ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS

FROM LOCARNO TO THE TERMINATION OF THE

INTER-ALLIED MILITARY CONTROL COMMISSION

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Wilhelm Josef Treidler

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Men fight and lose the battle and the thing they fight for comes about in spite of their defeat and when it comes, it turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name.

- William Morris, quoted in Keith Middlemas and John Barnes, Baldwin (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), p. 1075.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse Anglo-German relations from Locarno to the termination of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission. Locarno has been selected as the starting point because it is generally referred to as the turning point in European history in the inter-war years, supposedly ushering in an era of "good feeling" which lasted until the beginning of the depression in 1929. The "Spirit of Locarno", a rather mythical quality, was alleged to have exerted its benevolent influence on the minds of statesmen and moved them to co-operative efforts that stood in sharp contrasts to the first five years following Versailles. The manifestations of this "good feeling" were the evacuation of the Cologne Zone in January 1926, Germany's entry into the League of Nations in September 1926, and the termination of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission in January 1927.

But the evidence contained in the documents contradicts the idealistic interpretation of Locarno which may be regarded as the greatest German victory in the realm of foreign policy since the days of Bismarck. While Locarno may well have delayed German entry into the League of Nations, it opened up new vistas for German penetration in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, the "traditionalist" policy pursued by the British Foreign Office played into the hands of German statesmen, who successfully manoeuvered Germany into the League and the Control Commission out of Germany.

The most important sources on which this thesis is based are the Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik and the Documents on British Foreign Policy. These documents have only been published within the last few years and not much use has been made of them so far.

All the translations from German into English, both primary and secondary sources, are mine. In all instances, I have attempted to convey the meaning of the passages translated as accurately as possible.

The first chapter, "From Versailles to Locarno", attempts to establish the background to Locarno by a brief exposition of the aims of British, German, and French foreign policy.[1] Since neither the British nor the French were able to gain all their objectives at the peace conference, the Treaty of Versailles, as it finally emerged after endless discussions, was a compromise solution not wholly satisfactory to both London and Paris. Aggravating this awkward situation were the basic needs of Britain's economy which - in contrast to French policy - necessitated the rehabilitation and inclusion of Germany, as an equal partner, in the European system. Morever, Britain had no wish, after four years of war, to have the previous German hegemony of Europe replaced by a French system dominating the continent. The Germans, of course, wasted no time in turning to Britain for support in their continuous struggle for revision of the peace settlement.

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[1] In all the chapters an attempt is made to introduce the background pertaining to the topics to be discussed. I felt, therefore, that in the first chapter a summary rather than a detailed account was justified.

Against this background the Locarno Pact is introduced and the reactions of Britain, France, and Germany to the Pact are discussed.

At Locarno the Germans were promised alleviations in the Rhineland, and since the Pact would only become operative when Germany joined the League, the next two chapters, by logical necessity, deal with Anglo-German relations in the context of "The Rhineland" and "The League of Nations".

Germany's failure to become a member of the League in March 1926, and the subsequent treaty between Russia and Germany in the following month, aroused British fears that Germany might align herself with Russia against the western powers. In order to deal with this aspect of Anglo-German relations, a chapter on the U.S.S.R. has been introduced.

Further complicating the execution of British and German policy in Eastern Europe was the Polish problem. While accepting her territorial losses in the West, Germany could never be reconciled to her losses to Poland. Considering that Locarno gave Germany an opportunity to pursue her revisionist policy in the East, and adding the instability of Poland, Germany might have possibly effected atleast a partial revision of her eastern frontiers had not Britain - under pressure from France, Poland's chief ally - prevented Germany from pursuing a more forward Polish policy. The postponement of solving the Polish problem, as insisted upon by Britain acting under French influence, had tragic consequences in 1939. In view of these circumstances a chapter on Poland was deemed necessary.

Chapter VI deals with the removal of control of German disarmament from the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission to the League. This move was not only made on terms favourable to Germany, but considering the ineffectiveness of the League as an instrument of control, one may view the withdrawal of the Commission as the effective termination of German disarmament control.

In the last chapter an attempt is made to explain how the "traditionalist" foreign policy conducted by the British Foreign Office and applied to the problems discussed in the various chapters was favourable to the Germans, who not only realized the importance of their membership to the European community, but were also aware of Britain's anxiety to shift the emphasis of her diplomatic efforts from Europe to Asia. In short, this thesis hopes to prove that the stipulations of Locarno, in conjunction with the aims of British foreign policy, were used by the Germans as stepping stones toward their country's position of pre-war influence and importance.

The question of reparations was purposely avoided. The reason is obvious: as far as the period encompassed in this thesis is concerned, the problem had been settled by the Dawes Plan in 1924 and did not constitute a major element in Anglo-German relations from October 1925 to January 1927.

The treatment of France in the context of Anglo-German relations caused considerable difficulty. France was the chief German antagonist, with Britain acting as the mediator between Paris and Berlin. I first planned to devote one chapter to France, but due to the nature

of this intricate multilateral relationship, I realized that a separate chapter on France was not practical, and that the French factor would have to be dealt with in whatever chapter it became essential to the discussion. It must be borne in mind, however, that this thesis deals with Anglo-German relations and an over-emphasis of the French aspect would have been detrimental to its scope and purpose.

Italy and Belgium, the other two Locarno powers, exerted very little influence on Anglo-German relations in the period examined by this thesis and no reference, therefore, is made to them.

Another difficulty was caused by the wealth of details contained in the documents. While the intrinsic value of all this information is self-evident, I tried to be selective in choosing material and avoid getting bogged down by unnecessary ballast.

I am extremely grateful to Professor Stambrook not only for his help in obtaining otherwise unobtainable sources, but also for his constructive criticism and encouragement.

CHAPTER I

FROM VERSAILLES TO LOCARNO

"Our relations with Germany," commented a leading English newspaper in January 1925, "have for so long been those of upper and lower dog that it will be difficult to get back fully or quickly to terms of real and self-respecting equality."[1] Britain's uneasy attitude toward Germany had its beginning at the 1919 Peace Conference, where the most difficult task of the representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers was to reconcile the opposing British and French views on the future of Germany. The ensuing Treaty was a compromise which fully satisfied neither British nor French demands, but ultimately played into the hands of German statesmen determined to revise the peace settlement. British endeavours to rehabilitate their country's economy, which could only succeed within the context of a total European recovery - which in turn was based on favourable German economic conditions[2] - led Britain to adopt a moderate attitude toward Germany. France, however, was possessed by a fear for her security to a degree that seemed unrealistic to British observers.[3] Moreover,

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[1] The Manchester Guardian Weekly, January 2, 1925.

[2] Cf. The Times, November 9, 1922, and Ian Howard Rankin, "Britain and Western European Security 1919-1923." University of Manitoba, M.A. Thesis, 1972, pp. 29-30.

[3] "I am so cross with the French," said Lord Balfour during a C. I. D. meeting on February 13, 1925. "I think their obsession (with security) is so intolerably foolish....They are so dreadfully afraid of being swallowed up by the tiger, but they spend all their time poking it." Quoted in Jon Jacobson, Locarno Diplomacy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 15.

France wanted to extract reparation payments of such staggering proportions that only an economically healthy country could afford to pay. Yet a quick German economic recovery, that would make high reparation payments possible, was feared by France because it was expected that economic preponderance would automatically ensure to Germany an increasing political influence.

Had the French view prevailed at Versailles, the terms of the Treaty would have been written in such a way as to keep Germany in bondage indefinitely. But Britain feared that such a policy would soon lead to another confrontation, and hoped that by satisfying her most blatant grievances, Germany could be induced to participate in peaceful co-operation on the international level. Being an expression of compromise, the Treaty, as it was finally drawn up, was too lenient if Germany were to be eliminated as a great power, or even as a contender for great power status;[4] if, on the other hand, Germany was expected to re-enter the community of nations like a prodigal son, then the terms were too severe - especially the war guilt clause which created paranoia in the German mind. "Seldom indeed has so stringent a treaty been framed with such idealistic intent, a dichotomy which suggested to its prescient French critic, Bainville, that it was too mild for its severity."[5]

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[4]Cf. W.M. Jordan, Great Britain, France, and the German Problem (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), p.1, and Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France Between Two Wars (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1966), p.33.

[5]C.L. Mowat, ed. The New Cambridge Modern History, Vol.XII, The Shifting Balance of World Forces (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1968), pp. 221-222.

Being left intact by the Treaty as a great power, Germany did what comes naturally for a country in such a position: perpetuate its existence as a great power, which, as far as Germany was concerned, simply meant the revision of the Versailles settlement. German revisionist hopes were fanned by British newspapers[6] and public statements of influential British spokesmen. "Everybody in this country," wrote The Manchester Guardian Weekly, "should be aware by this time that the Treaty of Versailles confers legal rights upon the victorious powers which can and have been abused....Of course it may be said that the spirit of revenge is not dead in Germany. But the Treaty says nothing about the spirit of revenge."[7] Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the Labour Party, as quoted by a leading German newspaper, went even further than his liberal compatriots: "The Treaty of Versailles is a terrible solution, its results are almost as unhappy as the War itself."[8]

Again it must be emphasized that the reason prompting British spokesmen to make such pronouncements was that the main issues facing Britain after the war were not political but economic. Britain's chief objective was to overcome the economic difficulties caused by the war and to promote prosperity by maintaining a high level of world trade. Without intense participation in world trade, Britain could not hope to cure her economic ills, of which unemployment was the most serious.

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[6] A case in point was Geoffrey Dawson, editor of The Times, 1912-1919 and 1922-1941, who was strongly anti-French and pro-German. See A.L. Rowse, Appeasement: A Study in Political Decline, 1933-1939 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1963), pp. 5-13.

[7] The Manchester Guardian Weekly, January 2, 1925.

[8] Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, October 3, 1925.

But in order for world trade to flow freely once more from country to country and from continent to continent, European participation was an essential condition. However, this condition would not prevail, as British economists and statesmen were quick to point out, as long as the German economy was in shambles and Germany remained outside the European and world economic orbits.[9]

Since economic recovery was essential to Britain's continued existence, her statesmen in general were quite willing to interpret the terms of the Treaty so as to best forward that purpose. The French, on the other hand, could never forget Germany's great war potential and the strictest adherence to the terms of Versailles was, so they believed, their guarantee of safety. Britain, unlike France situated in close proximity to her traditional enemy, had not experienced invasion by foreign troops and through its link with the Commonwealth had a resource base[10] which afforded her the luxury of assuming, or atleast attempting to assume, the role of the arbitrator of European affairs.[11]

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[9] P.A. Reynolds, British Foreign Policy in the Inter-War Years (London: Longmans, Green and Co.,1954), pp.15-16. F.S. Northedge, The Troubled Giant (London: G.Bell & Sons Ltd.,1966), p.171. J.M. Keynes, The Economic Consequences of the Peace Treaty (New York:Harcourt & Howe, 1920),p.226-251.

[10] Reynolds, op.cit.,p.16. It should be noted that this is not how the situation appeared to the British at the time.

[11] Cf. Jürgen Spenz, Die diplomatische Vorgeschichte des Beitritts Deutschlands zum Völkerbund 1924-1926 (Göttingen: Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1966), p.106, and Eric Sutton, ed., Gustav Stresemann. His Diaries, Letters, and Papers (London: MacMillan & Co.Ltd., 1937), Vol.II, p.225.

The guidelines for German foreign policy had been established as early as 1920 and remained fairly consistent during the era of the Weimar Republic. In an unsigned document of September, 1920, entitled Richtlinien für die deutsche Politik gegenüber England, Dr. Simon, the German Foreign Minister, insisted that the central aim of German policy was to attempt fulfilling the terms of Versailles in order to prove that the conditions established by the Treaty were beyond fulfillment: "Erfüllung zum Beweise der Unerfüllbarheit....Any reduction of the German burden can only be achieved through the general agreement of all enemies that the terms of Versailles will have to be changed if the true interests of the victorious powers are to be guaranteed."[12] Special attention was paid to the delicate nature of Anglo-German relations. The Germans realized that Britain would have to be treated very tactfully and German demands would have to be presented in a casual rather than forceful manner. Yet at the same time, Germany had to avoid "to be put into a position of dependency on British political and financial powers. The interests of the German economy must be used against French tendencies to overpower us," but Germany must not become an "English commercial colony."[13]

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[12] Bonn, Auswärtiges Amt, Politisches Archiv, Büro Reichsminister, England, Vol.I (2368/489941-46).

[13] Ibid; 489942.

> Especially dangerous to our relations with England are British ambitions in the Baltic and in Russia. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance, that we adopt a course parallel to England's in the treatment of Scandinavia, the so-called border states and Russia....It should not be difficult to find a premise for an understanding with England if the British Government could be convinced that our understanding with the Soviet Government is not for the sake of power politics. Germany must not participate in Bolshevik endeavours directed against the British Empire, especially not in the sensitive areas of Asia.[14]

Under these circumstances, it was obvious that Germany would turn to Britain to be her spokesman at the councils of the nations. Without the goodwill of Britain, German Diplomatic activities would have been even more curtailed in the first five years following the peace conference. But as economic conditions gradually improved and as the resurgence of Germany's economic potential enabled the country to demand a more equal footing with the Entente Powers, British tutelage of Germany declined.

The take-off point for Germany's economic revival was the Dawes Plan of 1924. Sponsored by Anglo-American financial interests, which had long realized the potential inherent for investment in a financially stable Germany, the" basic idea behind the Dawes Plan was the transformation of the reparation question from an instrument of French expansionist and power policy into a vast international, and especially American financial undertaking."[15] This interpretation of the purpose

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[14] Ibid., 489943-44. See also Ludwig Zimmermann, Deutsche Aussenpolitik in der Ära der Weimarer Republik (Göttingen: Musterschmidt Verlag, 1958), pp.90-91.

[15] Arthur Rosenberg, A History of the German Republic (New York: Russell & Russell, 1936), pp.224-5.

of the Dawes Plan sounds like an echo of a statement made by MacDonald at the Labour Party Congress in Liverpool in October, 1925:

> The Dawes Plan evolved out of a certain political situation. The issue was to circumvent the reparation commission which would have pursued certain political ideas of the Treaty of Versailles....The reparation questions have been taken out of the hands of the politicians and placed into the hands of a more or less impartial committee of economists.16

The shifting of the reparation question from the political to the financial arena favoured the Germans. Not only did they find a friend in Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England and an important personage in international financial circles, who disliked the French[17] and worked hard toward the financial rehabilitation of Europe, but also, as Arnold Wolfers has pointed out:

> It was "business-like" to treat an opponent as an equal, unbusiness-like to use reparations as an instrument to protect one's security. It was to the interest of business men and private creditors to scale down reparations, to protect the stability of the German currency, to avoid political crisis, and to prevent the execution of the treaty from retarding the return of good will and economic initiative.[18]

Although no final reparation costs were settled and the Reparation Commission, under the chairmanship of the American banker Parker Gilbert, exercised considerable control over German finances, the immediate loan of 800 million gold marks to Germany provided the necessary stimulus for German economic recovery. German right-wing

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[16] Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, October 3, 1925. The Times. October 3, 1925.

[17] Andrew Boyle, Montagu Norman (London: Cassell & Co.Ltd., 1967), p.194.

[18] Wolfers, op. cit., p.207.

factions resented the Plan because, so they maintained, it made Germany " a sort of colonial appendage of the New York Stock Exchange."[19] But Stresemann, the German Foreign Minister, realizing that the political aspects of the Plan were greatly favourable to Germany, overcame the Nationalists' opposition in the Reichstag, where the Plan was accepted in August 1924.[20]

It had always been of paramount importance to all the German post-war governments to end the Allied occ upation of German territory. But before any Allied troops were to leave German soil, the twin problems of Reparation and (French) Security had to be solved. The Dawes Plan "technically disposed"[21] of the Reparation problem and paved the way for negotiations on the second obstacle, security. The opportune time for tackling the security problem arrived when Baldwin's Conservative Government, which took office on November 4, 1924, rejected the Geneva Protocol. France's quest for security seemed to have reached a happy ending when E. Herriot and Ramsay MacDonald introduced the "Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes" at the

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[19] Rosenberg, op. cit., p.227

[20] The antics of the German National People's Party in the Reichstag were peculiar. The party wanted to show its opposition to the Dawes Plan, but at the same time wished to avoid a defeat of the Government - being afraid that in this case the Socialists would be able to enter the Cabinet. Some of them, therefore, voted against the Dawes Plan while another faction, in order to prolong the life of the Government and thus protect their own portfolios, voted for acceptance of the Plan. Cf. Paul Schmidt, Statist auf diplomatischer Bühme (Frankfurt/Main:Athenäum Verlag, 1968), p. 71, and Rudolf Olden, Stresemann (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1930), p. 166.

[21] Sutton, op. cit., p.XI

Fifth League Assembly in September 1924. But the Protocol, dealing essentially with security and disarmament, did not find favour with the Conservative Government which had no faith in compulsory arbitration. Using the opportunity, the Germans, prompted by Lord D'Abernon,[22] British Ambassador in Berlin, took the initiative and suggested new security arrangements which, in their final version, became the Locarno Treaties.

When the Baldwin Government replaced its Labour predecessor, in November 1924, it was no secret that the Conservative Government would never accept the Geneva Protocol. "If British Conservatives were perhaps less provincial than their Labour opponents, as a group they were also less responsive to the internationalist outlook; they were more accurate reflectors of the tradition that would encompass specific and limited commitments, if any."[23] The Conservatives' opposition to the Protocol was so great that it caused Lord Balfour - at a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence, December 4, 1924 - to comment "on the difficulty of discussing a document which no one was prepared to defend."[24] The official denunciation of the Protocol was made by Chamberlain at Geneva in March 1925.[25]

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[22]For a discussion of the origins of the Locarno Treaties see F.G. Stambrook, "DAS KIND-Lord D'Abernon and the Origins of the Locarno Pact," Journal of Central European History, Vol. III, No. 1,1968, pp.233-263.

[23]R. Albrecht-Carrie, A Diplomatic History of Europe (London: Methuen & Co.Ltd., 1958),p.415.

[24]Quoted in Stambrook, "DAS KIND," op.cit., p.236.

[25]Wolfers, op. cit., p.257.

Once the Protocol was rejected, the German idea of giving France a guarantee of her eastern frontier was taken up anew.[26] After considerable haggling, from January 20,1925, when the first German scheme was communicated to London and Paris (February 9, 1925), until October 16, 1925, a series of treaties, collectively known as Locarno Pact, were signed.[27]

The Pact consisted of six annexes which were "mutually interdependent".[28] Annex A, referred to as the Rhineland Pact, consisted of a Treaty of Mutual Guarantee Between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain, and Italy. The signatories of the Treaty guaranteed the maintenance of the Franco-German and Belgian-German frontiers and the observance of the demilitarized Rhineland Zone as stipulated by the Treaty of Versailles. Moreover, France, Germany, and Belgium promised not to wage war on each other and to settle all disputes among themselves peacefully by reference to the Council of the League of Nations. If, however, a breach of the Treaty should be committed by any one of the contracting parties, the others would render help to the party against whom the breach had been directed. The Treaty was to become effective as soon as Germany gained membership in the League of Nations.

Annexes B and C were identical Arbitration Conventions Between Germany and Belgium and Between Germany and France.

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[26] Cf. Albrecht-Carrie, op.cit., pp.417-8, and Jacobson, op.cit., pp.28-29.

[27] For the text of the Locarno Pact see Survey of International Affairs, 1925, Vol.II, pp. 439-452.

[28] Ibid., p. 439.

Annexes D and E were identical Arbitration Treaties Between Germany and Poland and Germany and Czechoslovakia, similar to Annexes B and C, except that there was no guarantee for maintaining the frontiers as was the case in the West.

Annex F consisted of a Draft Collective Note to Germany Regarding Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations - an interpretation of Article 16 worked out by the legal representatives of the Locarno powers - and identical Treaties Between France and Poland and Between France and Czechoslovakia.

Article 16, the "heart" of the Covenant of the League of Nations[29] had caused the Germans great concern and in order to overcome this concern a satisfactory interpretation had finally been reached and accepted by everybody concerned. A state, according to Article 16, who broke the Covenant and went to war would be "deemed to have commited an act of war against all other Members of the League...."[30] In such a case, members were to discontinue all financial and economic relations with the offender and participate in such military measures that would be suggested by the Council. What worried the Germans most, however, was No. 3 of Article 16 which stipulated that member states "will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the Members of the League which are co-operating to protect the Covenants of the League."[31]

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[29] Spenz, op.cit., p.36.

[30] Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919 (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1947), Vol.XIII, p.88.

[31] Ibid., p.90.

German fears were realistic. Tensions in Eastern Europe between Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland could have easily deteriorated and an ensuing war spill over to German territory. If Russia, for example, were to attack Poland then the League would request passage for supporting troops through Germany. Such a situation, however, could have the most unpleasant consequences as far as Germany was concerned: it could lead to a Russian invasion of Germany and/or the presence of a large number of troops on German territory[32] and since some of these troops would undoubtedly be French, the possibilities of inviting difficulties were unlimited. Also, Germany entertained friendly relations with Russia which would have been jeopardized had Germany unconditionally accepted Article 16. The Russians, extremely suspicious about the motives of the capitalist countries ever since their intervention in Russia at the end of the War, brought diplomatic pressure on Germany not to accept Article 16 and permit passage of troops which, under all sorts of pretense, could be used against them.

Since the Pact would only become operative when Germany joined the League, and since Germany had refused to accept the consequences of Article 16, a compromise had to be worked out which permitted Britain and France to save face and at the same time enabled Germany to escape the obligation of supporting punitive action against the Russians. The interpretation of Article 16 in Annex F was vague enough to be manipulated by Germany in such a way as to remain neutral in any conflict involving Russia, and at the same time enabled her to accept the

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[32] Spenz, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

Covenant and join the League.[33]

Finally, the treaties between France and Poland and France and Czechoslovakia provided for mutual assistance in case of a German attack against one of the signatories.

The representatives of the Locarno powers were to obtain approval for the Pact from their respective legislatures and meet on December 1, 1925, in London, for the signing of the various treaties which made up the Locarno Pact.

Reactions to Locarno in France, Britain, and Germany were predictable and consistent with the role that each country had played since 1919: France and Germany had been and still were the antagonists, attempting enforcement and revision of the Treaty of Versailles respectively, while Britain, assuming the role of the mediator, had advised the Germans to listen to French complaints but at the same time told the French to be reasonable and make concessions to Germany.

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[33]The last paragraph of Annex F reads:

> In accordance with that interpretation the obligations resulting from the said article on the members of the League must be understood to mean that each State member of the League is bound to co-operate loyally and effectively in support of the Covenant and in resistance to any act of aggression to an extent which is compatible with its military situation and takes its geographical position into account. (Italics mine.) Survey of of International Affairs, 1925, Vol.I, p.451.

The French appreciated that Locarno increased their security and Aristide Briand, the French foreign minister, in a statement to the Petit Parisien on February 26, 1927, explained one of the more important aspects of Locarno: "Dorénavant, la violation par le Reich de la zone rhénane démilitarisée doit suffire à déclencher l'action anglaise et italienne." [34] Yet French apprehensions about security were not totally allayed because France, in contrast to Britain, was not impressed with the moral implications of a treaty such as the "Spirit of Locarno", but preferred iron-clad terms beyond any legal dispute.[35] Although Briand had "trembled and wept with joy"[36] at Locarno, he and his compatriots recognized the basic fact that Locarno did not provide guarantees for security as effectively as the now defunct Geneva Protocol. Unless security arrangements were unquestionable, there could be no peace; a condition regarded by the French as "a juridical situation. Peace to them means the Treaty of Versailles as the political structure of Europe with irresistible force behind it."[37] In other words, to the French, peace, based on security, meant the establishment and maintenance of a European hegemony and since Locarno did not measure up fully to these objectives, its partial benefits were appreciated but the general reaction to the Pact was less than enthusiastic. Specifically, being economically unable to support her Eastern

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[34] Quoted in Wolfers, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

[35] Jordan, op. cit., p.1.

[36] Jacobson, op. cit., p.3.

[37] Quoted in Ibid., p.39.

allies, the French were worried that with the Western frontier secure, Germany would now be in a position to redouble her efforts in the East and by applying economic pressure on Poland would be able to force a frontier revision.[38] While the French hoped for the best from the Pact, they nevertheless remained sceptical and compared the Pact to a parachute which may or may not open in a time of need.

> The French have compared the Locarno Pact to a parachute that a nation will resort to in a moment of great danger. Sometimes the chute opens and then everything is well; but sometimes the mechanism fails and a catastrophe is inevitable.... France hails the new instrument, which is supposed to enhance its safety, but still maintains that the experiment is fairly dangerous and the greatest caution is necessary.[39]

Reactions to Locarno in Britain were generally favourable, although there were different reasons for expressing satisfaction with the new arrangements. First, there was genuine enthusiasm that a new era of goodwill had been ushered in by the Pact; secondly, it was felt that the Pact would be an effective means separating Germany and Russia. Typical of the enthusiasm was Ramsay MacDonald's statement, in November 1925, in the House of Commons, who, having witnessed the conference at

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[38] French worries about the plight of her Eastern allies were not unfounded. In 1931, for example, Germany attempted to form a customs union with Austria. Had the plan been successful, Czechoslovakia would have had no choice but to join and, if in the meantime German economic ties could be strengthened with the Baltic States, then Poland, economically unstable, could be pressured to make territorial concessions to Germany. F.G. Stambrook, "The German-Austrian Customs Union Project of 1931- A Study of German Methods and Motives," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol.XXI, April 1961, No. 1, pp. 41-42.

[39] Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, February 28, 1926.

Locarno, commented that "the change in the psychology...was almost miraculous....At once everybody felt that they were at peace."[40] Lord D'Abernon, the real although perhaps not legitimate father of the Pact, was overjoyed that Russia had been dealt a severe diplomatic blow and Europe made safe by preventing a future Russo-German alliance. As soon as the Pact had been signed, he wrote in his diary:

> The most disgruntled parties are the Russians. Locarno has infuriated them, and they will do everything in their power to wreck it....
> . . . . . .
> With Locarno signed, and vigorously carried out in its legitimate implications, the old danger of a Russo-German alliance versus the Western Powers may be regarded as obsolete.[41]

Reactions to Locarno in Germany were mixed. While the centre of the political spectrum was generally in favour, the Communists and most of the Nationalists were bitterly opposed. Already before the German delegation had left for Locarno, the latter had been alarmed about the planned conference. Once the terms of the Pact became public, the Nationalists were outraged at what they felt was a betrayal of German people and a loss of German soil, and their criticism of Stresemann, the German foreign minister, became extremely abusive.[42] German military circles were worried that the Pact would jeopardize the secret Russo-German collaborations which so far had proven profit-

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[40] Parliamentary Debates: Official Report, Fifth Series-Vol.188. House of Commons (hereinafter cited as 188 H.C.Deb. 5s.), col. 435.

[41] Viscount D'Abernon, An Ambassador of Peace (London:Hodder & Stoughton,1930), Vol.III, pp.201,203.

