Locarno Revisited

European Diplomacy 1920–1929



Edited by

GAYNOR JOHNSON

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Foreword by

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Foreword

The *Collins Concise Dictionary of the English Language* (1978) defines 'détente' as 'a lessening of tension or hostility especially between nations'. This definition seems to be applicable to the Locarno agreements, since, in the last resort, these did little more than achieve 'a lessening of' Franco-German 'hostility'. Détentes by their very nature tend to be unstable and are often short-lived affairs. The so-called Anglo-German détente after 1912 was one example of this phenomenon, and ended ironically in a major war which the détente had been partly intended, at least on the British side, to avert. If the formation of the Stresa 'Front' between Britain, France and Italy in April 1935 can be classified as an Anglo-Italian détente (France of course sought a military alliance with Italy rather than merely improved relations), its shelf life was even shorter, barely a few months until October 1935, when Mussolini invaded Abyssinia. Finally the Cold War was marked by short-lived periods of East-West détente, punctuated by periods of mutual hostility and rising tension. Locarno exhibited similar tendencies. However much Austen Chamberlain, Gustav Stresemann and Aristide Briand laboured to resolve the multiplicity of contentious issues remaining from the Treaty of Versailles, Franco-German differences over security, disarmament and the Rhineland remained too wide and in the end Germany received only a few modifications to the Treaty from its Locarno partners. Mutual expressions of good will were all very well, but without progress on the resolution of the major outstanding problems, détente between France and Germany could not in the end translate into a genuine entente, despite the initial euphoria surrounding the conclusion of the Locarno Treaty on 15 October and its signature in London on 1 December 1925.

The massive withdrawal of US funds from Germany in 1931 had, of course, a disastrous effect since it had been US loans which had sustained the Ruhr and Locarno settlements. The withdrawal of US funds worsened the economic and financial plight of Germany, already struggling with mounting unemployment and increasing political instability. These factors severely undermined the foundations of Locarno. As an indication of this, the early withdrawal of Allied troops from the Rhineland in June 1930 was followed, in September 1930, by the Nazi Party gaining 107 seats in the Reichstag elections, a clear sign that Germany wanted more than just minor alterations to the Treaty of Versailles. The advent of Hitler only hastened the trend towards the liquidation of both Versailles and Locarno, a process which his predecessors had initiated, for example by attempting to set up an Austro-German customs union in March 1931, in direct contravention of the peace treaties. Although this was stymied by French financial pressure—the last time France took an active step to uphold Versailles— the fact that Germany persisted with its plans, despite a storm of international protest, until September, demonstrated how the wind was now blowing.

On 7 March 1936 Locarno, already on its last legs, as Britain was already contemplating modifying it by agreement with France and Germany, was finally destroyed by Germany's brutal remilitarisation of the Rhineland. Recriminations by France and Britain against this German coup were not followed by any military or economic action by the entente to reverse it. By taking at face value Hitler's offers of treaties to

replace Locarno, the British continued to delude themselves that Locarno could be revived in another form. Eden persisted with his search for a new Locarno, but the Cabinet, in mid 1936, decided that if Germany refused to attend a five-power conference to this end, Britain would have to form a western Locarno with France and Belgium—this never happened and Belgium was soon to withdraw into neutrality. France did manage to extract one British concession—the opening of Anglo-French-Belgian staff talks in London. While these were intentionally restricted by the United Kingdom to relatively minor technical matters, they were to be a precursor of much wider Anglo-French military conversations in 1939, and, furthermore, filled a vacuum which had been lacking in the Locarno pact—Britain's refusal, given the complications involved, to hold staff talks in 1925, and also, as Philip Towle points out, because the frontier guarantee was intended as a confidence-building measure, even if, in the end, it failed to instil much confidence in the signatories. This was the first time that Britain had entered military conversations with France since before 1914. With the removal of Germany (and Italy) from the equation, staff talks were now a practical possibility. In 1936 as in 1925, however, Britain's ill-equipped and minuscule army was in no position to embark on a major war on the Continent, nor did its politicians want it to, hence they excluded from the talks any mention of where a British field force would go after it had reached its assembly areas in France. The War Office refused to guarantee that British forces would be sent to France or Belgium in the event of war with Germany.

It was ironic that the three architects of Locarno—Austen Chamberlain, Briand and Stresemann—all disappeared from the international scene at roughly the same time. Given the catalogue of woes after 1930 it is doubtful that they would have been able to reverse the trend towards disaster, as Briand discovered in his abortive attempt to promote a Pan-European Union in May 1930. The chapters in this volume all in their different ways have succeeded in resurrecting the debate over Locarno, a debate which, as Gaynor Johnson points out in her introduction, has tended to languish in recent years. The Locarno period is a fascinating subject in its own right, and one that deserves the attention which this volume has given to it.

MICHAEL DOCKRILL
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Series Editor's Preface

The 'Spirit of Locarno' seemed to inaugurate a new era in international relations. The dark years that had witnessed the collapse of the Concert of Europe, the descent into the Great War, and the bitterness of relations in the wake of the Versailles Treaty seemed finally to have come to an end. The agreements concluded at Locarno were meant both to end that chapter in the history of international relations and to mark a new one in which cooperation would be the basis of foreign policy. The architects of Locarno, Austen Chamberlain, Aristide Briand, and Gustav Streseman would all receive the Noble Prize for Peace for their efforts. It would endure for barely a decade, being put finally to rest by Germany's remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936. This book provides a thorough reassessment, 75 years after the Locarno Conference, of the impact of what at the time was considered the greatest diplomatic breakthrough of the age.

ERIK GOLDSTEIN

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Map: Europe 1919–33.

Introduction

In 1930, Harold Nicolson, a senior Foreign Office official, wrote:

> The old diplomatist has not been fairly treated by his posterity. If he failed to foresee the war, he is, with full justice, called a fool: if he did foresee the war, he is quite unjustly, considered a knave… But if we are tempted to regard our own state of mind as more humane and more enlightened, we should remember that we were taught our lesson by the death and mutilation of ten million young men. We have no cause to feel self-righteous when backed by so expensive an education.[1]

Although these words were written about the conduct of diplomacy before the First World War, they have a resonance for those who search for the origins of the second great conflagration that broke out in September 1939. Most clearly, they provide a powerful indictment of the many who have criticised Neville Chamberlain and the other appeasers of Hitler in the 1930s. But Harold Nicolson's words also suggest how important it is for historians to be even-handed in their judgement of individuals and events in the preceding decade. Almost all of the work that has been published on the diplomacy of the inter-war period is tinged with a fatalistic quality and is concerned directly or indirectly with explaining the outbreak of the Second World War. The actions of Hitler continue to dominate the historiographical landscape of the inter-war period, with the diplo macy of the 1920s commanding much less attention from historians. Few would dispute that there are connections between the peacemaking process in 1919 and the outbreak of the Second World War. However, one of the purposes of this volume is to provide a reminder that this connection was by no means clear or straightforward. The weaknesses of the peace settlements at the end of the First World War were apparent to many British and European politicians in the 1920s. Consequently, there were remarkable efforts to sustain peace, espe cially during the so-called 'Locarno era' between 1924 and 1929. This was a period dominated by men many of whom possessed a passionate commitment to prevent the outbreak of a second world war and who operated in a time of unparalleled political and diplomatic change. The statesmen who met at Locarno in October 1925 would have been only too aware of the validity of Nicolson's point, and its significance weighed heavily on their shoulders.

The majority of the chapters in this book were presented as papers at a three-day conference held at Bolton Institute of Higher Education in July 2000, to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Locarno. The aim of the conference was twofold: to examine the diplomacy of the principal countries that signed the treaty in 1925 and so provide general comment on the issues of greatest importance to the study of European history in the 1920s; and to assess the extent to which the Treaty of Locarno could be seen as the 'real' peace treaty between Germany and the Allies at the end of the First World War. The contributors are a mixture of established and newer scholars based in Britain, Canada, Germany and the United States. Most of the chapters are concerned with traditional diplomacy—the interaction between

states and the mechanisms that enabled this to take place. However, foreign policy cannot be understood unless it is placed within a wider political and economic context. This is universally true, but at no time more so than during the 1920s. Italy had rejected democracy in 1922 under Mussolini's stewardship, while Britain and France remained committed to democratic values but were unsure how far they should be allowed to go. The Luther government in Germany was one of many democratic coalitions that tried to implement the most progressive democratic constitution yet devised but was hamstrung by its efforts and unable to shake off the remnants of pre-war nationalism. These issues and others relating to the repayment of war debts and other loans were considered by the conference. It would be misleading to offer a definition of what 'Locarno diplomacy' was in an introduction to a collec tion of essays on the subject. It meant different things to each of the people involved. The inability of contemporaries to arrive at a working consensus about what the Treaty of Locarno was intended to achieve in the long term weakened it and paved the way for its destruction. But just as historians continue to be fascinated by the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, part of the attraction of the Locarno agreements of 1925 is that they were well intentioned but spectacularly failed to fulfil their purpose. Unlike the Paris Peace Conference, however, the Treaty of Locarno and the era of diplomacy to which it gave its name, were not always seen as flawed. Far from it. Until 1945, they were held up as one the high points of European diplomacy in the 1920s. The Locarno conference, held in October 1925, produced a number of agreements designed to offer guarantees of assistance should the security of the signatory powers be violated. The most significant was that signed between Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Italy confirming the inviolability of Germany's frontiers with France and Belgium and agreeing that the Rhineland would remain a demilitarised zone. In effect, therefore, the treaty provided a means of affirming Germany's western borders as defined by the Treaty of Versailles.

Nevertheless, in recent years, discussions of the significance of the treaty have tended to diminish, despite continuing interest in the origins of the Second World War. It is perhaps because some regard the Locarno era as a period of shortsightedness and lack of co-operation between nations and because it does not fit into the patterns of diplomacy usually associated with a system on the brink of war that it is less often studied. In this respect, the realism expressed by E.H.Carr and others has much to answer for. It is not appropriate to regard the 20 years between the two world wars as a dark period of irrevocable decline leading from one global disaster to another. International diplomacy was not always motivated by cynical self-interest.

An overview of what the Treaty of Locarno meant to contemporaries and of the way that it has been viewed by historians is provided by Jon Jacobson. The focus of his discussion is the impact of the treaty on British foreign policy and whether it represented a continuity or discontinuity within the general strategy behind continental involvement developed since the middle of the nineteenth century. He identifies five ways in which 'Locarno diplomacy' can help us understand the conduct of European relations in the first two decades of the twentieth century 'Locarno as history' argues that the powers that signed the treaty possessed an overwhelming moral responsibility to set up mechanisms that would ensure that the world would never again resort to war. They were overshadowed and motivated by still vivid memories of the enormity of the carnage during the First World War. The peace settlements had done little to improve the temper of European diplomacy. There was thus a need to create a watershed between the era of war and a new era of peace and for the demarcation to be clear and written into international law. In discussing 'Locarno as realism', Jacobson questions whether it is appropriate to dismiss British involvement in the Treaty of Locarno as simply a token gesture of support for France. Austen Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary in the second Baldwin administration, would have liked to have made a more wide-ranging commitment to preserve peace in Europe but was prevented from doing so by domestic political and imperial constraints.

At the same time, Jacobson asks whether it was necessary for the British government to make a greater commitment than that offered in 1925 as the treaty met most of Britain's security requirements. 'Locarno as defence doctrine' asks whether the treaty offered an inadequate measure of continental security It has often been criticised for its inability to prevent Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936. Jacobson argues that the British lacked the means of enforcing the treaty; that it was not part of a wider review of defence strategy. Nevertheless, the Treaty of Locarno should not be dismissed as a sham as it was a sophisticated attempt at reconciliation and co-operation that improved the climate of European diplomacy. 'Locarno as decision making' provides a reminder of the lack of clarity and direction behind the British negotiating position and the angst experienced by senior members of the Conservative Party, by Chamberlain and the Cabinet as they considered how best to proceed. Finally, Jacobson offers an assessment of Chamberlain as a statesman from a nineteenth-century mould, committed to the creation of a Concert of Europe to preserve peace to be achieved through the conduct of the old diplomacy.

A number of these themes are explored by Patrick Cohrs, who places the problems of peacemaking and security experienced by European politicians and diplomats in a wider, transatlantic context. He argues that as scholars we should move away from an examination of the structural problems facing the peacemakers and ask whether any form of international stabilisation was achieved before 1923. If so, how much, if any, of it was real? He claims that it took the arrival of US money and influence through the Dawes Plan to bring financial stability to Europe that had so far been beyond the capabilities of European statesmen and commercial experts. We thus have the start of the globalisation of international finance. Furthermore, it was only US economic intervention that enabled European diplomacy to move away from consideration of the reparations question towards the potentially more significant matter of security. Without the United States therefore, there would not have been a Locarno, or, at least, not an agreement of that nature as early as 1925. Cohrs argues that we should regard the advent of the Dawes Plan in 1924 and the Treaty of Locarno as two fundamentally inter-related parts of the 'second peace settlement' at the end of the First World War that many regard the Treaty of Locarno to be. He also contends that Ramsay MacDonald, first Labour Prime Minister and also Foreign Secretary in his short-lived administration of 1924, should be accorded as many plaudits as Chamberlain for bringing about the watershed in European diplomacy. It was MacDonald more than Chamberlain, he argues, who appreciated the need for US cooperation and assistance to help Britain, France and Germany recover from the war and to create a climate in which peace could flourish. MacDonald was also a much greater 'internationalist' than Chamberlain, paying greater heed to the work of the League of Nations and developing Britain's role as a permanent member of the League Council.

Central to the study of history throughout the centuries is the role and impact of individuals on the course of events. This book contains four reminders of the importance of personality and individual prejudice to the study of European diplomacy in the 1920s: Jonathan Wright's mind map of Stresemann, Gaynor Johnson's analysis of Chamberlain's involvement in the conclusion of the Kellogg-Briand pact in 1928, John Keiger's assessment of the diplomatic priorities of Poincaré and Briand in the early 1920s, and Alan Cassels' discussion of Mussolini's attitude towards the Locarno conference. The pictures presented by Wright and Johnson of the men charged with the conduct of German and British f oreign policy respectively, have more in common than perhaps would be expected. Indeed, their policies and attitudes appear to have greater similarities than either of them realised or were prepared to acknowledge. Wright portrays Stresemann as a 'creative pragmatist', a phrase that Chamberlain would have welcomed as a description of his own attempts to broker a deal on international security that would protect Britain's commitment to the Empire as well as help meet the needs of France. Stresemann, Poincaré and Chamberlain were *Realpolitikers* concerned with enhancing and protecting their respective countries' status as Great Powers. Yet, at the same time, there were important differences between them. Stresemann's policy

objectives were relatively simple, to improve relations with the Allies to enable a renegotiation of the Treaty of Versailles to take place and to cultivate the Soviet Union as a trading partner. Chamberlain's priorities were at face value equally straightforward, but the burden of these policies weighed heavy on his shoulders. This does not refer to the amount of domestic opposition with which both men had to contend. Chamberlain and Stresemann endured and survived for much the same period of time. But taken together, Chamberlain's conduct of foreign policy was far more angst-ridden than that of Stresemann. He was often forced into compromises that conflicted with his instincts and felt compelled to prepare the diplomatic ground before acting. Stresemann, by contrast, acted as he saw fit and sorted out the detritus afterwards. There is an old adage that claims 'to the victor, the spoils'. The careers of Stresemann and Chamberlain in foreign affairs, which were almost exactly chronologically parallel, demonstrated that it was often easier to emerge on the defeated rather than victorious side after a war.

The problem of how to make an amicable peace with a former enemy is one of the themes explored by John Keiger's assessment of French diplomacy in the mid 1920s. He sees Poincaré as a *Realpolitiker* who was anxious to secure the best deal possible for France, especially regarding Britain and Germany, and who desired to reach an amicable entente with both. Thus Poincaré had more in common with Chamberlain and Stresemann than has hitherto been thought. The main point of this chapter, however, is to claim that there were differences of substance as well as style in the approach of Poincaré and Briand towards European diplomacy in the 1920s. Keiger asks whether Briand deserves his reputation as one of the principal architects of the so-called second peace treaty between the Allies and Germany at Locarno, when, during the earlier part of the decade, it was he and not Poincaré who advocated a harsh approach towards Germany. If this analysis is accepted, it necessitates a complete revision of Briand's relationship with Chamberlain, as well as the strategies behind French policy towards Germany, the Soviet Union and eastern Europe.

The responsibility of the Allies for making a lasting peace also placed a burden on the relationship between the victorious powers at the end of the First World War. Alan Cassels contends that one of the most important questions that historians of the 1920s need to ask is the extent to which statesmen and diplomats regarded Mussolini as a principal player in international diplomacy. Always one for the grandiose gesture, the Duce lacked the earnestness and conventionality of approach of Chamberlain and Stresemann. The British and German Foreign Ministers were prepared to work within the existing diplomatic framework created by the League and the peace settlements at the end of the First World War to bring about further guarantees of peace and security. Mussolini was not. Like Hitler, he was only prepared to work within this system when it suited him to do so. In this way, both dictators engaged in false confidence-building exercises with the Allies, which, as Philip Towle argues in another chapter in this volume, had disastrous results for all concerned. When examining the priorities of Stresemann and Chamberlain in 1925 it was a relatively straightforward task to identify what they were. With Mussolini, almost the opposite was true—it often being easier to identify what his principal objectives were. Cassels argues that the Treaty of Versailles had much to answer for because of its negative effect on Italian foreign policy during the early years of peace and because of its connection with Mussolini's rise to power. The Duce passionately wanted Italy's influence in European diplomacy to be as great as that of Britain and France. The British and French were prepared to work with him as regards signing a security agreement, but were not willing to accept him as a close ally because his regime was not democratic. Therefore, the Locarno Treaty was undermined from the outset because in promoting equality and cooperation, in terms of Italian involvement, it simply reaffirmed the isolation experienced by the former Prime Minister, Orlando, in Paris after April 1919. Relations between Italy and the other Locarno powers were further weakened because Mussolini did not share British and French revulsion at the use of war as a means of securing diplomatic or political change. While

Mussolini was not as willing as Hitler to list his priorities, he nevertheless embraced Social Darwinism. Cassels argues that not only did Mussolini lack a commitment to the Locarno pact, he also believed it to be completely incompatible with the general objectives of Italian foreign policy. However, in Mussolini's behaviour at Locarno—his very flamboyant arrival and departure and his ability to create dissension amongst his allies—we have a foretaste of his general approach towards the conduct of diplomacy. At Locarno, Mussolini established a 'blueprint' for his future dealings with the British and French, but in 1925 it was Germany and not Italy that was of greatest concern to those countries. They did not realise that they had anything to fear from Mussolini because it was inconceivable to them that any nation would act in a way that could jeopardise peace.

Like Jonathan Wright, David Cameron and Anthony Heywood view Stresemann as an exponent of *Realpolitik*. Their chapter provides balance and general context to the discussion of Locarno diplomacy in the 1920s, which tends to be viewed as a western European phenomenon, dominated by Britain, France and Germany However, for Stresemann, it was imperative that the Treaty of Locarno and any agreements resulting from it did not undermine Germany's relations with the Soviet Union. Much has been written about Stresemann's diplomacy 'between east and west' and his desire to build on the treaty of mutual assistance that had been signed between Germany and the Russians at Rapallo in 1922, in the shadow of the Allied conference at Genoa. Cameron and Heywood provide an additional dimension by assessing the importance of commercial interests in Stresemann's diplomatic thinking. They argue that Stresemann's negotiations with the British and French in the weeks leading up to the Locarno conference were influenced by the outcome of a trade agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union. Dissatisfaction and disappointment resulting from the terms of the commercial negotiations persuaded Stresemann to seek alternative means of enhancing Germany's influence in international affairs. This, Cameron and Heywood claim, explains Stresemann's conviviality and willingness to co-operate that are so well documented in accounts of the Locarno negotiations, at which the trade agreement with the Soviet Union would have been uppermost in Stresemann's mind, having been concluded only four days before the opening of the conference. Much to the chagrin of the Allies, the failure of the commercial agreement to live up to expectations was also to persuade Stresemann to seek alternative means of improving German relations with the Soviet Union. Therefore, in the spring of 1926, while the Allies were preoccupied with agreeing the terms under which Germany could be admitted to the League of Nations, Stresemann's diplomatic efforts were concentrated on negotiating what became the Treaty of Berlin (1926) with the Soviet Union as well as on improving his relations with the Allies. It reveals much about the attitude of the Allies towards international diplomacy that they failed to recognise or give sufficient store to the historic basis of German foreign policy to avoid encirclement by creating alliances with powers to the west of Germany and to the east. This was the tactic adopted by both Frederick the Great and by Bismarck.

The impact of Soviet foreign policy on Europe during the Locarno era is the theme of David Watson's discussion on Franco-Soviet trade relations. Although never natural allies, the relationship between France and the Soviet Union underwent something of a renaissance in the mid 1920s. The Soviet leadership and the Comintern had little time for western European attempts at collective security and the work of the League of Nations. Nevertheless, during this period significant progress was made towards the settling of pre-war Russian debts to France and the negotiation of a possible new credit agreement. Parallels can be drawn on a larger scale with the advent of the Dawes loan scheme in 1924. Chamberlain and Briand saw the negotiations between France and the Soviet Union as part of the dawning of a new era of trust in international diplomacy. But this mood of idealism was mixed with pragmatism. The British government signed a trade agreement with Germany in 1925, which guaranteed very favourable treatment of British goods. It is therefore possible to identify two trends in European affairs at this time: an emotionally charged

awareness of the need to prevent the outbreak of future conflict and a more hard-edged grasping of the commercial realities of the postwar world. The two strands were closely related. Commercial relations often act as a barometer of the strength of the general diplomatic relationship between states and are often the first casualty of its deterioration. This therefore suggests that relations between the western European powers and the Soviet Union were generally stable. This is not a new conclusion, but it does indicate that there was something more substantial to that stability than a high-minded denunciation of the use of war. After all, these major commercial agreements were concluded after sufficient time had elapsed for those countries who possessed the means to put their domestic economic affairs in order after the dislocation of the war. This five-year period also allowed sufficient time to elapse for the principal European economic problems and opportunities to be identified and for strategies to tackle them to be put in place. Watson argues that this process of reconciliation and co-operation was also hampered by Poincaré's desire to distance France from Anglo-American trade rivalry. Nevertheless, it was significant that the Franco-Soviet commercial negotiations continued more or less unbroken for almost four years, between 1924 and 1927. Their final collapse owed more to the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from international affairs under Stalin than to a lack of French commitment.

A second theme within the fabric of inter-related issues in 1920s diplomacy is that of disarmament. Carolyn Kitching asks why the disarmament question played such a small part in the thinking of the statesmen who met at Locarno when the treaty that they produced was so concerned with renouncing war and promoting reconciliation between the victorious and defeated powers at the end of the First World War. She contends that to Chamberlain, Briand and Stresemann, disarmament was irrelevant as it was simply a means to an end. It would have been difficult for each of the signatory powers to have established a limit for minimum levels of defence that would have been acceptable to all parties. Trust needed to be built up as a first stage, but the difficulty and ultimate f failure of the task ahead has been well chronicled. Kitching argues that the Locarno conference was not simply about setting up a framework for future discussions, but about establishing a precedent for negotiating from a position of strength. Although much has been written —praise and condemnation in equal measure—about the so-called 'spirit of Locarno', it concealed a dogged determination on the part of the British, French and Germans in particular not to give ground on the security issue. The British government was especially anxious to give precise definition to the degree of commitment which it was prepared to give to uphold and maintain European peace. At the same time, it was difficult for the Allies to put the disarmament question entirely out of their minds because concerns about the fairness of the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles that related to this matter were central to Stresemann's negotiating strategy at Locarno.

The Treaty of Locarno has been viewed by some as a 'failed' peace treaty—an agreement that offered the Germans a fairer hearing than they had received in Paris during the negotiation of the Treaty of Versailles on issues relating to the establishment of German frontiers, but which failed to provide the means of containing Hitler's foreignpolicy aspirations. Philip Towle offers an interpretation of this analysis that establishes a connection between Britain's policy towards Germany in the 1920s and the policy of appeasement as it was practised after 1937. It is not new to claim that Britain practised a policy of conciliation towards Germany for much of the inter-war period. However, Towle goes further and argues that the Treaty of Locarno was a confidence-building exercise—a gesture of goodwill that was designed to improve relations between the Allies and Germany and which worked until 1936, when Hitler invaded the Rhineland. The Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, and Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, failed to recognise the significance of Hitler's decision. From that point onwards, the British government sought other confidence-building exercises to get relations with Germany back on track, but failed because Hitler professed a willingness to use the same tactics, but lacked the desire to carry them out.

The analyses of European diplomacy in the 1920s contained in this book demonstrate that genuine attempts were made to ensure that peace was preserved and that these efforts were made by statesmen and diplomats who were all too aware of the enormity of the task they faced. Those involved in the conduct of foreign affairs during this period were not idealists with unrealistically high expectations, nor were they naïve, or, for the most part, misguided. Chamberlain, Briand and Stresemann certainly made errors of judgement, about each other, their allies and about the general diplomatic climate. But these were no worse than those made at any time in the ordinary course of diplomatic discourse. Those who met in Locarno in 1925 are often charged with creating a treaty that could not contain Hitler. However, it is doubtful whether any statesman in the mid 1920s could have predicted the extraordinary circumstances that led to the rise of Hitler and his subsequent challenges not only to the Locarno Treaty but to other major international agreements. The aim of this volume is to pose questions about some of the long-held assumptions about European diplomacy in the 1920s and to demonstrate that this period is as important to understanding the dynamics surrounding inter-war international history as the 1930s.

NOTE

1. H.Nicolson, *Sir Arthur Nicolson* (London: Constable, 1930), pp. ix–x.

1
Locarno, Britain and the Security of Europe

JON JACOBSON

At Locarno in 1925, the core states of western Europe—France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Belgium—stated in treaty terms the great lesson of the Great War: a final end to military conflict among them was of greater value than anything to be gained from another resort to arms. They agreed that their primary common interest was in banishing war from the region and declared an end to centuries of military conflict over the territories adjacent to the Rhine. The treaties they concluded then were an historic effort to make a stable peace by means of a comprehensive regional settlement designed to end longstanding antagonisms and conflicts.

Locarno was also the place western Europe identified itself as an independent region of interdependent states distinct from the rest of Europe and the world. The Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, popularly called 'the Rhineland Pact',[1] addressed the problems of west European security separately from those inherent in the instabilities of eastcentral Europe. It included the United Kingdom, but not the British Empire, and not the United States, or the Soviet Union. Locarno Europe portended in some respects the original European Economic Community of the Treaty of Rome 30 years later, and in some respects the Europe of the Six Plus Britain that was aborted in 1961, and in some respects the west European-led Europe of the 1990s.

Inherent in the Locarno agreements was the principle that peace was regional. They were concluded when efforts at universal security, or nearly universal security, organised within the League of Nations, the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the Geneva Protocol, had been aborted. At the heart of Locarno was the principle that Germany, France and Belgium had a common interest in the security of the region they bordered. Britain's vital interests in Europe were limited to the territory of Continent most adjacent to the Channel and closest to the British Isles. Locarno offered no security to the world beyond western Europe and expected none from it.

Austen Chamberlain stated at the time that the Locarno Treaties marked 'the real dividing line between the years of war and the years of peace'.[2] A.J.P.Taylor agreed, writing that they ended the First World War.[3] Both were correct. Along with the Dawes reparations settlement, the Locarno Security Treaties ended the 'war after the war', the struggle between Germany and the Allies over the results of the Great War that had not been not settled at Paris and Versailles in 1919. Locarno reinvented peace after the Great War on updated, post-1919 terms. It incorporated the most significant developments of post-First World War international relations: a post-Ruhr reconstructed entente between France and Britain, a rapprochement between Germany and the Allies of the Great War initiated from Berlin, and the import of US capital severed from US strategic commitment. It was both Europe's true postwar settlement and best hope for durable peaceful stability following the Great War.

Europe became more vulnerable to a second world war as that settlement was undermined. Ten years and five months after the Locarno conference, Hitler repudiated the treaty concluded there, and German troops remilitarised the Rhineland. By June 1940, all the nations signing the agreements were again at war, with

each other. It has been easy therefore to disparage Locarno retroactively. Some histories have characterised the agreement celebrated there in 1925 as impotent, inadequate and ineffective, dismissing it as an illusory peace, the product of mutual self-deception and collaborative denial, which ignored real conflicts and problems and papered them over with treaties and pacts, and a peace conjured up within an international order condemned to a second world war by the instabilities and hostilities inherent in the outcome of the first, which brought about no more than a blissful interlude, which was then obliterated without a trace by the Depression and Hitler.

British foreign relations have come in for their share of criticism. In particular, the Locarno promise of immediate military assistance in the event of an attack on one of the signatories, or in case of a flagrant violation of the demilitarised zone, has been dismissed as a mere gesture. In a now famous statement made in 1972, Correlli Barnett stated with compelling polemical force a proposition still widely held today:

> Unfortunately the treaty was, so far as Britain and her guarantee were concerned, no more than a hollow gesture to soothe the French; a bogus commitment, a fraudulent IOU that was given only because the English Government never thought for a moment that they would ever have to make it good… In regard to Europe, therefore, English policy did not merely display a characteristic escapism and self-deception, but the realities of power and strategy having been left so far behind, now veered positively into fantasy… For under the cover of the humbug of apparent British commitment to defend the Rhineland demilitarized zone and the integrity of France and Belgium, Britain had really completed the liquidation of her wartime strategic involvement in Europe.[4]

By contrast, Austen Chamberlain defended the Locarno agreements at the time as a measure that increased the safety of the British Isles, augmented French security, both deterred and reconciled Germany, and reduced the danger of a general European war.

After 75 years, the contradictions inherent within British Locarno foreign relations remain intriguing. The treaty met the security requirements of the British Isles almost exactly, yet participation in European security negotiations was initially opposed almost unanimously within the government in the spring of 1925. Of the five powers signing the treaty, Britain was least directly threatened by aggression on the Rhine. Yet, British diplomacy carried the Germanproposed Rhineland Pact to success at the conference at the lakeside resort in Switzerland six months later. Austen Chamberlain, who referred to himself as ‘the most pro-French member of the government’,[5] and a man with persistent reservations about the sincerity of German intentions, quickly became Locarno’s most vocal and consistent public spokesman.

Was British policy a fantasy and a deception, or was it realistically suited to national/imperial interests? The argument that British Locarno policy was a pragmatic response to the strategic lessons of the First World War is a familiar one. France and the Soviet Union together could not prevent German military hegemony in Europe without Anglo-American intervention, and, unless effectively countered, the submarine could sever the Empire overseas from the United Kingdom while the British Isles were attacked directly from the air. Confronted with this situation, postwar governments might have sought protection in the devices of classical continental power politics and allied with France, maintained a high state of military preparedness, aggressively defended the status quo and directly confronted German revisionism. They did not do so. Instead, ideological conceptions, public opinion and structural elements, including changes in the international economy, domestic political imperatives and global strategic overreach, constrained them from making political and military commitments in advance. Together, the problems in Egypt, the threat to Britain’s position in China, the persistent conflict with the Soviet Union, the strained relations with the

United States, and the assertion of Dominion autonomy only widened the discrepancy between Britain's global commitments and defence capabilities during the Locarno era.

This stance was reinforced by the traditions inherited from their predecessors, principally Castlereagh, Gladstone and Lansdowne. In that policy tradition, armed conflict was avoided except in the defence of narrowly conceived vital national/imperial interests. Principles of justice and morality were applied to international politics. International society was assumed to be governed by a natural harmony of interests. The powers of Europe could be united together for the common good of all. Compromise among opponents was pref ferable to the costs of reciprocal destruction. The best way to reach compromise was through mutual concession to the point of optimum mutual benefit. Disputes could be settled through rational negotiation. Agreement could be reached through the exercise of reason, fairness and trust.[6] These notions were reinf orced f ollowing the Great War by a Wilsonian concept of international relations that not only rejected arms races, secret diplomacy and territorial imperialism, but also advocated the rule of law, the moral force of international public opinion and national self-determination as the essential ingredients of international justice.

There is some reason for believing that British Locarno policy fits this model closely. The Locarno agreements increased the safety of the United Kingdom while limiting commitment on the Continent, for which there was no advance promise of Dominion support,[7] in order to meet the demands of imperial defence. The obligations of a general treaty of security, such as the Geneva Protocol, making Britain potentially liable to defend or aid any League member and submit its own disputes to arbitration, were shunned. West European security could be achieved without harnessing British policy to one continental power or the other, and without dividing Europe into opposing political camps, as might have been the consequence of a trilateral military alliance with France and Belgium.[8] The demands imposed on limited resources by the need to protect the British Isles, to attend to the needs of an overseas Empire and to secure a durable peaceful stability in western Europe could be limited. Military preparation could be restricted to the most likely potential threats and eventualities for intervention. In this interpretation, the limited liabilities of the Locarno agreements were a rational response of an over committed world power seeking peace. They corresponded to the natural interest of a satiated power estimating both the European security situation and the assets of the Empire. 'I do not think', Chamberlain told the Commons in the debate over the ratification of the Locarno Treaty, 'that the obligations of this country could be more narrowly circumscribed to the vital national interest than there are in the Treaty of Locarno.'[9]

Under the terms of the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, Britain concluded a permanent peacetime military alliance and a formal commitment to come to the immediate military assistance of a European country; and did so without the Dominions and without the joint participation of the United States, something London had been unwilling to do in 1919. Britain would come to the military assistance of France in the event of unprovoked aggression, an attack on French territory or a flagrant remilitarisation of the Rhineland. It was thus committed in advance to a military response in the event of German action aimed at decisively altering the military balance of power in western Europe. Other cases were to be submitted for decision to the Council of the League of Nations before any coercive action was taken. If Germany attacked Poland, and France occupied the Rhineland and Germany responded militarily, Britain was not legally obligated to intervene. Locarno thus updated Britain's international obligations to the changes that had taken place in international politics in the almost seven years since the end of the Great War.

Without doubt, the treaty conformed almost exactly to the specific security requirements of the British Isles, as of late 1924-early 1925. 'With the advent of the aeroplane', Baldwin had stated in 1923,' we ceased to be an island. Whether we like it or not, we are indissolubly bound to Europe.' And as Maurice Hankey stated in January 1925, 'History and economics show that isolation in present conditions spells danger,

vulnerability and impotence. Geography and aeronautics show that isolation is not in our case a scientific fact.'[10] As of 1925 any force of German bombers based in the Low Countries could attack Britain with significantly greater frequency and intensity than one based in Germany.[11] The industrial districts of the Midlands and of northern Britain were beyond the range of bombers based in Germany. Those based immediately across the Channel would have to fly only 40 miles through hostile airspace on their 120-mile flight to London. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff called the Rhine 'the true strategic frontier of Great Britain' and termed keeping the effects of any future military disturbance on the Continent as far as possible away from British shores 'a fundamental strategic doctrine'.[12]

The Rhineland Pact confined German ground and air forces behind the Rhine River and denied to the enemy of the recent war advanced bases for sea and air attack. A formal agreement guaranteed the British Isles against the possible effects of contingent German rearmament. France, with the strongest army and the best air force in the world, was obligated formally to defend what was Britain's first line of defence, its natural strategic frontier, while Germany promised voluntarily not to transgress it with military force. Britain meanwhile defined where its interests overlapped with those of France and Belgium, did so with greater precision than had been the case before 1914, announced its readiness to defend those interests with military force and gave to that readiness the full legal authority of a formal treaty

In terms of the conditions of immediate postwar diplomacy, Locarno addressed London's nightmare of postwar continental instability. It materialised with urgency in 1921–22 as France attempted to implement integrally the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and to conduct an independent foreign policy with Turkey, while Germany concluded a rapprochement with Soviet Russia at Rapallo. Curzon stated at the time that the European powers were 'relapsing…into the deepest slime of prewar treachery and intrigue'.[13] Then in the 1923 Ruhr occupation, Poincaré's proxy negotiations with Rhenish autonomists and the support for putschist separatism demonstrated by French officials on the scene while the German nation faced disintegration only increased the frequency with which the term 'French hegemony' was voiced in London. True, MacDonald and Herriot managed to reconstitute relations between London and Paris on the basis of mutual confidence[14] and the Dawes agreement with Germany undermined the 'specialness' of the Rapallo relationship.[15] Nevertheless, in late 1924, looking back from London on the previous 30 months of European international relations, the two most obvious potential threats to peaceful stability on the Continent remained an erratic France and a Germany driven into the arms of the Soviet Union.

Europe could be stabilised, Chamberlain maintained, according to three principles that he declared to the Committee of Imperial Defence in July 1925. He stated them in geo-political terms. The first principle was to make it an absolute impossibility for Germany again to overrun Europe. The second was to induce France to adopt a more friendly and reasonable frame of mind towards Germany. The third was to prevent a Russo-German understanding against the rest of Europe.[16] For Chamberlain, Locarno was the centrepiece of a strategy based on the premise that Germany must be deterred, pacified and won to the side of the West before either Germany or the Soviet Union recovered expansionist military capacity, that France must be soothed with a British security guarantee before Germany could be reconciled and that if Germany were reconciled the Soviet Union could be disregarded. With Locarno at its centre, his strategy aimed at a secure France, a Germany deterred by a British promise of military intervention on the Continent and restrained through diplomatic integration into a new Concert of Europe, and a Soviet Russia isolated by the integration of Germany into a west European regional security system.

Chamberlain envisioned a stable peace in Europe without the participation of the United States: 'With America withdrawn or taking part only where her interests are directly concerned in the collection of money', he wrote in March 1925, 'Great Britain is the one possible influence for peace and stabilization.'[17] London, therefore, would act as the honest broker, mediating between France and Germany, urging mutual

accommodation and pursuing a strategy of formal nonalignment, conciliation and negotiated rapprochement, and thereby reducing tensions, lowering the likelihood of military conflict and precluding another general war from western Europe.

A long-term policy of British diplomatic involvement in Europe, bringing about pacification through negotiated compromise continuing over a period of several decades, was a large ingredient of the grand strategy of which Locarno was a part.[18] It is difficult, therefore, to regard British Locarno policy as deceptive or illusionary, or as an episode or interlude in the history of British security policy. It was based on a realistic estimate of power and strategy and in the mainstream of inter-war British foreign relations. Locarno accorded well with British national and global interests. British Locarno policy does not fit the appeasement model of inter-war foreign policy exactly, however.

The policy of appeasement was based on the assumption that aggressively revisionist national impulses can be accommodated within a stabilised international order, and both the incentive for and resort to military action can be lowered or eliminated. This consideration was certainly a part of British Locarno policy. However, when the term appeasement is used to define the diplomacy of the Locarno era, important issues regarding British statesmanship are raised, issues deserving of further consideration. Most obviously, it was not an act of appeasement in the most well-known sense of the term, an effort to pacify an aggressive and expansionist Germany through accommodation. Rather, it aimed in the first instance at pacifying France, which was regarded from London at the time as the main disturber of calm and stability in postwar Europe. Nor is one of the chief corollaries of the interpretation helpful in understanding British Locarno policy, that is, that policy making after the Great War was a retreat from a position of previous preeminence. There is much reason to doubt whether there was any 'decline of British power' during the 1920s, or that notions of national declivity had any effect on the concept and conduct of foreign relations during the 1920s.[19] Thirdly, the notion that the function of Locarno was to separate Great Britain from continental involvement (to attend to the demands of a world empire), one of the keystones of the appeasement interpretation of inter-war British foreign relations, has found no support among scholars in the field. Finally, defence doctrine at the time of Locarno cannot be understood in terms of appeasement if that term denotes a reliance on diplomatic tactics of conciliation alone.

Was the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee inadequate as a measure of continental security? Undeniably, it did not prevent the remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936 or the invasion of France, Belgium and the Netherlands in 1940. Why not? Again British policy has come in for its share of blame. After 1925 the British and French military conducted no joint staff talks and devised no joint strategic plans. The treaty left Britain's military response to what constituted unprovoked aggression or flagrant violation of the demilitarised zone unclear. The Locarno promise was consequently of negligible military worth. The sometimes unspoken assumptions behind these assertions are two: (1) the right military preparations might have prevented, or put a quick end to any attempt to remilitarise the Rhineland and later effectively countered any German invasion of western Europe; (2) the most effective preparations would have been those that would have provided deterrence, the capacity to discourage aggression by destroying enemy values with punitive operations.

There is some validity in these propositions. Since 1919, the Army had been instructed not to prepare an expeditionary force for a major European war, and this instruction was *not* modified at the time of Locarno. No forces were created to defend France, Belgium and the demilitarised zone once military occupation ended. Instead, in a series of annual reviews beginning in 1926 and continuing until 1932, the Chiefs of Staff stated that the armed forces were *not* prepared to meet Britain's commitment under the Locarno Treaty. Only one division could be sent the first month with three more to follow piecemeal for the next four months. Moreover, these forces would be available only if not required elsewhere at the time for

Imperial defence. Other than by naval means, Britain could not do much in the early stages of the war to fulfil its Locarno obligations. The review of 1930 concluded: This country is in a less favorable position to fulfil the Locarno guarantees than it was without any written guarantee to come to the assistance of France and Belgium in 1914.'[20]

Thus, the commitment to the security of the Continent undertaken in 1925 was made without the force-in-being, the mobilisation preparations or the operations planning necessary for any effective military response. Locarno did not lead to any fundamental reevaluations in defence planning, no reappraisal of the Army's role in British security, no increase in the army budget, no preparation of an expeditionary force. Most significantly, the military doctrine inherent in the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee seems contradictory. The treaty recognised that air power had made the Rhine the strategic frontier of the British Isles. However, no provision was made rapidly to secure those bases with ground forces in case of war. Without forces ready to dispatch to the Low Countries, the sites from which German bombers could reach English industry, and from which British bombers could reach Germany, were left vulnerable. Thus there was at the centre of British security policy a glaring disjunctive between foreign relations, on the one hand, and military planning and preparation, on the other.

Until the Locarno era, no coherent doctrine of defence guided strategic planning and weapons procurement in London.[21] A farreaching reconsideration of Britain's world strategic situation then took place in 1925–26, due in part to the changed international situation. The government adopted what has been termed a 'systematic strategic policy'.[22] The Treasury and the Foreign Office, with the cooperation of the Prime Minister, combined to insist on several new principles on which service budgets were to be predicated: (1) Defence planning and appropriations were to be based on rational threat evaluation. Germany posed no actual military threat, and the current international situation did not indicate any potential threats to the Empire. The world order was stable; Europe would remain without military conflict for the near future; the likelihood of involvement in a war was therefore low. (2) The stability and growth of the economy and Britain's international trade were vital ingredients of imperial power, indeed the basic element of Britain's world position. Current defence expenditures weakened the economy, and, under present conditions, economic weakness was a threat more conceivable to imperial 'security' than was any foreign enemy. In sum, the actual international situation and the condition of national finances became the determinants of defence planning.

The new principles became the basis for the full implementation of the Ten-Year Rule in 1928. That action assumed Britain and the Empire would be secure for the near future because there were no current enemies sufficiently hostile and powerful to pose a genuine threat, and, if a threat emerged in the future (most likely from a new constellation of forces bringing together Japan, Germany and the Soviet Union), there would be a warning period of sufficient length to rearm fully, and future governments would quickly do so. It was in this climate that the review of def fence and naval expenditure instigated by Winston Churchill in the mid 1920s took place. This process of reappraisal did not mean, however, that the policy-making elite, civilian and military, entrusted the security of the Empire and the home islands to conciliation and reconciliation alone. There was no reduction in military effectiveness at the time. Britain armed itself with new RAF squadrons and with cruisers for the navy, while the army carried out the world's most advanced study of mechanised warfare. 'By 1929', John Ferris has maintained, 'the services were more effective than in 1925.' 'It was the actions of the governments between 1929 and 1936', he adds, 'which created the deadly predicament of the later 1930s.'[23]

At the same time, the army reminded the Cabinet that it had not been directed to prepare forces to honour the Locarno commitment to France, and acquiesced in the instructions of the government. It offered little if any resistance and exercised what has been termed 'considerable budgetary restraint'.[24] It did not define a

European mission and seek authorisation for a BEF equipped with the latest armoured technology and ready for rapid reaction when needed on the Continent. Instead, it attempted to substitute the Soviet danger to Persia and Afghanistan for the previous German threat as a justification for defence appropriations. However, an effort in 1926 to secure authorisation to develop a modern expeditionary force for imperial defence justified by the need to protect India from the USSR met heavy opposition. Chamberlain and the Foreign Office maintained that the best way to deal with the threatening situation in central Asia was not to feed the encirclement fears of the Soviet leadership with new military preparations against them.

Locarno era defence doctrine was not completely without deterrent. RAF doctrine, or at least one strain of it, entrusted the fate of the British Isles to the predicted deterrent effects of strategic bombing.[25] For the most part, however, the defence doctrine was one of dissuasion that was expressed informally or implicitly. It held that a potential enemy could be dissuaded from involvement in war with Great Britain, if it were convinced that the country had the capacity and the willingness to wage a long war of attrition resembling the war of 1914–18 without the trenches. The crucial military operations would be defensive engagements to deny the enemy success, rather than offensives launched to punish an aggressor, as well as a blockade against the opposing navy and merchant fleets. Strong naval and air forces would protect the industrial homeland from a knock-out blow and guard the sea lanes of the Empire, while the resources of the Empire would be mobilised behind this shield and powerful allies were collected for eventual victory.[26] As Churchill stated in the debate over the 1925–26 budget estimates, 'the last word would be with us'.[27]

Dissuasion doctrine clearly differs from one of deterrence, in which the enemy is threatened by immediate, punitive response to aggressive action, and aggression is prevented by the costs of such punishment.[28] For dissuasion to succeed, the future capability to mobilise and organise great military power in security had to remain credible in peacetime. The industrial resources of the home islands had to be adequate to strategic needs and invulnerable to a knock-out blow. A lengthy warning period was necessary for economic mobilisation. The willingness of potential allies to absorb a large part of the costs of ground combat on the Continent had to be incontrovertible. The resources of the Empire had to be available to defend the Empire and inner-Empire communications had to be defensible. Successful dissuasion depended on a 'healthy' domestic economy, on foreign trade safe from a negative balance of payments and on government credit not threatened by deficit.

An understanding of dissuasion helps make sense of the thought and actions of the London policy-making elite and of what they did and did not do about the security of Europe and Britain during the Locarno era. It is consistent with not providing for an expeditionary force of sufficient strength to deter, rather than dissuade, a continental aggressor and with assigning the military defence of western Europe principally to the French Army. It is consistent with making no advance assurances regarding the defence of eastern Europe and with waiting instead to see what assistance might be necessary and possible. It is consistent with assuming that the British Isles and the Empire would be secure for the near future because there were no current enemies sufficiently hostile and powerful to pose a genuine threat. It is consistent with believing that there would be a warning period of sufficient length to rearm fully and that future governments would quickly do so. It is consistent with minimising defence spending and husbanding economic resources for a future long war of attrition and with not risking the national capital and state solvency by expending the wealth of the nation in peacetime military deterrents.

The present task of defence policy, Chamberlain stated in the spring of 1926, was to consider how resources 'could best be husbanded for another great war'.[29] In dissuasion doctrine the economy becomes the fourth arm of defence. Industrial strength, financial stability and international trade become central elements of state power and crucial to strategic planning. At the time, eff fective and convincing dissuasion mandated retrenched government spending, increased private investment, recovery from the postwar

recession and reduced unemployment. While one can question how much modernising the army and its weaponry in expectation of fighting a European enemy might have attenuated the economy, the logic of dissuasion doctrine dictated that peacetime rearmament weakened, or potentially undermined, wartime military capacity. Minimising service expenditure was therefore necessary. The choice of national priorities was between long-term economic power and current military power, between present deterrent and the future dissuasion.

That no deterrent force was formed and no joint staff talks conducted does not mean that the Locarno Treaty promise was a sham, or that the guarantee of the west European territorial status quo was no more than a gesture, or that military doctrine was without a strategy for precluding a second general war in Europe. During the Locarno era dissuasion became the central element of defence doctrine, while the British, French and Belgian armies on the Rhine maintained the demilitarisation of the zone and deterred the use of military force to alter the territorial status quo. Reconciliation was implemented as the means to settle international conflicts and thereby to surmount long-term dangers, but it did not become the sole ingredient of British provision for European security.

Locarno placed British governments in a position to pursue those policies of formal non-alignment, limited commitment, conciliation and negotiated rapprochement that have together been characterised as Britain's 'natural policy', or 'massively over-determined' policy. The terms of the treaty accorded with national interests. Yet, joining the Rhineland Pact does not seem to have been the obvious policy choice to those who made the decision at the time. Thirty years of research into decision making in London has cast serious doubt on the proposition that Locarno was the inevitable or over-determined response to postwar European security issues.

The historic commitment to European security made at Locarno was nearly not made. Indeed, London nearly did not enter into any agreement at all for the security of Europe. Although he was instrumental in the reconstitution of the Anglo-French *entente cordiale* in 1924, MacDonald, along with most foreign affairs experts in the Labour government, deeply distrusted military alliances, collective security based on military force and forcible sanctions.[30] In addition, there can be little uncertainty about the anti-commitment attitudes of the imperial isolationists of the second Baldwin government that came to office in November of that year. In the three-month-long security deliberations in London, extending from 4 December 1924 to 16 March 1925,[31] they rejected both the Geneva Protocol and the Anglo-French-Belgian military alliance proposed by the Foreign Office. Sir Maurice Hankey, the head of the Cabinet Office, was also hostile to the Protocol.[32] He and others made it clear that their oppo sition was not to any proposal in particular; it was to any and all proposals that bound governments in advance to coercive action on the Continent and that denied to London the opportunity to consider the particulars of each case as it arose.

Making the decision to participate in European security negotiations was subject to the vicissitudes and permutations of intragovernmental debate in a cabinet made up of powerful, articulate and independent-minded personalities, Curzon, Balfour, Amery, Churchill and Birkenhead (along with Hankey), some of whom changed their minds or their tactics abruptly during the course of the deliberations. Matters not always regarded as important elements in high-policy decision making also influenced the course of debate at crucial junctures. Baldwin's mother became sick and he was absent from a crucial Cabinet meeting. Chamberlain was unable to advocate his policy preferences while chairing the meeting in his stead. Curzon attempted to reverse an earlier Cabinet decision and limit Chamberlain's room to negotiate with Paris. The Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, Eyre Crowe, operated semi-autonomously while Chamberlain was abroad. Curzon, the most vigorous and persistent opponent of continental commitment and the chief obstacle to Chamberlain's control over foreign policy, missed the final, decisive stages of deliberations. Baldwin atypically intervened in foreign policy decision making.

The contingencies of international negotiations played a significant role in the process by which the government eventually decided to accept and support the proposal that emanated from Berlin. The conjuncture of events in London, Paris and Berlin are of great value in clarifying the course of decision making.[33] Chamberlain's initial meetings with Herriot convinced him that an Anglo-French alliance would be necessary to meet French security requirements, whether or not the Geneva Protocol was ratified. The German proposal of a package of pacts among the powers with interests in the strategic future of the Rhineland, agreements guaranteeing the territorial status quo and demilitarisation of the area, had a crucial impact on the course of the discussion of European security in London, just as Schubert, Stresemann and D'Abernon intended that it should.[34] It was when the German proposal was subsequently sent to Paris, and Herriot indicated interest in it, that Chamberlain first recognised clearly the possibilities of a Rhineland pact.[35]

The furthest the Cabinet would go toward a 'continental commitment' was to authorise Chamberlain to inform Herriot that the British government would not refuse to participate (if invited to do so) in the proposals for a set of quadrilateral (France, Belgium, Britain, Germany) security agreements made by the Foreign Ministry in Berlin. Herriot then threatened to make French military occupation of Germany permanent in response to Chamberlain's statement that his government would not support a separate Anglo-French-Belgian treaty. If Paris insisted on continuing the occupation at a time when the Foreign Office considered that Berlin was fulfilling its reparation and disarmament obligations satisfactorily, then London would be faced with a choice between two unacceptable alternatives. The British Army of the Rhine could be kept in Germany, just as it had been throughout all the Anglo-French differences at the time of the Ruhr occupation. To have done so would have effectively surrendered to Paris determination of the fundamentals of Britain's relations with Germany. Alternatively, London could withdraw its troops unilaterally. French troops would then take over the posts formerly occupied by British troops and assume control of the area (along with Belgium). That, Chamberlain thought, would indeed be a disaster for both Britain and France and one from which their relations might never recover; Crowe predicted the effect would be 'the maximum of friction, not only with Germany, but over the whole of Central Europe'.[36] Confronted with the possible termination of the newly revived Anglo-French entente and another period of Anglo-French tension, Chamberlain telegraphed London asking the Cabinet for guidance on the matter. This set off a confused chain of events. Crowe acted autonomously in conversations with Baldwin and in a meeting of ministers.[37] Chamberlain threatened to resign. A clear decision was reached only when Baldwin reined in the anti-continental, imperial isolationists in the government and put his weight behind Chamberlain's policy of commitment to Europe. The matter was finally resolved with the Cabinet adopting a formula that essentially left Chamberlain free to negotiate Britain's participation in a regional security treaty.

Chamberlain's most important contribution to the outcome of the 1925 security debate in London may well have been what he did not do. He did not take up the suggestion made by more than one member of the Cabinet that negotiations with France be delayed until Paris was prepared to discuss a range of related issues in addition to west European security, in particular until Paris was ready to end Allied military occupation of the Rhineland and to discuss a readjustment of Germany's eastern frontiers.[38] The notion that the Great War peace terms be revised as French security was guaranteed was something Chamberlain dismissed without consideration. Hence, Britain's one remaining strategic asset on the Continent, the promise of military support to France and Belgium, was given without a return commitment from Paris, without French engagement with a British-guided German policy, without further steps toward what would later be called 'the final liquidation of the war'.

The most momentous choice made in the 1925 deliberations in London was the one that made Britain's historic 'commitment to Europe' a unilateral commitment. The decision to do so was accelerated by the threat from Paris to continue the military occupation of the Rhineland indefinitely. It was a consequence of

the urgency Chamberlain felt about the security of western Europe, his determination to restore the control of foreign policy to the Foreign Secretary, and his insistence that the Cabinet authorise an unambiguous response to Paris. A single individual and his personal policy preferences played a determining role in the 1925 security debate.

D.C.Watt has stated that the twentieth-century foreign policymaking elite held three basic attitudes. He termed them 'imperial isolationism', 'Atlanticism' and 'world leadership'.[39] The latter took a coldly realistic view of Great Britain's vital global interests, which were regarded as located in Europe primarily and then in the Mediterranean and East Asia. In the logic of this policy stance, European stability took priority because of the geographical proximity of the Continent to the British Isles. Chamberlain was the most prominent proponent of the 'world leadership' definition of British interests during the decade of the 1920s.[40] There was, moreover, a special character to his notion of Anglo-European relations. At the time policy alternatives were being debated in London in early 1925, he imagined a Concert of Europe as the means by which the continental commitment would be implemented, and the instrument by which relations among the Locarno powers would improve in an evolutionary manner.

Despite what he stated on at least one occasion, the Concert of Europe of which Chamberlain spoke was embodied, not in the League Council, but in the periodic Foreign Ministers' meetings of the post-Locarno era.[41] He clearly believed that personal relationships of mutual confidence among Briand, Stresemann and himself as well as the harmony and optimism of the spirit of Locarno could permeate international relations and thereby sustain peaceful stability. His moderation and good sense, his negotiating skills, what has been termed his 'sane and sensible diplomacy',[42] suited him to the informal sessions with Stresemann and Briand, and he enjoyed them. He was by temperament 'a born conciliator and much preferred matters to be settled by negotiation and compromise rather than by confrontation',[43] and was good at moderation and mediation. Chamberlain's conduct of relations, not only with western Europe, but also with the Soviet Union, the United States and China, evidences, to a greater or lesser extent, his moderation, his good sense and his ability to deal deftly and judiciously with complex postwar circumstances and without falling back reflexively on the prescriptions of pre-Great War foreign policy.[44]

Chamberlain's contemporaries stressed his sense of 'fair play', what was termed at the time his 'disinterested goodness' (Vincent Massy) and his 'plain good intent' (Leo Amery).[45] Scholars since have contended that Chamberlain epitomised the gentlemanly code of honour in politics, represented by 'truthfulness, straight-dealing, respect for treaties, keeping one's faith, integrity, unselfishness, and loyalty'.[46] It has been maintained that Chamberlain did not allow his personal sentiments to distort his policy, that he consistently acted as the 'honest broker' he claimed to be and that he appeased Paris and Berlin in turn. Gaynor Johnson has challenged that notion. After demonstrating how strong and persistent were Chamberlain's suspicions of those who conducted German foreign relations from the time Berlin proposed a Rhineland security pact in January to the time of the Locarno conference in October, she doubts that he ever regarded Germany as a suitable ally, or wholly embraced the idea of a pact that included Germany on an equal basis.[47] How even-handed, one might ask, was Chamberlain in his concert diplomacy?

Chamberlain came to office with a sense of urgency regarding the matter of European security, but with no particular formula for dealing with it.[48] The formula was written in collaboration with Eyre Crowe, who convinced him that the most destabilising influence in European international relations was an exaggerated French fear of another German invasion, and that the first task of British policy was to alleviate that fear with a guarantee of France's frontier. That measure would be capable of achieving two effects: it would deter Germany and restore French confidence in Britain.[49] The formula Chamberlain adopted, despite the opposition within the government that he knew it would provoke, was a def fensive military alliance with

France and Belgium, one that could include Germany, but only at a later date. Chamberlain and the Foreign Office regarded German participation in a west European security arrangement as comple mentary to an Anglo-French alliance, but as an agreement supplementary to it and as subsequent to it.[50] More than timing was at stake in this decision. To negotiate a separate Anglo-French alliance first followed by an agreement with Germany would have had a very different effect on policy attitudes in Berlin and on international relations than did the Locarno solution, that included Germany in the negotiations from the beginning.

