

BRIAND AND THE FRENCH SEARCH FOR SECURITY

by

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

From the catastrophe of 1914-1918 France as one of the major Allied Powers emerged victorious. Her statesmen were determined that one of the basic fruits of victory must be the permanent guarantee of national security.

The non-realization of the Anglo-American Guarantee was a serious blow to the French security structure and was fraught with illimitable consequences. This first breach in the system of collective security which the French people were so anxious to see established on a firm basis, resulted temporarily in the French reversion to a policy of force under Poincaré. The failure of this method to promote security led to the emergence of Aristide Briand to a position of prominence on the French political stage. The policy of rapprochement which he advocated largely dominated the French security picture from 1925 until his death in 1932. Because of this fact the name of Briand is inevitably linked with this problem which is so important in the national life of France.

An introduction to this study would not be complete without a word of thanks to Professor Frederic H. Soward for his invaluable assistance cheerfully extended at all times. Appreciation must also be given to Miss Anne M. Smith and Miss M. L. Lanning of the University of British Columbia Library Staff for their guidance in the selection of materials.

CHAPTER I.

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

# BRIAND AND THE FRENCH SEARCH FOR SECURITY

## CHAPTER I.

### THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

The treaty which marked the end of the Great War of 1914-1918 was ratified in the beautiful Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. It was in this same place that the articles of peace were signed by the French and German plenipotentiaries after the War of 1870. "It is a moot question if in human history there ever has been a swifter and more tremendous reversal." <sup>1</sup> Everything in the peace and in the circumstances surrounding it emphasize this rapid change and for France this was one of the most significant factors. Each of the Allied nations represented at the Conference had certain national aspirations which desired satisfaction. The French felt that however important these needs might be the question which required prior consideration was their national security.

There were two approaches to this problem advocated by groups of comparative importance. M. Henri de Jouvenel, a strong figure in one group, urged that both the government and people of France give their support to the League and work through it for enduring peace and also for the satisfaction of their needs. There were others in France who called M. de Jouvenel and his friends idealists and theorists

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1. Anon., The Signing of the Peace, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 1, July 4, 1919, p. 2.

and maintained that security for France lay in the complete disarmament of Germany coupled with a heavy indemnity. Both of these solutions to the problem of security were probably put forward by their advocates in all honesty of purpose and both, in greater or less degree, influenced the making of the treaty.

The Treaty of Versailles contains several articles directly concerned with the problem of security.<sup>1</sup> President Wilson's ideal was to establish a League of Nations which would introduce a spirit of trust and mutual understanding between nations. It was natural that in the months immediately after the war when peoples throughout the world were receptive to such ideas that the League of Nations idea should take hold. Wilson's power which was on the ascendant at this period enabled him to have the League of Nations Covenant placed at the beginning of the Treaty text. Although the Articles of the Treaty of Versailles mentioned above have an important bearing on the problem of security the main article around which the problem resolves is Article 10 of the League Covenant. It reads:

The members of the League undertake to respect and preserve against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Text of the Treaty of Versailles, Articles 42, 43, 44, 428, 429, 431, 432.
  2. Ibid., Article 10.

President Wilson maintained that this Article was the Monroe Doctrine of the world<sup>1</sup> yet his insistence upon the insertion of this Article in the League of Nations section alienated the support of many of his friends who, although opposing the Peace Treaty, were in favor of the idea of a League.

Robert Lansing says of this situation, "The President's unalterable determination to have his form of guarantee in the Covenant...and his firm refusal to modify it in any substantial way, resulted in the strengthening of the opponents of the League to such an extent that they were able to prevent the Treaty from obtaining the necessary consent of two-thirds of the Senators."<sup>2</sup> This refusal of the Senate to consider Article 10 was a very serious blow to the plan of security which the French leaders were trying to build up and would mean that France would probably be less receptive to overtures of friendship which the German statesmen might make to her. Europe had been assured by President Wilson with a sincerity which it never occurred to the common man to doubt, that he was morally and constitutionally the plenipotentiary of his country, and that in future the French might count without reserve upon the United States. Failure to win support from the United States was a very serious blow to proponents of the League of Nations who, not realizing

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1. Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement, Doubleday-Page and Company, 1923, vol. 1, p. 326.
  2. Lansing, Robert, The Peace Negotiations, London, Constable and Company, 1921, p. 112.

the power of the Senate to nullify the work of a President at will, took it for granted that the United States would endorse the completed treaty.

The Reparations problem loomed very large in the French security picture. When the Conference at Paris began its study of the problem of Reparations, there were several attitudes at once apparent. In the case of the Allied countries it was the general feeling that Germany must be made to pay for all the damage done to the destroyed portions of France and Belgium as well as any additional payments which the Allies through the Peace Conference should see fit to impose. This additional clause was contained in Article 19 which went much farther in scope than did Article 8 of the Fourteen Points which merely provided that all French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored. That this would be the extent of the financial demands on Germany was the belief before the end of the War but at the Peace Conference this view underwent a decided change. The word "Reparations" was given the broadest interpretation; English and French alike put forward, what from the German standpoint were considered impossible demands.<sup>1</sup> The Germans urged that a fixed sum be set, otherwise they declared that it would be impossible for them to organize their internal financial affairs in order to prevent financial chaos. The

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1. Bergmann, Carl, History of Reparations, London, E. Benn Limited, 1927, p. 3.

Americans supported the Germans in this stand.<sup>1</sup> However, as Congress refused ratification of the Treaty, their objection did not carry as much weight as it might have under other circumstances. The French stand on this issue was the real stumbling block. They felt that fixing a total sum might have a serious effect on their financial security in the future. If a fixed sum was agreed upon at this juncture, improvement in the German financial situation would mean a decided loss in indemnity payments to France. The French preferred to leave the matter indefinite and were successful in having it placed in the hands of a Reparations Commission.