[42] See M. Göhring, Stresemann (Wiesbaden:Franz Steiner Verlag, 1956), p.27, Olden, op.cit., pp.176-178, and Antonia Vallentin, Stresemann (Leipzig: Paul List Verlag, 1930), p. 184.

able to both countries.[43]

Stresemann denied all charges of betrayal; for him Locarno was an instrument for the peaceful revision of Versailles. "He went to Locarno as a German, offering a German solution to the problem of peace."[44] In a speech to the Dresden press, at the end of October 1925, he indicated his position very clearly: "We do not want to conclude any treaty affecting the East that might be interpreted as even an indirect recognition of the frontiers."[45] To charges that Locarno had really been a British solution of the security problem,[46] Stresemann replied: "If I am told that I pursue a policy friendly to England, I do not so from any love of England, but because in this question German interests coincide with those of England, and because we must find someone who helps us to shake off the strangle-hold upon our throat."[47]

Unlike the Nationalists, the Communists were not concerned about the loss of German territory, but any British diplomatic success was interpreted by them as yet another attempt to isolate Germany from Russia. They readily agreed with the British view that Locarno had

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[43]Cf. Gerald Freund, Unholy Alliance (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), "The Military Collaboration", pp.201-212, F.L. Carsten, The Reichswehr and Politics 1918-1933 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 232-238, and Helm Speidel, "Reichswehr und Rote Armee," Vierteljahrheft für Zeitgeschichte,Vol.I, No.1,January 1953, pp.9-45.

[44]Henry L. Bretton, Stresemann and the Revision of Versailles (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953) p.13.

[45]Sutton, op. cit., p.198.

[46]Jordan, op. cit., p.56.

[47]Sutton, op. cit., p.225

indeed been a British victory over Russia. A victory, as F. Zetkin, a Communist deputy in the Reichstag, told Stresemann, achieved at the expense of Germany. Locarno, Zetkin explained:

> ...is the expression of the struggle between the French and the British imperialism for the hegemony in Europe and beyond.... The borders in the East have been determined so cunningly by the French imperialism as to force Poland and Germany to live in continuous enmity beside each other. It is impossible to overcome this animosity with a piece of paper.[48]

Zetkin agreed with Stresemann that revision of the Eastern boundary was Germany's moral right but, he argued: "The realization of this right will, in practice, depend on the favour and on the disfavour of Britain and France....Secondly, the realization will also greatly depend on the relation of the German Republic with Soviet Russia."[49] Therefore, Germany's anti-soviet position at Locarno will not enhance Russian co-operation in the revision of the Eastern frontiers of Germany.[50]

Although Stresemann recognized the implications that Locarno had for Russo-German relations and was ready to take the necessary steps to alleviate any deterioration, his immediate concern in October 1925 was the evacuation of the Rhineland. The Rhineland Pact for Stresemann, securing the Eastern frontier of France, was the basic tool to accomplish this objective. With the reparation question temporarily resolved by the Dawes Plan and with the Locarno Pact the first important means since 1919 to ease the security problem, Germany was now ready to tackle the issue

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[48] Reichstagverhandlungen, III. Wahlperiode 124, Band 388, Nov. 1925 - Feb. 1926, cols. 4632-3.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

causing most anxieties to her patriots: the occupation of the Rhineland. Although Stresemann was unable to achieve the immediate total evacuation of the Rhineland,[51] the evacuation of Cologne, on January 30, 1926, was the first victory that Locarno had assured for Germany.

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[51]Jacobson, op. cit., p.42.

CHAPTER II

THE RHINELAND

The Rhineland's difficulties, as a German observer would put it, started on February 25, 1919, when French military experts advanced a plan that would have made the Rhine the frontier between France and Germany, with the Rhine bridges held by Inter-Allied military units.[1] But the territory in question, the left bank of the Rhine, was unmistakably German and the French demands would have run counter to Wilson's idea of national self-determination. Wilson, however, was not the only one to oppose the French scheme. The British equally disliked the French proposal, not primarily for any idealistic theories, but because Lloyd George did not want to involve British troops in a drawn-out occupation which could prove expensive and which would make it impossible for him to realize his demobilization plans. Moreover, since French troops would constitute the majority of the occupying

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[1] Parts of this Memorandum which was prepared mainly by Marshal Foch read as follows:

1. That the western frontier of Germany must be fixed at the Rhine, and that the Rhineland should be declared both politically and economically autonomous of the Reich.
2. That the bridge-heads of the Rhine must be permanently occupied by an inter-Allied force.

Quoted in J.W. Wheeler-Bennett and F.E. Langermann, Information on the Problem of Security (1917-1926) (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1927), p.21.

army,[2] there was a danger that France would be able to dominate the Lower Rhine and Belgium, a situation inconsistent with traditional British foreign policy. It had always been one of the more important goals of British foreign policy to prevent Germany from controlling the Lower Rhine and Belgium and now that Germany was no longer a threat in this region, there was no reason why France should have been encouraged to dominate it.[3]

In the ensuing compromise, the Rhineland was to be placed under Allied control and held as security until Germany had fulfilled the obligations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles.[4] As was the case with all major issues concerning France and Germany, the British and French entertained different views toward the occupation of the Rhineland. As far as the French were concerned, the Rhineland "constituted an ideal glacis for the most vulnerable of the French frontiers; and therefore any French troops posted in the Rhineland, so far from being thereby seconded from the main duties of the French army, were placed in a peculiarly advantageous position for performing those duties."[5]

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[2]Even though the French proposal of February 25, 1919, was rejected, for geographical and political reasons it was obvious that French troops would always be in the majority in any occupation scheme. Marshal Foch's report to the Five Great Powers on the Army of Occupation on the left Bank of the Rhine, dated July 15, 1919, is a case in point. Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, First Series, (hereafter cited as D.B.F.P., I) Vol. I, No. 18.

[3]Cf. Reynolds, op. cit., p.17, Akten Zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik, SeriesB:1925-1933 (hereafter cited as A.D.A.P., B)Vol.IV, No. 11, and D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, pp. 850-851.

[4]Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France. The Saar was placed under the supervision of the League for fifteen years when a plebiscite was to decide its future status. The Saar mines were placed under French ownership under the terms of the Reparation settlement.

[5]Survey of International Affairs, 1927,p.107.

The British, however, regarded the Rhineland "as an inland district of the European continent,...out of geographical relation to the general scheme of Imperial Defence,"[6] and British troops on duty in the Rhineland could not be used to protect vital British interests anywhere else. Yet for reasons of politics, the British could not afford to withdraw their troops from the area altogether because the void created, if they did, would be filled with French troops and once the French were installed firmly in the region, Britain would be deprived a great deal of her effectiveness as mediator between France and Germany; the more secure the French felt about their eastern frontier, the less they would be inclined to respect British wishes. But Britain did not want to have her position as mediator diminished because her statesmen believed it to be an essential condition for safeguarding British interests in Europe. Although the British were in favour of troop reductions, they insisted, for political reasons, on maintaining the proportional strength of their units in relation to the French and Belgian troops.[7]

The Inter-Allied High Commission to the Rhineland, representing "the Allied Governments in occupied territory"[8] was established on October 20, 1919. The Allied troops were deployed in three zones with Cologne, Coblenz, and Mainz as the respective centres. The first zone was to be evacuated five years after the signing of the peace treaty, the second in ten years, and the third in fifteen, provided

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[6] Ibid., p.107.

[7] D.B.F.P., I, Vol.5, No.70.

[8] Ibid., I, Vol.II, No.3, Appendix C.

that Germany adhered to the terms of the treaty.[9]

To the Germans the time limiting the occupation seemed of excessive length and they tried very hard to reduce it. German hopes of ending the occupation before the contemplated time limit were based on a "declaration regarding the occupation of the Rhine Provinces" made on June 16, 1919, by Wilson, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George.[10]

> In this declaration a prospect had been held out that the occupied territory might be liberated at an earlier date than that fixed in the Versailles Treaty...provided that Germany showed goodwill and gave satisfactory guarantees for the fulfilment of her treaty obligations.[11]

Having shown goodwill with regard to reparations by accepting the Dawes Plan,[12] and having voluntarily introduced far-reaching security measures at Locarno, the Germans now felt that it was the turn of the Allies to reward their goodwill by making concessions, meaning relaxation and eventual removal of the Allied regime in the Rhineland.

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[9] Articles 428 and 429, Treaty of Versailles; Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919, op.cit., pp. 720-725.

[10] 194 H.C.Deb.5s, col. 1186.

[11] Cf. Ibid., col.102, and Article 431, Treaty of Versailles. Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919, op.cit.,p. 725. Article 431 reads: "If before the expiration of the period of fifteen years Germany complies with all the undertakings resulting from the present treaty, the occupying forces will be withdrawn immediately."

[12] Annelise Thimme, "Stresemann and Locarno," European Diplomacy Between Two Wars, 1919-1939, ed. Hans W. Gatzke (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972), p.77.

Moreover, Briand and Chamberlain promised to Luther and Stresemann at Locarno that in order to facilitate the Pact's acceptance in the Reichstag, the Allies would "evacuate Cologne by a specified date without waiting for the completion of German disarmament."[13] Although this promise may be regarded as an immediate reward for Germany's contribution to the successful conclusion of the Locarno Conference, Briand and Chamberlain refused to make any further concessions with regard to the evacuation of the two other zones and the further reduction of Allied troops.

The Briand-Chamberlain promise determined the format of the diplomatic activities in the Rhineland that followed. Regarding the evacuation of Cologne - the first development in Rhineland diplomacy - as a fait accompli, the Germans attempted to link it with the second theme, troop reduction in the Second and Third Zones. Chamberlain particularly became increasingly annoyed with these tactics used by the Germans, but in the negotiations leading to the evacuation of Cologne the two questions became inevitably entangled. The third development arose out of the continued friction between the occupying army and the civilian population. Although incidents between soldiers and civilians were regarded as of little consequence when looked at individually, collectively they threatened to disrupt at times the cordial relations between Berlin and London.[14]

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[13] Jacobson, op.cit.,p.62. See also Michael Salewski, Entwaffnung und Militärkontrolle in Deutschland 1917-1927 (München: R.Oldenbourg Verlag, 1966) pp. 315-317.

[14] This third aspect is not developed in this chapter at any length; only a general statement is made and one particular incident is discussed as a case in point.

The Germans seemed to have had just cause for complaint because the French troops of occupation in particular made life difficult for the Rhinelanders. While some of the German accounts about incidents between the French military and German civilians may be regarded as chauvinistic, they cannot be dismissed altogether because some are corroborated by similar accounts of British officers and officials stationed in the Rhineland. When the Germans complained about attacks on civilians and molestation and rape of German women and girls,[15] then one must also consider Chamberlain's statement that on certain occasions "the conduct of the [French] troops is inexcusable."[16] While German "patriots" often provoked the French troops unnecessarily, the French, on the other hand, looked for every opportunity to make life difficult for the Germans. "The French officer has been brought up to regard Germany as his hereditary enemy." wrote Colonel Ryan, Acting British High Commissioner on the Inter-Allied Rhineland High Commission, to Chamberlain on October 20, 1925. "His gospel is the Echo de Paris, and his prophet, Poincaré."[17]

But the French troops were not the only ones that created difficulties. German complaints about housing shortages occasioned by the necessity to accommodate British troops, military manoeuvers in public parks, and a host of other matters, in short: the friction created by the presence of foreign troops caused general concern.[18] Most serious

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[15] Ferdinand Friedensburg, Die Weimarer Republik (Berlin: Carl Habel Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1946), p.109.

[16] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, No.99.

[17] Ibid., No.12.

[18] 194 H.C.Deb.5s. col.1008. 198 H.C.Deb.5s., col.1024. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 1.

were German complaints about housing shortages in the Second and Third Zones. When the First Zone was evacuated on January 30, 1926, most of the British troops leaving the Cologne area - except the 1,200 who actually left Germany - were stationed in the Second and Third Zones, thus swelling the ranks of the troops in these areas and forcing the British authorities to requisition more homes for billets.[19]

The Proclamation of the Interallied High Commission to the Rhineland had explained that the Commission would do everything "to make as light as possible,...the burden of occupation," provided that "the German Government fulfills its duties concerning the reparations due to the victims of the war."[20] But in spite of its good intentions,[21] the friction between the foreign soldiers and the civilians led to incidents that reached proportions beyond the administrative capacity of the Commission and had to be settled on a high diplomatic level, something which the British in particular had wanted to avoid at all costs.[22]

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[19]The seriousness of the situation is indicated by the figures on the tables in Appendix I and Appendix II.

[20]D.B.F.P., I, Vol.II, No. 3.

[21]The Proclamation concluded:

> The High Commission hopes that the contact between the troops of the Allied and Associated Nations and the Rhenish population will be, not a cause of friction, but a means to establish better acquaintance and to develop a closer relationship,labour, order, and the future peace of a better humanity.

[22]At the signing of the Locarno Treaties, in London on December 1, 1925, Chamberlain "...begged the German delegation to do all in their power to prevent these questions,...from becoming diplomatic questions." D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 122.

An interesting case in point is the Bingen incident; interesting not only because a minor event became entangled in a major diplomatic issue and assumed proportions which necessitated Chamberlain's as well as Stresemann's active participation in its solution, but also it demonstrates as clearly as any of the important issues the British attitude toward Germany, and how British statesmen supported Germany while at the same time attempting to placate French fears about German resurgence and dispel French doubts about British intentions.

The Bingen incident occurred on May 7, 1926. The mayor of Bingen, a small town near the confluence of the Rhine and the Nahe, proceeded with the illumination of a statue, commemorating German victories in the War of 1870, although the Allied Military Authorities in the Rhineland disapproved of the celebration without actually issuing orders forbidding it.

While French indignation was an expected reaction to the ceremony, Chamberlain's outbursts and shouting, when discussing the matter with Sthamer, the German ambassador in London, may seem surprising until the connection between what happened at Bingen and British policy becomes apparent. Chamberlain's tactlessness toward Sthamer, although unbecoming the dignity of the office of the Foreign Secretary, is nevertheless understandable in view of the fact that while the incident at Bingen took place, the British, in secret negotiations, had put pressure on France to reduce her troops in the Rhineland in order to satisfy German demands. The timing, therefore, of the incident could not have been worse because it threatened to abort any anticipated British success by supplying the French with fresh evidence as to the

hostile attitude of Germany. Chamberlain even accused the Germans of acting contrary to the "Spirit of Locarno" and it took a few months and some effort on both the British and German sides to overcome the ill-feeling caused by the incident.[23]

Chamberlain was willing to show the Germans some appreciation for Locarno and on October 17, 1925, one day after the conclusion of the Pact, he wrote to the Marquess of Crewe, informing His Majesty's ambassador in Paris that Locarno had now changed the situation:

> I wish to do everything that can be done to mark at once that our relations with Germany are now on an entirely new footing and that confidence established between us enables concessions to be made which would have been unthinkable earlier.[24]

On the same day, Chamberlain wrote a letter to Ryan in Coblenz, instructing him to do what he could for the Rhinelanders: "I cannot help feeling that there must be many directions in which we could quite reasonably make things easier for the inhabitants of the occupied territory."[25]

While the Germans welcomed any friendly gesture on the part of the Allies in the Rhineland, they expected, however, nothing less than immediate withdrawal of the Allied troops from the First Zone. Moreover, the German Government made no bones about the fact that unless some Allied concessions were made soon, it was doubtful whether the

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[23]Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 226, and D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, Nos. 3,13,22,26,30,32,39,50,138,204.

[24]D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 2.

[25]Ibid., Nos.3,7.

Reichstag would ratify the Locarno Pact. On October 26, 1925, Crewe, after a conversation with von Hoesch, the German ambassador in Paris, informed Chamberlain that both the German chancellor and foreign minister supported the Pact, but that unless some of the concessions intimated at Locarno were granted to Germany, both Luther and Stresemann were confronted by two choices, both detrimental to the continuation of the Locarno policy. In order to remain in office, Luther and Stresemann would have to renounce Locarno, or by continuing to defend Locarno, both men would be defeated in the Reichstag and the Locarno policy with them. Moreover, unless some definite concessions were promised now, it was unlikely that the German delegation would consider it worth their while to journey to London for the purpose of signing the Pact. Hoesch also pointed out the absurdity of the situation by observing that one of the Locarno powers had some of her territories occupied by the troops of the others, her partners and friends. While Crewe's report did not induce the British Foreign Office to make immediate concessions to the Germans, it may be regarded as a good expression of German sentiments and it shows how Stresemann pulled every available string in his fight for the ratification of the Pact in the Reichstag.[26]

Stresemann privately complained to D'Abernon how the ignorance of the German public about the Pact complicated its acceptance in the

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[26]Cf. D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, No. 28, and Herbert von Dirksen, Moscow, Tokyo, London (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1951), pp.69-75.

Reichstag: "Public here never understands details of any foreign question....the only point they care about in the Pact of Security is that it will lead to evacuation of Cologne, in improvement in conditions in the Rhineland...."[27]

During an interview with the French Ambassador in Berlin, on November 1, 1925, Stresemann was more explicit, explaining how he hoped to obtain support for the Locarno Pact and what he expected from the Allies in return:

> There is no doubt whatever that we shall proceed to London on November 30th and shall sign the pact. I do not think we shall be able to do this with the assent of Nationalists, but we count on socialist support which will, I believe, be obtainable without a general election....
>
> As regards signature in London I take it for granted that friendly assurances given in Locarno will materialise in a practical form without undue delay. I sincerely hope that date of evacuation of Cologne will be officially declared before November 10th.[28]

Chamberlain understood the position of the German Government and on November 3, 1925, through Crewe, put pressure on the French Government to hasten the evacuation of Cologne.[29] Yet at the same time, Chamberlain became quite annoyed with the Germans who, in addition to the evacuation of Cologne, asked: "for a declaration on the part of the allies [sic] regarding 'action under article 431[30] of the Treaty' [of Versailles]".[31] He asked D'Abernon, on November 4, 1925, to make

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[27] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 31.

[28] Ibid., No. 43.

[29] Ibid., No. 50.

[30] See Page 23.

[31] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 53.

the Germans aware that "they were in grave danger of falling into their usual error of opening their mouths too wide. Time is on their side if they play their cards even moderately well."[32]

While Chamberlain was annoyed with the Germans, and while the French wanted to delay the evacuation of Cologne,[33] D'Abernon informed Chamberlain that the quick evacuation of Cologne could be turned into a diplomatic victory, especially if the operation was completed "in advance of public expectation...."[34]

On December 1, 1925, on the occasion of the signing of the Locarno Treaties in London, the German representatives, secure of the support of D'Abernon, used the opportunity and, among other topics, discussed troop reduction in the Rhineland.[35] In essence, Luther wanted the strength of the Allied troops reduced to 45,000, arguing that this had been the strength of the German garrison before the war. Briand and Berthelot insisted that according to their military experts the figure suggested by Luther was too low and Painleve, the French War Minister, maintained that for organizational reasons the French troops could not be reduced below 60,000. The total number of Allied troops, therefore, after the reduction which had been agreed upon at

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[32] Ibid., No. 53.

[33] Ibid., No. 102. With regard to troop reduction in Second and Third Zones see A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 8.

[34] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 113.

[35] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 1. D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No.122.

Locarno, would be about 75,000. Luther, however, was not satisfied with Briand's explanation and argued that:

> The proposal was to reduce the French army to 60,000, the British to 8,000, and the Belgian to 7,000....Assuming that there were 40,000 troops in the 1st Zone to-day, the mere evacuation of Cologne should bring the total down to 85,000, apart from all reductions.[36]

As the haggling over troop reductions continued, Chamberlain became annoyed and asked the German representatives "not to forever asking concessions of them."[37]

Although Luther and Stresemann failed to obtain the troop reduction they had asked for in London, they continued their efforts and on January 13, 1926, Stresemann once more enlisted D'Abernon's help and asked him to exert his influence to bring about a greater reduction of troops. In accordance with Stresemann's request, D'Abernon sent a message to Chamberlain on January 14, 1926, and conveyed to him the message:

> Dr. Stresemann...finds himself in a most difficult position. He had counted on a considerable reduction of troops of occupation, and in this confident hope he had been able to defend himself against Nationalist agitation which accuses him of hoodwinking Germany about result of Locarno reaction. He can no longer conscientiously maintain this defence, if in spite of security of Franco-German frontier which has been assured by Locarno it is found necessary to maintain so strong a force in occupied territory.[38]

On January 26, 1926, D'Abernon once more attempted to impress

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[36] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 122. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/2, No. 41. See Appendix I and II.

[37] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 122.

[38] Ibid., No. 183. See also A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, Nos. 36,37.

on Chamberlain the importance of troop reduction and told him that he could not expect German public opinion to be reasonable about the occupation.[39]

D'Abernon was not alone in supporting German demands for troop reduction. On January 27, 1926, Sir George Grahame, the British Ambassador in Brussels, informed Chamberlain that the Belgian

> Minister for Foreign Affairs is inclined to think Herr Stresemann somewhat exaggerates his internal difficulties but at the same time considers that Germans have a certain grievance and that French government should make some reduction in numbers of their occupying troops.
>
> Belgian Ambassador will be told to bear this view in mind in any discussion at Ambassadors' Conference.[40]

On January 30, 1926, the Allies evacuated Cologne and the last British troops left the city at 4:45 p.m.[41] The evacuation made a good impression in Germany[42] and helped the government in securing support for the entrance of Germany into the League. Although the Germans, according to the British view, did not fully appreciate the smooth evacuation of Cologne, their behaviour during the operation, contrary to British newspapers, was correct.[43]

During the April session of the House of Commons, Chamberlain was confronted with questions about the peculiarity of a country about to become a member of the League of Nations and at the same time being

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[39] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 207.

[40] Ibid., No. 215. See also A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 42.

[41] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 228.

[42] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 76.

[43] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 241.

occupied by foreign troops. Questions which Chamberlain was unable to answer satisfactorily.[44]

A month later, on May 25, 1926, Chamberlain, under public pressure, re-affirmed his trust in the German Government and assured Stresemann that he had used all his influence to persuade the other governments of the German cause.[45]

On July 15, 1926, Addison, a British Embassy official, sent Chamberlain a confidential letter from Berlin in which he enclosed a transcript of the minutes of a meeting, on June 26, 1926, of the German Foreign Affairs Committee.[46] It seemed that the Germans were not slow in taking a cue from the Commons debate in April,[47] not that they needed much prodding. Addison was particularly concerned with the following Stresemann statement:

> ...once we are in the council [of the League of Nations] and the situation, which was foreseen at Locarno, has been brought about and consolidated by the withdrawal of the Military Mission of Control, the time will have come to bring up for diplomatic debate the whole question of the withdrawal of the troops from the Zones still occupied.[48]

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[44] 194 H.C.Deb.5s.,cols. 1186-1188

[45] Cf. D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, No.22, and A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 229.

[46] This committee consisted of some of the prominent members of the Foreign Office and of some members of the Cabinet.

[47] See p. 33.

[48] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, No. 93.

Addison attached much importance to this statement because he anticipated increased friction when German demands and French refusals to grant "any further reductions without some compensation..."[49] would place Britain in an awkward position in the middle:

> In short the action which Dr. Stresemann foreshadows after the entry of Germany into the League of Nations raises a very awkward question, the scope of which is outside the limits of concessions which M. Briand has hitherto stated that he might be prepared to discuss, and it is therefore good that His Majesty's Government should have had ample warning of this possible danger.[50]

The transcript makes interesting reading, but Chamberlain must have specially appreciated the passage where Stresemann analysed British policy and assessed Chamberlain's role:

> ...the British Government have made it known in Paris that, after Germany's entry into the League of Nations, they do not consider the then existing situation of political co-operation with Germany to be consistent with the continuation of a garrison in the occupied territory, and that such a state of affairs is on the contrary abnormal. If this information is correct, which I do not doubt, I quite understand that Chamberlain is peevish when he has to express himself freely, since this could only be regarded by France as unfriendly in view of the negotiations which have taken place between the two countries."[51]

Stresemann correctly recognized the difficult role of Chamberlain as mediator between Germany and France. An interesting incident that shows the conniving Chamberlain had to deal with in regard to troop reduction occurred between August and September 1926. During August 1926, in order to induce the Germans to be more sensitive

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[49] Ibid., No. 109.

[50] Ibid., No. 93.

[51] Ibid.

to French wishes as to the composition of the League Council, Briand " promised a reduction of 6,000 to be carried out during September."[52] While Briand's promise was carried out, no sooner was Germany in the League than, according to a Memorandum by Central Department on Troops in the Rhineland of the Foreign Office, the French moved their troops back into the Second and Third Zones.[53]

After Germany entered the League, on September 10, 1926, the first opportunity offered to Stresemann for advancing his aims for the Rhineland was at Thoiry.[54] Although the plan of action decided upon by Briand and Stresemann at Thoiry was short-lived, the question of the Rhineland evacuation became a question of finance. Stresemann's analysis of the situation was proven correct:

> It was no longer a question of security to be maintained by the occupation of the Rhineland-it was rather a bargain between two practical men who were prepared to make one another reciprocal concessions against value received.[55]

The comment on the Thoiry meeting in Le Temps was to the same effect: " If Germany wishes the Rhineland to be evacuated she will have to make heavy financial sacrifices."[56]

Although the Thoiry recommendations were not pursued immediately, the final evacuation of the Rhineland occurred in the financial context of the Young Plan. During August 1928, when the

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[52] Ibid., No. 151. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/2, No.4.

[53] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.III, No. 36.

[54] See pp. 69-70.

[55] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, No.222.

[56] Quoted in ibid., No. 220.

Kellog-Briand Pact was signed in Paris, Stresemann suggested the termination of the Allied Rhineland regime. Poincare, then Minister of Finance, "insisted on linking that question with the issue of Reparation...."[57] His suggestion was accepted and while the terms of the subsequently suggested Young Plan defined Germany's total indemnity, they also stipulated that the second zone and the third zone should be evacuated on November 30, 1929, and June 30, 1930, respectively.[58]

German efforts to press for troop reductions became less frantic after September 1926, once the country was installed as a permanent member in the Council of the League of Nations. Germany's entry into the League did much to restore her self-respect as a great power, and thus enabled her to endure irritations such as those in the Rhineland in a more sophisticated manner than had been the case earlier; yet another reason for this change of attitude was that time was on her side. In December 1926, in a letter to President Hindenburg and Chancellor Marx, Stresemann shrewdly assessed the time factor when he wrote that:

> ...the evacuation date provided for in the Treaty of Versailles was growing nearer, and as it did, the value of evacuation as an instrument of barter diminished; as the French came to recognize this, they would become increasingly disposed to further compromise. Provided the Germans did not inflate the value of evacuation by insisting on it anxiously, the problem would become increasingly easy to solve.[59]

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[57] Albrecht-Carrie, op.cit., p. 442.

[58] E.H.Carr, International Relations Between The Two World Wars (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1965), pp.124-129.

[59] Quoted in Jacobson, op.cit., p. 94.

The Rhineland was the first place where the effects of Locarno had made themselves felt, but Locarno was based on the premise that Germany would have to become a member of the League of Nations before the Pact assumed legal reality. Therefore, before any further benefits from Locarno could be accrued, the obstacles obstructing Germany's entry into the League had to be cleared.