Chamberlain adopted the 'France first' principle following his first meeting with Herriot (5 December 1924). From that meeting it was clear to him that Paris expected an Anglo-French alliance whether the Geneva Protocol was concluded or not and would not agree to simultaneous German participation in a west European security pact. Chamberlain advocated the principle early in the intra-governmental security deliberations in London, expressing it in the first CID meeting he attended (16 December). Discussions within the Foreign Office in early January came to the same conclusion, and they were subsequently set forth in the Harold Nicolson/Eyre Crowe memorandum on European security (dated 23 January 1925). Chamberlain was encouraged by the German security proposal for a package of multilateral pacts (20 January), but it did not deter him from this course. He informed the German ambassador (30 January) that Berlin's initiative was premature under present conditions. He then persisted in the face of incoherent and inconsistent, but nevertheless vehement opposition from Curzon, Balfour, Churchill, Amery, Birkenhead (and Hankey), recommending the 'France first' approach in meetings of the CID (13 and 19 February) and the Cabinet (2 and 4 March). There is no evidence that he was pleased at going to Paris following the second of these Cabinet meetings with nothing other than the government's rather indefinite endorsement of the German proposals, or that he was displeased when Crowe then, in an action not specifically authorised by Chamberlain, continued to press Baldwin and other members of the government (11 March) for a separate Anglo-French-Belgian agreement as part of a series of sequential, linked pacts, even after the Cabinet had twice rejected the idea.

Crowe and Chamberlain did not prevail in the deliberations within the government, and the Cabinet decided (20 March) to enter into security negotiations based on the German proposal. Their persistent insistence on the priority of the Anglo-French-Belgian alliance is significant nevertheless. In the international negotiations that led to the conference at Locarno in October 1925, Chamberlain continued to think of his objective being accomplished in two stages. Once the former Allies had 'secured their own safety' and France had the assurance that Britain was a reliable and faithful ally, then Germany would again become a member of the Concert of Europe. Then, within the post-Locarno triplice, Chamberlain continued to conceive and conduct British foreign relations as a two-stage process in which the principle of 'France first' was preserved. He reasoned, as he wrote subsequently, that 'if the French believe you to be their friend, you can go a great deal with them. If they think you are not their friend, you can do nothing.' It was 'only by the maintenance of this mutual confidence and by close cooperation between our two nations that the rehabilitation of Germany and the restoration of Europe can be achieved'.[51] Calming Germany meant calming France first, not once, but continually In accordance with this principle, Chamberlain pushed the pace of concessions to Berlin no faster and no further than the government in Paris would permit. This meant that the terms of relations within the Locarno triplice were determined in Paris; France remained diplomatically predominant in the Locarno era. Seen from this perspective, the crux of Chamberlain's concept of post-Locarno relations and diplomacy within the Concert of Europe was not one of treating Paris and Berlin identically or in a parallel manner. It was not in treating them sequentially in correspondingly appropriate ways. It was in promoting Germany's negotiated compliance with the Versailles Treaty without promoting German defiance of the veto Paris continued to hold over the terms of those negotiations.

NOTES

1. Several agreements were signed at Locarno. Together, they are referred to in this work as the Treaties of Locarno, or the Locarno Treaties. The most important of them was the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee that is referred to in this work as such, or as the Rhineland Pact, or simply as the Treaty (singular) of Locarno.
2. N.H. Gibbs, *Rearmament Policy* (London: HMSO, 1976), p. 43.
3. A.J.P Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (New York: Methuen, 1961), p. 54.
4. C. Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), pp. 332–3.
5. Chamberlain quoted in J. Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 16.
6. The ideological and structural elements shaping British foreign policy between the two world wars were analysed comprehensively and systematically in the 1970s. That examination included the full context of policy making and emphasised the continuity of the policy of appeasement. It was pioneered by German scholars and can be accessed in English in works such as P.Kennedy, *Realities behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865–1980* (London: Fontana, 1981) and 'The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy, 1985–1939', *British Journal of International Studies* 2, 1 (1976), 195–215 and in P Schroeder, 'Munich and the British Tradition', *Historical Journal* 19, 2 (1976), 223–43. Of particular importance for an understanding of the 1920s are W.D.Gruner, "'British Interest" in der Zwischenkriegszeit: Aspekte britischen Europapolitik 1918–1938', in K.Bosl (ed.), *Gleichgewicht—Revision— Restauration: Die Aussenpolitik der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik im Europsystem der Pariser Vorortevertrage* (Munich: Collegium Carolinum, 1976), pp. 85–151 and 'The British Political, Social and Economic System and the Decision for Peace or War: Reflections on Anglo-German Relations, 1800–1939', *British Journal of International Studies* 6, 3 (1980), 189–218; R.Meyers, *Britishche Sicherheitpolitik, 1934–1938* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1976) and 'British Imperial Interests and the Policy of Appeasement', in W.J. Mommsen and L.Kettenacker (eds), *The Fascist Challenge and the Policy of Appeasement* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983); G.Niedhart, 'Friede als nationales Interesse: Grossbritannien in der Vorgeschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges', *Neue Politische Literatur* 17, 1 (1972), 451–70; G.Schmidt, 'Britische Strategie und Aussenpolitik: Walchancen und Determinanten britischer Sicherheitspolitik im Zeitalter der neuen Weltmachte, 1897–1929', *Militargeschichte Mitteilungen* 8, 2 (1971), 197–218; 'Strategie und Aussenpolitk des "Troubled Giant"', *Militargeschichte Mitteilungen* 1 (1973), 200–20; 'Politisches System und Appeasement-Politik, 1930–1937', *Militargeschichte Mitteilungen 2* (1979), 37–53; *England in der Krise: Grundzuge und Grundlagen der britischen Appeasement-politik (1930–1937)* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1981), translated as *The Politics and Economics of Appeasement: British Foreign Policy in the 1930s* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986); B.-J.Wendt, *Economic Appeasement: Handel und Finanz in der britischen Deutschland-Politik 1933–1939* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1971); 'Grossbritannien —Demokratie auf dem Prufstand: Appeasement als Strategie des Status Quo', in E.Forndran, F.Golczewdki and D.Reisenberger (eds), *Innen und Aussenpolitik under nationalsozialistischer Bedrohung: Determinanten internationaler Beziehungen in historischen Fallstudien* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1977), pp. 11–31.
7. R.F.Holland, *Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance, 1918–1939* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 46–52; N. Hillmer, 'The Foreign Office, the Dominions and the Diplomatic Unity of the Empire, 1925–1929', in D.Dilks (ed.), *Retreat from Power: Studies in Britain's Foreign Policy of the Twentieth Century,* Vol. I (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 64–77. It was the negotiation and ratification of the Locarno Treaty that determined explicitly that the contribution of the dominions to the maintenance of Britain's security interests in Europe could be taken for granted no longer. It was also the time when the Foreign Secretary realised that the formation and conduct of British foreign policy could no longer be hampered and delayed by Dominion involvement. On the one hand, the Dominions as a whole could not by 1925 be depended on to assist Britain in Europe automatically in times of crisis. They had become resistant to contingency defence planning, to increased arms expenditures and to having foreign and defence policy defined exclusively in London. Uncertainty about the policies of the Dominions was a persistent feature of the opponents of the continental commitment within the government. Chamberlain, on the other hand, maintained, as he told the Commons, that 'I could not go as representative of

His Majesty's Government, to meeting after meeting of the League of Nations, to conference after conference with the representatives of foreign countries and say Great Britain is without a policy. We have not yet been able to meet all the governments of the Empire and we can do nothing' (quoted in Barnett, *Collapse,* p. 196). The Foreign Office subsequently informed the Dominion Office, 'our actions under the Locarno Treaty will not—indeed cannot—be dependent on the unanimous imprimatur of the Dominions' (quoted in Holland, *Britain and the Commonwealth,* p. 51), and the Baldwin government entered into and concluded the negotiations that culminated at Locarno without formally associating the Dominions. Locarno was thus both a landmark assertion of the national interests of the United Kingdom against the Dominions and, although it did not mark the end of any common imperial foreign policy, it was a crucial step in the dissolution of the 'white' Empire as an effective alliance useful to Britain. Barnett, *Collapse,* p. 202.

8. Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy,* pp. 21–6.
9. Quoted in Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy,* p. 38.
10. Baldwin, quoted in E.Kiel, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 94; Hankey in E.Goldstein, 'The Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy for the Locarno Pact, 1924–1925', in M. Dockrill and B.J.C.McKercher (eds), *Diplomacy and World Power: Studies in British Foreign Policy, 1890–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 125. Chamberlain and the Foreign Office too held that Britain's security boundary was the Franco-German frontier: E.Maisel, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1919–1926* (Brighton: University of Sussex Press, 1994), p. 163.
11. In 1934, the Chief of the Air Staff estimated that if the Germans occupied and set up bases in the Low Countries, the German Air Force could double the war load it could drop on London and far extend the hostile air space through which British bombers would have to fly on their way to the Ruhr. 'It is not too much to say that the occupation and successful defense of the Low Countries…would be the most effective means of mitigating the severity of a German air attack on London.' M.Smith, *British Air Strategy between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), p. 85. Meanwhile, British planes based in the Low Countries would put Germany within range of British short-range bombers. It was not until the development of longer-range bombers in the late 1930s that the defence of Britain, to RAF thinking, no longer depended on a European commitment.
12. Quoted in Gibbs, *Rearmament Policy,* pp. 41–2.
13. Curzon quoted in J.Ferris, *The Evolution of British Strategic Foreign Policy, 1919–1926* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 109.
14. A.Cassels, 'Repairing the *Entente Cordiale* and the New Diplomacy', *Historical Journal* 23, 1 (1980), 133–53.
15. J.Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley University Press, 1994), pp. 136–7.
16. Chamberlain quoted in Ferris, *Evolution of British Strategic Foreign Policy,* p. 149.
17. Chamberlain quoted in B.J.C.McKercher, '"The Deep and Latent Distrust": The British Official Mind and the United States, 1919–1929', in B.J.C.McKercher (ed.), *Anglo-American Relations in the 1920s: The Struggle for Supremacy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), p. 226.
18. R.S.Grayson, *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe: British Foreign Policy, 1924–1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp. 32, 41.
19. The decline thesis is a central assumption of the work cited in note 7, a succinct statement of which can be found in P.Kennedy, 'Strategy versus Finance in Twentieth Century Great Britain', *International History Review* 3, 1 (1981), 44–61. There is extensive criticism of it in B.J.C.McKercher, 'Wealth, Power and the New International Order: Britain and the American Challenge in the 1920s', *Diplomatic History* 14, 1 (1988), 411–41; J.Ferris, 'The Greatest Power on Earth: Great Britain in the 1920s', *International History Review* 13, 2 (1991), 726–50.
20. B.Bond, *British Military Policy between the Two World Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), p.93.
21. For British defence policy in the Locarno era, there is nothing to compare with the perceptive and wise consideration given to the later period in G. Post, Jr., *Dilemmas of Appeasement: British Deterrence and Defense, 1934–1937* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993). In the absence of that research, one can at best interpolate from scholarship on related topics. Some broader and more general works are suggestive. M. Howard,

The Continental Commitment: The Dilemma of British Defence Policy in the Era of the Two World Wars (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1972); Bond, *British Military Policy;* N.Gibbs, 'British Strategic Doctrine, 1918–1939', in M.Howard (ed.), *The Theory and Practice of War: Essays Presented to Captain B.H.Liddell Hart on his Seventieth Birthday* (London: Cassell, 1965), pp. 185–212; work on military doctrine, B.R.Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between Two World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984) and on the financial nexus of strategic commitments and service policies, Ferris, *Evolution of British Strategic Foreign Policy* is also important and useful.

22. Ferris, *Evolution of British Strategic Foreign Policy,* p. 171 (quote), pp. 174–5.
23. *Ibid.,* p. 181 and Ferris, 'Greatest Power on Earth', pp. 738–9.
24. Kiel, *Imagining War,* pp. 102–3.
25. N.Jones, *The Beginnings of Strategic Air Power: A History of the British Bomber Force, 1923–39* (London, 1987), chapters 1–2; Smith, *British Air Strategy between the Wars,* pp. 44–105.
26. Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine,* pp. 141, 176, 231–2.
27. Churchill quoted in Ferris, *Evolution of British Strategic Foreign Policy,* p.165.
28. The doctrine of dissuasion clearly differs from that of deterrence as developed during the Cold War, one in which the enemy is threatened by immediate armed response to aggressive action, and aggression is prevented by the threat of punishment. See P.M. Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis* (Beverly Hills, CA, 1984) for a definitive discussion of the varieties of deterrence.
29. Chamberlain quoted in Ferris, *Evolution of British Strategic Foreign Policy,* p. 177.
30. D.Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), p. 365.
31. Research into decision making in London in 1924–25 first became possible when the Austen Chamberlain papers were made available to scholars: D. Johnson, 'Austen Chamberlain and the Locarno Agreements', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 8, 1 (1961), 62–81 revised and updated a decade later as 'The Locarno Treaties', in N. Waites (ed.), *Troubled Neighbours: Franco-British Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), pp. 100–24. Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy* is based on multi-archival research and examines British policy in international context. D.Dutton, *Austen Chamberlain: Gentleman in Politics* (Bolton: Ross Anderson, 1985) is a perceptive understanding of Chamberlain as a statesman along with judiciously balanced criticism. The 1990s saw a revival of interest with new research based on careful research in Foreign Office records: Maisel, *Foreign Office and Foreign Policy,* is a narrative of admirable completeness and exactitude placing the Locarno decision in the context of British security policy from the time of the peace settlement. Goldstein, 'Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy' is a lucid analysis of the full range of factors involved in the decision-making process. F.Magee, "Limited Liability"?: Britain and the Treaty of Locarno', *Twentieth Century British History* 6, 3 (1995), 1–22 corrects those who have seen Locarno as the end of British involvement in Europe. Grayson, *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe* takes on those who would underestimate the extent of Chamberlain's efforts to pacify Europe. R.C.Self (ed.), *The Austen Chamberlain Diary Letters: The Correspondence of Sir Austen Chamberlain with His Sisters Hilda and Ida, 1916–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 263–71 provides access to some of Chamberlain's candid and important expressions.
32. Hankey to Baldwin, 26 November 1924, PRO (Public Record Office)/CAB/21/469.
33. Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy,* pp. 3–35, 47–59.
34. Research into the role of Lord D'Abernon in the inception of the German security offer was pioneered by F.G.Stambrook, "'Das Kind": Lord D'Abernon and the Origins of the Locarno Pact', *Central European History* 1, 1 (1968), 233–63; G.Johnson, "'Das Kind Revisited": Lord D'Abernon and German Security Policy, 1922–1925', *Contemporary European History* 9,2 (2000), 209–24 has reexamined it with perspicacity and challenged the notion that D'Abernon worked closely with Schubert and Stresemann and that he gave the essential impetus for the dispatch of the note to London. She has also corrected the mistaken notion that D'Abernon acted with the knowledge or encouragement of the Foreign Office in London. G.Johnson, 'Lord D'Abernon, Austen Chamberlain and the Origins of the Treaty of Locarno', *Electronic Journal of International History* 1, 1 (2000),

para. 6. Also A.Kaiser, *Lord D'Abernon und die englische Deutschlandpolitik 1920–1926* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 333–64.

35. Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy,* pp. 13–14. Only after learning of interest in the German proposal in Paris did Chamberlain refer to it as 'the most hopeful sight that I have yet seen': Chamberlain to Crewe, 16 February 1925, quoted in Grayson, *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe,* pp. 40, 46.
36. Crowe quoted in Goldstein, 'Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy', p.133.
37. Grayson, *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe,* pp. 50–5; cf. Maisel, *Foreign Office and Foreign Policy,* 174–75; Goldstein, 'Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy', pp. 132–3; S. Eyre Crowe, 'Sir Eyre Crowe and the Locarno Pact', *English Historical Review* 87, 3 (1975), 49–74; S. Crowe and E. Corp, *Our Ablest Public Servant: Sir Eyre Crowe* (Braunton: Merlin, 1993), pp. 467–87.
38. Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy,* p. 18; Maisel, *Foreign Office and Foreign Policy,* p. 169.
39. D.C.Watt, *Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Formation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Longman, 1965), pp. 211–22; McKercher, 'Deep and Latent Distrust', pp. 209–16.
40. B.J.C.McKercher, *Transition of Power: Britain's Loss of Global Preeminence to the United States, 1930–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 8–12.
41. J.Jacobson, 'The Conduct of Locarno Diplomacy', *Review of Politics,* 34 (1972), 67–81; cf. Grayson, *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe,* chapter 4.
42. B.J.C.McKercher, 'Austen Chamberlain's Control of British Foreign Policy: 1924–1929', *Austen Chamberlain and the International History Review* 6, 1 (1984), 570–91 and 'A Sane and Sensible Diplomacy: Austen Chamberlain, Japan and the Naval Balance of Power in the Pacific Ocean, 1924–29', *Canadian Journal of History* 21, 2 (1986), 187.
43. M.Morris, 'Et l'honneur? Politics and Principles: A Case Study of Austen Chamberlain', in C. Wrigley (ed.), *Warfare, Diplomacy and Politics: Essays in Honour of A.J.P. Taylor* (London: Hamilton, 1986), p. 84.
44. G.Gorodetsky, *Precarious Truce: Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1924–27* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); B.J.C.McKercher, *The Second Baldwin Government and the United States, 1924–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); E.S.K.Fung, *The Diplomacy of Imperial Retreat: Britain's South China Policy, 1924–1931* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1991).
45. Quoted in Dutton, *Austen Chamberlain,* p. 246.
46. Recently, Morris, "'Et l'honneur?'", p. 81.
47. Johnson, 'Lord D'Abernon, Austen Chamberlain and the Origins of the Treaty of Locarno', para. 25.
48. Most scholarship has rejected the notion that Chamberlain came to office with a complete foreign policy ready made that he then maintained stubbornly and rigidly. Rather he is seen as a skilled, pragmatic and flexible politician whose objectives and strategies were formulated rationally in response to circumstance, who worked closely with the Foreign Office staff, and who was guided by their advice. See McKercher, *Second Baldwin Government,* pp. 6–9, 19–20.
49. Goldstein, 'Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy', pp. 116–21.
50. Grayson, *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe,* pp. 44–5 maintains that Chamberlain's objective in the deliberations in London was 'securing France in one way or another' and that the separate Anglo-French-Belgian treaty was for him 'only a means to this end'. Maisel, *Foreign Office and Foreign Policy,* pp. 167–72 emphasises Chamberlain's prolonged attachment to the idea of a separate Anglo-French-Belgian agreement and rigid adherence to the notion that Germany would be included only later in the face of persistent opposition in the CID and the Cabinet. The latter account confirms earlier research, e.g. Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy,* pp. 13–18, and is the interpretation followed here. There is certainly no convincing evidence that Chamberlain ever spoke or wrote in favour of a security agreement that included Germany from the beginning, or proposed simultaneous negotiations with Paris and Berlin until compelled to do so by insistence of the Cabinet.
51. Chamberlain's letters to D'Abernon, May 1925 and September 1930, quoted in Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy,* p. 25.

2
The Quest for a New Concert of Europe: British Pursuits of German Rehabilitation and European Stability in the 1920s

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In the history of the modern states system, fundamental crises have led to equally fundamental changes in the core assumptions and practices of international politics. Paul W.Schroeder has shown that such changes marked British foreign policy at crucial junctures. These changes underlay Castlereagh's resolve to establish a new political equilibrium in Europe at the Congress of Vienna after decades of revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.[1] After 1814/15, Britain's benign hegemony proved to be pivotal for maintaining the Vienna system, which preserved European peace for most of the nineteenth century. By contrast, scholars examining the period since the First World War have mostly emphasised the shortcomings of postwar stabilisation; and they have pointed to negative lessons, particularly for British foreign policy—lessons which ultimately would only be applied in forging peace after a second world war.[2] Is it to be concluded, then, that Castlereagh's successors in the 1920s, the 'fulcrum period' before the Great Depression, made no headway towards building European stability on more lasting foundations? Did the unprecedented cataclysm of 1914–18 fail to spur any constructive reorientations that one could liken to those of 1814/15?

It will be argued that, rather than reexamining the enormous struc tural problem of the 1920s within the context of peacemaking, it is necessary to assess to what extent, and on what grounds, any international stabilisation in Europe was attained even if it could ultimately not be sustained.[3] What, then, came closest to a European peace order after the 'Great War'? Was it the order of Versailles? Or was it the emergence of a nascent, qualitatively different transatlantic peace system half a decade after Versailles? If it was the latter system, then it was built on two main pillars: the London reparations settlement of 1924 and the Locarno security pact of 1925. For it was these events that allowed for the most substantial advances towards resolving the German question, which arguably lay at the core of Europe's post–1918 instability. And it was a system to whose formation British policy, recast after the catalytic Ruhr crisis of 1923, made significant, and thus far neglected, contributions. Were they in fact Britain's greatest contributions to a 'real' post-First World War peace settlement?

The quality of the international stability that was achieved in the 1920s, and what part British diplomacy had in it, has remained disputed particularly since 1945. What has been neglected in recent scholarship is the 'idealist' critique. This asserts that Britain, by favouring regional security with Europe's remaining 'great powers', essentially weakened the League of Nations. Thus, the British government ultimately destroyed any prospects of founding peace on universal collective security, as prescribed in the League Covenant and its envisaged extension, the Geneva Protocol.[4] More influential has been the 'realist' critique of British 'appeasement' in the 1920s; that is, the pacification policies Britain pursued in the mid 1920s have been viewed as the negative pre-history of Munich.[5] In other words, they have been branded as 'illusory' attempts to accommodate Germany—attempts that undermined the last 'insurance' against German revisionism: a firm French containment of Germany, backed by a strong Anglo-French entente. Hence, while there has not yet been a comparative analysis of British contributions to the accords of London

and Locarno, both outcomes have been implicitly linked.[6] It has been suggested that Britain's first Labour Premier and Foreign Secretary, Ramsay MacDonald, brought about the end of France's European 'predominance' by allowing Anglo-American high finance to force on her the Dawes settlement of 1924.[7] His Conservative successor as Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, then sealed France's 'defeat' at Locarno. Between them, they undermined the status quo of Versailles and Europe's balance of power, preparing the ground for Hitler.[8]

This study will present a markedly different appraisal. It evaluates the policies of MacDonald and Chamberlain not only in the context of Britain's overarching quest for international stability, but also in their relevance for the development of the international system after 1918. It seeks to show that what made a tangible difference for Europe's postwar pacification was the evolution and reorientations of British foreign policy strategy, particularly after the *caesura* of 1923. Crucially, contrary to previous interpretations, Britain was not a status quo power in the 1920s, at least not in Europe. British policy makers eventually pursued not merely an adjustment of Versailles, but its qualitative transformation. This reorientation culminated in two successive, ultimately complementary yet distinct British approaches to peaceful change in Europe. This analysis will first focus on Ramsay MacDonald's quest to make Britain an 'active agent for peace' through a policy of transatlantic co-operation and evolutionary change in 1924.[9] Its main comparative focus will then be on Austen Chamberlain's 'noble work of appeasement in Europe' in 1925.[10] It will be argued that Chamberlain's new course gave the decisive impetus to the formation of a new system of international security and stabilisation: a western-orientated Concert of Europe. Transcending the system of 1919, it found its most marked expression in the Locarno pact and began to foster a new international equilibrium in Europe. Under the geopolitical and geo-economic conditions of the 1920s, however, the significance of Britain's Locarno policy can only be fully gauged if it is understood as the second formative stage in a wider consolidation process. To understand its progression, it is necessary to reappraise MacDonald's contribution to the Euro-Atlantic reparations settlement of London, the first cornerstone of what would evolve into Europe's 'real' peace settlements after the First World War.

British diplomacy promoted what would become the most substantial, if ultimately unsustainable attempts to forge a balanced international order in the inter-war period. The British government fostered stability precisely because it neither aimed to rein in Germany and establish a *de facto* elusive balance of power nor to construct an abstract system of universal collective security Rather, British policy was premised on British and US ground rules of pacific accommodation and integration—above all, the international integration of Weimar Germany.

The constitutive premise is that a comprehensive understanding of what consolidation British policy makers did and could achieve in postwar Europe requires not only a reevaluation of the post-1918 international system in which they acted but their perceptions of it. It also requires a reassessment of the position Britain had within this system and the cardinal challenges faced.

What methodology, then, could be illuminating to this end? Above all, this chapter seeks to advance a systemic approach to the study of international history, which has been developed for the study of nineteenth-century politics by Paul W.Schroeder.[11] Thus, it will suggest that the 'international system' is only on one level, classically, synonymous with the interaction of major powers in a given geo-political constellation and the distribution of power among them.[12] More fundamentally, it can be characterised as a system of international politics as described by Michael Oakeshott, namely as the assumptions and principles that actors develop and the rules they cultivate 'in pursuing their individual divergent aims within the framework of a shared practice'.[13] Here, the common practice is the conduct of international politics. Alternatively, one could describe it as a game which is the same for all the actors involved and influenced

by them according to the objectives they pursue, the means they deploy and the possibilities they create within it.

What must be considered when focusing on twentieth-century international relations, however, is that, with the rise of mass democracy, a new and more vital dimension to this 'game' had emerged since 1815: that of domestic legitimacy. In a decade when international relations were conducted between democracies with newly widened franchises, like Britain, or which remained as yet highly unstable, like Germany, stabilisation efforts were only viable if their outcomes could be sustained in the international sphere and they could gain legitimacy in very disparate national force-fields.[14] What is to be shown, then, is that the decisive change preceding Europe's 'relative stabilisation' in the mid 1920s originated in the ideas and outlooks underlying British, as well as European and US approaches to the process of 1920s international politics.[15] Even more decisive was the extent to which leading policy makers embarked on individual and collective learning processes: to conceive new and different policies if previous practices had proved insufficient. And by 1923, in the view of the British policy-making elite, post-First World War peacemaking clearly had achieved this goal.

What, then, were the main structural challenges British policy makers faced after the war? They can be outlined as follows. The adverse conditions for postwar stability were set by the collapse of Europe's crisis-prone balance-of-power system. Sealing the fall of Austria-Hungary and Tsarist Russia, the war had made even a nominal restoration of the old order impossible. Simultaneously, the rise of the United States as 'the power that finally determined the outcome of Europe's conflicts' had broadened the European into an essentially Euro-Atlantic state system.[16]

To change the old order radically had of course been the aim of Wilson's quest to 'make the world safe for democracy'.[17] He had sought to replace it by a supranational system of collective security under the auspices the League of Nations. Yet, as his successors would realise, Europe's instability was exacerbated rather than overcome in 1919, particularly because the ill-founded compromise between Wilsonian principles and Clemenceau's quest for *sécurité* was dictated to Germany. The latter, isolated and in political transition, would originally be paralysed by a 'revision syndrome' concerning Versailles.[18] To make matters worse, the Treaty of Versailles had left eastern central Europe structurally unstable: the newly recognised nation-states, Poland and Czechoslovakia, comprised German minorities; their borders were contested by their western neighbour. What in Chamberlain's judgement in 1919 fell short of 'real peace' had been aggravated rather than amended by Lloyd George's bid for pacification and retribution.[19] Above all, however, it had been aggravated by Wilson's inability to legitimate his design at home. The United States' withdrawal in 1920 deprived the treaty, and the envisaged Anglo-American alliance with France, of what should have been its principal underwriter.[20]

The unsettled German question was thus the rootcause of Europe's ensuing postwar crisis. At its core lay the latent Franco-German antagonism and its most palpable manifestation: the dispute over reparations. Ever more, it turned into the battlefield on which the future of the Treaty of Versailles was decided. Its intractability derived from two inextricably linked questions. First, who would ultimately pay for the war? Second, and more importantly, who would control the financial resources that, even in an era marked by unprecedented international interdependence, states still considered essential to ensure national security?[21]

Increasing disenchantment with the peace treaty unquestionably spurred Britain's reorientation towards peaceful change in the 1920s.[22] This first became apparent in Lloyd George's ultimately fruitless bid to rehabilitate Germany and rebuild Europe in the immediate postwar period. It can be seen as the first stage of a process in which British policy makers, Lloyd George as well as the Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, tried unsuccessfully to learn from previous shortcomings, yet in turn provided their successors with valuable lessons. This process reached its peak first in the futile attempt to buttress peace through a limited entente with

France, foundering at the 1922 Cannes conference, then, with major consequences, in the abortive scheme for European reconstruction advanced at the subsequent Genoa conference. It came to nothing primarily because Lloyd George had failed to foster Anglo-American co-operation to further European recovery: the United States was not present at Genoa, unwilling to fund a British 'grand design'.[23]

A final premise of Britain's gravitation towards peaceful change could be summarised as follows: British policy makers realised that, if not by a radical Wilsonian *caesura,* Europe was not to be pacified either by rehabilitating pre-1914 balance-of-power diplomacy and forcibly containing Germany.[24] What revealed the limitations of this approach most strikingly was the frustration of France's bid for an 'artificial hegemony' in Europe under Poincaré. It was launched after France had exhausted all options to bring Britain and the United States to support her security and reparations demands. Feeling compelled to satisfy them unilaterally, Poincaré in January 1923, ordered French troops to occupy the strategically pivotal Ruhr area.

Recent studies have stressed that his final aim was not Germany's outright disintegration but rather the acquisition of 'productive pawns' on Rhine and Ruhr, all to assure German 'fulfilment'—and French preponderance.[25] In fact, however, his coercive course sparked an escalating French struggle against German 'passive resistance' that by the autumn of 1923 did manage to precipitate the political, economic and territorial disintegration of Weimar Germany. Crucially, it was this latter dimension that was perceived with growing misgivings by British and US statesmen.[26]

By the end of 1923, then, what MacDonald had emphasised throughout the Ruhr crisis had become plain even to a hitherto passive Baldwin government: namely, that there was no functioning international system in place to master the challenges the war had left in its wake. Above all, while the most precarious problems could not be tackled without Germany's participation, no ways had been found to promote it. What also had become manifest, however, was that after 1919 a durable peace order depended not on how decisively Germany could be checked, but on how effectively Britain and the United States could provide 'hegemonic stability' in Europe. What characterised a hegemony in the 1920s? Essentially, apart from a potentially even more preponderant United States, Britain was the only power capable of substantially shaping and transforming the rules of postwar politics.

In contrast to the United States, the British Empire had emerged from the First World War victorious yet by no means strengthened. Even though the Empire's extension had reached its zenith in 1920, what influenced Britain's changing position in the postwar constellation most was its 'Janus-faced' character. There was a danger of strategic 'over-extension', a widening gulf between Britain's expanding commitments and the relative contraction of her resources, which was underscored by her substantial war debts to the United States.[27] Yet, against the background of the accelerating crisis of France's Ruhr policy, the US's aloofness and Germany's isolation, Britain was cast to become the international system's pivotal balancing power. Britain, if any power, was positioned to reassume a benign political hegemony and play a decisive role in overcoming the Franco-German antagonism after 1919. Futile British attempts to this end, and passivity, had worsened instability between 1920 and 1923. Poincaré's incursion, however, would trigger the Anglo-American intervention that recast Euro-Atlantic politics.

MacDonald's short-lived government of 1924 and his direction of Britain's external relations both as Premier and Foreign Secretary, undoubtedly marked a *caesura* in the evolution of British foreign policy after 1918. They were a departure both from Lloyd George's 'grand designs' and Curzon's policy of aloofness in 1923. Yet the question of what significance the changes MacDonald introduced had—and what they portended for European stability—has long remained comparatively neglected, only to become subsequently part of the wider controversy over British 'appeasement' in the interwar period. How tenable, then, is the aforementioned claim that MacDonald favoured a policy of appeasement that would persuade

France to accept a detrimental reparations settlement?[28] How far did it compromise not only the Anglo-French entente but also any further western prospects of controlling Germany?

An analysis evaluating MacDonald's policy both in the context of Britain's overarching quest for stability and the development of postwar international politics suggests that neither claim can be upheld. On the contrary, it can be argued that, although unable to sustain it during his nine-month premiership, MacDonald developed Britain's first comprehensive strategy for peaceful change that met the central challenge of the postwar era—to forge transatlantic solutions to redress European imbalances. Under his direction, British diplomacy would finally break with its previous priority of preserving, if reluc tantly, the Anglo-French entente. Instead, it would shift to a forward engagement geared to consolidating Europe through new groundrules of evolutionary integration. MacDonald would seek to reassure France yet above all to revive co-operation with the United States, all in order to foster the international inclusion of Weimar Germany.

Prima facie, what was most notable about MacDonald's approach to international politics appears to have been a marked tension between principle and practice. On the one hand, both the war and subsequent crises had only reinforced his belief in left-liberal assumptions about the requirements of peace. On the other, as Prime Minister he would come to pursue a remarkably pragmatic course. What bridged the gap between far-reaching aims and gradualist means, was MacDonald's evolutionary outlook on European stabilisation. It changed essentially through his observation of the Franco-German crisis and, crucially, the conclusions he had drawn from British passivity in 1923.

On a deeper level, it seems apposite to describe his path as a highly idiosyncratic learning process. This may be illustrated by the following juxtaposition. In 1918, MacDonald had seen no longstanding British traditions to build on in making peace.'[29] After a war that had kindled hopes for radical renewal, he had still rejected the 'frame of mind' that sought to effect Europe's recovery through something 'akin to the Holy Alliance…appealing for confidence in democratic language'.[30] Half a decade later, as will be seen, MacDonald would claim that such inter-governmental co-operation was both a practical necessity and Europe's best hope for peace. He would also co-operate closely with the heads of international capitalism on both sides of the Atlantic. This can be described as the essence of what lessons MacDonald had learned from Europe's post-war imbroglio. Not without a certain historical irony, this would in effect greatly contribute to stabilising the embattled liberal, and inherently bourgeois, capitalism of the nascent Euro-Atlantic community through the reparations accords of 1924.[31]

More profoundly, MacDonald's reorientation was informed by a notion that, in July 1924, he refused to draw 'false distinctions between idealism and practicalism *[sic]*' in foreign policy. In today's terminology, this might be characterised as his rejection of a crude dichotomy between 'idealist' and 'realist' conceptions of international relations.[32] He consistently stressed the overriding importance of psychological factors in international politics. And he turned against those who, in his eyes, even after the cataclysm of 1914–18 clung to discredited traditions, defending the allegedly immutable material interests of nation-states. He observed: 'The one thing that matters is psychology… Unless we change the qualities of our minds we had better arm to the teeth.'[33]

MacDonald thus held that the principal impulse for a transformation of the relations between Europe and the United States had to spring from changes in the mentality of international politics.[34] Conversely, he also came to think that such changes could only be effected through concrete co-operation between states, not by abstract covenants.[35] MacDonald placed a high degree of confidence in the possibility of such evolution. He saw it at best as a mutually reinforcing process: mental reorientation animating new practices and the latter in turn bearing out the former. Significantly, however, as a steadfast proponent of 'open diplomacy' he was also keenly aware of a dimension his predecessor Curzon had dismissed: the need for gaining domestic backing for international initiatives. As MacDonald saw it, not only political leaders but also public opinion

had to be educated about the requirements of an integrative peace. Characteristically, he f felt that the British public had already advanced further in this direction than their counterparts in continental Europe. Here, as in other spheres, Britain could give the moral lead.[36]

In contrast to Chamberlain, as will be seen, the crisis of 1923 had not altered but rather reinforced MacDonald's outlook on the failure of old-style diplomacy. Yet it had also reinforced his espousal of a more gradualist approach to Europe's pacification. As leader of the Labour opposition, in 1923 he had consistently criticised Curzon's Ruhr policy and emphasised the need to shift, both for moral and pragmatic reasons, from a futile 'policy of neutrality' to a more active mediation between the antagonists.[37] To his mind, Poincaré's Ruhr policy amounted to an undeclared war against Germany. He argued that, if left unchecked by Britain, French actions would sow the seeds for another continental war.[38]

In MacDonald's judgement, France was not only undercutting Germany's economic base. It also threatened its fragile republican order, discrediting those who sought accommodation with the West, and benefiting nationalist forces. As he noted retrospectively in May 1924, 'the worst form of German nationalism was the result of the way that Germany had been handled by the Allies', both in 1919 and thereafter.[39] Ultimately, MacDonald saw the spectre of Germany's territorial disintegration. On 26 January 1924 he concluded that Poincaré was inciting, by 'illegitimate means', separatist movements in the Rhineland, a course which he deemed intolerable to Britain.[40] In his view, then, Weimar Germany was in danger of being permanently destabilised. With it, both England's prosperity and the stability of Europe were at stake.

MacDonald thus regarded the Germans as not without fault yet clearly the 'underdogs' in the standoff with France. He especially sympathised with those who in his eyes were the true—essentially social democratic—guardians of Weimar's embattled republic, struggling to fortify it against both internal opposition and external challenges.[41] Despite his unquestionable Germanophile tendencies, however, it should be noted that his resolve to accommodate Germany did not anticipate British policy in the 1930s. He did not seek appeasement at any price. What made his approach distinct was precisely his refusal to act on the assumption that Germany had to be 'appeased' irrespective of her internal order or external conduct. Rather, he saw a tangible British interest in fostering the Weimar Republic precisely to prevent its replacement by an anti-democratic and anti-western regime.[42]

On these premises, the new Prime Minister took not only British policy in Europe but also Britain's co-operation with her elusive US partner to new levels in 1924. He became in effect the only leading British policy maker of the 1920s who both sought a new British role in stabilising Europe and was an Atlanticist. Overall, MacDonald aimed at a more fundamental transformation of European politics than Chamberlain would ever seek. In the long run, he aspired to forge a 'society' of democratic nations including Germany and Soviet Russia based on a reformed League and underpinned by a flexible system of collective security.[43] His medium-term agenda, however, was more modestly defined. From the outset, his priority was to solve the reparations problem. Essentially, he opted to disentangle it as far as possible from Europe's overarching security question. As he impressed upon the French government in March 1924, he held that a comprehensive reparations agreement would already constitute a vital step towards enhancing European security.[44]

In the face of persistent crisis, MacDonald decided to enlist the Foreign Office's advice for developing a 'comprehensive policy'.[45] The latter responded on 5 February with a memorandum by a junior official, Sterndale-Bennett, which reflected the line of its *spiritus rector,* Eyre Crowe. It warned against France's underlying desire to go beyond Versailles and establish a permanent European predominance, which would not only endanger German integrity but also, in the long run, pose a security threat to Britain.[46] Crowe by this time believed that Poincaré only 'meant to throw dust in the eyes of the Germans' and that his 'ridiculous

arguments' concerning reparations only had one purpose: to keep the Ruhr in French hands.[47] He thus advocated a policy of firmness towards France.

Agreeing with Crowe's diagnosis, yet not his proposed remedy, MacDonald came to pursue his own two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, he sought to forge a common Anglo-American approach to the reparations question. On the other, he began to approach first France, then Germany to prepare the ground for a peace process between the continental rivals. What he deemed the only viable solution was an internationalised negotiation process under Anglo-American auspices that prevented a bilateral Franco-German agreement dictated by Poincaré. In this process, both French leaders and Weimar's 'moral élite', in his view 'sincere spirits who were truly democratic', were to participate on an equal basis.[48] Crucially, by involving both the United States and Germany, MacDonald consciously aimed at shifting postwar politics from the Versailles system to what, in his thinking, *de facto* acquired the contours of a new transatlantic concert.[49]

The British Premier soon realised that an unequivocal implementation of the 'expert plan', which the US Secretary of State Hughes had proposed in December 1922, offered the most promising means to the end he envisaged.[50] Hughes, who followed Wilson in directing US foreign policy, had advanced the United States' 'grand design' for resolving the Franco-German conflict in his New Haven speech on 29 December 1922. What he proposed was a plan intended to 'depoliticise' the highly political reparations issue. Its 'solution' was to be taken out of the political sphere and entrusted to financial 'experts of the highest authority'. These were to be gathered in two 'independent committees' to assess Germany's actual capacity to pay.[51]

Following the 'return' of the United States to Europe, these committees would finally be formed in December 1923. Their findings were published in early April 1924. Hence, British diplomacy steadfastly supported an implementation of the 'experts' report in its entirety'.[52] In co-operation with the Foreign Office, MacDonald, Snowden and London's leading financiers made it a priority of their policy to facilitate a co-ordinated strategy with the Coolidge administration and the protagonists of US high finance. In the process, however, his strategy came to be the reverse of Hughes. In short, he intended to build on the United States' 'depoliticisation' scheme precisely to reinvigorate the stagnating political process of peaceful change in Europe. As its culmination, he came to envisage a 'conference in chief' in the summer of 1924, hoping that when it was held, 'America might be represented in some shape or form.'[53]

While viewing US financial involvement in Europe's reconstruc tion as both desirable and a pragmatic necessity, MacDonald was not without wariness lest Europe might be overwhelmed by the United States' potentially overbearing capitalism. As he put it after the London conference: 'Unless… Europe…can create an enormous federation of Free Trade nations, there is not a single nation in Europe that can flourish'—particularly in the face of growing US predominance.[54] In this respect, then, MacDonald came to develop elements of a European platform. The US challenge gave European leaders all the more reason to overcome postwar divisions and to concentrate on overarching European interests.

The mediation efforts he pursued to this end centred first on France, then on Germany—and proved remarkably successful. In short, without the reassurance he gave Poincaré's successor Herriot, ensuring his participation on terms acceptable for French public opinion, no reparations conference might have been convened at all. Discussion of these terms had taken place at the Anglo-French summit at Chequers on 20–21 June 1924 and subsequent talks at the Quai d'Orsay in early July.[55]

Towards Germany, MacDonald pursued a somewhat paternalistic policy of 'guardianship'. He impressed upon the Marx government that it would be well-advised to leave it to Britain and the United States to safeguard German interests on the road to a reparations settlement.[56] And he rebuked German attempts to complicate Britain's negotiations with France through demands such as that for an early deadline for France's

evacuation of the Ruhr.[57] As the Premier confessed to Britain's Ambassador in Berlin, Lord D'Abernon, on 29 May, he often saw himself 'faced with the difficulty of saving Germany from herself'.[58]

Finally, however, when there was considerable pressure at the beginning of the conference itself to exclude Germany to secure swift agreement, it was MacDonald who made the crucial political breakthrough in London. It found expression in the participation of a German delegation, notably Chancellor Marx and Weimar's preeminent Foreign Minister Stresemann, in the conference's second and final phase in early August 1924. The British Premier ultimately convinced both France and the United States to seek a settlement which, as he emphasised to Herriot, 'would have greater moral value than the acceptance of the Treaty of Versailles'.[59]

The result of the London conference was already widely perceived in 1924 as a sea-change in the evolution of international politics—the turn towards an era of 'relative stabilisation' in Europe. No less, however, it was seen as the onset of a *Pax Americana* in Europe.[60] The US strategy of overcoming political conflicts by administering economic remedies doubtless gave the vital initial impetus to the most significant, if as yet preliminary, reparations settlement after the First World War. It was executed by the United States' most powerful informal agents, especially the banker J.P.Morgan, but supervised by Hughes.[61]

As a systemic analysis can underline, however, the impact of British diplomacy, so far underrated, was no less decisive. According to Snowden, who played a key role at the conference, the entire settlement had been brokered by the British government, which had managed to 'co-opt' the financial power of the new world to redress the instability of the old.[62] In his appraisal, Britain had fostered nothing less than a 'new deal' for Europe.[63] More precisely, however, one could say that MacDonald's main contribution was to convert the US scheme, substantially an array of financial prescriptions, into a fully fledged political agreement. For crucially, as became apparent in London's aftermath, only such an agreement could be legitimated, not just in Anglo-American financial circles, but also in France and Germany.

In the final analysis, then, the outcome of London only created a novel mode of 'competitive cooperation' between a politically indispensable British and a not merely predominant US hegemony. It initiated, not a unilateral *Pax Americana* but a *Pax Anglo-Americana* in Europe, which began to supersede the Versailles system. It was in this latter respect that the London accords were a crucial systemic watershed in postwar international politics. The 'new deal' that was to shape Euro-Atlantic relations until the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 was the first settlement after 1918 that was not dictated by the victors but attained through a multilateral accommodation process.

It was this process that made Locarno possible, and necessary For it opened up the perspective of Germany reattaining an 'equal' status within the international system in a wider and more difficult process of pacific 'bargaining' with the West. It was a bargaining on British and US terms, yet in principle not unacceptable to either Germany or France. In this sense, MacDonald's résumé of 15 August 1924 would be confirmed: 'This agreement may be regarded as the first Peace Treaty, because we sign it with a feeling that we have turned our backs on the terrible years of war and war mentality.'[64] It can be characterised as the first pillar of the 'Unfinished Transatlantic Peace Order' of the 1920s.

As all sides clearly understood from the outset, however, the London compromise had not yet eliminated the reparations conundrum. Nor had the key been found to the Franco-German problem. Yet the agreements, which were implemented in the autumn of 1924, did furnish, with the Dawes scheme, a mechanism to terminate the open conflict over the question that had fomented international crisis since 1919. The new *modus operandi* decreased Germany's obligations in accordance with her 'capacity to pay' and permitted the crucial initial transfer of US capital to Germany. As the Dawes system remained without political guarantees, it became susceptible to breaking down in crisis. This would ultimately have grave

consequences in 1929. Without it, however, not even the 'relative consolidation' of Germany and Europe in the 1920s would have been conceivable.[65]

The 'economic peace' of 1924 had doubtless recast the 'balance' of power and possibilities between Germany and France fundamentally. At the same time, however, it had created a wholly new basis f or a stable European peace order. One answer to the Franco-German question had been given: French security would no longer be based on a containment of Germany. Nor would it any longer derive from the sanction powers France had commanded since 1919, because the reparations regime was hence *de facto* controlled by the United States. Rather, Germany was to retain her political and economic unity with disputed borders in the west and east and was set to restore its inherently superior capabilities. Besides, she had interlocked her financial interests very effectively with those of her US creditor and Britain's long-standing free trade interests.[66]

As British policy makers realised far more acutely than their US counterparts, the London agreement had created new prospects, also a new urgency to wrestle with what had not as yet been resolved: Europe's underlying security problem. Hence it hinged on the absence of an adequate security framework—a framework for European economic consolidation and had a revitalised Germany's transition towards a stable republican order.[67] Europe's nascent *Pax Anglo-Americana* had by no means eliminated the structurally unsettling imbalance between France's existing power preponderance and Germany's superior demographic and resource potential. Yet it should be noted that any international system that was to sustain European peace without breaking up Germany, which had proven highly destabilising in 1923, had to forge rules addressing this imbalance and, as far as possible, reconciling it with European stability This would remain the central challenge for Britain's European policy. Unmistakably, it prompted the further reorientation of British policy under MacDonald in 1924 and, thereafter, Chamberlain's quest for a 'political equilibrium' at Locarno.

What would lead to a Eurocentric evolution of international security politics in the mid 1920s, and accord Britain a decisive role, was the fact that in this field the Coolidge Administration adhered to its anti-Wilsonian creed and reverted to a policy of aloofness. In the autumn of 1924, Hughes' designated successor, Frank Kellogg, even accentuated the maxims of the United States' 'progressive' approach. US diplomacy would continue to pursue European consolidation without any formal commitments. As Kellogg saw it, US policy makers could accomplish more by maintaining their 'freedom of action' than by becoming 'parties in the League, the sanctions, and tied up in European politics'.[68] What MacDonald came to pursue, in collaboration with Herriot, to solve the security question and reassure France in the absence of US support, was an initiative to empower the League to become at last Europe's central mechanism of collective security and peaceful change. He hoped to achieve this through the so-called Geneva Protocol and an early inclusion of Germany.[69] Yet, in short, this quest would remain futile.

Confronted with a volatile European security situation at the end of 1924, the new Foreign Secretary in Baldwin's second Cabinet, Chamberlain, opted to abandon MacDonald's pursuit of the Protocol. It was finally rejected both by the Cabinet and the influential Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) on 16 December primarily on grounds reflecting MacDonald's misgivings about France's aspirations. What finally prevailed was the view that the French version of the Protocol was irreconcilable with vital British interests because it threatened national sovereignty, obliging Britain to enforce 'auto matic sanction clauses'. No less, the British government refused to commit itself to a 'rigid' order of collective security reinforcing the status quo of 1919 in Europe as a whole.[70]

The alternative design Chamberlain advanced to overcome Franco-German insecurity, his 'noble' Locarno policy of appeasement, has been subject to remarkably divergent interpretations. Most influentially, it has been criticised as the pursuit of a flawed compromise between regional and collective security at the

expense of the entente. British policy allegedly contributed to a deceptive truce in western Europe while sanctioning borders of inferior validity in the east, thus setting the stage for the forcible revision of the Treaty of Versailles after 1933.[71] More recent evaluations, however, have praised Chamberlain's quest as the 'painful attempt' made after 1919 'to return to the best of the old [pre-1914] order' and to refashion the Anglo-French entente as its central axis.[72]

An appraisal of Chamberlain's policy under the *leitmotif* of peaceful change, however, suggests that it was neither a flawed bid to evade the realities of Europe's postwar balance of power nor a laudable return to its pre-war origins. Rather, it can be seen as a conscious attempt to draw on traditions of British foreign policy that had founded the Vienna system of 1814/15, the attempt to forge a new concert system including Germany on terms sanctioned by France. Nonetheless, it was an idiosyncratic and markedly Eurocentric endeavour to draw lessons from the shortcomings of British policy since 1918.

To understand how much the reorientation of British foreign policy in 1924/25 owed to Chamberlain's personal approach, and was not part of an overarching continuity of British appeasement, it is worth emphasising that the Baldwin government was deeply divided over Britain's desirable European role. One school of thought, represented by Cabinet members such as the Colonial Secretary, Leo Amery, and Winston Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, clearly regarded imperial consolidation as Britain's foremost concern. They proposed a 'policy of aloofness' towards Europe until a 'natural balance of forces' between France and Germany had reestablished itself.[73] Another faction, aptly characterised as the 'little Englander' school and represented by influential figures like the Cabinet Secretary, Hankey, advocated domestic retrenchment and thus equally rejected any commitments in Europe.[74] It was largely against these tides of elite opinion that Chamberlain, aided by his first Permanent Under Secretary Eyre Crowe, charted a course that would reassert the Foreign Office's centrality in British policy making —and Britain's role as a European power.[75]

How far, then, was he indeed willing to draw constructive lessons from previous bids for European pacification after the 'great war'? Chamberlain's reorientation was hardly linear. Nor did it mark a complete break with British traditions of liberal hegemony. And yet it went beyond mere contingency planning, recasting Britain's search for a European equilibrium after 1919. This process can roughly be outlined as follows: in the autumn of 1924, Chamberlain had still favoured a policy predicated on balance-of-power calculations and the imperative to preserve the treaty of 1919 as the 'only possible basis of… Europe's law'.[76] Britain's foremost priority had to be to check the threat of German revisionism. He was mainly concerned about Germany's overbearing demographic and economic power and, if less so, about her possible orientation towards a revisionist entente with Soviet Russia. Consequently, he had deemed the alliance with France, which could also include Belgium, as the best guarantee of European security.[77]

By March 1925, when he had reassessed the 'Ruhr fiasco' and fathomed the international and domestic limits of what he could achieve, his approach had not only tactically changed. It had indeed been altered to a policy of reviving a western-orientated European concert, which was to crystallise in a quadrilateral pact guaranteeing the inviolability of the Franco-German border.[78] Stresemann's Rhine Pact proposal of late January had undoubtedly provided Chamberlain with a crystallisation point. Yet his new course was not only compatible with the German initiative but in fact advanced it further.[79] He now affirmed his belief that Britain was called upon to become Europe's 'honest broker'. In his words, she had the power:

> to bring peace to Europe. To achieve this end two things are indispensable: 1. that we should remove or allay French fears; 2. that we should bring Germany back into the concert of Europe.[80]

By this time, it had become an axiom of his policy that neither was sufficient by itself yet, clearly, the latter was inconceivable without the former.[81]

This had been reinforced by his altered perception both of the causes of Europe's postwar crises and of French and German conduct after 1919. As for Germany, the 'colossus' of continental Europe with a demographic and economic potential far superior to that of France, Chamberlain thought that her 'latent' revisionism remained the gravest challenge to European peace.[82] Yet in his view it stemmed not least from having been ostracised from the 'comity of nations' since Versailles. This could sooner or later lead Germany to challenge the status quo of 1919 by force and, even if this possibility seemed remote in the mid 1920s, to the arms of Soviet Russia if the western powers did not accommodate her.[83]

For all his lingering suspicion about German trustworthiness, however, Chamberlain did not rule out that a republican Germany could adopt a Western-style f oreign policy, by which he meant British rules of diplomacy. It was thus a vital British interest to promote, by political means, a German orientation towards peaceful change, the fulfilment of her 'sensible' obligations, particularly the renunciation of forcible territorial revision in the west and east.[84] This implied not least that Germany shall agree to join the League, which he envisaged as a platform for concert diplomacy, and should act 'in a friendly and conciliatory spirit'.[85]

From Chamberlain's perspective, then, French security concerns *vis-à-vis* Germany were justified. His central motive for reassuring France and establishing a strong rapport with his French counterpart Briand, however, was the conviction that, lacking British support, French leaders would feel compelled to repeat Poincaré's provocations of her eastern neighbour. Britain would then be 'dragged along, unwilling, impotent, in the wake of France towards the new Armageddon'.[86]

If one wants to fathom what gave Chamberlain's policy a more than fleeting direction, however, one has to evaluate his concepts in a wider historical context. Worth exploring is the importance of momentous precedents in the history of British foreign policy as they were construed after 1918. In short, Chamberlain was intent on advocating in the 1920s what he saw as Britain's most successful peacemaking eff ort of the nineteenth century. When first embarking on negotiations with France and Germany in mid-February 1925, he captured what would become his cardinal maxim until 1929 when noting that 'the first thought of Castlereagh after 1815 was to restore the Concert of Europe & that the more ambitious peacemakers of Versailles, when they framed the Covenant, still left a gap which only a new Concert of Europe could fill'.[87] Chamberlain would endeavour to follow Castlereagh—'adapted to the XXth century'—in making a consistent British commitment to shaping Europe's international system.[88] In particular, he opted against intervening only to readjust a 'mechanical balance of power—and deal with the consequences of a foreseeable European descent into crisis and, possibly, another war.[89] Rather, he would seek to foster a new international equilibrium, a balance of status and possibilities between powers of highly disparate capabilities, above all Britain, France and Germany.

Put in perspective, then, Chamberlain's quest for Locarno did not derive from naïve opportunism. Rather, it was premised on the assumption that, by becoming the pivotal mediator between France and Germany, Britain was most aptly positioned to control the extent of a highly undesirable guarantee of European security in terms of military power. Not least, the Foreign Secretary reckoned that a European security agreement would hardly find support in Parliament, the Baldwin government or with British public.[90] Moreover, Britain could thus hope to restrict this limited commitment further to what was considered the strategically vital western Europe —under which at this critical juncture Germany was subsumed. By contrast, eastern central Europe, particularly Poland and Czechoslovakia, did clearly not belong to this strategic heartland. As the Foreign Secretary famously observed in February 1925: 'No British Government would ever risk the bones of a single British grenadier' for the Polish Corridor.[91]

This was Chamberlain's case for Locarno. In principle and practice he had begun to transcend the 'logic' of Versailles. Yet how far was his new policy indeed meeting the requirements of European stabilisation after 1918? As the Dawes negotiations had shown, Britain's ability to co-operate gainfully with the United States was more critical than ever before in an era when international security could no longer be divorced from transatlantic finance. Yet, in short, Chamberlain's redefinition of Britain's role noticeably failed to spur a concomitant willingness to revitalise the fledgling Anglo-American concert of 1923/24. In 1925, when US policy under Kellogg appeared to withdraw to aloofness, he saw no advantage in trying to co-opt the US's political-cum-financial power to buttress European security.[92]

After MacDonald, this was a reversal to more traditional patterns of British exceptionalism and the distancing from a foreign-policy culture considered 'arriviste', which had informed Lloyd George's as well as Conservative postwar policy towards the new financial hegemony.[93] In sum, Chamberlain saw US policy as the pursuit of narrow economic advantage—and without the political resolve and wherewithal to enhance European security. On 18 March 1925, he noted: 'With America withdrawn, or taking part only where her interests are directly concerned in the collection of money, Great Britain is the only possible influence for peace and stabilisation.'[94] Consequently, throughout the 'Locarno era' no strategy was envisaged, nor any tangible effort made, to bring the United States into the guarantee of Europe's pacification. In contrast to both Stresemann and Briand, Chamberlain clearly separated the 'heights of grand policy' from the vale of transatlantic finance.

Following his lead, the security negotiations did essentially proceed on European terms and without any formal US participation. Systemically, however, it should be noted that Chamberlain benefited considerably not only from the United States' engagement of 1924 but also from her repeated informal interventions in 1925. Precisely because the Dawes regime had created an ever-tighter web of economic interests, there was a growing readiness to support what was seen as the 'political insurance' of Europe's 'economic peace'.[95] Overall, US influence and capital expedited the Locarno process significantly.[96] In the final analysis, however, it was Chamberlain's resilience as 'peace broker' between France and Germany that proved decisive for paving the way to Locarno. He was the only one who could offer Briand the essential minimum of *sécurité* that, in October 1925, would allow the new 'triumvirate' of European politics to transform Stresemann's pact initiative into a novel peace system.[97]

What overarching relevance, then, did Locarno and Locarno politics have? Did it accord with what Chamberlain had hoped to achieve? Or did it effectively tend to undermine the security of France, Poland and Czechoslovakia? Chamberlain in effect made the most far-reaching British guarantee to European security since the First World War. At the same time, it was the most substantial commitment conceivable under the constraints imposed by Britain's need for retrenchment and his government's unwillingness to extend commitments beyond the western security glacis. Yet, as has been shown, Locarno had been underwritten on the clear premise that the pact, as it stood, would only have to be honoured politically, not, in the foreseeable future, militarily.[98] In his parliamentary defence of the treaties on 18 November 1925, Chamberlain was thus justified in claiming: 'I do not think that the obligations of this country could be more narrowly circumscribed to the vital national interests than they are in the Treaty of Locarno.'[99]

Concretely, Britain had brokered a Franco-German accommodation in which the German government renounced any further attempt to change the postwar status quo by force. Above all, to assure France, she *per saldo* recognised the existing mutual border. As any other course was considered undesirable and domestically untenable, Germany merely renounced a f forcible revision of her eastern borders, not their modification as such. Yet it did so unequivocally. Fulfilling what Britain and France had made the minimum *sine qua non,* Stresemann concluded bilateral arbitration treaties not only with France and Belgium but also with Poland and Czechoslovakia. Any regional conflict was to be resolved by peaceful means.[100] In return,

France was to acknowledge the latter's claim to reattain, gradually, the position of a European great power. In 1925, Germany was of course still far from full 'equality' in rights and status. Yet the security pact, while formally leaving the Versailles system unaltered, *de facto* superseded it significantly. It was of more than symbolical import that Locarno's—and Germany's—new status was to be interlocked with the League's premises of collective security. German League membership became a core provision. As Chamberlain had envisaged, the League would hence become the platform for Britain's concert diplomacy, Britain with France and Germany.