"The future," said Foch, "can only be assured in any lasting manner, by making the Rhine our military frontier and holding it with Allied forces."<sup>2</sup> Marshal Foch was very insistent that in order to guarantee the security of France in the future the Rhine must be considered as the boundary between France and Germany. There were many people in France who were of a like opinion. Some of the arguments used by the French in support of this thesis were the fact that France had a population of approximately one-half that of Germany, and her birth-rate was not increasing at anything near the rate of her neighbor across the Rhine. She was also bereft

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1. Tardieu, Andre', The Truth about the Treaty, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1921.
  2. Great Britain, His Majesty's Stationery Office, Memorandum Communicated by Marshal Foch to President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George, Signor D'Orlando, at a meeting on March 31, 1919, Cmd. 2169, p. 85.

of the Russian Alliance due to the revolution in that country, which deprived her of an ally on the extreme frontier of Germany. Thirdly, France did not have a natural frontier on the East facing Germany. The Rhine would provide this. This policy was not new with Foch, it had been developed and advanced in 1916 after Sir Edward Grey had suggested that the Allies should make known their war aims. In addition, M. Doumergue submitted to the Russian Emperor a telegram on February 12, 1917, in which he stated explicitly the desire of France that "in the future the River Rhine might form a permanent strategic frontier against a German invasion."<sup>1</sup> Louis Madelin, a French journalist and author writing in "La Revue des Deux Mondes", compares the French position to that of an owner of a garden which had been pillaged for many times over. Should he be satisfied merely to place at his gate, as Madelin says "un criteau sur lequel serait écrit: Defenser d'entrer?"<sup>2</sup> Foch did not think so and made very determined efforts to ensure that the statesmen at the Conference were conversant with his views. He was so determined on one occasion that Clemenceau had to remind him that he was not dictating the peace but was merely acting as a consultant.<sup>3</sup> The great Commander-in-Chief regarded Clemenceau

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1. Temperley, H. W. V., ed., A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, London, Oxford University Press and Hodder & Stoughton, 1920, vol. 1, appendix II.
  2. Madelin, Louis, Le Marechal Foch, Part II., Revue des Deux Mondes, tome 22, 1 Aout, 1924, p. 795.
  3. Tabouis, Genevieve, The Life of Jules Cambon, London, Jonathan Cape, 1938, p. 352.

as the betrayer of his country. He himself outside and Louis Barthou inside the Chamber of Deputies kept up an incessant criticism of the "Tiger's" efforts towards a settlement on the eastern frontier.<sup>1</sup> Roch, at this time was merely endorsing the work of the Comité d'Etudes, headed by the historian, Ernest Lavisse, which had met in 1917 to study the Rhine frontier question and had concluded that the new frontier should be that of 1814 with certain extensions in the Saar area to include the coal basin. The military boundary was by this solution to be separated from the political boundary and the territory in between was to be organized into a separate region from which German forces were to be entirely excluded.<sup>2</sup> Tardieu vehemently denies that his government at any time ever contemplated the dismemberment of German unity when he says that "...at no time did the Government, the Parliament or even the Press demand the destruction of German unity."<sup>3</sup> Yet if these three elements did not favor the establishment of a separate Rhineland, the military certainly did.<sup>4</sup> General Mangin, in control of the French zone was not antagonistic to the movement of Dr.

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1. Lloyd George, David, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1938, vol. 1, p. 580.
  2. Tabouis, *op. cit.*, p. 352.
  3. Tardieu, André, *op. cit.*, p. 364.
  4. Ellington-Wright, C. E., *The Rhineland, Past and Future*, London, Nation and Athenaeum, vol. 35, August 23, 1924, p. 635.

Dorten,<sup>1</sup> but England and the United States were greatly opposed. Dr. Dorten complained that England secretly supported the central government at Berlin in its efforts to stamp out the secession movement. Allied solidarity behind the Separatists would have meant the building of a real barrier against the influence of Prussianism,<sup>2</sup> Dr. Dorten maintained. However, Lloyd George is credited with forcing the recall of General Mangin and with his departure the secession movement lost force very rapidly. It is very probable that the Rhineland elements felt that the forming of a separate peace would mean that they would weather the storm with easier terms, but it was the decentralization of responsibility which Britain feared. Her object was to restore trade relations with Germany in the quickest possible time. She was not so vitally interested in France's problem of security. President Wilson and Lloyd George were agreed as to the requirements of French security. They felt that demilitarization of the Rhineland Zone in addition to an Anglo-American promise to come to France's aid in case of aggression against her were sufficient guarantees.<sup>3</sup> Colonel House appears to have been favorable at first but Lansing,

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1. Stannard-Baker, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 86 ff.

2. Dorten, Hans, The Rhineland Movement, Foreign Affairs, vol. 3, NO. 3, April, 1925, p. 399.

3. Tardieu, Andre, op. cit., p. 175 ff.

White and Bliss decidedly were not.<sup>1</sup> However, President Wilson disregarded their opinion in order to reach a definite decision.<sup>2</sup> Clemenceau finally gave in in his urging for an independent state on the left bank. In this way a compromise was reached to guarantee French security. Provisions made in the Treaty covering this problem are:

1. Germany is forbidden to maintain or construct any fortification whether on the left bank of the Rhine or on the right bank to the west of a line drawn 50 kilometres to the East of the Rhine.
2. In the area defined above the maintenance and the assembly of the armed forces, either permanent or temporarily, and military manoeuvres of any kind, as well as the upkeep of all permanent units for mobilization, are in the same way forbidden.
3. In case Germany violates in any manner whatever the provisions of Articles 42 and 43 she shall be regarded as committing a hostile act against the Powers signatory of the present Treaty and is calculated to disturb the peace of the world.<sup>3</sup>

Fifteen years was specified as the period of occupation but in case at any time the guarantees against unprovoked aggression were thought to be insufficient, the evacuation of the occupying troops could be delayed for the period<sup>4</sup> felt to be necessary.<sup>5</sup> By these measures it was hoped that

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1. The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, Arranged as a narrative by Charles Seymour, London, Ernest Benn, Limited, 1926-28, p. 394.
  2. Lansing, Robert, The Peace Negotiations, A Personal Narrative, New York, Houghlon, Mifflin, 1921, p. 124
  3. Treaty Text, op. cit., Articles 42, 43, 44.
  4. Ibid., Article 49.
  5. Ibid., Article 429.

the French had been provided with ample security.

Various misgivings were felt in some French quarters as to the degree of reliance to be placed in a Tripartite Guarantee. There were two factors which seriously bothered French statesmen. In the first instance it was felt that too great a time would elapse before sufficient American troops could arrive in France to be an effective fighting force and in the second, doubts were raised as to whether the United States Senate would support the guarantee. Failure to ratify the Treaty of Versailles on the part of the Senate brought the fears of the French to full realization and in addition the American government refused to endorse the Tripartite Guarantee claiming that it wanted no commitments in Europe.<sup>1</sup> The basic thesis of the French, "the more powerful the guarantees of peace, the smaller will be the probability you will have to call upon them"<sup>2</sup> had suffered a severe blow and they were greatly disheartened by this set-back.

From observation of French policy in respect to the Rhineland it is evident that a powerful section of French opinion was not averse to seeing the disruption of German unity. It is quite understandable then that the French would be greatly averse to any thought of permitting

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1. Lord Riddell, Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After, 1918-1923, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1933, p. 55.
  2. Haskins, C. H., Franco-German Frontier, Foreign Affairs, vol. 3, No. 2, December 15, 1924, p. 199.