CHAPTER III

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Article 10 of the Locarno Pact, initialled on October 16, 1925, had stipulated that:

> The present treaty shall be ratified and the ratifications deposited at Geneva in the archives of the League of Nations 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.[1]

While the Pact was accepted in the House of Commons, on November 16, 1925, by an overwhelming majority (Ayes 375, Noes 13),[2] ratification proved more difficult in Germany. The government of Dr. Luther had been weakened by the resignation of three Nationalist ministers during October 1925, in opposition to the negotiations at Locarno. In order to placate the Socialists,[3] who did not want to vote for a minority government which still had Nationalist members, Luther, the chancellor, promised to resign as soon as the Pact was signed in London on December 1, 1925. While this manoeuver facilitated the ratification of the Pact in the Reichstag on November 26, 1925, after a lengthy and heated debate,[4] it delayed Germany's application for League membership.

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[1] Survey of International Affairs, 1925, Vol.II, p.442. Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1926. Vol.XXX, Cmd. 2764.

[2] 188 H.C.Deb.5s., Cols. 539-540.

[3] The government needed their support to obtain ratification of the Pact in the Reichstag.

[4] Reichstagverhandlungen, op.cit., Vol.388, Cols.4476-4633.

When the Pact was finally signed in London on December 1, 1925, Luther, due to "the complicated negotiations which followed"[5] and which continued until the third week of January 1926, was prevented from resigning until that time when he was given the opportunity to form another government. But no sooner was the new government installed into office than the Nationalists started a campaign to prevent Germany from becoming a member of the League.[6] The campaign reached proportions of absurdity when spokesmen of the Nationalists suggested that the coming into force of the Locarno Pact and German membership in the League could be separated, thus blatantly ignoring Article 10 of the text of the Pact. But the evacuation of Cologne, on January 30, 1926, eroded the Nationalists' opposition and on February 10, 1926 the German application was handed to Sir Eric Drummond, the Secretary-General of the League.[7]

German intentions, however, of joining the League and the actual seating of Germany as a permanent member on the Council of the League were different matters, and only after a great flurry of diplomatic activity could the latter be accomplished. Carlton has referred to Germany's initial failure, in March 1926, and consequent success, in September 1926, to gain a permanent Council seat as the first post-Locarno crisis.[8] This is an apt description because France's abortive attempts

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[5] Survey of International Affairs, 1926, p.5.

[6] Cf. Ibid., pp.5-8, and Peter Gay, Weimar Culture (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 133-134.

[7] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No.88.

[8] David Carlton, "Great Britain and the League Council Crisis of 1926," The Historical Journal, Vol.XI, 1968, No.2, pp.354-364.

to delay German membership, in March 1926, were the signal ending the French hegemony of post-war Europe and the re-appearance of Germany as a Great Power. It also revealed once more the different attitudes of Britain and France toward the League and its functions as well as the importance for Germany to become a member of the League.

Germany had always regarded the League as an instrument of the victorious powers under the leadership of France and watched with consternation the transformation from a "ligue wilsonienne to a ligue anti-germanique."[9] The reasons prompting the Germans to develop this attitude toward the League were twofold: 1. the failure of the U.S.A. to become a member and to exert her influence against France's anti-Wilsonian tendencies; 2. the fact that the Covenant became an integrated and important part of the Treaty of Versailles.[10] The integration of Covenant and Treaty tarnished the image of the League; it could never be regarded by the Germans as an instrument for the promotion of international goodwill, but became just another means for the victorious powers, particularly France, to enforce the dictated terms of Versailles. Moreover, German distrust of the League had been kindled when, in 1920, her suggestions for the organization of the League were rejected with her application for membership and the German Government told that the country would have to undergo a period of probation and fulfil the obligations of Versailles before she would

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[9]Quoted in Spenz, op.cit., p.13.

[10]Cf. Werner von Rheinbaben, Von Versailles zur Freiheit (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1927) p.146, and Zimmermann, op.cit., p.298.

have a say in these matters, let alone becoming a member. But no matter how the Germans regarded the League, the League was the best platform where Germany could voice her opinion and state her grievances regarding the peace treaty.[11] Passage of time, however, was in favour of Germany and as such important questions as reparations, disarmament, and security were attempted to be solved, even France began to realize that German membership in the League was essential, particularly as far as the security question was concerned, and could not be delayed forever. The German attitude toward the League and the conditions of her entry in 1926 were already established on October 29, 1920, by Dr. Simons, the German Foreign Minister, in a speech to the Reichstag: "The League is very unpopular in Germany because it disappointed the confidence the German people had bestowed on it. We shall not join as long as our opponents do not wish to accept us as equals."[12]

Yet no matter what her attitude toward the League was, practical considerations made it essential for Germany to join this organization. The League offered the Germans a means of making special arrangements with countries within their sphere of interest, under the pretence of pursuing the aims of the League. Such arrangements, if carefully executed could, for example, extend German economic influence and protect German minorities in Eastern Europe[13] and at the same time undermine

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[11] Rheinbaben, op.cit., p.147.

[12] Quoted in Zimmermann, op.cit., p.299.

[13] In order to overcome the opposition of the German Nationalists to the planned German entry into the League, Stresemann stressed the importance of aiding German minorities in Eastern Europe through the agencies of the League. Carole Fink, "Defender of Minorities:Germany in the League of Nations, 1926-1933," Central European History, Vol.V, No. 4, December 1972, pp.338-339.

the French system of alliances in this region.[14] Moreover, as Stresemann wrote in a letter on September 7, 1925:

> ...all the questions that lie so close to German hearts,...War Guilt, General Disarmament, Danzig, the Saar, etc., are matters for the League of Nations, and a skillful speaker at a plenary session of the League may make them very disagreeable for the Entente. France, indeed, is not very enthusiastic at the idea of Germany's entering the League, while England is anxious for it, in order to counteract France's hitherto predominant influence on that body.[15]

Britain regarded the League "as an organ for the peaceful settlement of international disputes" the function of which was "peaceful regulation of disputes and satisfaction of legitimate grievances rather than co-operation against attempted forcible redress."[16] Baldwin, the Prime Minister, explained the British position in rather lofty terms on October 26, 1928, in one of his rare statements on foreign policy:

> ...The League of Nations must be all-embracing. It must be no pressure of what are vulgarly called pacifists or "jingoes". No man is too good a patriot not to be a member of the League of Nations....The League has a great future before it....We want faith, and, buoyed up by faith, we hope that in time we, or those who come after, will one day plant their feet firmly in the everlasting path of peace."[17]

Chamberlain's attitude toward the League is best explained by comparing it with the attitude of Lord Cecil, a prominent member of the British Cabinet and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Both Chamberlain

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[14] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, Nos. 22,85,102,178.

[15] Sutton, op.cit., Vol.II p.504.

[16] Reynolds, op.cit., p.10.

[17] Quoted in Keith Middlemas and John Barnes, Baldwin (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p.362.

and Cecil supported the League, but while Chamberlain considered it just another means to be employed in the conduct of international relations, Cecil believed in its intrinsic value and wanted it to play a much more important role than Chamberlain would allow it to assume. According to Cecil, the League existed for Chamberlain "merely as a convenient bit of machinery of the old diplomacy...."[18] Chamberlain, on the other hand, felt that Cecil, "being more of a pacifist than I am, is naturally more prone to forcible methods."[19] But neither Baldwin's vague comments nor the conflicting views of Cecil and Chamberlain reveal how Britain wanted to use the League in the context of Anglo-German relations. British intentions were revealed when fighting about the German candidacy erupted and clearly indicated that Britain wanted Germany to join the League in order "to tie Germany to the West and start German integration into the European concert."[20]

The French, after their experiences in the war, wanted to make certain that Germany would never again be in a position to attack them and invade their country. Realizing that destroying Germany was neither possible nor "a realistic policy in the age of self-determination,"[21] the French wanted a peace treaty that would keep Germany indefinitely in bondage. But the terms of Versailles left Germany's potential as a Great Power intact and "the French felt highly insecure, despite their victory, or rather just because the victory was theirs only in part."[22]

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[18] Quoted in ibid., p.360.

[19] Quoted in ibid.

[20] Spenz, op.cit., p.41.

[21] Albrecht-Carrie, op.cit., p.388.

[22] Ibid., p. 382.

Feeling cheated out of the fruits of their hard-fought victory in the war, and unable to obtain a military commitment from Britain after the war, the French wanted compensation by organizing the League as " a permanent alliance of the Allied victors with an international armed force and an international general staff to prevent a renewed German attempt at European conquest."[23]

But French hopes were again disappointed by Anglo-Saxon complacency because the League, as it emerged in the early twenties, was not the powerhouse the French envisaged it to be. Moreover, the smaller powers soon realized that the League was run by the big powers and for the benefit of the big powers, assigning to the smaller countries the role of the supporting chorus while the big powers occupied centre stage. Consequently, French attempts to form unilateral military alliances to augment her security were rather successful in Eastern Europe,[24] where countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia were equally concerned about their security and disappointed with the League. "Our firmest guarantee against German aggression," Clemenceau told the Council of Four in 1919, "is that behind Germany, in excellent strategic position, stand Czechoslovakia and Poland."[25]

Poland, because of its geographical position in relation to Germany, was of particular interest to France.

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[23]Reynolds, op.cit., p.10. See also Spenz, op.cit., p.13.

[24]France concluded alliances with the following East European countries: Poland in 1921, Czechoslovakia in 1924, Romania in 1926, and Yugoslavia in 1927.

[25]Quoted in A.J.P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (Penquin Books, 1961), p.63.

> ...If notwithstanding the sincerely peaceful aims and intentions of the two contracting states, "read part of the Franco-Polish defensive treaty concluded in February 1921," the two contracting states, either or both of them should be attacked without giving provocation, the two governments shall take concerted measures for the defence of their territory and the protection of their legitimate interests,...[26]

Polish fears were aroused when the Locarno Pact stabilized the Franco-German frontier without introducing a similar arrangement in the East. To compensate for German gains at Locarno, Poland, supported by France, demanded a permanent seat on the Council at the same time as Germany. The Polish claim was supported by Britain and France, who also showed great interest in the applications of Spain and Brazil for permanent seats on the Council. But while Germany as a Great Power had expected, and had been encouraged to expect, a permanent Council seat as soon as she would join the League, Polish endeavours in particular came as a surprise to Germany and to world opinion.[27] "Since none of these candidates - Spain, Poland and Brazil - could validly claim to be a first-rank power, it was widely felt that France and Great Britain were being unjust to Germany in seeking at that juncture to create addional permanent seats."[28] German expectations were expressed by Stresemann in a letter to Sthamer, the German ambassador in London, on February 12, 1926:"Four powers have each been recognized as Great

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[26]Quoted in Albrecht-Carrie, op.cit., p.408.

[27]Carlton, op.cit., pp. 354-5.

[28]Ibid., p. 355.

Powers by their appointment to a permanent Council seat; the promise of a permanent seat given to us has been important because it would enable us to join as the fifth Great Power."[29]

In analyzing Anglo-German relations it is particularly interesting to note how Chamberlain reversed his position on the candidacy of Poland. On October 22, 1925, Chamberlain wrote to the British ambassador in Paris: "I am personally very averse from introducing Poland at the moment when Germany joins, lest it should wear the air of an attempt on our part to build up a party within the Council against Germany."[30] Yet three months later, on February 1, 1926, the British Foreign Secretary declared: "My own disposition...weighing all the circumstances, is to support the claim of Poland."[31] Chamberlain's change of mind was brought about by Briand's persuasiveness - at a meeting in Paris - who, as usual, did not find it too difficult to strike a friendly chord in Chamberlain's Francophile heart.[32] Chamberlain himself, in a memorandum on February 1, 1926, respecting Poland and the League Council, admitted that there were many outstanding questions to be settled between Germany and Poland which should be dealt with by the Council "and that one could not look at the map of East Prussia without feeling that sooner or later some accommodation must

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[29] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 95.

[30] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 17.

[31] Ibid., No. 233.

[32] One can only speculate whether Briand told Chamberlain that he had promised Poland a permanent seat on the Council to compensate her for the Locarno Pact, as he confidentially told Stresemann on March 10, 1926. Spenz, op.cit., pp.108, 144.

be discovered."[33] Briand wanted both Germany and Poland on the Council because he believed that the Council was the most suitable place where German and Polish representatives could meet in a friendly atmosphere and discuss their problems. If only Germany were admitted "Poland certainly would be less accommodating and would suffer under a sense of inequality and injustice." Moreover, Briand thought that if Poland would be on the Council she could act as her own spokesman and would not have to involve France in the German-Polish controversy. "France had her own difficulties to settle with Germany; he [Briand] did not wish to add to them and complicate their solution by becoming the spokesman of Poland."[34]

Within a few days of the Briand-Chamberlain meeting, the Germans knew about the latter's conversion and took immediate steps to prevent Poland's candidacy, the first one being to gain the support of Sweden. In a letter to the German minister in Stockholm, on February 6, 1926, Stresemann informed Rosenberg about the meeting and the adverse effect Poland's success would have on German foreign and internal politics. "I would like to know now," Stresemann wrote, "how much the Swedish government knows about this matter and its attitude toward it."[35] Stresemann then briefly stated his own opinion which he wanted

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[33] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 233.

[34] Ibid.

[35] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 83. See also Erik Lönnroth, "Sweden: The Diplomacy of Östen Undén," Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (eds.), The Diplomats (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp.87, 94-99.

to have conveyed, carefully, to the Swedes under the guise of making enquiries about their attitude.

> ...it seems wrong to us, to bestow on Poland an artificial status of a Great Power; a state that is so young and so unstable internally; a state that has unresolved contradictions with its two big neighbour states; a state that would through such honour only be encouraged in its dangerous ambitions and militaristic tendencies."[36]

Stresemann's views were supported by Cecil whose memorandum of February 8, 1926, on the composition of the League Council attempted to refute the Briand-Chamberlain thesis. Poland, Cecil contended, has no valid claim to Great Power status, but to give permanent Council seats to countries other than Great Powers would make it difficult to limit the number of permanent members. Poland has quarrels with all her neighbours and with the League, whose recommendations she has occasionally ignored. Such quarrels, however, did not enhance her claim for permanent membership.

> It is urged by the French that Poland has so many difficulties with Germany that she ought to be a member of the Council in order to maintain her point of view. This seems a dangerous argument. Suppose the differences between the Serbians and the Italians became again as acute as they were a few months ago, would that be a good reason for making Serbia a permanent member of the Council?[37]

D'Abernon too was opposed to Poland's candidacy and made the following entry in his diary: "To contend that to have a standing quarrel with a Great Power on the Council entitles a country to a seat on the same Council is worthy of Alice in Wonderland. Admit this principle,

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[36] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 83.

[37] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 253.

and cats will, in future, scratch duchesses in order to be admitted to their tea-parties."[38]

But Chamberlain was not without supporters in the Foreign Office, a fact which becomes evident from a secret note by Dirksen, on February 9, 1926, which not only named Sir William Tyrrell, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, as Chamberlain's chief supporter, but also shows that the Germans must have had a good intelligence service because they were quite well informed about the situation.

> The secret information received by the [German] Foreign Office regarding the patronage given to Polish endeavours to gain a permanent Council seat by the British Government has established two things: not only has Chamberlain let himself be persuaded by Briand in Paris to support the Polish claim, but the [British] Foreign Office supports this claim as well. The involvement [Mittaterschaft] of the Foreign Office is evident from the statements of Sir William Tyrrell. We are dealing, therefore, with the well-planned attitude [Stellungsnahme] of English government circles.[39]

Stresemann was upset because on February 11, 1926, after the German application had been sent to the League Secretariat, the House of Commons discussed the increase of permanent Council seats.[40] In a

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[38] D'Abernon, op.cit., Vol.III, p.231.

[39] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 90.

[40] Chamberlain, on February 11, 1926, had made the following statement in the House of Commons:

> The application of Germany for admission to the League has opened, as was probably inevitable, the whole question of the composition of the Council, and is giving rise to claims in other quarters. But, until those claims have been formally preferred [sic], and the arguments both for and against them have been heard, it is impossible to reach any final decision as to the course which will best serve the interests of the Council and of the League generally. As far as it is practicable to study them at this stage, the issues involved are receiving the careful consideration of His Majesty's Government. 191 H.C. Deb. 5s., col. 1242.

telegram, on February 12, 1926, he asked Sthamer to arrange for an interview with Chamberlain and inform him about the uneasiness of the German government that an increase of the permanent Council seats should be discussed right after the German application had been sent to the League. What annoyed Stresemann particularly was that Chamberlain had openly admitted " that the consideration for the application of other countries was not consistent with the natural evolution of the organization of the League, but was due to the event of Germany's League entry." Stresemann reasoned that the awarding of permanent seats to other countries at the same time as Germany was a move designed to counterbalance Germany's influence on the Council.

> Since the aspirations of the interested countries could not have been communicated to Britain and France just now, the least consideration we should have been given was to be informed in time and not have the whole thing come to light now when a fait accompli has been created by sending our application to the League.[41]

On February 15, 1926, Sthamer, as requested by Berlin, conveyed to Chamberlain the German disappointment about the re-organization of the League Council. Chamberlain tried his best to soothe German feelings, but was not very successful.[42] Sthamer, in his account of the interview to Berlin, immediately afterwards on the same day, gave a fair resume of what had happened. He mentioned that the Foreign Secretary became occasionally annoyed during the conversation and concluded his report as follows:

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[41] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 95.

[42] Cf. D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 275, and A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No: 101.

> The conversation lasted over an hour and was conducted correctly even when Chamberlain became upset. It was, nevertheless, quite obvious that Chamberlain was not pleased with the conversation. He gave indications of embarrassment right from the beginning and had difficulties in finding the right words for his answers. His explanations were incoherent at times. I left no doubt about the seriousness of the situation.[43]

The Germans, however, were not the only country that refused to be brought in line with Chamberlain's reasoning. On February 9, 1926, the Swedish Minister in London had already informed Chamberlain in no uncertain terms that his country "was opposed to the creation of any additional seats, except the one which it had been agreed to accord to Germany."[44] Chamberlain was not yet overly concerned about the attitude of Sweden and in a letter to Cecil, on the same day, he made the observation that Sweden was in no position to further or harm the interests of British foreign policy: "Of what use will either Sweden or Brazil be to us in maintaining the peace of Europe or in supporting any British interest in any quarter of the world?"[45] Chamberlain also attempted to change Cecil's position on the composition of the League Council and once again reiterated his own position:

> The more I think the question over, the more certain I am that the presence of Poland at the Council on an equality with Germany is the best means, if not the necessary means of promoting peace between the two. This view...is strongly held by Tyrrell. I do not think

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[43] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 101.

[44] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 255.

[45] Ibid., No. 257.

> that I could bring myself to take another line. At any rate I shall have to use whatever influence my position gives me with the Cabinet to get a favourable decision from them. I do hope they will feel the force of the arguments which we have used... and that you will not think it necessary to oppose me.[46]

Chamberlain's concern about obtaining Cabinet approval for his scheme may be a partial explanation for his nervousness during the Sthamer interview. Another reason could be that he was worried about Sweden's uncompromising attitude. The tough line adopted toward Sweden in his letter to Cecil may very well have been a front put up to reassure the latter and bring him in line with Chamberlain's position. There is a curious telegram on the composition of the League Council from Chamberlain to D'Abernon on February 21, 1926:

> I watch with great anxiety the progress of the controversy on this subject in the press of different countries. There is great danger that the entry of Germany into the League may revive and intensify old quarrels instead of making a further advance to peace and reconciliation. I am confident that by friendly personal discussion at Geneva before the subject is formally at Council we could and should reach a working agreement.[47]

Two days later, on February 23, 1926, Chamberlain, in his famous Birmingham speech, again voiced his apprehension about Germany's entry into the League although this time, as reported in The Times, in more carefully chosen words than he had used in his telegram to Berlin:

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[46] Ibid., No. 258.

[47] Ibid. No. 287. The "friendly personal discussion" referred to a conference among the Locarnites. The telegram also shows Chamberlain's preference for settling problems by informal discussions.

> He[Chamberlain] saw people writing and speaking,...as if, because Germany entered, some other nations should put up a counterbalancing claim,...this was not historically true as a description of how the question arose ....Even before that became practical politics...the question of what powers should have attributed permanent seats was already under discussion.

The House of Commons, Chamberlain continued, had passed a resolution stipulating that only Germany should now become a permanent member of the Council, reasoning that "to admit anyone else would be contrary to the understanding of Locarno." But promoting the cause of peace by welcoming only Germany into the League negated the right of other nations to be even considered for permanent seats; such a proposal, he was sure, "German statesmen were too wise to make in the interests of their own country in its new position in the newly constructed world and its relation to foreign nations."[48]

In view of Chamberlain's telegram to Berlin, February 21, 1926, and the Birmingham speech, February 23, 1926, D'Abernon's visit and discussion with von Schubert, the State Secretary in the German Foreign Office, on February 22, 1926, is truly amazing because the ambassador told the German official in the strictest confidence that "according to his latest information, Chamberlain now regards the awarding of a Council seat to Poland as impossible and, especially in view of the opposing position of Sweden, the question [of a Polish Council seat] would not occur again."[49] One cannot help wondering what prompted

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[48] The Times, February 24, 1926.

[49] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 114.

D'Abernon to convey such a message to Schubert. Did he have information that Chamberlain would never get Cabinet approval and would either be forced to change his tune or resign?[50] If this was the case, the Cabinet meeting, on March 3, 1926, proved him correct because it was decided:

> (i) No change in the Council can be permitted which would have the effect of preventing or delaying the entry of Germany. It would be best that Germany should, as a member of the Council, have full responsibility for any further change in the Council beyond her own admission.
> (ii) The rule that only Great Powers should be permanent members of the Council should in principle be maintained. Spain is in a special position and may require exceptional treatment.
> (iii) Neither Poland nor Brazil should be made permanent members. But Poland should be given a non-permanent seat as soon as possible.[51]

Or did D'Abernon hope that by conveying the message of February 22 to the Germans he would play into Chamberlain's hands by making the Germans more willing to participate in the discussions with the Locarnites at Geneva? If he anticipated the latter then his immediate goal was reached: the Germans participated in the talks; but they refused any compromise affecting the circumstances of their entry into the League.

Two days before the talks of the foreign ministers of the Locarno Powers opened at Geneva on March 5, 1926, the Spanish ambassador in Berlin visited the German Foreign Office and conveyed to Schubert

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[50] Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, "Gerüchte über den Rücktritt des Monsieur Chamberlain." February 28, 1926.

[51] Cabinet Records, Public Record Office London, Cabinet 23, Microfilm, March 3, 1926, p.137.

a compromise suggestion from his government respecting the composition of the League Council.[52] Ostensibly, he came to see Schubert because he did not want to bother Stresemann, who was leaving Berlin with the German delegation on the same day. One can only speculate whether the timing of the visit was arranged in order to avoid meeting Stresemann, whose position was well-known and who was a more difficult man to influence than Schubert, and if by working on Schubert, Berlin might be persuaded to instruct the German delegation to take a more conciliatory position. One can also only speculate, until some evidence can be found, whether Chamberlain motivated the Spanish proposal or whether it originated from the Spanish government.

Britain had been Spain's sponsor for a permanent seat since 1921,[53] when the latter was given a non-permanent seat which she kept until 1926.[54] In early February 1926, British newspapers claimed that their country would support the Spanish bid for a permanent seat at the time when Germany received the same, while Chamberlain refused to comment on the issue in the House of Commons.[55] On February 28, 1926, a

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[52] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 141.

[53] Cabinet Records, op.cit.,February 24, 1926, p.96.

[54] Cf. A.D.A.P., B,Vol.I/1, No. 148, and Survey of International Affairs, 1926, pp. 9-16.

[55] 191 H.C. Deb. 5s.,col.1243.

German newspaper claimed that, according to MacDonald, Britain would support Spain and Poland to be given permanent seats with Germany.[56] Articles in British newspapers, in the beginning of February, voiced similar opinions.[57] Chamberlain, at the same time, refused to comment openly on the official British attitude toward Spain; something not entirely surprising in view of the fact that by March 3, 1926, no definite decision had been reached in the Cabinet.[58]

Whatever the case may have been, the Spanish spokesman insisted that the friendly relations between his country and Germany would be jeopardized if Germany refused to increase the membership on the Council beyond the seat Germany herself anticipated to obtain. Schubert replied that the German position was a matter of principle, and not due to any ill-feeling toward Spain. The ambassador then asked if Germany would agree to the following procedure: "If at this year's session Spain would be the only country to obtain a permanent Council seat beside Germany, and if all the other powers would agree to such procedure, then the German government would not oppose it."[59] Schubert, in reply, could only point out to his visitor that he was in no position to comment on this suggestion. Moreover, "if Spain would be given a permanent seat, then a non-permanent seat would be vacated and it could only be expected that Poland would automatically be asked to fill the vacancy. But such procedure is not acceptable to us."[60]

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[56] Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, February 28, 1926.

[57] See Daily Chronicle, March 8,1926,and Sunday Express, March 8, 1926.

[58] Cabinet Records, op.cit.,March 3, 1926, p.137. 192 H.C.Deb.5s., col. 1662.

[59] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 141.

[60] Ibid.

Schubert's answer was typical of the unyielding position of the German representatives at Geneva who did not want to compromise in regard to their country's League entry. It surprised nobody, therefore, when the first meeting of the Locarnites, on March 7, 1926, did not come off well. Briand opened the discussions by insisting that France had not betrayed Germany when supporting the Polish candidacy. He blamed the German press for stirring up ill-feeling by biased reporting. Chamberlain continued in the same vein: "You should have informed your press better than you did."[61] he told Stresemann and Luther; but whereas Briand had spoken with skill, Chamberlain blundered. Stresemann and Luther, however, refused to become excited and Stresemann stated the German position in no uncertain terms, insisting that the matter was quite simple, and Germany expected that the promise made at Locarno for a permanent seat would be realized. "I do not want to leave any doubt," he concluded, "that the increase of the permanent Council seats on account of Germany's entry could possibly result in the withdrawal of the German League membership application."[62]

As the preliminary meeting of the Locarnites did not yield the desired results, the problem was then dealt with at Council level. But after lengthy haggling, with the opposing sides still apart, the only

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[61] Schmidt, op.cit., p. 97.

[62] In ibid., p.98. A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 148. D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, No. 331.

tangible results were the frayed tempers of the various representatives.[63] On March 13, 1926, another British attempt was made by Cecil to find an acceptable solution:

> ...French, Belgian and British delegates should undertake that permanent seat should be accorded to Germany only at present Assembly, and that Council when recommending to Assembly creation of additional permanent seat to Germany should recommend creation of one new temporary seat, occupant of which would, in accordance with rules of procedure, be chosen by Assembly. French, Belgian, and British delegates would of course do their best to secure election of Poland to this temporary seat but nominations would and could be made in Assembly itself.[64]

No sooner was the proposal made, however, than it was rejected by the Germans, who argued that they could not "consider [a] solution involving any change in the Council at present session beyond admission of Germany."[65]

Although the disappointment was great when the Germans replied negatively to Cecil's proposal, Chamberlain, in conjunction with the Belgian Foreign Minister and Albert Thomas, the French president of the International Labour Congress, made one final attempt to bring Germany into the League. By appealing to Sweden to re-consider its position, they succeeded in formulating a new proposal suggesting that Sweden would relinquish its non-permanent seat in favour of Poland and thus free

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[63] Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 155, and Schmidt, op.cit., p.103.