Ultimately, then, what had led to Locarno and was sealed by the accords was not a process either by nature or necessity limited to western Europe. More than any other development since the war, it also created the most promising, if as yet far from propitious preconditions for transforming Germany's relations with her eastern neighbours. Disputes were to be solved by peaceful means, revisions conceivable only if they could be achieved through negotiations, and harmed neither Germany's rapprochement with the West nor the emerging European peace order as a whole. Arguably, it thus also opened up the best prospects for a peaceful coexistence between Germany and her eastern neighbours and thus, ultimately, for Polish and Czechoslovak security in the inter-war period. Unquestionably, however, this is not how Locarno was universally judged at the time, certainly not in Poland. And advances towards an 'Eastern Locarno' would remain among the hardest tasks for Locarno politics after 1925.[101]

Unmistakably, as Chamberlain had realised succinctly in negotiating with his French and German counterparts, each of his French and German interlocutors had partly divergent ideas about what pacification the 'spirit of Locarno' was to inaugurate—not least as both had to struggle for domestic backing. Stresemann demanded *'Rückwirkungen'* (consequences) as a reward for Germany's initiative, above all an early French withdrawal from the occupied zones.[102] Briand construed the pact as an agreement underpinning the newly fortified status quo and thereby, essentially, the Versailles Settlement — and postponing further revisions as much as possible, particularly regarding the strategic asset of the Rhineland.[103]

Such differences, however, are neither necessarily the root cause for the disintegration of peace orders nor even an uncommon feature in international history. What is required, however, is a mechanism by which different aims can be balanced and, as far as possible, reconciled. Chamberlain for one had begun to recognise what was *de facto* one of the gravest challenges in this respect after 1918: the need to broker compromises that could be legitimated not only in international diplomacy but also *vis-à-vis* national audiences.[104] Like those of London, Locarno's protagonists represented and also had to gain legitimacy within three distinctly different parliamentary systems and domestic force fields. What was thus called for was an international system permitting a complex dynamism. Locarno had to 'pay off' quickly, yet not too quickly to give both Weimar's political elite and that of the Third Republic an interest in sustaining the FrancoGerman peace process.

With hindsight, it can be asserted that Chamberlain was not mistaken in reckoning that Stresemann wanted to foster stability, and legitimate his *Westpolitik,* by regaining political equality and economic clout in the international sphere—not military parity or preponderance.[105] What had to be stabilised in Germany was, fundamentally, a more far-reaching transition process—a process of westernisation. Yet, as has to be emphasised even if it alludes to an obvious fact, the time Weimar and the Locarno system *de facto* had to consolidate would be highly constrained. Europe enjoyed only a short 'era of relative stability' between 1925 and 1929.[106]

It can certainly be maintained that Chamberlain returned from the pact negotiations with a heightened, perhaps exaggerated belief in what summit diplomacy alone could accomplish. More importantly, however, at the very moment when he called Locarno 'the beginning, and not the end, of the noble work of

appeasement in Europe', he had in private already begun to develop a different perspective. It was the notion that Locarno itself had already marked Britain's greatest contribution to European pacification. Britain had actively founded a system in which France and Germany were hence called upon to settle their remaining disputes. The 'honest broker' would continue to lend diplomatic support. Yet he saw no need for further substantial strategic initiatives, let alone complex political-cum-financial arrangements, such as had been brokered in 1924, to advance Franco-German reconciliation further. Chamberlain would never champion the latter in the Cabinet or among the British public at large.

Viewed in this light, Chamberlain's renewed emphasis on reviving an Anglo-French entente as Europe's 'axis of stability' within the 'European concert' from 1926 onwards, which has been termed the greatest 'virtue' of his policy, rather stands out as a marked shortcoming. For it tended to allow Briand to control the 'pace' of Germany's international integration unilaterally in deference to French 'public opinion'. Thus, the Locarno process would be deprived of crucial momentum when its legitimisation required it most. This first became manifest at the time of Germany's up-hill struggles to join the League council in the spring and autumn of 1926, only the second of which finally succeeded. Ultimately, although not having a decisive impact, this reversal of British diplo macy after Locarno would hinder rather than promote an equitable Franco-German peace process and thus the establishment of a new European equilibrium in the 'Locarno era'.

What can be highlighted from a comparative perspective, then, is Britain's pivotal role in two interdependent developments underpinning Europe's 'relative stabilisation' after the First World War. The security settlement of Locarno would have remained elusive without Europe's initial *Pax Anglo-Americana* of 1924. The latter would have remained short-lived had it not been for the accords of 1925. Both could not have been achieved without Britain's 'brokerage'.

Crucially, British policy makers had come to realise that a reversion to balance-of-power politics did not offer solutions to Europe's main structural problems, above all the Franco-German question. After the catalytic Ruhr conflict, the British government developed and pursued more comprehensive policies of peaceful change. These were no longer merely seeking minor adjustments of the status quo of 1919. Rather, they began to find a qualitatively new system of international politics—a system that, at the core, enhanced European security by beginning to integrate a hitherto 'ostracised' Weimar Germany, on terms not merely tolerable but indeed advantageous for France.

This, in essence, marked the formation of the 'unfinished transatlantic peace order' of the 1920s. It often prefigured the hegemonic pacification and concerted efforts of nation-states at constructing a European order that achieved more sustainable peace after 1945. Rather than on a 'salutary' balance of power, European stability then hinged on a bipolar hegemony and nuclear deterrence between the superpowers. In the West, however, and eventually, after 1989, also extending to the East, the principal guarantee for its sustenance became an international equilibrium, forged under the auspices of more or less benign hegemonic powers. In the final analysis, this process originated in the 1920s, under the auspices of an 'old' yet still very powerful arbiter, Britain. Ever more decisive for twentiethcentury Europe, however, became the rising hegemony of the United States.

NOTES

1. P.W.Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
2. Cf. E.H.Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 208–39.
3. The central premise of this study builds on C.S.Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilisation in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade After World War I* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 3.

4. See Z.Steiner, 'The League of Nations and the Quest for Security', in M.Howard *et al.* (eds), *The Quest for Stability: Problems of West European Security, 1918–1957* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 35–70.
5. See S.Marks, *The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe, 1918–1933* (London: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 143–6; H.A.Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994). Cf. J.Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972).
6. Cf. J.Jacobson, 'Is There a New International History of the 1920s?', *American Historical Review* 88, 1 (1983), 617–45.
7. Cf. S.A.Schuker, *The End of French Predominance in Europe* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), pp. 385–93.
8. Cf. M.Gilbert, *The Roots of Appeasement* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966); P.W. Schroeder, 'Munich and the British Tradition', *Historical Journal* 19, 1 (1976), 223–43.
9. See MacDonald to Bonar Law, 29 January 1923, Public Record Office, PRO/5/33, MacDonald Papers.
10. See Austen to Ida Chamberlain, 28 November 1925, in R.Self (ed.), *The Austen Chamberlain Diary Letters: The Correspondence of Sir Austen Chamberlain with his Sisters, Hilda and Ida, 1916–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 286.
11. Schroeder, *The Transformation,* pp. vii–xiii.
12. See G.H.Snyder and P.Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 28.
13. M.Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). This approach draws on Schroeder, *The Transformation,* p. xii.
14. Cf. in general W.J.Newman, *The Balance of Power in the Interwar Years, 1919–1939* (New York: Liberty, 1968).
15. Cf. Schroeder, *The Transformation,* p. viii. Schroeder emphasises change in 'collective mentalities and outlooks'.
16. K.D.Bracher, *Die Krise Europas seit 1917* (Munich: Propyläen, 1993), p. 19. Cf. P.M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (London: Fontana, 1988), p. 366.
17. Cf. T.J.Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).
18. Cf. M.Salewski, 'Das Weimarer Revisionssyndrom', in *Außpolitik und Zeitgeschichte* 80, 2 (1980), 14–25.
19. Austen to Hilda Chamberlain, 19 July 1919, Self, *Diary Letters,* p. 116.
20. Cf. A.J.PTaylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London: Penguin, 1964), pp. 44–5.
21. Cf. J.M.Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919).
22. See A.Lentin, *Guilt at Versailles: Lloyd George and the Pre-History of Appeasement* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 138–41.
23. Cf. C.Fink, *The Genoa conference: European Diplomacy, 1921–22* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 125–8; G.H.Bennett, *British Foreign Policy During the Curzon Period, 1919–24* (London: St Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 13–31.
24. Cf. the overview in J.Jacobson, 'Strategies of French Foreign Policy after World War I', *Journal of Modern History* 55, 2 (1983), 67–81.
25. Cf. the more affirmative interpretation in J.Keiger, *Raymond Poincaré* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 294 and J.Bariéty, *Les relations franco-allemandes après la première guerre mondiale, 10 Novembre 1918–10 Janvier 1925, de l'exécution a la negotiation* (Paris: Editions Pedone, 1977), p. 369.
26. Cf. Chamberlain's criticism of Curzon, Chamberlain to Birkenhead, 17 August 1923, AC35/2/25, Austen Chamberlain Papers, University of Birmingham.
27. This is emphasised in Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall,* pp. 407–13.
28. Thus a core thesis of Schuker, *The End of French Predominance,* p. 383.
29. M.R.Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914–1965* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 31.
30. Official Bulletin of the International Labour and Socialist Conference (Berne), 7 February 1919. Cf. D.Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997), pp. 248–52.

31. Cf. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe,* pp. 482–8.
32. Minute by MacDonald, 3 July 1924, PRO/FO371/9818, MacDonald's emphasis. Cf. J. Ferris, *The Evolution of the British Strategic Foreign Policy, 1919–1926* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 44–5.
33. Minute by MacDonald, 3 July 1924, PRO/FO371/9818.
34. Public statement by MacDonald, 15 August 1924, *Proceedings of the London Reparations Conference,* II, PRO/CAB/29/103–4, pp. 7–8.
35. MacDonald made this case most forcefully in a parliamentary speech in March 1923, House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, Vol. 161, col. 326.
36. Cf. MacDonald's notes about deliberations with Leon Blum and Socialist members of the *Assemblée Nationale* in March 1923, PRO/MDP8/1, MacDonald Papers.
37. Cf. MacDonald, 'Outlook', *Socialist Review* (February 1923).
38. See MacDonald's speech in March 1923, House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, Vol. 161, col 326.
39. MacDonald to Knox (Berlin), 6 May 1924, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVI, No. 462.
40. See also MacDonald to Crewe, 26 January 1924, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVI, No. 344.
41. See MacDonald's critique of Versailles in 'Outlook', *Socialist Review* (July 1919).
42. Speech by MacDonald, 23 July 1923, House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, Vol. 167, col. 67.
43. See Ramsay MacDonald, *The Foreign Policy of the Labour Party* (London, 1923), pp. 19–24. Cf. Ferris, *The Evolution,* p. 44.
44. MacDonald to Phipps, 24 March 1924, PRO/FO371/9730.
45. See Memorandum by Sterndale-Bennett, 5 February 1924, PRO/FO/371/9813.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Crowe to Phipps, 20 March 1924, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVI, No. 394.
48. MacDonald statements in an interview with *The Times,* 16 February 1924.
49. MacDonald to Sir Richard Grahame, 29 June 1924, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVI, p. 733.
50. MacDonald to D'Abernon, 29 May 1924, PRO/30/69/94, MacDonald Papers.
51. See *Foreign Relations of the United States 1922,* II, pp. 199–202.
52. MacDonald to D'Abernon, 29 May 1924, PRO/30/69/94.
53. *Ibid.*
54. MacDonald in *The Free Trader,* December 1925, p. 265. Cf. R.W.D.Boyce, *British Capitalism at the Crossroads, 1919–1932: A Study in Politics, Economics and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 114.
55. See especially notes of the meeting between MacDonald and Herriot and others at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, 8 July 1924, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVI, No. 507.
56. MacDonald to D'Abernon, 29 May 1924, PRO/30/69/94.
57. MacDonald to Knox, 6 May 1924, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVI, No. 462.
58. *Ibid.*
59. See notes of meeting between MacDonald and Herriot and others.
60. Cf. W.Link, *Die amerikanische Stabilisierungspolitik in Deutschland, 1921–1932* (Düsseldorf: Econ, 1970), pp. 260–306.
61. Cf. K.Burk, 'The House of Morgan in Financial Diplomacy, 1920–1930', in B.J.C. McKercher, *Anglo-American Relations in the 1920s: The Struggle for Supremacy* (London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 125–57.
62. See statement by Snowden to delegates of the British Empire, 15 August 1924, PRO/CAB 29/105.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Public statement by MacDonald, 15 August 1924, *Proceedings of the London Reparations Conference,* II, pp. 7–8.

65. For a critical analysis see B.Kent, *The Spoils of War: The Politics, Economics and Diplomacy of Reparations 1918–1932* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
66. Link, *Die amerikanische Stabilisierungspolitik,* p. 587. Cf. A.Orde, *British Policy and European Reconstruction after the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 253.
67. See A.Orde, *Great Britain and International Security, 1920–1926* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), p. 37.
68. Kellogg to Coolidge, 7 October 1924, cited in Link, *Die amerikanische Stabilisierungspolitik,* p. 323.
69. See Ramsay MacDonald, 'Protocol or Pact', *International Conciliation,* No. 212, September 1925.
70. See CID Minutes, 16 December 1924, PRO/CAB16/56/4657.
71. Cf. Marks, *Illusion of Peace,* p. 63; Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy,* pp. 12–17.
72. R.Grayson, *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp. 32–115; E.Goldstein, 'The Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy for the Locarno Pact, 1924–1925', in M.Dockrill and B.J.C.McKercher (eds), *Diplomacy and World Power: Studies in British Foreign Policy, 1890–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 115–35.
73. Cf. P.Kennedy, 'The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy, 1865–1939', in P.Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy 1870–1945* (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 21.
74. See Goldstein, 'British Diplomatic Strategy', p. 135.
75. On Eyre Crowe's considerable influence see S.E.Crowe, 'Sir Eyre Crowe and the Locarno Pact', *English Historical Review* 187, 1 (1972), 49–74.
76. See Chamberlain's statement on 14 July 1924, House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, Vol. 176, cols 109–10.
77. See Chamberlain's statements during the 192nd CID meeting on 16 December 1924, PRO/CAB 24/172, CP125 (25).
78. See also the following, Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 18 March 1925, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVII, No. 255; Minute by Chamberlain, 19 March 1925, PRO/F0371/10756/C3539/3539/18.
79. Stresemann's proposals had been encouraged by Britain's Ambassador in Berlin, Lord D'Abernon. Cf. G.Johnson, '"Das Kind" Revisited: Lord D'Abernon and German Security Policy', *Contemporary European History* 9, 2 (2000), 209–24.
80. Minute by Chamberlain, 19 March 1925, PRO/FO371/10756/C3539/3539/18.
81. Cf. Orde, *International Security,* pp. 196–203.
82. This had shaped his outlook ever since 1919. See the citation in M.Dockrill and J.D. Goold, *Peace Without Promise: Britain and the Peace Conferences, 1919–1923* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 45.
83. Chamberlain in the Cabinet session on 14 April 1926, PRO/CAB23/52/15; Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 18 March 1925, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVII, No. 255.
84. On this aspect see Orde, *International Security,* p. 196.
85. See Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 18 March 1925, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVII, No. 255. Cf. R.Grayson, *Chamberlain,* pp. 125–8.
86. Minute by Chamberlain, 4 January 1925, PRO/FO371/H064/W362/2/98.
87. Minute by Chamberlain, 21 February 1925, PRO/FO371/11064/W1252/9/98.
88. Cf. Austen Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 28 November 1925, *Diary Letters,* p. 285.
89. See Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 28 November 1925, *Diary Letters,* p. 285.
90. Cf. Chamberlain to Ivy Chamberlain, 10 March 1925, AC6/1/602, Austen Chamberlain Papers.
91. Chamberlain to Marquess of Crewe, 16 February 1925, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVII, No. 200.
92. See Chamberlain to Howard, 18 March 1925, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVII, No. 256.
93. Cf. M.J.Hogan, *Informal Entente: The Private Structure of Co-operation in Anglo-American Economic Diplomacy, 1918–1928* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997), pp. 212–27; Burk, 'The House of Morgan', pp. 126–7.

94. Chamberlain to Howard, 18 March 1925, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVII, No. 256.
95. See Kellogg's speech before the Council of Foreign Relations, New York, 14 December 1925, Kellogg Papers, St Paul, roll 17. Cf. Link, *Stabilisierungspolitik,* p. 344.
96. Cf. Schuker, *The End,* p. 372.
97. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 28 November 1925, *Diary Letters,* p. 286.
98. This assumption was shared by the General Staff. Cf. M.Howard, *The Continental Commitment* (London: Temple Smith, 1972), pp. 72–95.
99. House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, Vol. 188, col. 429.
100. Cf. P.Krüger, *Die Außenpolitik der Republik von Weimar* (Darmstadt: WBG, 1985), p. 301.
101. Cf. P.S.Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919–1925* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1961), p. 27.
102. Cf. Krüger, *Außenpolitik,* pp. 295–301.
103. Cf. E.D.Keeton, *Briand's Locarno Policy* (New York: Garland, 1987).
104. See Austen to Hilda Chamberlain, 28 November 1925, *Diary Letters,* pp. 285–6.
105. J.R.C.Wright, 'Stresemann and Locarno', *Contemporary European History* 4, 2 (1995), 109–31.
106. Chamberlain to the King, 9 February 1925, AC52/378, Austen Chamberlain Papers.

3
Austen Chamberlain and the Negotiation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928

GAYNOR JOHNSON

Austen Chamberlain's period as Foreign Secretary has attracted considerable interest in recent years. In particular, fresh life has been breathed into the debate about Britain's role in the conclusion of the Treaty of Locarno in 1925 and has focused especially on Chamberlain's attitude towards the German government.[1] This forms part of the vast literature on the peace settlements at the end of the First World War and their connection with the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. In comparison, there are few detailed evaluations of Chamberlain's career as Foreign Secretary after the admission of Germany to the League of Nations in September 1926.[2] Yet there is a strong case for increasing our understanding of the period between 1925 and 1929 because this was the time when those who were most committed to the Treaty of Locarno continued to be diplomatically active. Brian McKercher has done much to give the foreign policy of the second Baldwin government general context, but a detailed analysis of the diplomatic episodes that were to dominate Chamberlain's thinking between 1926 and 1929 has yet to be written. Richard Grayson claims to have undertaken this task. He argues that throughout his period as Foreign Secretary, Chamberlain had a consistently pro-German attitude towards European diplomacy. However, his treatment is uneven and what emerges is a detailed discourse on the origins of the Treaty of Locarno followed by a more general assessment of events post 1925. This discussion aims to flesh out and challenge some of the points made by McKercher and Grayson by examining Chamberlain's attitude to one of the most important diplomatic agreements of the 1920s, the Kellogg-Briand pact. Signed by the US Secretary of State, Frank B.Kellogg, and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Aristide Briand, in August 1928, the pact sought to renounce war as an instrument of national policy. Both men felt it incumbent on the French and US governments to set an example to the world by raising the profile of the international debate about disarmament.[3] Kellogg and Briand also believed that it was important to have British support for the pact from the outset because of Britain's status as an imperial power, Permanent Member of the League Council and as one of the architects of the Treaty of Locarno. Designed to supplement the Locarno pact, which was seen by many as the real peace settlement at the end of the First World War, the Kellogg-Briand pact represented an extension of the work of the League and was one of the high watermarks of European diplomacy in the 1920s.[4]

McKercher suggests that Chamberlain's involvement in the negotiation of the Kellogg-Briand pact provides an example of a faltering rather than confident approach to diplomacy. Chamberlain is consigned to a peripheral role but the reason for this is not fully explained.[5] Grayson's discussion of the subject is very brief. In defending Chamberlain's handling of European diplomacy, he devotes one paragraph to a discussion of the pact. Such dismissive treatment suggests that he too found little to praise in Chamberlain's actions. At the root of McKercher's argument is scepticism about Chamberlain's ability to understand the dynamics of US foreign policy. The Foreign Secretary had appeared ill-prepared at the Three Power Naval Conference in the summer of 1927, which had extended the provisions made at the Washington Naval Conference of 1921–22.[6] Why then should Chamberlain have any greater understanding of the diplomacy

behind a pact to outlaw war? David Dutton argues that Chamberlain was not enthusiastic about becoming involved in the negotiations of the Kellogg-Briand pact and preferred to adopt a cautious approach.[7] This is not an entirely fair assessment. Such observations make little reference to the nature of the relationship between the Locarno powers after 1925 and the bearing that the Locarno powers' relationship with the United States had on the negotiations.[8] These issues were very close to Chamberlain's heart.[9] After 1925, and until his death in 1937, many of his statements about European diplomacy were expressed in terms of their relationship to the Locarno Treaties. At the same time, there were occasions when Chamberlain regarded the diplomatic ties that bound Britain to the Treaty of Locarno a mixed blessing. Furthermore, during the negotiations, he found himself agreeing with people with whom he had little natural affinity and doubting the judgement of his closest ally, Briand. For those who search for continuity in Chamberlain's approach to foreign policy, such an episode is clearly not helpful. But it reveals much about how Chamberlain thought that Locarno diplomacy should operate and the difficulties that subscribers to it experienced long before the fascist dictators posed a threat to international peace. The negotiations also offer an insight into how Chamberlain was forced to reconcile Britain's interests as an imperial power with her commitments under the League Covenant, Locarno and the proposed pact. They offer a broader insight into Chamberlain's approach to foreign affairs than that revealed by the Locarno negotiations.

Since the publication of Jon Jacobson's important study of Locarno diplomacy, it has been widely accepted that, despite the optimism of 1925, no other significant agreement of that nature was forthcoming.[10] Securing the admission of Germany to the League was fraught with difficulty.[11] During these negotiations, Chamberlain frequently boasted about his bond with Briand and the need for a close working relationship between Britain and France to help secure European peace.[12] Discussions between the Locarno powers and the United States in 1926 and 1927 centred on the reduction of armed forces on land and sea. Beyond this, it was not clear whether a further pact was necessary to confirm a commitment to outlawing war as a means of resolving diplomatic disputes. Indeed, at different times, Chamberlain, Briand and the German government were to claim that gilding the Locarno lily could prove counterproductive. They believed that all challenges to the Treaty of Locarno were potentially dangerous and designed to undermine the text and spirit of the agreement. At the same time, relations between the Allies and the United States remained strained after the tense debate about the repayment of war debts. US financial might was such that one of Chamberlain's Cabinet colleagues, Lord Robert Cecil, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and a member of the British delegation to the League, suggested that means should be found to encourage the United States to play a role in maintaining world peace.[13] But his views, and those of other senior Conservatives, were influenced by doubts about the motives behind US policy towards Europe. It had not escaped their notice that while the Dawes Plan provided loans to enable Germany to pay reparations, *ipso facto,* it offered a means of influencing the entire course of European reconstruction after the war. It was not clear whether the Kellogg proposal was simply a means of wresting the diplomatic initiative on European security policy away from the Locarno powers. Unlike during the early stages of the security negotiations in 1924 and 1925, Chamberlain therefore found himself in agreement with his Cabinet colleagues about the need to make a positive but guarded response to the pact proposal.[14] Although US involvement in European diplomacy was not welcomed by all, French politicians thought that working with the Americans rather than against them could prove advantageous, especially if France's borders came under attack again. It was therefore Briand who was more inclined than Chamberlain to overlook US refusal to sign the Treaty of Versailles and to join the League. Different priorities thus made agreement between the British and French about the desirability of US involvement in matters relating to security unlikely.

It was for these reasons that Briand announced on 6 April 1927— the tenth anniversary of US entry into the First World War—that the French government was prepared to sign an agreement with the United States

outlawing war.[15] Initially, the proposal was not well received in Washington. President Coolidge suspected that it was a ploy to bolster French prestige in international diplomacy. Nevertheless, he believed that the proposal offered too many possibilities to the United States for it to be ignored.[16] This included an opportunity to limit the military effectiveness of the system of alliances built up by France in Europe that was designed to contain German aggression. It was not in the commercial or diplomatic interests of the United States for either France or Germany to dominate continental affairs. This point was not lost on a growing number of US Senators from both political parties. Contemporary accounts claim that the idea to support Briand's suggestion came initially from Senator William Borah, who, from the outset, favoured a pact that included Britain, Germany and Italy. However, Borah's biographer claims that Kellogg stole his idea and claimed it as his own.[17] It was from this inauspicious start that the first draft text of the Kellogg-Briand pact was to emerge.

Despite this, there was every reason to believe that France and the United States would work together in partnership to bring the plan to fruition. But the negotiations were to reveal that the end result accommodated Kellogg's view of the world rather more than that of Briand's. While Briand saw every advantage to concluding an agreement to outlaw war, it was Chamberlain who was to have a clearer perception of how the pact would affect the conduct of European diplomacy.[18] Kellogg announced that the US government would sign an agreement providing it was multilateral rather than bilateral.[19] Briand, however, believed that other nations should only sign the pact after the French and US governments had ratified it. Furthermore, the pact should only apply to wars of aggression. Kellogg rejected these ideas and recommended that the text be communicated to the British, German, Italian and Japanese governments for consideration. It would not, of course, have been reason able for the French government to discuss every agreement it proposed to sign with a foreign power. However, Briand's reluctance to include Britain from the outset of the negotiations reveals much about Anglo-French relations in the post-Locarno era, especially regarding an issue so intimately bound to the question of security. Chamberlain immediately realised that British interests needed to be safeguarded, noting that the proposed pact could give France a 'free hand to pursue in Europe policies appearing aggressive in American eyes'.[20] The only way of preventing that was for the British government to ensure that the balance of power remained with all of the Locarno powers, not just France.

Chamberlain regarded a British role in the conclusion of the Kellogg-Briand pact as being of central importance. Britain had been one of the driving forces behind the Treaty of Locarno. A pact to outlaw war could, potentially, be a logical addition to it. Furthermore, the signing of the Locarno pact had been the high point of Chamberlain's career so far and he was anxious to build on his reputation as a peacemaker. Just as he had acted in the role of 'honest broker' between France and Germany during the Locarno negotiations, Chamberlain intended to create 'a bond of union between the United States and Europe' in 1928.[21] Indeed he later claimed that it was Britain rather than France who first saw the merit in an agreement to outlaw war.[22] After all, if successful, such a measure would enable the British government to save money on defence obligations around the world. There was almost a philosophical dimension to Chamberlain's thinking about eternal peace in the spring of 1928 that was also detectable in his statements on the subject in 1925. He was aware from the outset that the Kellogg-Briand pact had a widerranging importance than the Locarno Treaty, applying as it would to global affairs between nations rather than just to European diplomacy. Nevertheless, the pact must be seen to augment rather than to eclipse the Locarno Treaty.[23] Although he held Chamberlain's views in high regard, Briand took a more pragmatic approach to security policy His statements, like those of so many of his compatriots, were born out of the knowledge that France had been invaded by German forces twice within living memory His first priority was to ensure that recent history did not repeat itself. Within the history of Anglo-French relations since 1918, these different points

of view were not new. Parallels can be seen in the tense exchanges between Lord Curzon, the then British Foreign Secretary, and Raymond Poincaré, the French Prime Minister, earlier in the 1920s.[24] But what is noticeable is that these petty jealousies continued to dominate after the Treaty of Locarno had supposedly identified areas of common ground between the powers that signed the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

Dutton claims that Chamberlain responded cautiously to the Kellogg-Briand initiative because his confidence had been shaken at the Geneva disarmament conference of 1927.[25] While Chamberlain's response was undoubtedly guarded, it was similar to his reaction to the German security note of January 1925, which arrived when his confidence was much higher. Both proposals arrived out of the blue. But once Chamberlain had absorbed their significance, he was anxious to press forward as soon as possible. Just as in 1925, he wondered whether the proposal for a pact to outlaw war was an attempt to drive a wedge between the British and French governments to gain diplomatic advantage.[26] He was determined that no power should ever be in a position to set 'France and England at loggerheads…destroying the basis of our common policy in Europe'. Furthermore, he was keen to 'employ in this case the same machinery which had led us to success in the Locarno negotiations'.[27] In January 1925, the Germans had sent their ideas for comment to Britain, while insisting that they should not be discussed with the French. Three years later, Chamberlain wondered why the Americans had approached France and not Britain about a 'peace pact'. An additional twist was provided by Briand's insistence that France and the United States should ratify the pact before other countries signed it. Chamberlain's ponderous approach to the negotiation of the Kellogg-Briand pact was thus born out of concerns that the French were happy to take unilateral action on a matter close to the rationale behind the Treaty of Locarno. At the same time, he wanted time to work out under what terms Britain would sign the pact, especially if relations with France were now less intimate. This process was to lead him to move towards defining areas of special influence for Britain and the United States in world affairs. His views on diplomacy, rooted in the nineteenth-century concept of the balance of power, led him to see the Kellogg-Briand pact as an agreement with a similar rationale to the *Entente Cordiale* arrangement with France of 1904.

There are other ways in which it is misleading to regard Chamberlain's response to the Kellogg-Briand proposal as evidence of indecisiveness. As he had done with the German security note in 1925, he wished to establish the precise nature of the Kellogg-Briand proposal before acting.[28] In particular, he wanted to know why Kellogg had chosen that moment to resurrect it.[29] Esme Howard, the British Ambassador in Washington, had sent Chamberlain numerous dispatches suggesting that Kellogg was engaged in a publicity stunt to appeal to a US electorate fearful that the United States might have to bankroll another world war in the near future.[30] If Howard was right, Chamberlain would have been unwise to have committed the British government to the terms of the agreement.[31] Furthermore, the past ten years had taught the European powers that the US government did not always keep its promises. Chamberlain also wondered if Kellogg understood the etiquette of conducting diplomacy, referring to the Secretary of State's method of flinging 'a new proposal at our head without one word of preliminary discussion', even if it has been done 'in good faith as complete as his ignorance!'[32] Chamberlain thought that if the pact was not of an 'all in nature', Britain and all other signatory powers might be 'faced with the old difficulty that the rights of war and peace reside in Congress'.[33] He recommended that Kellogg be taught some lessons in recent history, suggesting he read the passage from Viscount Grey of Falloden's memoirs about the effect the Hague and London conventions had had on efforts to maintain peace before the First World War.[34]

Chamberlain's attitude towards Kellogg was much the same as he had adopted towards the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gustav Stresemann, during the Locarno conference. Carlton and Self suggest that at the heart of Chamberlain's relationship with Kellogg was a clash of personalities—that the outspoken American was irritated by the formal Englishman.[35] But this provides only a superficial explanation for the

tensions between them. Chamberlain was concerned that Kellogg did not understand the nature of the relationship between Britain and France.[36] He was disconcerted by Kellogg's frequent assertion that the United States would not conclude a bilateral agreement because it would give France the opportunity 'to take what action she liked in Europe and ensure the neutrality towards herself of the United States Government'.[37] It seemed preposterous to Chamberlain that anyone would think that the pact would have anything other than a global application. There was a case to be made for the consideration of areas of special interest, but not those of an 'arbitrary and imprecise nature'. Kellogg was becoming too bogged down with the wording of the pact and was paying insufficient attention to the 'fluid' nature of diplomacy; that is, the spirit of the understanding reached, which could never be precisely expressed in words, was as important as the actual text of the agreement. The atmosphere created by the Treaty of Locarno had created much to be lived up to.[38] Kellogg, on the other hand, thought that Chamberlain was too obsessed with establishing a connection between the pact to renounce war and the Locarno Treaty.[39] But he nevertheless recognised that it was in the US government's interest to cultivate Chamberlain as a mediator between himself and Briand.[40]

Despite these concerns, Chamberlain realised that there were advantages to bringing about a closer relationship between France and the United States. Here it is possible to reach the limit of Chamberlain's francophilia. He saw Kellogg's relationship with Briand as a means of reopening the debate about sensitive issues relating to naval disarmament first broached at the Washington Naval Conference. In particular, Britain, the United States, Italy and Japan had undertaken to abolish submarine warfare but the French had not. This was an important security issue for the British government as it was believed that, if the French failed to comply, it could undermine the co-operation between states that the 'spirit of Locarno' was supposed to inspire. On the question of French involvement in a pact to outlaw war, theref fore, the French should put their own house in order before approaching other nations. Nevertheless, anxious to avoid a diplomatic confrontation with Briand, Chamberlain placed the onus on Kellogg to persuade the French to toe the line, observing that, 'Mr Kellogg will readily appreciate that it is for the United States Government, who convened the Washington Conference, to take such action as may be possible to secure progress in the matter of this treaty.'[41]

Brian McKercher has asserted that it was Howard rather than Chamberlain who ensured that the US government received an accurate assessment of the British position regarding signature of the pact.[42] While Howard was an influential figure, it is important not to draw the conclusion that there were major differences of opinion with Chamberlain. In particular, they both shared a desire not to agree to a strategy that would compromise British commitments under the Treaty of Locarno. In January 1928, Robert Olds, the US Under-Secretary of State, handed a note to Howard outlining the next phase of Kellogg's thinking. Howard thought it contained little that was new. What was more, even if the difficulties associated with the original proposal were resolved, it was unlikely that states would be prepared to renounce war completely or be prepared to make a 'mental reservation in favour of defensive war'. Much better, Howard believed, to sign a multilateral covenant containing a clause relating to the arbitration of justiciable disputes, and for other matters to be put before the conciliation commission set up by the Anglo-American Root-Bryce Arbitration Treaty of 1908.[43] In early March, Howard recommended that the British government should make Kellogg's proposals 'harmonize with our previous commitments' made at Locarno, and use them as a basis for increasing British influence in the United States. At the same time, Kellogg needed to realise that British reservations could not simply be swept aside. Howard and Chamberlain were agreed that Kellogg's 'mentality, like that of most Americans in this respect, leads him to believe that once all American difficulties have been overcome, all difficulties have been overcome'.[44]

The point about US diplomatic highhandedness was pursued by Chamberlain in his conversations with the US Ambassador to London, Alanson Houghton, in the spring of 1928. Chamberlain expressed regret that hitherto there had been little consultation with Britain regarding the terms of the pact. He thought it unreasonable that, as Foreign Secretary of one of the world's foremost imperial powers and a signatory to the Treaty of Locarno, he should only hear indirectly about the US proposals sent to France. Houghton reminded him that the suggestion for the pact had originally come from Briand. But again, Chamberlain found it difficult to believe that Briand was behind such discourteous treatment of Britain. He was sure that the proposal was 'something in the nature of a brain wave which had occurred to M.Briand when making a statement intended to improve Franco-American relations and that probably M.Briand himself had no precise ideas when he made his famous declaration'. As it was, Briand was right to hesitate about whether the agreement should be multilateral because potentially it could undermine France's obligations under the Covenant of the League.[45] In actuality, the proposed agreement posed exactly the same difficulties as Chamberlain's suggestion to outlaw war between Germany and Poland at Locarno.[46] It had been clear then that British and French policy was at one on this.[47] Unofficially, however, Houghton advised Chamberlain against pursuing this line of argument too vigorously because it would hinder the progress of the pact negotiations if the British and French appeared to be too cliquish in their attitude towards each other.

Chamberlain's attitude towards the Kellogg-Briand proposal was similar to that adopted by his subordinates at the Foreign Office. Although initially convinced that the Locarno Treaty provided an adequate insurance against the outbreak of war, by April 1928, Sir Cecil Hurst, senior legal adviser at the Foreign Office, thought that more ought to be done to 'maintain cordial relations between Great Britain, France and Germany than anything else'. Consequently any statements by the British government that implied acceptance of the terms of the pact to outlaw war and an abandonment of France would be harmful to British interests.[48] The Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir William Tyrrell, a noted Francophile and one of Chamberlain's closest confidants during the Locarno negotiations, identified other problems. There could be a conflict of interests between the pact on the one hand and the League Covenant and the Treaty of Locarno on the other, especially if the pact was multilateral.[49] Hurst suggested that a debate should take place about the relationship of the pact to Britain's other diplomatic commitments in Europe and to the League.[50] There was also the possibility that the pact might make it more likely that Britain would be compelled to invoke Article 16 of the League Covenant, which stated that all nations were obliged to close their land frontiers to an aggressor. He shared Chamberlain's concern that the pact might affect Britain's ability to defend the Empire. Furthermore, it was unclear how the Kellogg-Briand proposal could be reconciled with the Monroe Doctrine of the US government.[51]

Even Howard, who was instrumental in improving Britain's relations with the United States after the tensions over the repayment of war debts, continued to advise Chamberlain to tread carefully.[52] His advice was direct and to the point. While most nations would subscribe to the idea of banishing war, to suggest concluding a pact to that effect was 'really nothing but sheer hypocrisy and humbug because no Government can obviously consent to renounce the right to defend itself if attacked'.[53] This was, of course, what was to scupper not only the Kellogg-Briand pact but the entire international disarmament movement of the inter-war period.

Consideration of these fundamental questions about war and the future of international security persuaded Chamberlain to extend the debate to include some of the other Locarno powers. All that he heard confirmed his suspicions and persuaded him that it was vital to maintain a cautious approach to the negotiations. The advice that he received from Berlin suggested that the entire concept of the Kellogg-Briand pact was flawed. The most scathing observations were made by von Schubert, the able and influential *Staatssekretär* at the *Auswärtiges Amt,* who had been the architect of so much of Germany's foreign policy in the mid 1920s. He

thought that the principal problem with the Kellogg-Briand pact was that the negotiations had been bound up in circular reasoning. As von Schubert put it: 'if the French government could renounce war in a Treaty with America, they ought logically to be able to do so in a multilateral treaty; and it was reductio ad absurdum to plead the Pact, which was designed to prevent war, as an obstacle to the renunciation of war'.[54]

On 26 March, the French government issued its response to Kellogg's second draft. Kellogg was happy with it. The only barrier to signature was Briand's insistence that the pact should not come into force until all nations had signed it. In this eventuality, the implementation of the pact could be delayed for years.[55] Chamberlain was anxious that the British response was more forthright and assertive. He wrote: 'our position in the world requires us, even in the altered circumstances in which modern warfare and modern commerce are conducted, to maintain as hithertofore belligerent rights at as high a level as possible'.[56] These were hardly the words of a man wholly committed to the rationale behind the Kellogg-Briand proposal. But Chamberlain's correspondence with Howard at this time suggests that he was considering other strategies to pursue in conjunction with the pact. In particular, he was warming to the idea of an Anglo-American naval convention. His reaction to the inclusion of Germany in the early negotiations of the Treaty of Locarno was to try to safeguard British interests through a number of bilateral rather than multilateral agreements.[57] This gave scope for 'fine tuning' foreign policy to ensure that Britain was not dragged into conflicts which had little bearing on British interests. Chamberlain was hoping to achieve such scope for action in the pact to outlaw war. In particular, there would be circumstances when, for example, a signatory power committed an act of aggression against a non-signatory power and the League would be free to invoke Article 16 against the aggressor. If such terms for signing the pact could be agreed, there was little point in complying with Briand's wish that the pact would only come into force when all the powers of the world had signed it. Thus amended, Britain could sign the pact without the fear of conflicting interests.[58]

A month later, the French government indicated that it intended to adopt a similar approach to Chamberlain toward signature of the pact. A note, issued through the French embassy in London, set out proposals for separate talks with each of the Locarno powers to discuss the pact without the presence of the Americans.[59] At the same time, Hurst's scepticism about the motives behind Kellogg's actions had also increased. He now felt that it was 'illogical and difficult to defend', and could undermine the Locarno Treaties.[60] Howard believed that there were two issues that Chamberlain ought to consider: in what spirit was the US government likely to enter the negotiations, and when would be the best time f or the British government to discuss the pact with the Americans?[61] Mindful of such advice, Chamberlain asked Houghton to clarify the precise terms that the Americans were proposing. At the same time, Chamberlain was unconvinced that the French request for additional consultation with the Locarno powers was reasonable or practicable. It was therefore necessary for him to 'act as a mediator' between the French and US governments. His purpose was 'thus by degrees [to] gain for himself and Great Britain full credit for whatever treaty may result'.[62] If Britain was to sign the pact, Chamberlain believed that he should make some input into its text. Once again he rehearsed his questions about how the pact would apply to wars of self-defence and the extent to which it was consistent with the Monroe Doctrine. At the same time, he did not wish to appear unnecessarily obstructive. He thought that it would be a 'misfortune to the world that such initiative should fail' and that, ultimately, the British government would be able to agree to terms under which to sign the pact.[63]

Chamberlain's attitude towards the German government remained ambivalent during the spring of 1928, although there is evidence to suggest that he was more ready to encourage co-operation with the British than he had been during the Locarno negotiations. Chamberlain encouraged a brisk, businesslike relationship with the Germans during the negotiation of the Kellogg-Briand pact. When it appeared that there had been a misunderstanding about the meaning of Article 1, he asked Gaus, legal adviser to the German Ministry for

Foreign Affairs, to come to London to clarify the situation with Hurst.[64] Later in the negotiations, in a conversation with Houghton about the general relationship between the pact and the Treaty of Locarno, Chamberlain thought it essential that Germany 'be brought back into the comity of nations and given her proper place in the world and treated in such a way'. The principal obstacle remained, as it had done since the war, French desires to ensure security from German attack.[65] To an extent, therefore, Grayson misses an opportunity to extend his thesis about Chamberlain's attitude towards Germany beyond 1925. At the same time, Chamberlain's faith in the motives behind German security policy was far from absolute. When he asked for clarification about what action would be taken by the United States if Germany or the Soviet Union broke the terms of the pact after Britain had signed it, the 'spirit of Locarno' was not evident in his comments. 'It may be one thing to sign such a treaty with a Government and people in whose loyalty you have perfect faith', he noted, 'but it is quite a different thing to involve us in signature of a multilateral treaty with Powers who have not our standard and whose past does not encourage us to place unlimited faith in their loyalty to a "scrap of paper".'[66] Thus Chamberlain was taking a prudent course of action.[67] Furthermore, his comments were similar to those he made in November 1924, when he became Foreign Secretary.[68] It is therefore questionable how much the 'Locarno experience' had changed his views about international diplomacy

At the beginning of May, Chamberlain learnt that Mussolini had agreed to Briand's suggestion about consultation between the Locarno powers in the absence of the Americans.[69] Chamberlain now thought that there was little point in a meeting between Gaus and Hurst. Furthermore, Stresemann was correct in wishing to avoid 'anything which would wear the appearance of a European cabal against the United States'.[70] But again the contrast between Chamberlain's attitude towards France and Germany was apparent. On the same day, Tyrrell reported 'how warmly' the Foreign Secretary had received the terms of the French note of 26 March.[71] The note also set up a meeting between Hurst and his French oppo site number, Fromageot, to sort out remaining differences relating to the text of the pact. Chamberlain was anxious that this process should be completed within one month so that an answer could be given to Kellogg. In order to make the proceedings more transparent, Chamberlain recommended that a US jurist should be present at the meeting and that a meeting should be arranged of European Foreign Ministers to discuss its terms.[72]

Chamberlain's forthright approach disconcerted the government in Washington. Kellogg was at a loss to understand the Foreign Secretary's thought processes but was prepared to come to Paris to sign the agreement if that was what Briand preferred. Chamberlain regretted that there was now little time for a conference of jurists to meet, as such a course of action had been used to great success prior to the Locarno conference.[73] But it is clear that his thoughts were influenced by the impact of the German response to the proposal for a meeting of the Locarno powers. Kellogg wondered why, if the Germans had been able to reply quickly to the US proposal, 'could not the other Powers do the same?'[74] Nevertheless, Chamberlain hoped that his statement in the House of Commons on 27 April had made the commitment of the British government to the pact clear.[75] As far as he was concerned, 'The Covenant and the Treaty of Locarno were our principal international obligations, and if, as Kellogg had explained, there was nothing inconsistent with them in the signature of this proposed treaty, but that on the contrary the signature of that treaty would reinforce them, that covered our principal preoccupation, which was that, in endeavouring to effect an additional guarantee of the peace of the world, we should not destroy or impair the measure of security which we had already achieved in Europe.'[76] These were much the same words that Stresemann had used.

Yet there was not unanimity among the Locarno powers. Briand objected to the abandonment of the meeting of experts, believing that it would be difficult without it to arrive at a text on which all could agree. Chamberlain agreed but thought that dogged insistence on this matter could do the negotiation of the pact more harm than good.[77] By May, Chamberlain was describing the proposed pact as 'an important additional

guarantee for the maintenance of world peace'.[78] This statement formed the substance of the note of 19 May giving the official response of the British government. If a power refused to sign the pact, this was consistent with rejecting the Treaty of Locarno.[79] Other diplomatic considerations were of secondary importance. But Chamberlain's sympathy with Briand was not absolute. When Poland and Czechoslovakia expressed concerns about the impact of the pact on their relations with France, Chamberlain believed that it was not his 'business to defend or explain the French position'. He thought it would be disastrous if such concerns reached Kellogg's ears and advised Howard to proceed with caution.[80]

Chamberlain also had other concerns. The text of the British reply had accorded the same status to British claims to control the Suez Canal as US claims to control the Panama Canal. The naming of such specially designated areas, Houghton argued, could be made as defensive strategies to preserve British and US spheres of influence. If they were described in any other way, other signatory powers might ask for similar interests to be taken into consideration. In that event, the pact would be unworkable. Chamberlain objected to the phrase 'sphere of influence', but nevertheless asked that those countries signing the pact would undertake not to 'establish themselves upon our route to India'.[81] As indicated earlier, much has been made of the tension between Chamberlain and Kellogg.[82] However, the response of the Secretary of State to Chamberlain's concerns on this subject was at best eccentric.[83] Kellogg thought the safest course of action would be to remove all mention of such areas of special interest from the text.[84] In the event of a power taking a step that led to a violation of the Monroe Doctrine, the United States would take steps that would 'constitute something short of war'.[85] The British government would likewise be able to take similar steps to safeguard the Suez Canal. However, these were vague notions—too vague for the pact to have been workable. What constituted an act 'just short of war'? Such refinements required the Locarno powers and the United States to enter into a debate about what constituted a warlike act. This was not a debate that they were willing to engage in fully. Chamberlain was bewildered by Kellogg's attitude and ordered an informal investigation to see whether other powers intended to request the inclusion of areas of special interest before signing the pact. Dromer, the British *Charge d'Affaires* in Tokyo, for example, was asked whether the Japanese government wanted Manchuria be given similar status to the Suez region.[86] No, came the ironic reply.[87] What then, Chamberlain thought, was the obstacle to acceptance of the British reply to the draft Kellogg-Briand pact?

Kellogg also thought that signature of the pact could be imminent.[88] Nevertheless, matters were thrown into a state of flux once again in June 1928. The French government now wished to have its reservations about the maintenance of existing treaties and the right of signatory powers to take action against each other incorporated into a preamble.[89] The British government raised no objection.[90] Kellogg, however, believed that if he acceded to this request other nations would insist on similar considerations being taken into account.[91] As an alternative, he suggested that all the powers that had signed the Treaty of Locarno should be the first signatories of the new pact.[92] However, Chamberlain did not see how Kellogg's suggestion would be palatable to the French and he devoted much of June 1928 to considering how the preamble could be worded. He discussed it with Cecil and other members of the British delegation to the League of Nations. His preferred wording was 'any signatory Power which shall hereafter seek to promote its national interests by resort to war, in disregard either of the provisions of this treaty or of its obligations under any other treaty or international agreement which is binding upon it, should be denied'. He also tried to take advantage of the impasse between the United States and France to see if further assurances about the sanctity of 'our Monroe Doctrine' regarding the security of the Suez Canal were required.[93] His thoughts crystallised into a lengthy memorandum written on 29 June, but he concluded that it was not necessary to go beyond the stated British position.[94]

Discussions with the French at this time, however, sowed new doubts in Chamberlain's mind. Concerns had been expressed in Paris about the compatibility of the pact with France's existing treaty obligations. Briand believed that it would be 'impossible to allow the proposed pact to appear as a kind of innovation which might have the effect of weakening the restrictive character of certain provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations or of the Locarno Agreements'. He was also unconvinced that Kellogg would be willing to make many concessions on this point. Instead, he wanted to explore the possibility of working with the British government to draft two parallel protocols to be signed at the same time as the Kellogg-Briand pact. In the first, the Locarno powers and other League members would make it clear that, in adhering to the new pact, they had no intention of prejudicing the Treaty of Locarno or the League Covenant. The second would contain an undertaking to register the pact with the League. Chamberlain was unsure whether such a course of action was possible under international law.[95] Hurst advised him not to adopt the French suggestion, believing it to be fraught with complications that would alienate the Americans.[96] Furthermore, Kellogg had accommodated these French concerns in earlier drafts of the pact and so thought that any further discussion of them was unnecessary.

Nevertheless, the German government pressed for a meeting of jurists to discuss whether the terms of the pact could be reconciled with Article 16. In early July, Gaus, Fromageot and Hurst met in Berlin.[97] Chamberlain agreed that the situation needed clarification. It was, he believed, unclear whether the 'Covenant imposes no affirmative primary obligation to go to war; nor can we regard it as a satisfactory answer to suggest that the difficulty would not arise if every Member of the League were to become a party to the new treaty, since there can be no assurance that this will be the case, at any rate in the immediate future'.[98] Such statements were interpreted in Washington as indicating waning British enthusiasm for the pact. Consequently, Chamberlain found himself under attack from the State Department for delaying the dispatch of the final British reply because of a 'desire to build a bridge for the French'. Advice from Houghton persuaded Chamberlain to tone down his francophilia.[99] In a statement implying an even-handed British approach to Germany as well as to France, Chamberlain observed that 'it is true that we share certain obligations and rights under the Covenant of the League and Treaty of Locarno with France as also indeed with Germany but policy of His Majesty's Government will be guided entirely by consideration for British and Imperial interests and obligations'. Any suggestion that British foreign policy was dominated by other factors such as his own personal sympathies was 'a complete and…dangerous misconception'.[100] Conversations with Sthamer in July revealed that the Germans were happy to accept the terms of the pact that related to the preservation of spheres of influence. But some of the arguments that he put forward disconcerted Chamberlain. When it came to responding to acts of aggression, the Treaty of Locarno only made provision for flagrant cases and obliged Britain to go to the aid of France, while the Treaty of Versailles only gave scope for such action to be seen as a 'hostile act'. Under the terms of Locarno, Britain would be obliged to resist the infringement by taking military action. As a result, it might be held that, under the Kellogg-Briand pact, it was Britain who had made war and not Germany by her hostile act. Sthamer believed that in such an eventuality Germany would be in breach of the Kellogg-Briand pact, thus releasing the other signatory powers from it and leaving them free to act as they saw fit.[101] Chamberlain however thought that such a definition of a hostile act would be unacceptable to the United States. It would convey the appearance of US isolation from Europe and create a division between League powers who signed the pact and those that did not. More significantly, 'it would leave the United States free to declare that warlike action under Article 16 of the Covenant was a breach of the treaty and liberated the United States from all further obligations towards Powers taking such action'.[102] Meanwhile, in Washington, Kellogg was growing impatient with Chamberlain's reluctance to give final approval to the text.[103]

It was the result of the meeting between Gaus, Fromageot and Hurst that provided the final impetus to sign the pact. They concluded that the only way to reconcile the terms of the pact with Article 16 of the Covenant was to state that Article 1 of the pact did not preclude action being taken under the Covenant against a League member which had resorted to war. But they agreed that it was now impossible to obtain an alteration to the text of the pact.[104] Chamberlain was not happy with this and believed that Fromageot's statements in particular skated 'very lightly over the thin ice'. Nevertheless, he realised that there was little to be gained by protracting the negotiations further. To do so 'would make it appear that we were far harder to please than the Germans or even the French and were creating difficulties which those Powers had not raised'.[105] It would be unseemly for the British government to hold up the signature of an important international agreement through such pettifoggery. On 18 July, Chamberlain therefore dispatched the final reply of the British government to Washington.

When the pact was signed in August 1928, relations between the United States and Britain had improved, although ill health prevented Chamberlain from attending the signing ceremony in Paris.[106] It could be claimed that the Kellogg-Briand pact, which was to be so quickly f orgotten when the fascist dictators created a tangible threat to European security, represented the most concerted effort in the 1920s to render all types of hostile acts in international diplomacy unacceptable. It can thus be seen as an attempt to enshrine the 'spirit of the Locarno' in text form, as at least a supplement to the treaty of 1925. A case could be made for claiming that it was the signature of the Kellogg-Briand pact that represented the high water mark in Allied diplomacy in the 1920s. At the same time, the negotiations of 1928 revealed much about the unevenness of the relationship between the Locarno powers and the ambivalent attitude that the British government in particular had towards US involvement in European affairs. Much of Chamberlain's scepticism about the German commitment to preserve European security had diminished by 1928. His relations with Briand continued to be good but were not as close as they had been in 1925. It was not Briand's first instinct to include Britain from the outset of the negotiations of a pact that was so close in spirit and substance to the Locarno Treaty. At the same time, Briand's role after April 1928 was to follow rather than to lead the negotiations. In that respect, it is something of a misnomer to refer to the agreement signed in August 1928 as the Kellogg-Briand pact. Kellogg was the driving force behind it, but it was Chamberlain who had the greater influence on the Secretary of State's thinking.[107] Chamberlain also emerges as the most committed of the Locarno powers to presenting a united front to the Americans regarding European security. Briand tended to be less decisive about French requirements from the pact. Chamberlain, in contrast, showed a greater willingness to compromise and to negotiate with the French and German governments to enable the Locarno Treaty to function alongside the Kellogg-Briand pact.

NOTES

1. In addition to those listed below, see G.Johnson, 'Lord D'Abernon, Sir Austen Chamberlain and the Origin of the Treaty of Locarno', *Electronic Journal of International History* 1, 1 (2000), 1–37.
2. David Dutton, Richard Grayson and Brian McKercher are the exceptions. D.Dutton, *Austen Chamberlain: Gentleman in Politics* (Bolton: Ross Anderson, 1985), pp. 259–99; R.S. Grayson, *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe: British Foreign Policy, 1924–29* (London: Frank Cass, 1997); B.J.C.McKercher, *The Second Baldwin Government and the United States, 1924–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
3. H.C.Allen, *The Anglo-American Relationship Since 1783* (London: Black, 1959), p. 211.
4. One of the main elements of the treaty was an undertaking by Germany to accept the German frontier with France and Belgium as defined by the Treaty of Versailles.

5. A further article by McKercher praises Chamberlain's control of foreign policy during the late 1920s but completely fails to mention the Kellogg-Briand pact. B.J.C. McKercher, 'Austen Chamberlain's Control of British Foreign Policy, 1924–1929', *International History Review* 6, 2 (1984), 54–72.
6. See W.R.Braisted, 'The Evolution of the United States Navy's Strategic Assessments in the Pacific, 1919–1931', in E.Goldstein and J.Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference, 1921–1922* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), p. 120.
7. Dutton, *Austen Chamberlain,* p. 278.
8. This is only briefly touched upon in B.J.C.McKercher, 'The British Diplomatic Service in the United States and Chamberlain's Foreign Office's Perception of Domestic America, 1924–1927: Images, Reality, and Diplomacy', in B.J.C.McKercher and D.J. Moss (eds), *Shadow and Substance in British Foreign Policy, 1895–1939* (Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta Press, 1984), p. 230.
9. A.Chamberlain, *Down the Years* (London: Cassell, 1935), pp. 234–5.
10. J.Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972).
11. G.Johnson, *The Berlin Embassy of Lord D'Abernon, 1920–1926* (London: Palgrave, 2002).
12. D.Carlton, 'Great Britain and the League Council Crisis', *Historical Journal* 11, 1 (1968, 78–92).
13. *Ibid.,* p. 230.
14. Johnson, 'Lord D'Abernon, Sir Austen Chamberlain and the Origin of the Treaty of Locarno'.
15. A copy of the text can be found in Memorandum by Chamberlain, 24 January 1928, C.P 22 (28) Public Record Office, PRO/FO371/12809/A154/154/45.
16. D.R.McCoy, *Calvin Coolidge: The Quiet President* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 369.
17. C.O.Johnson, *Borah of Idaho* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1936), p. 400.
18. Crewe to Chamberlain, 9 January 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 249.
19. B.J.C.McKercher, *Esme Howard: A Diplomatic Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 321.
20. Memorandum by Chamberlain, 24 January 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 262, C.P 22 (28).
21. Howard to Vansittart, 13 January 1928, PRO/FO371/12789/A290/1/45.
22. Chamberlain, *Down the Years,* p. 234.
23. Memorandum by Torr, 20 January 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 259.
24. H.Nicolson, *Curzon: The Last Phase* (London: Constable, 1934), pp. 273–4.
25. Dutton, *Austen Chamberlain,* p. 278. See also The Council on Foreign Relations, *Survey of American Foreign Policy, 1928* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1928), p. 543.
26. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 9 January 1925, AC52/252, Austen Chamberlain Papers, University of Birmingham.
27. Chamberlain to Crewe, 27 April 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 327.
28. Chamberlain to Howard, 14 February 1928, AC55/266.
29. T.N.Guinsburg, 'The Triumph of Isolationism', in G.Martel (ed.), *American Foreign Relations Reconsidered, 1890–1993* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 90.
30. Howard to Chamberlain, 30 December 1927, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 243.
31. Howard to Chamberlain, 9 March 1928, AC55/267; McCoy, *Calvin Coolidge,* p. 376.
32. Chamberlain to Howard, 13 February 1928, AC55/266.
33. Chamberlain to Crewe, 6 January 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 247.
34. Viscount Grey of Falloden, *Twenty-Five Years, 1892–1916,* Vol. II (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925), pp. 192–3. The Hague Convention of 1907 promoted the pacific settlement of all international disputes. Chamberlain to Howard, 14 February 1928, AC55/266.
35. R.Self (ed.), *The Austen Chamberlain Diary Letters: The Correspondence of Sir Austen Chamberlain with his Sisters, Hilda and Ida, 1916–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 307–8.
36. Chamberlain to Howard, 20 January 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 256.
37. Howard to Chamberlain, 27 January 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 263.
38. Chamberlain to Howard, 13 February 1928, AC55/266.