Austro-German union. One of the most famous doctrines advanced by Wilson at the Conference was that of the "self-determination of peoples." This was used at first in reference to the Balkan peoples, but it had an unexpected reaction when it was observed that the Germanic peoples were applying it to the situation of Austria. There were three suggestions put forward as to the fate of that country.

1. Become part of a Danubian confederation with Czechoslovakia, Yugo-Slavia and the Balkan nations.
2. Join with the German Republic.
3. Remain an independent Republic.

In the first instance France was not against Austrian union with other Danubian countries from the standpoint of her security. She felt that it would shift some of the German influence from Central Europe to the eastward. Yet the Italians feared that it might lead to a revival of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire and the small ambitious Balkan nations were averse to becoming linked up with a decadent people so that efforts towards that solution were dropped.<sup>1</sup> Of the two remaining solutions, the French favored an independent Austrian Republic and when on March 4, 1919, the Austrian Assembly made known its desire for union with Germany there almost seemed to be a spirit of reconciliation to the inevitable, but as time went on the feeling that it was the prerogative of the victors to disregard the "self-determination of peoples" if

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1. Temperley, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 470 ff.

they so wished for their own security asserted itself.<sup>1</sup> France made a very serious blunder over this question of Austro-German union. Her fear of 60,000,000<sup>2</sup> Germans on her frontier was real enough and she felt that the addition of several millions more Austrians would make the German influence too strong. Yet, openly flouting the principle of self-determination in this manner aroused in these peoples a spirit of resentment which Lloyd George in a letter to Clemenceau said would find some means of exacting retribution.<sup>3</sup> The trend of French relations with the Germany of Hitler seems to bear out this conclusion. It was felt in some quarters that Austria might have successfully used this indecision over her future to press for more favorable conditions of peace. Yet her government failed to do so and let matters take their course. Colonel House comments that Austrians would not join the Germans if the Conference intimated otherwise.<sup>4</sup> The French finally won in their desire to prevent this union and gained one of their essential points for security. In the Treaty of Versailles Germany promises to "respect strictly the

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1. Noble, G. B., Problems and Opinions at Paris, New York, Macmillan and Company, 1935, p. 222.
  2. Aubert, Louis F., France and the League, Foreign Affairs, vol. 3, No. 4, July, 1925, p. 637.
  3. Great Britain, His Majesty's Stationery Office, Letter from Lloyd George to Clemenceau: Some Considerations for the Peace Conference before they finally draft their terms, Cmd. 2169, p. 76.
  4. Papers of Colonel House, vol. 4, p. 335.

independence of Austria."<sup>1</sup>

With the loss of her hoped-for frontier on the Rhine, France turned her attention to the negotiations in progress towards the establishing of the new European states. Poland was one of her chief objects of interest. French leaders felt that only the counter-balance of a strong Poland would in some degree compensate her for the loss of the Rhine frontier. Conversely, Germany believed that a strong Poland would be a serious obstacle to her recovery. For this reason she raised vigorous objections to the partition of Upper Silesia as well as for the loss of the natural resources in that area.<sup>2</sup> Poland was responsible for some friction on the German frontier and in this she was encouraged by France.<sup>3</sup> It is very possible that her bitterness towards Germany in some measure poisoned her sense of justice.<sup>4</sup> However, France was taking all possible steps within her power to assure security for herself. Doubts began to enter the French national mind as to the continued whole-hearted support of her allies so besides trusting to the regular machinery set up by the Conference France was working in other directions to a large degree independently.

One of the mainstays of the security of France in pre-war

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1. Treaty Text, Article 80.
  2. Ibid., Article 88.
  3. Lord Riddell's Diary, p. 191.
  4. Lloyd George, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 990.

years was her friendship with Russia. In 1917 with the outbreak of revolution in that land the old Régime was overthrown and with it went, in French eyes, an integral part of their system of alliances. Also, from the Soviet point of view went the obligation to pay debts incurred by the Czarist government to France in pre-war and war years. French opinion felt that the Leninist organization set up in Russia after the Revolution did not represent the real Russian people and the French were not, like Wilson, troubled with ideological qualms about "self-determination" and the "right of peoples". There were two courses open to France. One was to adopt a "stand-off policy and allow the Russians to develop their own plans for salvation. This was called the "cordon sanitaire". Its aim was to block off all Russian contacts with the western countries so as to starve the country into abandoning Bolshevism. In the second case the French government favored a policy of intervention, even although this did not find favor with the Socialist and Labor press. Intervention was not to be for conquest but rather it was to take on the appearance of a crusade--to save the Russian people. Which of these two policies would best aid French security? In the case of the "cordon sanitaire" it was felt that it would starve the wrong people and abandoning Russia in that way would be tantamount to a complete loss as far as the vast Russian debts to France were concerned. To openly attack Russia would offend some of the basic principles of the Conference so eventually the Supreme Council decided to throw its weight behind Admiral

Kolchak. However, this White Russian leader lost out and as a result each nation was left to its own designs as far as Russia was concerned. Once an ally, Russia was now feared by France. However, her Russian policy was fairly dormant until she sent General Weygand to reorganize the Polish forces which were being seriously beaten by the rejuvenated Soviet armies.<sup>1</sup> The French feared the ideology of the Russian Soviets, and its possible influence on French national unity more than attack on their national frontiers by Russian forces. Also they were alarmed lest Russia should join forces with Germany in a common front. Then her security would indeed be seriously menaced.

In this introductory chapter an effort has been made to analyze some of the factors involved in France's search for security through the Peace of Versailles. Twenty years after the Treaty the world can sit in sober judgment and find fault with many of its provisions. It did commit injustices without doubt, yet if it had obtained the support from the nations which formulated it, as far as France is concerned it would have guaranteed her security satisfactorily. The failure of the United States to ratify the Treaty and the Tripartite Guarantee resulting in England's refusal to stand by her promise, caused the French to feel that they were being deserted. Speaking of his country one French writer said, "Son activité s'orient vers l'arts de la paix, son esprit ne nourit aucune

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1. Lord Riddell's Diary, p. 227.

idée de conquête.<sup>1</sup> Yet France felt that she was going to have to preserve that peace alone. As her confidence in her former allies lessened France turned to a new system of alliances to supplement the guarantees of the Treaty of Versailles. This search for allies is the second phase of the French search for security.

1. Dumont-Wilden, L., *La France et Les Alliances*,  
*Revue des Deux Mondes*, Tome 21, 15 Mai, 1924, p. 272.

CHAPTER II.