[64] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 341. A.D A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 153.

[65] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 341. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 154.

the way for Germany's taking possession of a permanent seat. Stresemann, sensing ultimate success for the German position, again declined the offer: "If instead of neutral Sweden an ally of the Entente were to be elected, then the basic political structure of the Council would be changed to a degree that such a solution could only be interpreted as the most unfriendly solution for Germany."[66]

In order to placate German fears about the election of Poland, Briand and Chamberlain suggested that not only Sweden but Czechoslovakia as well should resign from the Council so that the consequent election of a neutral would balance the presence of Poland on that body. The formula that finally emerged from their discussion was conveyed to London for approval on March 15, 1926 and read as follows:

1. Germany enters now without other addition to Council.
2. Sweden and Czechoslovakia resign their seats which are then at disposition of Assembly. Neither presents itself as candidate.
3. Probable election of Poland and Holland.
4. Council decides to recommend creation of two new permanent seats in September in favour of Spain and Brazil. Assembly of course would have right to reject this proposal, but it would satisfy Spain and Brazil and prevent trouble with them.[67]

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[66] In Schmidt, op.cit., p.106. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 158.

[67] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, No. 349.

In reply, Tyrrell sent the following message from London:

> Cabinet would much prefer a solution which does not include the creation of any new permanent seats; but we feel that some solution of the present deadlock is essential and if you are obliged as a last resort to adopt the proposed clause (4) the Cabinet will support you.[68]

While the German delegation was still pondering whether the formula, which appeared as a complete victory for them, contained any hidden traps, the Brazilian representative, who had abstained from taking part in the discussions during the last few days, suddenly announced that "unless Brazil does receive a permanent Council seat right now, she will vote against Germany's admission."[69] No sooner had the Brazilian ultimatum been read, when the Spaniards threatened to withdraw from the League unless their aspirations also were satisfied.[70] The resulting chaos was cut short by Briand who all of a sudden declared: "It is quite evident in view of the Bazilian vote that we have laboured in vain. To our regret, we must postpone the admission of Germany until the session in September."[71]

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[68] Ibid., No. 351. It is interesting to note that the position of the Cabinet did not substantially change since March 3, 1926.

[69] Quoted in Schmidt, op.cit., p. 107. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 166. D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, Nos. 333,357,362.

[70] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No.356.

[71] Quoted in Schmidt, op.cit., p.108. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 166.

Was Briand concerned that Germany had achieved too much and wanted to prevent the pending German victory in the last minute? Was there any secret collaboration between France, Italy and Brazil[72] of which Chamberlain was not aware when he agreed to the postponement?

A confidential letter from Sir R. Graham, the British ambassador in Rome, to Chamberlain, on March 19, 1926, suggests the possibility of a secret collaboration between Italy and Brazil:

> The insinuations in the foreign press that the Brazilian attitude owed its inflexibility to the support of a great power-Italy being clearly indicated-has [sic] aroused considerable indignation in the Italian newspapers. But rumours to this effect are current in various Italian circles also and a connection has been mooted between the resignation of Senator Contarini and the question.[73]

The possibility of secret collaboration between Italy and Brazil is also supported by Carlton who advances the theory that:

> Chamberlain and Briand, despairing of persuading the Brazilians to back down and fearing the effect on Germany if a veto were actually employed, sought and obtained on 16 March an adjournment of the Special Assembly until September when the annual League Assembly would be convened.[74]

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[72] Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 173, Bretton, op.cit.,p.235, 193 H.C.Deb.5s., col.1097, Survey of International Affairs,1926,p.52, Spenz, op.cit.,p.148, The Times, March 18, 1926, and The Manchester Guardian Weekly, March 12, 1926.

[73] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 368. Graham's impression was that Contarini, the Secretary of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, had resigned because he disagreed with Mussolini's aggressive policy in Central Europe aimed directly at Germany. Viewed in this context, Germany's failure at Geneva may be interpreted as an Italian victory.

[74] Carlton, op.cit., p.361.

Carlton also cites part of a letter from Cecil to Chamberlain in which Cecil blamed Chamberlain for failing to " discourage the hopes of Spain" and to take action against the Italians who allegedly induced the Brazilians to use their veto to stall the proceedings:

> Is it not necessary to take very strong action both at Rio and Rome? Nothing short of a joint representation by France and ourselves will be likely to be effective. I cannot help suspecting that the refusal of Brazil must have been known and encouraged by Italy and perhaps others [Italics are Carlton's] in order to put pressure on Sweden so that she might withdraw her veto and then increased pressure might be put on Germany.[75]

Cecil also blamed Chamberlain for adjourning the meeting and thus preventing Germany from taking her seat on the Council. "He [Cecil] considered that the adjournment had been prematurely moved and averred that, if time had been found for a full public debate, Brazil might have relented."[76]

Reaction in Britain to the events in Geneva found expression in criticism of Chamberlain. Lloyd George, speaking in the House of Commons on March 23, 1926, summed up the feeling of disappointment and frustration when he quoted the Spectator:

> Sir Austen Chamberlain's failure has been as great as was his success at Locarno. Everyone knows that he has worked himself to a standstill at Geneva trying to bring about an agreement, and we are all sensible of the pains he has taken...but the mistake was made, not at Geneva, but two weeks ago in Paris. It was a mistake of such magnitude that it could not be redeemed.[77]

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[75] Quoted in ibid., p.361.

[76] Ibid.

[77] 193 H.C.Deb.5s., col. 1064.

Chamberlain, in reply to the accusations that he had made a deal with Briand prior to the Geneva meeting, denied all accusations and said in his defence:

> What passed between M. Briand and me in Paris?
> We spoke about Poland, I asked M. Briand to tell me what were the reasons for which the French Government proposed to support the admission of Poland to the Council and, more particularly, the claim of Poland to a permanent seat on the Council. I told him that I could take no engagement, that I could give no assurance as to the attitude of my Government....
> With respect to Poland, Brazil, and the other powers, I adopted the attitude which has been adopted by the British Government universally in similar circumstances. I refused to give any pledge.[78]

In contrast to the criticism heaped on Chamberlain, Stresemann, in spite of his country's failure to gain a Council seat, emerged from the Geneva conference in a stronger position than before. Although the extreme rightist and Communist papers in Germany were pleased that the "Locarno policy has broken down,"[79] and claimed that Stresemann's whole foreign policy had failed, the Socialists' criticism was directed against Brazil while the press of the moderate right noted that the Government could not be blamed for what happened at Geneva.[80] After all, as Stresemann adroitly explained in a memorandum on March 20, 1926, Germany did not suffer a defeat. Granted, she did not obtain the permanent seat, but all her conditions had been accepted and had it not been for Brazil's veto and the sudden adjournment, Germany's objective would have been fully achieved. Moreover, before the final adjournment of the meeting on March 16, 1926, the Locarnites had expressed their

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[78] Ibid., cols. 1072-73.

[79] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 363.

[80] Ibid.

continued support of the Pact and the German proposal to examine the issue of increasing the Council had been accepted, with Germany being ably represented by von Hoesch, the German ambassador in Paris, and Dr. Gaus, the legal expert of the German Foreign Office.

> It is unfortunate that in the conduct of our foreign policy we were unable to reach stage which should have witnessed our entry into the League. There is no doubt that the League has suffered a fiasco. Yet we emerged from the Geneva discussions stronger rather than weaker with respect to our foreign policy. [Italics mine.] We have succeeded in foiling the plan, which became known after our application had been submitted to the League, and which would have increased the permanent Council seats by the addition of Poland, Spain and Brazil for the purpose of creating an equipose to counteract German influence.[81]

D'Abernon, reporting to Chamberlain on March 22, 1926, about the German reaction to Geneva, wrote:

> 1. Germany did not try to force her way into the League. The other powers made Germany's entry into the League a pre-condition for Locarno agreements. Accordingly, it was their duty to facilitate Germany's entry in any way. Hence Germany's astonishment on learning that changes were contemplated at Geneva tantamount to reconstruction of Council.
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> . . . . . .
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> 10. Germany's position is in no way weakened. [Italics mine.] All the Locarno powers were agreed as to the maintenance and continuance of the Locarno policy.
> 11. It would be stupid to turn one's back on the League because the mechanism of the League had failed.[82]

The commission to iron out the troublesome details which prevented the smooth functioning of League mechanism did its job well. Gaus reported on May 20, 1926, that the negotiations were favourable to the Germans and that the March crisis seemed to have been overcome.[83]

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[81] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 175.

[82] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 369.

[83] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 224.

Poland had not insisted on a permanent seat again and Spain and Brazil had been given to understand that their quest for a permanent seat would be hopeless. Although the commission gave them time "to adjust their position to the new situation,"[84] the message they received was quite clear: either agree with the commission or withdraw:

> Both have been forced to face the fact that the other powers were not willing to have the League fail because of the special wishes of Brazil and Spain. The Brazilian representative especially had been told that another veto to prevent Germany's admission would not be tolerated.[85]

Gaus was especially impressed with Cecil whom he regarded as the top man at the negotiations:

> He really has performed brilliantly. Especially amusing was his suggestion which I did not quite understand at first, to carry out the negotiations in public. But this was a clever move because the candidates for permanent seats stood like butter in the sun, ihre Kraft schmolz zusehends dahin.[86]

Cecil reported to the Cabinet on June 4, 1926, that the Committee on the Composition of the Council had provisionally accepted a proposal which, in essence, contained the following points and which became the accepted formula in September:

> i) the non-permanent members are to be enlarged from six to nine; they are to hold office for three years; three to be elected each year;
> ii) not more than three out of the nine non-permanent members are to be re-eligible, and that only if the Assembly so decide by a two-thirds majority. The remainder are not to be re-eligible for a period of three years after the expiration of their term;

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

iii) the non-permanent members are to take office immediately on election and not as at present on the 1st January following, and at any time the Assembly may, by a two-thirds majority, decide to proceed to a new election of all the non-permanent members of the Council on such terms as it shall then lay down.[87]

The purpose of Cecil's proposal was to accommodate Germany as well as Poland and Spain. Germany would be the only power to gain a permanent seat, while Poland and Spain could be immediately elected on a quasi semi-permanent basis. Neither Britain nor France showed any concern for Brazil.

Gaus's optimism about the certainty of the German admission to the League during the September session was proven correct. British policy had always had as its objective to have Germany join the League, and this policy never changed. On April 21, 1926, the Cabinet met and discussed the importance of Germany's membership in the League; its conclusion served as the guideline for Cecil's proposal of June 4, 1926:

> ...the entry of Germany to the League of Nations is a matter of prime consequence to the peace of the world,...the Cabinet welcomed the assurance of the Foreign Secretary that he would consider whether diplomatic action in South American States or elsewhere could be used to bring pressure to bear on Brazil to withdraw her opposition, and took note of the fact that Sir Cecil Hurst had already been instructed to consider what steps could be taken, in the event of Brazil remaining obdurate, to secure her immediate removal from the Council in September, so that Germany's entry should not be further delayed.[88]

On July 22, 1926, Chamberlain, in a letter to D'Abernon again stressed this aspect when reviewing Anglo-German relations:

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[87] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, No. 46.

[88] Cabinet Records, op.cit., April 21, 1926, p.271.

> It was an axiom of British policy that Germany should be elected a permanent member of the Council, and that there should be no other additions to the permanent seats.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> From this the conversation [with Sthamer] passed to a general discussion of questions outstanding between Germany and this country. The general conclusion reached was that there were really comparatively few, and that the position had immensely improved during the past year or so.[89]

Although there was a last-minute exchange of notes between London and Berlin prior to the opening of the League session in Geneva, and Chamberlain once more cautioned the Germans to behave themselves at Geneva,[90] Germany's entry, on September 8, 1926, was a foregone conclusion and went off smoothly.

With Germany safely on the Council, Britain felt that she could now afford to take less interest in Europe and concentrate her efforts defending her interests in China which were being threatened by Chiang Kai-shek's campaign, starting in July 1926, to unite all China by military force. Germany, the British generally believed " was in a better position to influence the future of Europe than the geographically remote Britain,"[91] and there was hope that German statesmen would make their country the centre of peace.[92]

Germany was more than willing to play an active role in European affairs and on September 17, 1926, one week after taking

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[89] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, No. 100.

[90] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, No. 50.

[91] Ibid., No. 121.

[92] Ibid.

possession of her permanent Council seat, took a step in that direction when Stresemann and Briand met secretly at Thoiry to discuss a total solution of the outstanding Franco-German problems. "According to Stresemann's account, Briand took over and dominated the conversation. In contrast, the French account of the meeting described Briand only as interested listener."[93] Whatever the case may have been, and whoever did most of the talking did not matter, what mattered was that Germany did not need prompting to take the initiative and negotiate with France without British intervention. The total solution, as advanced by Briand, was an ambitious scheme which suggested the termination both of the Rhineland occupation and Inter-Allied Military Control Commission as well as the return of the Saar for German financial support.[94]

> The fact that the meeting of the two foreign ministers had taken place in the quietness of a provincial inn greatly excited the imagination of their contemporaries. Shortly after their return to Geneva there appeared press accounts which greatly distorted the nature of the talks,...[95]

The British Foreign Office received the news of the meeting without panic;[96] no doubt D'Abernon's realistic reports[97] about Thoiry did

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[93] Eckhard Wandel, Die Bedeutung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika fur das deutsche Reparationsproblem 1924-1929 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1971), p.53.

[94] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, No. 159

[95] Wandel, op.cit., p. 54

[96] Although there was no panic, there was some concern that France and Germany might have made a deal without including, or at least informing Britain. See A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, No.100,112. Sthamer reported that officially Chamberlain's meeting with Mussolini in Livorno on September 30, 1926, was not regarded as a countermove to the Thoiry meeting. A D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, No. 164; see also No. 126,146.

[97] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, Nos. 222,225.

much to soothe Chamberlain's nerves[98] who felt that Briand and Stresemann at Thoiry "dreamed dreams and saw visions that will not be easily realized, letting their imaginations rather run away with them."[99] Moreover, the solution suggested at Thoiry never materialized because the sudden, unexpected resurgence of the franc made German financial aid superfluous and American financial interests were not in favour of the scheme.[100]

Perhaps the best indicator of Anglo-German relations in the autumn of 1926 was the resignation of D'Abernon. Anglo-German relations in autumn of 1926 had reached a stage of disinterested friendliness which enabled D'Abernon to hand in his resignation as British Ambassador in Berlin. D'Abernon had contemplated resignation before, in December 1925 after the Locarno Treaties had been signed in London, but Stresemann had prevailed upon Chamberlain and the latter had persuaded D'Abernon to continue in Berlin until a safe stage in Anglo-German relations had been reached.[101] Germany's election to the Council was this stage and on November 11, 1926, Sir Ronald Lindsay officially took over the post in Berlin. With Lindsay a new phase in Anglo-German relations began.

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[98] Stresemann also had told Chamberlain on September 12, 1926 that he would meet with Briand privately in a few days to discuss Franco-German problems.

[99] Sir C. Petrie, Life and Letters of Austen Chamberlain (London: Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1940), Vol. II, pp. 306-307.

[100] Wandel, op.cit., pp. 55-62

[101] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 9.

Already in August 1926, when Lindsay had been named D'Abernon's successor, Dufour-Feronce, Counsellor at the German Embassy in London, had given notice that the new ambassador's role would be different: "One may anticipate - and I have been convinced by the British Government and the Foreign Office - that the role of the British Ambassador in Berlin will be changed considerably."[102] Dufour-Feronce then explained the nature of D'Abernon's appointment, his independence of the Foreign Office, and pointed out that with Lindsay taking office, London, rather than His Majesty's representative in Berlin, would assume control of Anglo-German relations: " The fulcrum of the diplomatic relations between Germany and Great Britain would now be moved from Berlin to London."[103]

On his first official visit to Schubert, on November 11, 1926, Lindsay explained that in his study of Anglo-German relations he had reached the conclusion, which he rather tactlessly stated, that Britain had done more than her share to satisfy Germany's insatiable demands for concessions from the Allies.[104]

Lindsay and Schubert did not get along very well, but the former undoubtedly played his part according to instructions from London. With Germany safely in the League, however, the main British objective in Europe had been achieved and as the intensity of Anglo-German relations decreased,the less was expected of the British

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[102] Ibid., Vo. I/2, No.13.

[103] Ibid., No. 13.

[104] Ibid., No. 190.

representative in Berlin.

When D'Abernon left Berlin, the Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung featured an article in appreciation of his work and efforts on behalf of Germany:

> The departing ambassador has impressed his personal stamp on the most important phase of the post-war period and his name, in view of his diplomatic activity in Germany, will live in world history. In appreciation of his accomplishments, his King has bestowed on him the title of Viscount, but for Germany he will always remain Lord D'Abernon, because his name is incorporated in the history of German foreign policy.[105]

One of the main objectives of British foreign policy since 1920 had been to help Germany gain membership in the League. After the setback in March 1926, Britain had increased her efforts in support of Germany's quest for a permanent Council seat. There can be no doubt that the increased efforts of Britain were due to apprehension caused by the signing of the Berlin Treaty, in April 1926, between Germany and the Soviet Union. At the Cabinet meeting on April 21, 1926, the concensus reached was that Germany's League membership was extremely important, "especially so in view of the Treaty being negotiated between Germany and Russia, which, even though innocuous in itself, might lead to further developments if Germany were humiliated by the rejection of her application."[106] Britain's perennial fears of a Russo-German entente directed against the West exercised great influence on the conduct of Anglo-German relations and deserve to be examined at some depth.

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[105] Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, October 10, 1926

[106] Cabinet Records, op.cit., April 21, 1926, p.271.

CHAPTER IV

BRITAIN, GERMANY AND THE U.S.S.R.

British apprehensions about a Russo-German entente were not entirely unfounded. British intervention in the internal upheaval that occurred in Russia at the end of World War I and the emergence of the Soviets as the new government were factors not conducive to promoting friendly relations between the two countries. In contrast to the British intervention in Russia, the Communist activities in Germany, culminating in the Spartacus Revolt of January 1919, were looked upon by the Soviets as a kindred movement and prompted Karl Radek, a prominent German Communist, to formulate the thesis "that Russia and Germany now had more common interests than ever, and that the logic of history compelled them to work together - not against each other."[1] But even though the Communist revolution in Germany was a failure and the Social Democrats, who formed the first government of Weimar Germany, were branded as traitors to the Marxist cause, the Treaty of Versailles and the territorial aggrandizement of Poland brought about a close cooperation between Russia and Germany during the first two decades following the war.

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[1]Walter Laqueur, Russia and Germany (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), p.20.

Germany was the first of the western countries that recognized the Soviet Government de jure in May 1920; formal recognition was immediately followed by a Soviet-German trade agreement. The Treaty of Rapallo, on April 17, 1922,[2] expanded trade relations between the two countries and re-affirmed Germany's diplomatic relations with Moscow. Moreover, Germany agreed to no longer ask for compensation for German property in Russia which had been nationalized by the Soviets, while the Soviets agreed not to press Germany for reparation payments. Although the news of the treaty caused alarm in the Allied capitals, it was neither a statement of neutrality nor a military alliance. "It was simply a political manifestation of the need for self-assertion on the part of two European powers which had been ostracized by the rest."[3]

Lenin acutely explained his country's collaboration with Germany when he observed, in April 1920, that "the German bourgeoisie felt a real hatred towards Bolshevism and repressed it ruthlessly within Germany, yet they were impelled towards an alliance with Russia by the hard facts of the international situation."[4] The Soviets also believed

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[2]Reparations and international trade were the main topics of the Genoa Conference in April 1922. The German and Soviet delegates, dissatisfied with the minor role assigned to them, met at Rapallo for private discussions which ended with the drafting of the treaty. See Duff Cooper's statement in the House of Commons on p.78.

[3]Laqueur, op.cit., p. 129. See also Albrecht-Carrie, op.cit., p. 394, and E.J. Passant, A Short History of Germany 1815-1945 (Cambridge: University Press, 1962), p.p. 166,167.

[4]Laqueur, op.cit., p. 128.

that Russian security could best be maintained by preventing the Western Powers from forming a united front against the U.S.S.R. Germany, therefore, the black sheep of the Capitalist camp, could count on Russian support in her attempts to effect a revision of Versailles, the most disruptive issue confronting the Western Powers. Soviet strategists had assessed the situation correctly because British statesmen, in contrast, believed that the best means of isolating Communism was by keeping Germany and Russia apart. Already at the peace conference at Versailles Lloyd George had circulated a secret memorandum to that effect:

> The greatest danger that I see in the present situation is that Germany may throw in her lot with Bolshevism and place her resources, her brains, her vast organizing power at the disposal of revolutionary fanatics whose dream is to conquer the world for Bolshevism by force of arms. This danger is no mere chimera.[5]

Yet financial and economic considerations did not afford Britain the luxury of a diplomatic breach with the Soviets. If Britain wanted to recover loans made to the Tsarist government and expected to solve some of her economic difficulties by resuming her pre-war trade with the Russians,[6] then, Soviets or no Soviets, a rupture in the relations with Russia would be utterly pointless.

The Russians realized as well that co-existence rather than world revolution was the order of the day in the early 1920's. In June 1921, at the Third World Congress of the Comintern at Moscow, Trotzki

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[5]Quoted in ibid., p.20. Cf. D.B.F.P., I, Vol. II, Nos. 55,56.

[6]Albrecht-Carrie, op.cit., p.426.

admitted that: "We realize now for the first time that we are not immediately before our goal: we are not about to gain power; we are not about to start the world revolution... in 1919 we told ourselves that it would only be a question of months. We know now that it may perhaps be a question of years."[7]

In order to trade with the Russians, Britain gave de facto recognition to the Soviet Government on March 16, 1921. Three years later, MacDonald's Labour Government formally recognized the Soviet Union, on February 1, 1924, and a commercial treaty was subsequently concluded between the two countries. However, the sensational Zinoviev letter, urging the British workers to revolt, and the hasty termination of the investigation against J.R. Campbell, a Communist journalist who had published a seditious article in the Workers Weekly,[8] caused so much opposition to the Labour Government that MacDonald dissolved Parliament in October of the same year.[9] The following election was won by the Conservatives under the leadership of Baldwin, who took

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[7]Quoted in Hans Hartl, Werner Marx, Fünfzig Jahre sowjetische Deutschlandpolitik (Boppard am Rhein:Harold Boldt Verlag, 1967) p.91.

[8]Middlemas and Barnes, op.cit., p.272.

[9]The following exerpt from a speech made by Baldwin during the election campaign is a case in point: "It makes my blood boil to read of the way in which Mr. Zinoviev is speaking to the Prime Minister today. Though one time there went up a cry, 'Hands off Russia', I think it's time somebody said to Russia, 'Hands off England'." Quoted in ibid., p.275.

office on November 4, 1924, with Austen Chamberlain becoming Foreign Secretary.

The complex triangular pattern of Anglo-German-Russian relations was further complicated by the division of opinion in Britain and Germany as to what these countries' correct attitude toward the Soviet Union should be. In Britain, even the Cabinet of the Baldwin Government was divided into two factions: one led by Churchill, Birkenhead and Joynson-Hicks, the Home Secretary, who wanted a termination of the relations with Russia[10] while the other faction, led by Chamberlain, was convinced that the maintenance of friendly relations with Russia was in the best British interest. In Germany, the ultra Nationalists and the Communists, each group for obviously different reasons, wanted close collaborations with Russia; the Social Democrats and the People's Party, on the other hand, favoured a western orientation of German foreign policy while Stresemann, as Chancellor and Foreign Minister, managed with great skill to play the Russians against the Allies.

In a memorandum, February 16, 1926, Chamberlain had explained his Russian policy:

> The policy which, with the sanction of the Cabinet, I have followed in regard to the Soviet Government has been to avoid a breach of the diplomatic relations established before we took

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[10]Cf. F.G. Stambrook, "The Foreign Secretary and Foreign Policy: The Experiences of Austen Chamberlain in 1925 and 1927," International Review of History and Political Science, Vol. VI, No.3, August 1969, p.120, and Middlemas and Barnes, op.cit., pp.105-106.

> office and neither to court nor to show fear of that Government, but to leave them alone in the expectation that sooner or later they would discover that they have more need of us than we have of them.[11]

That the Russians were greatly disturbed when the Locarno Pact had been initialled in October 1925[12] was to be expected. Chamberlain, in a lengthy discourse in the House of Commons dealing with the "Spirit of Locarno", envisaged the Pact as "a turning point in the history... of the world,"[13] and assured his audience that it was "aimed at nobody, pointed at no one, threatening no one and menacing no one."[14] But, in almost the same breath, he added that Locarno had been arranged for the purpose of uniting Western Europe against Russia.[15]

Duff Cooper, a Conservative Member of Parliament who had previously been a Foreign Office official, seconded the Foreign Secretary's explanation:

> Everyone who has studied...foreign affairs...realized the danger of an alliance between Germany and Russia. We know that a treaty exists between Germany and Russia,...and there was a real danger of that treaty becoming an alliance, and of that alliance representing...the old balance of power in Europe, with two groups of powers, with Germany and Russia side by side against the rest of Europe and the League of Nations.[16]

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[11] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 278.

[12] Cf. Freund, op.cit., p.214, and Hans W. Gatzke, "Von Rapallo nach Berlin-Stresemann und die deutsche Russlandpolitik," Vierteljahrhefte für Zeitgeschichte, Vol. 4,1956, p.19.

[13] 188 H.C.Deb. 5s., col.421.

[14] Ibid., col. 426.

[15] Ibid., col. 441.

[16] Ibid., col. 462.

The Times, in its best tradition, joined the chorus: "The significance of Locarno was tremendous. It meant that as far as the present Government of Germany was concerned, it was detached from Russia and was throwing in its lot with the Western Powers."[17]

The Russians feared that Germany had finally decided to join the anti-Soviet bloc for the purpose of isolating Russia from Europe.[18] The Central Department of the British Foreign Office, in a memorandum of November 13, 1925, regretted the Russian interpretation of Locarno and asked the question:

> Who is doing the isolating? The rest of Europe or the Russian government itself? The European camp is not hostile and Russia can enter it by using the password which admits its other inhabitants. Surely it is not argued that we should refuse to heal disruption and refrain from drawing Europe together merely because by doing so we may make Russia's isolation more evident. We should welcome any step towards a rapprochement with Russia by any European power, especially her neighbours.

Tyrrell, the Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, commented on this passage: "We regret, but cannot help the interpretation which the Soviet Government places upon the Locarno Treaty."[19]

Regret, however, seems to have been all that the British Government could afford to bestow on Russia, if one is to believe the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in London who complained on December 10,1925, that the Soviet mission was "kept at a distance and practically ignored by the British Government."[20] Chicherin's comment, when talking

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[17] Quoted in ibid., col.438.