39. McKercher, *The Second Baldwin Government,* p. 113.
40. Kellogg to Houghton, 20 April 1928, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relation of the United States, 1928,* Vol. I (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942), p. 41.
41. Chamberlain to Howard, 17 January 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 254.
42. McKercher, *Esme Howard,* p. 299.
43. Howard to Chamberlain, 2 March 1928, PRO/FO371/12790/A1774/1/45. This treaty was due to expire in June 1929; McKercher, *The Second Baldwin Government,* p. 104.
44. Howard to Chamberlain, 9 March 1928, DHW/9/59, Esme Howard Papers, Cumbria Record Office; McKercher, *Esme Howard,* p. 321.
45. McKercher, *The Second Baldwin Government,* p. 107.
46. Carlton, 'Great Britain and the League Council Crisis'.
47. Chamberlain to Howard, 23 January 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 261; Chilton to Howard, 27 January 1928, DHW/4/23.
48. Memorandum by Hurst, 20 April 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 314.
49. Tyrrell to Drummond, 8 February 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 270.
50. Memorandum by Hurst, 15 March 1928, PRO/FO371/12790/A1774/1/45.
51. McKercher, *The Second Baldwin Government,* p. 111.
52. McKercher, *Esme Howard,* p. 322. The British government had borrowed more than £850 million from the United States to finance the war effort. However, relations between the two countries deteriorated rapidly in the early 1920s when the Harding administration insisted on full and immediate repayment at a time when the British economy was in recession. The crisis was averted by the dispatch of the Balfour Note in the summer of 1922, which announced that the British government would give priority to repaying the debt to the United States.
53. Howard to Chamberlain, 2 February 1928, DHW9/58.
54. Lindsay to Chamberlain, 21 March 1928, PRO/FO371/12790/A2034/1/45; P.Roberts, 'Underpinning the Anglo-American Alliance: The Council on Foreign Relations and Britain between the Wars', in J.Hollowell (ed.), *Twentieth Century Anglo-American Relations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p. 45.
55. Howard to Chamberlain, 3 April 1928, PRO/FO371/12790/A2355/1/45.
56. Chamberlain to Howard, 5 April 1928, PRO/FO371/12823/A2280/133/45.
57. C.Petrie, *The Life and Letters of Sir Austen Chamberlain,* Vol. II (London: Lovat Dickson, 1940), p. 322.
58. Howard to Chamberlain, 20 April 1928, PRO/CAB16/79.
59. Minute by Oliphant, 20 April 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 315.
60. Memorandum by Hurst, 24 April 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 320.
61. Howard to Chamberlain, 25 April 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 323.
62. Houghton to Kellogg, 27 April 1928, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Policy of the United States* (Washington, DC: State Department, 1947), p. 40.
63. Chamberlain to Howard, 26 April 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 325.
64. Chamberlain to Lindsay, 27 April 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 326.
65. Chamberlain to Howard, 25 May 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 358.
66. Chamberlain to Howard, 13 February 1928, PRO/FO800/262.
67. Craigie to Howard, 27 February 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. IV, No. 284.
68. D.Johnson, 'Austen Chamberlain and the Locarno Agreement', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 8, 1 (1961), 178–90.
69. Graham to Chamberlain, 1 May 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 330.
70. Chamberlain to Lindsay, 2 May 1928, AC55/312.
71. Memorandum by Tyrrell, 2 May 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 335.
72. Houghton to Kellogg, 2 May 1928, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States,* pp. 44–5.
73. Chamberlain to Howard, 15 May 1928, AC55/270.
74. Chamberlain to Howard, 3 May 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 339.
75. Reported in *The Times,* 27 April 1928, p. 18; House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, Vol. 216, col. 1336.

76. Chamberlain to Howard, 3 May 1928, PRO/CAB24/194.
77. Chamberlain to Howard, 8 May 1928, PRO/FO371/12791/A3022/1/45.
78. Chamberlain to Howard, 16 May 1928, PRO/FO371/12792/A3340/1/45.
79. The text of the agreement is to be found in Chamberlain to Howard, 16 May 1928, PRO/FO371/12792/A3340/1/45.
80. Chamberlain to Howard, 22 May 1928, PRO/FO371/12792/A3497/1/45.
81. Chamberlain to Howard, 25 May 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 358.
82. For example, McKercher, *The Second Baldwin Government,* p. 35.
83. R.Vansittart, *The Mist Procession* (London: Hutchinson, 1958), p. 361.
84. Howard to Chamberlain, 30 May 1928, PRO/FO371/12793/A3697/1/45.
85. Memorandum by Craigie, 31 May 1928, PRO/FO371/12793/A3700/1/45.
86. Tyrrell to Dormer, 8 June 1928, PRO/FO371/12793/A3922/1/45; *Survey of American Foreign Relations, 1929* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 392.
87. Dormer to Chamberlain, 13 June 1928, PRO/FO371/12792/A4048/1/45.
88. Chilton to Chamberlain, 12 June 1928, PRO/FO371/12793/A406W45.
89. McCoy, *Calvin Coolidge,* p. 370.
90. Tyrrell to Chilton, 16 June 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 382.
91. Chilton to Chamberlain, 19 June 1928, PRO/FO371/12792/A4196/1/45.
92. In addition to Britain, France, Germany and Italy, this would include Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Spain and the Netherlands.
93. Chamberlain to London, 26 June 1928, PRO/FO371/12794/A4282/1/45. The reference was to the Declaration to Egypt of 28 February 1922, under which, while recognising Egypt as an independent sovereign state, the British government reserved to their absolute discretion the four points set out in Volume I, appendix, paragraph 96.
94. Foreign Office Memorandum, 29 June 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 404.
95. Chamberlain to Crewe, 29 June 1928, PRO/FO371/12795/A4468/1/45.
96. Hurst to Chamberlain, 29 June 1928, PRO/FO371/12795/A4479/1/45.
97. London to Chamberlain, 30 June 1928, PRO/FO371/12794/A4469/1/45.
98. Chamberlain to Chilton, 4 July 1928, PRO/FO371/12794/A4551/1/45.
99. See for example, memorandum of a conversation between Chamberlain and Houghton, 11 June 1928, in DHW9/60.
100. Chamberlain to Chilton, 4 July 1928, PRO/FO371/12794/A4480/1/45.
101. Chamberlain to Nicolson, 4 July 1928, PRO/FO371/12794/A4561/1/45.
102. Chamberlain to Nicolson, 5 July 1928, PRO/FO371/12794/A4560/1/45.
103. Chilton to Chamberlain, 6 July 1928, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. V, No. 414; Chilton to Howard, 22 August 1928, DHW4/23.
104. Hurst to Chamberlain, 9 July 1928, PRO/FO371/12796/A4628/1/45. This also contains the text of the joint statement produced by Gaus, Hurst and Fromageot. See also Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 9 July 1928, AC/5/1/459.
105. Memorandum by Chamberlain, 13 July 1928, PRO/FO800/263.
106. The text can be found in *Survey of American Foreign Relations, 1929,* pp. 397–9. Memorandum by Cushendun, 27 August 1928, AC38/3/38.
107. Vansittart, *Mist Procession,* p. 361.

4
Locarno: Early Test of Fascist Intentions

ALAN CASSELS

In 1939, the late E.H.Carr published an anti-appeasement tract under the title *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. It was an ingenious dialectical *tour de force* that interpreted inter-war international relations as a contest between two antithetical styles of diplomacy—traditional pre-1914 *Realpolitik* on the one hand, and on the other, a more enlightened method of inter-state politics to be brought about as part of that brave new world promised by Allied propaganda during the First World War. To the former were to be attached such adjectives as realistic, practical, bureaucratic and even deterministic; it was the international system of the political right wing. In contrast, the postwar dreams of a reformation in the conduct of international affairs were nourished by the left, particularly by intellectuals who dabbled in theories and believed that the human condition could be improved by the exercise of free will. In Carr's most damning terminology, this predilection was utopian.[1] More specifically, the reformist prescription called for the curbing of the unfettered power of the sovereign nation-state by means other than a shifting balance of power, the tempering of power politics by an injection of morality, and the substitution of international conciliation for endless competition. These aspirations were most widely held in the English-speaking world and, appropriately by the close of the Great War, found their spokesman in the US President, Woodrow Wilson.

In the years immediately following the war, however, most of the expectations of a brave new world seemed to be dashed. On the home front fear of bolshevism, coupled with the ability of old elites to reinvigorate themselves, assured the return of much of the pre-1914 social order, and on the international stage the Treaty of Versailles fell a long way short of a peace of reconciliation.[2] Nevertheless, the vision of a new international order lingered on. It became focused on the League of Nations and inspired attempts 'to put teeth', as the phrase went, in the League's Covenant. The closest to success that these endeavours came was the Geneva Protocol hatched at the League Assembly session of September 1924. Postulating mandatory League sanctions against any state that refused arbitration in an international dispute (a novel definition of aggression), the protocol was an archetype of the new diplomacy advocated by the democratic left. Indeed, it was the work of Britain's first Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, and Edouard Herriot, head of the French governing coalition, the *Cartel des Gauches*. Whether the Geneva Protocol would ever have got off the ground is a moot point, but in the event the electoral defeat of the Labour government in October sealed its fate.[3] The new Conservative administration in London rejected out of hand the far-ranging commitments of the protocol. The Treaty of Locarno was intended to be a surrogate for the aborted Geneva Protocol. But, as the historiographical consensus now recognises with the benefit of hindsight, what was agreed at a Swiss lakeside resort on 16 October 1925 was nothing more or less than an old-fashioned compact among the major European powers, heirs of the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe. Substantive guarantees were severely limited by geography to the Rhine frontiers. The objectives of the signatories were all, in one way or another, self-seeking, and often mutually contradictory.[4] As an

exercise in conventional power politics nothing could be further from the universalistic, idealistic Geneva Protocol.

Yet, at the time no such conclusion was drawn. Quite the contrary; seduced by the arbitration treaties that Germany signed with its neighbours east and west, and promises to submit all disputes arising out of the agreements to the League of Nations or to Permanent Councils of Conciliation, general opinion greeted Locarno as a triumph of the new diplomacy. In particular, the principal Englishlanguage press organs were ebullient. The *Manchester Guardian* contrasted Locarno with 'the pre-war state of things'. Similarly, *The Times* was convinced that Locarno constituted a departure from stale Realpolitik: 'A very great and liberating event…the light of a new dawn is at last breaking upon the world… It [Locarno] is an entirely new kind of treaty.' The *New York Times* repeated the sentiments of its London namesake when it editorialised: '[Locarno] is interpenetrated by the letter and the spirit of the League Covenant…indeed, of the Geneva Protocol.'[5] On the day of the Locarno Treaty's formal signing, 1 December 1925, the Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York City held a service of thanksgiving. Gustav Stresemann, German Foreign Minister and instigator of the Locarno Pacts, summed up the mood of the day: 'I see the achievement of Locarno not as a juridical construction of political ideas, I see it as the basis of a great future. Statesmen have thus proclaimed their readiness to prepare the way for mankind's longing for peace and understanding.'[6] In due course, the German, British and French statesmen architects of Locarno were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. As one journalist present at the Locarno Conference recalled, it was 'probably the only diplomatic assembly in history over which statesmen grew lyrical, and journalists…went into sentimental raptures'. Another observer called it 'the threepenny idyll in a village on Lago Maggiore [that] wafted a gentle breath over Europe, the breath of hope'.[7] In all this lay the origins of the euphoric albeit transient 'spirit of Locarno'.

Now, it is against this contemporary perception of Locarno as fulfilment of a sanguine Wilsonian utopia that the role of Mussolini's Italy should be examined. One hardly needs to elaborate the point that Fascism and its leader did not share the hopes of so many that the close of the world war would usher in an age of international peace and goodwill. Suffice it to say that he had ridden to power in 1922 on the back of two myths: namely, that a bolshevik coup was imminent in Italy, and that Italy's victory on the battlefield in 1918 had been 'mutilated' by the allegedly meagre gains secured at the postwar Paris Peace Conference.[8] Arguably, the latter was the more significant factor in the rise of Fascism, and as early as June 1921 Mussolini was announcing that 'our preoccupation is primarily with matters of foreign policy'.[9] The Fascist demand was for Italian *parità* (equality) on the world stage with Britain and France, and in his first speech as Premier Mussolini threw down a challenge to London and Paris in the phrase *niente per niente* (nothing for nothing).[10] This was the language of the noisy and xenophobic Italian Nationalist Party, and it came as no surprise when in 1923 this Nationalist Party was absorbed without fuss into the *Partito Nazionale Fascista.* Inasmuch as Mussolini himself subscribed to any coherent political philosophy, it was a naïve, unadulterated Social Darwinism. 'Strife is the origin of all things', he once wrote,[11] and he believed firmly in the inevitable and eternal struggle amongst nations and, for that matter, between the white and black-brown races. Thus, war was not something to be avoided at all costs, but rather embraced eagerly; force, not conciliation, was his determinant of international politics.

I

Between February and October 1925 Italy was largely peripheral to the actual negotiations leading up to the Locarno Treaty. Rather, Italy reacted to diplomatic initiatives undertaken elsewhere. However, this chapter will not recount in any detail these responses as the Locarno bargaining unfolded, accounts of which can be

found elsewhere in print.[12] Instead, by more broadly depicting how alien the spirit of Locarno was to Italian Fascism and its Duce, it will try to demonstrate how Mussolini's international behaviour during the Locarno era (1925–29) presaged much of what came later in the history of Fascist foreign policy; to use Locarno, in other words, as a test of Fascist Italy's long-term ambitions in world politics.

Yet ironically, when Rome was first informed in February of the German overture for a five-power guarantee of the existing Rhine frontiers (with Italy designated as one of the underwriters), Mussolini welcomed the idea.[13] His motive, though, had less to do with contributing to European stability than to the eradication of alternative diplomatic schemes. Notably, the proposed Rhineland Pact superseded the Geneva Protocol that, to Mussolini, was anathema because it granted the League of Nations the lion's share in the settlement of international quarrels. Here, we must recall that Mussolini had tangled with the League in September 1923 after Fascist Italy had seized the Greek island of Corfu, with the surreptitious intent of keeping it permanently Although the Duce had succeeded in thwarting League cognisance of the Corfu affair, he had threatened in mid crisis to withdraw Italy from the League, and his animus against the League, already rooted in his Social Darwinian bias, was reinforced.[14] Attendance at League sessions in Geneva was ruled out as 'homage to the League'. Mussolini boasted that Fascist Italy had never subscribed to the League-oriented Geneva Protocol, and he expressed 'no regrets at its premature demise'.[15] The enhanced profile of the League in the ultimate Locarno agreements was undoubtedly one of several factors in Mussolini's growing lack of enthusiasm for the final product. The League of Nations was a perpetual *bête noire,* 'the debris from the great shipwreck of Wilsonian ideology', he would call it.[16] The rift over Ethiopia ten years later and Italy's departure from the League in 1937 were always in the cards.

Predictably, talk in 1925 of fresh guarantees of Germany's western frontiers raised the issue of the status of other European boundaries established in the postwar peace settlement. Of special Italian concern was the sanctity of the borders of the new Austrian republic. An inviolable frontier between Germany and Austria was necessary to ward off an Anschluss, which, should it ever come about, would place the full weight of Teutonic power on Italy's own northern frontier with Austria. This latter frontier had been set at the Paris Peace Conference for purely strategic reasons at the Brenner Pass, thereby giving Italy possession of the South Tyrol (or the Alto Adige as Italians still prefer to call it), which was the major territorial prize that Italy had received in return for entering the First World War. But problematically, the South Tyrol contained over 200,000 German-speaking inhabitants who, after Mussolini's arrival in office, found themselves subjected to a harsh programme of Italianisation, and who looked north, as much to Berlin and Munich as to Vienna, for relief. In other words, the linked questions of Italy's hold on the South Tyrol and the threat to it represented by an Anschluss comprised a live political issue well before the Locarno negotiations began.[17]

As early as March 1925 Rome received intimations that the western powers were not averse to an Anschluss, and the hint seemed to turn into substance when the British Ambassador in Berlin, Viscount D'Abernon, raised the matter directly with his Italian counterpart. Not surprisingly, Italy's Ambassadors in Berlin, London and Paris were quickly instructed to register their country's adamant opposition.[18] However, the Anschluss topic refused to go away. On 8 May Stresemann, in a conversation with Alessandro De Bosdari, Italy's Ambassador in Berlin, made the observation that not all governments were as opposed to an Anschluss as the Italians. Mussolini rose to the bait and annotated his ambassador's report: 'Attention! Important. De Bosdari's attitude is feeble!'[19] In addition, Mussolini chose to launch a different and public riposte. Addressing the Italian Senate on 20 May, he reiterated his opposition to an Anschluss, which 'would nullify Italy's victory [in 1918]', and added: 'Not only must the Rhine frontier be guaranteed, gentlemen, but that of the Brenner too… We consider the Brenner frontier to be irrevo cable [and], I affirm, the Italian government will defend it at any cost.'[20] Almost at once Stresemann gave Mussolini an assurance

that Germany had no intention of tying Anschluss to the Rhineland Pact.[21] Whereupon the Duce caused the official record of his recent Senate speech to read, more innocuously: 'There is no need to guarantee the Rhine frontier alone by making less firm the sureties for the Brenner.' Later, he would deny altogether that he had ever requested a Brenner guarantee.[22] What, in truth, had emerged by the end of May 1925 was an absolute impasse. Germany feared to broach the subject of an Anschluss lest Italy demand, and possibly win, international reconfirmation of its Brenner frontier and possession of the South Tyrol. *Mutatis mutandis,* Italy dared not seek this *desideratum* lest Germany gain Anschluss in compensation. Both sides recognised and accepted the stalemate. At Locarno the British Foreign Secretary recorded Mussolini's explanation of why he declined to broach the Brenner frontier issue at the conference itself: 'To raise that question with Germany was to suggest that Germany and Austria might be united, and thus, as it were, to invite the danger which he [Mussolini] wished to avoid.'[23]

But if a full international Brenner guarantee proved out of the question, Italy received the offer of half a loaf from elsewhere. On several occasions during June, Aristide Briand, the French Foreign Minister, suggested a separate Franco-Italian accord for the 'reciprocal security of respective frontiers'. This offer was to stay on the table until the very eve of the Locarno Conference itself, and over time Briand promised concessions in the colonial field (Tunisia, Tangiers) if only Italy would accept his proposal.[24] Briand's motives are not clear; he spoke airily about the need of the 'Latin nations' to stand together in order to 'counterbalance the Anglo-Saxon coalition', although his overture to Italy won Britain's blessing.[25] In any event, all Briand's solicitations and inducements were in vain. Mussolini at first ignored the French *demarche,* but then rejected it as a bad bargain because the pan-German threat north of the Brenner was, in his own words, 'much less serious for Italy than for France'.[26]

Regardless of the merits of this judgement, it is worthwhile putting into wider perspective Mussolini's attitude to France, especially with regard to the danger posed by German nationalism. While Briand might dwell on the affinity between Latin nations, the Fascist Duce regarded France and Italy as rival 'Latin sisters', destined by Social Darwinian logic to struggle for supremacy. Mussolini thus expected the Franco-Italian relationship to be a hostile one, and worked to realise what he anticipated. He complained ceaselessly and vociferously about the activities of the *fuorusciti,* anti-Fascist exiles in Paris, refusing to recognise the right of free speech even outside Italy. And with the exception of the Laval-Mussolini understanding of January 1935 (which perished in the Ethiopian affair), a whole series of French overtures for a general *rapprochement* got the same treatment as Briand's in 1925.[27]

On the other side of the ledger, Fascist Italy's reluctance to join France in a common front against German revisionism must also be ascribed to the Duce's ambivalence towards German nationalism itself. For in spite of Mussolini's apparent perturbation when Anschluss became a topic of discussion in mid 1925, there is abundant evidence that he was prepared, from the moment he took office, to employ German nationalism for his own purposes. In the midst of the Ruhr occupation crisis of 1923 he had astonished Stresemann with the question whether Germany, in the event of a Franco-Yugoslav conflict over Fiume, 'would be in a position…to immobilize part of the French army on the Rhine'.[28] In reality, however, Mussolini set little store by Weimar Germany; he scorned the democratic republic that he was convinced would sooner or later be supplanted by a right-wing regime dedicated to revising the Versailles Treaty.[29] Consequently, he thought to prepare for this contingency by making clandestine contact with a variety of disaffected nationalist elements in Germany, both military and civilian. Fascist Italy was complicit in the secret rearmament of the *Reichswehr,* while amongst Germany's paramilitary nationalist groups, one above all was of interest to Mussolini, not least because its leader was unique amongst his kind in advocating renunciation of the South Tyrol for the sake of Italy's friendship. Italian money almost certainly helped to finance Hitler's Beer Hall *Putsch* in November 1923, and Hermann Göring and other Nazis found

a comfortable asylum in Italy in its wake.[30] But the irksome fact remained that all the other German right-wing nationalists with whom Mussolini trafficked, and for that matter most of Hitler's followers too, looked ahead to an Anschluss and German recovery of the South Tyrol. And herein resided a glaring contradiction in Mussolini's German policy between preservation of Austrian integrity and Italy's grip on the South Tyrol and, conversely, his encouragement of those who represented the principal menace to these self-same ends.

In light of the Duce's liaison with dangerous German revisionists, as well as his dismissal of the French offer of a Brenner guarantee, the question might be asked to what degree his indignation vented at the exclusion of Italy's northern frontier from the Locarno project was, in fact, feigned. It has been suggested that his expostulations were geared to reassure Italy's generals and that in his mind imperial designs in the Mediterranean and Africa took precedence over defence to the north.[31] This may be true, but in 1925, with overseas expansion still in the future, no hard choice had to be made. A decade further on, however, Mussolini, now embarked on an imperialist course, did deem it necessary and advantageous to choose between Alpine security and alignment with German nationalism. His option for the latter had been prefigured in the 1920s, and once given shape in the form of the Rome-Berlin axis, it led irresistibly to the arrival of German troops on the Brenner. This, in turn, marked the beginning of the end of Fascist Italy itself.

Long-term geo-political goals aside, the failure to achieve an international Brenner guarantee in 1925 was a blow to Mussolini's *amour propre*—perhaps of itself a sufficient explanation of the resentment he exhibited. Certainly, his initial reaction smacked of pique as he turned his back on the projected Rhine Pact. If this were to create two categories of European frontier, he argued, 'Italy would have no specific interest in participating in such a pact.'[32] Therefore the western states and Germany went ahead without Italian input, and on 11 August Rome learned that a committee of jurists would soon meet in London to draft an actual treaty.[33] At this point the Fascist leader came under pressure, from both inside and outside Italy, to reverse course and join in the Rhineland negotiations.

The Italian lobby consisted of the luminaries of Italy's diplomatic service led by the formidable Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Salvatore Contarini. The career diplomats were an important component of that Italian establishment, which had decided to cooperate with Mussolini in the fond belief that they could manipulate him. Their hope was, in the words of one diplomat memorialist, 'to present the Man [Mussolini] as capable of bringing new strength to our country, but without transgressing the bounds of international life'.[34] However, on this score, their record since 1922 was far from spotless. The Duce's actions at Corfu and in Fiume showed that his belligerence might break free at any moment. Intelligence that Fascist agents, behind the back of Italy's accredited diplomats, were intriguing with Europe's revisionist factions also indicated his evasion of conventional constraints. Nevertheless, in the weeks leading up to the Locarno Conference, Italy's career diplomats made a concerted effort to persuade Mussolini to participate in framing the new western European security agreement.[35] Since Mussolini at the end of the day did go to Locarno, this might be counted a success in the campaign of Contarini and his colleagues to keep the Duce in check. If so, however, it was one of the last such instances. While Mussolini had at first submitted to lessons in deportment, he nonetheless resented the aristocratic old-guard diplomats as he resented the rest of the Italian establishment. Rather than bend to their tutelage, his aim was to bring the Ministry of Foreign Aff fairs to heel. A token of this was the appointment in May 1925, in the midst of the transactions that would culminate at Locarno, of Dino Grandi as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Grandi's public reputation was that of violent leader of the Fascist blackshirts of Bologna. In actual fact, Contarini had already judged him 'malleable and understanding to the extent of being able to conform to those prevailing tendencies in foreign policy followed hitherto by the Palazzo Chigi' (site of Fascist Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs).[36] And so it turned out; Grandi quickly adopted the mores of a traditional diplomat, and proved to be a great

disappointment as Mussolini's Trojan horse in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But Mussolini's objective was clear—to give the Foreign Ministry a distinctly Fascist tone. Moreover, his path was cleared considerably in February 1926 when Contarini, the symbol of the ministry's autonomy, refused to serve Fascism any longer and resigned.[37] These were only portents of the total *fascistizzazione* of the Foreign Ministry to come, but the day would arrive when Italy's professional diplomats would be reduced to mere ciphers.[38]

The extent of the Italian diplomatic community's influence on the Duce in 1925 is difficult to assess, and in persuading Mussolini to accede to Locarno it was probably less than that of other external elements. More important without doubt were those western powers that did their utmost to prevail on Italy to serve as a guarantor of the Rhine Pact. The French offer of an unconditional Brenner guarantee was, of course, calculated to that end. However, what mattered in Rome was not France's opinion and desires but those of Great Britain —even though the Foreign Office throughout 1925 was as steadfastly opposed to a Brenner pledge as it was to guaranteeing eastern Europe's borders.[39] Italy's relationship with Britain was in large measure a dependant one. As an old-guard Italian diplomat quaintly put it, his country had 'historically constrained for intrinsic and obvious reasons…to take refuge on rainy days…under the ample and capacious mantle of England'.[40] Or in stark geo-political terms, as a quasi-island in the middle of the Mediterranean, Italy stood at the mercy of British sea power. Mussolini had evacuated Corfu only under the threat of British naval action. But it was not *force majeure* alone that disposed Mussolini to sign on to the Rhineland Pact. What seemed to count more was a special rapport that he was in the process of developing with Sir Austen Chamberlain, the British Foreign Secretary. This had begun in Rome where the League of Nations Assembly held its quarterly meeting in December 1924, a time when the Fascist regime was still being rocked by repercussions from the murder of the socialist deputy, Giacomo Matteotti, six months before. Yet Chamberlain not only visited Rome but went out of his way to meet Mussolini. The signed photographs of Mussolini which he procured as mementos for his family indicated that the exchanges were remarkably cordial. On the international scene the Duce and the Foreign Secretary saw eye to eye on the inconvenience of the Geneva Protocol, and Mussolini sent Chamberlain congratulations 'on the manner in which you had delivered the *coup de grâce* to the protocol'.[41]

As for the prospective conference to sign a Rhineland accord, Chamberlain gave assurance of his undying opposition to an Anschluss, and he made plain his personal desire to see Mussolini at the negotiating table and to renew his acquaintance.[42] Mussolini's response was to imply that his presence depended on the forthcoming conference being held on Itatian soil. Chamberlain naturally was counting on London to be the conference site, but he indulged Mussolini to the extent of proposing a neutral location in Switzerland close to the Italian border, and mentioned Lugano and Locarno.[43] One might say that the choice of Locarno as the conference venue was Italy's major contribution to its preparation.

Fascist Italy's signature on the Locarno Treaty, therefore, is best seen as a function of a burgeoning Anglo-Italian entente. Even so, Mussolini's adherence to the Rhine Pact was grudging and slow in coming. He first requested and then accepted an invitation to send a delegate to the committee of jurists preparing the text of the accords, but without any commitment to accept the end result.[44] It was, in fact, the Italian delegate on the jurists' committee, Vittorio Scialoja, who on his own initiative requested that Italy be included amongst the parties listed in the preamble to the treaty His colleagues reasonably assumed that this assured Italy's signature, although, in reporting to Mussolini, Scialoja prudently contended that it did not.[45] In any event, he went unrebuked, and thereafter Italy's participation in the Rhineland agreement was taken for granted.

Still unresolved, though, was the matter of whether Mussolini himself would condescend to appear with the rest of Europe's leaders at Locarno. However, the Duce had grown wary of international gatherings. The Lausanne Conference, the opening of which he had attended within weeks of taking office, he had found

tolerable, although he did not receive the deference he thought was his due. But at the London Reparations Conference in December 1922 he had suffered nothing but embarrassment, became the object of *bon mots* retailed behind his back, and received rough treatment at the hands of the British press. An unfriendly French diplomat described his appearance in London as that of 'a hunted convict…disguised as a man of the world to escape recognition'.[46] On the other hand, it was hard for so prestige-conscious an individual as Mussolini to ignore so publicised and signal an event as the Locarno Conference. Hence, at the last minute he dashed off a message to Chamberlain that he was about to come to Locarno 'entirely to see you and because he knew you wished him to come'.[47] Then he rushed by special train to Milan, by racing car to Stresa, and by speedboat across Lake Maggiore to Locarno. But his experience over 15–16 October 1925 turned out to be if anything worse than that in London. He was accompanied by a retinue of ill-disciplined blackshirts whom the Swiss-Italian inhabitants of the Ticino viewed, as one commentator remarked, 'grimly and in silence'.[48] Most of the international press boycotted his press conference in protest at the murder of Matteotti. And he was snubbed by the Belgian Foreign Minister. He resolved never to expose himself to these slights again, and did not put in an appear ance at the official signing of the Treaty of Locarno in London on 1 December.[49] (The only other international conference outside Italy that Mussolini ever attended was in 1938 in Munich where the atmosphere was, to say the least, controlled.) Although Italy, and Mussolini in particular, had done little to further the Locarno negotiations, this did not stop the Duce claiming to have played a key role at Locarno itself.[50] Furthermore, when later it came to the awarding of Nobel peace prizes, Mussolini expected to be considered.[51]

Since Mussolini attended the Locarno Conference ostensibly and solely to please Chamberlain, it was incumbent on both parties to hold a private meeting, which duly took place on 15 October 1925. The British Foreign Secretary used the occasion to try and persuade Mussolini to join him in efforts to encourage détente in the Balkans, only to find the Duce disappointingly unresponsive to the Locarno ambience of international concord. 'This silence', wrote Chamberlain, 'was more eloquent than words.'[52] Plainly, Mussolini had his own Balkan agenda.

Nevertheless, Chamberlain stifled whatever apprehension he harboured about the Duce, and after Locarno his friendship with Mussolini blossomed. He and his family liked to vacation in Italy where invariably they were received by Mussolini. Lady Ivy Chamberlain was noticeably captivated by the Duce and was spotted wearing a Fascist badge. Mussolini for his part exulted, 'Chamberlain is, deep down, rather a sympathizer with Fascism.'[53] The Anglo-Italian entente built on this personal intimacy outlasted Chamberlain's tenure of office and was not really ruptured until the Ethiopian affair in 1935–36, after which Mussolini's inflated imperial pretensions challenged increasingly the security of the British Empire. It seems to have been the fate of the Chamberlain family in the inter-war years to strive for an Anglo-Italian understanding. It was, of course, Sir Austen's half-brother who sought most assiduously on the eve of the Second World War to recreate the earlier Anglo-Italian entente, and it was ironic that Sir Austen's widow should have been involved in Neville Chamberlain's vain enterprise.[54]

II

In the aftermath of the Locarno Conference, the Chamberlain-Mussolini entente notwithstanding, Fascist Italy gave further proof of its leader's intrinsic aversion to Locarno ideals. For one thing, his warlike rhetoric continued unabated. Less than a fortnight after the treaty signing ceremony he told the Chamber of Deputies that he considered 'the Italian nation to be in a permanent state of war' because 'the international struggle has been unleashed and will intensify'.[55] In addition, the absence of an international Brenner guarantee still rankled, and in 1926 Mussolini relieved his feelings in a bitter and public dispute with Stresemann who had

been drawn into questioning the treatment of the South Tyrolean Germans. This quarrel, together with his disdain for Locarno, lay behind Mussolini's foot-dragging over Germany's entrance into the League of Nations Council, an integral part of the Rhineland security bargain.[56] And when the Franco-German détente born at Locarno showed signs of maturing in the Briand-Stresemann talks at Thoiry, he complained to Chamberlain that this development had produced 'a new continental situation, not devoid of anxieties'.[57] What he meant, in effect, was that Fascist Italy hoped to turn German nationalism away from Austria and the Brenner and, instead, against France—the very negation of that Franco-German détente on which the entire Locarno system was based.

The crux of the matter was that Locarno was an exercise in international stabilisation, while Mussolini preferred a fluid situation in which he could intrigue and agitate to raise Italy's status. This was Mussolini's fundamental disagreement with Locarno. But, of course, Locarno brought a measure of stability only to western Europe, and by ignoring other frontiers cast the rest of Europe, however unintentionally, into a state of relative flux. In this way, Locarno served the Duce much better than he appeared to realise. To be precise, it left him free to pursue a 'dynamic' policy in the Balkans and the Danube Valley, an opportunity he seized in the post-Locarno years. It goes without saying that Mussolini had no interest in those schemes for an eastern Locarno that were floated after 1925. He was more concerned to combat France's influence, wielded through its Little Entente partners, in south-eastern Europe. Within a year of Locarno, Fascist Italy had established a virtual protectorate over Albania, thereby creating a breach with Yugoslavia. By the end of the 1920s, Mussolini was secretly aiding Croation separatists.[58] Further north, in the Danubian basin, his challenge to the French and the Little Entente led him into association with Hungary's revisionists. In 1928 he caused something of an international scandal by calling publicly for revision of the postwar treaties.[59] All was irreconcilable with the Locarno spirit of international harmony and reconciliation.

III

The so-called Locarno era may have come to a shuddering halt with the Great Depression, but it is worth remembering that technically the Locarno system of western European security pacts remained in force until Hitler's remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936. As a Locarno signatory, Italy's reaction to such a patent violation of the Rhineland agreement was of some consequence. By this juncture, however, Fascist Italy was subject to League of Nations sanctions for its aggression in Ethiopia, and the collapse of the Hoare-Laval Plan had opened up an unbridgeable rift with the western democracies. Moreover, in a notorious interview with the German Ambassador in the new year of 1936, Mussolini had revealed that he was tired of protecting Austrian independence, stating that 'if Austria were…in practice to become a German satellite, he would have no objection'.[60] With this scarcely veiled invitation to an Anschluss, Mussolini threw in his lot with Nazi Germany. When in February 1936 Hitler claimed France's ratification of its non-aggression treaty with the Soviets to be a violation of the Locarno Treaty, Mussolini concurred and informed the Führer that, in the event of a German denunciation of Locarno, 'Italy would consider herself equally disengaged and would declare herself equally free of her obligations'.[61] Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland followed on 7 March, providing a clear case for the imposition of League of Nations sanctions. But in no circumstances was Mussolini going to levy sanctions on a friendly Nazi Germany which had held aloof from League sanctions against Italy.[62] For that matter, neither France nor Britain showed any stomach for sanctions against the Locarno transgressor. Resorting to face-saving devices, the western states suggested a round of general staff talks and/or a meeting of all the Locarno powers to cobble together some new security pact. Whereupon Mussolini gave Hitler a fresh assurance that there would be no Italian participation in staff talks and that, if Italy did take part in new Locarno discussions, it would be 'in order to

sabotage them'.[63] Fascist Italy's reward for these obstructionist tactics was German *de jure* recognition of Italian Ethiopia.[64]

Mussolini's signature on the Treaty of Locarno had been in the first place an empty gesture. For ten years his international conduct had mocked Locarno principles. It was only appropriate, then, that Fascist Italy should play some role in Locarno's final destruction.

NOTES

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('World War II Collection of Seized Enemy Records', Microcopy 120: Stresemann Papers, serial 7318H, container 3168, frame 159901 [National Archives, Washington, DC]).

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49. *I Documenti Diplomatici,* Settima Serie, Vol. IV, No. 188.
50. *Opera omnia,* Vol. XXI, pp. 411–12; *I Documenti Diplomatici,* Settima Serie, Vol. IV, No. 200. The British official record of Locarno proceedings (*Documents on British Foreign Policy,* First Series, Vol. XXVII, Appendix, pp. 1078–175) reveals the paucity of the Italian delegation's interventions. As for Mussolini, he attended only the final plenary session on 16 October, but he made no recorded contribution until joining the other signatories in self-congratulatory speechmaking after the conference was officially concluded.
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5
Poincaré, Briand and Locarno: Continuity in French Diplomacy in the 1920s

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Raymond Poincaré is generally regarded as the man of a policy of firmness towards Germany dating from before the First World War. That policy tended to be viewed as continuing through the postwar peace settlement into the reparations question and beyond. It is seen as representing in history the French hard-line position towards Germany. By contrast, Briand has traditionally been depicted as the 'pilgrim of peace', the dove always ready to negotiate with Germany, and as characteristic of the softly softly approach to France's eastern neighbour, typified by the 'spirit of Locarno'. In reality neither fit the Manichean caricature a certain history has etched of them.

Poincaré's diplomacy towards Germany was far more flexible than has often been believed, both before the First World War and after. Equally, Briand could be far more hardline towards Germany than his traditional image suggests. In March 1921 it was Briand who, as Premier and Foreign Minister, ordered the occupation of three German towns in the Ruhr (Dusseldorf, Duisberg and Ruhrort) to oblige Germany to pay reparations and accept disarmament. He threatened Berlin with 'a firm hand on the scruff of the neck' if reparations clauses were not adhered to. He also ordered Foch to draw up a plan for the total occupation of the Ruhr in April-May 1921. This Manichean view has highlighted the peaks and troughs of French diplomacy in relation to Germany and obscured fundamental continuities. Yet French foreign policy in the 1920s was characterised by far more continuity in its attitude to Germany than has traditionally been believed.

Why should this Manichean view have developed? One explanation might be that the historiography of France's relations with Germany in the 1920s has fluctuated depending on which historical vantage point it was viewed from. Hitler's coming to power in 1933, French defeat in 1940 and the collaboration that followed, led many observers, in hindsight, to classify Briand's clear policy of negotiation, entente and the integration of Germany into the community of nations as a failure.[1] However, where Poincaré's policy was more hardline towards Germany it was blown up, exaggerated and praised for standing up to Germany—his more conciliatory positions obscured or forgotten.

Though more research is needed, it would seem, however, that these historiographical depictions began to be reversed from the 1950s, as Franco-German entente was renewed in the context of European integration. Franco-German détente in the 1920s was retrospectively viewed more sympathetically. Increasing European integration from the 1950 Schuman Plan, establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community and the signing of the 1957 Rome Treaty of the European Communities put Franco-German friendship at the heart of European construction. The 1963 Franco-German friendship treaty was the consecration of Franco-German reconciliation.[2] With historiography following in the wake of these developments one can detect a retrospective tendency to present earlier Franco-German relations through the rose-tinted glasses of subsequent European integration. The early 1920s were presented in some quarters as a missed opportunity for an earlier Franco-German reconciliation. This helps explain why a greater shadow came to be cast over

Poincaré's 'firm' line towards Germany in the 1920s and why a concomitant glow illuminated Briand's Locarno policy, particularly in view of Briand's 1929 suggestion for a 'United States of Europe'.

A further reason for the depiction of Poincaré's policy as antiGerman was that for a long time 'Anglo-Saxon' historiography was not kind to 1920s France. This historiography tended to go along with a belief, prevalent in the British and US governments of the time, that France wished to resume her supremacy on the European continent. It was not really until the opening of French archives and the work of US historians in the 1970s, such as Jon Jacobson, Charles Maier, Stephen Schuker and Marc Trachtenberg, that a subtler and less hawkish picture emerged of French diplomacy in the 1920s.[3]

Poincaré's 1920s image as a Germanophobe was fuelled by largescale contemporary German propaganda. This was intended to reduce German responsibility in the origins of the First World War. As Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty saddled Germany with responsibility for the outbreak of the war, the less blame Germany had to bear the more she could contest the whole moral basis of reparations and their payment. Germany attempted to shift some of the blame on to France and Russia. The Russian Bolsheviks were happy to associate themselves with any campaign that heaped discredit on their Tsarist predecessors and strengthened their own legitimacy. They promoted views of Russian and French responsibility through their own propaganda, which had the additional advantage of partly justifying not repaying the massive debts Russia had incurred to France prior to the war. Poincaré was the perfect scapegoat on to whom the responsibility for the war's outbreak could be shifted. A native of Lorraine—one of the two provinces annexed by Germany in 1871—in power as Premier and Foreign Minister in 1912 and President of the Republic, up to the war, Poincaré was portrayed as having both motive and opportunity. Furthermore, from 1912 to 1914 he had pursued a policy of strengthening the Franco-Russian alliance. All in all he could be portrayed credibly as partly responsible for the outbreak of war. Lavishly financed German Foreign Ministry propaganda promoted this view in the 1920s. Whole units were established in the *Wilhelmstrasse* dedicated to combating the 'lies' of German war responsibility. French documents show that the targets for such propaganda were principally the United States, Great Britain and neutral powers. One of the images promoted was of Poincaré the war-monger and Germano-phobe intent on emasculating Germany in the 1920s.

Another target for this propaganda was France itself. Here the internationalist socialist and communist left were receptive to the negative image of the bourgeois nationalist Poincaré. It was picked up by a number of Poincaré's political opponents in the press and became a theme in the 1924 election campaign to block his return to power. By this time some of the mud thrown at Poincaré had stuck. Many could no longer believe that Poincaré could ever be conciliatory towards Germany.[4]

Of course neither Poincaré nor Briand could have a totally free hand in their diplomacy. They were constrained by international and domestic politics. The international context of French diplomacy called for a large degree of flexibility and imagination in dealing with the 'German question'. This was not new. From 1871 French diplomacy towards Germany was, contrary to received opinion, far from unfailingly hostile. It went through cycles of tension, détente and even rapprochement.[5]

Of particular importance to French diplomacy was the state of relations with Britain. Despite continual efforts by France no exclusive alliance was forthcoming with London after the abortive 1920 Franco-British Treaty of Guarantee. The French believed that such an alliance, whether purely diplomatic or better still military, was essential to France's security in Europe. The desire for such an alliance and consequent fear of indisposing London haunted French diplomacy and continued to hamstring it up to the Second World War, thus, in François Bédarida's words, French diplomacy submitted to the 'English governess'.[6]

French reliance on Britain from a security point of view was doubled by financial reliance. France's financial position was extremely vulnerable after the war. Her indebtedness put her at the mercy of London

and Washington with whom she had contracted massive loans. Consequently, Paris had to keep her erstwhile allies sweet to avoid having to repay those loans too early. The crises of the French currency in 1924 and 1926 were dismal reminders of France's financial dependency. Not until the franc was finally devalued and stabilised in 1928 would France feel she had cast off the financial shackle.

Despite being a victor at the end of the First World War, France did not enjoy the diplomatic freedom she might have expected from such a position. Russia was no longer available as a traditional counterweight to Germany (despite the Herriot government having recognised the Soviet Union in October 1924). This was a double blow. It not only meant that France was deprived of an eastern bulwark against Germany, it forced her to rely all the more on London's goodwill for her security in Europe. This explains why she recklessly cast in her lot with a network of alliances in central and eastern Europe that she hoped might compensate for the loss of her traditional Russian ally.

The French were also pressured by the fear of a Russo-German agreement. Such fears conjured up memories of French diplomatic isolation engineered by Bismarck in the 1870s and 1880s. One solution was a French agreement with Germany, which would anchor Germany to the West.

A long-standing and increasingly severe restraint on France's freedom of manoeuvre was her precarious demographic position. Her stagnant population had long been a source of anxiety, in particular in relation to Germany. In searching for French security through reconciliation with Germany, had not Briand declared: 'I am carrying out a policy which corresponds to our birth-rate.'[7]

One of the few cards France did have up her sleeve was in the area of intelligence. Through the interception and deciphering of the diplomatic traffic of many European states (even if some like Britain were also reading those of France), France had the luxury of being aware of the negotiating positions of many of her allies and enemies from Britain to Germany, although what she knew and when she knew it is still unclear. What France does seem to have learnt of through intercepts was London's fear of a Franco-German rapprochement in 1924. This the French exploited, albeit unsuccessfully, to draw London closer to Paris.[8]

It used to be believed that the Bloc National governments that were in power from 1920 to 1924 were straightforwardly nationalistic governments of the right, in favour of hawkish coercion of Germany. By contrast, the Cartel governments of 1924–26 were depicted as dovish governments of the left in favour of international solutions to France's security problems and blind conciliation of Germany This picture is far too simplistic. Many of the Bloc governments contained significant numbers of Radical Party ministers and enjoyed Radical parliamentary support. The Bloc National was in reality far more centrist than their traditional image, having been depicted through the eyes of their political opponents.[9]

Though victorious in the elections of 11 May 1924, the Cartel did not have an overall majority and was forced to rely on moderate republicans of Poincaré's persuasion for support in the Chamber of Deputies. For instance, Briand, a man of the centre-right, served in the Cartel governments as Foreign Minister. Nor were the Cartel government's policies on foreign affairs so different from those of Poincaré. Although the Cartel criticised Poincaré's policy towards Germany during the 1924 election campaign, it did not clearly define an alternative: the socialists were resolutely pacifist and internationalist (and worried about the new French Communist Party on their left) having always opposed the Versailles Treaty. But the Radicals, whose name belied their centre-left republicanism, were the largest group in the Chamber and in typical Jacobin tradition were more circumspect, even suspicious, of Germany. They were by no means opposed to the Versailles Treaty. Many had been members of the Bloc National governments as well as Poincaré's January 1922 Cabinet, which contained four Radical ministers. Many would support Poincaré on his return to power again in July 1926.

Thus French political leaders, constrained by shifting majorities, were at pains not to displease the pivotal Radical Party. Poincaré was most insistent from the outset, in the best Republican tradition of the Third

Republic, that his governments should be of 'republican concentration', rejecting reliance on right-wing parties for too much support. This symbiosis in French domestic politics explains why foreign policy in particular did not reflect clear-cut policies of left or right.

The 1923 occupation of the Ruhr provided just such an example. The Chamber vote that immediately followed the Franco-Belgian decision to occupy the Ruhr saw a large majority of the French Chamber voting for Poincaré's action (452–72), including most Radicals, even if their leader Herriot abstained. It was largely on domestic policy (like tax) rather than foreign policy that the Radicals initially opposed Poincaré and the Bloc National. As the 1924 general elections approached, in order to seal a left-wing Cartel and define clearer electoral boundaries, the Radicals and the left began to use foreign policy as a stick to beat Poincaré.

Another contributor to the continuity of French diplomacy of the 1920s was the diplomatic personnel. Permanent officials at the Quai, most notably the 'Briandist' and highly experienced Secretary General Philippe Berthelot, were remarkably stable. Apart from a three-year interlude, which followed a disagreement with Poincaré on an issue other than foreign policy, Berthelot returned as Secretary General with Briand in 1925. Continuity also came from the Assistant, then Political, Director Jules Laroche, as well as the French Ambassador to Berlin, Pierre de Margerie. Continuity of personnel ironed out the peaks and troughs of politicians' rhetoric on France's relations with Germany.

One of the greatest sources of stability and continuity in French diplomacy during the 1920s was the presence of Aristide Briand as Foreign Minister. Cartel ministerial instability (six governments in fifteen months) was compensated for by the continuity of France's longest-serving Foreign Minister since Delcassé in 1905. Briand held the offices of Premier and Foreign Minister consecutively from January 1921 until January 1922 when Poincaré took over. Briand returned as Foreign Minister in April 1925 and continued a process of détente with Germany until his departure from the Quai in January 1932. Most important of all, Poincaré retained him at the Quai from 1926 until his own resignation in 1929. The Political Director of the French Foreign Ministry in 1924 and at the time of Locarno, Jules Laroche, noted that Poincaré 'showed no urge to block his [Briand's] foreign policy'. Poincaré sanctioned that policy in the full knowledge that its intention was détente with Germany. Even when Poincaré became Premier in 1926 and took on the finance portfolio, he kept a careful watch on the foreign ministry and foreign policy. He told his friend Léon Bailby: 'Since I became premier, I get all dispatches sent to me from the Quai d'Orsay.'[10] Poincaré supported Briand's policy of détente with Germany in parliament and in public. Yet the symbolic public displays of Poincaré's conciliation of Germany have been largely ignored. Just as in January 1914 Poincaré had been the first President of the Republic to dine at the German Embassy in Paris since the Franco-Prussian war, in 1928 his government was the first to invite a German Foreign Minister to Paris to sign the Briand-Kellogg pact outlawing war as a means of settling international disputes.

Before he had come to power Poincaré had favoured negotiating with Germany, as Marc Trachtenberg has shown.[11] On his return to the Premiership and Foreign Ministry in 1922 Poincaré supported the idea of working with Germany, especially on economic issues. This was a continuation of his predecessors' policies since 1920.[12] Although Poincaré attempted to work with Germany in the course of 1922, Germany's failure to keep up reparations payments was the sticking point. He only 'backed into the Ruhr' reluctantly in January 1923, when he believed all alternative attempts to encourage Germany to maintain payments had been exhausted. Following the Ruhr occupation, when he successfully coerced the Germans into ending passive resistance, he f failed to capitalise on the advantage by refusing to negotiate an agreement with Germany. By the end of the Ruhr episode Poincaré had come to the conclusion that an international reparations settlement was the only way of retaining Anglo-Saxon support abroad and Radical support at home, as well as providing France with the financial stability and security it coveted. But this

called for a working relationship with Germany. Poincaré had been attempting to steer a course between the nationalist right's policy of coercion of Germany and the socialist left's commitment to unilateral abandonment of the Ruhr. As Jacques Seydoux, one of Poincaré's and the Quai's most far-sighted advisors explained on 27 December 1923, France was moving towards a 'financial reconstruction' of Europe by which it was no longer possible to deal with Germany as Victor to vanquished'.[13] This is the view of modern historiography which has, in the words of Jon Jacobson, rescued Poincaré from 'the aggressive and vengeful role which at times has been assigned to him in German, British, and American historiography'.[14] In accepting the necessity of working more closely with Germany, Poincaré was embarking French diplomacy on a route that Briand would take to Locarno.

Cartel governments did not therefore break with past French diplomacy in sanctioning the Locarno strategy. They were following a trajectory on which their predecessors had reluctantly embarked. The notion that by following Poincaré's 'failed Ruhr policy' Cartel leader Edouard Herriot converted France to a policy of negotiation with Germany that would lead to pacific coexistence overstates the case. In reality most French governments since 1920 had been nego tiating with Germany on a variety of issues. The problem was that Germany was not always willing to negotiate. Berlin understood how she could play off the Anglo-Americans against the French.[15] But difficulty in negotiating with Germany was not restricted to Poincaré, as Herriot and Briand would discover. Herriot's scepticism about Germany was revealed by his choice of War Minister: General Nollet, who from 1919 had led the *Mission InterAlliée de Contrôle Militaire* in Germany, and who maintained a healthy scepticism towards Germany's attitude in implementing Allied measures.

What Herriot and Briand did have was the benefit of the experience of the Ruhr episode to gauge their dealings with Germany. They also benefited from the Ruhr experience as having warned Berlin that France would not indulge Germany indefinitely and that the military option always remained for non-compliance.

Poincaré had also learned his lesson by the time he returned to power in 1926. He certainly did not want to overturn Briand's Locarno policy. Indeed he fully accepted it. This did not escape contemporaries such as Clemenceau. He criticised Briand's Locarno diplomacy as 'the conductor of French defeatism', remarking that, 'Mr Poincaré let him get on with it.' Clemenceau added: 'Mr. Poincaré was in the front row of those who could and should have spoken for *la patrie*. He saw. He understood. He permitted.'[16]

Even during his period in opposition from 1924 to 1926 Poincaré refrained from much criticism of Cartel foreign policy. This has surprised some historians, such as Jean-Noël Jeanney. Criticism of Herriot's foreign policy was more technical than political. This was perhaps because he continued to influence Herriot's policy to Germany. In May 1924 Poincaré had a number of meetings with Herriot. At those meetings Poincaré impressed on his successor the need to link a final settlement of the Ruhr episode to two essential questions: European security and an inter-Allied debt settlement.

The Locarno agreements, negotiated from 5 to 16 October 1925, were intended to stabilise the frontiers between Germany and its western neighbours: Germany recognised its borders with France and Belgium and accepted the demilitarised left bank of the Rhine established by the Versailles Treaty. Italy and Britain were made guarantors of these agreements, which obliged them to intervene militarily in the event of their being breached. This was considered of prime importance for France, who had failed repeatedly for five years to coax Britain into a military alliance. Briand considered this agreement to be the best possible substitute for the abortive 1920 Franco-British Treaty of Guarantee. As a counterpart Germany became a member of the League of Nations and was promised a permanent seat on its Council. Berlin also secured the evacuation of Allied troops from around Cologne. The problem for France, of course, was that Britain and Italy were left to decide what constituted the aggression that would activate the Rhineland Pact. France

might have won a German pledge of non-aggression and a British promise of military assistance, but neither were cast iron guarantees.

On his return from the Swiss resort to Paris Briand was presented as the 'pilgrim of peace'. He projected the Locarno agreements as the beginning of the real peace process, whereby Germany finally accepted of her own volition what the Versailles Treaty had imposed on her—the return of Alsace-Lorraine and demilitarisation of the left bank of the Rhine in perpetuity.

The Chamber voted through the Locarno agreements by a massive majority, but the agreements did come in for some criticism from Poincaré, now out of power. He did not believe demilitarisation of the Rhineland to be an adequate guarantee. Still suspicious of Germany and with some foresight, given the remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936, he wrote in a Belgian journal, 'Belgium and France are no longer free to judge the danger in the event of a flagrant breach of the treaty. In exchange for a few concessions, we are obtaining a commitment from the Reich worth only what the reigning mood in Germany is worth.' According to Jules Laroche, it was partly to refute criticism of the inadequate guarantees for Rhineland neutrality that a legal note was added to the Locarno agreements effectively allowing countries such as France the right to intervene, without the League of Nations, to stop any unprovoked aggression, even if France made no use of it to stop Hitler's remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936.[17] Nevertheless, Briand had established a momentum in French foreign policy which was widely supported by domestic opinion, the Radicals and Poincaré.

Briand, like Poincaré, also understood the weaknesses of the Locarno agreements for France. It was largely with that in mind that he developed his idea of a United States of Europe in 1929, with the intention of completing and rejuvenating the Locarno agreements. Briand's speeches at the time of Locarno were already imbued with the European ideal and punctuated with references to 'Europe'. On 30 November 1925 in London he stated, 'here we are only Europeans. The documents we have just signed must renovate Europe.' In the Chamber during ratification of the Locarno agreements he remarked on 26 February 1926, 'Do you think I went without emotion to that rendezvous where I was to meet German ministers? … I went there, they came, and we talked European.'[18]

What was important in Briand's references to Europe was that they were not starry-eyed, but clearly linked to the idea of the European project providing a solution to France's security problems. On 23 February 1926 he told a secret meeting of the Chamber Foreign Affairs Commission that the day would soon come when Europe would have to become a federal unit like the United States and that France's future would be in that direction. Poincaré, who was always fully briefed about the politics of the Chamber, would have been fully aware of Briand's statements and intentions. It is significant, therefore, that only five months later Poincaré appointed Briand Foreign Minister in his new cabinet. Furthermore, it was in Poincaré's government that Briand developed the initial plan f or a United States of Europe, whose gestation dated from Locarno and which was finally announced in his speech to the tenth assembly of the League of Nations on 5 September 1929. That speech was made only two weeks after Poincaré's resignation from the government on health grounds. Although Briand spoke of his plan to very few people (not even Foreign Ministry officials), it is highly unlikely that Poincaré was not informed. Poincaré would have known that Briand's European project was not purely idealistic musings, but had a very realistic and practical intent. It was founded on the imaginative idea—not absent from French thinking about European construction some three decades later—that an alternative means of delivering security to France in Europe was to envelop Germany in a web of political and economic agreements that would reduce her freedom of manoeuvre and consequently her ability to come into military conflict with France.

It was certainly under Poincaré's premiership from 1926 to 1928 that Briand developed still further the policy of détente with Germany. Germany was admitted to the League of Nations on an equal footing to

other nations, an International Steel Entente was concluded with France, Germany, the Saar, Belgium and Luxembourg (a precursor of the European Coal and Steel Community of the 1950s) and inter-Allied Military Control in Germany was ended. Finally in August 1927 a Franco-German commercial treaty was signed, which Jacques Bariéty has described as a substantial source of the 'economic pacification of the continent'.[19] During the general election campaign of April-May 1928 Poincaré spoke publicly of conciliation of Germany and an early evacuation of the Rhineland (in other words before 1935) if a reparations settlement could be reached with Germany.[20] In May 1928 an article appeared in the Social-Democrat *Vorwärts* newspaper based on conversations with Poincaré entitled: 'Does Poincaré want an agreement with Germany?'; to which the emphatic reply was 'Yes.' Furthermore, the German journalist insisted that the old nickname of 'Poincaré-la-Ruhr' was no longer valid.[21] In late August the German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann was officially invited to Paris for the signing of the Briand-Kellogg Pact. On 27 August 1928, in personal conversations with Stresemann, Poincaré was for the moment guarded about an evacuation of the Rhineland. Nevertheless he did suggest—in Gaullist vein—a Franco-German rapprochement to protect Europe from Americanisation and Bolshevism. In this process France and Germany would 'forget the past' and 'come together to work out the major European problems' posed by US financial power and Bolshevism.[22] At a further meeting with Stresemann in Paris on 19 June the following year, Poincaré lifted his opposition to an early evacuation of the Rhineland, because the previous month the Young Plan had settled the reparations issue by maintaining German repayments until 1987. As ever, Poincaré was willing to make concessions to Germany so long as concrete safeguards for French military and financial security were forthcoming.