THE FRENCH SEARCH FOR ALLIANCES 1920-1925

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FRENCH SEARCH FOR ALLIANCES 1920-1925

"Fourteen Points," said Clemenceau of Wilson's plan for peace, "God Almighty only had ten." <sup>1</sup> Such was the spirit with which some French political leaders set about reorganizing the national life of France for peace. Victory had been achieved at great cost in lives and property, not only for France but for others as well. Herein lay the cause for the note of impatience in Clemenceau's remark. For in all post-war arrangements France's will was not only to be considered. Woodrow Wilson's leadership for peace through the League of Nations found such active support in so many countries that the French authorities could not overlook it in their calculations. Yet they would not put their whole faith in it. Rather must they try to find other safeguards should the League fail to provide France with the security she must have.

What were these other safeguards? In the first case France could really disarm. This might be a safeguard against a future war. Yet the Frenchman is a militaristic pacifist. He does not feel safe unless he has an army of sufficient size always on call. However, this point, as an argument against disarming, is very weak in comparison to that of population. France, whose population was at one time larger than

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1. Anon., France and Germany, Round Table, vol. 21, June, 1931, p. 506.

Germany's, had much less in 1921.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the birth-rate in Germany was much greater than that in France. In the first six months of 1921 in France there were 72,000 births whereas for the same period in Germany there were 180,000.<sup>2</sup> This, coupled with the fact that during the Great War France lost 2,000,000 men<sup>3</sup> made French leaders very sensitive about the problem of security and precluded any possibility of France accepting the dictum that by disarming herself she could best attain her object--security. The second alternative, naturally follows therefore, that France must maintain a large army and rely upon herself for protection. As she had the largest army in Europe under arms two years after the war ended one might ask why she did not feel secure? Her leaders knew that she could no longer consider herself as the sole arbiter in European matters, because just as she waged long and bitter wars under the banner of Louis XIV. to maintain the balance of power in that period of her history, she knew, others would be just as insistent that it be maintained after

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1. Toynbee, A. J., Survey of International Affairs, London, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1927, p.131. Professor Toynbee states that at this time France had a population of 39,604,992.

Anon., French Preparations for Genoa, Current History, vol. 16, No. 1, April, 1922, p. 171.  
The writer of this article sets the population of Germany at 64,000,000. He says France has 37,000,000 which is at variance with the figure of Professor Toynbee.

2. Anon., The Malady of Europe, Round Table, vol. 12, September, 1922, p. 751.

3. Toynbee, A. J., op. cit., 1927, p. 131.

the Great War. In addition French statesmen knew that if France insisted upon maintaining a large army, competitive building might ensue which would make her task that much costlier in order to maintain a correspondingly larger force.

The third alternative would be for France to rely upon the League of Nations to provide her with adequate protection. In the first enthusiasm of success the great mass of French people were whole-heartedly behind this altogether novel and thoroughly promising organization. The Treaty of Versailles marked the end of the Great War and the Covenant of the League of Nations was part of the Treaty, therefore the French people expected that the signatures of the former Central Powers to the Versailles Pact would mark their acceptance of the "status quo" as established by the Treaty. This was very necessary, the French considered, before they could feel that security was assured. Yet in German eyes this attitude of the French could only mean that the Germans were to be placed in a position of permanent inferiority in Europe.

In addition to German opposition to the idea of the permanence of the Versailles Pact, other factors soon became apparent which caused the French to decide that they could not place all their hope of security in the League of Nations organization. They decided to revise the pre-war system of developing alliances. The first of these factors was the failure of the United States to ratify the Tripartite Treaty of Guarantee. As Robert de Jouvenel, a Radical journalist wrote, "President Wilson came to Europe to represent a principle which

he brought in the name of a superior morality. The French soon learned it was only in the name of his country that he came." <sup>1</sup> French enthusiasm for the future received a severe shock. The second factor which caused the French to stop and consider was the rapidly changing British attitude. British interest on the continent was not concerned with French security, rather was it in the resumption of normal economic re-<sup>2</sup>lations, principally with Germany. The German market was thought to be essential to British commerce and if Germany was to be held in economic subjection through Reparations it would mean that the buying power of the Germans would be seriously affected. Hence the British and French attitudes were at complete variance. Britain felt the best method to gain Reparations was the restoration of trade with Germany. The French thought that payments should come from Germany without assistance from the outside. The attitude of the British on world problems was becoming increasingly wider in scope, that of the French remained fundamentally narrow and continental.

As the French leaders perceived that their former allies were not going to fulfill their promises in respect to guarantees and also that the gap between the French and British view on continental problems was growing wider without any apparent

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1. Jouvenel, Robert de, A French Debate on the League of Nations, Living Age, vol. 321, May 1924, p. 931. Translated from La Grande Revue, Paris monthly.
  2. Toynbee, Arnold, The World After the Peace Conference, Oxford University Press, 1925, p. 49 ff.

hope of reconciliation they turned their attention towards the formation of Alliances.

In the early summer of 1920 military conversations were begun between Belgium and France. These conversations resulted in the signature of an agreement on the seventh of September of the same year. This military alliance was legal in view of the violation of the neutrality treaty of 1839.<sup>1</sup> It was first thought that Article 8 of the Covenant of the League which says that "Every treaty or international engagement entered into hereafter by any member of the League shall be forthwith registered with the Secretariat"<sup>2</sup> would destroy the effectiveness of this military alliance, however notification that it was purely a defensive agreement was sent to the Secretary-General but its clauses were not disclosed. This departure from her historic policy was a very radical step for the Belgian government to take and is testimony to the power and prestige of post-war France. The Belgian government regarded the widening breach between Great Britain and France with concern for the cooperation and friendship of these two Powers was essential to her security. Yet, on the other hand, the commercial interests of the Belgians were largely bound up with Germany and industrialists feared that if a serious breach did take place between France and Great Britain this military

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1. British Foreign Office Historical Section Handbook, Belgium, Appendix, by Hymans, R., La Belgique et L'Œuvre de M. Leon Delacroix, Paris, Le Correspondant, Tome 281, 10 Decembre, 1920, p. 769.
  2. Covenant of the League of Nations, Article 8.

alliance with France, in addition to her geographical position would drive her too much into dependence upon that country.<sup>1</sup> However, the alliance held and the first link in the French security chain had been forged.