[18] Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR, Vol. III, 1925, No. 398.

[19] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 99.

[20] Ibid., No. 142.

to Stresemann on December 22, 1925, was more to the point when he complained that England "through the manipulations of her banks, is attempting to bring about an economic boycott of Russia."[21]

D'Abernon, who seems to have been well informed, was able to report to Chamberlain the next day, December 23, 1925, about Chicherin's activities in Berlin:

> He [Chicherin] represented England as seducer and Germany as seduced saying 'Why play Marguierite to England's Faust? Nothing but disaster can come to you from such a relationship.' He declared that England was endeavouring to effect financial starvation of Russia by preventing other countries from giving her credits.[22]

Mr. Peters, the British representative in Moscow reported on January 14, 1926, that Chicherin was convinced that Chamberlain's policy was to ignore Russia.[23] "Chamberlain thought that he could bring the Soviet Union round by looking the other way, by affecting to ignore her.... He thought that if he looked the other way long enough the Soviet Union would come asking to be looked at and talked to. He was wrong."[24]

While Chicherin's motives may be questioned, there is no doubt the British Government had no intention of changing its policy toward Russia.[25] Sthamer,[26] the German Ambassador in London, did not anticipate

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[21] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/1, No. 15.

[22] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, No. 155.

[23] Stambrook makes the following comment on Chamberlain's policy as outlined in the memorandum of February 16, 1926: "In practice this meant the continuation of Britain's formal though womewhat frigid relationship with Russia until the latter checked the anti-British activities of the Third International and put forward reasonable concrete proposals for the settlement of outstanding differences." Stambrook, "Austen Chamberlain," op.cit., p.121.

[24] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, No. 181.

[25] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.II/1, No. 15.

[26] Although an adherent of Ostpolitik, Sthamer was an objective analyst of British intentions.

any change in British policy toward Russia as long as the Conservatives were in power. "As long as there is a Conservative government in office, and this may be anticipated for some time to come," he wrote to Berlin on January 23, 1926, "one may expect English policy to be anti-Bolshevik and Russian anxieties about an economic boycott are based on a realistic premise."[27]

On April 1, 1926, D'Abernon reported to London about an interview with Schubert, the German State Secretary, during which the latter explained the situation between Germany and Russia and discussed a pending Russo-German agreement.[28] In reviewing Russo-German relations, Schubert said that the Russians had always warned Germany of the danger of being used by the West as pawn against Russia. Attempting to prevent Germany taking part at the discussions at Locarno, Chicherin had "threatened and bullied in the most insolent manner."[29] At the same time, Chicherin had been pursuing Germany for an alliance, insisting that "an unrestricted treaty of neutrality"[30] was the minimum requirement expected of Germany. "If you refuse to make a treaty of neutrality with us," Chicherin had threatened, "it is that you intend to abandon entirely Russian connection."[31] The Germans, however, while informing the western

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[27] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/1, No. 46

[28] The report is contained in D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, Nos.391,392.

[29] Ibid., No. 391.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

powers in general and Britain in particular "that she could not take part in any aggression against Russia," told the Russians at the same time that "an unrestricted treaty of neutrality was out of the question."[32] Stresemann refused to become involved "in a Western crusade against the Bolsheviks."[33] He was equally determined not to permit the Soviets "to impose an exclusive alliance on Germany."[34] Either limitation on Germany's range of action would have been detrimental to Stresemann's goal "to revive German power and to gain an independent middle position in Europe."[35]

Once the Locarno Treaties had been signed, the Russians changed their tune and reduced their demands. Although the Russians made some attempts to come to terms with Poland in order to exert pressure on Germany, the Polish-Romanian Treaty of March 26, 1926, forced the Russians' hands and they were ready to accept the proposed German formula which contained the following three points:

1. Germany would not support military aggression against Russia if Russia was attacked unprovokedly.
2. In peace time Germany would not join in deliberate repression of economic combination against Russia.

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[32] Ibid., No. 391. See also Freund, op.cit., pp. 214-218.

[33] Freund, op.cit., p.213.

[34] Ibid., p. 213.

[35] Ibid., p. 214.

3. When Germany entered League of Nations she would be bound by article 16: but she would in a communication to Russia refer to assurance regarding article 16 which had been received from other powers on December 1, 1925.[36]

Schubert, commenting on the three point formula, said although some aspects were still under discussion, "we shall not sign anything which will not be compatible with the covenant of League of Nations or with obligations of our policy at Locarno."[37] When asked by D'Abernon what advantages Germany would gain from the proposed agreement, Schubert answered:

> I cannot say that advantages are very definite but such a convention would prevent Russia going right away from us and would keep her within bounds. Russia, at a loose end, might take certain courses which would be extremely disagreeable to Germany. Consider what she might make Poland.[38]

The immediate British reaction to the proposed treaty were marginal comments on D'Abernon's dispatch by Marxe, Gregory, and Tyrrell. None of them saw anything sinister about the terms of the proposed treaty, although all three of them expressed concern about the reaction in Poland:

> I cannot see," wrote Marxe, "that we have any valid objection to the conclusion of this convention, if it contains nothing but what is herein reported.
>
> It is not part of our policy to wage military, political or economic war against Russia and though we may not altogether like the German-Russian connection it is an old standing association, which we are in no position to break, and which may as well turn out to [?our] advantage as to our disadvantage in the long run.

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[36] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 392. See also A.D.A.P., B, Vol.II/1, No. 95.

[37] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 392.

[38] Ibid.

> One cannot, however, escape the thought that if ever the Balance of Power theory again dominates European diplomacy, then this combination may be but the first step to yet another partition of Poland.[39]

Gregory was concerned about the reaction in Warsaw and Paris, but he agreed with Marxe that it would be best for Britain to accept the coming treaty:

> On the face of it the action required both here and in Paris is not to place obstacles in the way of a Russian-German agreement, but to intensify existing policy and encompass Germany with every incentive and motive for entrenching herself more solidly under the Locarno shelter and let nothing deflect us from our present methods for attaining a final September settlement by working in close co-operation with Germany.[40]

Tyrrell felt that opposing the contemplated treaty would push Germany into the hands of the Soviets. Chamberlain agreed with Tyrrell's minutes, parts of which read as follows:

> Whatever the motives may be, it would be a mistake on our part not to accept this as a fait accompli and make the best of it, as Mr. Gregory suggests, by intensifying our present policy of encouraging Germany to look West and not East....
>
> In view of the negotiations between the French and the Russians which are about to start in Paris, it would be a mistake on the part of the former to object: if they were so ill-advised as to do so, they would considerably strengthen German suspicions of the recent rapprochement between Paris and Moscow and possibly drive Berlin further in the latter direction than they are prepared to go if left to themselves; in fact, whether they like it or not, the best policy for the French to adopt is to faire bonne mine a mauvais jeu.[41]

Four days later, April 8, 1926, D'Abernon reported a conversation he had with "a leading German authority"[42] on German-Russian relations and wrote that Germany's main reason to come to an agreement with Russia

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., No. 407.

"is to be attributed to fear of Poland - to alarm lest some alliance might be established between Russia and Poland or between Russia and France."[43]

D'Abernon's unidentified source undoubtedly tried to pave the way for the planned treaty by placating British fears regarding the effects of a Russo-German agreement:

> The net result of a German-Russian agreement today would be quite different from that which might have been apprehended at the time of Rapallo....To a certain extent it may be said that by signing with Germany, Russia condones Germany's entry into the League of Nations. It is possible that this condonation may be the preliminary towards following Germany's example and entering the League. The path for Geneva for her may lead through the Brandenburger Tor.[44]

Changing to another topic greatly concerning the British government, the dissemination of communistic ideas, the unidentified speaker said exactly what the British government wanted to hear:

> As regards the advance West of communistic ideas, the greater danger appears to be a close understanding between Russia and Poland which would facilitate the introduction of Moscow doctrines into Poland. The large Jewish population there is evidently a ground ready for the reception of subversive doctrines, while the financial crisis in Poland, which is probable in the near future, will give a favourable opportunity to the propoganda of Communism. The danger of communistic propoganda in Germany is today less great. It was considerable in 1920 - today, with the financial crisis overcome and with a stronger Government the danger of any serious communistic extension here becomes less. It may be said that a Russo-German combination in this regard is less dangerous to Europe than a Russian-Polish combination would be.[45]

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

It seems that in order to prepare the British public for the Treaty, the Foreign Office gave pertinent information to The Times[46] which published an article, on April 14, 1926, which dealt in "a rather tactless manner with Russian affairs."[47] The Germans considered this tactic as "a breach of the extremely confidential nature of our communication."[48]

Yet in spite of all the preliminaries, no sooner was the Treaty of Berlin signed on April 24, 1926,[49] than Chamberlain expressed dissatisfaction with it and Sthamer was informed by Lampson, head of the Central Department of the Foreign Office, that "Chamberlain believes...that the treaty influences the political situation negatively and that the content of the treaty was 'singularly inadequate' as far as the assurances were concerned that Germany had given earlier."[50] The main point of contention was the second half of Article 3 which could be interpreted "that Germany has an obligation here which permanently determines German attitudes toward the League in favour of Russia."[51] Sthamer refused to accept this interpretation and cautioned Lampson about the danger that would arise "if the English interpretation were to become known to other powers. I am afraid that this would lead to the

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[46]Cf. The Times, April 14, 1926, and A.D.A.P., B, Vol.II/1, No. 132.

[47]A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/1, No. 138.

[48]Ibid.

[49]For the text of the treaty see Appendix III.

[50]A.D.A.P., B, Vol.II/1, No. 178.

[51]Ibid.

destruction of the Locarno Pact by the Western powers themselves."[52]

Stresemann agreed with Sthamer's explanation and on May 1, 1926, the Foreign Minister's public statement on the treaty appeared in the press. D'Abernon, in a telegraphic message to Chamberlain, summed up the main points: 1. There is no conflict between the treaty and Locarno. 2. The premise that Russia is hostile to the League is not acceptable because it would render impossible "any agreement between a League member and Russia." Rather, efforts must be made to bring Russia into the League. 3. "There are no secret clauses or agreements of any kind between Germany and Russia." 4. The treaty has not limited Germany's range of decision making within the League. 5. Germany left no doubt during the negotiations, leading up to the treaty, about the importance of friendly relations with Russia. It is absurd to assume that "the strengthening of these good relations can give any cause for the non carrying out of Locarno treaty."[53]

Two days later, May 3, 1926, Chamberlain sent his interpretation of the treaty to the British representatives in Prague, Paris, Brussels, Rome and Warsaw. After examining the three articles of the treaty individually, the Foreign Secretary stated that:

> ...from the legal point of view I am satisfied that neither the treaty nor the Stresemann note[54] justifies a complaint that Germany has entered into pledges inconsistent with the Covenant or with anything she agreed at Locarno.

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[52] Ibid.

[53] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 490.

[54] Refers to press statement discussed in ibid.

> I do not of course wish it to be inferred that I in any way welcome the Treaty, but its text and that of the accompanying note is apparently beyond challenge juridically and however much we may all regard signature as significant of political tendency, it would be highly unwise to place ourselves in a false position. I am convinced more than ever that the only sound policy for us all to pursue is to work solidly for the earliest possible admission of Germany to the League.[55]

Stresemann made another attempt to reassure Chamberlain and on May 10, 1926, D'Abernon conveyed to London Stresemann's private view "that Russia will be represented at Geneva within eighteen months. He [Stresemann] is convinced that whole tendency of Moscow is to get in touch with the west. Locarno and want of money have made such an impression on them that they are no longer truculent."[56]

Yet all the endeavours to gain British acceptance of the treaty were bound to be wasted since any rapprochement between Moscow and Berlin was contrary to British interests. In a telegram to the German Embassy in London, May 3, 1926, Dirksen, Senior Counsellor in the German Foreign Office - principally encharged with East European affairs, discussed the two supposed reasons for British suspicions of the Treaty of Berlin:

> 1. The aim of British policy, even at Locarno, was to set up a political barrier between Russia and Germany.
> 2. Germany should become part of an anti-Soviet economic front which, through economic boycott, was to make Russia pliant to the interests of the Western powers.
>
> Both motives are diametrically opposed to the aims of German Russia policy. Due to the nature of her export needs, her economic crisis, and the attempts of other countries to establish protective tariffs, Germany depends on Russian markets...Germany cannot afford the luxury of an economic war with Russia.
>
> Nor can Germany afford to neglect good political relations with Russia; without these it would be impossible to extend economic relations.[57]

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[55] Ibid., No. 492.

[56] Ibid., No. 515.

[57] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/1, No. 186.

The British Foreign Office, however, did not seem able to recognize the real nature of Russo-German relations and placed the wrong emphasis on Germany's League entry on September 8, 1926. Talking to Dufour-Feronce, the German Counsellor of the Embassy in London, on September 16, 1926, Tyrrell was convinced that Germany's membership in the League meant "that Germany has decided to increase its co-operation with the Western powers and not to intensify her relations with the Soviet Government."[58] With this assumption, Tyrrell continued his conversation in a rather careless manner, expounding his views about the Russian government:

> It is impossible to negotiate with the men who are now in power in Russia. Only an idealist of extreme purity could entertain the notion of ever being able to negotiate positively with the representatives of the Soviet government. Already in 1917 he had maintained that the greatest danger menacing the continuation of European civilization was the penetration of Bolshevism. He had always made it his guide, when dealing with Russian ideas in the pursuance of foreign policy, to do the exact opposite of whatever the Soviet government had suggested and feels extremely comfortable adhering to this rule that had always guided him.[59]

If Dufour-Feronce was surprised to hear the Permanent Under-Secretary of the British Foreign Office use such language, he was even more perplexed when, later on the same day, he listened to Gregory's views on the same topic: "In contrast to Tyrrell, Gregory maintains that an understanding between the British government and the Soviet government would be very useful for both countries...."[60] Yet in spite of differences

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[58] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/2, No. 110.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

of opinion as to what kind of relations Britain should entertain with Russia, the Foreign Office as a whole was convinced that by loosening Russo-German ties, the position of the Soviets would be weakened,[61] and they would be more receptive to British demands.

It is difficult to formulate a concise statement as to the exact nature of Anglo-German-Russian relations. Possibly the best summary of this intricate triangular relationship was made by Wolfers:

> From the days of Rapallo, when Germany and the Soviet Union signed their first treaty of friendship and consultation, down to the beginning of the National Socialist regime, relations between Germany and the Soviet Union were so cordial that any increase in German power was quite obviously of benefit to Moscow, at least in the diplomatic field. All that Britain could do at that time was to try to wean the Germans away from too close an alignment with the Soviets.[62]

A Foreign Office Memorandum of February 20, 1925, by Harold Nicolson, expresses some of the frustration pertaining to the difficulty of formulating a clear-cut statement on relations with Russia:

> Europe to-day is divided into three main elements, namely, the victors, the vanquished and Russia. The Russian problem, that incessant, though shapeless menace, can be stated only as a problem; it is impossible as yet to forecast what effect the development of Russia will have on the future stability of Europe. It is true, on the one hand, that the feeling of uncertainty which is sapping the health of Western Europe is caused to no small extent by the disappearance of Russia as a Power accountable in the European concert. On the other hand, the Russian problem is for the moment Asiatic rather than European; to-morrow Russia may again figure decisively in the balance of continental power; but to-day she hangs as a storm-cloud upon the Eastern horizon of Europe - impending, imponderable, but, for the present, detached. Russia is not therefore in any sense a factor of stability; she is indeed the most menacing of all our uncertainties; and it must thus be in spite of Russia, perhaps even because of Russia, that a policy of security must be framed.[63]

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Wolfers, op.cit., p. 247.

[63] Foreign Office, Public Record Office, London, Record Group 371, Vol. 10727, No. 1.

British concern about Russian intentions in Asia and the measures to be adopted by Britain became evident again during a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence on July 22, 1926. "Having regard to the unsettled conditions in the Far East and possible developments in Russia, we could not accept any risks to which our trade would be exposed in the event of war in that part of the world."[64] In order to avoid "any risks" Chamberlain then introduced a rather unusual scheme suggested by the Secretary of State for India:

> The Chiefs of Staff should study the vulnerability of Russia to attack by the British Empire. He himself thought, however, that that study would lead to the conclusion that Russia was not vulnerable at all, except at a price that England would be unwilling or, indeed, unable to pay.[65]

Although he did not say so in so many words, it seems that Chamberlain, under these circumstances, wanted to do "nothing" as far as Russia was concerned: "nothing" to be understood as maintaining the statusquo, which included the continuation of diplomatic relations in order to avoid the consequences which such a break would cause.

The Foreign Office was certain that the pivot of the lever which would put Russia into place was the Locarno Pact; but since the effectiveness of the Pact depended on German entry into the League, it is easy to understand British anxieties when Germany's bid failed in March 1926. The subsequent Treaty of Berlin increased British fears because it was felt that the treaty was a measure of revenge directed by the Germans against the Western Powers whom they blamed for the

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[64] Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence (London: Public Record Office, Cab. 2), Nos. 706B-707B, p.4.

[65] Ibid., p. 10.

activities in Geneva in March. But no sooner was Germany safely seated in the Council of the League, than Britain lost a great deal of interest in German dealings with Russia. There was, of course, still interest in such news as the German army using Russian sites for testing weapons,[66] but British interest in Central Europe definitely declined until the late 1930's when it was too late to initiate decisive action. Anglo-Russian relations deteriorated as British interest in Russo-German relations declined. In spite of her agreement with Germany, Russia's distrust of British designs to isolate her increased. Moscow, wrote The Times, is

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[66] The Manchester Guardian Weekly, January 14, 1927.

It is important that Russo-German military collaborations in the 1920's are examined in the proper context. Gatzke has stressed this point at the conclusion of his article on "Russo-German Military Collaboration:"

> Historians, like everyone else, tend to oversimplify issues on which they feel strongly. Critics of Germany thus have presented the Reichswehr's Russian activities as evidence of a German conspiracy of revenge against the West. Defenders of Germany have tried to explain these activities as understandable military maneuvers of which Germany's political leaders were unaware. The truth lies somewhere in between....Germany's political leaders realized, as their military colleagues did not, that it was impossible to have such trust in a government whose aims threatened the very existence of friend and foe alike.

Hans W. Gatzke, "Russo-German Military Collaboration During the Weimar Republic," Hans W. Gatzke, (ed.) European Diplomacy Between Two Wars , 1919-1939 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972) p.65.

> ...circulating reports that the Border States, instigated by Great Britain, are planning military operations against Russia....The Krasnaya Zveda...has published a leading article alleging that the British Government is organizing the Border States...with Poland as the centre, for a war against the Soviets, and that it engineered the recent Lithuanian Putsch as part of this programme to ensure the participation of Lithuania.[67]

While Britain denied any part in plotting the encirclement of Russia, the Soviets retaliated by increasing their propaganda campaign against Britain and devising schemes for the purpose of interrupting British trade in China. Moreover, Chamberlain's opponents in the Cabinet believed that the Soviet Union was "pursuing the old Tsarist policy in Asia under a veneer of Communism" and that "war with Russia was inevitable in the course of time."[68] Under these circumstances, Anglo-Russian diplomatic relations were severed on May 23, 1927.[69] Although Russian distrust of the West continued, Soviet anticipation for world revolution became less fervent and an article in the Izvestiia, on January 22, 1929, although insisting that world revolution was inevitable, stressed the importance of patience:

> The longer the imperialists postpone their attack on the Soviet state, the more time we shall have to build up in peace our socialist economy,...the more advantageous for international socialism will be the conditions when the encircling capitalist countries launch their inevitable attack on the Soviet state.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> We are interested in the maintenance of peace and its continuation as long as possible,...because for us the maintenance of peace is connected with the question not only of the fate of the first Soviet state, but also of the fate of international socialism.[70]

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[67] The Times, January 20, 1927.

[68] Stambrook, "Austen Chamberlain," op.cit., p.122.

[69] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.III, No. 209.

[70] Quoted in Xenia Joukoff Eudin and Robert M. Slusser, Soviet Foreign Policy 1928-1934 (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), Vol. I, pp. 160-161.

Later in the year, on October 3, 1929, MacDonald's second Labour Government took the initiative once more and restored trade and diplomatic relations with the U.S S.R.

German-Soviet relations improved temporarily after the signing of the Berlin Treaty. "The expectations which both sides have placed in the Berlin Treaty", Stresemann told Chicherin on November 30, 1926, "have been fulfilled."[71] But Stresemann's enthusiasm was soon dampened because his hopes of increasing Germany's prestige by association with "an increasingly prosperous and stable Soviet Union..."[72] did not materialize. Social and economic crisis in the U.S.S.R., beginning in the summer of 1926, and the anti-British foreign policy of the Soviets, culminating in the termination of Anglo-Soviet relations in May 1927, placed Germany in a position of unilaterally supporting either Moscow or London[73] - a position diametrically opposed to Stresemann's objective of balancing East against West and by doing so achieve revision of Germany's eastern frontiers without hinderance from either London or Moscow. Revision of the eastern frontier of Germany meant, of course, the acquisition of some of the territory handed over to Poland by the Treaty of Versailles. While Britain accepted the eventual revision of the German-Polish frontier as a political reality, its timing and the methods to be used, as proposed by the Germans in the mid-twenties, were not consistent with British policy.

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[71] Quoted in Harvey Leonard Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia 1926-1933 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966), p.47.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.IV, Nos. 34, 42, and D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. III, No. 205.

CHAPTER V

THE POLISH PROBLEM

If Britain opposed German revisionist schemes in the mid-twenties it was because she did not want to become militarily involved in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, Britain realized that countries like Poland could well serve as a buffer between Russia and Germany, preventing close co-operation between these two countries. The strategic importance of Central Europe was discussed by the British Charge d'Affaires at Bucharest in a message to Curzon, on February 25, 1920, who approved of the representative's thesis:

> ...I take it for granted that the establishment of friendly relations between the minor Central European Powers is essential to the cause of the Allies, and in general to the cause of order and tranquility. If it is desired to maintain a buffer between German and Pan-Slav expansion and to prevent the two from developing into one comprehensive movement directed against Great Britain, it is obviously essential to make the Central European buffer of small states as homogeneous and as closely welded together as possible, so that it may perform the functions to be attributed to it.[1]

In addition to political considerations, Britain regarded Central and Eastern Europe as a potential field of economic investment. Not only was there an expectation of reaping financial rewards from such

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[1] D.B.F.P., I, Vol. XII, No. 114. This was in line with the thinking of the Allied statesmen who, at a conference in London on December 12, 1919, stated that one of their objectives was "to build up Poland as a barrier against Russia and a check on Germany." D.B.F.P., I, Vol. II, No. 56.

investments, but the economic penetration of the region by other interested powers could be prevented as well.[2] Closely connected to any such schemes was the question of extracting reparation, and the affiliation of the Bank of England with former branches of the principal banks of Austria-Hungary. Therefore, participation in the economic affairs of Central Europe "seemed to offer an opportunity of salving...an important connection with old customers of London."[3]

Yet in spite of these considerations, British fears of military involvement in Eastern and Central Europe were so strong that British statesmen continually voiced statements expressing disinterest in the affairs of the region. Moreover, Britain rather sympathized with the Germans and regarded the newly established Poland as an inconsiderate upstart, oblivious to the realities of European politics and determined to pursue her chauvinistic ends without due regard for everybody else. This trend of British thought was already evident at the peace conference, where Clemenceau repeatedly attempted to persuade the British representatives to adopt a friendlier attitude toward Poland,[4] and found its

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[2]In the 1920's it was France that planned the economic penetration of Central Europe, hoping that it would lead to political domination. In the 1930's German Wirtschaftspolitik made great strides in the area.

[3]Sir Henry Clay, Lord Norman (London: MacMillan & Co.Ltd., 1957), p.181.

[4]A case in point is Clemenceau's attempt, on December 11, 1919, to persuade Lloyd George and Lord Curzon to show more interest in Poland: "Great Britain did not take sufficient interest in Poland....The Poles were a very sentimental people, and they wanted to feel that Great Britain was more favourable to them." D.B.F.P., I, Vol.II, No. 55.

classic expression in Chamberlain's laconic remark, on February 16, 1925, that "no British Government ever will or ever can risk the bones of a British grenadier"[5] to defend the Polish Corridor. Yet like it or not, Britain had to be careful not to become involved in Polish militaristic adventures by the French system of East European alliances. As Wolfers has pointed out:

> On whatever grounds France might come to the assistance of her Eastern Allies, Great Britain, with her strategic frontier on the Rhine, would have to throw her weight and active support on the French side. By virtue of her ties to France she was therefore indirectly committed to any power with which France chose to be allied.[6]

The awkward position in which Britain found herself with respect to Poland complicated the implementation of German policy the aim of which, quite clearly, was "the recovery of Danzig, the Polish Corridor, and a correction of the frontier in Upper Silesia."[7] Yet before the conclusion of the Locarno Treaties, in October 1925, which secured Germany's western boundaries, there was little she could do to effect revision of her eastern frontier. Rauscher, the German minister in

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[5] In Middlemas and Barnes, op.cit., p. 356.

[6] Wolfers, op.cit., p.269. But see Sir Arthur Willert, Aspects of British Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), pp. 58-63.

[7] Sutton, op.cit., Vol. II, p.XI. Seeckt, the German Chief of Staff, in September 1922, stated his country's objectives more brutually than Stresemann: "Poland's existence is intolerable and incompatible with the vital needs of Germany; she must disappear..." Friedrich von Rabenau, Seeckt. Aus seinem Leben 1918-1936 (Leipzig: Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1940), p.317.

Warsaw, advised Stresemann as late as March 1924, that "the time was not suitable psychologically..."[8] for negotiating with Poland. Lacking effective means to bring pressure on Poland, Germany engaged in a propaganda campaign against her eastern neighbour for the purpose of undermining "the world's confidence in Poland's viability...," thus insisting on the "necessity for a revision of the German-Polish frontier..."[9] Stresemann, however, was careful to explain that Germany had neither the desire nor the necessary military power to bring about revision by force.[10] Moreover, Stresemann insisted that Article 19 of the Covenant of the League of Nations enabled Germany to pursue revision peacefully and legally, stipulating that all treaties no longer applicable - and the German-Polish boundaries were said to be a case in point - could be revised[11] and Germany could "reopen the question at some future date."[12]

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[8] Zygmunt J. Gasiorowski, "Stresemann and Poland before Locarno," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. 18, 1958, p.29. Rauscher was referring to a general arbitration treaty that Stresemann wanted to offer to Poland, similar in nature to one signed between Switzerland and Germany, guaranteeing reciprocal territorial integrity.

[9] Roman Debicki, Foreign Policy of Poland 1919-39 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 47.

[10] Gasiorowski, "Stresemann and Poland before Locarno," op.cit., p.35.

[11] Article 19 reads: "The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world." Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919, op.cit., p. 92.

[12] Henry L. Bretton, Stresemann and the Revision of Versailles (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953), p.117.