Despite this apparently rosy picture of Franco-German relations in the late 1920s, both Briand and Poincaré maintained a healthy scepticism about France's security in Europe *vis-à-vis* Germany. Both understood that Locarno was not enough.[23] The Briand-Kellogg pact signed in Paris on 27 August 1928 between 59 states was originally intended by Briand—backed by Poincaré—to lead to a bilateral Franco-American Treaty. It was hoped that this device might return the United States to European politics as a guarantee of French security. However, Washington made the Briand-Kellogg pact multilateral, thus avoiding any special commitment to France. France was therefore obliged to fall back on a European system for its security. This is where Briand's plan for a 'United States of Europe' came in. Not surprisingly, some cynics saw it as a 'United States of France'.

Berlin, however, had misgivings about the Briand Plan. Berlin was none too enthusiastic about being trussed up in a French-designed organisation for Europe. While the Briand Plan was still being sketched out, Briand explained it to the US Ambassador who told the German Foreign Office. The Germans expressed their opposition to the plan, but couched that opposition in terms of the plan seeming anti-American, which was not an unattractive side to it for some.[24] Berlin saw Washington as her supporter in what Berlin described as 'the struggle against the French system of alliances'. The Germans rejected the plan even before it was officially presented to them, just as Berlin had roundly rejected a number of Poincaré's 1922 initiatives.

There was an overall continuity in French diplomacy in the 1920s, which leads to the conclusion that there was Locarno diplomacy before and after Locarno. That diplomacy was not motivated by sentiment, but rather as a means of tackling France's long-standing problem of having to live alongside a powerful Germany. Reconciliation offered another form of security. The willingness to work with Germany had much to do with Poincaré and Briand f facing similar constraints throughout the 1920s. As Jon Jacobson has written, perhaps Briand and Poincaré did not differ significantly in their policies. The wily Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay, Philippe Berthelot, who knew both men well, put it thus: 'Briand was a man who said "Yes, but", while Poincaré was a man who said "No, however".'[25] They represented two sides of

the same coin, whose currency was security. Throughout the 1920s both sought in not dissimilar ways—often overlapping—to reach an agreement with Germany that would provide France with the European security it desperately craved.

NOTES

1. On this see Jacques Bariéty, Aristide Briand: les Raisons d'un Oubli', in Antoine Fleury (ed.), *Le Plan Briand d'Union Fédérale Européenne* (Berne: Lang, 1998), pp. 2–4.
2. On Franco-German relations more generally see J.F.V.Keiger, *France and the World Since 1870* (London: Arnold, 2001), pp. 10–59.
3. J.Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972); C.S.Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade After World War I* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); S.A.Schuker, *The End of French Predominance in Europe: The Financial Crisis of 1924 and the Adoption of the Dawes Plan* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1976); M.Trachtenberg, *Reparations in World Politics: France and European Economic Diplomacy, 1916–1923* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980). Melvyn Leffler describes Poincaré as 'not eager to pursue a bellicose course towards Germany' but desirous of securing German respect for the treaty and wishing to elicit more comprehensive guarantees from Britain, in *The Elusive Quest: America's Pursuit of European Stability and French Security, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), p. 37. Leffler's account is understanding of the constraints on Poincaré, e.g. pp. 73–8, 89, 153–4. More recent historiography has tended to be more sympathetic to France and harder on Germany, see for instance a number of the contributions in M.F.Boemeke, G.D.Feldman and E.Glaser (eds), *The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment after 75 Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), notably S.Marks, 'Smoke and Mirrors: In Smoke-Filled Rooms and the Galerie des Glaces', pp. 337–70.
4. On the anti-Poincaré propaganda see J.F.V.Keiger, *Raymond Poincaré* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
5. On Franco-German relations at this time see J.F.V.Keiger, *France and the World Since 1870* (London: Arnold, 2001), pp. 110–20.
6. F.Bédarida, 'La "Gourvernante Anglaise"', in R.Rémond and J.Bourdin (eds), *Edouard Daladier, Chef de Gouvernement (Avril-Septembre 1939)* (Paris: FNSP, 1977), pp. 228–40.
7. Quoted in Bariéty, 'Aristide Briand', p. 5.
8. See Keiger, *Poincaré* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 290–1; C.Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London: Sceptre, 1992), p. 375 and generally on the activities of the French intelligence services at this time, Keiger, *France and the World,* pp. 88–93.
9. For the more recent view see J.-M.Mayeur, *La Vie Politique sous la Troisième République* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), pp. 253–9; J.-J.Becker and S.Berstein, *Victoire et Frustration, 1914–1929* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), pp. 179–80, 186–96.
10. Quoted in Keiger, *Poincaré,* p. 318.
11. Trachtenberg, *Reparation,* pp. 174–5.
12. In February 1920 Premier Alexandre Millerand appealed for the normalisation of Franco-German economic relations and in 1924, as President of the Republic, called for Franco-German reconciliation. In a speech to the Senate on 24 July 1929 Millerand explained his support of Franco-German entente at this time, even if he was critical of Locarno for not offering sufficient guarantees for French security, see R.Persil, *Alexandre Millerand* (Paris: SEFI, 1949), p. 178.
13. Quoted in Trachtenberg, *Reparation,* p. 335. On Poincaré's attempts to work with Germany, see Keiger, *Poincaré,* pp. 275–94.
14. J.Jacobson, 'Strategies of French Foreign Policy after World War One', *Journal of Modern History* 55, 1 (1983), 83.

15. See for instance Germany's enlisting of the influential economist John Maynard Keynes in its criticism of France's insistence on the payment of reparations, in N. Ferguson, *Paper and Iron: Hamburg Business and German Politics in the Era of Inflation, 1897–1927* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 226, 368–9, or the wilfully crafted reparations myth of 'mountainous' German repayments still perpetu-ated in general histories, discussed in W. Keylor, 'Versailles and International Diplomacy', in Boemeke *et al.* (eds), *Versailles,* pp. 499, 502.
16. G.Clemenceau, *Grandeurs et Misères d'une Victoire* (Paris: Plon, 1930), pp. 315–16, 318.
17. J.Laroche, *Au Quai d'Orsay avec Briand et Poincaré, 1913–1926* (Paris: Hachette, 1957), pp. 214–15.
18. Quoted in Bariéty, 'Briand', p. 8.
19. J.Bariéty and R.Poidevin, *Les Relations Franco-Allemandes 1815–1975* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1977), pp. 271–5.
20. See Jacobson, *Locarno,* pp. 162, 168.
21. See F.Roth, *Raymond Poincaré* (Paris: Fayard, 2000), p. 505.
22. See Jacobson, *Locarno,* pp. 193–4 on this.
23. On their shared outlook see Jacobson, *Locarno,* pp. 372–4.
24. For anti-American interpretations see, H.Blumenthal, *Illusion and Reality in Franco-American Diplomacy 1914–1945* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), p. 178.
25. Quoted in Jacobson, *Locarno,* p. 306.

6
The Franco-Soviet Negotiations of 1924–27

DAVID R.WATSON

The period 1924–27 saw an attempt to normalise relations between the European powers—and also the United States—in both the political and economic spheres, necessarily so as political and economic questions were intertwined. The Locarno Treaties were part of a wider attempted normalisation, involving reparations, war debts and relations between the 'bourgeois' states and the Soviet Union. In the latter case also economic and political questions were interlinked; the restoration of diplomatic relations was followed by negotiations about economic matters, the Russian debt, the possibility of new credit and the expansion of trade.

This chapter deals with the Franco-Soviet negotiations, following on France's granting of diplomatic recognition on 28 October 1924; after some preliminary manoeuvrings, these took the form of bargaining in an elaborate large-scale Commission, with important participants from both sides. Most of the meetings were held between 26 February and 10 July 1926, when they were adjourned, in effect, to March 1927. After resumption in a desultory fashion, the official meetings were soon adjourned again, but the two presidents of the respective delegations, Anatole de Monzie for the French, and the Soviet Ambassador to Paris, Christian Rakovsky for the Soviet Union, continued to meet privately. In fact many indications suggested that by the autumn of 1927 the two sides were on the verge of concluding an agreement. Then, in a crisis that will be examined later, the French curtailed the considerable freedom of action previously enjoyed by de Monzie. Although the Franco-Soviet Commission never met again, it was not formally dissolved, and the archive material shows that the French bureaucracy still envisaged resumption of negotiations and the possibility of a successful conclusion for at least another 18 months. However, by 1929, it was clear that any such possibility had vanished; Stalin had begun the collec tivisation campaign, a second revolution as it has been called, which completely removed the basis on which the negotiations had been conducted, the restoration of relatively normal economic relations between the Soviet and the capitalist economic worlds. On the political side, France was again pilloried by the Soviet Union as the most hostile of the bourgeois powers, although diplomatic relations were never broken off.[1]

As a framework to discussion of the negotiations some background information has to be provided. On the Russian side it is important to realise that over these years Stalin was establishing his control over the party. This involved a complex dance in which the different factions, led by the various party bosses, allied first with one, then with another in manoeuvrings which inexorably led to domination of the whole state and party machine by Stalin; essentially a battle of personalities, it was expressed in ideological terms. Both of these aspects are far too complex to be discussed here, but the essence of the matter was that Stalin adopted a moderate ideological line, 'Socialism in one country', and the continuation of the New Economic Policy (NEP). This latter would necessitate the development of good economic relations with capitalist states, and thus the successful conclusion of negotiations such as those with France. Stalin's major rival, of course, was Trotsky, who adopted a more 'revo lutionary' line, criticising the détente implied by 'socialism in one

country', and calling for more rapid development of Soviet industry. Paradoxically, however, in 1925 Trotsky became Commissar for Concessions, that is for arrangements by which foreign capitalists would be allowed to invest in and operate enterprises on Soviet soil. Such concessions did operate on quite a considerable scale, although very few of them were French; concessions for French capitalists, many of whom had claims to enterprises nationalised in 1918, were part of the negotiating programme. Rakovsky, who succeeded Krassin as ambassador in Paris at the end of 1925, and who was the leader of the Soviet negotiating team, was a leading Trotskyist, and it is noticeable that several members of the Soviet delegation were also associated with the Trotskyist opposition, notably Preobrazensky. There can be no doubt that Stalin's principal motive in sending Rakovsky to the West, first as Soviet diplomatic representative in London, and then in Paris, was to get him out of the way during these crucial years.[2] Having followed a moderate policy line to the end of 1927, by which time the Trotskyists had been totally defeated, Stalin in 1928 switched in internal matters to a more revolutionary policy than even the Trotskyist opposition had contemplated, making negotiations such as those conducted with France completely otiose.

Turning to the French background, the main points are the electoral victory of the *Cartel des Gauches* in April to May 1924. This involved the removal from office of the right-wing (though ex-Socialist) President Millerand and Raymond Poincaré, the centre-right politician who had been Prime Minister for two years. However the *Cartel,* a coalition of Socialists, Radicals and other leftist groups, failed to remain united for long. Its leader, the Radical Edouard Herriot, Foreign Minister as well as Prime Minister, had time to negotiate the agreements that led to the Dawes Plan and to end the French occupation of the Ruhr, as well as to grant diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union, thus opening the rapprochement that led to the Franco-Soviet negotiations. In the eyes of his opponents, and in those of many historians since, Herriot's decision amounted to throwing away the strong hand that had been won for France by his predecessor. But the mounting financial crisis, with the French franc falling dramatically on the foreign exchanges, brought down his government in April 1925. He was succeeded by another left-leaning Prime Minister, Paul Painlevé, with Aristide Briand as Foreign Minister. There followed five other governments between April 1925 and July 1926, during which time the financial crisis deepened with the franc falling at its lowest point to one-tenth of its 1914 value. This led to the return of Poincaré as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. The confidence he inspired, and the return to a centre-right instead of centre-left government, produced a rapid recovery of the franc to one-fifth of its 1914 value, twice what it had been at the low point. As was so often the case under the Third Republic Cabinet instability could be combined with considerable longevity of individual Ministers. An important point is that the most elaborate period of formal negotiations, from February to July 1926, coincided with the financial crisis and with unstable left-wing governments. While new French credits to the Soviet Union were first discussed, the whole French financial system seemed to be in meltdown. In contrast, by the summer of 1927 there had occurred a remarkable turnaround, putting France well on the way to being financially, if not economically, one of the strongest countries of the world. By that time, it would have been possible for France to advance large-scale credits to the Soviet Union.

Franco-Soviet relations in this period have not been much studied in comparison to Soviet relations with Germany, Britain and even the United States, in spite of the latter's refusal to grant recognition.[3] The most substantial work ends with recognition.[4]

For the period after 1924 we have only the fairly rapid treatment in A.J.Williams *Trading with the Bolsheviks,* and some articles that are valuable but necessarily limited. The most recent detailed article is one on the subject of the Soviet Union and attempted FrancoGerman economic collaboration, while the only overall survey of the Franco-Soviet negotiations is in the form of two articles by S.Schram published in 1959–60.[5] When Schram wrote his articles the French archives for this period were not yet opened; his sources were de Monzie's private papers, the German diplomatic documents and material from the Soviet

side—paradoxically in view of the iron curtain that was about to descend, cutting off western researchers from Soviet material until 1990. At this early date some authentic Soviet documentation escaped to the West. This was because of Trotsky's defeat and his exile. Apart from material that survived in the Trotsky archive, a US journalist, Louis Fischer, was given material by Trotsky and his associates, including Rakovsky, which he published in English as early as 1930.[6] Thus before the recent work by Debo, Carley and Williams, accounts of the Franco-Soviet negotiations have been based mainly on documentation from the Soviet side. This chapter will be based on French material, mainly from the archives of the Ministry of Finance.

By 1921 it was clear that the Bolshevik regime in Russia would continue for the foreseeable future; their opponents had been unable to defeat them in the civil war, and the possibility that sheer chaos and economic collapse would destroy the party's rule was obviated by the adoption of the New Economic Policy. For many reasons which cannot be examined here the wartime allies of Russia found it impossible to grant her diplomatic recognition, although Germany of course had already done so at Brest-Litovsk in 1918. However in the British case the absence of formal recognition, withheld until the formation of the first Labour government in 1924, masked the reestablishment of *de facto* diplomatic relations under the guise of trade missions. Lloyd George tried very hard to restore both political and economic links with Russia at the Genoa Conference, and even the Conservative governments that followed the break up of the coalition continued in practice to have dealings with the Soviet Union. It was more difficult for French governments to follow this path, partly because of the closer and more sentimental links between France and Tsarist Russia, but primarily because of the existence of a very large number of small individual holders of Tsarist bonds. The Bolsheviks had 'expropriated the expropriators' by repudiating the debts incurred by the previous government, as well as by nationalising all of Russian industry, including firms owned in whole or in part by foreigners. Industrial investment involved Britain, although less than the French in total, and wartime inter-governmental debt brought the total British claim to more than the French. But what mattered politically were the small *rentiers* whose votes counted. Banks and large industrial investors could afford to take a more understanding and long-term view, but French governments were reluctant to reestablish relations with the Soviet regime without a settlement of the debt question. Nevertheless as the Russian economy recovered a little from the revolutionary catastrophe, trade between France and the Soviet Union revived in 1922 and 1923.[7] But French businesses felt they were handicapped in comparison to their German, British and even their US competitors by the diplomatic freeze. The diplomats at the Quai d'Orsay also felt that it did not make sense to ignore the existence of a state which, in fact, did exist. Although the treaty of Rapallo suggested much closer relations between Russia and Germany than were really achieved, it could be seen as an example of what could result from an ostrich-like attitude. There was, then, considerable pressure building up for a resumption of diplomatic relations between Paris and Moscow.

Raymond Poincaré, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister from January 1922 to April 1924, has been held responsible for the rejection of recognition. In spite of his reputation as a hardliner on the Russian question, as on the German question, Poincaré did intend to restore diplomatic relations in due course. But he thought that recognition was a card in French hands that ought to bring some counterpart from the Soviet government. He argued that it was up to the latter to state what they would give, particularly about the debt, in order to be recognised. This hit the Soviet government at one of its most sensitive points, as it implied that they had to prove themselves before they deserved to be treated as a sovereign state. They argued that recognition simply meant that the bourgeois states were accepting a fact. This produced stalemate as long as Poincaré remained in power. It can be argued that in this matter, as in his Ruhr policy, Poincaré over-estimated the strength of the French position. Neither Germany nor the Soviet Union found it necessary to come to Canossa and kneel before Poincaré's intransigence. As time went on his inter-locuters realised that

Poincaré's position was threatened by the elec tions scheduled for April-May 1924. Poincaré had unrealistic expectations about the likely election results, thinking that he could survive them and remain in office with a majority shifted to the left. This is, of course, what emerged by 1926, but in the meantime there was the two-year period of government by the *Cartel des Gauches*. Then, as the Germans and the Soviets had gambled, they could deal with the more pliable Herriot, and not with a tough bargainer like Poincaré. Herriot had first to deal with reparations and Germany but, after six months in office, he granted recognition of the Soviet Union on 28 October 1924, without any of the preliminary bargaining Poincaré had wanted. Instead it was agreed that the two governments would proceed to discuss the questions at issue after recognition instead of before it, with Herriot optimistically arguing that recognition would be rewarded by a more forthcoming attitude on the part of the Soviet Union.

Leonid Krassin was appointed as the first Soviet ambassador to Paris, although he retained his post as Commissar of Foreign Trade in Moscow. His appointment underlined the fact that trade and economic relations were seen by both sides as the most important issues. Krassin, although an 'old Bolshevik', had also been a wealthy businessman before 1917, and represented at least superficially a very moderate face of Bolshevism. The French sent Jean Herbette as their first ambassador to Moscow. He was not a career diplomat, but a journalist on the conservative paper *Le Temps*. He was completely enchanted with 'the Soviet experiment' and throughout the period 1924–28 pressed very strongly for a Franco-Soviet rapprochement. On the train to Moscow he scribbled a note to his friend, Gaston Bergéry, at that time also a Sovietophile, worth quoting for its evocation of the mental atmosphere of the time: 'tachez de venir bientot a Moscou. Voir le nouveau, apprendre, comprendre [try to come to Moscow soon. To see what is new, to learn, to understand]'. He also commissioned the artist Raoul Dufy to produce a new design for the embassy seal, a cup of liberty against a background of ears of corn. This effort is described by a junior diplomat, de Boisanger, as one of several of his naïve attempts to ingratiate himself with the Bolsheviks, which were the reverse of what they wanted. Instead of radical chic, they appreciated protocol and formality, demonstrating acceptance on a footing of equality. The German Ambassador, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, had aristocratic manners and went down much better with Chicherin than Herbette. After his naive enthusiasm Herbette after 1928 did a complete about turn, sending back to Paris despatches that were as critical of the regime as his earlier ones had been favourable. These later despatches were extracted from the archives by the Germans and published in 1943 under the title *Un diplomate français parle du péril bolchévique*.[8]

In the months following recognition the two sides prepared their respective cases in readiness for the formal bargaining that was to follow. The French side set up a *Comité consultatif pour l'étude des questions relative aux negotiations franco-soviétiques*. Its president was Anatole de Monzie, and other important members were Yvon Delbos, Joseph Noulens, Jules Laroche and Hervé Alphand. Delbos was a Radical deputy, later to be Foreign Minister in the Popular Front government, while Noulens, another former deputy, had been Ambassador to Russia in 1917–18, and was much involved with groups trading with Russia. Laroche and Alphand were officials. De Monzie himself was a centre-left politician, who, among other interests, had established himself as an expert on Soviet Russia, and as an advocate of the reestablishment of close relations, economic and political, with France. A lawyer, de Monzie, had been employed by Count Ignatiev, the Tsarist military attaché in Paris who threw in his lot with the Bolsheviks after 1917, in the complicated legal problems resulting from the immense funds he controlled: funds originally destined for the purchase of munitions. Herriot himself, who certainly appointed de Monzie to this post, had visited Russia in 1922, describing his experiences in newspaper articles reprinted as *La Russie Nouvelle*. In this book he argued that the 'excesses' and violence of the revolutionary years had been abandoned, and that in both the political and economic fields the Soviet regime was rapidly returning to normality.[9] De Monzie, visiting Russia a year later, developed the same ideas in his own accounts.[10]

For a year after recognition de Monzie's committee proceeded to gather together the different items in the French debt claim against Russia, taking note of representations from the several committees representing the bondholders and owners of shares and real property, and assessing them with the aid of the documentation collected by the official *Office des Biens et Interêts Privés*. Meanwhile Herbette was sending back optimistic reports on the immense potentialities of Franco-Soviet trade. As A.J.Williams notes: 'hardly any of his despatches mention debts; many of them dwell on the glittering prizes of trade. And virtually all of them underline the necessity of credit.' In fact trade was taking place, although with the balance very much in favour of the Soviets: they exported goods to the value of 50 million dollars to France (oil 14 million dollars, wheat 29.6 million dollars) while France sent goods only to the value of 9 million dollars.[11]

By September 1925 very little progress had been made. A memorandum signed by Caillaux, as Minister of Finance, to Briand, Foreign Minister, ended with the remark that the proposals submitted by Krassin were not worth discussing. The Soviet offer to make some payment on the pre-1918 debt was dependent on their being given long-term credits by the French banks, guaranteed by the French State: as the French money market was still closed, even to friendly foreign borrowers, this was quite impossible.[12]

Nevertheless the negotiations continued, and it was decided to make them more formal and elaborate. At the same time Krassin was replaced by Rakovsky as Soviet Ambassador in Paris. In spite of the impression that Rakovsky, a leading supporter of Trotsky, was more revolutionary than Krassin, this probably signified a Soviet attempt to push things forward. Rakovsky appeared to have achieved remarkable results in similar negotiations with the British Labour government in 1924, persuading them to agree to state-backed credits to the Soviet Union. In reality, though, this was not a real achievement as it was very unlikely that Parliament, where the minority Labour government depended on Liberal support, would have ratified the agreement. In the event the Campbell case brought down the government, and the elections swept the Conservatives back into power, bringing an abrupt end to Anglo-Soviet rapprochement. Nevertheless Rakovsky now had a reputation for successful negotiation with bourgeois governments; he was also an old friend of de Monzie, a friendship dating back to their student days 30 years before.

De Monzie was now transferred from his original *Comité consultatif* to the presidency of the French delegation in an elaborate Franco-Soviet Commission divided into four sections: political, economic, financial and judicial. He was aided by two Radical deputies, Dalbiez and Bastid, and leading bureaucrats headed the different sections, Berthelot (from the Quai d'Orsay, political), Seruys (Ministry of Commerce, economic), Fromageot (juridical) and Seydoux (financial). The Secretary was Eirik Labonne, a young Foreign Office official with much Russian experience, and someone destined for a brilliant future career. The Russian delegation included some of the leading figures of the party, headed by Christian Rakovsky as President, with Tomsky, Preobrazensky and Piatakov among its members. An elaborate programme of topics for discussion was drawn up, although very little of it seems to have actually been embarked on.[13]

The two delegations conferred from 26 February to 10 July 1926, a period of ministerial instability and financial crisis. There were five governments one of which lasted only one day on 21 July when Herriot attempted to form a cabinet with de Monzie as Finance Minister. Rakovsky, who had just returned to Moscow received a telegram from de Monzie with the happy news and calling him back to Paris to resume the negotiations. But by the time he had returned the ephemeral Herriot Cabinet had been replaced by a government of national union headed by Poincaré, with Briand remaining as Foreign Minister.[14] The talks were adjourned, not to be resumed until March 1927. A constant theme of the talks was that the French wanted to talk about repayment of the Russian debt while the Russians were interested in new credits to be advanced by France. On 24 March 1926 the Soviets asked for a credit of 225 million dollars, partly in goods, partly in cash, to be guaranteed by the French government, 'un veritable investissement pour la reorganisation de l'économie nationale russe [a real investment for the reorganisation of the Russian

national economy]'. The French replied that this was inadmissible: in particular there could be no question of a state guarantee. This question of principle was then left in suspense while the financial section worked on the details of claim and counterclaim. The French began by asking for annual Russian debt payments of 125 million gold francs: then they were beaten down to 82 million gold francs annually over a period of 62 years. The Russians offered 62 payments of 55 million gold francs, possibly increased to 60 million. On the face of it there did not appear to be an enormous gap between the two sides. But as a French note remarked there were huge differences between the two sides on more basic questions.[15] A French note of September 1926 stated that they were a finger's breadth away from breakdown, which had only been averted by a long adjournment. On 21 October 1926 Poincaré met de Monzie to discuss the talks' progress, giving him precise instructions about matters he must raise with Rakovsky, in particular that there could be no question of government guaranteed credits. In fact the official talks did not resume until 19 March 1927, after which they were soon adjourned again. But less formal negotiations continued between de Monzie and Rakovsky both before and after 19 March.

All that the elaborate official Commission had achieved by the spring of 1927 was to have almost arrived at agreement on the scale of Soviet debt repayment. The Soviet side leaked this to the press, much to the annoyance of the French government. It was dependent on the two sides reaching agreement on a wider range of issues, which had scarcely been discussed: nationalised French industrial enterprises and the question of new credits. The Soviets simply assumed agreement on these. The idea was clearly to put pressure on the French government by way of the *petits rentiers:* in newspaper articles and pamphlets it was argued that the Soviet government was ready to secure payment to them if the French government would adopt a reasonable attitude on these other questions.[16] In spite of their annoyance the French government, or at least part of it, was still anxious to continue to negotiate. But an increasing divergence between the Ministry of Finance, on the one hand, and the Foreign Ministry and de Monzie himself, on the other, becomes apparent in 1927, with the latter determined to press on in the face of resistance from the Finance Ministry. The Foreign Minister himself, Aristide Briand, seems to have taken little interest in the Soviet negotiations.

Continuing negotiations in the spring and summer of 1927 took place mainly outside the framework of the Commission. They took the form of direct talks between de Monzie and Rakovsky. Valuable insight into the French viewpoint is provided by a personal letter from Eirik Labonne, Secretary of the Commission, to Herbette on 12 April 1927. Labonne told him that there had been an important private meeting a few days before between de Monzie and Rakovsky: also present were Labonne himself, with Gourevitch and Preobrezensky on the Soviet side. Preobrazensky had explained that the short-term credits they had obtained from Germany had proved unsatisfactory, and that they were not interested in further commercial credits of that sort from Germany or from anyone else, including France. The Soviet Union needed much longer-term loans—for example, of 15 years—for the development of their electrical, chemical and oil industries. As it was certain that such long-term loans would not be provided by the private sector, they would involve a State guarantee. The interesting thing is the French response to this demand: 'Concours de l'Etat: la formule n'est pas pour nous effrayer [Agreement of the State: the formula is not for us to criticise].' The letter went on, 'we have realised for some time that there could be no solution otherwise'. This was a remarkable concession on the part of the French negotiators, and one that would soon bring them into conflict with the Ministry of Finance. But, continued Labonne's account, 'we said that such a dramatic step would only be possible if it had the support of the holders of Tsarist bonds, and that would only be forthcoming if the Soviets resumed debt repayments'. The Ministry of Finance insisted, the Soviets were told, that an agreement on the debts had to come before new credits. However the French side suggested a possible solution: the Soviets would agree the terms of debt repayment, but with the proviso that they would only go

into effect after agreement had been reached on new credits. There were many on the French side who regarded this concession as giving the Soviets a perfect blackmail weapon. But Rakovsky refused it, and the talks were suspended for the holidays. Labonne continued his long letter by saying that he and de Monzie were still optimistic. The Soviets were so obviously in desperate need of new loans that they could not continue to be so intransigent. He told Herbette that de Monzie had said, in a tone of voice that could not be conveyed adequately, Avez-vous mésuré tout ce qui représente d'amitié preventive dans les circonstances du moment, cette reprise des negotiations? [Have you weighed up all that this resumption of negotiations represents by way of preventative friendship in the current circumstances?].' Labonne concluded that the atmosphere in Paris was 'lourde', and that the pessimists seemed to have been proved right. He pressed Herbette to 'get the Soviet government to give us the necessary support to achieve agreement'.[17] A completely different tone is seen in a Ministry of Finance memorandum of 18 May, complaining of the difficulty of negotiating with the Soviet team, and expressing annoyance at their false announcements to the press.[18] Nevertheless de Monzie was assured by Poincaré that the talks should continue, in spite of the wide gap between the two sides. A long memorandum of 18 July, drafted by Labonne for de Monzie, entitled *Des conditions effectives du règlement de la Dette russe,* caused a good deal of annoyance in the Ministry of Finance, as representing de Monzie's willingness to go too far in accommodating the Soviets. The memorandum spelled out in more detail the settlement that had been outlined in Labonne's private letter to Herbette in April. It introduced a new element that was clearly of some importance, Soviet oil. Looking at the detail of how Franco-Soviet trade could be increased, it suggested that France should buy 500,000 tons of oil annually, which would be about one-sixth of total French oil imports and also one-sixth of Soviet oil exports. France already imported Soviet oil but on a smaller scale. The memorandum envisaged increasing the Soviet share of French oil imports by the government using them for the navy, and by 'quelques indications données aux acheteurs privés [some instructions (or information) given to private buyers]'. Oil was certainly of major significance in tempting the French to envisage abandoning the rules of free market capitalism. From 1918 onwards French governments had been seeking ways to free France from what was seen as dependence on the Anglo-Saxon oil trusts; a stake in the Rumanian field was one idea, but it was not in itself enough, and Soviet oil would be a valuable addition. Poincaré, who had played an important role in developing French oil policy in his 1922–24 Ministry, would be sympathetic. It is noticeable however that in the very critical comment of de Monzie's memorandum produced by the Ministry of Finance on 8 August, this aspect is not mentioned. Its author, Moret, confines himself to attacking the idea of a state guarantee for new loans to the Soviets, which was completely incompatible with basic principles of public finance.[19]

Other material in the French archives suggests that in July 1927, the French government thought that, in view of their breach with Britain, the Soviets would be forced to be more conciliatory in the negotiations with France. It was at this point that the 'Rakovsky affair' erupted. Rakovsky had returned to Moscow to play his part in what turned out to be the final showdown between Stalin and the Trotskyist opposition. As part of this party quarrel he added his signa ture to an appeal to the world proletariat, including the French, to rise in revolt against their bourgeois rulers to prevent a further armed intervention against the Soviet Union.[20] The urbane aristocratic figure who negotiated with his former student friend de Monzie, seemed to think that such revolutionary pronouncements would have no impact in Paris. Indeed, when questioned about similar propaganda, he had always replied that they came from the Communist International which had nothing to do with the Soviet government.[21] While de Monzie was perfectly happy to play this game, Rakovsky's declaration was a perfect weapon in the hands of those who thought that he had won far too many concessions. A violent press campaign erupted, demanding his recall. As has been seen, this was welcomed by important elements in the French governmental machine. Although Briand and the Foreign

Office were reluctant to go along with this, Poincaré, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, insisted on Rakovsky's recall. This did not mean that an end to the negotiations was envisaged. It was assumed that they would continue under the new Soviet Ambassador, V.S.Dovgalevsky. With that in mind the government laid down more precisely the limits of de Monzie's authority. A note of 11 October 1927 stated that Poincaré and Briand had decided that de Monzie was not, and never had been, a plenipotentiary, and that his Commission's position was to *'déblayer le terrairn'*. In future he would have much less scope for independent negotiation, and be strictly controlled by the Foreign Ministry, where relations with the Finance Ministry on this matter were also more carefully delimited. The considerable documentation in the French archives shows that from October 1927 to the spring of 1928 resumption of serious negotiations was still envisaged.[22] Replacement of Rakovsky was not seen as marking the end of the negotiations but as allowing them to continue with a better chance of success. As late as November 1928 Herbette reported from Moscow that Rykov, the Soviet Prime Minister, wanted the negotiations to resume. It is significant that Herbette still thought that Rykov had any importance. In reality he was already far from the centre of power in the Soviet state. By 1928 the man who decided Soviet policy was Stalin. He is reported as having made the following remarks to G. Bessedovsky, a Soviet diplomat who defected from his Paris posting shortly afterwards: 'Must I explain that the 20 million roubles that Rakovsky offered to France was a mere *pis aller,* invented to ward off the danger of war? We are manoeuvring… You want to establish a long period of cooperation with the capitalists. By surrendering ourselves to the mercy of Poincaré we should be abandoning all possibility of revolution… Surely you don't imagine that these two economic systems, essentially incompatible with each other, can possibly establish a cooperation of any permanence.' He finished by becoming coarsely abusive.

One way of interpreting the collapse of the negotiations is to state that Poincaré and his officials in the Ministry of Finance had been opposed throughout, and that they now seized on the opportunity of the Rakovsky incident to sabotage the negotiations. This was Fischer's interpretation with an additional surmise that Poincaré was acting at the behest of the Anglo-Saxon oil trusts, especially Deterding's firm Shell. As Poincaré wanted to free France from undue dependence on Anglo-Saxon oil this is most unlikely. In fact the French documents show that, although there was a divergence between the Prime Minister and the Finance Ministry, on the one hand, and de Monzie and the Foreign Office, on the other, both expected the negotiations to continue after Rakovsky's replacement. The change came from the Soviet side. With the end of the New Economic Policy their need for credits of this type disappeared. Under the New Economic Policy the need was to offer the peasants better industrial goods to persuade them to deliver agricultural produce to the state in a market system. Stalin's system of collectivised agriculture and giant industrialisation swept all such concerns away.[23] Agricultural produce was not bought from the peasants, but confiscated without any return. It could then be exported, in fact dumped on a rapidly collapsing world market for cereals, to provide foreign currency to pay US and German capitalists to build the factories of the first Five Year Plan. Instead of long-term foreign credits the exchange worked virtually as cash on the nail at the cost of millions of deaths by starvation. The world of New Economy Policy in which restoration of something like traditional economic relations between France and the Soviet Union could be envisaged, vanished. It was also some time before the desirability of better political relations became clear to both sides.

NOTES

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7
Germany, Russia and Locarno: The German-Soviet Trade Treaty of 12 October 1925

DAVID CAMERON AND ANTHONY HEYWOOD

On 12 October 1925, four days before the initialing of the Western security pact in Locarno, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a trade treaty in Moscow. The timing of these two events was more than coincidental. The timing of the signing of the trade treaty and indeed the very fact of its signing was closely connected to events at Locarno; the German-Soviet trade treaty was part of Stresemann's policy of an East-West balance. The German-Soviet trade treaty has, however, received much less attention from scholars than has the Locarno Treaty. Even among historians of German-Soviet relations in the 1920s, the trade treaty of 1925 has generally received only passing mention. Even if the importance of German-Soviet economic relations during this period has been given a good deal of attention by historians, the trade treaty of 1925 has not.[1] There are a couple of reasons for this. On the one hand the trade treaty of 1925 is viewed as simply that, a trade treaty Consequently it is seen in a much more mundane light by historians than the Treaty of Rapallo or the secret military co-operation between the *Reichswehr* and the Red Army. Moreover, the trade treaty was seen at the time of its signing as an agreement that fell far short of German expectations, if it was not seen as an outright failure in this regard. This view was widely held within the German Foreign Office as well as among German business and industrial circles. Indeed at the time of its signing there were individuals within the German Foreign Office, as well as some German industrialists and businessmen, who went so far as to argue against even signing the trade treaty. The proponents of such actions maintained that as an economic and trade agreement the trade treaty did not begin to meet the needs and expectations of the German economy. However, by the time such arguments were being put forward another imperative for signing the trade treaty with the Soviet Union had developed: the need to sign some sort of major agreement with Moscow to allay Soviet fears surrounding the security pact negotiations between Berlin and the Western powers.

Thus the significance of the trade treaty has largely been seen more in its larger relationship to Locarno than to anything inherent within the contents of the trade treaty itself. If not viewed as insignificant, it was certainly seen by contemporaries as of diminished significance. Historians have reflected this view as well. However, the fact that the trade treaty failed to live up to contemporary expectations, misses the point of the treaty's larger significance. The significance of the trade treaty lies not so much in what it was, but rather in what it was not. Here the disappointment of German diplomats and industrialists in the actual contents of the trade treaty is a key point, but to understand that disappointment one must first examine what German diplomats and industrialists had hoped, but had eventually failed, to achieve in the negotiations for the trade treaty These hopes tell us a great deal, not only about the nature of German policy toward the Soviet Union during the 1920s, but also about the larger context of German foreign policy during these same years.

Although the trade treaty of 12 October 1925 was to a great extent signed to provide an Eastern balance to the proposed Western security pact, this was by no means its original intent. The trade treaty, which was preceded by three years of at times intense preparation and negotiations, was originally intended to lay the

foundation for the kind of close economic and trade relations that Germany and Russia had enjoyed before 1914. In a larger sense it was originally intended as part of Berlin's strategy for postwar economic recovery. Insofar as Berlin looked to postwar economic recovery as a lever against the Versailles settlement, the trade treaty was to serve as an integral part of Berlin's overall revisionist foreign policy.

Germany's defeat in the First World War dramatically altered the framework within which Berlin's foreign policy was formulated. Most importantly, defeat meant the end, at least for the foreseeable future, of Germany's position as a military power. In an age in which military might remained the ultimate arbiter in international politics this meant a greatly reduced status for Germany among the ranks of the great European powers. Germany's defeat in the First World War and the terms of the Treaty of Versailles had therefore radically altered the framework within which Berlin had to formulate foreign policy. Within this new framework, the diplomats of the German Foreign Office sought to develop and employ new strategies with which to implement their policies and achieve their goals. One such strategy was economic diplomacy, or the conscious use of German economic might as an instrument of f oreign policy. The diplomats of the German Foreign Office were keenly aware of the fact that despite its defeat in the war, Germany was still in a potentially strong position in Europe. Germany had already possessed the strongest economy in pre-war Europe and the makers of Weimar foreign policy believed that, if left to recover unhindered from the effects of the war, Germany's natural economic weight would reassert itself and Germany would reemerge as the dominant economic power in Europe.

Indeed, Germany's economic position would be even further enhanced because the two other major continental powers, France and Russia, had been severely weakened by the war. For the French, whose population growth was already stagnant before 1914, the war was a demographic catastrophe. In 1919 40 million French faced 60 million Germans, and the situation could only worsen from the French point of view. Before 1914 France's industrial capacity had also lagged behind that of Germany and, more importantly, much of France's industry and raw materials were heavily concentrated in the northern and eastern sections of the country where virtually all of the fighting on the western front had taken place. In 1919 these lay in ruins.

Unlike France, Russia did not face a demographic catastrophe. In 1914 and for that matter at the end of the First World War as well, Russia was an overwhelmingly rural, agrarian economy. Moreover, in 1919 Russia was in the midst of a brutal civil war such that few reckoned with a Russian economic recovery in the near future.

Thus, in spite of its defeat, Germany was still in a potentially strong position in Europe. She had suffered enormous casualties in the war, but this did not constitute a demographic catastrophe for the nation. Furthermore, because none of the fighting had occurred on German soil, Germany's industrial base was completely intact at the war's end, if the worse for wear. Nevertheless, Germany was militarily defeated and, as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, disarmed. Consequently, a traditional foreign policy based on military force or the threat of military force was no longer an option for her. Berlin now concluded that German economic might would, to the extent possible, have to serve as a replacement for military power.[2]

Ultimately, the German Foreign Office believed that economic power could be translated into political power which in turn could be used to reclaim Germany's place among the ranks of the great powers and to achieve Berlin's most important long-term foreign policy goal: the revision of the Treaty of Versailles and the undoing of the military defeat of 1918.

Such calculations underlay much of Germany's support for a Wilsonian peace settlement. A peace based on the liberal economic principles of the Fourteen Points would, the German Foreign Office was convinced, provide the best framework for the future recovery, development and growth of the German economy. 'The diplomats of the Foreign Office… were clearly of the opinion that the Fourteen Points could be used to

achieve victory, or at least a draw, in a war that from a military standpoint was clearly lost.'[3] Despite the failure to achieve a Wilsonian Peace, at least as the German Foreign Office understood Wilsonianism, the basic economic assumptions underlying German policy did not change. Thus, in May 1919, at a time when it was clear to the Germans that a Wilsonian peace was not in the cards, Ernst Schmitt, the head of the commercial division of the German delegation at Versailles, concluded that:

> In general it can be stated that there is one principle which is decisive for our entire future foreign and economic policy and which runs through all of our individual considerations. Namely that once we have overcome the present paralysis of our economy, German manpower and German industriousness will become so strong [underlined in original] that under more or less equal conditions, we must, over the course of time, gain the upper hand in the economic competition with other nations, or at least with those nations on the continent.[4]

Continuing to argue within this same framework, Schmitt concluded that 'as far as the details of Germany's future economic policy are concerned, it is clear that for the foreseeable future, the German economy cannot constitute a matter in and of itself, but rather can only constitute one part of our overall foreign policy'.[5]

Russia played a crucial role in Berlin's broad strategy for its future economic revival and indeed Russia was viewed in Berlin as a key element in any postwar German economic recovery. Imperial Germany and Tsarist Russia had been major economic and trading partners before the war and Berlin was eager to see this relationship reestablished as quickly as possible. Germany needed markets for its finished goods, Russia for its raw materials and agricultural products. Economic considerations also went hand in hand with political considerations. The German Foreign Office looked to Russia as the one European great power still outside the influence of the entente. Indeed as early as July 1919, the German Foreign Office had concluded that:

> Geographically our most necessary political and economic interests point toward a close friendly relationship with Russia. A political understanding between our two countries promises to provide Germany with valuable support *vis-à-vis* the Western Powers… An economic understanding would mean the exploitation of an invaluable source of raw materials and an inexhaustible market for our industrial goods.[6]

As such the Foreign Office concluded: 'close and good relations with an orderly, well-administered Russia represents one of the most important conditions for our political and economic recovery'.[7] However, in the summer of 1919 when this analysis was being formulated, Russia was anything but orderly and well administered. The country, already ravaged by four years of fighting in the Great War, was in the midst of a brutal civil war the outcome of which was unforeseeable. As for the current regime in Moscow, Bolshevik principles were hardly such as to be conducive to what Berlin would consider normal economic and trade relations.

Yet in the summer of 1919, as the larger contours of both Weimar's overall foreign and more narrow Russian policy were beginning to take shape, neither the civil war nor the Bolshevik regime was overly worrisome to the *Wilhelmstrasse*. At some point the civil war would end and normal conditions would return to Russia. As for the Bolsheviks, the *Wilhelmstrasse* was convinced that, in the long run, Lenin and his cronies would in all likelihood not remain in power in Russia. Thus in July 1919, the *Wilhelmstrasse*'s guidelines for policy toward Russia were based on the assumption that 'all indications point to the fact that Bolshevism in its present form will disappear as a form of government in Russia. The number of its adherents

is shrinking daily.'[8] Indeed the *Wilhelmstrasse* was convinced that any regime espousing the kind of political and economic ideas put forward by the Bolsheviks could not in the long run remain in power in Moscow. At some point a more sensible regime would replace it. In this regard the *Wilhelmstrasse* did not necessarily disregard the possibility that a more sensible regime might consist of a more moderate Bolshevik administration. Indeed, as early as April 1919, the *Wilhelmstrasse* assumed that the Bolshevik regime in Moscow would be 'temporary' *(vorübergehend)*. In elaborating on just what 'tempo rary' might mean, however, the *Wilhelmstrasse* envisioned two alternatives, namely that 'once peace returns [to Russia] the Soviet government will either move aside *[abtreten]* or undergo a transformation toward the right'.[9] By January 1920 Ago von Maltzan, head of the Foreign Office's Russian Desk, had concluded that there was the first signs of just such a development in Russia. In analysing the situation in Russia, von Maltzan concluded: 'for the immediate future we must deal with Soviet Russia or with a [Soviet] regime that is more oriented toward the right *[eine…nach rechts entwickelten Staatsform]*'.[10]

The changing attitude within the *Wilhelmstrasse* was accompanied by the first cautious steps toward reestablishing economic relations with Moscow. An illuminating example of these moves is the Foreign Office's contact with a Soviet transport engineer, Iu.V.Lomonosov, in 1919.[11] In August the Ministry allowed Lomonosov to enter Germany for negotiations about purchasing railway equipment, and cautiously cultivated him on its own account.[12] Following two clandestine meetings with Walter Bartels, of the Ministry's Political Department, Lomonosov was received by the Director of the Russian Desk and by Karl Edler von Stockhammern, Director of the Department for Trade Policy.[13] Historians have seen Stockhammern as hostile towards the Bolshevik regime, but Lomonosov formed a different impression.[14] The head of the Russian Desk reportedly stated that history was driving the two countries together, that Germany wanted a political and economic agreement with Russia, and that Allied policy was the principal difficulty.[15] Stockhammern additionally noted the lack of a shared land border and the abolition of private trade in Russia as obstacles, but he also declared that Germany desired cooperation with Soviet Russia. He even permitted Lomonosov, on condition of absolute secrecy, to place some small orders for railway materials immediately.[16]

Despite this first, cautious meeting, the *Wilhelmstrasse* ultimately decided to pursue another, more indirect, strategy of resuming economic relations with Russia. As Foreign Minister Herman Müller informed the Foreign Policy Committee of the *Reichsrat* on 16 February 1920, the *Wilhelmstrasse* had decided to 'cautiously resume relations with Soviet Russia'. The method chosen to do this, Müller further informed the committee, was in the question of prisoners of war. As Müller made clear to the committee, however, Berlin was not solely interested in prisoners of war; any contact with Moscow would also have as its purpose the resumption of economic relations.[17]

The prisoner of war question was in many ways a natural issue over which to resume contact with the Soviet government. After all, in 1920 there remained some 100,000 German prisoners of war in Russia and some 1,200,000 Russian prisoners in Germany. Moreover, in line with its cautious approach, Berlin could always argue that in taking up the issue of prisoners of war with Moscow, it was only following London's lead. An Anglo-Soviet agreement on the repatriation of prisoners of war had been signed on 12 February. Berlin's initiative in the question of prisoners of war led to the signing of a similar agreement between Germany and Soviet Russia on 19 April 1920,[18] followed by a supplementary agreement, signed on 7 July.[19]

Here, too, Berlin could claim that it was merely following a lead from London. In particular, noting the British government's negotiations with L.B.Krassin about a general Anglo-Soviet trade agreement, it discussed an analogous German-Soviet agreement with the Soviet trade representative in Germany, V.L.Kopp, but held off from signing this treaty while the Anglo-Soviet talks continued into 1921.[20] In

reality, however, the German government did not simply let London lead the way. During 1920–21 it secretly assisted negotiations about Soviet contracts for railway equipment, potentially worth US $100 million, with a considerable degree of success.

The idea for large-scale railway contracts originated in Moscow in early 1920. Up to 5,000 new locomotives, 100,000 freight wagons and vast quantities of spare parts and raw materials would be sought to hasten postwar economic reconstruction and modernisation. On 16 March 1920 the Soviet government assigned 300 million gold rubles— roughly 40 per cent of its gold reserve—for initial railway contracts, and during the next two months Soviet representatives began discussions with engineering firms throughout western Europe and North America.[21] Thus, for example, on 23 April 1920 Krassin voiced his desire to order 2,200 locomotives and large quantities of springs, loco motive tyres, couplings and buffers in Germany.[22]

The German government actively facilitated the Soviet negotiations with the *Verband* of German locomotive builders.[23] Apart from the obvious matters of granting visas quickly and permitting Soviet representatives to use diplomatic ciphers, the *Wilhelmstrasse* played two main roles. One was to help resolve a dispute over the price. Present at the first Soviet-Verband meeting in Berlin on 16 August, von Maltzan supported a Soviet suggestion that the syndicate's offer price be scrutinised by an expert from the Ministry of Trade and Industry. von Maltzan quickly obtained the approval of the Foreign Office's State Secretary for political affairs, Edgar K.A.Haniel von Haimhausen, and then organised a Soviet-German expert commission. This group duly helped to produce a compromise involving a minimum unit price of 2. 25 million marks (roughly US $44,000) at the factory gate.[24]

The *Wilhelmstrasse*'s second and more substantial role concerned the arrangement of finance. Allied restrictions meant that Soviet gold imported into Germany would probably be seized. In late July, therefore, the Ministry offered assistance to the *Verband* in forming an international consortium of prominent banks capable of handling this large venture. Privy Counsellor Hermann Bücher contacted the *Deutsche Bank* and *Disconto-Gesellschaft,* while *Verband* representatives approached Mendelssohn and Co. Significantly, there was 'striking interest' from the first two banks.[25] Next, in mid August, the Foreign Office tried two related initiatives. One was to promote a Soviet-German conference on 23 August at Mendelssohn's headquarters; the other was for the Foreign Minister, Dr Walter Simons, to make a personal appeal to the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George.

The conference of 23 August established that the main obstacle to getting the necessary bank guarantees was probable Allied intervention. Thus, the meeting resolved—and the Foreign Office concurred —that British banks should be invited to participate.[26] In the meantime, with a letter and *aide-mémoire* dated 22 August, von Simons sought Lloyd George's permission for the British banks' involvement. Interestingly, his appeal was couched in anti-Bolshevik terms. Simons stated his belief that Lloyd George was genuinely concerned about defending Europe against the danger of moral and economic ruin. Further, he agreed that the threat posed to European stability by food shortages in central Europe could be solved 'by regaining the food supplies of Russia', which itself would require the reconstruction of Russian transport. The proposed locomotive contract would not simply address the transport question, but would also contribute to 'securing the inner peace of Germany', where business was slack and unemployment high, and where Bolshevism was such a great danger that every European nation should come to the rescue.[27]

The overall results of these initiatives were mixed. In the short term, they were a failure: von Simons was rebuffed by the British government, which unsurprisingly saw Germany as a trade rival, and hence the British banks declined to participate.[28] But the *Verband* did not lose heart, the *Wilhelmstrasse* remained supportive, and within a month a breakthrough was achieved by arranging finance through banks in a neutral country. Here the Foreign Ministry's support took the extraordinary form of permitting the Soviet

trade delegates occasionally to use German diplomatic cipher to communicate with Krassin.[29] This close co-operation was rewarded in mid October with firm contracts worth some 35, 890, 462 Swedish crowns (approximately US $9,545,336), covering 100 locomotives (subcontracted via a Swedish company), 38,000 locomotive tyres and 153, 900 boiler tubes.[30]

Moreover, thanks to the *Wilhelmstrasse*'s continuing support, a far larger success was recorded during the following winter. On 28 February 1921 a contract was signed whereby the *Verband* would supply 600 locomotives at a cost of some 178, 613, 400 Swedish crowns (approximately US $47,503,563), and on 2 March von Maltzan gave it a verbal blessing in a meeting with Krassin.[31] Again the financial arrangements presented the key problem, but they were solved on this occasion by an international debt-swap. The basic idea was that if Soviet gold was sent to Sweden, the Swedish authorities could treat it as part-payment of the German war debt to Sweden, and the German government would guarantee all payments owed to the *Verband*. Thus, German firms would win the contracts, whilst the Soviet side could enjoy the lower German prices yet continue to use Sweden as a relatively safe location for its gold.[32]

The negotiations between Germany and Russia on the issue of railway equipment were accompanied by moves to further solidify formal treaty agreements between the two countries by building on the prisoner of war agreements. This culminated in the signing of a further agreement on 6 May 1921, whereby the prisoner of war repatriation offices that had in the meantime been established in Berlin and Moscow were transformed into official missions *(Vertretungen)* whose heads were to enjoy the privileges of an accredited, diplomatic mission. Under the terms of the 6 May Agreement each mission was to establish a trade office 'for the cultivation of economic relations'.[33] Gustav Hilger, one of the Foreign Office officials responsible for drafting both the initial prisoner of war repatriation agreement and the 6 May Agreement, summed up the latter as follows:

> The Provisional Agreement concerning the extension of the prisoner of war aid delegations in effect converted [them]…into political and consular missions by entrusting them with the protection of all of their own nationals in the guest country, and by giving them a number of consular functions. Diplomatic privileges and immunities were extended to the missions' head plus seven members of their delegations. They were to be accredited to the Foreign Ministry of the guest country, and the commercial representatives to be attached to the missions were given authority to deal directly with other governmental agencies.[34]

With the 6 May Agreement Berlin in essence extended *de facto* if not *de jure* recognition to the Soviet regime. The economic and political assumptions that led Berlin to take this step were the same ones that had guided German policy toward Russia since 1919 and that have been discussed above. By the time of the 6 May Agreement, however, the guiding assumptions behind German policy had taken on an added urgency.

By the time of the 6 May Agreement there was a growing belief in the German Foreign Office that the Soviet regime had embarked on an evolutionary process away from extreme communist economic principles and toward an economic system more oriented toward western norms. As we have already seen, the *Wilhelmstrasse* had always been convinced that at some point a more moderate regime or a more moderate form of Bolshevism would appear in Russia. Developments in Soviet Russia over the course of 1920–21 only served to reinforce and strengthen this conviction. Two such developments in this regard were the Soviet decree of 23 November 1920, promulgating the granting of long-term foreign concessions, and, most significantly, Lenin's announcement of the New Economic Policy at the Tenth Party Conference, which met from 8 to 16 March 1921. Both developments only confirmed the belief within the *Wilhelmstrasse* that the Russian Bolshevik leadership was moderating its economic policies.

Indeed by the time of the signing of the 6 May Agreement, this view was well advanced in the *Wilhelmstrasse*. Thus, on 26 May, just three weeks after the signing of the 6 May Agreement, Foreign Minister Friedrich von Rosen met with the Soviet Commissar of Foreign Trade, Leonid Krassin. To prepare von Rosen for this meeting von Maltzan wrote a policy brief f or the Foreign Minister in which he informed von Rosen: 'along with Lenin, Krassin is an advocate of a moderate form of Bolshevism, [who] leans toward a policy of evolution'. von Maltzan continued: 'such views have gained a great deal of influence in Moscow'. The conclusion von Maltzan drew from this was that 'these policies would mean…a closer approximation of the capitalism of the Western states'.[35]

The conviction in the *Wilhelmstrasse* that Russia was at last evolving toward an economic system more amenable to realising German economic goals was reinforced throughout the remainder of 1921 and into 1922. This reinforcement came from numerous sources, both official and unofficial. The most important official source was Carl Graap, an economic advisor attached to the German Trade Mission in Moscow which was, in accordance with the 6 May Agreement, opened in the autumn of 1921. On 27 November 1921, Graap penned the first of a series of reports sent to Berlin over the course of the next several months. In this and subsequent reports Graap informed the *Wilhelmstrasse* that the Bolsheviks had embarked on a path of evolution away from communism and toward a more moderate economic and political order.[36] The *Wilhelmstrasse* was also receiving similar analyses from such unofficial sources as German journalists stationed in Moscow. Thus, in a letter dated 27 February 1922, Bernard Waurick, Moscow correspondent for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,* informed von Maltzan that the situation in Russia was one of a 'slow but steady slide into a private economic system'.[37] Indeed, by early 1922 the *Wilhelmstrasse* had concluded from such reports that:

> there can be no further doubt that Soviet Russia has given up as useless communist economic principles and that the communist rulers [of Russia] have begun to direct their energy towards leading Russian economic life back toward individualism and free trade… Russia has overcome communism *[den Kommunismus überwunden hat]* and has opened its gates up to free trade and therefore to world trade.[38]

This belief only heightened the desire on the part of the diplomats in the *Wilhelmstrasse* to restore close economic relations with Russia. Events in Russia at long last seemed to present Berlin with the opportunity to do just that.

It was against this background of information from Graap and others that Germany entered into secret negotiations with the Soviet government in late 1921, the ultimate result of which was the resumption of full diplomatic relations between Germany and Russia at Rapallo on 16 April 1922.[39] The details of the events culminating in the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo have been the subject of a good deal of scholarly research.[40] It is not the intention here to reconstruct the immediate events that led to Rapallo but, rather, to place that treaty within the overall analysis of German policy toward Russia presented up to this point. In this respect one point needs to be stressed: for the Germans, the Treaty of Rapallo and the resumption of full diplomatic relations which Rapallo brought about were never seen as an end in themselves. Rather the Treaty of Rapallo was viewed as a means to an end, albeit a very important means. Rapallo was one more step, although an important one, toward providing the basis for the realisation of Berlin's long-range goal of reestablishing German-Russian economic and commercial relations. Indeed, the Treaty of Rapallo itself pointed in this direction. Article V of the treaty called on both sides to enter into an 'exchange of ideas' *(Gedankenaustausch)* in order to provide a fundamental basis for the economic needs of both nations.[41] That the Germans viewed Rapallo as one more step in an on-going process is evident from remarks made by

the German Foreign Minister, Walther Rathenau, to his Soviet counterpart, Grigorij Chicherin, in a meeting of 6 June 1922, just under two months after the Treaty of Rapallo had been signed. During the course of their discussion, Rathenau informed Chicherin of his desire in future negotiations 'to provide content for the Rapallo Treaty, which is only a skeleton agreement *[Rahmenvertrag]*'.[42] The subject of further agreements supplementing and indeed elaborating on Rapallo was again raised in late July in a meeting between Chancellor Joseph Wirth, Chicherin, von Maltzan and the new Soviet Ambassador to Berlin, Nikolai Krestinsky.[43] Indeed, even as these preliminary discussions were proceeding, the *Wilhelmstrasse*'s Russian Desk was busy preparing guidelines for future negotiations aimed at reaching a comprehensive set of agreements regulating German-Soviet economic and trade relations.[44]

By mid August, the Russian Desk had gone a long way in making its preparations such that a series of meetings to discuss the proposed negotiations with Moscow were held with representatives from both the pertinent departments within the German government as well as with representatives from German business and industry. These meetings were chaired by Erich Wallroth, recently recalled to Berlin from his post in Riga specifically to oversee the preparations for the trade treaty negotiations with Russia.[45] On 14 August 1922, Wallroth met with representatives from all of the relevant ministries within the German government to discuss the proposed trade treaty negotiations with Russia. Wallroth's purpose was to provide them with a complete picture of German preparations thus far.[46] Wallroth began his presentation with a summary of the course of German-Soviet relations from the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk to Rapallo, noting: 'the Rapallo Treaty was intended only to provide the foundation for future German-Russian relations. The arrangement of all individual questions is to be reserved for additional regulation.'[47] Wallroth then spent the remainder of his remarks elaborating on the various issues that would have to be resolved if Germany were to reestablish meaningful economic and trade relations with Russia. These included, among others, civil (debt) obligations, copyright, commercial protective rights, consular relations, legal aid, marriage and family rights, matters related to inheritance, tax collection, the protection of individuals and of property, and the right of Germans to establish residency in the Soviet Union. Of particular importance to Wallroth was the Soviet monopoly on foreign trade. Above all else', Wallroth noted:

> the development of fruitful commercial relations has…suffered from the…inflexibility of the Russian foreign trade monopoly… A genuine revival of business dealings is only to be expected when representatives of the German economy can establish direct business relationships with the representatives of the Russian economy within Russia itself.[48]

In trying to regulate these matters in fixed agreements, Wallroth was under no illusions regarding the problems the German negotiators would face. These he noted, 'stem from a deep divergence between the two political systems…the strong differences between the sources of law' and, most notably, 'the gap between the two economic systems: one based on a system of commercial and economic freedom, the other on a strict state-run economy'.[49]

If, as Wallroth's remarks demonstrate, the *Wilhelmstrasse* was under no illusions regarding the obstacles ahead, the German Foreign Office was also under no illusions as to how best these obstacles were to be resolved. In their negotiations with the Russians, the Germans would have 'to strive so that these contentious issues are regulated by the standards of international law'.[50] In other words, the German negotiators would seek to settle these matters according to the liberal, capitalistic norms of the West, not the revolutionary, communist principles of the Soviet regime.