The fundamental factor in the French plan of security was, the more powerful the guarantees of peace, the smaller will be the possibilities of war. Although many French political leaders and writers felt that France should have had complete control over the Rhineland and the Saar she was forced to accept the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles and share control of the Rhineland with Great Britain and Belgium and to use the mines of the Saar only for a stipulated period to take the place of those destroyed in the Great War within her own national frontiers. The French hoped that Allied occupation together with the support of the League of Nations would give her her wanted security in the west.<sup>2</sup>

By the Treaty of Versailles, the foundations of the old political and economic order in Eastern Europe had been burst asunder. Whereas the three great empires, the German, the Russian and the Austrian formerly dominated the political scene, now smaller, more racially intact groups which had

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1. The Belgian Cabinet which signed the Alliance was voted out shortly after this but the Alliance was not seriously menaced until later.
  2. Degouy, le contre-amiral, Dans La Sarre, Revue des Deux Mondes, Tome 18, 15 Novembre, 1923, p. 430. This naval man says complete control of the Saar is absolutely essential to the security of France.

broken away from the larger organizations were carrying on independently. France, keenly conscious of the failure of the United States and Great Britain to guarantee her security in the West as President Wilson and Lloyd George had promised, saw in these smaller groups, an opportunity, partially at least, to make up for this failure. The help given to the Poles in the war with Russia, given independently by France after Lloyd George had refused to cooperate, led in February, 1921, to the signing of the Franco-Polish Alliance. M. Dmowski, one of Poland's greatest statesmen, considered this pact to be an integral part "d'un nouveau système d'équilibre politique en Europe."<sup>2</sup> This is not exactly what France was trying to establish. She was trying to guarantee herself security through an alliance with Poland against a very real fear of aggression by Germany in the East and against Russia in the north. This Franco-Polish Alliance might have dominated the political situations in Europe for the following years except for the fact that the Polish leaders realized that their own security might be further enhanced by a peaceful solution of their differences with Germany over the Upper Silesian question.<sup>3</sup> This was done and thus Poland was not forced to come entirely into the French orbit. However a commercial agreement was undertaken between

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1. Patterson, Eric J., Poland, London, Arrowsmith, 1934, p. 72.
  2. Gaston, Victor, La Politique extérieure de la Pologne, Paris, Revue Bleue (Politique et Littéraire), No. 23, 1 Decembre, 1923, p. 825.
  3. Toynbee, A. J., op. cit., 1920-1923, p. 269.

France and Poland by which they agreed to open up the markets of the two countries at a lower tariff and by a French loan<sup>1</sup> to Poland of 400,000,000 francs.

In discussing France's search for alliances it is now necessary to turn back again to the west and to trace the developments in Anglo-French relations. At the close of hostilities, England and the United States took immediate steps to disband their armies. France did not. Thus in the new European system of Alliances which France was working out so assiduously British military power had become only a secondary factor until such a time as it could be brought into line with the policy of France and her two allies, Belgium and Poland. Writing to Clemenceau at the time of the Peace Conference of 1919, Poincaré states, "the precious assistance which our friends will give us in the event of a German aggression, can unfortunately, never be instantaneous. It cannot be a substitute for occupation."<sup>2</sup> In spite of the French determination to occupy the Ruhr and even although the United States refused to ratify the Tripartite Treaty of Guarantee, it was hoped that some way would be found to prevent the breakdown of the Anglo-French relationship which had been such a potent factor in European affairs. With this object in view the French ambassador to Great Britain, the Count de Saint-Aulaire placed before the Marquis of Curzon tentative proposals that

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1. *Ibid.*, 1924, p. 441, foot-note 1.

2. *Cmd.* 2169, p. 100.

conversations should be begun towards that end.<sup>1</sup> He felt that advantage to Europe generally and England specifically would be four-fold:

1. France would be able to reduce her land armaments, thus enabling Great Britain to do likewise.
2. France would consent to immediate entry of Germany into the League of Nations.
3. An Anglo-French Alliance would have a steadying effect on the continent, and more specifically on Germany herself.
4. It would enable France to work with Great Britain and Germany to help Russia rebuild the shattered fabric of her state.<sup>2</sup>

Somewhat the same thoughts were stated by Briand later in the same month of December during a visit to Mr. Lloyd George but no official British stand was taken until the latter statesman placed some concrete proposals before Briand during the economic conference of some of the western nations held at Cannes.<sup>3</sup> He recognized the French need for security but stressed the British dislike of any continental commitments. Briand in his reply stated that in the opinion of the French government "some mutual guarantee of military security and demonstration of the close political understanding existing

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1. Ibid., No. 32, The Marquis of Curzon to Lord Harding, December 5, 1921, p. 108.
  2. Cmd. 2169, p. 110.
  3. Ibid., No. 33, Notes of a conversation between Mr. Lloyd George and M. Briand at 10 Downing Street, December 21, 1921, p. 112.

between them would be of capital importance for the pacific settlement of European questions.<sup>1</sup> Here we see the divergent British and French views on the problem of security. It was in an effort to overcome this conflict of aims that these two statesmen were carrying on their conversations. This difference can best be understood by examining Article 1 of the British and French drafts of a proposed Anglo-French treaty.

<sup>2</sup>  
British

In the event of a direct and unprovoked aggression against the soil of France by Germany, Great Britain will immediately place herself at the side of France with her naval, military and air forces.

<sup>3</sup>  
French

In the event of unprovoked aggression by Germany against France, Great Britain will place herself immediately at the side of France with her naval, military and air forces.

Reciprocally in the case of an unprovoked aggression by Germany against Great Britain, France will place herself immediately at the side of Great Britain with her military, naval and air forces.

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1. Cmd. 2169, No. 35, Statement of the views of the French government on Anglo-French Relations sent to Mr. Lloyd George by M. Briand on January 8, 1922, p. 123.
  2. Ibid., No. 38, British Draft of Treaty between the Government of the British Empire and the French Republic, handed by Mr. Lloyd George to M. Briand, January 12, 1922, p. 127.
  3. Ibid., No. 39, French Draft of Proposed Anglo-French Treaty (communicated to the Marquis of Curzon of Kedleston by the French Ambassador, January 22, 1922), p. 128.

It will be seen in the above two extracts that the British guarantee is unilateral in character, because it contemplated a guarantee against German aggression given to France by Great Britain without reciprocal obligation by France to Great Britain. As soon as the French Chamber got word of the contents of the proposed pact Briand was recalled to Paris by President Millerand where bitter hostility caused him to summarily resign. The French wanted the British guarantee very badly but so great was their pride after the war that they wanted the world to think that they were ready to accept it but were not actually pressing for it. Poincaré, who succeeded Briand, carried on negotiations but the British government had still no desire to make the pact reciprocal. The French were determined that it should be undertaken on a basis of absolute equality. No understanding could be arrived at for another reason as well. Referring again to the statement of the above two Articles it will be noticed that the word "direct" is used in the British and omitted in the French draft. This was another serious point of contention.