The Poles were well aware of German intentions and a document of the Polish Foreign Ministry, dated April 15, 1920, stated "that all political groups in Germany were motivated in their views on Eastern Europe by a desire for revenge...." Germany, the document continued, "would never be reconciled to the existence of an independent Polish state and would employ every means to cause its downfall. But Poland's advantage," the document concluded, "was her geographic location as a crossroad of communications between Germany and Russia."[13] While Polish assessments of German sentiments were correctly analyzed, Poland's geographic position, located between Russia and Germany, was more of a hazard to her than an advantage. Had Poland been a great power, her position could have been used to advantage, but in spite of frantic efforts Poland never achieved this status and as early as April 1920, when the Red Army knocked at the gates of Warsaw, until the German invasion in 1939, it was obvious that the Polish state was not founded on a secure base.

Korbel has pointed out that Poland never made any attempts to accommodate either Germany or Russia and, in doing so, "strengthen her security and her posture toward the other."[14] Yet considering that major portions of the new Polish state consisted of territories obtained at the expense of her two neighbours, one is apt to accept the explanation of a

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[13]Quoted in Josef Korbel, Poland Between East and West (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 78-79. See also Edward Hallett Carr, The Interregnum 1923-1924 (London: MacMillan & Co.Ltd., 1954), pp.216-217.

[14]Ibid., p.101.

Polish colonel who, when asked during World War II why Poland never tried to co-operate with either Germans or Russians, answered that "if we had there would be no Poland."[15]

Polish aspirations of "a re-establishment of the powerful and vast country which once was the Kingdom of Poland"[16] were at variance with the country's political and economic difficulties. Feuding factions in parliament caused frequent changes in the administration which led to the termination of what had been a semblance of democratic government in May 1926, when Marshal Pilsudski established himself as dictator. Poland's economic difficulties were many, with a serious agrarian problem possibly

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[15] Quoted in ibid., p. 102. But see Dyck, op.cit., pp.27-29.

[16] Korbel, op.cit., p.4. Polish statesmen were not content with the creation of an ethnic unit, but insisted on the formation of a Greater Poland. Dmoski, the Polish representative at the peace conference, said in 1923: "I have not fought for Poland's rebirth - this was inevitable. I have fought, however, for the creation of a Greater Poland." These sentiments were repeated by the Polish president Wojciechowski: "Poland can only exist as a Big Power." A high-ranking Polish general staff officer, demanding the annexation of Danzig, East Prussia, and the largest part of Silesia to Poland, justified these claims as being essential for the restoration of European peace: "Peace will not prevail in Europe until all Polish territories are returned to Poland in their entirety; until the name Prussia...disappears from the map of Europe;...until the Germans have moved their capital, Berlin, further west...either to Magdeburg or Merseburg." All these excerpts are quoted in Christian Holtje, Die Weimarer Republik und das Ostlocarno-Problem 1919-1934 (Würzburg: Holzner-Verlag, 1958), pp. 136-137.

leading the list of problems. Inflation, too, was frequently recurring and poverty was the lot of a large segment of the population.[17]

In the years immediately prior to Locarno, German attempts to bring about a revision of her eastern frontiers were confined to futile, verbal gestures.[18] But no sooner was the Pact signed and her western boundary secure, than Germany's endeavours to regain some of her eastern territories began in earnest.[19] None other than Briand had encouraged the Germans to strive toward that goal when he told Stresemann, during the Locarno Conference, that "the Poles would become very uninteresting if Germany and France were to reach an understanding."[20]

Immediately after the initialling of the Locarno Pact on October 16, 1925, the British Government realized that in order to have the Pact ratified in the Reichstag and make it operative by having Germany join the League, German aspirations in the East would have to be discreetly endorsed - that is to say that Germany would have to be given some vague platitudes favouring revision which, at the same time, would not upset the Poles.

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[17]Cf. Korbel, op.cit., pp. 100-101, and Felix Gilbert, The End of the European Era, 1890 to the Present (New York: W.W.Norton & Co. Inc., 1970), pp. 165-166.

[18]Zygmunt J. Gasiorowski, "The Russian Overture to Germany of December 1924," The Journal of Modern History, Vol. XXX, June 1958, pp. 99-117.

[19]Dyck, op.cit., pp. 28-29.

[20]Quoted in Holtje, op.cit., p. 86.

On October 17, 1925, Chamberlain urged Skrzynski, the Polish Foreign Minister, to persuade his government "to voluntarily renounce their rights"[21] to expel any more Germans from Poland.[22] The result of such a move, Chamberlain explained to Skrzynski, "would be an act of the highest statesmanship, the one thing capable of producing a marked improvement in their relations with Germany and certainly to be appreciated in every country in the world."[23]

During the course of a conversation with Schubert, on November 26, 1925, D'Abernon made it clear that although Britain was promoting an understanding between Germany and Poland, the British Government had no intention of supporting boundary revisions in the near future. The ambassador suggested to Schubert, who complained about the intolerable situation in Upper Silesia and the Corridor, that the German Government should follow an indirect method which would progress from friendly relations to improved economic and political conditions to a final discussion of boundary changes.

> ...if Germany proposed to await the rectification of her present frontier as a condition precedent of entering upon an endeavour to improve commercial and political relations with Poland she would probably wait a long time. Speaking personally it appeared to me that this method was topsy-turvey, and that the only satisfactory course was to initiate better conditions with Poland in the hope that when these better conditions had been appreciated in both countries they would render possible some frontier arrangement less

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[21] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 6.

[22] Chamberlain was referring to the Convention of Vienna, signed August 30, 1924, for the details of which see League of Nations Treaty Series, Vol. XXXII, 1925, pp. 331-53.

[23] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, No. 6.

> obnoxious to German feeling than the present one apparently was. In other words, the best hope of arriving at a satisfactory settlement of the frontier difficulties was by the indirect and not the direct method.[24]

Responding to British prompting, Skrzynski approached Schubert on December 4, 1925, on the way back from London to Ostende, after the signing of the Locarno Treaties on December 1, 1925, and suggested to him that the German-Polish trade negotiations, which had begun on September 16, 1925, should be speeded up so that some tangible results could be reached.[25] Although Schubert politely agreed to the suggestion, there can be no doubt that the Germans were in no hurry to talk about trade with Poland. The Wilhelmstrasse was convinced that improved trade relations with Poland would not enhance German chances to reach a boundary agreement in the East, even if economic pressure could be applied to Poland. Schubert described the situation rather bluntly when he wrote, at the end of December 1925, that "the question of the Corridor is not to be solved otherwise than through force in conjunction with numerous favorable circumstances."[26]

Chamberlain and D'Abernon seem to have been playing a well-rehearsed but futile game when suggesting to Poland that she should make friendly gestures to Germany, and to Germany to use the "indirect method" to solve the frontier question. It was no secret that Poland was on the

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[24] Ibid., No. 118.

[25] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.II/1, No.2

[26] Quoted in Zygmunt J. Gasiorowski, "Stresemann and Poland after Locarno," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. 18, 1958, p.294.

brink of bankruptcy and all Germany had to do was to wait until the time when conditions would be right and German designs would be realized through the disintegration of Poland.

Troutbeck, a member of the Central Department of the Foreign Office, stressed the economic aspect of German-Polish relations when he minuted a dispatch from the British Embassy in Berlin to Chamberlain, on December 15, 1925, as follows:

> There is an aspect of the question which Mr. Addison barely touches, that is the economic. On the face of it the economic forces at the moment seem to be all on Germany's side. She is in difficulties, it is true, but seemingly in no such difficulties as her neighbours on either side - France and Poland - who are rapidly sinking into bankruptcy. What the future holds out on that score is impossible to predict, but at the moment it looks as though Germany only has to play a waiting game for her old provinces on either frontier to slip back into her power, merely because their new possessors are financially incapable of holding them.[27]

Chamberlain must have realized that time was in favour of the Germans yet he and some members of his staff in the Foreign Office played a waiting game that alienated the Poles as well as the Germans. He must have realized the gravity and immediacy of the problem, he knew - or as Foreign Secretary was at least supposed to have known - the dangerous position of Poland and Germany on the boundary question, yet he as well as Tyrrell and Troutbeck refused to face the problem.

Huxley, a member of the Central Department of the Foreign Office, in a minute discussing the Polish problem on December 17, 1925, makes the opening remark that in view of Chamberlain's preference for doing nothing "it is perhaps unwise and undesirable to discuss the Corridor problem at

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[27] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, No. 141.

the present time."[28] But being convinced of the seriousness of the problem, Huxley threw caution aside and continued that even the Americans, although rather blase as far as the affairs of Eastern Europe were concerned, realized the importance of the Corridor situation. "Harper's Magazine", an American journal, had named the Danzig Corridor as "the ground where the next European war will start."[29] Although admitting that the American article might have been somewhat sensational, Huxley thought "there is a large grain of truth in it, and it is difficult to avoid the feeling that if His Majesty's Government refuses pointblank on all occasions to consider even the possibility of a territorial revision, Poland will do likewise until the time comes when Germany feels strong enough to force acceptance of her own solution." [Italics mine.] [30]

Huxley then went into details, advocating a scheme similar to the many solutions proposed to solve the Corridor problem. Lampson and Tyrrell reacted negatively when they read over the document. "I am convinced," commented Lampson, "that the way not to solve the German-Polish question is to stir up public discussion about it. Let sleeping dogs sleep - or if they don't, let us try to make them sleep....Let us leave the question severely alone....This may seem like stagnation: I do not think it is!"[31] Tyrrell's laconic comment expressed the same sentiment:

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[28] Ibid., No. 151.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

"Stagnation at times may be and is preferable to earthquakes."[32]

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the document was Huxley's appeal to common sense: "One cannot but feel that human ingenuity is capable of reconciling the two points of view, given sufficient inducement on both sides."[33] Huxley's optimism was infectious and on December 24, 1925, Collier, a member of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, continued Huxley's efforts to place the German-Polish dispute on the conference table. Collier agreed with Huxley that the problem would "sooner or later, come up in an acute form."[34] However, he added another dimension to the discussion when he insisted that the Corridor problem was a question of psychology. The Poles, Collier explained, "a nation of exaltes,"[35] want the Corridor mainly for reasons of prestige and commercial pressures would not likely induce them to change their position. "They are not a commercial people...and they would rather loose [sic] a million pounds of trade than a square mile of territory."[36]

Collier then proposed a scheme for settlement which, although rather interesting, needs no further discussion because Lampson, in a minute added to the document, wanted the discussion of the German-Polish boundary dispute terminated. "This discussion, though academically very interesting and instructive, might now be allowed to lapse."[37]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., No. 159.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

But not only minor officials in the Foreign Office were eager to discuss the Polish problem; financiers and officials in the Treasury were equally anxious to come to grips with it. In a secret dispatch from London,[38] on December 17, 1925, the German Foreign Office was informed by the Counsellor of the Embassy, Dufour-Feronce, about the attitudes of Sir Otto Niemeyer[39] and Sir William Goode[40] toward Poland. In their estimation, Poland's economic problem was due to a lack of experts capable of realistic economic planning. One of the direct results of this lack of realistic economic management was that Poland spent far too much on the maintenance of her army; an army kept more for reasons of self-gratification and prestige than real use, considering that neither Russia nor Germany was in a position to pose a serious threat to Polish security. Both men agreed that Poland was in grave financial difficulties and needed immediate relief. Both men also mentioned that Montagu Norman shared their opinions about Poland and had remarked caustically that "the biggest obstacle blocking the financial rehabilitation of Poland was that the country was inhabited by Poles."[41] It was felt by the financial experts that Europe could not afford to have any one state in difficulties because ultimately all the other states would be adversely affected as well. The experts were equally convinced that if Poland was to receive a loan, she would have

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[38] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/1, No. 10.

[39] Leading official in the Treasury.

[40] Journalist and financial expert.

[41] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/1, No. 10.

to submit to financial controls established by the countries advancing the money. So far, however, there was no indication that the Polish government was inclined to accept such controls. Moreover, if Poland wanted the money, she would have to adopt a more conciliatory attitude about Upper Silesia and the Corridor.[42]

The lesson was not lost on the Germans. On December 29, 1925, laying down guidelines for a planned conversation between D'Abernon and Schubert about Poland, Dirksen suggested the following approach: Germany would agree to the financial rehabilitation of Poland only if the boundary question was settled first, because the financial help would vitalize Poland's strength, and once this was done, Poland would refuse to negotiate over the frontiers.[43]

Dirksen's strategy proved correct when the German Foreign Office received another telegram from London on January 2, 1926, which confirmed Dufour's previous message, repeating that Poland would only get help under the conditions previously stipulated.[44] The Germans felt that all they had to do was to wait and a favourable trade agreement with Poland would fall in their lap.[45] They also realized that a peaceful boundary revision could only be obtained with the support of Britain.[46]

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[42] Ibid., No. 10.

[43] Ibid., No. 21.

[44] Ibid., Nos. 10,26.

[45] Ibid., No. 31.

[46] Ibid., No. 150.

In a letter to Sthamer, dated April 19, 1926, Stresemann agreed that the revision of Germany's eastern frontier would only be possible if Poland was on the verge of collapse, but he also cautioned the proponents of Ostpolitik in the Foreign Office that unless Germany showed a more conciliatory attitude toward Poland, she might lose British support. There seems to have been an intrigue, fostered by Dufour-Feronce and Dirksen who approached Norman and Tyrrell without instructions from their foreign minister, to prevent financial aid to Poland.[47] In his letter Stresemann reiterated his position and put a stop to the independent manoeuvers of his subordinates:

> 1. A peaceful solution of the Polish border question, one that satisfies our demands, is not possible until the economic and financial difficulties of Poland have reached an extreme degree and the Polish state is in a state of unconsciousness. As long as the country has left any strength at all, no Polish government is in a position to engage with us in a peaceful discussion about boundaries.[48]
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> 6. Should the English seriously attempt the rehabilitation of

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[47] Ibid., No. 150. (See footnote 5, p.366.) See also Stambrook, "The German-Austrian Customs Union Project," op.cit., p.119,footnote 31.

[48] The position of the Polish government on this topic was summed up by the Polish Foreign Minister, M. Zaleski, during a conversation on June 11, 1926, with the British ambassador in Warsaw: Poland wants to establish "normal relations between the two countries,...but in saying this he must not be understood to be contemplating even the remote possibility of yielding on the territorial questions which the Polish government regard as settled once and for all by the Treaty of Versailles." D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, No. 58.

> Poland now, then we must not stand aside. We can't afford to create the impression that through the utilization of our economic position we intend to sabotage the rehabilitation scheme. Therefore, our only choice is to participate in any endeavour that might be undertaken even now in order to be involved and thus be able to manipulate developments to our advantage.[49]

But Stresemann's hopes of Poland's economy reaching a state of depression, which would force the country to submit to German schemes, were shattered by the strike of the British coal miners in May 1926. Having had to depend mainly on German buyers for her coal, Polish exports now found markets formerly supplied by Britain.[50] The boom of the coal industry was a boost to the Polish economy which lasted until 1929.[51] Pilsudski's take-over of the government, in May 1926,[52] gave Poland a stabler government than she had experienced since the war. Although Pilsudski was not anti-German - it was said that he hated the Russians more than the Germans[53] - his firm grip of the government and the improved economic situation of Poland[54] precluded any considerations of giving

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[49] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/1, No. 150.

[50] When the strike ended in November 1926, Britain had lost £150,000,000 of exports alone. Harold Nicolson, King George the Fifth (London: Constable & Co.Ltd., 1952) p.421.

[51] Gasiorowski, "Stresemann and Poland After Locarno," op cit., p. 300.

[52] It is possible to speculate as to whether or not Sir W. Max Muller, the British ambassador in Warsaw, supported Pilsudski's coup d'etat. Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/1, No. 207, footnote 2, and D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. II, No. 101, footnotes 2 and 6.

[53] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.II/1, No. 207.

[54] In addition to the revival of the coal industry, in 1926, a good harvest and a foreign loan amounting to $72,000,000 considerably improved the Polish economy. Moreover, Charles S.Dewey, an American Treasury official was hired as financial adviser and capably assisted in Poland's economic rehabilitation.

back to Germany territories she had lost in 1919.[55]

The Germans, quite naturally, were disappointed with these developments and accused Britain of not fully appreciating German endeavours to conclude the Locarno Pact and to join the League; both considered as ultimate testimonies of Germany's goodwill and readiness to compromise for the sake of European peace. In recognition of this attitude, the German Government had hoped that Britain would be more sympathetic to German revisionist hopes in Eastern Europe. Britain's ambiguous attitude, however, toward Eastern Europe, had shattered these hopes and created the impression that Britain had changed its position and was now supporting Poland to the detriment of Germany.[56]

Yet it is neither fair nor correct to accuse Britain of switching sides in the German-Polish controversy. The British had never committed themselves publicly to frontier revision, and German hopes were based on private conversations with various British personages. The senior Foreign Office officials and the Foreign Secretary were only too well aware that the question of the Corridor was seen in Paris as closely linked to that of French security. Britain's hopes of pacifying Europe depended on quelling France's security fears; as Harold Nicolson had put it in 1925: "Until we can quieten France, no concert of Europe is possible."[57]

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[55] Cf. Charles Kruszewski, "German-Polish Tariff War (1925-1934) and its Aftermath," Journal of Central European Affairs. Vol.III, 1943-44, pp. 294-315, and Fink, op cit., p.340.

[56] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.II/1 No. 74.

[57] Memorandum by Harold Nicolson, February 20, 1925, Foreign Office, op.cit., Vol. 10727, No. 1

France was convinced that her security could only be maintained by a system of alliances with Germany's eastern neighbours, Poland and Czechoslovakia.[58] French statesmen feared that if the Germans were allowed to penetrate and exploit eastern Europe at will, German power would increase and "she could turn around and attack France successfully."[59] Moreover, the French military was certain that as long as Germany was forced to submit to the terms of Versailles, France's eastern allies would be of sufficient strength to provide France with the necessary military support in case of a German attack.[60] If Britain, therefore, would have supported German revisionist schemes at the expense of Poland, she would have acted contrary to French interests and thus increased French fears about security. Such a development would have had an unsettling effect on European affairs and prevented Britain from concentrating more intensely on Asian affairs.

Before the Locarno Pact was signed, France could render military aid to Poland - in case of a German attack - by invading Germany's western provinces. But once the Pact was signed, such an option was no longer available to France because in order to attack at Germany's western frontier, she now had to wait for the Council of the League to

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[58] Elizabeth Wiskemann has made an interesting observation about Franco-German relations: "That Stresemann could have turned Briand against the Poles is unlikely; we may feel certain that Briand could not have reconciled Stresemann with them." Elizabeth Wiskemann, Europe of the Dictators (Manchester: Nicholls & Co.Ltd., 1966), p.62.

[59] Wolfers, op.cit., p.18.

[60] Ibid., p. 19.

reach a decision and pronounce Germany as an aggressor under Article 16 of the Covenant.

> The arrangements made at Locarno, therefore, had the effect of rewriting the Franco-Polish Alliance of 1921 and the French-Czechoslovak Alliance of 1924 in such a way as to limit French freedom in Eastern Europe by making the operation of the French guarantee conditional and delaying it in certain circumstances.[61]

Locarno did not provide Germany with a "free hand" in Eastern and Central Europe. It did, however, provide Germany with advantages which were viewed with caution in France, and which, therefore, made it impossible for Britain to support the revision of Germany's eastern frontiers openly.

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[61] Jacobson, op.cit., p. 30. See also Piotr Wandycz, France and her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925; French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from the Paris Peace Conference to Locarno (Minneapolis, 1962), pp. 348-368..

CHAPTER VI

THE INTER-ALLIED MILITARY CONTROL COMMISSION

The Inter-Allied Military Control Commission (IMCC)[1] was organized in July 1919. Its purpose was to supervise the disarmament[2] of Germany. The IMCC derived its power from Articles 203-211 of the Treaty of Versailles. Its duration, according to Article 10 of its constitution, would be determined by the time it would take Germany to

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[1]Actually there were three commissions: 1. IMCC; 2. NIACC (Naval Inter-Allied Commission of Control); 3. ILÜK (Inter-Alliierte Luftfahrt Überwachungs-Kommission). See Michael Salewski, Entwaffnung und Militärkontrolle in Deutschland 1917-1927 (München: R.Oldenbourg Verlag, 1966) p. 41. Salewski's book is the most detailed and complete account dealing with this topic.

For the sake of convenience and in keeping with the scope and purpose of this chapter, only the IMCC will be mentioned. In the A.D.A.P. and the D.B.F.P. there is no specific mentioning of the NIACC nor the ILÜK, and although air regulations are discussed, there is no discussion of naval regulations.

[2]The term "disarmament" is ambiguous because it is used indiscriminately to describe two different processes, the German equivalents of which are Abrüstung and Entwaffnung. The difference between the two concepts is that Abrüstung stands for multilateral disarmament, as agreed upon by the contracting countries while Entwaffnung, on the other hand, is the unilateral disarmament of a defeated country as stipulated by the victors. (Salewski, op.cit., p.11). Disarmament, therefore, in the context of the IMCC refers to the second concept, Entwaffnung. (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines disarmament as the "reduction to the customary peace footing," a definition which does not apply to German disarmament which objective it was to reduce German strength below her pre-war potential.)

successfully disarm.

> The duration of the activities of each Commission shall be limited to the complete execution of the Military, Naval or Air clauses under its supervision, for which a time limit is fixed, in the Treaty of Peace; and in case the execution be not completed within the period fixed, this fact will be reported by the Commission concerned to the Governments of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers for a decision as to the action to be taken.
> Until a decision is reached the Commission will continue to supervise the execution of the particular clause in question.[3]

The IMCC was responsible to theConference of Ambassadors[4] which, at first, only issued guidelines but left it to the initiative of the IMCC to select the best methods in getting the required results. Left to its own devices, the IMCC, staffed predominately with French officers, usually reported in terms most unfavourable to Germany.[5] As a result of this approach, there were endless protestations by the German government which finally resulted in the Conference of Ambassadors more and more restricting the scope of the IMCC. In other words, the question of disarmament[6] was elevated from a purely military to a higher

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[3] D.B.F.P., I, Vol. I, No. 7.

[4] The Conference of Ambassadors was made up of the permanent representatives of the Allied governments and had its seat in Paris. The purpose of this organization was to finish all the problems left over from the peace conference as well as handling all the new problems that would emerge during the enforcement of the peace treaties. Gerhard P. Pink, The Conference of Ambassadors (Geneva Research Centre: Geneva Studies, 1942), Vol. XII, Nos. 4-5, pp. 24-35.

[5] John P. Fox, "Britain and the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control, 1925-26," Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1969, pp. 145-146.

[6] Again it must be emphasized that "the control of the disarmament of the defeated nations was not identical with 'general limitation of the armaments of all nations,' mentioned in the Preamble to Part V of the Treaty of Versailles." Pink, op.cit., p.125.

diplomatic level and once this was the case, "it did not take much imagination to predict that its termination would reach the third level of 'big politics'."[7] This development suited and played into the hands of the Germans whose diplomats were far more capable negotiators than their generals.

As was the case with the League, the British and French views on the IMCC were different. But even in Britain the War Office and the Foreign Office each advocated different policies toward the IMCC. While Brigadier-General Morgan, the British representative on the IMCC, believed "that the work of the CMIC could never be considered complete...,"[8] D'Abernon had insisted as early as July 1922 that "95 or even 98 per cent of the disarmament has been carried through - everyone knows that this is the position, and clearing up mere remnants is a wearisome job."[9] Vacillating between the two views, the British Government adopted the ambassador's suggestion, not because of its accuracy, but because it could be easier integrated with Britain's general objective of restoring peace to Europe by accepting Germany as a full-fledged member of the European community. By 1925, however, the British became particularly concerned with regulations pertaining to training of pilots and building of aircraft; but once their demands were met satisfactorily they were quite willing not only to terminate the IMCC, but also begin a general

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[7] Salewski, op.cit., p. 302-303. But see Pink, op.cit., pp.125-161.

[8] Fox, op.cit., p. 143.

[9] D'Abernon, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.212, 224-225, Vol.II, p.59.

program of disarmament and arms control. On January 1, 1926, at a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence, Chamberlain, as recorded in the minutes of the meeting, said: "Limitation and reduction of armaments was part of our declared policy and the object of the Locarno treaties was to give security which would make disarmament possible. If disarmament did not result there would be very general disappointment in this country."[10] Britain realized that Germany's disarmament would never reach the stage prescribed by the Peace Treaty and was willing to withdraw the IMCC as soon as German disarmament had reached a plausible stage. As long as the IMCC remained in existence, a visible proof of Germany's failure to disarm, the French - for security reason - could never be induced to participate in a general disarmament and arms control program desired by Britain. But once the IMCC was withdrawn, signalling, at least theoretically, the completion of German disarmament, then the French could not very well refuse participation in general disarmament.[11]

The French, never entirely convinced of German goodwill, believed that their neighbours had no real intention of disarming and, therefore, maintained that their national security would be threatened if the IMCC were to be terminated. Typical of the French attitude was Herriot's remark to MacDonald: "My country has a dagger pointed at its heart. I

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[10] Minutes of Meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence, op.cit., No. 690B-693B, p.6.

[11] Salewski suggests that the French, who were not very enthusiastic about multilateral disarmament, purposely procrastinated in the matter of German disarmament so as to avoid participation in general disarmament. (Salewski, op.cit., p. 328.).

believe I should not be doing my duty if I did not render Germany harmless."[12] As early as 1922, in order to assure the functioning of the IMCC and thus avoid a stalemate contrary to French as well as British interests, the two countries reached a compromise which was presented to the German Government on September 29, 1922, by the Conference of Ambassadors: "While Britain had to accept the French view that Germany was not in fact disarmed, the French had to accept the idea that if Germany co-operated, the CMIC [sic] might or would be withdrawn."[13]

The German position on disarmament[14] was based on Clemenceau's interpretation of the Preamble to Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. The Preamble read: "In order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations, Germany undertakes strictly to observe the military, naval and air clauses which follow."[15] Clemenceau, being asked by the German representatives for an explanation, interpreted the Preamble on June 16, 1919, as follows:

> The Allied and Associated Powers wish to make it clear that their requirements in regard to German armaments were not made solely with the object of rendering it impossible for Germany to resume her policy of military aggression. They are also the first steps toward that general reduction and limitation of armaments which

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[12] The Manchester Guardian Weekly, January 2, 1925. But also see A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No.54, and the C.I.D. Minutes, op.cit. p.1.

[13] Fox, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

[14] For an interesting comment see Otto Hoetzsch, "The German View of Disarmament," Journal of the Royal Institute for International Affairs Vol. 11, 1932, pp. 40-54.

[15] Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919, op.cit., p. 309.

> 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.[16]

The German Government, although it had negotiated secret military arrangements with the Soviet Union and attempted to avoid some of its disarmament obligations, claimed to have fulfilled its obligations as set forth by the peace treaty. Consequently, the Germans requested the termination of the IMCC, claiming that its continued presence in Germany demonstrated the Allies' lack of faith in German intentions. German remonstrations fell on many sympathetic ears in Britain.