Representatives of German industry were even more blunt on this point. In January 1923 the *Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie* presented the Foreign Office with an analysis of the views of

German industry regarding the upcoming trade treaty negotiations.[51] The *Reichsverband* made the wishes of German industry very clear:

> It is of the greatest interest for the German and more so for the Russian economy that to the extent possible in the agreements to be concluded, the difficulties arising out of the differences between the German system of free enterprise and the Russian state controlled system be settled in such a manner that the Russians gradually acknowledge the principle of free enterprise.[52]

That the German Foreign Office was aware of the wishes of German industry is beyond doubt. As Foreign Minister Rosenberg informed the German Ambassador in Moscow, Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau, the desire of the German business community was a straightforward one: 'the admission of individual businessmen and industrialists to pursue trade and business in Russia under the best possible protection of both individuals and [their] property'.[53]

The goals Berlin hoped to achieve in its negotiations with Moscow were ambitious to say the least. The *Wilhelmstrasse* hoped to be able to negotiate a series of agreements, at the centre of which would be a major trade treaty, that would allow German economic and commercial interests to behave in Russia in much the same manner as they would in the open, capitalist societies of the West. At the very least the Germans hoped to reestablish the kind of economic and commercial relations enjoyed by Germany and Russia before 1914.[54] Nevertheless, as they prepared to negotiate the trade treaty the diplomats of the *Wilhelmstrasse* were confident in two respects. There was the belief, discussed above, that under NEP Russia was beginning to evolve toward a more moderate economic system. Moreover the Germans were convinced that the Russians were, if not desperate, then very eager to conclude a successful treaty with Berlin. Wallroth for one was hopeful that 'after the fiascos in Genoa and the Hague, Russia must have at the very least a substantial interest in concluding a reasonable treaty with Germany to bring about an effective breach in the Western cordon'.[55] Foreign Minister Rosenberg echoed this sentiment when he noted that with regards to successfully negotiating a treaty, 'the political interest of the Russians in concluding a treaty is greater than the private interests of German economic circles [in concluding such an agreement]'.[56]

Following a brief round of talks that lasted from 26 June to 14 July, negotiations began in earnest on 13 September and continued uninterrupted until they were broken off on 3 May 1924, as a result of a police raid on the Soviet Trade Mission in Berlin.[57] The subject of this first round of negotiations was the so-called side agreements: the consular treaty, as well as agreements on inheritance, legal aid, the mutual acceptance of nationals, extradition, and merchant shipping. From the German point of view, progress was satisfactory, if slow. The Russian delegates had been given very limited authority and consequently had constantly to request instructions from Moscow, even on points of minor significance.[58] Despite this, at the time negotiations were broken off in May 1924, the terms of the consular treaty had largely been agreed upon and progress had been made on such issues as inheritance and legal aid.

Following the resolution of the so-called Bozenhardt incident, negotiations resumed in Moscow on 15 November 1924, the *Wilhelmstrasse* having used the break in the talks to prepare for this new round of negotiations, the primary focus of which would be the trade treaty itself. Indeed during the break in the talks, the *Wilhelmstrasse* had prepared a draft trade treaty.[59] In preparing this draft treaty the *Wilhelmstrasse*'s primary goal had been 'to guarantee the possibility of interested parties [in Germany] to operate freely [in Russia] insofar as this is possible under the terms of the state monopoly of trade'. The latter, notwithstanding the *Wilhelmstrasse,* was well aware that the achievement of this goal would be 'one of the greatest difficulties [in the upcoming negotiations]'.[60] For its part German industry was not optimistic with regards to the upcoming trade treaty negotiations. The representative of the German General Electric

Company (AEG), Felix Deutsch, spoke for many German industrialists when he doubted that there was much hope that the Soviet trade monopoly could be breached.[61]

Deutsch's pessimism proved to be well founded. After just over a month, the negotiations were recessed on 16 December 1924, having made no headway. Indeed, none of Berlin's chief economic demands had been met.[62] For their part, the representatives of German commerce, industry and agriculture viewed the prospect of reaching any agreement 'with great scepticism', and indeed saw 'no reason to conclude from the negotiations to date that agreements could be reached in any of the issues deemed essential to their interests'. Should this indeed ultimately prove to be the case, these same economic interest groups informed the *Wilhelmstrasse* that they preferred 'no [trade] treaty to a bad one'.[63] The pessimism on the part of German industrial and business interests was doubtless further fuelled by the disappointing results in German-Soviet trade thus far. Despite the hopes for increased trade that had accompanied the agreements for Soviet railway orders in early 1921, trade between Germany and Russia had not developed significantly since then. As Wallroth noted in December 1924, over the course of 1923 Russia had accounted for only 1.5 per cent of total German exports. The figures for 1924 were even gloomier, 1.33 per cent, a sum, as Wallroth noted, equivalent to German exports to the Dutch East Indies.[64]

The pessimism that was coming to surround the trade treaty negotiations was also beginning to be mirrored in the *Wilhelmstrasse*'s overall assessment of the relationship with Moscow. In a long memorandum, dated 15 December, Wallroth analysed the current state of German-Russian relations. In his analysis Wallroth reviewed the assumptions that had guided German policy toward Russia in the immediate postwar years, a time when the belief had been strong in the *Wilhelmstrasse* that Germany and Russia were 'partners by fate' *(Schicksalsgenossen)*. Wallroth continued his analysis, however, by noting that the 'absolute prerequisite for a working partnership with Russia was a determined renunciation of the unproductive policy of so-called War Communism'. Wallroth then went on to note that at the time of Rapallo this had indeed seemed to be the case, such that 'the beginnings of German-Russian cooperation in economic reconstruction glimmered…on the eastern sky of a promising new dawn'. In the ensuing years, however, Berlin's hopes for its economic and political relations with Moscow had 'proven to be a bitter disappointment'.[65]

Despite this increasingly pessimistic mood both among German industry and in the *Wilhelmstrasse,* negotiations were resumed in Moscow in March. They went nowhere. Indeed by late April 1925 the *Wilhelmstrasse* had concluded that 'from a *purely economic standpoint* that which has been achieved thus far does not provide a sufficient basis for a trade treaty. Economic interest groups and public opinion would not only be disappointed by such a treaty, they would completely reject it.'[66] These concerns were well founded. On 27 April various interest groups representing German commerce, industry and agriculture informed the *Wilhelmstrasse* that 'at present it is impossible to reach an economic agreement with the Russian government that is acceptable to German economic and industrial interests'.[67]

By mid June Moritz Schlesinger, one of the *Wilhelmstrasse*'s experts on Russian economic affairs, had also concluded that there was no chance that a satisfactory trade treaty could be negotiated. As he informed Herbert von Dirksen in a letter dated 6 June:

> For me there can be no doubt that our expected minimum economic results, which in the best of cases alone could have justified the conclusion of a treaty from an economic point of view, cannot be achieved. None of our main demands have been met, to say nothing of having been satisfactorily resolved.[68]

The situation was such by mid June that Schlesinger was growing concerned about the increasingly negative mood in Germany concerning the negotiations, particularly should an unsatisfactory treaty be concluded. Indeed, as far as he was concerned, the only treaty possible would be, from the German point of view, an unsatisfactory one.[69] By mid summer 1925 the pessimistic mood in Berlin seemed completely justified as the negotiations had stalemated with neither side willing to accept the chief demands of the other or to compromise on its own. At this point it was clear that if any kind of treaty were to be concluded either both sides had to compromise or one side had to do so. The Germans blinked first. Beginning in late July and continuing through August and into September the German delegation conceded all of Moscow's major demands without achieving any of its own.[70] Perhaps of greatest significance for Berlin was the failure to achieve direct access for German business with their Soviet customers. The Soviet monopoly on foreign trade had not been breached.

The German concessions cleared the way for the signing of the trade treaty and side agreements on 12 October, four days before the initialing of the Treaty of Locarno. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, this was no coincidence. Indeed, the string of German concessions during July, August and September and the signing of the treaty with Moscow in October were intimately connected with the progress of Berlin's negotiations with London and Paris regarding the Western security pact. This had implicitly been the case for some time, as the resumption of the trade treaty talks between Berlin and Moscow in November of 1924 coincided with the beginning of a series of developments in Germany's Western policy that ultimately led to the signing of the Treaty of Locarno almost a year later.

The acceptance of the Dawes Plan during the London Conference in July-August 1924 had smoothed the way toward a larger political settlement between Berlin, Paris and London. Following the acceptance of the Dawes Plan events in the West moved quickly. In September British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald proposed that Germany join the League of Nations. On 12 December, the *Wilhelmstrasse* informed Geneva of its willingness to enter the League. This League initiative was soon followed by Berlin's proposal for a Western security pact to London, on 20 January, and to Paris, on 9 February, respectively These initiatives could only raise suspicions in Moscow, where suspicion of Berlin's intentions had already surfaced following the replacement of von Maltzan as State Secretary in the Foreign Office by Carl von Schubert in December 1924. von Maltzan, the father of Rapallo, was a strong advocate of close relations with Moscow; von Schubert was known to be more inclined toward the West. As Schlesinger wrote to von Maltzan in April 1925:

> At the time of your appointment to Washington, the Russians believed that they were correct in assuming that your departure from Berlin signaled a change in German policy. At that time it was possible to dissuade the Russians categorically from this notion and they were even prepared, despite various warnings from within Russian circles, to believe our assurances. However once the security pact offer became known and once Stresemann declared in a press statement that the [security pact] offer had been the subject of discussions since mid-December, the Russians believed that they possessed solid evidence that with your departure a change in policy had indeed occurred, at which point Moscow no longer believed our assurances.[71]

From Moscow's point of view developments in the late autumn of 1924 seemed more than a coincidence. The Dawes Plan, the initiative toward German entrance into the League, von Maltzan's replacement by von Schubert, all led Moscow to suspect a Westward shift in German foreign policy. The Russians did not remain passive in the face of this perceived shift in Berlin. On the contrary, Moscow sought to preempt German action in the West by offering Berlin what amounted to a treaty of non-aggression in December

1924. The offer came in a discussion between Chicherin and Brockdorff-Rantzau during the night of 25–26 December. Chicherin proposed to Rantzau: 'the German and Russian governments obligate themselves not to enter into political or economic alliances or understandings with third parties that are directed against the other'. Chicherin further proposed that 'moreover Germany and Russia pledge that with regards to the question of entrance to the League of Nations or the sending of observers to the League, [Berlin and Moscow] coordinate their actions'. Chicherin even went so far as to suggest that the 'ideal solution' would be 'that Germany and Russia enter the League simultaneously, or simultaneously send observers to Geneva'.[72] Berlin's reaction to the Soviet initiative was to stall. Repeatedly throughout the winter and spring and into the summer of 1925, the *Wilhelmstrasse* avoided any concrete response to Moscow's proposals. Stresemann was determined not to reach any such political agreement with Moscow before the western security initiative had played itself out. However, despite Berlin's dilatory behaviour regarding the Soviet December initiative, Berlin's western initiative had now become linked with the Soviet offer of a neutrality pact. Moreover, both Berlin's western security initiative and Moscow's December initiative now became linked with the on-going trade treaty negotiations. As Schlesinger informed von Maltzan in a letter dated 30 April 1925, the 'negotiations regarding the Western Security Pact have come to overshadow the trade treaty negotiations'.[73] Thus by the spring of 1925 all three initiatives, the Western Security Pact, the Soviet proposal for a neutrality treaty, and the trade treaty negotiations had, from Berlin's point of view, for better or worse become linked.

On the one hand, Berlin hoped that the economic negotiations with Moscow would put pressure on the Western powers to respond favourably to the proposed security pact. Indeed as the trade treaty negotiations reached what seemed to be an insurmountable impasse in the spring of 1925, the *Wilhelmstrasse* was loath to let the negotiations fail. As von Schubert noted in early May, at a time when the trade treaty negotiations threatened to break down: 'There is hardly any prospect that enough of Germany's minimum demands can be achieved so as to justify the conclusion of an economic treaty. However a collapse of the negotiations would, given the current political constellation, have an extremely disadvantageous affect.'[74] On the other hand, in light of its failure to enter into negotiations with Moscow regarding a neutrality treaty, the *Wilhelmstrasse* did not wish to see the trade treaty negotiations f fail. As Stresemann inf ormed the German negotiating team in Moscow: 'even if they are objectively independent from one another, unfortunately the tensions in the economic negotiations [with Moscow] coincide with the unwarranted bad mood on the part of the Russians regarding the course of the pending political negotiations with the West'.[75] A breakdown in the trade treaty negotiations would, Stresemann f feared, send entirely the wrong message to Moscow.

It is evident from the remarks of Schlesinger and von Schubert, among others, that by June of 1925 it was clear to the *Wilhelmstrasse* that despite three years of intense preparation and negotiations, Germany would prove unable to achieve its major goals for the trade treaty. Thus Berlin's ultimate strategic goal of laying the groundwork for a revival of close economic and trade relations with Russia would not be realised. However, just as the *Wilhelmstrasse* was coming to this conclusion, the negotiations with Moscow now took on a different, tactical, purpose, namely to allay Russian suspicions regarding the western security initiative and Berlin's refusal to sign the kind of neutrality treaty proposed by Moscow in December. And, indeed, this is the very argument Stresemann used to persuade the German Cabinet to accept the trade treaty. During the Cabinet meeting of 25 September, Stresemann argued: 'the government intends to conclude the German-Russian trade treaty and thereby to show clearly to the Russians that Germany has no intention of orienting itself solely toward the West'.[76]

As for German industry, despite its earlier stance that no trade treaty was preferable to a bad one, it too had come to appreciate and grudgingly accept this new imperative. As the leading economic interest groups informed the Foreign Office on 3 June: 'Should the current treaty be signed, German economic interests

will at all events suffer greatly. German economic interests do not however remain impervious to the conclusion that certain political necessities exist and [consequently]… will not oppose [the treaty].'[77] It was these 'political necessities' that in the end pushed Berlin to sign a treaty with Moscow that did not begin to meet the larger goals of either *Wilhelmstrasse* or German industry.

On 29 September, Stresemann presented the Cabinet with his final arguments and analysis of why the trade treaty should be signed. In so doing he provided both the larger background and context of the treaty as well as the more narrow concerns that had recently come to dominate German policy. Stresemann began by briefly reviewing the original purpose of the trade treaty negotiations. 'The GermanRussian negotiations f or an economic treaty which have now reached their conclusion were originally intended to produce an extensive and comprehensive treaty regulating the whole of [German-Russian] economic relations and to create a firm and definitive foundation for those relations for a long time.' Stresemann then went on to note that this had not proven possible. He told the Cabinet, 'developments during the course of the summer and fall have shown that in light of the conditions in Soviet Russia and the economic views that hold sway there, these plans and objectives cannot be realized. It became ever clearer that German wishes for the possibility of operating freely in Soviet Russia and of binding the Russian market to Germany had encountered insurmountable obstacles in the form of the Russian system of a state-run economy and the monopoly on foreign trade.'

Nevertheless, Stresemann went on to argue: 'the results achieved in the economic negotiations… represent that which can be achieved within the limits of the given circumstances'. 'To be sure', he continued, 'we have not succeeded in reestablishing the foundations of [our] prewar Russian business and… in piercing or turning back… the Russian economic system/Having laid out the modest results obtained in the trade treaty negotiations, he then presented the Cabinet with the dilemma that Germany now faced. 'In the final analysis', Stresemann informed the Cabinet, 'it is a question of whether or not one wishes to reject the entire treaty as presently constituted simply because it does not fulfill all of the extensive provisions that have been attached to the treaty earlier', and, he continued, 'whether in the final analysis one wants to bear the consequences of rejecting a treaty that is the product of two and one half years of serious negotiations.' Stresemann left the Cabinet under no illusions as to what such a rejection by Berlin would mean: 'an estrangement and a cooling between…[Germany and Russia] with all of the consequences that would arise from such a development'. Stresemann then went on to remind his listeners of the larger context of the decision facing the Cabinet, namely that 'at the present moment…the negotiations with the West hang in the balance and…there is a deep mistrust on the part of the Russians that Germany is beginning to turn away from Russia and from Rapallo'.[78] As we have already seen, Stresemann's arguments carried the day. The trade treaty with Soviet Russia was approved by the Cabinet and signed.

As Stresemann had stated in his remarks to the Cabinet, Germany had initially embarked on the path that ultimately led to the signing of the trade treaty with a very different agenda. Initially Berlin had viewed the trade treaty as an important step in laying the foundation for a resumption of the kind of economic and trade relations Germany and Russia had enjoyed before 1914. Revived economic relations with Russia were to play an important role in Germany's own economic recovery. Moreover, the revival of German economic might would, it was assumed in Berlin, lead to a revival of Germany's international political power. This in turn would allow Germany to reemerge among the ranks of the great European powers and ultimately to overturn the Versailles settlement. However the trade treaty signed in October 1925 failed to lay the foundation for close economic and trade relations envisioned by Berlin and, as we have seen, the treaty was ultimately signed as a way to balance German relations in the East with its security initiative in the West. However, the very fact that Berlin's western security initiative came to fruition at Locarno four days after the signing of the trade treaty bore testimony to the fact that the circumstances under which Berlin sought to

revise the Versailles settlement had changed dramatically from those under which the *Wilhelmstrasse* had originally conceived of the trade treaty. Locarno had shown that the community of fate *(Schicksalsgemeinschaft)* between Berlin and Moscow was not quite as fateful as had once been assumed and that revision might be achieved by different means.

NOTES

1. A notable exception to this is R.P.Morgan, 'The Political Significance of German-Soviet Trade Negotiations 1922–1925', *Historical Journal* 6, 2 (1963), 253–71; R.M.Spaulding, *Osthandel und Ostpolitik: German Foreign Trade Policies in Eastern Europe from Bismarck to Adenauer* (Providence: Berghahn, 1997), pp. 186–93.
2. P.Krüger, *Deutschland und die Reparationen 1918–19: Die Genesis des Reparationsproblems zwischen Waffenstillstand und Versailler Friedensschluss* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags, 1972), p. 82.
3. P.Grupp, *Deutsche Aussenpolitk im Schatten von Versailles 1919–1920* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1988), p. 58.
4. Bundesarchiv-Koblenz, R43I/161, Reichskanzlei—Akten betreffend Auswärtige Politik vom Februar 1919 bis 31 Dezember 1920, D800158.
5. *Ibid.*
6. 7 July 1919, *Niederschrift zur Ermittelung der Richtlinie für unsere Politik gegenüber Russland,* R2025, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts*.
7. 6 July 1919, *Kurzer Überblick über den Stand unserer Ostpolitik, Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, nr. 86, p. 150.
8. 7 July 1919, *Niederschrift zur Ermittelung der Richtlinie für unsere Politik gegenüber Russland, R2025, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts.*
9. *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/I/218, p. 43, *Ostpolitik,* April 1919.
10. *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/III/13, p. 31. *Aufzeichnung Maltzans,* 20 January 1920.
11. For a brief biography of Lomonosov see H.A.Aplin, 'Iurii Vladimirovich Lomonosov (1876–1952)', in his *Catalogue of the Lomonossoff Collections* (Leeds: Leeds University Press, 1988), pp. vii–xx.
12. 22 September 1919, Report by Iu.V.Lomonosov to L.B.Krassin, 04/46/54073/282/19– 20ob, Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii; Diary, Vol 5, pp. 39–40; Iu.V. Lomonosov, *Dvevnik,* Leeds Russian Archive, G716.3.5, V.Lomonossoff Collections; Memoirs, Vol. 7, pp. 221–2, 246, Iu.V.Lomonosov, *Vospominaniia,* 716. 2.1.7, Leeds Russian Archive.
13. 22 September 1919, Report by Lomonosov, 04/46/54073/282/19–20ob, Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii; Lomonosov, *Dvevnik,* Vol. 5, pp. 22–7, 30, 45–6, 50–6; Lomonosov, *Vospominaniia,* Vol. 7, p. 234.
14. On Stockhammern see G.R.Himmer, 'German-Soviet economic relations, 1918–1922', unpublished PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1972, pp. 109–11.
15. 22 September 1919, Report by Lomonosov, 04/46/54073/282/19–20ob, Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii; Lomonosov, *Dvevnik,* Vol. 5, pp. 45–6; Lomonosov, *Vospominaniia,* Vol. 7, pp. 250–1.
16. 22 September 1919, Report by Lomonosov, 04/46/54073/282/19–20ob; Lomonosov, *Dvevnik,* Vol. 5, pp. 50–6; Lomonosov, *Vospominaniia,* Vol. 7, pp. 252–7, 269. For the subsequent draft contracts see Lomonosov to Brisk and Prohl, 2 September 1919, and Brisk and Prohl to Lomonosov, 2 September 1919, 04/46/54073/282/17, Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii.
17. *Protokoll über die Sitzung des Reichsrats, Auschuss für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten vom 16. Februar 1920, Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/III/35, p. 65.
18. *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen von den Verhandlungen in Brest-Litowsk bis zum Abschluss des Rapallovertrages,* Berlin (East), Vol. II, nr. 93. pp. 207–10. *Abkommen zwischen dem Deutsche Reiche und der Russischen Sozialistischen Föderativen Sowjetrepublik über die Heimschaffung der beiderseitigen Kriegsgefangenen und Zivilinternierten*.

19. *Ibid,* nr. 104, pp. 223–5, *Ergänzungsabkommen zum Abkommen vom 19 April 1920 zwischen der RSFSR und Deutschland über die Heimschaffung der beiderseitigen Kriegsgefangenen und Zivilinternierten.*
20. See R.H.Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917–1921,* Vol. 3 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 89–453; S. White, *Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Study in the Politics of Diplomacy, 1920–1924* (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 3–26; A.J. Heywood, *Modernising Lenin's Russia: Economic Reconstruction, Foreign Trade and the Railways* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 110–20.
21. This strategy's origins and implementation is the subject of Heywood, *Modernising Lenin's Russia*.
22. *Niederschrift von Hagemann: Russisches Lokomotivgeschäft,* 1920–1937, pp. 3–4, *Friedrich Krupp GmbH, Historisches Archiv, Essen, Werksarchiv IV 1361.*
23. Heywood, *Modernising Lenin's Russia,* pp. 120–4,126–8.
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25. *Niederschrift von Hagemann,* pp. 17–18. See also *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/III/237, pp. 485–6; Maltzan to Brockdorff-Rantzau, 6 August 1920, 34/3509/frames H237050–1, German Foreign Ministry Papers.
26. Protocol of meeting on 23 August 1920, 4038/1/44/34–8, Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki; Kopp/Lomonosov to Krassin, 23 August 1920, 4038/1/14/57, *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki;* Lomonosov, *Vospominaniia,* Vol. 7, pp. 1490, 1495–9.
27. Simons to Lloyd George, 22 August 1920, with *Aide-mémoire,* F53/3/5, Lloyd George Papers, House of Lords Record Office.
28. Lloyd George to Simons, 26 August (first draft), F24/3/10(a); Memorandum on Proposal to expel Messrs Kameneff and Krassin, 2? September 1920, 117, House of Lords Record Office, Davidson Papers; Lomonosov to Krassin, 18 September 1920, 4038/1/14/62, *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki;* Lomonosov to Krassin, 19 September 1920, 4038/1/14/60, *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki;* Report by Lomonosov to Council of Foreign Trade, 27 October 1920, r-130/4/317/39, State Archive of the Russian Federation.
29. See Lomonosov, *Vospominaniia,* Vol. 7, pp. 1624, 1633–4.
30. See Lomonosov, *Vospominaniia,* Vol. 7, pp. 1646–7; *Niederschrift von Hagemann,* pp. 24–5. The value of these contracts in Swedish crowns is shown as calculated by the Soviet authorities in mid April 1923; we have converted it from crowns to dollars at the rate of 3.76:1. *The Economist,* 14 April 1923, p. 811.
31. See Lomonosov to NKVT/NKPS, 1 March 1921, 4038/1/15/234–5, *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki;* Lomonosov, *Vospominaniia,* Vol. 8, pp. 170–1, 175–9, 183–6, 189–92, *Niederschrift von Hagemann,* pp. 29–32; Memorandum about meeting with Krassin, 2 March 1921, 34/3974/frames K096205–8, German Foreign Ministry Papers. A copy of the contract is at Leeds Russian Archive, MS 716.1.107.
32. Lomonosov to Krassin/Emshanov/Lezhava, 27 January 1921, 04/46/54073/282/23, *Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (this copy incorrectly dated 1920); Lomonosov, *Vospominaniia,* Vol. 8, pp. 89–90.
33. *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen,* nr. 187, pp. 383–9. *Abkommen zwischen der Reichsregierung und der Regierung der Russischen Sozialistischen Föderativen Sowjetrepublik über die Erweiterung des Tätigkeitsgebiets der beiderseitigen Delegationen*. As had been the case with the initial prisoner of war repatriation agreement, Berlin once again followed London's lead, an Anglo-Russian trade agreement having been signed on 16 March.
34. G.Hilger, *The Incompatible Allies: A Memoir-history of German-Soviet Relations 1918–1941* (New York, 1953), p. 67.
35. 25 May 1921, Botschaft Moskau 2/1, Aufzeichnung Maltzans, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts*.
36. 27 November 1921, R35632, E306416, *Aufzeichnung Graaps, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts*.
37. Waurick to Maltzan, 27 February 1922, R31960, H117860, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts*.
38. *Die Wiederanknüpfung der Handelsbeziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Russland,* February 1922, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts,* R94671, L107109.
39. *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen,* Vol. II, nr. 93, p. 586. *Deutsch-Russischer Vertrag von Rapallo.*

40. For a detailed presentation of the immediate background to the Rapallo Treaty see: H. Helbig, *Die Träger der Rapallo-Politik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1958); T. Schieder, 'Die Entstehungsgeschichte des Rapallo-Vertrages' in *Historische Zeitschrift* 204, 1 (1967), 545–609; as well as P.Krüger, 'A Rainy Day, 16 April 1922: The Rapallo Treaty and the cloudy perspective for German foreign policy', in C.Fink, A.Frohn and J.Heideking (eds), *Genoa, Rapallo and European Reconstruction in 1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 49–64; and E.Schulin, 'Zur Entstehung des Rapallo-Vertrages', in H.von Henting and A.Nitschke (eds), *Was die Wirtschaft lehrt. Golo Mann zum 70. Geburtstag* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1979), pp. 179–202.
41. The original text states: Die beiden Regierungen werden den wirtschaftlichen Bedürfnissen der beiden Länder in wohlwollendem Geiste wechselseitig entegenkommen. Bei einer grundsätzlichen Regelung dieser Frage auf internationaler Basis werden sie in vorherigen Gedankenaustausch eintreten.
42. *Aufzeichnung,* 14 June 1922, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/VI/118, p. 249.
43. *Aufzeichnung Maltzans,* 25 July 1922, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/VI/161, p. 335. During this meeting future agreements in the following areas were discussed: a consular treaty; an agreement regulating letters and postal packages; and a trade treaty. Regarding the trade treaty it was agreed that negotiations would be held in both Berlin and Moscow.
44. *Aufzeichnung,* 14 June 1922, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts,* R23711, pp. 188–91.
45. As indicated above, the negotiations between Germany and Russia were to encompass a whole range of agreements, only one of which was to be a trade treaty. The trade treaty was, however, considered to be the centrepiece of these agreements. Within the context of this paper, the term 'trade treaty' will be used to refer to these agreements as a whole unless otherwise noted.
46. *Aufzeichnung über die am 14. August im Ausivärtigen Amt abgehaltene kommissarische Besprechung über den Abschluss eines Ergänzungsabkommens zur Ausgestaltung des deutschrussischen Vertrages von Rapallo, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts,* R31516, L090336– 54. On 26 August, a similar meeting was held with the representatives of German industry to discuss these same issues. See *Vorbesprechung betreffend Ausgestaltung des Rapallo-Vertrages mit den Herren Geschäftsführern der Spitzenverbände für Handel, Industrie, und Schifffahrt und den am Russlandhandel besonders beteiligten Vereinigungen,* R31520, L091462–75, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts*.
47. *Aufzeichnung,* 14 August 1922, L090340.
48. Ibid., L090345.
49. *Ibid.,* L090342.
50. *Aufzeichnung,* 14 June 1922, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts,* R23711, p. 188.
51. *Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie an das Auswärtige Amt,* 26 January 1923, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts,* R31520, L09236977.
52. *Ibid.,* L092369–70.
53. *Der Reichsminister des Auswärtigen von Rosenberg an den Botschafter in Moskau Graf Brockdorff-Rantzau,* 18 April 1923, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/VII/194, p. 477.
54. See Wallroth's remarks on this matter, PA-AA, R31516, L090337–8. See also, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts,* R31520, L091464.
55. *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts,* R31516, L090343.
56. *Ibid.*
57. For a detailed discussion of the so-called 'Bozenhardt Incident' and its effects on German-Soviet relations, see K. Rosenbaum, *Community of Fate: German-Soviet Diplomatic Relations 1922–1928* (Syracuse, 1965), pp. 87–112.
58. *Zweiter zusammenfassender Bericht über den Verlauf und das Ergebnis der Verhandlungen vom Wiederbeginn nach der Sommerpause 1923 bis zur Unterbrechung anlässlich des Lindenstrassekonflikts, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts,* R35642, E316062.
59. Ibid, E316080.

60. *Protokoll der im AA am 14. Oktober stattgefundenen Besprechung mit den Verretern der Länder und mit Interessenten über die deutsch-russischen Verhandlungen zum Ausgestaltung des Rapallovertrages, Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XI/116, p. 286.
61. *Ibid.,* p.287.
62. *Reichswirtschaftsminister Neuhaus an den Staatssekretär in der Reichskanzlei,* 5 February 1925, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XII/71, p. 180.
63. *Aufzeichnung Wallroths,* 16 February 1925, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XII/96, p. 231.
64. *Zwischenbilanz über die deutsch-russischen Beziehungen,* 15 December 1924, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XI/239, p. 604.
65. *Ibid.,* pp. 601–12.
66. *Aufzichnung Hahns,* 22 April 1925, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts,* R31907, H112896.
67. *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XII/9, p. 26.
68. Schlesinger to Dirksen, 6 June 1925, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XIII/97/, p. 262.
69. Schlesinger to Schubert, 12 June 1925, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XIII/116, pp. 314–15.
70. R.P. Morgan, 'The Political Significance of German Soviet Trade Negotiations 1922–1925', *Historical Journal* 6, 2 (1963), 268–9.
71. Schlesinger to Maltzan, 30 April 1925, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XIII/11, pp. 29–30.
72. *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XII/261, p. 649. For a detailed analysis of the December initiative and its subsequent effect on German-Soviet relations during the final stages of the trade treaty negotiations, see Rosenbaum, *Community of Fate,* pp. 121–84.
73. Schlesinger to Maltzan, 30 April 1925, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XIII/11, p. 29.
74. *Schubert an den Staatssekretär in der Reichskanzlei,* 11 May 1925, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XIII/28, p. 77.
75. *Stresemann an die deutsche Delegation für die deutsch-sowjetischen Vertragsverhandlungen (Moskau)* 20 June 1925, *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XIII/135, p. 358.
76. K.-H. Minuth, *Die Kabinette Luther,* Vol. I (Boppard am Rhein: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977), pp. 578–9.
77. *Die deutsch-wirtschaftlichen Spitzenverbände zu den deutsch-russischen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen und dem Abschluss eines Handelsvertrages, Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik,* Series A, Vol. II, A/XIII/81, p. 214.
78 Minut, *Aufzeichnung des Reichsministers des Auswärgtigen über die deutsch-russischen Wirtschaftsverhandlungen,* 29 September 1925, Akten der Reichskanzlei, pp. 588–92.

8
Stresemann: A Mind Map

JONATHAN WRIGHT

The purpose of this chapter is to take a step back from the diplomacy of Locarno and to discuss instead the way Stresemann thought about international relations and Germany's place in the world.[1] This is clearly relevant to the central question about his policy as Foreign Minister: what was the balance between *Realpolitik,* patiently rebuilding Germany's position as a great power in the centre of Europe for a future which remained undefined and, on the other hand, a growing understanding in the words of Thomas Mann (writing in 1930) that he belonged to 'the world of European society in thought, conviction and deed'?[2]

One should not of course exaggerate the power of ideas. Stresemann was essentially a practical politician who never took his eye off the real world of politics at home and abroad. He operated in an extremely unstable political system and it was only due to his extraordinary ability to manage that system that he survived in power for so long and that the system itself was able to function. On the other hand he was not only a professional politician, he had a capacity to reflect on his situation and that of Germany and the world. He was not a theorist but his policy as Foreign Minister in the 1920s followed a consistent path—the fruit both of thought and experience. As one of his biographers put it, like Bismarck his policy was one of 'creative pragmatism'.[3] Stresemann also had what is sometimes called a hinterland: interest in literature, history, theatre and music. One of his gifts as a politician was to be able to place the immediate problem in a wider context. It enabled him to explain clearly and to give a sense of direction.

Again like Bismarck, Stresemann believed that successful foreign policy had to take account of all the elements of which international relations were composed. The future could not be predicted accurately and therefore no one formula could serve as a guide. In a speech in January 1927 to the officials of the government information service under the theme of 'the position of Germany among the peoples of the world' he poked fun at academic theorists:

> I imagine I would have your support in thinking that in this lecture you are not demanding any kind of scholarly discussion from me of theories of foreign policy. I confess that I have never read a book about it [Laughter] and I believe that has been a benefit to me in conducting foreign policy. [Renewed laughter] I am of the opinion that foreign policy has nothing to do with any kind of theory. Foreign policy must be created from practical experience, foreign policy is not something fixed, but something changing. Nobody explained that more often and more clearly with biting irony than the greatest statesman, whom we have had in the conduct of German foreign policy, Prince Bismarck…[4]

As a matter of fact Stresemann was exaggerating, as he tended to do when making a speech. He was far from ignorant of the subject of international relations. As a student in Leipzig he had taken a seminar in international law in the summer semester of 1900 as part of his studies in political economy. Indeed his best performance in his Ph.D. oral examination in 1901 was in that subject.[5] From Stresemann's notes it is clear

that his Professor, Karl Fricker, took a broad view of international law, defining it in the Grotian tradition as 'the law of a community that is in the process of coming into being' and provided detailed historical and analytical lectures.[6]

More important in shaping his outlook than this one course was probably the whole tenor of his university education. The predominant influence on his teachers both in Berlin and Leipzig was the school of political economy, centred on the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (Association for Social Policy), of which Gustav Schmoller, whose lectures he attended in Berlin, was the leading exponent. Its aim was to produce an overall view of the development of economic life from the earliest times, combining the skills of economists, historians and sociologists, to establish a German tradition of political economy to rival those of France and Britain. From it Stresemann gained a thorough knowledge both of political history and of the development of a modern industrial economy and the social theories which sought to explain and reform it. He also acquired a particular view of German society as a whole and a sense of the responsibility of an educated elite towards it. This was accompanied by pride in Germany's achievements and its still growing importance in the world— Schmoller was a supporter of the fleet and colonial expansion.

After university, he became a 'Syndic', that is he was employed by an organisation which represented the interests of a particular branch of industry. In Stresemann's case this was the *Verband Sächsischer Industrieller* (Association of Saxon Industrialists) based in Dresden which he built up from an organisation representing some 180 firms to 5,740 by 1914, with over half a million employees. This success made his name and helped to launch his political career. From our point of view, the interesting feature is that the businesses Stresemann represented were overwhelmingly exporters. They were generally small-scale manufacturing firms in skilled and specialist products—textiles, lace, leather goods, printing, iron works, chemical products. They were highly dependent on the international economy both for markets and for imports, for instance of cotton. Their interests were generally opposed to the coal and steel giants of the Ruhr. They consumed Ruhr coal and therefore did not like the Ruhr's price cartel policies. They also in general wanted lower rather than higher tariffs, both for imports and exports, and therefore opposed the protectionist policies both of the Ruhr and of the powerful German agrarian lobby.

One of Stresemann's consistent themes as a young man was that the rapidly growing German population could only be supported by an expansion of German exports, as that was the most dynamic sector of the economy and the place where new jobs could be found. In 1912 he visited the United States and Canada and together with the Hamburg shipping tycoon, Albert Ballin, he founded the GermanAmerican Economic Association. Yet, as he was keenly aware, German exporters were at a disadvantage in the power structure of the Wilhelmine Empire compared with the lobbies of heavy industry and agriculture. They were also, he thought, at an increasing disadvantage compared with their international competitors. Britain, France, Russia, the United States all had either continental economies or vast empires. They did not suffer in the same way as Germany from what he called its Achilles heel'—dependence on imports—nor did they have to work so hard for their markets, having either huge domestic markets or imperial systems.[7] Germany, on the other hand, had to depend on the quality of its exports and was vulnerable to an increasing tendency to protection abroad, for instance Joseph Chamberlain's campaign for tariff reform within the British Empire. The only economic weapon Germany had was the importance of its own market for foreign producers and their desire to have access to it.

As a rising star in the National Liberal party, after his election to the Reichstag in 1907, one of Stresemann's themes became Germany's disadvantage in terms of Empire and the jealousy of the established empires, particularly the British, towards it. He was a passionate advocate of colonial expansion and the navy and a loud critic of what he saw as the weak policies of the Chancellor from 1909, Bethmann Hollweg, for instance over Morocco.[8] He beat the nationalist drum with enthusiasm, approving the

sentiment of his party leader, Ernst Bassermann, that in international diplomacy 'other nations got a part of the world, but we get only a new army bill'.[9] He hoped that it would still be possible to reach agreement with Britain but on one occasion he said, 'The vital questions of the nations will always be decided by the sword. The division of the world does not follow from paragraphs in conferences.'[10] In a review of Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion,* he rejected its arguments that there was no relationship between Empire and wealth and that victory in a future war would be unprofitable. Stresemann pointed out that German trade with the British Empire was only one tenth of the size of Britain's trade with the Empire. He also predicted that the defeated in a future war would lose their world trade, have their merchant fleet destroyed and be forced to pay reparations.[11]

These remarks clearly represented Stresemann's real views. It is important to remember, however, the context. Not only did they reflect common attitudes, but the National Liberal Party was deeply divided on social, economic and even constitutional issues. The one area in which it was united was nationalism and Stresemann was keenly aware that this was also its most successful theme with the electorate. The role of a politician in Germany was still to make speeches, not to exercise power, and Stresemann at this date had no prospect of ever entering government. The Kaiser even refused to have him and Bassermann presented, when they were guests of Ballin at the Kiel naval regatta, a slight which Stresemann never forgot.[12]

It comes as no surprise that when war broke out, Stresemann blamed Britain, above all, for having forged a coalition which had fallen on Germany 'like the thief in the night'.[13] He later admitted that German diplomats had been no cleverer in the crisis of July 1914 than those of other countries, but he persisted with the argument that the deeper cause of the war had been Britain's determination to crush an increasingly successful economic rival.[14] It followed from his pre-war view of the world economy that his main war aim was to secure Germany's future as a global power. 'The great moment of world history has come', he wrote to Bassermann on 30 December 1914, 'we will push forward to the sea lanes of the world.' Germany would acquire a continental base in Belgium and the northern coast of France: Calais was to become 'a German Gibraltar'.[15]

In most books Stresemann's wartime career is portrayed as that of a consistent and extreme annexationist, and in a way it was. However, the picture can be made more precise. His priority was to secure Germany's position in world markets against Britain. His continental strategy was to give effect to that priority, and only if Britain could not be defeated did he think of Germany's future in terms of continental Empire alone. It is true that in 1915 he talked of a German economic sphere from Antwerp to Baghdad and that he supported the detachment of the Baltic provinces from Russia and, in 1918, defended the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the acquisition of a vast German Empire in the east, but these were secondary to his main war aim in the west. During the war, as a member of the Reichstag, he travelled in 1916 through the Balkans to Turkey and in 1917 north to the Latvian port of Riga. However, he did not see a continental Empire as an adequate substitute for trade overseas, describing the markets in central and south-eastern Europe in 1915 as more theoretical possibilities for the future than real alternatives for the German economy as it then existed.[16]

There were two problems with his main war aim. No one had a clear idea of how to defeat Britain and Bethmann Hollweg and those around him appeared to favour making peace in the west to enable them to concentrate on the war in the east. Stresemann until 1918 thought that the reverse strategy should be adopted —hence his aggressive support for unrestricted submarine warfare to turn the British economic blockade of Germany back on Britain itself. When questions were raised about the use of such a weapon in principle, he said he would be prepared for 'the deployment of a poison bomb and the death of half a million inhabitants of London if that would bring peace and save the lives of half a million Germans'.[17]

He also carried over into the war his feeling that Bethmann Hollweg was fundamentally a weak man—this 'tall but small man' as Bassermann called him—and that it was the job of a National Liberal politician to mount a public campaign on war aims which would prevent him going wobbly.[18] After Bethmann Hollweg's fall in July 1917—which Stresemann helped to bring about—he still saw it as his job to maintain faith in victory in order to keep up morale on the home front. The victory would go, as Clemenceau and General Haig said, to that side whose nerve held out longest.[19] It is also important that Stresemann felt that the democracies were better at mobilising public support than the German government. Britain and France had the better propaganda and the better political leadership. He recognised that the war could only be won with public opinion—he joked that the German government would rather fight the war in secret if it could—and he led the National Liberal party from 1917 to support constitutional reform as well as victory, thus aligning it with the left on domestic issues and the right on war aims.[20]

On 5 October 1918, hearing of Prince Max von Baden's peace offer, Stresemann recorded in his diary 'finis germaniae'.[21] What did he learn from defeat?

He learnt that faith in victory was not enough and that not only had Germany's civilian government and diplomats performed poorly, which he had always believed, but that its generals and particularly its admirals had also been unequal to the task. Even in munitions production Germany had been outclassed—he quoted the answer he had received in the Ministry of the Interior in 1916 as to why German production had fallen behind Britain's, 'We have not had a Lloyd George.'[22]

However, he carried over certain attitudes from the pre-war and wartime periods. He continued to believe that Germany's place was within the world economy. It had to export or die: autarchy was impossible. He also continued to believe that international relations were fundamentally competitive. He dismissed the rhetoric of President Wilson as hypocrisy. Under attack himself for his illusions of victory during the war, he hit back saying that those who believed in Wilson would find that they had succumbed to the greater illusion.[23] The Treaty of Versailles helped to restore his political credibility as it was seen within Germany as a peace based on power politics not principle. Power politics were continuing as usual, he said in August 1919, and the task for Germany was once more to become 'a credible ally' *(bündnisfähig)*.[24] And, although Germany did not have many cards to play with—disarmed, losing its fleet and merchant marine, saddled with reparations—he continued to believe that it had one important asset, the size of its domestic market and the importance of this market to the rest of Europe.

Very quickly his language changed from the pre-war economic rivalry with Britain to the interests of other powers, particularly France, in a restoration of the German economy. He did not expect that to happen from altruism but from self-interest. Nevertheless, the theme of economic interdependence entered his vocabulary and became his main suit in the period after 1919, allowing him to speak the language of European statesmanship. On 31 December 1919 he wrote, 'The great question of our recovery is this, whether we will succeed in bringing about an international understanding which prevents the collapse of Germany and therefore the collapse of Europe.'[25] By 1921 in speeches to the *Reichstag* he spoke of France and Germany sharing the same fate and predicted that 'the day of understanding will come because it must come'.[26] He still made occasional references to the possibility of a reorientation of German policy towards economic co-operation with Russia but these were included, as during the war, as an alternative of last resort if the Western powers persisted in a policy of destruction.

Already a principal element of his mental map in the 1920s was in place—German recovery was dependent on regaining its position in the international economy and the future of the international economy required the recovery of Germany. This was an argument from self-interest and assuming that self-interest would be the motive of other powers. But it also assumed that self-interest would lead to 'understanding' or co-operation.

This view of the world now replaced to a great extent the pre-war picture of Germany engaged in an economic struggle for mastery with the British Empire. The two views had in common the belief in Germany's dependence on exports. But the assumption of imperial rivalry and protection now took second place to the assumption of economic interdependence. What had happened?

The answer is obviously the war. This had changed the nature of the international economy—in Stresemann's view—from the rivalry of great empires to the common needs of the European states, and to some extent Britain, in relation to the United States. All had suffered enormous losses of one kind or another and all except the United States suffered from an acute shortage of capital.[27] On the Continent one could argue that Germany had suffered less than either France or Russia despite the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. In particular, France depended on Germany to rebuild its north-eastern provinces, which had suffered from the war and German destruction. And Stresemann and German business and political elites believed that Germany could only provide that help if it was itself allowed to recover. The needs of the international economy became therefore the welcome instrument for revision of the Versailles Treaty and the only instrument Germany possessed—without military power and weakened by internal divisions. The instability of the international economy provided for Stresemann a reason for optimism, for believing that the Treaty would not determine the future course of international relations. That was the sense of his argument to the officials of the government inf ormation service, that 'foreign policy is not something fixed but something changing' and that a foreign minister should not be tied to the textbooks of the past.

However, Stresemann was too sensitive to the different dimensions of politics and too well-read to imagine that by itself the international economy would determine the future either. He grasped very swiftly that the major problem in the way of allowing the German economy to recover was French security. He referred to the French nightmare of a German-Russian rapprochement already in February 1920 and in April 1921 to those French politicians who were more concerned with the Rhine than with its gold, that is, reparations.[28] In December 1922 he said that the French nightmare of a 'recovering Germany' was a more powerful influence on their behaviour than considerations of how best to obtain reparations.[29] He suggested then that the idea of 'some sort of international agreement for the preservation of the status quo on the Franco-German frontier' —which the Cuno government had proposed to the United States— might have more effect on French opinion than the much discussed proposal for an international loan.

Stresemann's understanding of the French need for security was intensified by the dramatic events of the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923. It is hard to exaggerate the importance of this watershed. Germany had survived the Treaty of Versailles but it very nearly did not survive the Ruhr occupation. Coming to office as Chancellor for the first time in August 1923 Stresemann faced a multiple crisis: the occupation, separatism, the prospect of losing the Rhine-Ruhr region, the collapse of the currency to the point where it was no longer a means of exchange, threatened communist insurrection in Saxony and Thuringia, the Hitler putsch plus Bavarian separatism, pressure from the *Reichswehr* (the German army) under General Seeckt for him to make way for an authoritarian regime and an attempt to stab him in the back from within his own party

He had very few resources with which to manage these crises. That Germany did survive was due at home to the patriotism of the Ruhr working class, luck, his own courage and ingenuity and President Ebert's support. The industrialists led by Stinnes who had argued that Germany should make payment of reparations conditional on revision of the Treaty—and defy France to occupy the Ruhr since France would certainly come off worst—were the first once the occupation happened to demand that Stresemann must get an agreement with France at once—incidentally another group of experts in whose judgement Stresemann never trusted again.[30]

And in international politics Germany owed its survival to the isolation of France and Belgium from Britain and the United States. The Soviet Union was of no use to Germany—indeed it attempted to

undermine his efforts to reach accommodation with France by encouraging a communist uprising in Germany in October 1923: so much for the Treaty of Rapallo, which Germany had signed with the Soviet Union in April 1922.

The most important conclusion for Stresemann was that Germany's security also depended on French security and this was security in the widest sense, both internal and external, domestic politics as well as international politics. He constantly referred back to the Ruhr crisis in his later years as Foreign Minister. That became *his* nightmare and he warned that if Franco-German understanding failed, the status of the Rhineland could again be imperilled. There was therefore a second string to interdependence; it was relevant not only to the economy but to security at large. And in this search for security Britain and the United States might play a useful role in persuading France to abandon the tactics of coercion.

It is easy to see how the Dawes Plan and the Locarno pact fitted into this view of the world. How did Stresemann's views develop after Locarno? Was there a further shift towards a new agenda? Was he biding his time for the end of reparations and rearmament in order to unleash another attempt at German domination of the Continent? Some of his language in defence of the Dawes Plan and Locarno could suggest as much with its emphasis on expedience and eventual German recovery to 'freedom'.[31] There is, however, convincing evidence that his views continued to develop in the 1926–29 period but in the opposite direction, towards the importance of preserving European peace and an increasing acceptance that this meant postponing German hopes for territorial revision in the east to an increasingly remote future.[32]

Stresemann often compared the period through which they were living with the upheavals that followed from the French Revolution to the Congress of Vienna. In the speech in January 1927, referred to above, he said their period had led from war to revolution, and a Revolution with deeper effects on people's minds than the French Revolution. Just as it had taken 26 years from the French Revolution before a stable situation was created, 'so I believe that no one of us could guarantee that this social, political and economic turmoil, and also the turmoil in the development of relations between nations has reached a conclusion in the period in which we live'.[33]

What policy conclusions did Stresemann draw from this view? The Paris peace settlement had not produced a stable international system. He had argued this since 1919 as a way of maintaining hope of revision of the system in Germany's favour. The problems of the British Empire, France, the East European states, the inevitable recovery of Russia, the coming conflict between the United States and Japan, all these were standard themes in his speeches.[34] In the second half of the 1920s, however, there was a subtle shift. He continued to speak of the weaknesses of the international system, for instance in the January 1927 speech, but he drew a different conclusion. He said there were two views of German foreign policy. First, those who thought Germany should abstain from international organisations, which included its former enemies, and wait for the recovery of Russia to produce a situation from which it could benefit. The second, with which he identified himself, was that the effect of the war on Germany had been such that 'it would have to pay for any military experiment with its existence as the whole of Germany' and that its situation as far into the future as human beings could foresee must be directed at 'reaching a peace with its former enemies but a peace based on equal rights, and trying to correct by new political methods by peaceful means those aspects of the peace treaties which had to be corrected'.[35]

What did the two sides to this policy—equal rights by peaceful means—mean in practice?

Stresemann became convinced that a new war would be a disaster for Germany. On the issue of making a lasting peace, he advanced various arguments. First, Germany lacked the means: despite the secret co-operation with the Soviet Union, it lacked heavy artillery, tanks and aeroplanes.[36] He also argued that the advances in military technology meant that any new European war would be a general disaster leading to 'irretrievable ruin'.[37] Beyond that he argued that Germany's central European position made war

particularly dangerous. As he told the Reichstag foreign affairs committee in January 1929: 'We could not base our policy on the situation in future wars, because in almost every contingency we are obliged to provide the battlefield.'[38] It was in this sense that he told the students of Heidelberg in May 1928, 'The preservation of peace and the attempts to achieve it are not weakness, are not timidity, they are the realistic recognition of our own national interests'.[39] There are strong grounds for thinking that Stresemann was sincere when he wrote that a new war would mean 'above all the destruction of Germany'.[40]

What of the other side of his policy, which he called in the Heidelberg speech: 'The securing of a free Germany with equal rights and the inclusion of such a Germany together with all other states in a stable international structure'?[41] Equal rights could mean many things. It was first an argument for the lifting of the remaining sanctions of the Versailles Treaty, particularly the military occupation of the Rhineland. But it could also be used as an argument for territorial revision through the application of self-determination to the Saar, parts of Poland and Austria, and, further, Germany's right once again to be a colonial power. Equal rights could mean in other words Germany resuming its place not only as a great power but as the greatest of the European powers—with the exception of the potential of a future Soviet Union.

But how could such sweeping change be combined with peaceful methods and a 'stable international structure'? Stresemann, unsurprisingly, was unable to find a satisfactory answer to this question. He could not claim less than equal rights, if he was to maintain domestic support. And that became an ever-more serious consideration when Hugenberg allied with Hitler and other anti-Republican groups against the Young Plan in 1929. Given the values of the League system—based on principle not the balance of power—there was also no reason for Stresemann to claim less than equal rights. In practice, however, his hopes of territorial revision were constantly scaled back.

The main difficulty was the problem of French security which he understood, but for which he was never able to find an answer acceptable both to the French and the German people. He hoped that economic integration, the international coal and steel community (1926), and a European customs union might provide the key.[42] He was attracted by the parallel of the division of the German states into separate economic systems before 1871 and the enormous economic growth after unification and frequently applied the same reasoning to Europe—in his last speech to the League of Nations on 9 September 1929, he even raised the question of a European currency.[43] But there were several problems with these ideas. He did not want them to acquire an anti-US or anti-British edge—Germany was too dependent on US loans. He was also wary of Briand's efforts to turn European unity into a device for stabilising existing frontiers, where the attraction for Stresemann was precisely to overcome French fears of modest revision in Germany's favour.[44] Thirdly, German industrialists supported measures of integration only so long as they worked to their benefit and they did not on the whole share Stresemann's interest in political rapprochement.[45] For these reasons Stresemann, who believed that no revision was possible without at least French acquiescence, found it very difficult to turn equal rights into an effective instrument of territorial revision.[46] In 1929, he pressed Briand for the early return of the Saar, following agreement on evacuation of the Rhineland. But so far as the Polish frontier was concerned, he seems to have accepted the advice of his envoy in Warsaw, Ulrich Rauscher, that in détente with Poland and increasing economic ties lay the best hope of eventual revision, though he continued to regard the frontier as a threat to peace and therefore in need of revision. As for union with Austria *(Anschluß)* he supported parallel development so that in time the differences between the two states would disappear, even if they continued as separate entities, but he also expressed doubts about the desirability of union in terms of its consequences for German domestic politics.[47] Where colonies were concerned he said he would never be so happy as if he could see the German flag waving over Dar-es-Salaam again, but he also expressed doubts about the viability of the European overseas empires.[48]

At the end of his life, the Germany with equal rights for which Stresemann hoped was effectively the existing Germany with the Saar returned and relieved progressively of reparations, allowed a measure of rearmament, and with the German minority in Poland more effectively protected by the League.[49]

The problem, as he realised in his last months, was how he could make this limited programme acceptable to a constituency which faced a deepening economic and financial crisis and in which as he told his party's national executive just before he died, 'parts of the Right have gone mad'.[50] He could not openly advocate abandoning German claims to revision of the Versailles Treaty—that would have been political suicide and, in any case, he was not prepared to give up Germany's claim to 'equal rights'. He continued therefore to pitch his argument in terms of its being the only viable policy for revision.

A DVP pamphlet issued to help party members rebut the propaganda of Hugenberg and Hitler against the Young Plan argued that the policy of 'understanding' was not a policy of 'renunciation'. However, it pointed out that the Treaty of Versailles had created so many potential enemies for Germany that revision of the Treaty could be achieved only with the consensus of the international community. In addition, the interest of other powers in bringing about revision was limited. The French were afraid of German military power; the British feared economic competition (a revival of an old theme); the new states of eastern and south-eastern Europe contained large German minorities and therefore saw revision as a threat. Were Germany to try to change all that into the pre-1914 status quo, it would mean war with the whole world. Even a Germany rearmed with the latest military technology would have to pay for such a policy by facing a global alliance of enemies. 'The possibilities of German policy are therefore limited. Only if we remain within these limits are we conducting *Realpolitik* and are we able to achieve what it is possible to achieve with the methods available at the time.'[51]

During the 1920s Stresemann's ideas continued to develop around the problem of how to achieve security. When challenged in 1926 for being too trusting of other powers he replied:

> The old system of cabinet policy: trust no one and betray everyone; this was also ultimately very unsuccessful…and should be left to the past. For me one thing is certain, that the new Germany and its recovery…can only be based on peace. This is the only basis for a restoration of our strength but how will this peace be possible if…it is not founded on understanding between Germany and France?[52]

This was a long way from his exclusive emphasis on power politics and his scorn for the League of Nations in 1919.

What made such a development possible for him? In addition to his intelligence and the rapidity with which he adjusted to new circumstances, there were some features of his mind map that made it natural for him to look for peace and stability. His liberalism and his sense of responsibility for the whole of Germany led him to favour a consensus built around the parties of the middle. A successful foreign policy, in his view, required the support of a successful parliamentary democracy. That separated him from the revolutionaries of the right and left. His belief that Germany should be part of an international trading community and the fact that he was not a racist also divided him from Hitler and the radical right.

He did not have all the answers. He did not know how to reconcile the French to what Germans saw as their just deserts, or the Germans to accepting less than equal rights in the interests of European security. His only solution was economic co-operation in western Europe and perhaps also joint projects in the Soviet Union. He did not think in terms of trying to reassure France by encouraging it to strengthen its links with Britain or the United States as a way of managing German power. Perhaps, however, the distance he had travelled is more remarkable than the fact that he did not go further.