The question of Poland is brought into the problem here. France had an alliance with Poland which included a military convention and she was thereby obligated to go to the aid of Poland if that country should be attacked by Germany. Now, in the immediate post-war years Britain regarded Poland as an artificial creation, a protégé of France and above all as a threat to the British position in the Baltic. In addition, Poland's frontiers were not natural geographically and therefore

were difficult to defend. For these reasons the British felt that if they should ratify the French draft it would obligate them to go to the defense of the Poles while fighting with France. This, of course, was not within British comprehension at this period, although in later years the attitude of the British changed radically, due to the pressure of events. Poincaré concluded the abortive conversations in his letter to the Marquis of Crewe when he wrote that if in the future any further negotiations should be undertaken in respect to a Pact it must be bilateral; must be accompanied by effective reciprocal military guarantees and that it must have a practical value for both countries.<sup>1</sup>

In summarizing the Anglo-French phase of the French search for alliances what was the basis of the difference of opinion in this problem of security? It is the difference of attitude on the part of a Frenchman and Englishman on the interpretation of "aggression". In France, a guarantee such as that discussed above, would be regarded as a binding commitment on the part of England to assist France against Germany whatever might be the circumstances of the quarrel or the conditions which led up to it, so long as Germany was formally the aggressor. In England it was taken for granted that when the time came for a decision on the part of the British government and people that they would be free to decide for themselves on the merits of the case as to who was in reality the aggressor. Great Britain

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1. Cmd. 2169, No. 55, Enclosure I., M. Poincaré to the Marquis of Crewe, August 20, 1923, p. 173.

had ~~the~~ the dominions in the British Commonwealth to consider and in these early post-war years they were showing divergencies of interest. French narrowness and the world viewpoint of the British could not be reconciled at this period.

After their failure in the negotiations with Great Britain, French statesmen turned their attention to the furtherance of their policy of building up alliances on the European continent. France had already negotiated treaties with Belgium and Poland and she now turned towards the east. French leaders had been watching with interest the course of conversations being carried on by her ally, Poland, with Rumania and also by Rumania with Jugo-Slovia and Czecho-Slovakia. By the third of March, 1921, Poland had already concluded an agreement with Rumania. Both of these countries feared Russia and were anxious for each other's support. The Little Entente structure was completed by the Rumanian-Jugo-Slav treaty on June 7, 1921,<sup>1</sup> and although these Alliances had been entered into by the Balkan and Eastern European countries primarily for their interests, yet those interests were closely connected with those of France by the fact that they rested on the common basis of the Four European Peace Treaties.<sup>2</sup> The French motive in desiring definite understandings with Rumania, Jugo-Slavia and Czecho-Slovakia has a different foundation than that which prompted her to make the Belgian and Polish Alliances. With

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1. Temperley, H. W. V., op. cit., vol. 4, 1921, p. 519.

2. Toynbee, A. J., op. cit., 1926, p. 144 ff.

them it was merely a desire on the part of France to cement their common interest in keeping a check on Germany. But with the new states in South-eastern Europe it was largely their common interest to preserve the "status quo" through the separate peace treaties made by them with the Central Powers. Broadly speaking, if France could come to some understanding with these smaller nations it would be definitely to aid Rumania against Russia, Czecho-Slovakia against Hungary and Jugoslavia against Italy. It would mean heavy commitments for France, but she was the richest and most powerful nation on the European continent.

The policy of attaining security through alliances was being pursued while France actively engaged in the Ruhr occupation. However, this episode in French post-war history is more concerned with the financial side of French policy than with security. The official French government stand on this question was conveyed to the English government by the Count de Saint Aulaire when he stated that the invasion was undertaken for economic purposes only and had no connection with the question of security.<sup>1</sup> Criticism which resulted from this action was very bitter and in spite of the French disclaimer regarding security, this action was bound to affect French national security in the attitudes it engendered in other peoples. Within Germany sentiment can best be described by quoting the words of a young married woman who said: "When

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1. Cmd. 2169, No. 51, The Marquis Curzon of Kedleston to the Marquis of Crewe, Paris, (Extract), July 10, 1923, p. 171.

I married I hoped I would have no children. We were ruined by the inflation, we were living from hand to mouth...but now I want sons so that I may bring them up and dedicate them to the task of avenging the Fatherland." <sup>1</sup> An American writer, Nicholas Roosevelt, maintains that the Ruhr occupation yielded a net profit of nearly 4,000,000,000 paper francs and that as a diplomatic weapon it was a success, <sup>2</sup> but a Frenchman, George Leschartier says that "the results of this adventure...proved disastrous in every way, materially, financially, politically and even morally, for it dealt a severe blow to French prestige abroad. <sup>3</sup> Yet, that the French Chamber of Deputies was thoroughly behind the policy of the Premier, Poincaré, is shown by the fact that the vote taken after the Socialist deputy M. Leon Blum censured the government, was 478 to 86 in favor of the policy of the administration. <sup>4</sup> Thus the first punitive effort undertaken jointly by the two allies, France and Belgium was begun. In spite of official declarations to the contrary, the Frenchman's sense of security was reduced.

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1. Anon., The Regeneration of Germany, Quarterly Review, No. 484, April 25, 1925, p. 231.
  2. Roosevelt, Nicholas, The Ruhr Occupation, Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 4, No. 1, October 25, 1925, p. 112.
  3. Leschartier, Georges, French Policy and Disarmament, International Problems and Relations, Academy of Political Science, Columbia University, 1927, p. 36.
  4. Anon., The French Invasion of the Ruhr, Current History, vol. XVII., No. 5, February, 1923, p. 711.

It is necessary to mention at this juncture the use by France of a new tool in building her security structure viz. money. Her object was to hold the friendship of her allies by every possible method and her strong financial condition made it possible for her to use money as a lever. On December 17, 1923, the French Senate ratified the offer of credits to Poland, Yugo-Slavia and Rumania to be used for the purchase of war materials in France.<sup>1</sup> It was at once a convenient way of getting rid of her old war supplies and arming her allies. One of the reasons why Poland, Yugo-Slavia and Rumania found it so difficult to raise funds for constructive purposes was the large amount of their indebtedness to France and when they did want money for construction they were usually forced to go to London and New York as France was not interested when she could not put her money to political use.<sup>2</sup> France drove a hard bargain at this period and at the basis of all her schemes was her great object--security.

On March 24, 1924, a Franco-Czecho-Slovak treaty was ratified. Czecho-Slovakia was situated on Germany's southern border and the conclusion of this treaty meant that France had allies now on the west, north and south borders. The French could rightly feel that they were making progress in their policy of keeping Germany weak. For France the key

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1. Toynbee, A. J., op. cit., 1924, p. 444, foot note No. 1.
  2. Einzig, Paul, Finance and Politics, London, Macmillan. 1932, p. 47 ff.

point of this Treaty is Article 1<sup>1</sup> which states,

"The governments of the French Republic and the Czechoslovak Republic undertake to concert their action in all matters of foreign policy which may threaten their security or which may tend to subvert the situation created by the Treaties of Peace of which both parties are signatories." This was a purely consultative pact. Accusations were made that there were secret military clauses to the Pact but this was denied<sup>2</sup> by Dr. Benes.<sup>3</sup> This treaty added another nation to the bulwark against revision of the Versailles Treaty. French statesmen were encouraged in their belief that the security of France was steadily increasing.