> That Germany," wrote a leading British newspaper in January 1925," can be shown to have exceeded the very drastic limitations imposed upon her is pretty certain. But she is disarmed far more completely than has ever happened to a Great Power, and is not in a position to wage a war under modern conditions. The Allies have to decide whether this satisfies them and whether they are going to rely for permanent security upon creating confidence and goodwill. If they decide otherwise they take uponselves the almost impossible task of artificially restricting for an indefinite period the strength of one of the greatest European Powers. In short, thechoice lies between a hopeless, though legally justified, method and the method of common sense.[17]

Although German pleas received a sympathetic ear in Britain, they did not alter the fact that the report of the IMCC's general inspection of German disarmament, in January 1925, stated that "everything outstanding in 1922 was still outstanding...."[18] Under these circumstances, not

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[16]Quoted in Viscount Cecil, A Great Experiment (London:Jonathan Cape, 1941), p. 123.

[17]The Manchester Guardian Weekly, January 2, 1925.

[18]Fox, op.cit., p. 150.

only did the IMCC continue its work in Germany, but the Allies also refused to evacuate the Cologne Zone of the Rhineland.

Cecil has pointed out that "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."[19] The "common sense"prognosis, as explained by The Guardian and Cecil, caused concern in the War Office. A memorandum issued by this office, Memorandum on the Present and Future Military Situation in Germany, January 6, 1925, expressed apprehension about future German attempts to regain the losses incurred by the Treaty of Versailles, and recommended that the "effective execution of the military clauses...should be insisted upon before the withdrawal of the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control...." In conclusion the document expressed the General Staff's distrust of the Germans in rather unflattering terms: "They regard the German nation as a primitive people, scientifically equipped. The General Staff have no fear of France; their only fear is for France."[20]

The Germans, however, insisted that they had met all the obligations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles and felt that if there were any outstanding questions yet to be settled, they were of a technical nature "and not of sufficient importance to warrant the maintenance of a permanent control organization...."[21] Moreover, the

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[19]Viscount Cecil, op. cit., p.123.

[20]Quoted in Fox, op.cit., p.149.

[21]Survey of International Affairs, 1927, p.88.

German Foreign Office pointed out that any of these outstanding matters could be handled by the League under Article 213 of the Treaty of Versailles which stipulated that:

> So long as the present Treaty remains in force, Germany undertakes to give every facility for any investigation which the Council of the League of Nations, acting if need by a majority vote, may consider necessary.[22]

Although the Germans had opposed a scheme for investigation by the League, approved by the Council of the League on September 27, 1924, criticizing it because according to their interpretation it introduced a tendency to make League control permanent, they had been assured at Locarno that the League scheme would not become operative until Germany was on the Council and their objections had been discussed.[23] Having been given this assurance, the League's right of investigation was no longer questioned because, the Germans reasoned, once on the Council they would be in a strong position to look after their own interests. A Foreign Office memorandum of December 7, 1925, indicated this trend of German policy: "The chief concern of the German Government will have to be to undermine and get rid of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission as quickly as possible." It may be assumed, the memorandum continued, that once the IMCC has withdrawn, the League, as stipulated by Article 213,would replace it. If Germany were now to

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[22]Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919, op.cit., p.362.

[23]Cf. Stambrook, "Das Kind," op.cit., pp. 251-252, A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, No. 190, and D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.II, No. 11.

protest against this contemplated change, especially after the assurances received at Locarno, the Allies might very well use this opportunity and delay the withdrawal of the IMCC, using Germany's protest as an excuse for examining the validity of the League's right to control German disarmament in the context of Article 213.[24]

On October 23, 1925, one week after the initialling of the Locarno Pact and in order to demonstrate their co-operation, the Germans produced a statement indicating the state of their disarmament.[25] The German report consisted of four lists: the first dealt with obligations Germany had met; the second with obligations that would be met by November 15, 1925; the third with obligations that were being dealt with but the execution of which had been delayed; and the fourth dealt with problems that caused difficulties. The difficulties were the recruiting of the police, the independent position of the High Command, the dubious role of patriotic organizations, the arms used for training by the army, and the strength of the fortresses on the eastern frontier.[26]

Already before the IMCC submitted the German report and its comments to the Conference of Ambassadors in January 1926, Chamberlain advised the German Government, on November 9, 1925, through D'Abernon to

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[24] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 13.

[25] This statement became the basis of an IMCC report to the Conference of Ambassadors in January 1926.

[26] Cf. D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, Nos. 28,33,35, and Survey of International Affairs, 1927, p. 88.

> ...submit satisfactory proposals in regard to police, associations and High Command at a very early date, and I request that you will impress this upon Dr. Stresemann with all the force at your command. It is also important that the Control Commission should submit a report with the least possible delay....[27]

One wonders if the Germans wilfully misconstrued Chamberlain's request for "satisfactory proposals" because they thought that the signing of the Locarno Treaties in London on December 1, 1925, would present a suitable opportunity to discuss issues of concern. In a last minute effort, on November 28, 1925, Chamberlain asked D'Abernon to persuade the Germans to come to London for the purpose of signing the Pact and not to discuss conditions pertaining to the termination of the IMCC:

> German Ambassador has informed me that German delegation to London on December 1st will be accompanied by a staff of fifteen including eight secretaries....I am somewhat disturbed by the German proposal which lends credence to the reports in the press that the German delegation are intending to use the occasion of the signature of the treaties to discuss all manner of business. [Italics mine.]
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> . . . . . .
>
> I shall of course be glad to discuss the position freely with the German Ministers but this is not the moment for them to press for further concessions from us....It is borne in upon me once again that to a German no concession is of any value from the moment that it has been made.[28]

Although Chamberlain complained frequently about German unreasonableness in asking for the impossible, the negotiations leading to the air agreement show that the British, when issues of their safety were concerned, could be as demanding as the Germans. A memorandum on

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[27] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, No.75.

[28] Ibid., No. 120.

December 24, 1925, by Nord, the German representative to the negotiations between the Conference of Ambassadors and the experts from the various countries, showed the British concern that Germany might be training military pilots under the auspices of government-subsidized flying clubs. Although the German representatives had agreed to British demands that there would be no government subsidies to flying clubs, and that the clubs would not be permitted to train their students in any military aspects of flying (luftmilitärische Ausbildung), the British representative insisted again that Germany would have to distinquish between training pilots for the purpose of flying sportscrafts and fighter planes. It is interesting to note that the British representative, Wing Commander Joseph R.W. Smyth-Pigott, privately told Nord about his embarrassment at having to present such demands.[29]

About a week later, on January 3, 1926, when negotiations were resumed, the British representative, as instructed by London, asked for more concessions which Stresemann deemed unrealistic. The following excerpts are from a Stresemann memorandum of the same date:

> The English, to their horror, have heard that Germany would not forbid members of the army to be trained as sport pilots....if one considers that Germany is going to train 7,000 officers as pilots, then the German refusal poses a grave threat and causes extreme concern in England. I told the British representative that we would never consider training 7,000 army officers as pilots....This was a question of prestige as far as the army was concerned....Insofar as it is impossible to prevent these officers from learning to drive a car, or to participate in horse racing. it is equally impossible to prevent them from flying as a sport.[30]

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[29]Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 25, and D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No.161.

[30]A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 27.

Chamberlain, however, kept insisting that the Germans should yield to British demands and on January 8, 1926, Addison, a member of the staff of the British Embassy in Berlin, conveyed to Schubert a message from London, urging him to use his influence in the next session of the German Cabinet to forbid army officers to be trained as pilots.[31]

On February 2, 1926, Chamberlain protested that the Germans were not acting in the "Spirit of Locarno" and had D'Abernon present Schubert with a note which not only mentioned air regulations once more, but also listed such issues as police force, high command, patriotic organizations as further grievances:

> In disarmament, no progress on such important points as High Command and Patriotic Associations.
>
> The police question has made little advance, and the German Government are understood to be about to ask for another 5000 men over and above those which their own delegates agreed to at Paris last November.
>
> In air negotiations, some progress has been reported in the last few days, but it is now over two months since the German Government came forward with their original suggestion, and we are still far from a complete settlement.[32]

On the same day, to stress his point, Chamberlain made a personal appeal to Luther and Stresemann in a telegram:

> Secretary of State begs the Chancellor and Dr. Stresemann to consider how unstable is the present French Government, and how unfortunate an influence would be exercised on the policy which all the Statesmen, who met as friends and colleagues at Locarno, have at heart, if their task of bringing this policy to fruition were to fall in other hands.

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[31] Cf. ibid., No. 31, and D.B.F.P. IA, Vol.I, No. 172.

[32] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 73. See also D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, Nos. 211, 218, 227.

> Sir Austen Chamberlain addresses a personal appeal to his friends and collaborators, the Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs, not to let slip the present golden opportunity, and to show all the courage and good faith which alone can bring our common hopes to fulfilment.[33]

Chamberlain's appeal must have been successful because on February 26, 1926, D'Abernon told Schubert that the air negotiations in Paris were progressing better and that Chamberlain considered it now very important to finish the disarmament negotiations.[34] Chamberlain was undoubtedly anticipating - as indicated by the Paris negotiations - that Germany was getting ready to agree to British demands and, as an incentive and gesture of appreciation, he offered his support on an issue that the Germans wanted to close as soon as possible.

Stresemann knew that British support was necessary to overcome French reluctance to withdraw the IMCC; he also knew that British anxieties about air safety would have to be satisfied before any real progress in the disarmament negotiations could be made. But while the German Government was willing, although somewhat reluctantly, to make the required concessions to the British demands, Stresemann was well aware of the moral strength of the German position which led him to believe that the withdrawal of the IMCC was a realistic expectation. That the British Foreign Office was equally aware of the German position is indicated by a statement by Cecil and Chamberlain's comment on the statement. The Cecil-Chamberlain exchange of views is important because

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[33] A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/1, No. 74. See also D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, Nos. 231, 232.

[34] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 123. But see D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, No. 295.

although the two men interpreted Germany's obligations to disarm differently, they both realized that Germany could not be kept disarmed forever, especially if Britain and France did not participate in a general disarmament program themselves. Cecil maintained that:

> The Germans are entitled to say that under several international documents the last of which is the Protocol to the Treaties of Locarno we and the French and others have bound ourselves to promote a general scheme of disarmament. They can further rightly contend that unless we do something genuine in that direction their obligations to disarm under the Versailles treaty are no longer binding.[35]

Cecil felt that while the German contention was legally doubtful, it was morally correct. Chamberlain, on the other hand, was not concerned with the moral aspect of the question and stated:

> That if it all comes to nothing we shall be unable to keep Germany disarmed indefinitely.... Germany will in that case rearm some day and we shall not be able to prevent it but she will have broken the treaty.[36]

The moral versus legal issue of German disarmament, as expressed by Cecil and Chamberlain, is of less practical consequence than their consensus on the improbability of Germany's continuous state of disarmament. Perhaps this is the best explanation of the IMCC's premature and somewhat hasty withdrawal from Germany.

In the meantime the negotiations continued and on April 22, 1926, Schubert told D'Abernon that he had been informed that air negotiations were progressing extremely well and that a final agreement was to be

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[35] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 326.

[36] Ibid., No. 326. See also Viscount Cecil, op.cit., pp.171-172.

expected shortly. D'Abernon concurred with Schubert and replied that he had information to the same effect.[37]

Although the air negotiations were progressing well,[38] some of the other disarmament issues took longer to negotiate. Moreover, two additional aspects caused the Allies, particularly the French, to become reluctant to withdraw the IMCC. One of these new aspects was the Treaty of Berlin. Interpreted as an instrument of revenge for Germany's failure to gain admission to the League in March, it "made French opinion unwilling to grant Germany any sort of concession."[39] The other development was caused by Germany's failure at Geneva in March.

> It will be remembered that the Germans had formulated objections to the League scheme and were assured at Locarno that League investigations would not take place until their objections had been discussed by the Council in the presence of German representatives. Now that Germany's entry into the League has...been postponed, the result of withdrawing the Control Commission without further delay would be to leave Germany free from supervision of any kind for a period of at least some months which might conceivably drag out indefinitely.[40]

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[37] Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 198, and D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, No. 436.

[38] The Air Agreement was signed on May 21, 1926. Germany had accepted the British demands. Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/1, No. 201,220, and Salewski, op.cit., p. 333.

[39] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. II, No. 11. Although the writer of this Memorandum respecting the state of Military Control in Germany blamed only French reaction as the cause for continuing the IMCC, there is no doubt that the British were also anxious about the situation.

[40] Ibid., No. 11.

Germany, however, was quite prepared to accept League investigation in special cases, and on November 12, 1926, after joining the League, when Lindsay suggested that all the outstanding disarmament questions should be settled before the December Council Meeting, he included the question of League investigation and Schubert replied carefully:

> The League investigation scheme exists already. Insofar as Germany was concerned it has not yet come into existence because the IMCC is still busy. Once the Control Commission is withdrawn, then the League investigation scheme would automatically come into force....last January we disputed some aspects of the scheme and its operational regulations. It is, therefore, necessary to reach an understanding with the League. Yet this is not supposed to imply that any possibility of investigation by the League would be entirely impossible before such an understanding was reached. After all, we only protested against a few points of the investigation protocol and especially against the view contained in the protocol that the League was justified to exercise a permanent control of Germany. [Italis mine.] But we never questioned that the right of control could not be exercised in justified special cases. If such a case would occur, we would never question a special investigation. Under these circumstances, ...all needs for control...are taken care of.[41]

A German Foreign Office dispatch to London, Paris, and Brussels, on November 16, 1926, repeated and confirmed Schubert's statement to Lindsay that Germany was willing to accept League investigation, as based on Article 213 of the Treaty of Versailles, in special cases but - and a significant point was added:

> We are not interested in a quick solution of the investigation question. Our position on the Council with regard to this question is bound to improve,...It is, therefore, unnecessary to discuss the investigation question any further with the respective governments.[42]

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[41] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, No. 191.

[42] Ibid., No. 195.

On November 23, 1926, in a speech in the Reichstag, Stresemann reaffirmed that Germany had lived up to the conditions imposed upon her at Versailles, and that the time for the termination of the IMCC had come. He had no objection to have the League take over the function of the IMCC, but felt that failing to reach an immediate agreement on League investigation was no justification for maintaining the IMCC. Moreover, Stresemann insisted that, in fairness to Germany, it was time for the other powers to reduce their armaments.[43]

London was interested in finishing discussions of the disarmament questions before the opening of the Council meeting and Tyrrell assured Sthamer, on November 18, 1926, that the British representatives would do everything to bring about a solution.[44]

British hopes to terminate discussions on the disarmament questions before the opening of the Council were not fulfilled; some of these questions were settled as late as July 1927 long after the IMCC had left Germany. On December 6, 1926, the opening day of the Council meeting, the investigation question was handed over to a committee of jurists for further study.[45] On December 11, 1926, it was decided, although

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[43]Cf. Verhandlungen des Reichstag, op.cit., Vol.391, cols.8143-8144. and The Manchester Guardian Weekly, November 26, 1926.

[44]A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, Nos. 198, 200.

[45]Ibid., No. 237.

some questions were still outstanding,[46] that the IMCC should terminate its control of Germany on January 31, 1927. All outstanding questions were to be referred to the Conference of Ambassadors and the German Government for settlement before January 31, 1927. If settlement prior to this date was impossible, then the Council would take over and work out a final solution. After all the previous haggling and fighting a solution had now suddenly been formulated and accepted with relative ease.[47]

On the same day, December 11, 1926, the jurists' recommendations pertaining to the League's scope and power of investigation were accepted. As can be seen from examining the document, the Germans were able to successfully maintain their position:

> Les commissions d'investigation agissent sous l'autorité et sur les instructions du Conseil de la Société des Nations statuant à la majorité. C'est au Conseil qu'il appartient de décider, conformément à l'article 213 du traité de paix, s'il est nécessaire dans un cas déterminé de procéder à une investigation et d'en specifier l'objet et les limites.
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> . . . . . .
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> En outre, il est entendu que les dispositions de l'article 213 du traité de paix avec l'Allemagne sur les investigations sont applicables à la zone rhénane démilitarisée comme aux autres parties de l'Allemagne. Ces dispositions ne permettent pas dans cette zone plus qu'ailleurs une spécialisation de contrôle par des

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[46] These were the stationing of the police in barracks, patriotic organizations, German trade in war material, and modification of the eastern fortifications. The first two problems were solved by a presidential decree, on December 31, 1926, which satisfied the Conference of Ambassadors. The remaining issues were satisfactorily concluded in January 1927. Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol. IV, Nos. 82,92, and Salewski, op.cit., pp. 367-370.

[47] Survey of International Affairs, 1927, p. 97.

éléments locaux stables et permanents. [Italics mine.]

S'il doit y avoir dans la zone rhénane démilitarisée de tels éléments spéciaux non prévus par l'article 213, c'est affaire de convention entre les gouvern[e]ments intéressés.[48]

On December 16, 1926, a Socialist member of the Reichstag accused the Reichswehr of breaking German promises to disarm by military collaboration with Russia, giving such details as names, sums of money involved and arrangements made by the contracting parties. Although Scheidemann's revelations made the headlines in the newspapers and caused a heated debate in the Reichstag, the accusations did not prevent the IMCC's withdrawal from Germany on January 31, 1927.[49]

The termination of the IMCC after eight years of supervision was welcomed in Germany as yet another success of Stresemann's foreign policy. German complaints about the incompatibility of Locarno and the prolonged presence of the IMCC on German soil - which was regarded as an infringement on German sovereignty and a general nuisance - were finally satisfied. Expressed differently, in Stresemann's statement to Lindsay on November 24, 1926, "Germany's whole understanding was at stake if the question of military control were not now done away with."[50] But it was not only Germany that gained from the termination of the IMCC. Britain's

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[48] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. II, No. 352. Cf. A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, Nos. 252,257, and Survey of International Affairs, 1927, pp. 97-98.

[49] Cf. Verhandlungen des Reichstag, op.cit., Vol.391, cols. 8577-8586, and The Manchester Guardian Weekly, January 14 and 24, 1927.

[50] Quoted in Lionel Kochan, The Struggle for Germany 1914-1945 (Edinburgh: University Press, 1963), p. 55. See also A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, No. 209.

interests too were served, as Stresemann saw very clearly, because if the IMCC were not withdrawn in time, "the political consequences...would be a victory of Poincarism in France and the transfer of the leadership of German public opinion in the direction of the German Nationalists; both developments certainly not in the interest of Europe, but a return to methods previously discarded."[51] Such a reversal to previous conditions, however, would have been detrimental to British policy and although Chamberlain's pro-French attitude was no secret, he used all the means at his disposal to induce Paris to agree to the termination of the IMCC. A case in point is his letter to Lord Crewe, on November 3, 1925, urging the ambassador to convince Paris that even though some aspects of German disarmament had not yet been dealt with satisfactorily, it was politically important to reach an understanding regarding the evacuation of the Cologne Zone. "Any minor discrepancies between the Control Commission reports and German statements would not be allowed to interfere with the work of appeasement to which M. Briand attaches as much importance as we do ourselves."[52] Chamberlain's attempts "to appease" Germany for the sake of European peace were more realistic than the futile attempts undertaken by the British Government in the 1930's. "Unlike Neville Chamberlain, Austen at least had something positive to offer the Germans, and in this sense he could be said to have pursued

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[51] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, No. 209.

[52] Quoted in Fox, op.cit., p. 153.

a 'positive appeasement' policy, as opposed to the later policy of 'negative appeasement'; by the late thirties there was little that Britain could offer Germany."[53]

There was also the practical consideration that, no matter what effort would be exerted, there was no acceptable method of keeping Germany indefinitely disarmed while the other nations refused to accept arms control. Once the IMCC was withdrawn and the League took over its function, the control of German disarmament was practically ended because the League made no attempts to exercise its right of control.[54] While from a German point of view the termination of the IMCC was a great success, in the general European context of disarmament and arms control it was only one step toward a goal which was never achieved.

> When the League of Nations has similar powers of investigation into the armaments of France and Great Britain as it now has in the case of Germany we may perhaps hope that equilibrium has been reached and a real steptaken towards European disarmament. Until then we can only regard the present arrangements as transitional."[55]

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[53] Ibid., p. 164.

[54] Salewski, op.cit., pp. 375-376.

[55] The Manchester Guardian Weekly, February 4, 1927.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The "traditionalist"[1] foreign policy of the Conservative and Coalition Governments strongly supported Germany's struggle for pre-war eminence.[2] While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with all the ingredients that went into the making of British policy, one aspect deserves consideration: the "traditionalist" dislike of making long-ranging decisions that might lead to awkward commitments. In his memoirs, reminiscing about the pre-war era, Viscount Grey cautioned against possible mistakes in foreign policy "made by a great thinker calculating far ahead, who thinks or calculates wrongly."[3] Viscount Halifax, speaking in the House of Lords, in March 1937, praised Article 16 of the League Covenant because its provisions "were not capable of

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[1]For a discussion of "Traditionalists" and "Collectivists" ideas on British foreign policy see Wolfers, op.cit., pp. 223-8.

[2]In the Inter-War period Labour was in office for two short periods (1924, 1929-31) only. For most of the time British foreign policy was directed along traditionalist lines by the Conservative and Coalition Governments in power.

[3]Quoted in W.N. Medlicott, British Foreign Policy Since Versailles 1919-1963 (London: Methuen & Co.Ltd., 1968), p.XIII.

prior definition" and, therefore, did not place British diplomats in a position to "define beforehand what might be our attitude to a hypothetical complication in Central or Eastern Europe."[4] This attitude is reflected in the documents of the British Foreign Office in the period ranging from October 1925 to January 1927 and has done much to promote the still accepted theory that Britain preferred to "muddle through" rather than pursue an active, well-articulated foreign policy. But considering British objectives and the general state of international relations in the mid-twenties, then it is not only unfair to accuse British statesmen of simply "muddling through", but leads to an inaccurate interpretation of British policy as well.[5] According to the "muddling through" theory, one may begin by asserting that the British Foreign Office, led by Austen Chamberlain, reacted decisively to short-range and sometimes trivial problems,[6] but there was a lack of long-range planning and an ostrich-like attitude which refused to look beyond Stresemann and at what might happen if somebody less responsible than he were to decide the course of German foreign policy. Chamberlain himself has often been labelled a proponent of the "muddling through" type of diplomacy,[7] and statements such as the following give basis for the sterotype:

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[4]Qucted in Wolfers, op.cit., p. 267.

[5]For an interesting point of view see Algernon Cecil, "British Policy Past and Present," The Quarterly Review, Vol. 241, No. 478, (January 1924), pp. 159-161.

[6]A good example of this is the Bingen incident which resulted in a flood of letters and telegraphs between London, Berlin, and Coblenz. See Chapter II, pp. 27-28.

[7]See Wolfers, op.cit., pp. 224-225. Cf. Albrecht-Carrie, op.cit., p. 415, and Taylor, op.cit., p. 81.

> We have been content to deal at any one moment with the evil of the day and to provide the remedy which that evil required. It is not out of a logical system proceeding from general hypotheses that our freedom, our liberties, our safety have grown. It is from the wise spirit of compromise which has inspired all British parties in critical moments and from our careful concentration upon the immediate problems which required a solution at the moment.[8]

Moreover, the upper echelon of the Foreign Office entertained at times rather quaint notions about Central European conditions which prevented them from understanding the problems of the region.[9] In all fairness, however, it must be pointed out that the British Foreign Office, unlike its German counterpart, was occupied with global affairs and the problems of continental Europe were considered just another facet of the total picture rather than a matter of life and death as in the German case. There can be no doubt that Britain, a satisfied power with world-wide interests, had to divide her efforts whereas Germany, before she could once again assume responsibilities overseas, could concentrate all her efforts on re-establishing her position in Europe. The following paragraph is typical of British sentiments:

> We have got all that we want - perhaps more. Our sole object is to keep what we have and live in peace. Many foreign countries are playing for a definite stake and their policy is shaped accordingly. It is not so in our case. To the casual observer our foreign policy may appear to lack consistency and continuity, but both are there. We keep our hands free in order to throw our weight into the scale on behalf of peace. The maintenance

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[8]Chamberlain at the League of Nations Assembly, September 10, 1925. In Wolfers, op.cit., pp.224-5.

[9]H. Munro Chadwick, The Nationalities of Europe (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1945), p.VII.

> of the balance of power and the preservation of the status quo have been our guiding lights for many decades and will so continue.[10]

The Baldwin government's refusal to deal with any but immediate problems and the pragmatic approach to them, coupled with the Prime Minister's disinterest in foreign affairs,[11] enabled Chamberlain to remain in office for five years. The Foreign Secretary's personal likes and dislikes with regard to France and Germany were quite clear, but luckily for his political career he never was able to implement them.[12] A successful Foreign Secretary with definite ideas beyond the immediate future would have been a constant embarrassment to a government bent to "muddle through". Three months before coming into office, Chamberlain had expressed his views in the House of Commons; views he never changed subsequently:

> What is the policy which we would follow? In the first place, we would frankly accept and uphold the Versailles Treaty and its subsidiary or collateral Treaties as the basis, and the only possible basis, for the public law of Europe.
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> . . . . . .
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> In the second place, we would make the maintenance of the Entente with France the cardinal object of our policy. We would do that both to give confidence in the stability and the execution of the Treaties and to prevent fresh causes of difference arising between ourselves and our Allies....Thirdly, we should make the observance by Germany of her obligations a not less cardinal feature of our policy in foreign affairs, and, in return,

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[10] D.B.F.P., IA, Vol.I, p. 846. Undated memorandum submitted to Chamberlain on April 10, 1926 by Mr. Gregory.

[11] Petrie, op.cit., p.246.

[12] "What precise form Chamberlain thought a British commitment to France should take never became clear." Stambrook, "Austen Chamberlain," op. cit., p. 113.

> if Germany frankly accepted and loyally fulfilled the obligations as now presented, we should be prepared to respect the integrity of Germany and to welcome her into the comity of nations.[13]

Once in office, The Foreign Secretary showed that he had meant what he had said a few months before in a minute, dated January 4, 1925:

> I see no prospect of the continuance of cordial relations with France in Europe or elsewhere unless we can somehow give her a sense of security. Looking at Germany I see no chance of her settling down to make the best of her new conditions unless she is convinced that she cannot hope to divide the Allies or to challenge them with any success for as long a time as any man can look ahead. As long as Security is absent, Germany is tempted to prepare for Revanche....We cannot afford to see France crushed, to have Germany or an eventual Russo-German combination supreme on the Continent or to allow any great military power to dominate the low Countries.[14]

But Chamberlain's views were at variance with the course suggested, or rather the lack of any policy, in the Foreign Office. Reacting to the minute of January 4, 1925, one official responded with the statement that "having no objective Foreign Policy at all...in the present conditions, would not be a wholly bad conclusion."[15] Moreover,

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[13] 176 H.C.Deb. 5s., July 14, 1924, cols. 109-110. Cf. Middlemas and Barnes, op.cit., p. 345.

[14] Quoted in Stambrook, "Austen Chamberlain," op.cit., p.125.