NOTES

1. A more detailed account of the points made in this chapter may be found in J.Wright, *Gustav Stresemann: Weimar's Greatest Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 27.
2. Quoted by F.Hirsch, *Stresemann: Ein Lebensbild* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1978), p. 307.
3. Hubertus Prinz zu Löwenstein, *Stresemann: Das deutsche Schicksal im Spiegel seines Lebens* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Heinrich Scheffler, 1952), p. 207.
4. *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945,* Serie B, IV, Anhang I, pp. 581–606.
5. *Universitätsarchiv* Leipzig, Phil. Fak. Prom. 853, 1–5.
6. *Nachlaß* Stresemann, Bd. 362, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes,* Berlin; J.Wright, 'Gustav Stresemann's Concept of International Relations', in A.M.Birke, M.Brechtken and A.Searle, *An Anglo-German Dialogue* (Munich: K.G.Saur, 2000), pp. 145–6.
7. G.Stresemann, 'Zehn Jahre Verband Sächsischer Industrieller', *Festschrift zur Feier des zehnjährigen Bestehens des Verbandes Sächsischer Industrieller Dresden, am 11. und 12. März 1912* (Dresden: Boden, 1912), p. 57.
8. His views are set out in a collection of speeches entitled *Wirtschaftspolitische Zeitfragen,* 2nd edn (Dresden: Boden, 1911).
9. Stresemann to Bassermann, 9 April 1913, *Nachlaß,* 135, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*.
10. Notes for a speech in Elberfeld, 20 April 1913, *Nachlaß,* 128, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*.
11. 'Normann Angells falsche Rechnung', *Nationalliberale Blätter,* 4 May 1913, 25/18.
12. This happened two years running and was recalled in a letter from Stresemann to Frau von Roon (neé Bassermann), 22 November 1928, *Nachlaß,* 290, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*.
13. Notes for a speech in Aurich, 4 October 1914, *Nachlaß,* 140, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*.
14. G.Stresemann, *Von der Revolution bis zum Frieden von Versailles* (Berlin: Staatspolitischer Verlag, 1919), pp. 160–1.
15. Stresemann to Bassermann, 30 December 1914, A.Harttung (ed.), *Gustav Stresemann Schriften* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1976), pp. 143–6.
16. Stresemann's report to a committee of the Association of Industrialists, 9 January 1915, Nl. 150, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*.
17. Minutes of the Reichstag budget committee meeting, 1 February 1917; R.Schiffers and M.Koch (eds), *Der Hauptausschuß des Deutschen Reichstags 1915–1918,* Vol. III (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1981), p. 1107.
18. Bassermann to Stresemann, 6 April 1915, *Nachlaß,* 135, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes.*
19. After the war he praised Clemenceau's refusal to contemplate defeat despite the German advance in the spring of 1918. Speech in Osnabrück, 19 December 1918, R.von Rheinbaben (ed.), *Stresemann: Reden und Schriften,* Vol. I (Dresden: Carl Reissner Verlag, 1926), p. 216.
20. See, for instance, his speeches to the Reichstag, 18 January 1916 and 26 October 1916, Rheinbaben (ed.), *Reden und Schriften,* Vol. I, pp. 81–104; G.Zwoch (ed.), *Gustav Stresemann: Reichstagsreden* (Bonn: AZ Studio, 1972), pp. 43–56.
21. *Nachlaß,* 362, *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*.
22. 'Politische Umschau', 3 November 1918, *Deutsche Stimmen,* 30/44.
23. Speech in Berlin, 22 February 1919, Stresemann, *Von der Revolution,* pp. 117–19.
24. Minutes of a meeting of the executive committee of the German People's Party (DVP), 24 August 1919; E.Kolb and L.Richter (eds), *Nationalliberalismus in der Weimarer Republik: Die Führungsgremien der Deutschen Volkspartei 1918–1933* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1999), p. 179.
25. 'Politische Umschau', 4 January 1920, *Deutsche Stimmen,* 32/1.
26. Speeches to the Reichstag, 5 March and 28 April 1921, Rheinbaben (ed.), *Reden und Schriften,* I, pp. 328–69.
27. This, of course, became a principal argument for the Dawes Plan, to secure US loans to revive the German economy. Gustav Stresemann, 'The economic restoration of the world', *Foreign Affairs* 2/4 (15 June 1924), pp. 552–7.

28. 'Politische Umschau', 4 January 1920, *Deutsche Stimmen,* 32/1, Rheinbaben (ed.), *Reden und Schriften,* Vol. I, pp. 365–6.
29. 'Politische Umschau', 20 December 1922, *Deutsche Stimmen,* 32/45.
30. Stresemann recalled their behaviour when warning the Cabinet against Schacht's opposition to the Young plan for a final settlement of reparations in 1929. Minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 1 May 1929, M.Vogt (ed.), *Das Kabinett Müller II* (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1970), No. 191.
31. Most famously his letter to Crown Prince Wilhelm, 7 September 1925, Harttung (ed.), *Schriften,* pp. 336–40; also his address to a group representing Germans in frontier areas separated from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, 14 December 1925, *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945,* Serie B, I/I, 727–53, and to the German colony in Geneva, 21 September 1926, *ibid.,* I/II 665–9.
32. This is also the conclusion of a major recent study by a French scholar, Christian Baechler, *Gustav Stresemann (1878–1929): De l'impérialisme à la sécurité collective* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1996).
33. As note 4.
34. See for instance a programmatic speech in Halberstadt, 19 December 1919, *Halberstadter Zeitung,* 1 January 1920.
35. As note 4.
36. Stresemann's speech to the national executive of the DVP, 6 July 1924, Kolb and Richter (eds), *Nationalliberalismus,* No. 56, pp. 512–13.
37. Speech to Heidelberg University, 'Neue Wege zur Völkerverständigung', 5 May 1928, Reden bei dem Akt der Ehrenpromotionen des Reichsministers Dr Stresemann und des Botschafters der Vereinigten Staaten Dr Schurman in der Aula der Universität Heidelberg 5 Mai 1928 (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1928), pp. 22–36, extract in H.Bernhard (ed.), *Gustav Stresemann: Vermächtnis,* Vol. III (Berlin: Ullstein, 1932–33), pp. 483–8.
38. Report by the Bavarian representative in Berlin, Ritter von Preger, 26 January 1929, MA 103543, *Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv,* Munich.
39. As note 37.
40. Preface to *Zehn Jahre Deutsche Geschichte 1918–1928* (Berlin: Otto Stolberg Verlag 1928), p. viii.
41. As note 37.
42. On the limits in practice of the steel community and other inter-European industrial cartels, C.A.Wurm, 'Internationale Kartelle und die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen 1924–1930: Politik, Wirtschaft, Sicherheit', in S.A.schuker (ed.), *Deutschland und Frankreich: Vom Konflikt zur Aussöhnung* (Munich: R.Oldenbourg Verlag, 2000), pp. 97–115. A useful bibliographical guide to the economic dimension of foreign policy is provided by G.Niedhart, *Die Aussenpolitik der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: R.Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999), pp. 63–70.
43. Bernhard (ed.), *Vermächtnis,* Vol. III, pp. 577–9.
44. P.Krüger, 'Der abgebrochene Dialog: die deutschen Reaktionen auf die Europavorstellungen Briands in 1929', in A.Fleury (ed.), *Le Plan Briand d'Union fédérale européenne* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998), pp. 289–306.
45. K.H.Pohl, *Weimars Wirtschaft und die Außenpolitik der Republik 1924–1926: Vom Dawes-Plan zum Internationalen Eisenpakt* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1979).
46. On Rauscher, K.Doß, *Zwischen Weimar und Warschau: Ulrich Rauscher. Deutscher Gesandter in Polen 1922–1930: Eine politische Biographie* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1984). Before he died, Stresemann was planning to appoint Rauscher as his Secretary of State, i.e. senior official, in the *Auswärtiges Amt*.
47. Memorandum by Secretary of State Carl von Schubert, 16 July 1927, *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945,* Serie B, VI, No.39.
48. Meeting of the national executive of the DVP, 19 March 1927, Kolb and Richter (eds), *Nationalliberalismus,* No. 66, pp. 728–31.
49. He devoted considerable attention in his last year to the problem of minority protection, perhaps to provide political cover for his attempts to reach détente with Poland on other issues. Wright, *Stresemann,* pp. 465–74;

also B. Schot, 'Die Bedeutung Locarnos für die Minderheitenfragen', in R. Schattkowsky (ed.), *Locarno und Osteuropa* (Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1992), pp. 163–81.

50. Meeting of the Reich Committee of the DVP, 30 September 1929, Kolb and Richter (eds), *Nationalliberalismus,* No. 76, p. 861.
51. 1 October 1929, Archiv der Deutschen Volkspartei.
52. Speech to the DVP party conference, 2 October 1926, special conference report edition of the *Nationalliberale Correspondenz*.

9
Locarno and the Irrelevance of Disarmament

CAROLYN KITCHING

Disarmament was one of the fundamental goals of the Treaty of Versailles, and one of the major factors in Stresemann's search for an understanding with Britain and France in 1925. Yet its place in the treaties of Locarno was, at best, insignificant, and at worst, irrelevant. This chapter will attempt to put the question of disarmament into context as far as the priorities of the European powers were concerned and to ask why, despite its apparent importance in stimulating the Locarno negotiations, it assumed such a minor place in the treaties themselves. The answer is that disarmament *per se,* was, in fact, irrelevant to those who negotiated the treaties; it was merely a means to an end. The factors which *were* relevant to each of the three major powers involved varied considerably, as other analyses have shown, but obviously they wished to strengthen their respective positions, whatever that entailed; what they did *not* want was to risk weakening that position by making any real commitment to disarm.

But if the three major powers, Britain, France and Germany, wished to avoid the question of disarmament, why had it become such an important issue between them? The answer to that question is twofold: first, there was Germany's enforced disarmament under the Treaty of Versailles, and its consequent desire to reestablish its self-respect, and, second, the nature of the disarmament debate itself. Before attempting to establish the position of disarmament in the Locarno negotiations, it is necessary to examine these two issues in a little more detail.

Germany's humiliation at the hands of those who crafted the Treaty of Versailles was due, in no small part, to the disarmament clauses of that treaty. The 'Prussian militarism' which the Allies wished to crush, was a highly significant part of Germany's perception of itself, and not likely to be easily eliminated. Under the treaty, Germany was disarmed, not merely as punishment for its 'war guilt', or to ensure that Germany was unable to resume its aggressive foreign policy, but, as stated in the Preamble to Part V of the treaty, 'in order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of armaments of all nations'. Germany was allowed to retain an army of no more than 100,000 men, on a long-term service basis, and was prohibited from possessing 'aggressive weapons' such as tanks, heavy guns over 105 mm, battleships over 10,000 tons, military aircraft, poison gas and submarines. Numerical restrictions on its navy meant that it could have no more than six battleships, six light cruisers, 12 destroyers and 12 torpedo boats, with a maximum personnel of 15,000. Its General Staff was abolished, the military training of civilians prohibited, and strict regulations applied to all military establishments. The military, naval and air clauses were to be executed by Germany under the control of inter-Allied Commissions, which would be withdrawn when the Allied occupation of Germany was ended.

The Allied occupation of the de-militarised Rhineland, which was the best that France could achieve in the absence of an AngloAmerican guarantee, was to be withdrawn in stages, at five-year intervals from the date of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, provided that Germany had adequately met its disarmament targets. These were the disarmament terms imposed on Germany under the Treaty of Versailles, but, as the

Preamble to the disarmament clauses had stated, this disarmament was imposed upon Germany 'in order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of armaments of all nations'. When the German delegation asked for clarification of the Preamble, Clemenceau, on behalf of the Allies, informed them that the Allies' requirements in regard to German armaments

> were not made solely with the object of rendering it impossible for Germany to renew her policy of military aggression. They are also the first step towards that general reduction and limitation of armaments which they seek to bring about as one of the most fruitful preventives of war and which it will be one of the first duties of the League of Nations to promote.[1]

Whilst the Allies' commitment to disarmament, as set out in the Preamble and the Clemenceau Letter, may have been somewhat vague, their obligations as set out in the Covenant of the League of Nations were much more specific. Under Article 8, members of the League pledged themselves to 'the reduction of armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations'.[2]

Disarmament was, thus, firmly on the agenda, albeit in a somewhat vague and unspecific manner. But, if the measures imposed on Germany were not designed merely to render it 'impossible for Germany to renew its policy of military aggression', what was the motive behind the apparent commitment of the Allies to reduce their own armaments 'to the lowest point consistent with national safety'? The answer to that question lies in the nature of the disarmament debate itself, and in the view put forward by the majority of international statesmen at the time. In the aftermath of the First World War, many leading ministers and politicians came to the conclusion that the arms race itself, the frantic acquisition of armaments by the major powers, was the chief cause of the war. This view is perhaps best summed up in the oft-quoted words of Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary in 1914:

> The moral is obvious: it is that great armaments lead inevitably to war… The enormous growth of armaments in Europe, the sense of insecurity and fear caused by them—it was these that made war inevitable.[3]

Followers of this side of the disarmament debate advocate the abolition of armaments as a means of abolishing war; without the arms to fight, tensions between states can never erupt into violence. But this is only one side of the debate. Is it not, argues the other side, rather the tensions between states that lead to the perceived need for a state to arm itself against possible aggression? The theory is summed up by Hans Morgenthau thus:

> Men do not fight because they have arms. They have arms because they deem it necessary to fight. Take away their arms and they will either fight with their bare fists, or get themselves new arms with which to fight.[4]

On this side of the disarmament debate, the priority is security rather than arms reduction, and it is against this background that the issue of disarmament during the inter-war period must be set. The statesmen who had disarmed Germany publicly proclaimed that the build-up of arms had caused the outbreak of war in 1914, and that therefore the goal must be a substantial reduction in the arms of all nations. Privately, the majority of them subscribed to the other side of the argument, and each sought security at the expense of arms reduc tions. This, of course, was not a situation that Germany could be expected to tolerate. Caught

between enforced disarmament under the Treaty of Versailles, and the Allies' rather vague commitment to 'the reduction of armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety' under Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, Germany was obviously going to make a connection between the two. As Robert Cecil, perhaps the only genuinely prodisarmament member of Baldwin's Conservative administration, remarked 'whatever conclusion might be reached from a careful examination of the wording of the two promises, there never was any serious doubt as a matter of common sense that the Germans would …expect their late opponents to disarm as soon as Germany had done so, and if they did not, Germany would certainly regard herself as free to re-arm'.[5]

So where does this disarmament debate fit into the Locarno Treaties? Does it, in fact, enter into the question at all, or is it merely an irrelevance? At first sight it *must* be relevant; after all, it was the failure of Germany to fulfil its disarmament obligations under the Treaty of Versailles that was largely instrumental in prompting Stresemann's approach to Britain and France in the first place. The Allies were quite immovable in their insistence that Germany should meet these obligations if they were to agree to evacuate the Cologne zone on 10 January 1925. But if disarmament *was* relevant, then where did it stand as far as the Locarno negotiations and treaties were concerned, and what was its position in the improved relations of the aftermath of Locarno?

The goal of disarmament as set out in the treaty and Covenant seemed no nearer in 1925 than in 1919. Steps to achieve this goal were slow and faltering. The successful negotiation of the Washington Naval Treaties in 1921–22 resulted in a temporary halt in the emerging naval race between the three major naval powers, the United States, Britain and Japan, but did not address the basic problem of Germany's need to see other powers disarm in line with their commitments. Initially, however, it had appeared that intentions were good. The League of Nations almost immediately established two bodies to deal with the problem. The Permanent Advisory Commission (PAC) was created in May 1920 with a remit of advising the League Council on military, naval and air questions. In September 1920, the League set up the Temporary Mixed Commission for Disarmament (TMC), the aim of which was to f ormulate plans for the reduction of armaments under Article 8 of the Covenant. Neither of these bodies inspired much enthusiasm in the minds of committed disarmers like Cecil, but he felt that, of the two, the TMC was most likely to produce some result. However, even the TMC did not move quickly enough for Britain's other representative, Viscount Esher, whose fears of another 'aimless war' led him to take matters into his own hands. Having collaborated with the dissident soldier, Major General Frederick Maurice, on 23 February 1922, Esher put forward proposals which he himself considered to be drastic. The Esher Plan proposed the restriction of standing armies in peacetime, on a numerical basis 'by a ratio following the Naval precedent at Washington'.[6] Although when he discussed his proposals with French counterparts they, in his words, 'nearly had a fit',[7] they were not as hostile as he had feared. In the event, however, the plan melted away into obscurity, officially because it was rejected by the military experts who made up the Permanent Advisory Commission; unofficially, according to Esher himself, because Cecil 'was so keen on adopting a different procedure' that he had 'regretfully' given way.[8]

It is unlikely that the Esher Plan would have solved the problem of disarmament in the long term; amongst other criticisms, it effectively consolidated French superiority over Germany, a situation that the Germans would obviously never have accepted.[9] However, perhaps the most striking feature of the Esher Plan was the lack of support it received from his own government. Certainly there was little likelihood of its ever being accepted by any of the European powers, but there is no evidence that it was ever even discussed by the British Cabinet. The closest it came to any official recognition was a Committee of Imperial Defence Memorandum (No. 339-B dated 3 April 1922) that concluded that the ratio allotted to Great Britain 'will

certainly not suffice' and that it was unlikely that Esher's proposals 'would be met with much sympathy by the Council of the League of Nations'.[10]

Cecil's 'different procedure' was the proposed Treaty of Mutual Guarantee that attempted to tackle the problem of disarmament from a different direction from that envisaged by Esher. The Draft Treaty took an indirect approach to disarmament; rather than reduce the level of armaments in the hope that this would reduce the risk of aggression, Cecil's plan aimed to increase the level of security, which in turn would lead to a decrease in the level of armaments. This link between security and disarmament had been spelled out at the Third Assembly of the League in September 1922. Resolution XIV stated that 'in the present state of the world, many governments would be unable to accept the responsibility for a serious reduction of armaments unless they received in exchange a satisfactory guarantee of the safety of their country'.[11]

This guarantee of safety was to be provided by a 'defensive agreement that should be open to all countries, binding them to provide immediate and effective assistance in accordance with a prearranged plan'.[12] Cecil's plan was global: assistance would be provided to each state, in the event of aggression by another state, by countries situated in the same part of the globe. The guarantee would, however, apply only to those states which had reduced the level of their peacetime forces in line with plans to be drawn up by the League Council; security and disarmament were inextricably linked.

Whilst the smaller members of the League of Nations welcomed the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee with enthusiasm, it proved unacceptable to the larger powers on whom the onus of providing security would lie. Britain was loudest in her condemnation, her objec tions ranging from an alleged *increase* in armaments in order to meet increased obligations, to the necessity of placing troops under the command 'of some foreign General Staff'[13] at the demand of the League Council. Baldwin's Conservative government prevaricated, and it was MacDonald's Labour administration that eventually turned down Cecil's proposed plan on 30 May 1924. MacDonald believed that the problem of disarmament ought to be tackled 'from the other end', as he put it. On taking office he declared: 'My own feeling about Disarmament is that we ought to advance the political side a bit further before we can expect any good result from a direct approach to the problem.'[14] This apparently chose to overlook the fact that Cecil's plan did, in fact, attempt to 'advance the political side' by establishing a system of international security.

Having ultimately been responsible for rejecting a disarmament proposal which most of the other European powers were prepared to use as a basis of discussion, MacDonald's government felt committed to helping the League to draw up a plan which did not suff fer from the perceived flaws of the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee. The resulting draft Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, or Geneva Protocol as it became known, attempted to close the 'gap' in the Covenant which had always left the powers the final option to use force should economic sanctions fail. It also sought to address one of the major criticisms levelled at the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, which was its failure to define an aggressor. The ability to determine who was the aggressor in any dispute was crucial to the League's ability to deal with the situation immediately. Under the TMG, in the event of an aggressor not being immediately obvious, the League Council could take up to four days to determine the victim of aggression; four days which could, in the opinion of the British War Office, at least, be 'almost fatal'.[15] The Geneva Protocol addressed this problem through the concept of compulsory arbitration. States which refused arbitration or mediation in international disputes would be presumed aggressors and become liable to sanctions under Article 16 of the League Covenant if they then resorted to war. The idea of arbitration completed the link between security and disarmament. As with the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee before it, the Protocol would not come into force until a disarmament agreement had been reached, and on the security side the signatories would be required to reaffirm the commitments they had already made under the League Covenant.

France and nine other countries signed the Protocol before the close of the League Assembly at which it was presented. France, the country which demanded security before all else, gave wholehearted support. Aristide Briand, head of the French delegation, declared that, 'France is honoured in adhering to the Protocol, and for myself…the most memorable event in the whole of my political career is that I have come to this platform to bring you my country's adherence to the Protocol.'[16] Unfortunately, despite being more or less acceptable to the majority of League members, the Protocol was destined to go the same way as the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, again at the hands of the British government. This time it was Baldwin's incoming Conservative government which administered the death blow to their Labour predecessor's plan, citing almost identical reasons as MacDonald's administration had used in turning down the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee. They feared it involved greater commitments, both economic and military, and that it surrendered national sovereignty to the League Council. They feared the Dominions would object to the commitments contained in the document, though the Dominion representatives had been closely involved in the formulation of the draft Protocol. A further point against the Protocol was that it did not meet with the approval of the United States, since the latter ran the risk of being declared an aggressor and having sanctions imposed upon them. It was this fact that led Austen Chamberlain, the new Conservative Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to suggest that a public announcement of the US viewpoint should be made because it would 'obviously have a great effect upon the nations which were now considering their attitude towards the Protocol'.[17] In advising rejection of the Protocol, the Committee of Imperial Defence declared that 'it was impossible for the Government of this country to turn it down without making a serious effort either to amend the present form of the Protocol or to substitute something else for submission to the League of Nations in its stead'.[18] The need to offer some gesture towards a disarmament agreement was thus very much a priority in Chamberlain's foreign policy

Obviously the current study can deal only superficially with the detail of these abortive disarmament plans.[19] The major point to be made is that in the five years since the League of Nations began to try to find a formula to fulfil its commitment to the 'reduction of armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety', no progress had, in fact, been made. It is on the surface difficult to see how any of the proposals so far submitted for approval to the League members could actually have been accepted by them: the Esher Plan had no real backing, especially from the British government, and both the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee and the Geneva Protocol involved what British Ministers and Service Chiefs chose to see as a loss of sovereignty and apparently greater international commitments. Both Cecil and MacDonald, the architects of the respective plans, repeatedly pointed out that they in fact involved no further commitments than those already undertaken through the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League. The problem was, however, that the feeling amongst the British Cabinet and the Committee of Imperial Defence was that Britain ought to try to extricate herself from some of these commitments, rather than take steps to renew them. Disarmament was thus still high on the international agenda, but without any real commitment on the part of any of the major powers involved.

But one power *was* disarmed, having been told that its disarmament was part of a greater move towards international disarmament, and that power was watching proceedings with great interest. Germany was, quite obviously, no more enthusiastic about disarmament than any of its European counterparts, but her ability to evade the issue was more restricted. However, even whilst members of the League discussed possible disarmament measures via a Treaty of Mutual Guarantee or the Geneva Protocol, Germany's reluctance to meet the disarmament conditions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles was beginning to cause unease amongst the former Allies. The French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 had brought the activities of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission to a temporary halt. When they were able to

resume their inspections, following the settlement of the Dawes Plan in 1924, it immediately became obvious that Germany's progress towards fulfilment of its treaty obligations was well behind schedule.

Part XIV of the Treaty of Versailles had set out the Allies' requirements as far as the Rhineland was concerned. Article 428 stated that, 'As a guarantee for the execution of the present Treaty by Germany, the German territory situated to the west of the Rhine, together with the bridgeheads, will be occupied by Allied and Associated troops for a period of fifteen years from the coming into force of the present treaty.'[20]

The programme for the staged evacuation was also clearly defined, provided that 'the conditions of the present treaty are faithfully carried out by Germany'.[21] At the end of five years, the first of these zones, comprising the bridgehead of Cologne and specified surrounding areas, would be evacuated. The date set for this evacuation, five years from the date of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, was 10 January 1925. However, as early as August 1924, opinion in France was hardening against this evacuation in the light of Germany's failure to comply with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. A British Foreign Office memorandum pointed out that, whilst some of these infringements were 'of no practical importance', they were 'sufficient to afford France an excuse for saying that the treaty has not been faithfully carried out by Germany, a[n]d that the first zone of the Rhineland cannot, therefore be evacuated'.[22]

Whilst some of these infringements may have been 'of no practical importance', they nevertheless did constitute an infringement of the treaty. As the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Lord Cavan, pointed out in a memorandum dated 3 December 1924: '[t]he recent General Inspection which has been proceeding for the last two months, and which is not yet completed, shows conclusively that, while the infractions of the treaty are numerous, and often small, several most important clauses have not yet been carried out'.[23]

Specifically, these more important infringements related to the following Articles of the Treaty of Versailles:

1 Transformation of factories to peacetime production (Article 168)
2 Disposal of the dumps of war material (Article 169)
3 The necessary legislation relating to

(a) Recruiting and volunteers (Articles 160, 174, 178)
(b) Patriotic societies (military) (Article 177)
(c) Unauthorised production or possession of armaments (Article 168)
(d) Import and export of war material (Articles 170 and 211)

4 Coast Defences and Fortress Guns (Article 167)
5 Reorganisation of Police (Article 162).

Cavan's memorandum concluded that 'it is, in the opinion of the General Staff, absolutely imperative to insist upon these important clauses being at least in actual process of completion before concessions to Germany in the way of evacuation of the Rhineland are granted'.[24]

In addition to the problems identified above, there were other areas of potential disagreement. A Foreign Office memorandum of 7 November 1924, pointed out that whilst Germany had complied with all the purely naval clauses, it was threatening the 'smooth working' of the aeronautical committee by demanding the revision of the rules defining the difference between military and civil aircraft. The memorandum concluded that 'the French do not wish these to be modified, and the Germans are threatening to make difficulties f or British civil aviation in Germany if their request is not complied with'.[25]

Public opinion in Germany was certain to be angered by refusal of the Allies to evacuate the Cologne zone on schedule. As early as August 1924, the then Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, had expressed to the German Ambassador to London, his 'anxiety…in regard to the attitude of certain sections of the German public' in relation to the officers of the Control Commission:

> Reports have reached me, for example, of a virulent and, may I add, untimely campaign in the Munich press against the officers of the Commission of Control… I draw Your Excellency's earnest attention to the deplorable result which may ensue if this spirit goes unchecked.[26]

As far as the delays in meeting its obligations were concerned, Germany could, of course, plead that this was outside its control; the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr had temporarily halted proceedings. But when it emerged that the German government was not merely defaulting on the reductions demanded, but was, in fact, 'secretly replenishing their stock of ammunition for the *Reichswehr*'[27] (a fact which the British government took great pains to keep from the French), it was becoming increasingly obvious that a stand would have to be taken.

This is the well-documented background against which Gustav Stresemann made his approaches to Britain and France in January 1925. The reparations issue had been settled, at least temporarily, by the Dawes Plan in 1924 and disarmament was now the only major outstanding area where Germany was deemed to be defaulting on her commitments under Versailles. Alongside these developments, or lack thereof, ran the attempts by the League of Nations to find a formula to which the other nations could subscribe. Germany's concern was naturally not solely related to the issue of disarmament; any pact which excluded it, or brought its allies closer together, was a threat to its attempts to regain its rightful place on the European stage. Thus Stresemann's approaches to Britain and France were double-edged; to attempt to achieve, as Sally Marks describes it, 'evacuation without disarmament',[28] and to prevent any alliance of its former enemies which excluded it. But if the issue of disarmament was one of the major spurs to the Allies' refusal to evacuate the Cologne zone, and hence one of Stresemann's major spurs to address the problem, where did disarmament feature in the actual negotiations and achievements of the Locarno Treaties?

Austen Chamberlain, British Foreign Secretary, and one of the three main architects of Locarno, could not be insensitive to the growing importance of disarmament. He was, however, a firm believer in the 'security first' side of the disarmament debate, and in a Cabinet memorandum of 16 July 1925 he clearly set out his own views on the place of disarmament in the Locarno negotiations. Referring to the failure of the League to achieve a disarmament agreement thus far, he declared that, whilst disarmament had occupied 'perhaps the most prominent place' in discussions at the League Assembly, it was 'not through apathy or from lack of effort that the problem remains unsolved, but because the basic conditions required for disarmament have not yet been attained'.[29]

Having declared that 'there can be no reduction without security', he criticised Cecil, who was pushing for a greater commitment to disarmament in the Locarno negotiations, for 'proceeding on the assumption that the Western Pact provides the security for which Europe is asking'.[30] This assumption was questionable, he maintained, firstly because the new pact was not yet concluded and secondly, as Cecil himself had pointed out, because 'the new pact does not touch Russia, and Russia is the key to the problem, at least as far as eastern Europe is concerned'.[31]

Is it the slightest use to propose reduction of armaments to the powers of eastern Europe while they remain under the nightmare of Bolshevik Russia? And, even if the latter were to come into any scheme for

reduction, who can trust or be expected to trust a Russian promise or signature in the light of what is happening about propaganda?[32]

Herein lies at least part of the answer to the question of why disarmament was not a major feature of the Locarno negotiations. Any attempt to persuade Czechoslovakia and Poland, potential co-signatories of the new treaty, to accept any measure of disarmament would be doomed to failure whilst Russia remained outside such an agreement. But this was only part of the answer. It was not only the small and relatively helpless eastern European states who were insufficiently secure to agree to disarm; the same was true, to an even greater extent, of their west European ally—France. Chamberlain, perhaps the only committed francophile in Baldwin's Cabinet, recognised the validity of French fears. 'The attitude of France, it must be observed, has been consistent throughout. Her refusal to disarm is not as a result of military fever but of deep-rooted fear, arising from past history, in regard to her future safety.'[33]

The French, Chamberlain pointed out, have 'consistently stated the path of progress in the sequence: security, arbitration, disarmament'—significantly, the three main ideals of the Geneva Protocol, to which the French were to remain committed for the next decade. This was not to say that he shared the French preoccupation with security, but he recognised that it was 'not the negative absence of security' but 'the positive presence of insecurity that creates this troublesome and difficult situation'.[34] When Curzon queried whether there was any ground for the French feeling of insecurity, as 'France is the most powerful military country in Europe' while 'Germany is disarmed', and Balfour, reflecting perhaps the overwhelming view of British Conservative politicians, declared that he was 'so cross with the French' because their 'obsession is so intolerably foolish', Chamberlain defended their attitude. His more charitable view was that, whilst France's *actual* insecurity might be questionable, he had no doubt 'as to the genuineness of the feeling'.[35]

Towards the proposed Locarno negotiations, Chamberlain's attitude was unswerving; they would provide the strong base of security from which disarmament would follow, one step at a time. The question of disarmament itself was not, in fact, discussed. Following Chamberlain's preferred route of security before disarmament, the final protocol of the Locarno Conference, in its penultimate paragraph, declared that:

> The representatives of the Governments represented here declare their firm conviction that the entry into force of these treaties and conventions will contribute greatly to bring about a moral relaxation of the tension between nations that it will help powerfully toward the solution of many political or economic problems in accordance with the interests and sentiments of peoples, and that, in strengthening peace and security in Europe, it will hasten on effectively the disarmament provided for in Art. 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

In effect, other than a virtual footnote to the treaty along the lines of Chamberlain's view of 'security first', the only part that disarmament played in the Locarno episode related, in a purely negative way, to *German* disarmament. It was in large part Germany's failure to meet the disarmament conditions of the Treaty of Versailles that had stimulated Stresemann to make the offer to Britain and France, and it was Germany which ultimately benefited in this area. The Rhineland Pact meant that Germany had succeeded in avoiding the penalty for not meeting the IMCCs demands that it adhere to the disarmament conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, it had avoided the permanent systems of on-site inspection, which France demanded to ensure its adherence to these conditions, and it had achieved the demilitarisation of the Rhineland and the removal of all occupation forces from her territory.[36] Stresemann had managed to achieve evacuation *without* disarmament; far from fulfilling the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, he had evaded them. He had also succeeded in preventing either an entente alliance against Germany, or a FrancoBritish alliance. France was meant to feel more secure now that it had a guarantee of its frontier with Germany, and this security,

according to Chamberlain's theory, would enable it to make significant reduc tions in the level of her armaments.

However, even if Germany had been the only source of French anxiety, it is unlikely that the Locarno Treaties would have reassured France sufficiently to make such reductions. France was well aware that Germany sought to dismantle the Versailles treaty, to 'hollow out' the chains of Versailles.[37] But Germany was *not* the only source of French anxiety. At a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence, exactly a month after the initialling of the Locarno Treaty, Chamberlain admitted that, in the search for a disarmament agreement by the League of Nations, whilst 'something might be done by prevailing on the Power which was highly armed—France—to cut down her armaments and so bring influence to bear on others…it was essential, however, to look east of Europe; how far was it possible to tackle the problem of disarmament without asking Russia to take part'.[38]

Fear of communism was far stronger in western Europe than fear of Germany, and the alliances which France had concluded with Poland and Czechoslovakia, following the failure of the promised Anglo-American Guarantee, made her particularly vulnerable to Soviet Russia's potentially expansionist policy.

However, if French security was little improved by the Locarno treaties, there was at least one positive sign, as far as disarmament was concerned. Germany was admitted to the League, under the Locarno agreement, in 1926, and it was to the League that France consistently looked for a solution to the disarmament question. France thus began exerting pressure on the League to carry the search for a disarmament agreement forward; this was partly as a result of its fear that the United States was about to enter the disarmament debate, and France was, as Chamberlain put it, eager 'to claim this question for the League'.[39] The League Council duly set up a body to attempt to pave the way for a disarmament conference. The Preparatory Commission, established in 1926, spent the next seven years in attempting to devise a framework for discussion at a multilateral conference, but it is not within the remit of this current study to attempt to chart its course.[40] It is enough to record that when the World Disarmament Conference finally did assemble, in February 1932, the labours of the Preparatory Commission were dismissed within the first week, and the collapse of the conference in 1934 is seen as a watershed in international relations during the inter-war years. Disarmament was decisively removed from the international agenda, and rearmament became the order of the day.

Locarno had obviously failed to 'advance the political side', as MacDonald had put it. Aside from the 'illusion of peace', Locarno had not actually changed the security situation in Europe in any way that would have allowed the powers to negotiate a meaningful disarmament treaty. Germany's violations of the disarmament clauses of Versailles had effectively been ignored, the military implications of the Rhineland Pact were so vague and yet so complex they could hardly reassure France, and Germany's freedom to revise her eastern frontiers meant that France's allies, Poland and Czechoslovakia, could well need her military support in the future.

The f failure of the Locarno treaties to provide an increased sense of security in Europe was not, of course, the only reason for the failure of the powers to reach a disarmament agreement. Arguably, both Cecil's Treaty of Mutual Guarantee and the proposed Geneva Protocol would have gone much further in creating this sense of security, and thus have provided a basis for the European powers to meet their commitments under Article 8 of the Covenant. Many obstacles stood in the way of meeting these commitments, not least the lack of political will in Britain, and the lack of security in France.[41] Locarno's failure, or perhaps its success, was that it apparently fooled public opinion in Britain and France into believing that stability and security *had,* in fact, been achieved, and the public in both these countries had been told, since the end of the war, that disarmament was the key to peace. Was it then wrong to expect that disarmament would follow this achievement of security? Locarno was certainly a diplomatic success for

Chamberlain, but it did not go any way towards compensating France for the rejection of the Geneva Protocol, nor providing the security offered by the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee. This is not, in any way, to discredit Chamberlain's achievement; despite his belief that Britain must offer France *something,* he obviously did not believe that the Locarno Treaties would lead to disarmament, for, as he had said, 'the new pact does not touch Russia, and Russia is the key to the problem'.[42]

Chamberlain's acceptance of this point merely highlights the question of what exactly was the place of disarmament in the Locarno Treaties? It was certainly an important stimulus as far as Germany, Britain and France were concerned. For Germany it had the potential of further de-stabilising an already shaky government. Stresemann had been in office for too short a period to survive the outcry amongst the German people if the Allies refused to evacuate the Cologne zone on time. Britain was, of course, well aware of this, but equally well aware that France was not prepared to grant Germany more time; France would demand that Britain assist her in enforcing the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Coupled with this, was Britain's responsibility for turning down both the proposed Treaty of Mutual Guarantee and the Geneva Protocol; she felt that she must make some more acceptable gesture towards reaching a disarmament/security guarantee. For France, of course, Germany's adherence to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles was essential to its own perceived level of security, and the wholehearted support of Britain was, in turn, vital in achieving this security. These are the welldocumented short-term stimuli which prompted Chamberlain and Briand to conquer their suspicion of Stresemann's overtures.

In the medium term, however, disarmament did not feature in the Locarno negotiations or treaties, other than as a passing reference as a goal that might, hopefully, be achieved as a consequence of the improvement in international relations. In the longer term, it became lost in the illusion of the 'spirit of Locarno'. Undoubtedly this 'spirit' did lead to an improvement in relations between Germany and her Western neighbours, but did it, in fact, provide the 'moral relaxation of the tension between nations' necessary to 'hasten on' the disarmament provided for in the Covenant of the League of Nations?[43]

The terms and implications of the Locarno treaties in general, and the Rhineland Pact in particular, have been well-documented elsewhere.[44] All that needs to be said here is that the pact could *not* provide France with sufficient security; the requirements of Britain's role as guardian of the Rhineland Pact meant that she must formulate joint military plans both with and against France and Germany, and consequently she did neither. Less than two years later, Britain's Ambassador in Paris, the Marquess of Crewe, commented that 'the Locarno treaties have never been considered here to provide a complete solution of the problem of French security' but 'the better informed sections of French public opinion are fully aware that the Locarno guarantees are as much as any British government is ever likely to be in a position to concede to France'.[45] It was obvious that France would have to make the best of the little she had been given, but that this was not enough to provide the security which Chamberlain maintained would lead to disarmament.

In conclusion, the role of disarmament in the Locarno negotiations, treaties and aftermath, seems quite clear. It provided the necessary stimulus for the three major European powers to embark on serious discussions of the question of *security,* lip-service was paid to the desirability of disarmament in the Final Protocol itself, but the real effect was that it actually enabled Germany, Britain and France to *avoid* any commitment to disarmament. Disarmament was irrelevant.

NOTES

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32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. Minutes of the 195th Meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence, 13 February 1925, PRO/CAB2/4.
35. *Ibid.*
36. See J.Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 41.
37. *Ibid.,* p.43.
38. Committee of Imperial Defence, 205th Meeting, 17 November 1925, PRO/CAB2/4.

39. *Ibid.*
40. For more detailed discussion on the Preparatory Commission's endeavours, see Kitching, *Britain and the Problem of International Disarmament,* and Richardson, *The Evolution of British Disarmament Policy*.
41. See *ibid.,* and for a detailed assessment of the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee and Geneva Protocol, see Silverlock, *Issues of Disarmament*.
42. Cabinet Memorandum CP357(25), PRO/CAB24/174.
43. Final Protocol of the Locarno Conference.
44. See, for example, Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy,* Marks, *The Illusion of Peace* and other contributions in the present volume.
45. Crewe to Chamberlain, No. 1497, 8 July 1927, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Series Ia, Vol. III.

10
Taming or Demonising an Aggressor: The British Debate on the End of the Locarno System

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In 1925, Austen Chamberlain and Aristide Briand negotiated the Locarno agreement with Gustav Stresemann bringing Germany back into the international community. The confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the arrangement transf ormed the atmosphere between the major European nations. Eleven years later Adolf Hitler shattered the agreement but managed to keep his country within the community of nations by playing on democratic fears of war and the belief that the policy of ostracisation had failed between 1919 and 1925. Hitler offered further spurious CBMs which held out the enticing, but utterly misleading, prospect that a state led by Nazis might behave like a satisfied member of the international community.

At noon on 7 March 1936 Hitler told the Reichstag that, in view of the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Treaty, which he claimed breached the Locarno agreements, German troops had entered the demilitarised Rhineland. Article 1 of the Locarno Treaty, which guaranteed the demilitarised zone, was effectively at an end, even though Hitler held up the promise of new and more far-reaching treaties as a replacement.[1]

The French and Belgians, whose security was dramatically reduced by the occupation of the Rhineland and who were permitted under Article 11 of the Locarno Treaty to use force against a 'flagrant breach' of its provisions, dithered and allowed Britain to decide the democracies' response. The British National Government, led by Stanley Baldwin, determined to follow up Hitler's proposals for nonaggression pacts and to play down the significance of German actions.[2] Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, set about reassuring the British public that the government was not going to be drawn into any precipitate response to German actions and that it did not believe the occupation of the Rhineland amounted to a *casus belli*. From first to last he stressed the importance of calm, calming British and French public opinion, and, with German help, finding new CBMs to replace those which the German Chancellor had derisively thrust aside. Atmosphere, trust between nations and tranquillity were treated as more important than changes in the strategic balance.

Thus, the Locarno agreements began and ended with the search for CBMs because the British government did not want Germany to be, or to be seen to be, a pariah. In 1925 Austen Chamberlain saw that security in Europe was not directly threatened, but that suspicion and lack of confidence were causing the endless friction between Germany and its French and Belgian neighbours. He could rebuild confidence by guaranteeing the frontiers between Germany, France and Belgium. He could offer nothing more concrete in these negotiations because economic arrangements were already under discussion in other forums, and disarmament talks were taking place under the aegis of the League of Nations. There were similarities with the situation in the early 1970s, when the term CBM was coined at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The CSCE did not discuss arms control because it was being negotiated at the UN and in the talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, yet statesmen wanted measures that could build confidence in the peaceful intentions of the two opposed alliances.[3] Each would cease to be a pariah in the eyes of the other.

Although the term was only coined in the 1970s, CBMs are a conventional part of the diplomatic scene. They are designed to create mutual trust between potential enemies by minor measures which might improve communications between them, reduce secrecy or introduce legal mechanisms for arbitrating frontier and other disputes. They respond to the democratic appetite for engagement rather than confrontation. What was unusual about the 1936 crisis was that, while Eden and his colleagues talked extensively about rebuilding confidence, they were particularly concerned about the confidence of their own public in the way they, and the French and Belgian leaders, intended to respond to German policy.

In March 1936 the Cabinet was afraid of the British public. This appeared fickle, unforgiving, unpredictable and susceptible to the intense propaganda spread by foreign governments. In the 1920s the public had turned against the Versailles settlement for which in 1919 there had been lavish praise from all political persuasions.[4] Public opinion, or rather what Ministers believed public opinion to be, had dominated the handling of the Abyssinian crisis in the autumn of 1935. The government felt it was forced to abandon the Hoare-Laval plan, which it had previously endorsed, for a compromise with the Italians over Abyssinia.[5] To quote the German Military Attaché in London, Baron Geyr von Schweppenberg, 'once the British get warmed up politically they take a long time to cool down. All who know this, from the Prime Minister downwards, tread warily when the political temper of the people is aroused. The Hoare-Laval crisis provides a striking example of this.'[6]

Belief in the volatility and power of public opinion explains the peculiar shape and nature of Eden's speech when the denunciation of Locarno and the occupation of the Rhineland were fully debated for the first time in Parliament on 26 March 1936. Eden began, not by talking about German actions, but by thanking MPs, the press and the public for the restraint that they had shown during the crisis. He then went on to emphasise that his speech was addressed 'not to nations overseas, but to the people of my own country'. Of course he knew as well as anyone that foreign governments would examine every phrase, but his urge to address his domestic constituency is telling. The immediate danger was that the public might restrain the government from taking actions which it deemed essential. This was the taproot of government policy at the time.

Thus Eden emphasised the significance of what had happened. He pointed out that it was Germany which had initiated the moves leading to the Locarno Treaty and had asked for the Rhineland to be demilitarised in perpetuity. He also stressed that Britain was not an arbiter in the dispute but a guarantor of the agreements. At the same time he did not believe that German forces could be expelled from the Rhineland by economic or other pressures. Because of the consequent threat to peace, he went on, 'we thought it our imperative duty to seek by negotiation to *restore confidence*'. Thus the government tried to persuade Germany to take the dispute to the Hague Court as it was obliged to do under the treaty, to agree not to fortify the Rhineland and to accept temporarily the establishment of an international force in the demilitarised zone. Every one of these CBMs was rejected by Berlin because Hitler was confident that he could reassure democratic opinion by offering grandiose and meaningless new treaties.[7] All that actually happened, as Eden's speech made clear, was that Britain's guarantee to defend France and Belgium from attack was reiterated and staff talks between the three democratic Locarno powers were promised. But these were 'purely technical conversations. They can in no measure increase our political obligations—in no measure.'

Britain was still in the middle of an intense debate during which the conventional wisdom of the 1920s about international affairs was slowly to be replaced by the strategic axioms of the Cold War years. This debate reflected the volatility of public opinion and its doubts about the direction to follow. Parliamentary discussions on foreign issues resembled a prolonged seminar on security. In a typical debate in the House of Commons on 2 May 1935, the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, attacked military alliances which, he said 'have never yet saved [man] from war and never will'. George Lansbury, the leader of the Labour

Party, denounced government plans for rearmament because 'we cannot believe that the piling up of armaments will bring peace' and Sir Herbert Samuel, the Liberal leader, criticised the 'system of alliances [and] the recrudescence of the balance of power'. All these ideas of what to avoid in international affairs were based on assumptions about the causes of the First World War. They were still widespread in Britain when Hitler invaded the Rhineland in March 1936 and it was not until March 1939, when Hitler overran Czechoslovakia, that they all collapsed together. The opposition parties also believed that the Locarno agreements and their demise were less important to the League of Nations and to Britain than the Japanese attack on Manchuria in 1931 or the Italian on Abyssinia in 1935. From the moment it was signed in 1925 the Locarno Treaty had been a Tory measure which detracted from the League and from collective security. As Hugh Dalton told the Commons on 26 March 1936, Locarno's 'geographical limits…are far too narrow to be realistic today'. Conversely, to many Tories, Manchuria and Abyssinia were ravaged by distant conflicts about which Britain could do little and which did not directly affect the country's interests.[8] The Tories believed that they were simply being realistic about British power, though experience was to show that the threats to the British Empire were pervasive and unavoidable.

On 26 March, to avoid appearing belligerent to the British people, Eden told the Commons that negotiations would proceed with Germany for wider measures, on the lines proposed by Hitler. Reflecting British isolationism and the attacks which he rightly foresaw would come from the Labour and Liberal benches, he was extremely defensive about the staff talks and the guarantee to Paris and Brussels, and equally enthusiastic about following up Hitler's proposals

> which open up opportunities for new negotiations… It is the appeasement of Europe as a whole that we have constantly before us. We need time…a calmer and quieter atmosphere in which to attempt to study these new proposals.

He finished his peroration by appealing again for calm, for support from all parties and from the British people whom he asked to trust the government. He used the extraordinary phrase, that diplomacy was impossible 'unless in this country we can divest ourselves of prejudices about our own politicians', in other words unless the public showed far more support for government policy than he believed it had done in 1935. There was not a word about German armaments or about the blood-thirsty nature of the Nazi regime, and only a veiled reference to the dramatic change in the balance of power which Germany had achieved by remilitarising the Rhineland.[9]

Eden's speech showed that the government itself was entrapped by Hitler's offers to negotiate another Locarno agreement or, in other words, to choose the CBMs which he would accept. The Francophile Conservative Edward Spears noted sardonically during the debate that:

> having invaded the Rhineland this year and offered a treaty of 25 years, next year they will take Austria and offer a treaty of 50 years…after that it will be the turn of Memel and the Corridor, when they will off fer a treaty of 75 years, and we can look f orward to eternal peace once France and England have disappeared.

But, if the government rejected Hitler's offers, then it would be accused of missing opportunities and resurrecting the failed policy of ostracising Germany begun with the Armistice. Thus it capped Germany's proposals for new non-aggression pacts with its own suggestion for a series of pacts of mutual assistance. The government itself hoped that Germany's ambitions were finite. In any case, Ministers accepted military advice that time was on their side over rearmament and so, if war had to come, it should be delayed as long

as possible. Yet, so sceptical were some diplomats of the ministerial judgement that atmosphere was more important than strategy that the Permanent Under Secretary, Robert Vansittart, and Ralph Wigram and others co-operated with the tiny band of politicians, led by Winston Churchill, whose primary aim was to reduce public confidence in Hitler's policies, and thus by implication in the government's whole approach to CBMs and to keeping Germany in the international community. Throughout the Rhineland crisis, Wigram kept Churchill supplied with classified information and with reports from British ambassadors. Following a visit with his wife to Churchill's house two weeks after the invasion, Wigram wrote, 'it made us both feel much better in every way It is such a privilege and encouragement to me to hear your views. I wish and wish they were the views of the government.'[10] A privilege it may have been, but it was extremely unusual, not to say improper, for a British civil servant to share government secrets with the leader of the group trying to thwart government plans.

These plans were naturally encouraged by the German representatives in London. These were not Nazis and their efforts were all the more effective because they wanted to believe that their country did not deserve to be a pariah, but was just recovering its rightful position in Europe, rather than engaged in an unlimited crusade for dominance. We know how hard Geyr and Ambassador von Hoesch worked to restore British confidence in German policy after the reoccupation of the Rhineland; how von Hoesch pleaded the German cause with Robert Cecil and Austen Chamberlain and was dead within a month of the outbreak of the crisis; how Geyr braved the wrath of the War Minister, Duff Cooper, who insulted him at von Hoesch's memorial service, and maintained his links with the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence, Sir John Dill, and other key members of the General Staff.[11]

CBMs were peculiarly attractive to British statesmen because they deplored emotion and public hysteria. They feared the change described by Arnold Toynbee under which 'war and diplomacy have ceased to be the exclusive business of a tiny band of prof fessionals and have become everybody's business'. They were educated to maintain a demeanour of studied calm. When von Hoesch, told Eden on 7 March about the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, the Foreign Secretary's response was measured and reassuring. He already knew what was happening so he had had time to prepare his reply He objected to Germany's repudiation of the Locarno agreement, but he welcomed the ambassador's suggestion that Germany might rejoin the League of Nations—a CBM designed to divert attention from Germany's actions and apparently conceived simultaneously by Hitler and his future Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop.[12] By referring to the League and to negotiations on air and naval arms control, which Britain and Germany were discussing, Eden made it clear that the British government expected to go on working with Germany as normal and that he did not regard the crisis as catastrophic. Geyr commented afterwards, that von Hoesch's:

> Description of the frigid self-control with which the Foreign Office received the fateful declaration is impressive. The British ruling class are well trained in dignity and acquire a self command which enables them to meet blows of this kind as though they did not greatly matter.[13]

Eden went on to tell the French Ambassador that he considered Hitler's proposals for a new pact to replace Locarno to be very important and stressed the effect that they would have on British public opinion. The Foreign Secretary said that he expected the French government to do nothing which would make the situation more difficult, in other words to worsen the crisis by treating Germany as a pariah, to throw off the studied air of normalcy or to misalign British and French opinion.[14]

Ministers offered the state of British public opinion as a CBM to the Germans, although we can now see that their leader had only too much confidence in its quiescence. The War Minister, Duff Cooper, had dinner with von Hoesch whom he told that 'though the British people were prepared to fight for France in

the event of a German incursion into French territory, they would not resort to arms on account of the recent occupation of the Rhineland'. Most of them, Cooper said, knew little about the Locarno agreement and did not care 'too hoots' about German actions. Cooper must have been aware that his admission would be reported to Berlin and that it would strengthen German determination to proceed. Cooper was an antiappeaser who saw himself as engaged in a battle against the pacifism of the Anglican Church hierarchy. Yet, the War Minister was apparently of the view that Britain could not go to war alongside the French to restore the *status quo ante* and did not mind telling the Germans that this was the case; partly, no doubt, because he believed it was so obvious and partly because there was no point in creating tensions with Germany when Britain could not take up arms.[15]

This was the fundamental assessment made by British Ministers when they met their Belgian and French counterparts at the pivotal gathering of the Locarno powers in Paris on 10 March. The story of the subsequent negotiations has been recounted by many of the principals including Eden himself and Pierre Flandin, the French Foreign Minister. Flandin told the meeting that 'the French Government would put at the disposal of the [League] Council all their moral and material resources (including military, naval and air forces) in order to repress what they regarded as an attempt upon international peace'.[16] The French would refuse to negotiate until international law or the *status quo ante* had been restored by whatever measures were necessary. Both the French and Belgian ministers claimed that Germany would yield without military action and the Belgian Minister estimated there was only a one in ten chance of war if the Locarno group took action. Flandin made the vital point that this was the best moment to act as Germany was friendless and the democracies' military situation would be worse next year.[17] From the British record of the meeting it appears that Eden ignored what, had the public mood been different, should have been the decisive appraisal of the arms race. He insisted that Germany would not retreat under economic pressure and he was thoroughly, and as we now know rightly, sceptical of French and Belgian willingness to use force if the Germans refused to back down.

According to Flandin's account, when he was in London in January 1936 attending the funeral of George V, Eden and Baldwin had asked him how France would react if the Germans reoccupied the Rhineland. Flandin had replied that his personal view was that France would resist. But, when he returned to Paris, he found the War Ministry purely defensively minded, even if the Chief of Staff, Maurice Gamelin, said that the Council of Ministers had to decide such questions. The Council, in turn, authorised him to give the formula which he repeated to the meeting on 10 March. But, in fact, he knew that the War Ministry believed that nothing could be done without a general mobilisation and the Council of Ministers was unwilling to order this within six weeks of an election. British scepticism about French willingness to use force was thus hardly unjustified. Then and now there has been debate about whether the Germans would have resisted a forceful response. The British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Eric Phipps, argued during the crisis that 'Germany is ruled by bold and determined adventurers…they can neither resign nor leave the country without risking their lives or freedom'. They would go to war rather than lose their position and the German public would back them. This judgement has been confirmed by historians. Hitler bragged with some justification of his willingness to take risks; he was not afraid of Germany being ostracised and was prepared to bluff and, if necessary, to fight; the British Cabinet, the majority of the French Cabinet, the democracies' armed forces and their publics were not, and thus, in Gamelin's words, 'dans le domaine du bluff [Hitler] était plus fort que nous [when it came to bluffing, [Hitler] was better than us]'.[18]

Meanwhile, German embassy officials in London were told by their British counterparts that Britain hoped, when the issue came before the League of Nations, that Germany would not be ostracised. They would, 'induce those at Geneva to let the matter go with a moral condemnation of Germany, [and] this must be deemed a great success'.[19] The British suggested that the League Council's discussion should be

transferred to London where it would be calmer. There, Germany's breach of the Versailles and Locarno treaties was condemned, but Bruce, the Australian chairman, immediately went on to say that 'the moderation of statement by the French and Belgians has aroused the greatest admiration in the world' and that, since Hitler had offered to negotiate, he believed a solution was possible.[20]

Of course, not all of Germany's British counterparts were so calm; Austen Chamberlain and Robert Cecil denounced German behaviour to Berlin's Ambassador. Geyr admitted later that even the doorman at the War Office changed his behaviour towards him during the crisis.[21] Colonel Paget, who was responsible for dealing with f oreign attaches, treated him with considerable coolness. Paget said Germany's word could not be trusted because Hitler had previously admitted that Locarno (unlike Versailles) had not been imposed on Germany. Finally, he warned that Berlin's action was viewed much more seriously than Germany's announcement in March 1935 that it was rearming. Simultaneously, however, Berlin learnt through its Naval Attaché that the Anglo-German negotiations on naval arms control were continuing so that the British were determined to avoid isolating or antagonising Berlin.[22]

In general, senior British officers shared the illusion that Germany could be kept within the community of nations and that arms control agreements could be negotiated with a government of the Nazi type, despite its denunciation of the Locarno Treaties in 1936 and of the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty the year before. Very few senior officers really understood the nature of the regime which confronted them and, in this sense, they were much less awake to the threats posed than Winston Churchill or Austen Chamberlain. The Naval Staff had backed the negotiations held in 1935 which led to the Anglo-German Naval Treaty limiting German forces to one-third of the size of the Royal Navy.[23] The day after the German reoccupation of the Rhineland, Eden pointed out that the Foreign Office had been discussing with the War Office and Air Ministry the possibility of trading an agreement to allow Germany to reoccupy the Rhineland for German acceptance of limitations on its air power.[24] The British armed forces had far too much confidence in German intentions and were willing to trust their German counterparts, even though they knew that Hitler had repeatedly assured the French and others that he would not breach the Locarno agreement and reoccupy the Rhineland.