The French were pleased with their success in the pursuance of their policy of building up alliances against Germany, but Romain Roland, one of the greatest of French pacifists said of this policy of France "...the boundaries established by the treaties of 1919 cannot from the point of view of two-thirds of Europe be maintained. Our French informants stop their ears to the agonized cries of the vanquished countries, Germany is starved and will not be able to bear this repression."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Anon., France and Germany, Round Table, vol. 13, March, 1923, p. 237.
  2. Toynbee, op. cit., 1924, p. 446.
  3. Ibid., p. 441.
  4. Roland, Romain, Broaden Europe or Die, New York, Nation, vol. 132, No. 3433, April 22, 1931, p. 443.

The French claim to be realists, so much so that they did not place all their trust in the League but preferred to build a second line of defense in their Alliances. By the time five years had passed since the Treaty of Versailles France had done much to increase German bitterness, and yet at the same time had increased her own security through her own efforts. Yet a movement began to take shape for a broader interpretation of the word security. France was whole-heartedly behind it. But she always knew that whatever the outcome she always had a developing system of alliances which was gradually increasing her national security.

CHAPTER III.

FRANCE AND THE MAKING OF LOCARNO

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#### FRANCE AND THE MAKING OF LOCARNO

Even while French statesmen were busy weaving other countries into their security pattern for France, they always professed readiness to discuss broader guarantees of peace which would embrace continental Europe as well. The more nations prepared to guarantee French security the better France was pleased. The first of these discussions led up to the attempted Treaty of Mutual Assistance. Although not accepted by many of the Powers this treaty and the Geneva Protocol which followed it ~~laid~~ the foundations for the Locarno Peace Pact and because of that must be included in this study.

In the month of July, 1922 negotiations between France and Great Britain towards an Anglo-French guarantee finally lapsed. The differences between the French and British attitudes were sharply brought out. The French felt that their armies saved Britain in the first months of the Great War and therefore a guarantee of some sort was an obligation on the part of the British. The British trusted to their insular position for security. "Englishmen," says M. André Cheradame, "have never been able to get the French point of view. They are mutually indispensable, yet incomprehensible." <sup>1</sup> What was needed was a new approach to the problem. This was provided in the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance begun under the

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1. M. André Cheradame cited by Wickham Steed, The Position of France, London, Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs, vol. 2, March 20, 1923, p. 65.

auspices of the League of Nations.

During the deliberations of the Second Assembly of the League the conclusion was arrived at that security could be attained through the reduction of armaments. France had never held to this theory, rather did she insist that guarantees must precede disarmament. However, in accordance with its new theory the Assembly set up a Temporary Mixed Commission<sup>1</sup> which was to bring in a report as to how this reduction could be carried out. Lord Esher brought forward a new proposal that reduction be carried out, not by a treaty, but by developing a numerical factor as a common measure and reducing proportionately.<sup>2</sup> His plan was to take a unit of 30,000 men as a basis upon which to develop the size of the armed forces of European countries. This would give France an army of 180,000 men which he deemed sufficient for her protection. Naturally the plan did not materialize, as it did not include all the nations and the problem of security was not dealt with directly as it was thought that it would follow out of the Esher plan. That was not good enough for the French. There must be something more concrete and possessing a clearer definition. The members of the Temporary Mixed Commission agreed that before a state could reduce its armaments it must have some form of guarantee to assure it of security. This

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1. Toynbee, A. J., Survey, 1924, p. 18.

2. Maurice, F. B., Lord Esher's Proposals for the Limitation of Armaments, Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs, vol. 1, July, 1922, p. 101.

was the original French thesis which formed the basis for the abortive Anglo-French conversations.

With the criticism of Lord Esher's plan in mind the Third Assembly of the League charged the Temporary Mixed Commission with a new task contained in Resolution XIV.<sup>1</sup> Articles 1 and 2 of this resolution serve to show the line of reasoning along which men were thinking at this time.

Article 1. No scheme for the reduction of armaments within the meaning of Article 8 of the Covenant can be fully successful unless it is general.

Article 2. In the present state of the world many Governments would be unable to accept the responsibility for a serious reduction of armaments unless they received in exchange a satisfactory guarantee of the safety of their country.

In 1914, there were 3,740,000 men in Europe under arms.<sup>2</sup> In 1923 there were 3,600,000.<sup>3</sup> According to Article 160 of the Treaty of Versailles Germany was allowed 100,000 men under arms. The former Allies must be maintaining large establishments

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1. Records of the Third Assembly, vol. 1, p. 287 ff., cited by Kellor, Frances and Hatvany, Antonia, Security Against War, New York, Macmillan, 1924; vol. 2; p. 699.

Toynbee, A. J., op. cit., 1924, p. 21, Substance of Resolution XIV. was put forward by the French as a compromise and was accepted by the Assembly for the same reason.

2. Maurice, F. B., op. cit., p. 105.

3. Maurice, F. B., The Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs, vol. 3, March 1924, p. 47.

to account for the balance. Yet in spite of this figure stipulated in the Treaty the French maintained that the Germans were spending the equivalent of 591,656,273 French francs on their army and its equipment to their 372,186,410 francs. Although Stresemann denied this the French never doubted its truth. Hence the importance to them of the above mentioned articles of Resolution XIV. The French were favorable to a general agreement but it must be according to a "pre-arranged plan." The French must know the consequences of each step. Lord Robert Cecil and Colonel Réquin, a former officer on the staff of Foch each prepared a draft of a proposed treaty. That of Lord Cecil was general in type, placing in the hands of the League the power to make supplementary agreements where the situation warranted it. That of Colonel Réquin was based on the premise that it is inevitable in European politics for nations to drift into a scheme of alliances and that therefore any treaty must be a general one, with supplementary treaties to be created by individual members under the general treaty, for the regulation of special circumstances. Lord Cecil went further than Colonel Réquin in that he made provision for the naming of an aggressor. This was to be decided within four

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1. Anon., Dépenses militaires de l'Allemagne et de la France, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 429, 8 Mai, 1926, p. 647.
  2. Stresemann, Gustave, His diaries, letters and papers, edited and translated by Eric Sutton, Macmillan, London, 1935, vol. 2, p. 12.
  3. Article 3 of Resolution XIV.

days after an attack was made.<sup>1</sup> But the basic difference between the two drafts lay in their attitude to partial alliances. Lord Robert Cecil held that they should only be undertaken after permission of three-fourths of the Council was obtained but Colonel Requin felt that registering treaties already made with the Council was sufficient. Here again will be seen the philosophy that permeated French policy at this period--to work through and with the League for security, but at the same time maintain the alliances already made and preserve the right for making new ones. Out of these two efforts a Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance<sup>2</sup> was drawn up which was laid by the Temporary Commission before the Assembly during its Fourth<sup>3</sup> Session in September, 1923.