[15] Minute by Harold Nicolson, January 23, 1925. Quoted in Stambrook, "Austen Chamberlain," op.cit., p. 117. It is ironic to note that in later years the same Harold Nicolson, in discussing what he termed the "functional defects" that professional diplomats tend to develop, could include among them "the fallacy that on the whole it is wiser, in all circumstances, to do nothing at all." Harold Nicolson, The Evolution of Diplomatic Method (London: Constable & Co., 1954),p.78.

Chamberlain, the Francophile, was not popular with the majority of his own party, let alone his Liberal and Labour opponents.[16]

Chamberlain did not sense the distrust in which the British held France, or simply chose to ignore it. This intuitive distrust certainly had some justification. Wolfers observed that "with the exception of the United States, who was not located on the life-line, France was the only Great Power still in a position to oppose Britain and interfere with her vital interests if she so chose."[17] This assertion is supported by a Memorandum on the Foreign Policy of His Majesty's Government, with a List of British Commitments in their Relative Order of Importance, whose author, Mr. Gregory, did not hold the Foreign Secretary's views. Considering an Anglo-French war within the next decade as improbable, Gregory, nevertheless, gave plenty of space to explaining the unlikelihood of such an event and concluded rather ungraciously that: "In spite of the poison distilled daily by the Paris press and the mischievous activities of French agents in many parts of the world, the two countries are bound to stand together for many years to come."[18]

The peculiar nature of Anglo-French relations was not lost to

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[16]While being highly praised for his part in achieving the Locarno Pact, which was favoured by the British public, Germany's failure to enter the League in the spring of 1926 was laid squarely on the Foreign Secretary's doorstep.

[17]Wolfers, op.cit., p. 205.

[18]D.B.F.P., IA, Vol. I, pp. 846-881.

interested observers in Germany. Lieutenant-Colonel von Stülpnagel, chief of army department T1, wrote in a memorandum in February 1924:

> As Britain at the moment is neither able to wage war, nor willing to do so, she sees in the League of Nations the means of making France pliant....To obtain for herself a dominating role in the League of Nations, she urges Russia and Germany to join it, and hopes to gain a majority, with the help of Russia, Germany, and Italy against France with her satellites....France aims and will always aim at the final destruction of Germany as a power. When France has become undisputedly the preponderant power on the Continent after the destruction of Germany, she will not hesitate any longer to fight Britain openly....For both, Germany is merely an object. Britain wants to 'Austrianize' Germany under her influence, France wants to destroy Germany...."[19]

It did not take German diplomats long to realize that by appealing to British public opinion and the right men in the British Foreign Office, they could bring pressure on France which that country could not withstand indefinitely.

There were, however, other considerations governing the conduct of British foreign policy which proponents of the "muddling through" thesis have overlooked. Accepting the premise that Britain was a satisfied power interested in maintaining the status quo, then it is not difficult to accept the fact that British policy was pragmatic and British diplomats more concerned with dealing with problems as they arose rather than precipitating crises in order to advance on ideological grounds or gain some grand objectives. Germany, in contrast, wanted revision and it was comparatively easy for German statesmen to formulate a strong, long-range program with the termination of the Versailles

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[19]Quoted in F.L.Carsten, The Reichswehr and Politics 1918 to 1933 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) p. 199.

system as its ultimate goal. But insistence on maintaining the status quo and formulating well defined, long-range objectives are contradictory concepts and, therefore, to accuse British statesmen of "muddling through" is ignoring the fact that in view of the ever changing international system, German objectives were easier to achieve ultimately than British hopes of maintaining the status quo by continuous pragmatic adjustments to the changes of the political, economic, and social realities of the international situation.

Moreover, to accuse Baldwin of being disinterested in foreign policy and incapable of understanding its premises is also erroneous. Granted, a prime minister who avoids confrontation with the problems of foreign relations fits in well with the "muddling through" theory, but Middlemas and Barnes, in their biography of Baldwin, have ably substantiated the opposite and pointed out that:

> A Prime Minister, in the nature of his duties, is involved with every facet of Government; but everything may not be his concern. His influence is not so easy to establish as that of a departmental chief. The machinery of government has its own momentum; the various ministries and departments have great areas where he never penetrates.[20]

Baldwin claimed that he was apprehensive about exerting too much influence when dealing with matters of foreign policy, but one of his critics wrote that: "he has read history and awaited the next phase,

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[20]Middlemas and Barnes, op.cit., p. 1074-75. See also pp.105-106, 154,268,345. (This is the best biography of Baldwin now available).

regardless of the fact that he was the statesman by whom history should have been written."[21] Whatever the case may have been, Baldwin had great confidence in his foreign secretary, which he expressed in a letter at the end of 1926: "It has been a great comfort throughout the year to feel that I never need worry about foreign affairs and to feel perfect confidence in the judgment and wisdom of the Foreign Secretary...."[22] Yet even though he was reluctant to interfere too much, he personally intervened on behalf of Germany during the Ruhr crisis and participated in the settlement of the perennial reparation question in 1924 as well as in the negotiations leading to the Locarno Pact.[23] He believed that Britain's fortunes were "indissolubly bound to Europe, and we shall have to use, and continue to use, our best endeavours to bring to that Continent that peace in which we and millions of men up and down Europe have an equal belief and an equal faith."[24] In order to maintain this peace, Baldwin was prepared to face whatever the consequences might be: "War is a very terrible thing....I am quite content...to be called a coward if I have done what I could...to keep my own people out of war."[25]

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[21]John Green, Mr. Baldwin (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd., 1933) p. 26. But see Middlemas and Barnes, op.cit., p.345.

[22]Quoted in Middlemas and Barnes, op.cit., pp. 342-343.

[23]Cf. ibid., p. 1076, and Steed Wickham, The Real Stanley Baldwin (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1930), p. 60.

[24]Stanley Baldwin, On England (London: Philip Allan & Co. Ltd. 1926), p. 235.

[25]Stanley Baldwin, Service of our Lives (London: Hoddes & Stoughton Ltd., 1937), pp. 41-42.

Like his Foreign Secretary, Baldwin was a Francophile, but he was not blind to French endeavours to keep Germany in indefinite subjugation, being aware "not only of French policy, but of German intentions, and he moved with caution, careful to avoid the finality of categoric demands."[26] Chamberlain, often attacked for his pro-French attitude and his admiration for Briand, also realized that Germany's potential was intact - despite the war and Versailles - and that the time would come when this potential would be fully realized once more. At this time, one could only hope that Germany would be prevented from asserting her might by either realizing that the price of aggression was too high, or her position too favourable to be risked by hasty military action. On February 19, 1925, he expressed these views in a revealing letter to King George V:

> I regard it as the first task of statesmanship to set to work to make the new position of Germany tolerable to the German people in the hope that, as they regain prosperity under it, they may in time become reconciled to it and be unwilling to put their fortunes again to the desperate hazard of war. I am working not for today or tomorrow but for some date like 1950 or 1960 when German strength will have returned and when the prospect of war will again cloud the horizon, unless the risks of war are still too great to be rashly incurred and the actual conditions too tolerable to be jeopardised on a gambler's throw. It is on the realization of this double factor that the hope of permanent peace depends. I believe the key to the solution is to be found in allaying French fears, and that unless we find means to do this we may be confronted with a complete breakdown of our friendly relations with France and an exacerbation of her attitude towards Germany.[27]

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[26] Middlemas & Barnes, op.cit., p. 181.

[27] Quoted in Harold Nicolson, King George V (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1952) p. 407.

Churchill, although often antagonistic to Chamberlain's method of conducting foreign policy, also agreed that any attempts of easing Franco-German hostilities were in the best British interests. "It seemed to me," he wrote in his history of the Second World War, "that the supreme interest of the British people in Europe lay in the assuagement of the Franco-German feud, and that they had no other interests comparable or contrary to that."[28] Yet despite his professed pro-French attitude, Chamberlain could be critical of French policy whenever he considered it to be disturbing cordial European relations. Perhaps the best example to illustrate this aspect of Chamberlain's activities as Foreign Secretary was his endeavour, contrary to French aims and the wishes of the British War Office, to terminate the IMCC's supervision of German disarmament.

Complicating Britain's role in Europe were developments in China which demanded the full attention of the Foreign Office. After the death of Dr.Sun Yat-Sen the leader of the Kuomintang, in 1925, the Nationalist Government directed Chinese agitation against foreign exploitation, hoping to revise the commercial treaties between China and the western powers. The Chinese offensive was primarily directed against Britain. London attempted to reach an agreement with the Chinese Government in December 1926, but a skirmish between British troops and a

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[28]Winston S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston:Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), p. 28.

mob at Hankow delayed negotiations and further complicated the situation.[29]

The tone of the domestic scene in Britain in the mid-twenties was set by the General Strike in 1926. The strike strengthened the already existing alienation of the working class from society[30] and disenchanted many middle and upper class idealists with the Government. "Talk about hanging the Kaiser! Parliament is full of little unhanged Kaisers!" was one of the slogans used to express criticism of the Conservative Government for its handling of the crisis.[31] While it is difficult to ascertain to what extent the internal situation influenced the conduct of foreign policy, it seems safe to speculate that anxieties about the domestic situation could well have acted as a psychological deterrent to the efficient conduct of foreign policy.

German aims were obvious and generally accepted in Germany. Granted, the Right as well as the extreme Left in the Reichstag would have preferred - each for different reasons - a pronounced "eastern" foreign policy and alignment with the U.S.S.R. For the former this preference was tactical and thought of in terms of effectiveness in Germany's struggle to break the shackles of Versailles, while the Communists' concern for close co-operation with Russia was dictated by dogmatic considerations.

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[29]Cf. E.H. Carr, International Relations Between the Two World Wars, 1919-1939, op.cit. pp. 154-162, D.B.F.P. IA, Vol.I, pp.872-873, and Vol.III, pp.800-801.

[30]Gilbert, M., op.cit., p. 244.

[31]Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, The Long Week-End- A Social History of Great Britain 1918-1939 (New York: W.W.Norton & Co. In., 1963), p. 167.

A good summary of Germany's foreign policy objectives can be found in Stresemann's letter to the Crown Prince, on September 7, 1925. The letter stated that the first objective of German policy was to end the Allied occupation of German territory, or, as Stresemann put it: "to get this stranglehold off our neck."[32] With this important goal in mind, Stresemann then explained his other objectives:

> ... the solution of the Reparations question in a sense tolerable for Germany, which is an essential condition for the recovery of our strength.
> ...the protection of Germans abroad, those 10 to 12 millions of our kindred who now live under a foreign yoke in foreign lands.
> ... the readjustment of our Eastern frontiers, the recovery of Danzig, the Polish Corridor, and a correction of the frontier in Upper Silesia.
> In the background stands the Union with German Austria, although I am quite clear that this not merely brings no advantages to Germany, but seriously complicates the problems of the German Reich.[33]

Stresemann realized that Germany was powerless and any success in foreign policy could only be achieved by skilful diplomatic manipulation of every opportunity offered. In a speech at the German People's Party Conference in Hanover, March 29, 1924, he said:

> We are experiencing the misery of the foreign policy of an armless nation. We have nothing in common with a pacifism that is proud of this situation. In contrast to such pacifism, we are deeply ashamed that disarmament has been forced upon us. But because we are adherents of the Bismarckian idea of Realpolitik, we must demand that all the others, who also claim to be disciples of Bismarck, engage in the pursuance of Realpolitik and not in politics of illusions.[34]

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[32] Sutton, op.cit., Vo. II, p.XI.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Quoted in Zimmermann, op.cit., p. 220.

Even Locarno did not alter the fact that Germany was powerless, and in a speech in Berlin on December 14, 1925, before the Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Landmannschaften, Stresemann again explained patiently to his audience this basic premise of German foreign policy:

> The real tragedy of German foreign policy is that it is a fight for right without power that could be used at the opportune moment to assert this right.[35]
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> . . . . . .
>
> As a people too one may not adopt the position of a child that, on Christmas Eve, writes a letter to Santa Claus asking for everything needed for the next fifteen years. The parents would not be in a position to satisfy all the demands. I sometimes have the feeling of being presented with such Santa Claus letters; there is no consideration that history advances only in steps, and that nature never leaps.[36]

Obviously such statements were not popular, but Stresemann realistically accepted the consequences. "No German Foreign Minister," he observed, "was able to pursue a popular policy because there was always so serious a discrepancy between the high tension of national feeling and any practicable policy."[37] Stresemann's calculating and realistic approach to foreign policy was particularly unpopular with large sections of the German youth. "The misery," Stresemann told foreign reporters, "drives people into extremes, and the politics...of national humiliation drive a large portion of our people, particularly

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[35]Quoted in Salewski, op.cit., p. 282.

[36]Quoted in Otto Winzer, Deutsche Aussenpolitik des Friedens und des Sozialismus (Berlin: Staatsverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republic, 1969), p. 401.

[37]Sutton, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 224.

our youth, into the arms of the right-wing parties."[38] Stresemann was hated by the German nationalists who wanted to eliminate him as foreign minister at any cost and even attempted to assassinate him. Among his opponents was the chief of staff of the German army. "It is not desirable," wrote Seeckt in a letter on July 2, 1925, "to bring about a government crisis now - one does not change jockey during the race - but the question is if it is not more important to get rid of this man now and open up ways for another foreign policy."[39]

Stresemann's tactics were based on three factors which he skilfully probed and exploited. First, he made use of the distrust between East and West and his insistence on conducting a German rather than an East or West policy[40] indicated his successful handling of a potentially dangerous situation. Secondly, Stresemann was sensitive to any Anglo-French discord and used it to German advantage. Thirdly, he utilized Germany's growing economic potential to advance political objectives.[41] "His most outstanding characteristic," wrote a member of his staff, "was his ability to grasp political ideas and to apply them to prevailing domestic and foreign policy."[42] On the other hand,

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[38] Quoted in Göhring, op.cit., p. 17.

[39] Quoted in Rabenau, op.cit., p. 418.

[40] In a letter of September 23, 1929, Stresemann wrote: „Es gibt keine Ost - und Westpolitik, sondern nur eine Aussenpolitik des Deutschen Reiches." Quoted in Spenz, op. cit., p. 121.

[41] For a discussion of Stresemann's tactics see Bretton, op.cit., pp. 150-156.

[42] Quoted in ibid., p. 10.

Stresemann's personality, his physical appearance, his tenacity and tactics during negotiations aroused distrust,[43] and, as Lord D'Abernon explained in his diary, it took a long time before one was able to appreciate Stresemann's good points.[44] His exploitation of the East-West conflict, his manipulation of certain factions of the Reichstag, and his practical approach to politics in general may have caused his condemnation as an unscrupulous opportunist by his less successful political opponents and by some writers, but remaining in office as long as he did certainly is enough evidence that his methods were appreciated by a significant segment of the German people. The patrons of the Berlin cabarets of the twenties were undoubtedly amused when the entertainers declaimed: „Stresemann der mal links kann und mal rechts kann."[45] - but under the surface was latent appreciation of their foreign minister's tactics.

Stresemann received good support from Schubert, the State Secretary in the German Foreign Office. Schubert believed that good relations with Britain were of paramount importance to Germany, yet he strongly supported Stresemann's policy of balancing Russia against the West in order to achieve the revision of Versailles. Dirksen, an advocat of Ostpolitik, and, therefore, no friend of Schubert, admitted the Secretary's competence in the following, somewhat caustic description of Schubert:

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[43] Northedge, op.cit., p. 252.

[44] D'Abernon, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 153, 195.

[45] Quoted in Northedge, op.cit., p.252.

> He was suspicious, secretive, and lacked the gift of taking things easily and confining himself to the really important matters. He made life a burden to his collaborators, but still more to himself. He...believed that everything would be on the rocks if he were out of his office. A Westerner...he was a convinced advocate of the pro-British school in the German foreign service. But he was sufficiently farsighted...to counterbalance the western influences by a good understanding with Russia.[46]

Stresemann was also ably assisted by Sthamer, the German Ambassador in London from 1920 to 1930. Although Sthamer was an adherent of Ostpolitik, his skill as diplomat stood Germany in good stead and was appreciated by George V, who told Stresemann and Luther, at the signing of the Locarno Treaties in December 1925, that Sthamer had represented his country with dignity during the difficult years following the war.[47]

The Locarno Treaties were the turning point in German endeavours to regain her pre-war status of eminence in the European community. "I see in Locarno the preservation of the Rhineland and the possibility of regaining German lands in the East."[48] This comment on Locarno was made by Stresemann who fully appreciated the scope that the Pact had offered to German foreign policy. Forty years later, the Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, agreed with Stresemann's interpretation of Locarno, but added a new twist: "Any change in the boundaries in the

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[46]Dirksen, op.cit., p.52.

[47]Heinz Günther Sasse, 100 Jahre Botschaft in London (Bonn: Gebr. Hermes KG, 1963), p. 55.

[48]Quoted in Göhring, op.cit., p. 24.

East was already then the recognized premise for the changes of the boundaries in the West."[49] French apprehensions about the effects of Locarno were best and most vividly expressed by the French newspaper that wrote: "Through a mouse by the name of Locarno, Stresemann manages to have Versailles chewed to pieces."[50] In view of this and similar comments, and the actions taken by some of the powers after the Pact had been signed, it is difficult to locate the "Spirit of Locarno" and observe its benevolent influence on European statesmen; such an idealistic interpretation of Locarno implies that either the Pact was so effective in providing security that Germany was no longer regarded as a threat to European peace, or that the powers concerned not only changed their attitudes to each other, but, consequently, also their policies to bring about this era of goodwill. Neither explanation is acceptable in view of the evidence at hand, some of which has been presented in the foregoing chapters. None of the European powers changed its attitudes, let alone its policies. Circumstances in 1925 forced France to accept the fact that Germany was again playing an important part in European diplomacy.

Locarno was Stresemann's greatest achievement. The stipulation that Locarno would become operative as soon as Germany entered the League of Nations became the ace of trumps in Stresemann's capable hands. France, realizing too late the extent of the German victory at

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[49]Winzer, op. cit., p. 161.

[50]Quoted in Göhring, op. cit., p. 27.

Locarno, delayed Germany's entry into the League with the alleged connivance of Italy and/or Brazil. But Locarno could not be undone and led to reductions of Allied troops of occupation in the Rhineland, the withdrawal of the same troops from the First Zone, and to a permanent seat on the Council of the League of Nations. Once Germany was on the Council, it became only a matter of choosing a convenient time for the Inter-Allied Commission of Control to leave Germany. "The Control Commission," was Briand's comment on this organization, "has fulfilled an important function under difficult circumstances. But one does not control a people of 60 million indefinitely and securely."[51]

The termination of the Inter-Allied Commission of Control was keenly anticipated in Germany. If, as most Germans reasoned, the awarding of a permanent seat on the Council of the League was to be equated with the dismissal of the war guilt stigma and the acceptance of Germany as an equal partner in the council of the nations, then clearly the Control Commission remained "a wound in the flesh of German sovereignty."[52] Indeed the Control Commission had become a symbol of German subjugation[53] and served as convenient scapegoat whenever a political faction wanted to express its dissatisfaction. But once the Control Commission left Germany, it was felt - even though in theory

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[51]Quoted in Salewski, op.cit.. p. 355.

[52]Ibid., p. 332.

[53]Ibid.

the right of control was handed over to the League - that the true sovereignty of the fatherland had once more been established. Whatever German aspirations were left dissatisfied in January 1927, their fulfilment, even the eventual evacuation of the Rhineland in 1930, was anti-climatic and indeed inevitable once the Locarno Pact had been signed, Germany admitted to the League, and the Control Commission withdrawn from Germany.

On October 2, 1926, Viscount D'Abernon, reviewing Anglo-German relations on the eve of his departure from Berlin, made the following entry into his diary:

> During the years 1925-6 the German Ministers in charge of affairs have accomplished what even Bismarck and the post-Bismarckians attempted in vain.
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> . . . . . .
>
> ... it may be confidently said that the animosity between England and Germany has been in large measure appeased, the proof being that England is now brought in as an arbitrator, and as a guarantor of the territorial integrity, not only of France, but also of Germany. Moreover, it is mainly through English influence that Germany has obtained at Geneva a position acceptable to her national dignity.[54]

D'Abernon's assessment of Britain as arbiter of European affairs and guarantor of the new territorial settlements was exaggerated. Granted, British initiative and diplomatic influence exerted themselves heavily during the netotiations of the western problems such as disarmament, organization of the League Council, reparation, and Allied occupancy of German territory - even though on these issues the opposing special interests of Britain and France played into the hands of the Germans - but

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[54]D'Abernon, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 267-8.

Britian's refusal to bring pressure on Poland and the consequently unsettled German-Polish question came back to haunt the British Government in 1939.

The settlement of the western problems was a foregone conclusion; Britain's economic needs necessitated the rehabilitation of Germany[55] while "traditionalist" British foreign policy necessitated the establishment of German power as an equipoise to French attempts of establishing a European hegemony.[56] If British statesmen, however, entertained any fond hopes that by giving Germany a guarantee of her western boundaries, and thus enable her to pursue a strong economic policy in the East, she would align herself with the capitalist West in general and Britain in particular, and act as a buffer against Communist Russia, then they were bound to be disappointed. "If I am told," said Stresemann in a speech on December 14, 1925, "that I pursue a policy friendly to England, I do not so from any love of England, but...we must find someone who helps us...."[57] German disappointment and anger about the loss of her eastern lands were as strong as her resentment against the presence of alien soldiers on her soil. "The Polish Corridor," Stresemann had said, "is like a hall separating the lover from his beloved."[58] Germany was

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[55] For an interesting point of view see A.D.A.P., B, Vol.I/2, No. 147.

[56] Sutton, op.cit., Vol.II, p. 225.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Quoted in Antonia Vallentin, Stresemann (Leipzig: Paul List Verlag, 1930), p. 261.

quite prepared to come to terms with the Soviet Union, as Russo-German secret military collaborations and the Treaty of Berlin in 1926 well indicate, in order to increase her bargaining power and achieve her eastern objectives.

Germany had made great strides between October 1925 and January 1927 in improving her position and maintaining good relations with Britain. British concerns about relations with Germany, described by the Manchester Guardian, in January 1925, as being those of "upper and lower dog",[59] were dispelled two years later when Germany had regained - as a permanent member of the Council of the League of Nations - recognition as a Great Power. The improvement of the German position was noted by Lindsay who, on November 11, 1926, told Schubert somewhat cynically that:

> 1. according to his opinion, Britain had acted in a remarkable manner as Germany's attorney;
> 2. he has the impression that Germany could be compared with a nest full of birds, all opening their beaks and having an insatiable appetite.[60]

Germany's accomplishment was due to the fact that the Treaty of Versailles had left Germany's Great Power potential intact and Anglo-German economic interdependence made the resurgence of this potential inevitable. While the Baldwin Government, in traditionalist style, was concerned with immediate, concrete goals, German statesmen were building for the future, with Locarno serving as the junction on Germany's road to pre-war eminence.

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[59] See Chapter I, p. 1.

[60] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. I/2, No. 190.

APPENDIX I

Number of British, French, and Belgian Before and After the Evacuation of Cologne

	Before Evacuation of Cologne (First, Second, Third Zones)
British	9,000
French	73,100
Belgium	17,100
Total	99,200

	After Evacuation of Cologne, February 1, 1926 (Second, Third Zones)
British	7,800
French	59,000
Belgium	7,500
Total	74,300

191 H.C. Deb 5s., col. 1533.

August 18, 1926

Strength of the French, English, and Belgian Troops in the Second and Third Rhineland Zones

	Before evacuation of the First Zone			Now		
	Total	French	English + Belgian	Total	French	English + Belgian
1. According to information from the Ambassador de Margerie as of July 31, 1926.	83,300	77,000	6,300	71,300	55,000 (End of May 1926)	16,300
2. According to information from Berthelot to Hoesch as of August 11, 1926.				71,000	55,800	15,200
3. According to information from the German authorities.	85,750	78,350	7,400	84,600	69,100 (Middle of July 1926)	15,500
THE TROOP REDUCTION						
1. According to information from Berthelot to Hoesch; planned French reduction to be completed by the end of September 1926. (Report from Hoesch, August 11, 1926.)				65,200	50,000	15,200
2. Reductions expected by Germany based on note of Ambassadors' Conference of November 14, 1925 and on French promise.				50,000		

A.D.A.P., B, Vol. 1/2, No. 41.

APPENDIX III

Freundschaftsvertrag zwischen Deutschland und der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken vom 24. April 1926

Die Deutsche Regierung und die Regierung der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjet-Republiken,

von dem Wunsche geleitet, alles zu tun, was zur Aufrechterhaltung des allgemeinen Friedens beitragen kann,

und in der Überzeugung, dass das Interesse des deutschen Volkes und der Völker der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjet-Republiken eine stetige vertrauensvolle Zusammenarbeit erfordert,

sind übereingekommen, die zwischen ihnen bestehenden freundschaftlichen Beziehungen durch einen besonderen Vertrag zu bekräftigen, und haben zu diesem Zwecke zu Bevollmachtigten ernannt:

Die Deutsche Regierung:

den Reichsminister des Auswärtigen, Herrn Dr. Gustav Stresemann,

die Regierung der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjet-Republiken:

den ausserordentlichen und bevollmächtigten Botschafter der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjet-Republiken, Herrn Nikolai Nikolajewitsch Krestinski,

die nach Austausch ihrer in guter und gehöriger Form befundenen Vollmachten nachstehende Bestimmungen vereinbart haben.

Artikel 1

Die Grundlage der Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjet-Republiken bleibt der Vertrag von Rapallo.

Die Deutsche Regierung und die Regierung der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjet-Republiken werden in freundschaftlicher Fühlung miteinander bleiben, um über alle ihre beiden Länder gemeinsam beruhrenden Fragen politischer und wirtschaftlicher Art eine Verständigung herbeizuführen.

Artikel 2

Sollte einer der vertragschliessenden Teile trotz friedlichen Verhaltens von einer dritten Macht oder von mehreren dritten Mächten angegriffen werden, so wird der andere vertragschliessende Teil während der ganzen Dauer des Konfliktes Neutralitat beobachten.

Artikel 3

Sollte aus Anlass eines Konfliktes der in Artikel 2 erwähnten Art oder auch zu einer Zeit, in der sich keiner der vertragschliessenden Teile in kriegerischen Verwicklungen befindet, zwischen dritten Mächten eine Koalition zu dem Zwecke geschlossen werden, gegen einen der vertragschliessenden Teile einen wirtschaftlichen oder finanziellen Boykott zu verhangen, so wird sich der andere vertragschliessende Teil einer solchen Koalition nicht anschliessen.

Artikel 4

Dieser Vertrag soll ratifiziert und die Ratifikationsurkunden sollen in Berlin ausgetauscht werden.

Der Vertrag tritt mit dem Austausch der Ratifikationsurkunden in Kraft und gilt fur die Dauer von fünf Jahren. Die beiden vertragschliessenden Teile werden sich rechtzeitig vor Ablauf dieser Frist über die weitere Gestaltung ihrer politischen Beziehungen verständigen.

Zu Urkund dessen haben die Bevollmächtigten diesen Vertrag unterzeichnet.

Ausgefertigt in doppelter Urschrift in Berlin am 24. April 1926.[1]

[1] A.D.A.P., B, Vol. II/I, No. 168.

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