On 10 March von Hoesch sent the German Foreign Ministry a summary of opinion in Britain which reiterated Duff Cooper's conclusions. von Hoesch asserted that ordinary Britons did not 'care a damn' about the reoccupation of the Rhineland and were angered by French attempts to harness Britain to their interests and possibly involve the country in a war. von Hoesch backed up his claims with a public opinion survey from the Liberal *News Chronicle;* another reminder of the disadvantages which an open society faced in a situation of this sort. Hitler knew the weaknesses in the British position, while British Ministers were bewildered by the Nazi regime and the attitudes of the German people. They ought to have feared isolation but, apparently, they did not. von Hoesch admitted that the British newspapers condemned the German breach of the Locarno agreements, but said they 'showed many gratifying indications of sympathy for the German point of view'. von Hoesch added that Parliament was much more critical and anxious. Indignation at Germany's action was widespread and so were suggestions that it was useless making agreements in the future with the Reich. 'Nonetheless, Parliament also realises the necessity for *remaining calm* and sees that efforts to eliminate as far as possible the risk of war now or in the future, by maintaining contact with Germany, must not be abandoned.' In this one sentence von Hoesch thus captured the essence of British policy, the need for calm and for avoiding German isolation. However, the ambassador went on to warn that there were some similarities with the situation in 1914, when public opinion initially condemned the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, but rapidly turned round and unified behind the government's declaration of war. He might as easily have cited the example of the Crimean War, when even those who

had been taking a thoroughly Cobdenite view of international affairs suddenly turned on the Manchester radicals and became vocal supporters of a war with Russia.[25]

But in 1936 sympathetic elements in Britain quickly contacted the German Ambassador suggesting that the Nazi government propose CBMs which could reduce British and French anxieties. Liberals like Lloyd George and Lord Lothian, who had been involved in the Paris peace negotiations in 1919 and consequently were overcome by guilt, took a particularly prominent line. Lothian advised the Germans to announce that they would not advance the troops who had entered the Rhineland for the time being and would not garrison any further places.[26] von Hoesch also found that the British court was sympathetic to the German cause. After Edward VIII had ascended the throne: 'the directive given to the Government from there is to the effect that, no matter how the details of the affair are dealt with, complications of a serious nature are in no circumstances to be allowed to develop'. Duff Cooper's memoirs confirm the new King's political slant.[27]

Nevertheless, the Embassy warned Berlin that British colleagues feared the Germans did not regard the situation as sufficiently serious. Public opinion might change, particularly if Austen Chamberlain threw his weight behind tough measures. 'Within and outside the Embassy…the view that Berlin does not sufficiently appreciate the seriousness of the situation is general.' The ambassador stressed the dangers, the determination of British leaders to back the French if war threatened and the decisive role which major figures, like Austen Chamberlain, could play in changing the public mood. On 13 March he again drew the parallel with August 1914 when he had been a young diplomat serving in London. The Nazis responded by considering sacking him as they wrongly felt he was being used by the British to convince them that their position within the international community was not assured. After his death they complained that the British made too much of his memorial service, while Vansittart later recorded his view that the ambassador was 'one of the best Germans that I ever knew… Hoesch was a good fellow and an honest man'.[28]

Honest or not, we can now see that his judgement was unsound. He and Geyr were mistaken if they believed that Nazi ambitions were finite and von Hoesch was equally mistaken to argue that the British might become belligerent in 1936.[29] Perhaps von Hoesch hoped to discourage German adventurism, certainly his despatches underplayed the extent to which British confidence had been shaken by the Abyssinian crisis and by the revelations in the *Morning Post* in January 1936 about the inadequacy of British military preparations. von Hoesch was also wrong to suggest that Austen Chamberlain could have led an effective campaign to turn British public opinion against Germany in March 1936. Not only was he too old and public opinion too recalcitrant but he was vulnerable to the charge, often made by Labour and Liberal spokesmen, that he had not fully explained to the public the nature of the guarantees he had given in October 1925. Thus he had to tread warily because of his own position and because he did not want to embarrass his half-brother, Neville, then Chancellor of the Exchequer and a figure of growing importance in the government. Finally, having replaced the policy of isolation in 1925 with one of engagement, would the public now follow him if he were to suggest that the strategy which had built his reputation was fundamentally flawed in the new circumstances and had to be reversed?

Nevertheless, there were profound divisions within the British elite between the tiny band of alarmists in Parliament, led by Winston Churchill and Austen Chamberlain on one side, and the government on the other. Over and over again Churchill emphasised that the government should not be trying to reassure the public because this created a spurious confidence in German intentions. On 13 March 1936 he reminded his readers in the *Evening Standard* how serious the attack on the Locarno system had been:

> To France and Belgium the avalanche of fire and steel which fell upon them twenty years ago, and the agony of the German occupation which followed, are an overpowering memory and obsession. The

> demilitarised zone which they gained by awful sacrifices is to them not only a bulwark, but the guarantee of a breathing space between them and mortal calamity.[30]

This was true enough but the French response was as weak and divided as the British. The right blamed the government for negotiating the Franco-Soviet Treaty, the left feared war above anything and the armed forces were divided over doctrine and embittered by cuts in their budgets. However, for Churchill, the only way now open of minimising the German menace was to build up a coalition behind the League and for Britain to stand resolutely by its commitments under the Locarno agreement. On the day the Germans invaded the Rhineland he asked Flandin for French estimates of the balance of air forces. The reply he received on 16 May increased his fears. His assessment throughout was that, 'if the relative strengths are narrowly balanced war may break out in a few weeks'. On 3 April he warned his readers that Germany was 'proceeding night and day and is steadily converting nearly seventy millions of the most efficient race in Europe into one gigantic, hungry war-machine'.[31] What Churchill rightly wanted to create was not confidence in Germany but anxiety about its actions, not trust but suspicion, not engagement but isolation. As he told the Commons on 26 March, over the last five years 'we have seen the most depressing and alarming change in the outlook of mankind which has ever taken place in so short a period'. Once Germany had fortified the Rhineland, 'it will be a barrier across her front door which will leave her free to sally out eastward and southward by the back door'.[32]

Churchill was ignored because he was seen as a war-monger. Even the anti-appeaser Harold Nicolson had to reassure his wife as late as 1938 that he 'was not going to become one of Winston's brigade'.[33] Churchill's analysis was too dark and the consequences too painful for many to contemplate since they overthrew every liberal assumption about international affairs which had been assiduously built up in Britain since 1918. He rubbed the noses of his colleagues in the inadequacy of their strategic analysis.[34] He also completely misjudged the need to find a moral basis to undermine the maudlin proGerman sympathies which had grown up in Britain over the previous years, a process to be dissected towards the end of the war by R.B.McCallum in *Public Opinion and the Lost Peace*.[35] It was not that public opinion was ignorant of Nazi policies towards minorities, but it needed to be constantly reminded what Nazi government portended for Jews, socialists and other persecuted groups and that its internal and external policies were linked.

Nazi behaviour had been debated in the House of Lords on 30 March 1933, only two months after Hitler came to power. Lord Robert Cecil had protested against the attacks on the German Jews and the ban on Jews retaining their posts as doctors, judges and in other professions. Lord Reading asked the government to make clear British feelings on the matter and was supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury.[36] Two weeks later Clement Attlee brought up the plight of the German Jews as well as the Communists and Socialists in the adjournment debate in the Commons. Attlee called on the government to help refugees from Germany, while Austen Chamberlain denounced any efforts to hand territory to a government which was depriving its subjects not of 'pure Nordic birth' of their rights of citizenship. Other MPs rose to attack the Nazi persecution of minorities; Eleanor Rathbone protested against the 'evil spirit' which had come over Germany and 'which bodes ill for the peace and freedom of the world'; and Major Nathan suggested that all the work put in by Stresemann and others to rehabilitate Germany in the world community had been destroyed by Nazi persecution. Churchill contributed a brave and balanced defence of the Versailles settlement and a warning of the inevitability of war if Germany became as powerful as France, but his words then and later lacked the necessary ethical and emotional dimension.[37]

Historians have generally overlooked the way the emphasis on the nature of the Nazi regime became less prominent in later debates on foreign affairs and how the old sympathies with Germany for its postwar troubles revived after 1933. MPs and others became habituated to Nazism and, most importantly of all, their

fears of war and thus of offending the Nazis increased.[38] Today we can see that this simply increased Hitler's contempt for the democracies. The Nazi Soviet Pact in 1939 was to show that he was quite capable of allying temporarily with a government which had spent the last six years anathematising his regime, thereby throwing into question the whole of the British government's policy of trying to calm international tensions and to maintain good relations with Berlin.

The 'Locarno' debate on 26 March 1936 reflected the conventional view that preserving Anglo-German relations was vital. Although the nature of Nazism was stressed by the alarmists, the bulk of speeches ignored the issue and even the alarmists moderated their comments. For Labour, Hugh Dalton attacked the government's 'fantastic and absurd proposal' to place British and Italian peace keeping forces in the Rhineland as a temporary confidence-building measure. To both the Liberals and Labour the Italians were beyond the pale after their invasion of Abyssinia. As Sir Archibald Sinclair put it, for the Liberals, 'justice demands that the worse and earlier offender should at least be compelled to submit to the law, and to withdraw his troops from the territory he has invaded, before he is employed as a warder to hold the other offender in custody'.[39] Dalton drew the same distinction 'between the action of Signor Mussolini in resorting to aggressive war and waging it beyond his frontiers and the actions, up-to-date at any rate of Herr Hitler which, much as we may regard them as reprehensible, have taken place within the frontiers of the German Reich'.[40] Dalton and Clement Attlee also emphasised that Tories had always put too much stress on Locarno and too little on the League of Nations and collective security.

Sinclair admitted that 'confidence in Germany's good intentions has been profoundly shaken by Herr Hitler's methods'. But the Liberal leader took the opportunity to warn against military alliances, and the party's former leader, Lloyd George, attacked the proposed staff talks with France because 'the moment you give a military convention, power at a time of crisis passes away from the Government to the military… It thwarted negotiations and it precipitated war in 1914.' The former Prime Minister went on to put German occupation of the Rhineland on the same level as the French 'failure' to disarm under the obligations of the Treaty of Versailles and with Anglo-French unwillingness to pay the debts incurred to the USA in the First World War. All were guilty of breaking treaties, why pick on Germany? Plainly Lloyd George had no fear of German intentions and he was to congratulate Hitler during his visit to Germany in September as 'the man who, after defeat, had united the German people behind him and led them to recovery'.[41] Given what was happening in Germany at this time, he was guilty of astonishing moral blindness and showed how the widespread criticism of the Treaty of Versailles had undermined his political and strategic judgement.

There was only a handful of MPs including Sir Austen Chamberlain, Harold Nicolson, Sir Edward Spears and Robert Boothby who were prepared to link Germany's internal and external policies. Not only had Germany broken its commitments but the whole drift of its internal and external policies was opposed to what Britain stood for. Chamberlain said that Germany was a country which 'submits its own subjects to the most cruel racial persecution' and where 'every child is taught that the proudest fate that can overtake it is to die on the field of battle, that war is the noblest of man's ends, and that Germany is to rely rather upon guns than upon collective security'.[42] Boothby stressed that 'neither the methods by which [the Nazis] attained power, nor the methods by which they now maintain themselves in power are methods of which we can ever approve. They are now using similar methods in the field of foreign affairs.'[43]

Churchill's contribution to the debate was again accurate but, unlike Boothby and Austen Chamberlain, he did not stress the internal nature of the Nazi regime. He was as worried as Eden about public opinion, but his remedy was totally different. He warned against the 'extraordinary volume of German propaganda in this country' and criticised governments over the previous five years for 'trying to gain the sympathy of sections of our public, seeking to gain transient applause by putting f orward platitudes, by putting f orward hopes which no one really felt could be realised'. He wanted the government to 'confront the nation steadily

and robustly with the realities of the situation'.[44] He might have been even more critical but he had hoped until 14 March to be appointed to the new post of Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence and he still wanted to improve relations with Baldwin and Eden.[45] In this he was to be frustrated, because his policy was diametrically opposed to the government's and his appointment would have served to heighten fears, not assuage them as Baldwin and Eden intended.

The Germans welcomed the parliamentary protests by Lloyd George, Attlee and other Labour and Liberal MPs against the staff talks. von Ribbentrop told Eden on 3 April that they were a 'most retrograde step'. Eden replied that, 'it was as a result of the situation …created by the German government that we were endeavouring to create *conditions of confidence* which would make negotiation possible'.[46] Thus, the British government ensured that the staff talks would be CBMs rather than effective military planning sessions, and they let Geyr and others know that this was the case.[47] In this the government had the support of many serving officers. Malcolm Kennedy, a former British army officer now working for Intelligence, noted in his diary on 22 March that the General Staff were horrified by the idea of holding talks about action on the Rhine 'as apparently it was put forward without consulting them!' A little earlier Kennedy had attended a dinner at which he sat next to an officer just back from Germany, who:

> like most other army officers to whom I have spoken on the subject, is very sympathetic towards Germany in the matter of her latest action. What seems to have caused more loss of sympathy for France than anything else is this wretched pact of hers with the Soviets, a most foolish action on France's part.[48]

In this climate of opinion and fearing German reactions, the British hoped that the staff talks would be held between relatively junior officers. In the event, the French appointed officers of General rank and the British had to reciprocate.[49] The talks began in the Admiralty at Whitehall on 15 April. Subsequently the British were self-congratulatory. The military staff largely limited the meeting to discussion of the British forces available and the ports through which they might be sent to Europe. The naval conversations also focused on ports, the state of forces and communications. Finally on 16 April, 'Admiral James, on behalf of the British representatives, expressed the view that the conversations had been entirely satisfactory, and that certain ground had been explored which, if ever the time came to extend the scope of the Conversations, would be extremely useful'.[50] In other words, despite German actions, the time was not ripe and all that was intended was to create a degree of trust. The close co operation between the democracies, which the alarmists like Winston Churchill regarded as essential, was ruled out.

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that the British alone were at fault in their f failure to def end the Locarno system, though their f fault was the greatest. The French had been riven by a series of acrimonious civil-military disputes over disarmament, over the length of military service and over the Franco-Soviet Treaty.[51] They were in no position to deter the Germans in March 1936. On 19 May 1936 the French analyst, Jacques Kayser, gave a presentation to Chatham House about the French election which had taken place in the aftermath of the Rhineland crisis. Kayser claimed that the main reason for the victory of the parties of the left was the fear of French Fascism. Yet, he said, 'I do not know of a single person, whether the most violent nationalist or the most ardent Communist, who voted in favour of preventive war' with the Nazis. In terms of foreign affairs all political parties were divided, on the right between those who called for a détente with Germany at all costs and those nationalists bitterly opposed to such efforts, and on the left between the pacifists and those who held 'that fascism and Hitlerism constitute a mortal danger'. Kayser believed that it was too late to reverse the Italian conquest of Abyssinia and the German remilitarisation of the Rhineland: 'we should certainly have to face the prospect of war—and I do not even know that it would

be a victorious war—in order to secure the retreat of those who have carried out their *coups de force* with impunity'. The French press was as divided and confused as the electorate.[52]

In the 1920s and 1930s statesmen and diplomats representing the democracies were struggling with electorates which took, or appeared to take, a far closer interest in foreign affairs than had their predecessors before the calamity of 1914. They were not content to entrust the control of diplomacy to the government. In Britain the conventional wisdom about the causes of the First World War seriously hampered the government's response to aggression by Germany, Italy and Japan. The lesson the government learned from the failure of the Hoare-Laval Pact in 1935 was that it could only deal with the aggressors if it had public backing and that such backing would be very difficult to achieve. Baldwin, Eden and their colleagues in government believed that the public could slowly be brought to face the twin realities of the limitations in British power and the extent of the threat to democracy in Europe and Asia.

In 1925 Germany had been isolated from the European community Stresemann, Briand and Chamberlain transformed the situation by introducing the CBMs contained in the Locarno agreement. Isolation had failed. As Briand told the French Assembly in December 1929:

> If the Locarno policy had not been pursued, what would have happened? Germany did not enter the League of Nations. She continued to be subjected to constant coercion. An atmosphere of hatred was developing again between the Germans and the French. Germany was becoming the focus of all Europe's displeasure. She was striving to establish closer relations with a large country such as Russia. In the end, other countries that had remained outside the League of Nations could have gathered around her. That is why I preferred to turn to the possibility of agreement.[53]

The policy of détente appealed to democratic electorates and to statesmen who wanted to restore normal calm conditions so that trade could prosper and armaments could be reduced. It appealed to diplomats who wanted to treat their opposite numbers as gentlemen whose word could be trusted.[54]

Eleven years later, the Nazi government was prepared to risk being ostracised because Hitler believed he could trick democratic electorates into allowing Germany to dominate the continent. In stark contrast the British government and people were afraid of returning to the discredited policy pursued between 1919 and 1925, and to the strategies which seemed to have failed before 1914. With the invasion of the Rhineland they had a clearer *casus belli* than even the invasion of Belgium had presented in 1914. Every German government since 1925 had promised to uphold the Locarno Treaty and to leave the Rhineland demilitarised. A line had been drawn in the sand and the line had been crossed, but public, armed forces and government were unwilling to face the consequences. Thus the government pursued the policy of engagement and tried to negotiate CBMs with Berlin even though these would have actually deepened the spurious feeling of security and made it more difficult to prepare for the worst. They were utterly bewildered and thrown off balance by the rise of Nazism and Japanese militarism which were so alien to the world in which they thought they were living and the standards they expected civilised states to uphold. The policy of appeasement which they followed has thus become a byword for incompetence and betrayal.

More attuned than almost any other to the military threats, Churchill saw the nature of the trap which Hitler had set. But his advocacy of rearmament and the tightening of relations with the other democracies frightened the electorate who still believed that such policies had been responsible for war in 1914. Churchill was also unable to engage the public morally. Intriguingly, Austen Chamberlain, the progenitor of the Locarno agreement, intuitively saw the solution more clearly when he linked the internal characteristics of the Nazi regime with its foreign policies.[55]

Later democratic governments have dealt with threatening dictators from Joseph Stalin to Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic not just by turning them into pariahs but by demonising them, so bringing strategy and opinion into harmony. Thus, they have found a way of whipping up public feeling so that people are willing to risk confrontation and war. Moreover, counter-intuitive as this may be to democratic electorates, the Nazi-Soviet Pact showed that Hitler could swallow past insults easily enough if it suited him strategically and that all he respected was power and determination. On the other hand, it might be said that the Nazis were *sui generis* and that many other dictators, particularly in the Third World, have been acutely sensitive to insults and abuse. Furthermore, such vituperation cannot quickly be reversed to reintroduce a pariah state into the community of nations. It was not until the early 1970s that the CBMs contained in the Final Act of the CSCE began to end the decades of confrontation with the Soviet bloc. Tailoring foreign policy to fit external circumstances, whilst aligning public hopes and expectations with the realities of international affairs, remains a problem for all democratic leaders and the extent of the difficulty should, perhaps, encourage sympathy for the statesmen who had to respond to the invasion of the Rhineland, which reaffirmed the dangers of Nazism and destroyed the balance of power that, until 7 March 1936, had underpinned the Locarno agreement.

NOTES

1. For Hitler's announcement see 'Foreign Minister to the Missions in Great Britain, France, Italy and Belgium', March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy* Series C, The Third Reich: First Phase (London: HMSO, 1966), p. 11; W.E.Dodd and, M.Dodd *Ambassador Dodd's Diary 1933–1938* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1942), pp. 325–6. For Geyr's comments on the announcement see, General Baron Geyr von Schweppenburg, *The Critical Years* (London: Allan Wingate, 1952), p. 52.
2. Ambassadeur de France a Londres a M. Flandin, 7 March 1936, *Documents Diplomatiques Français 1932–1939,* Second Series (1936–1939), Vol. 1 (Imprimerie Nationale, 1963), p. 413. House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, 26 March 1936, Vol. 310, col. 1435. The standard account of the Rhineland crisis is J.T.Emmerson, *The Rhineland Crisis, 7 March 1936* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1977).
3. For the role of CBMs see J.J.Holst, 'Confidence-Building Measures: A Conceptual Framework', *Survival,* January/February 1983, 19–30 and T.C.Schelling, 'Confidence in Crisis', *International Security,* Spring, 1984, 23–32. On Chamberlain's defence of the Locarno agreement see A.Chamberlain, *Down the Years* (London: Cassell, 1935), p. 151.
4. See House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, 21 July 1919, Vol. 118, and R.B.McCallum, *Public Opinion and the Last Peace* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944).
5. On the Abyssinian crisis see D.Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War 1935–6* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1975), chapter 2.
6. Geyr, *Critical Years,* p. 19. See also Sir A.Wilson, *Thoughts and Talks* (London: Right Book Club, 1938), p. 142.
7. House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, 26 March 1938, Vol. 345, cols. 1435 to 1449.
8. House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, 2 May 1935, Vol. 311, cols. 570, 582 and 585.
9. See note 8 supra.
10. For E. Spears' attack on Hitler's proffered CBMs see House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, Vol. 311, column 1509. For Spears' role at this time see M. Egremont, *Under Two Flags* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), pp. 127–8. For Vansittart's role and relationship with Churchill see Lord Vansittart, *The Mist Procession* (London: Hutchinson, 1955), pp. 496 and 544. For Wigram's comments and help to Churchill, see the Churchill papers, Churchill College, Cambridge CHAR/2/273, particularly 1 and 2. See also W. Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (London: The Reprint Society, 1950), pp. 192 and 204; M. Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (London: Heinemann, 1991), p. 550.

11. The Ambassador in Great Britain to the Foreign Ministry, 10 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* p. 94. von Hoesch was third secretary at the German Embassy in London at the outbreak of war in 1914; Geyr, *Critical Years,* p. 74.
12. Eden to Phipps, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* 7 March 1936, Second Series, Vol. XVI, p. 50; The Ambassador in Great Britain to the Foreign Ministry, 7 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* p. 41; *The Ribbentrop Memoirs* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1954), p. 53. Toynbee's comments on public opinion were quoted with approval in P.S.Mumford, *Humanity, Air Power and War* (London: Jarrolds, 1936), p. 16.
13. Geyr, *Critical Years,* p. 55.
14. Eden to Clerk, 7 March 1936, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Second Series, Vol. XVI, p.45.
15. The Ambassador in Great Britain to the Foreign Ministry, 9 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* p. 57. For Duff Cooper's account of these years, though not of this incident see Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1935), p. 189. See also Wilson, *Thoughts and Talks,* p. 130.
16. Record of conversation between representatives of the Locarno Powers, 10 March 1936, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Second Series, Vol. XVI, p. 82; *Ribbentrop, Memoirs,* pp. 53–4; P Schmidt, *Hitler's Interpreter* (London: Heinemann, 1951), pp. 41–4. For a recent critique of Flandin see M.Egremont, *Two Flags,* p. 135.
17. Clerk to the Foreign Office, 10 March 1936, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* p. 80; P.-E.Flandin, *Politique Française 1919–1940* (Paris: Les Editions Nouvelles, 1947), p. 193; General Gamelin, *Servir: Le Prologue du Drame 1930–1939* (Paris: Plon, 1946), p. 193. For a detailed appraisal of the French military's part in the crisis see M.S.Alexander, *The Republic in Danger: General Maurice Gamelin and the Politics of French Defence, 1933–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 76.
18. Flandin, *Politique,* pp. 194–9; Gamelin, *Servir,* pp. 201–4; Phipps to Eden, 11 March 1936, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* p. 90. D.C.Watt, 'German plans for the Re-occupation of the Rhineland: A Note', *Journal of Contemporary History* 10, 2 (1966), 193.
19. The Ambassador in Great Britain to the Foreign Ministry, March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* p. 59. This refers to a conversation between Bismarck and Wigram.
20. Schmidt, *Interpreter,* p. 46.
21. The Ambassador in Great Britain to the Foreign Ministry, 10 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* pp. 75–7. See also Geyr, *Critical Years,* p. 62. For Cecil's views see Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, *All The Way* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1949), p. 209.
22. The Military Attaché in Great Britain to the Reich War Ministry, 9 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* pp. 67–9. See also Geyr, *Critical Years,* p. 60. The Naval Attaché in Great Britain to the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy and to the Foreign Ministry, 9 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* p. 73.
23. For a defence of Naval Staff policy see J.A.Maiolo, *The Royal Navy and Nazi Germany, 1933–39* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).
24. Memorandum by Eden on Germany and the Locarno Treaty, 8 March 1936, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Second Series, Vol. XVI, p. 60.
25. Ribbentrop to the German Foreign Ministry, 10 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* pp. 92–4. For the reversal of public opinion before the Crimean War see J.Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden* (London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1906), p. 622.
26. Ribbentrop to the German Foreign Ministry, 11 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* p. 103.
27. Ribbentrop to the German Foreign Ministry, 11 March 1936 and The Military Attaché in Great Britain to the Foreign Ministry, 12 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* pp. 106 and 120.
28. The Military Attaché in Great Britain to the Reich War Ministry, 12 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* p. 119; Ribbentrop to the German Foreign Ministry, 13 March 1936, *Documents on German Foreign Policy,* p. 127. Vansittart, *Mist Procession,* p. 525.
29. House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, 26 March 1936, Vol. 310, col. 1498; H.Nicolson, 'Has Britain a Policy?', *Foreign Affairs* (July 1936), 549.
30. W.Churchill, *Step by Step* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1939), p. 13.

31. *Ibid.,* p. 17. Contrast Churchill's appraisal of the effect of the reoccupation with Alexander's assessment of the state of France, Alexander, *Republic in Danger,* chapter 3.
32. R.Rhodes James (ed.), *Churchill Speaks 1897–1963,* (London: Windward, 1981), p. 620.
33. N.Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1930–1939* (London: Collins, 1966), p. 328.
34. See, for example, G.Lowes Dickinson, *War: Its Nature, Cause and Cure* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1923); L.Woolf (ed.), *The Intelligent Man's Way to Prevent War* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933); A.A.Milne, *Peace With Honour* (London: Methuen, 1934). On Churchill in the period see R.Rhodes James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure 1900–1939* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970), part six. For Churchill's views on the balance of power see Gilbert, *Churchill,* p. 555.
35. See note 4 supra.
36. House of Lords Debates, 5th Series, 30 March 1933, Vol. 276, col. 192. But, despite the condemnation of Germany in the debate, note the degree of anti-semitism prevalent in Britain at the time: see, for example, F.Yeats-Brown, *European Jungle* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1939), chapter VI; D.Reed, *Insanity Fair* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), p. 151; Nicolson, *Diaries,* p. 327.
37. House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, 13 April 1933, Vol. 276, col. 2739.
38. Even Vansittart sometimes warned against attacks on Germany in Parliament, see B. Pimlott (ed.), *The Political Diary of High Dalton* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1986), entry for 24 June 1937.
39. House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, 26 March 1936, Vol. 310, col. 1435.
40. *Ibid.,* col. 1451 and 1466.
41. *Ibid.,* col. 1454. For a description of the growing persecution of the Jews in these years see M.Smith, *Foley: The Spy Who Saved 10,000 Jews* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1999).
42. House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, 26 March 1936, Vol. 310, col. 1472.
43. *Ibid.,* col. 1482.
44. *Ibid.,* cols. 1524 to 1527.
45. Churchill, *The Gathering Storm,* p. 172; See also K.Middlemas and J.Barnes, *Baldwin: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), pp. 916–17.
46. Eden to Phipps, 3 April 1936, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Second Series, Vol. XVI, p. 278.
47. Phipps to the Foreign Office, 7 April 1936, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Second Series, Vol. XVI, p. 284; Geyr, *Critical Years,* pp. 71–2.
48. Diary entries pp. 121 and 123, 4/30, Kennedy papers, University of Sheffield.
49. Clerk to Foreign Office, 9 April 1936, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Second Series, Vol. XVI, p. 307.
50. Note by Sir T.Inskip on the Staff Conversations and Enclosure No. 262, 17 and 20 April 1936, *Documents on British Foreign Policy,* p. 345.
51. P.C.F.Bankwitz, *Maxime Weygand and Civil-Military Relations in Modern France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).
52. J.Kayser, 'France and International Relations', *International Affairs,* 15 (1936), 506. For press comment see, for example, H.Berenger, 'La session de Genève', *Revue de Paris,* September 1935, p. 721; R.d'Harcourt, 'Psychologie Hitlerienne', *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 April 1936, p. 771.
53. Speech by Briand, 27 December 1929, reprinted in J.W.Wheeler-Bennett, *Documents on International Affairs 1929* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 64.
54. For the difficulties faced by traditional diplomats when faced with the Nazi regime see Schmidt, *Interpreter,* p. 86. Diplomacy itself was transformed after 1945; compare, for example, the debates at Panmunjom during the Korean War with democratic behaviour in the 1930s. See A.E.Goodman, *Negotiating While Fighting: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks* (New York: Cornell University, 1990) and the rhetoric used in Paris between the delegations at the Paris peace talks on the Vietnam War in P.Towle, *Democracy and Peacemaking* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 170.
55. G.Messersmith, the US consul in Vienna, had a similar appreciation of the threats presented by the Nazis and the links between their internal and external policies, see J.H. Stiller, *George S.Messersmith* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of Carolina Press, 1987), p. 82.

Afterword

DAVID DUTTON

It is difficult not to be struck by the contrast between the two moments which in practice delineate the lifetime of the Locarno agreements. The initialling of the treaties on 16 October 1925 and their formal signing six weeks later prompted in many quarters a disproportionate and, as it turned out, unfounded sense of optimism about the diplomatic future. 'This morning the Locarno Pact was signed at the Foreign Office', noted George V in the pages of his diary. 'I pray this may mean peace for many years. Why not for ever?'[1] His Majesty was not noted for his political insight, but on this occasion he undoubtedly spoke for many, perhaps the majority, of his fellow countrymen. Even the usually straight-laced British Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, showed signs of joining in what Harold Nicolson described as the 'orgiastic gush' that greeted the Locarno accords.[2] A brief telegram from the Secretary of State to Sir William Tyrrell read simply, 'Cock-a-doodle-do!' More soberly, it seemed to many that Locarno had provided that key element in European affairs, a sense of security, which had been lacking since the end of the First World War. Before Locarno an atmosphere of fear had hung over the Continent which, as Chamberlain warned the Committee of Imperial Defence in December 1924, would make another war inevitable unless Britain acted to remove it.[3] Locarno brought about the necessary transformation. The Great War might have ended in November 1918, conceded the veteran Conservative statesman Arthur Balfour, but 'the Great Peace did not begin till October 1925'.[4]

Just over a decade later, as Hitler's troops marched into the Rhineland, the era of the Great Peace came to an end, the pre-Locarno mood of fear returned and men began to look nervously towards the prospect of a second trial of strength with the military might of Germany. Before long, the reoccupation of the Rhineland came to assume the status of the decisive last moment at which Hitler could have been stopped without a war. No less a figure than Winston Churchill saw the failure of the western allies to stand by their Locarno agreements as fatal. 'If the French government had mobilized', he later wrote with the unique authority attaching to his status as a victorious war leader, 'there is no doubt that Hitler would have been compelled by his own General Staff to withdraw, and a check would have been given to his pretensions which might well have proved fatal to his rule'.[5] Though Churchill's assumption that Hitler would have backed down without a fight in the face of Allied steadfastness is now widely challenged, the importance of the Rhineland coup on the path to a second world war cannot be disputed.

Locarno itself died not with a bang but with a prolonged and lingering whimper. To begin with, Foreign Secretary Eden, who had served his political and diplomatic apprenticeship as Chamberlain's Parliamentary Private Secretary, seemed reluctant to concede that Locarno was now effectively dead. His policy and that of the British Cabinet was to avoid war while trying to 'avoid a repudiation of Locarno'.[6] He even now proposed making Britain's future Locarno obligations to France and Belgium 'automatic'.[7] Yet, as Austen Chamberlain, now a backbencher but as well placed as any British politician to judge, noted, there was 'something missing' from Eden's speech to the House of Commons on 9 March, 'nothing said about the

entry of Zone being a violation of frontier according to Locarno. There could be no clearer case of the breach of a voluntary engagement.'[8] Indeed, speaking in the Commons on 26 March, Eden declared that Britain would support France and Belgium if they were attacked, adding that 'I am not prepared to be the first British Foreign Secretary to go back on a British signature', without appearing to recognise that, in the eyes of many, this was what he had already done.[9]

For a time the British and French governments clung to the fig-leaf that, in view of the fresh series of German proposals which accompanied their Rhineland coup, designed to confirm 'their unchangeable longing for a real pacification of Europe between states which are equals in rights and equally respected', the destruction of the Treaties of 1925 opened up the possibility of a new and more effective Locarno. Eden persuaded the Cabinet that it was still worth Britain's while to follow up Hitler's latest initiative and see whether any new agreement could be founded upon it.[10] The Cabinet authorised the Foreign Secretary to inform parliament that, while one of the chief foundations of western European peace had been cut away, it was Britain's clear duty to replace it if peace were to be secured.

In the event, of course, nothing came of all this and the diplomatic initiatives of the spring of 1936 ground slowly to a halt. Once the danger of a French military response appeared to have passed, the German government lost interest in its own proposals. On 1 April von Ribbentrop delivered a revised version of Hitler's earlier suggestions. Eden, responding to an idea from his French opposite number, set about preparing a questionnaire to the Führer to establish the latter's intentions. This was finally presented to Hitler on 7 May. Several members of the Cabinet were sceptical but it was, as Eden privately conceded, 'all that had survived of our obligation to march into the Rhine'.[11] The Germans repeatedly postponed their response until the whole matter was finally buried by Hitler in a speech to the Reichstag at the end of January 1937. In the meantime, the AngloFrench staff talks, which some had seen as the only positive outcome of the Rhineland crisis, went ahead. But they were limited to logistical questions and represented only a small step towards a military alliance. France was left, as she had been before Austen Chamberlain's diplomacy of 1925, feeling inadequately protected in the event of future German aggression.

Locarno's brief lifetime has left historians only too conscious of its shortcomings and inherent flaws. In particular, it has been argued that, by focusing on the troubled frontiers between France, Belgium and Germany, the status of the Versailles-constructed borders in eastern Europe was subtly, but significantly, undermined. Scope existed for the future leaders of Germany, less scrupulous about diplomatic niceties than Gustav Stresemann, to work towards the revision of the Versailles settlement in eastern Europe, freed it seemed from the possibility of British interference in an area for which Chamberlain had said that he would not risk the bones of his celebrated British grenadier. Yet it was not, of course, in relation to Poland or Czechoslovakia that Locarno was found wanting. By the time that Hitler turned his attention to these countries, the treaties of 1925 had been consigned to history. It was precisely in the parts of Europe which Locarno had sought to render sacrosanct that it proved deficient. Was this failure inevitable?

In the last resort Locarno collapsed at its first trial of strength because of a lack of will, especially in London, to honour it. Indeed, the British government had in practice already decided, in advance of the German coup, that a forced reoccupation of the Rhineland would not be the occasion of British military intervention. Eden had indiscreetly said as much to the Soviet Foreign Minister, Maxim Litvinov, at the time of George V's funeral the previous January. It had in fact been Eden's intention to use the carrot of remilitarisation as a bargaining counter in future negotiations with Germany. As the Foreign Secretary later explained:

> Before the event we had considered that it would be impossible, for us at any rate, to react in a military sense if the Rhineland were reoccupied. We had therefore…been trying to persuade the

> French to get what they could for it while they could get anything. The Cabinet reflected the nation in the sense that there were some who championed the popular view outside of impatience with France and such arguments as 'why cannot Germany do what she likes in her own back garden?'[12]

Eden had, probably correctly, drawn the conclusion that France would not fight f or the zone and, when Flandin suggested recourse to the League Council, the British Foreign Secretary took this as a tacit French admission that the German action did not represent a 'flagrant' violation of Locarno such as would prompt an immediate military response. We now know that the French High Command had already downgraded the importance of the Rhineland in strategic terms. This, together with France's military and economic weakness, effectively ruled out the possibility of a credible French response.[13] But the French, as so often in the 1930s, could always present their own inaction as the restraining consequence of British pressure.

To this extent, then, the western statesmen of the mid 1930s let down their predecessors of a decade earlier, a point emphasised by Austen Chamberlain's reaction to the coup of 1936. 'That has happened against which we guaranteed France', bemoaned the former Foreign Secretary, 'and Press and public seek excuses for evading our pledge… And our Govt. has no policy.'[14] Unlike the British government, Chamberlain seemed ready to envisage the use of force. Speaking at the Hotel Metropole as the guest of the London Rotary Club on 1 April, he suggested that a clear case existed for placing all Britain's power at the disposal of the League. With prescience he argued that, if Germany got away with the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, then it would not be long before Austria was under threat. Thereafter Czechoslovakia would be indefensible and, if that country fell to German occupation, Nazi influence would soon spread throughout the Balkans from where it could threaten the British Empire.

Yet if Chamberlain seemed ready in 1936 to stand by the agreement he had negotiated over ten years before, it has to be said that others had doubted from the outset whether Britain would ever be called upon to honour it. Even while the 1925 negotiations were taking place, Leo Amery, Dominions Secretary and Chamberlain's Cabinet colleague, surmised that 'in the end what we shall commit ourselves to is something so remote and contingent that we are not likely in fact ever to be called on to intervene'.[15] In the privacy of his diary Amery took credit for having helped to divert Chamberlain from his original intention of a bilateral Anglo-French alliance towards 'a scheme which should ally us equally with Germany against France as with France against Germany—a scheme I pushed from the outset *as calculated to disentangle us from European commitments*'.[16] Britain's guarantee had been contingent upon any violation being 'flagrant' and constituting 'unprovoked aggression' with Britain left to judge whether these two conditions applied. Even in Chamberlain's eyes the pact had been meant primarily as a deterrent rather than as a clear statement of commitments on Britain's part. Cabinet Secretary Maurice Hankey had been concerned at Chamberlain's reluctance to have the military implications of the Locarno Pact considered by the Chiefs of Staff and the CID. Chamberlain had not wished 'to wreck his policy on the technicalities of military considerations'. 'Some day', however, as Hankey warned, 'the cheque might be presented and we should have to honour it.'[17] That moment had come in March 1936 but Britain had never made the preparations to put her commitments into effect. Having given her guarantee, without preference, to both France and Germany, Britain had been logically obliged to concert her military arrangements with both countries or with neither. She chose the latter course. Yet the possibility that Britain could, without detailed military plans, react effectively to a violation of the Locarno accords was highly remote. There was then always a danger that the British guarantee might lack meaning.[18]

That said, it would be perverse to claim that Locarno had not led to a distinct lessening of tension in one of Europe's most sensitive and troubled areas. The 'Locarno era' was a reality at least until 1929. But was

the agreement of 1925 enough? A valiant attempt has been made to view the whole of Austen Chamberlain's Foreign Secretaryship in a constructive light.[19] Yet it is difficult not to conclude, not least in terms of Chamberlain's own aspirations, that his period in office after Locarno was a disappointment as far as consolidating and developing the original pact was concerned.

In his own mind Chamberlain was quite clear that Locarno was a beginning and not an end. As he told D'Abernon, there were 'still difficulties to be faced and still a long road to travel'.[20] The problem was, however, that Chamberlain regarded Britain's chief work as now done. It would be for others to take the initiative and build on the achievements of 1925. Any further pacts', he stressed, 'must be a natural growth among the nations interested, responding…to the desires and hopes of the peoples concerned.'[21] Having defined what he regarded as Britain's essential European interests, he was not prepared to engage his country outside those areas of vital concern. Yet there was always something fanciful in the idea that British foreign policy could be circumscribed this neatly. Certainly, much remained to be done, not least in Franco-German relations. Briand and Stresemann came tantalisingly close to agreement at Thoiry near Geneva in September 1926 on a range of outstanding issues, including German war guilt, mandates and the future of the Saar, but in the end a further substantial step towards lasting peace eluded them. Meanwhile, talk over the following decade of an eastern Locarno, giving protection and security to states such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, remained just that, talk. By 1936 Chamberlain perhaps sensed that his narrow definition of British interests could no longer be sustained. While still commending the policy of restricting obligations to 'the area where we are vitally interested', he conceded that it was 'in what exactly we propose to do "elsewhere" that the real difficulties arise'.[22]

Chamberlain's attitude of detachment provoked its critics. Lloyd George was among the most scathing. 'Sir Austen Chamberlain takes the train to Zermatt', the former Prime Minister wrote in 1927, 'to contemplate in rapture mountains he had no intention of climbing— a true picture of the Locarno ecstasy that gazes beatifically at the peaks with a telescope of huge self-satisfaction, but will face none of the rugged difficulties of ascent.'[23] It was as if Chamberlain attached too great a significance to the intangible 'spirit' of Locarno, the rapport which he had established with his French and German oppo site numbers which, in the nature of things, was bound to be no more than a transient phase in the diplomatic process. 'It was the spirit of Locarno', he once suggested, 'to which I attached so much value and which I hoped would inform and guide the policy of the whole world.'[24] Perhaps like his half-brother Neville he had too much confidence in the capacity of men of good will to resolve their differences through patient negotiation. But by 1929 Chamberlain himself was out of office, Stresemann was dead and Briand was getting carried away with his vision of European unity. By the early 1930s, Chamberlain recognised that the spirit of Locarno had collapsed. He saw a 'Germany which has f orgotten Stresemann and a France which rejects Briand' and was sad to think that 'the spirit of those sunny days [had] faded so quickly'.[25]

There is then a case to be made that Locarno might have provided a more solid basis for international peace if a concerted effort had been made to build upon the foundations laid in 1925 rather than regard them as a sort of finished diplomatic masterpiece. This development would have involved tackling those outstanding German grievances, out of which Hitler would make such rich political capital, while safeguarding French security interests. It would also have meant extending to the frontiers of eastern Europe the sort of guarantee which Locarno had given to the west. At the same time, it would have been necessary to construct the military machinery needed to give more reliable teeth to Locarno's pious declarations.

In the last resort, however, Locarno shows the limitations of any diplomatic agreement, if the will to abide by it ceases to exist. In 1936 that will was lacking on all sides. Britain was as culpable for her failure to honour the 1925 guarantee as Germany was to abide by the treaty itself. As Hitler had hitherto drawn a clear distinction between Versailles, which had been imposed upon Germany in 1919, and Locarno into

which Germany had entered six years later of its own free will, a clear lesson was waiting to be learnt. At one level Eden evidently grasped the point:

> The myth is now exploded that Herr Hitler only repudiates treaties imposed on Germany by force. We must be prepared for him to repudiate any treaty even if freely negotiated (a) when it becomes inconvenient, and (b) when Germany is sufficiently strong and the circumstances are otherwise favourable for doing so.[26]

Yet beyond this, Eden's policy in 1936, endorsed by the British Cabinet, was based upon an extraordinary contradiction. Having recognised that no treaty signed by Hitler was worth the paper upon which it was written, the Foreign Secretary still argued that it was in Britain's interests to conclude with Germany 'as far-reaching and enduring a settlement as possible whilst Herr Hitler is in the mood to do so'.[27] The illusory quest for an agreement with Nazi Germany would continue, until the very outbreak of war. Locarno, Chamberlain had proclaimed in 1925, and without appreciating what a loaded word he was employing, was the beginning of the work of appeasement in Europe.[28] Its destruction a decade later marked the beginning of a new and altogether less optimistic phase in the policy of appeasement and one which singularly failed to avert the coming of a second world war.

NOTES

For permission to quote copyrighted material, the author wishes to thank the Countess of Avon and the University of Birmingham.

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Appendix I:
Summary of Part I of the terms of reference for the Dawes Committee

I. Attitude of the Committee

(a) The standpoint adopted has been that of business and not politics.
(b) Political factors have been considered only in so far as they affect the practicability of the plan.
(c) The recovery of debt, not the imposition of penalties, has been sought.
(d) The payment of that debt by Germany is her necessary contribution to repairing the damage of the War.
(e) It is in the interest of all parties to carry out this plan in that good faith which is the fundamental of all business. Our plan is based upon this principle.
(f) The reconstruction of Germany is not an end in itself; it is only part of the larger problem of the reconstruction of Europe.
(g) Guarantees proposed are economic, not political.

II. German Economic Unity

For success in stabilizing currency and balancing budgets, Germany needs the resources of German territory as defined by the Treaty of Versailles, and free economic activity therein.

III. Military Aspects: Contingent Sanctions and Guarantees.

(a) Political guarantees and penalties are outside our jurisdiction.
(b) The military aspect of this problem is beyond our terms of reference.
(c) Within the unified territory, the plan requires that, when it is in effective operation:

1. If any military organization exists, it must not impede the free exercise of economic activities;
2. There shall be no foreign economic control or interference other than that proposed by the plan.

(d) But adequate and productive guarantees are provided.

IV. The Committee's Task

(a) Stabilization of currency and the balancing of budgets are interdependent, though they are provisionally separable for examination.
(b) Currency stability can only be maintained if the budget is normally balanced; the budget can only be balanced if a stable and reliable currency exists.

(c) Both are needed to enable Germany to meet her internal requirements and Treaty payments.

V. Economic Future of Germany

(a) Productivity is expected from increasing population, technical skill, material resources and eminence in industrial science.
(b) Plant capacity has been increased and improved since the War.

VI. Currency and a Bank of Issue

(a) All classes will benefit from stabilized currency, especially Labour.
(b) Under present conditions, *Rentenmark* stability is only temporary.
(c) A new Bank is set up or the *Reichsbank* reorganized.
(d) The main characteristics of the Bank will be:

1. To issue notes on a basis stable in relation to gold, with an exclusive privilege;
2. To serve as a Bankers' Bank, establishing the official rate of discount;
3. To act as the Government Banker, but free of Government Control;
4. Advances to Government to be strictly limited;
5. To hold on deposit Reparation payments;
6. The capital of the Bank will be 400 million gold marks;
7. It will be directed by a German President and Managing Board who can be assisted by a German consultative Committee;
8. The due observance of its statutes will be further safeguarded by a General Board, of which half the members, including a Commissioner, will be foreign.

VII Budget and Temporary Reparation Relief
.

Balancing the German budget requires:

(a) Full economic and fiscal sovereignty, subject to the supervision provided for in this report.
(b) A stable currency.
(c) Temporary relief from charges on the budget for Treaty obligations.
(d) Such relief not to suspend essential deliveries in kind.

VII The Basic Principles of Germany's Annual Burden
I.

(a) Treaty obligations and continuity of balanced budgets:

1. Balancing the budget does not entail merely provision for internal administrative expenditure;
2. Germany must also provide within the utmost limit of her capacity for her external Treaty obligations;
3. The budget can be balanced without necessarily dealing with the total capital debt for Germany;

4. It cannot be continuously balanced, unless the annual charge is fixed for a considerable period, on a basis clearly prescribed in advance.

(b) Commensurate Taxation:

1. Government internal debt has been practically extinguished by the depreciation of the currency;
2. New debt charge ought to be met, commensurate with the burden of the French, English, Italian, and Belgian taxpayer;
3. The Treaty recognizes the principle;
4. It is morally sound;
5. It is economically just in its influence on costs of production;
6. This principle has been applied to the full amount of practicability

(c) Allies' share in Germany's prosperity:

1. Germany's creditors must share in the improvement in Germany's prosperity;
2. This will be secured by an index of prosperity.

(d) There is an important difference between the Germans' capacity to pay taxes and Germany's capacity to transfer wealth abroad.

IX. Normal Resources from which Payments are made

Germany will pay treaty charges from three sources:
A. Taxes; B. Railways; C. Industrial Debentures.

A. From her ordinary budget:

(1) 1924–5 Budget may be balanced if it is free from Peace Treaty charges.
(2) 1925–6 Budget receiving 500 million gold marks from special sources may pay that sum for Reparation.
(3) 1926–7, 110 million gold marks.
(4) 1927–8, 500 million gold marks.
(5) 1928–9, 1,250 million gold marks. This is considered a normal year and a standard payment; thereafter additional payments will be made, depending on prosperity.

B. From Railways:

1. Railway bonds:

(a) Eleven milliards of first mortgage railway bonds against a capital cost of twenty-six milliards will be created for Reparations;
(b) These bonds bear 5 per cent. interest and 1 per cent. sinking fund per annum;
(c) In view of reorganization, interest is accepted as follows:

1924–5: three hundred and thirty million gold marks;

1925–6: four hundred and sixty-five million gold marks;
1926–7: five hundred and fifty million gold marks;
1927–8 and thereafter: six hundred and sixty million gold marks.

Behind the Bonds, there will be created:

Two milliards of preference shares to be reserved for sale to the public; and
Thirteen milliards of common stock.

Three-quarters of the proceeds of the preference shares will be applied, as required, to the payment of debt and for capital expenditure of the railways. The remaining 500 millions of preference shares and all the common shares go to the German Government.

2. Transport Tax:

After 1925–6, 290 million gold marks per annum for Reparations, and balanced to German Government.

C. Industrial debentures:

(1) Five milliards of industrial debentures are provided for Reparations.
(2) The resulting charge on industry is less than that existing before the War and now wiped out by depreciation.
(3) These bonds bear 5 per cent. interest and 1 per cent. sinking fund, ie 300 million gold marks per annum.
(4) Pending economic restoration, interest and sinking fund are accepted as follows:
First year—nothing.
Second year—one hundred and twenty-five million gold marks.
Third year—two hundred and fifty million gold marks.
Thereafter—three hundred million gold marks.

X. Summary of provision for Treaty Payments

(a) (1) Budget Moratorium Period.
First year—from foreign loans and part interest on railways bonds:
Total of 1,000 million gold marks.
Second year—from part interest on railway bonds and on industrial debentures, budget contributions, through sale of 500 million gold marks railways shares:
Total of 1,220 million gold marks.
(2) Transition Period.
Third year—from interest on railway bonds and on industrial debentures, from transport tax and from budget:
Total of 1,200 million gold marks (subject to contingent addition or reduction [within the limit] of 250 million gold marks).
Fourth year—from interest on railway bonds and on industrial debentures, from transport tax and from budget:

Total of 1,750 million gold marks (subject to contingent addition or reduction [within the limit] of 250 million gold marks).

(3) Standard Year.

Fifth year—from interest on railway bonds and on industrial debentures, from transport tax and from budget.

Total of 2,500 million gold marks.

Thereafter: 2,500 millions plus a supplement computed on the index of prosperity.

Interest on the securities, but not the proceeds of their sale, is included in these figures.

(b) The first year will begin to run from the date when the plan shall have been accepted and put into effective execution.

XI. Inclusive Amounts and Deliveries in Kind

(a) The above sums cover all amounts for which Germany may be liable to the Allied and Associated Powers.
(b) Deliveries in kind are to be continued, but are paid for out of balances in the Bank.

XII How the Annual Payments are made by Germany
.

(a) The amounts will be raised in gold marks and paid into the Bank.
(b) These payments cover Germany's annual obligation.

XII How the Payments are Received by the Creditors
I.

(a) Germany's creditors will use these moneys in Germany or convert them into foreign currencies.
(b) Experience will show the rate and extent to which the conversion can safely take place.
(c) Danger to stability through excessive remittances is obviated by a Transfer Committee.
(d) Sums not remitted accumulate, but with a limit of amount.

XI Guarantees, in Addition to Railway and Industrial Bonds
V.

(a) The following revenues are pledged as collateral budget contributions and other payments:

(1) Alcohol.
(2) Tobacco.
(3) Beer.
(4) Sugar.
(5) Customs.

(b) The yield of these revenues is estimated to be substantially in excess of required payments.
(c) The excess is returned to the German Government.

XV External Loan—its Conditions and Purpose
.

Foreign loan of 800 million gold marks meets a double purpose:

(a) Requirements of gold reserve of the new Bank.
(b) Internal payments for essential Treaty purposes in 1924–5.

XV Organization
I.

The Organization consists of:

(a) A Trustee for railway and industrial bonds.
(b) Three Commissioners of: (1) Railways, (2) the Bank, (3) Controlled Revenues.
(c) An Agent for Reparation Payments, who will co-ordinate the activities of the above and will preside over the Transfer Committee.

XV The Nature of the Plan
II.

(a) The plan is an indivisible unit.
(b) The aim of the plan is:

(1) To set up machinery to provide the largest annual payments from Germany.
(2) To enable maximum transfers to be made to Germany's creditors.
(3) To take the question of 'what Germany can pay' out of the field of speculation and put it in the field of practical demonstration.
(4) To facilitate a final and comprehensive agreement upon all the problems of Reparations and connected questions, as soon as the conditions are right.

A.J.Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1924* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928).

Appendix II:
Pact of Locarno, 16 October 1925

The Final Protocol of the Locarno Conference, 1925.

The representatives of the German, Belgian, British, French, Italians, Polish and Czechoslovak Government, who have met at Locarno from the 5th to 16th October 1925, in order to seek by common agreement means for preserving their respective nations from the scourge of war and for providing for the peaceful settlement of disputes of every nature which might eventually arise between them,

Have given their approval to the draft treaties and conventions which respectively affect them and which, framed in the course of the present conference, are mutually interdependent:

Treaty between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain, and Italy (Annex A).

Arbitration Convention between Germany and Belgium (Annex B).

Arbitration Convention between Germany and France (Annex C).

Arbitration Treaty between Germany and Poland (Annex D).

Arbitration Treaty between Germany and Czechoslovakia (Annex E).

These instruments, hereby initialled *ne varietur,* will bear today's date, the representatives of the interested parties agreeing to meet in London on the 1st December next, to proceed during the course of a single meeting to the formality of the signature of the instruments which affect them.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of France states that as a result of the draft arbitration treaties mentioned above, France, Poland, and Czechoslovakia have also concluded at Locarno draft agreements in order reciprocally to assure to themselves the benefit of the said treaties. These agreements will be duly deposited at the League of Nations, but M. Briand holds copies herewith at the disposal of the Powers represented here.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain proposes that, in reply to certain requests for explanations concerning Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations presented by the Chancellor and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, a letter, of which the draft is similarly attached (Annex F) should be addressed to them at the same time as the formality of signature of the above-mentioned instruments takes place.

This proposal is agreed to.

The representatives of the Governments represented here declare their firm conviction that the entry into force of these treaties and conventions will contribute greatly to bring about a moral relaxation of the tension between nations, that it will help powerfully towards the solution of many political or economic problems in accordance with the interests and sentiments of peoples, and that, in strengthening peace and security in Europe, it will hasten on effectively the disarmament provided for in Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

They undertake to give their sincere co-operation to the work relating to disarmament already undertaken by the League of Nations and to seek the realization thereof in a general agreement. [Signed] Luther, Stresemann, Vandervelde, Briand, Chamberlain, Mussolini, Skrzynski, B nes.

Extract from the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee between the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Germany and Italy, Locarno, 16 October 1925

The Heads of State of Germany, Belgium, France, Britain, and Italy… Anxious to satisfy the desire for security and protection which animates the peoples upon whom fell the scourge of the war of 1914–18;

Taking note of the abrogation of the treaties for the neutralization of Belgium, and conscious of the necessity of ensuring peace in the area which has so frequently been the scene of European conflict;

Animated also with the sincere desire of giving to all the signatory Powers concerned supplementary guarantees within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the treaties in force between them;

Have determined to conclude a treaty with these objects, and have…agreed as follows:

Article 1. The High Contracting Parties collectively and severally guarantee, in the manner provided in the following Articles, the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* resulting from the frontiers between Germany and Belgium and between Germany and France and the inviolability of the said frontiers as fixed by or in pursuance of the Treaty of Peace signed at Versailles on the 28th June 1919, and also the observance of the stipulations of Articles 42 and 43 of the said treaty concerning the demilitarised zone.

Article 2. Germany and Belgium, and also Germany and France, mutually undertake that they will in no case attack or invade each other or resort to war against each other.

This stipulation shall not, however, apply in the case of:

1. The exercise of the right of legitimate, that is to say, resistance to a violation of the undertaking contained in the previous paragraph or to a flagrant breach of Articles 42 or 43 of the said Treaty of Versailles, if such breach constitutes an unprovoked act of aggression and by reason of the assembly of armed forces in the demilitarised zone immediate action is necessary.
2. Action is pursuance of Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.
3. Action as the result of a decision taken by the Assembly or by the Council of the League of Nations or in pursuance of Article 15, paragraph 7, of the Covenant of the League of Nations, provided that in this last event the action is directed against a State which the first to attack.

Article 3. In view of the undertakings entered into in Article 2 of the present Treaty, Germany and Belgium and Germany and France undertaking to settle by peaceful means and in the manner laid down herein all questions of every kind which may arise between them and which it may not be possible to settle by the normal methods of diplomacy;

Any question with regard to which the parties are in conflict as to their respective rights shall be submitted to judicial decision, and the parties undertake to comply with such decision.

All other questions shall be submitted to a Conciliation Commission. If the proposals of this commission are not accepted by the two parties, the question shall be brought before the Council of the League of Nations, which will deal with it in accordance with Article 15 of the Covenant of the League.

The detailed arrangements for effecting such peaceful settlement are the subject of special agreement signed this day

Article 4. 1. If one of the High Contracting Parties alleges that a violation of Article 2 of the present treaty or a breach of Articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been or is being committed, it shall bring the question at once before the Council of the League of Nations. 2. As soon as the Council of the League of

Nations is satisfied that such violation or breach has been committed, it will notify its finding without delay to the Powers signatory of the present treaty, who severally agree that in such case they will each of them come immediately to the assistance of the Power against whom the act complained of its directed.

3. In case of a flagrant violation of Article 2 of the present treaty or of a flagrant breach of Articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles by one of the High Contracting Parties, each of the other Contracting Parties hereby undertakes immediately to come to the help of the party against whom such a violation or breach has been directed as soon as the said Power has been able to satisfy itself that this violation constitutes an unprovoked act of aggression and that by reason either of the crossing of the frontier or of the outbreak of hostilities or of the assembly of armed forces in the demilitarised zone immediate action is necessary. Nevertheless, the Council of the League of Nations, which will be seized of the question in accordance with the first paragraph of this Article, will issue its findings, and the High Contracting Parties undertake to act in accordance with the recommendations of the Council provided that they are concurred in by all the members other than the representatives of the parties which have engaged in hostilities.

Article 5. The provisions of Article 3 of the present treaty are placed under the guarantee of the High Contracting Parties as provided by the following stipulations:

If one of the Powers ref ferred to in Article 3 refuses to submit a dispute to peaceful settlement or to comply with an arbitral or judicial decision and commits a violation of Articles 2 of the present treaty or a breach of Articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, the provisions of Article 4 shall apply.

Where one of the Powers referred to in Article 3 without committing a violation of Article 2 of the present treaty or a breach of Articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, refuses to submit a dispute to peaceful settlement or to comply with an arbitral or judicial decision, the other party shall bring the matter before the Council of the League of Nations, and the Council shall propose what steps shall be taken; the High Contracting Parties shall comply with these proposals.

Article 6. The provisions of the present treaty do not affect the rights and obligations of the High Contracting Parties under the Treaty of Versailles or under arrangements supplementary thereto, including the agreements signed in London on the 30th August 1924.

Article 7. The present treaty, which is designed to ensure the maintenance of peace, and is in conf ormity with the Covenant of the League of Nations, shall not be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world.

Article 8. The present treaty shall be registered at the League of Nations in accordance with the Covenant of the League. It shall remain in force until the Council, acting on a request of one or other of the High Contracting Parties notified to the other signatory Powers three months in advance, and voting at least by a two-thirds majority, decides that the League of Nations ensures sufficient protection to the High Contracting Parties; the treaty shall cease to have effect on the expiration of a period of one year from such decision.

Article 9. The present treaty shall impose no obligation upon any of the British Dominions, or upon India, unless the Government of such Dominion, or of India, signifies its acceptance thereof.

Article 10. The present treaty shall be ratified as soon as possible. It shall enter into force as soon as all the ratifications have been deposited and Germany has become a member of the League of Nations…

J.A.S.Grenville, *The Major International Treaties, 1914–1973: A History and Guide with Texts,* Vol. II (London: Methuen, 1974).

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