Although the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance discussed above was never adopted owing largely to the opposition of the British Commonwealth it found favor in French eyes because it provided for those factors which were points at issue in the Anglo-French negotiations. In the first instance it took in the eastern sphere of Europe as well as the western. It involved much broader responsibilities for Great Britain than the bilateral pact discussed during the Anglo-French negotiations

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1. Much justifiable criticism is made of this idea as 20 years after the Great War ended there is still much doubt as to who was the actual aggressor.
  2. Anon., A Practical Plan for Disarmament, International Conciliation, Carnegie Endowment of International Peace, No. 201, August, 1924, Appendix, p. 360.
  3. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 1924, p. 22.

of 1921-1922. The second factor was that it allowed the formation of special groups of alliances under the supervision of the League. France and some of the smaller Central European states were already party to several of these alliances. Great Britain was suspicious of them and the Dominions were openly hostile. In the third instance it permitted those nations party to these alliances to arrange for military cooperation in advance although in this Article (No. 8) provision was made that the League of Nations must be informed at once of the agreements undertaken. The Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance was an attempt to combine the two principles of general agreement and special alliance or more broadly speaking, combining of the idea of a general agreement among all states with that of partial alliances among some--all under the control of the League of Nations. French hopes of a guarantee through this Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance were dissipated.

The refusal of some Powers to sanction this treaty had a definite reaction on public opinion in France. One French commentator, writing in the French magazine, *Correspondant*, speaks sarcastically on the action of the League Assembly in not endorsing the Draft Treaty at once when he says, "Crainant de s'engager trop a fond, elle se contenta de l'envoyer pour avis aux gouvernements intéressés," while of England's stand he remarks, "L'Angleterre, ... dont la collaboration était indispensable si l'on ne voulait pas rester dans la domain de rêve, avait pris une telle attitude qu'on se demandait sérieusement comment reprendre la question sans risquer de

compromettre définitivement le prestige de la Société."<sup>1</sup>

While the negotiations for the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance were in progress French participants were imbued with the nationalistic spirit of Poincaré and his group. As a result it was necessary for the framers of the Draft Treaty to provide in their draft for the maintenance of the system of alliances which France had built up if they wanted to produce a treaty at all. With the failure of this treaty to win the acceptance of so many nations the French people, as individuals, began to take stock and came to the conclusion that perhaps they were trying to get security by the wrong method. Thus in the latter part of 1923 and the early part of 1924 we see a new spirit abroad in France--one which reasoned that if France hoped to attain security through ostracizing herself from the rest of the world she was making a serious mistake. From a national opinion almost solidly behind the Ruhr policy of M. Poincaré, there has developed a conflict of opinion remarkable in its contrasts. The old idea of a local settlement of the Franco-German problem is put forward by M. Paul Reynaud when he says that it would be shirking responsibility to refer this great problem to the League, but M. Robert de Jouvenel takes a stand fast growing in popularity, the exact opposite from that of M. Reynaud. He says that the Quai d'Orsay has not settled anything between France and Germany yet and the security of Europe depends on international action, so how

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1. Anon., La Problème De La Sécurité, Le Correspondant, Tome 301, 25 Novembre, 1925, p. 493.

could France and Germany settle the peace of Europe between themselves?<sup>1</sup> The changing official attitude is shown in the words of Edouard Herriot, the new premier, when he said, "To wish for the destruction of Germany is stupid from both the moral and political point of view...because of their weaknesses these German democrats ought to have been aided, even directed by us."<sup>2</sup>

This was the spirit which prompted Herriot in the conversations at the London Conference on Reparations to respond to the friendly overtures put forward by Ramsay McDonald, the new Labor Prime Minister of Great Britain. The British always had started from the basis of arbitration and disarmament in the formulae for world peace believing that security would take care of itself. The French, although still insisting on concrete guarantees, were willing to search for an agreement based more on moral guarantees than on definite military commitments, to cooperate in the defining of an aggressor and thus remedy one of the major faults in the Treaty of Mutual Assistance, and to draw up a procedure to be followed in the case that action against an aggressor should become necessary. The crux of M. Herriot's stand was in his speech when he referred directly to the problem of security. "Arbitration," he says,

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1. Reynaud, Paul, and Jouvenel, Robert de, A French Debate on the League of Nations, Living Age, vol. 321, May 17, 1924, p. 931. (Translated from La Grande Revue.)
  2. Herriot, Edouard, The Program of Liberal France, Foreign Affairs, vol. 2, No. 4, June 15, 1924, p. 560.
  3. July 15, 1924, Toynbee, op. cit., 1924, p. 370.

is essential but it is not sufficient. It is a means but not an end. It does not entirely fulfill the intentions of Article 8 of the Covenant, which...are security and disarmament...Arbitration must not be a snare for trustful nations... we Frenchmen believe that a nation which accepts arbitration... be it great or small has a right to security."<sup>1</sup> In accordance with these sentiments Herriot and MacDonald presented a joint statement to the Fifth Assembly which was adopted by it on September 6, 1924.<sup>2</sup> In view of the failure of Anglo-French negotiations up to this point on the question of a guarantee and the difference of the view-point already disclosed in the Fifth Assembly, it is of utmost interest to note the text of this joint note.<sup>3</sup>

1. The Third Committee is requested to consider the material dealing with security and the reduction of armaments, particularly the operations of the Governments in the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance contained in the Covenant of the League in relation to the guarantees of security which a resort to arbitration and a reduction of armaments may require.
2. The First Committee is requested:
  - a. to consider in view of possible amendments, the articles in the Covenant relating to the settlement of disputes;
  - b. to examine within what limits the terms of Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Statute of establishing the Permanent Court of International Justice might be rendered more precise and thereby facilitate the more general acceptance of the clause

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1. Toynbee, op. cit., 1924, p. 42.
  2. Ibid., p. 45.
  3. Assembly Document, A 135, 1924, cited by Toynbee, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

and thus strengthen the solidarity and the security of the nations of the world by settling by pacific means all the disputes which may arise between states.

It can be seen in the above three extracts from this Anglo-French note that both England and France were anxious to reach some basis of understanding. Particularly in the case of France as her sacrifice would likely be much the greater if some solution were agreed upon.

In this study of the Geneva Protocol in as far as it<sup>1</sup> effects French security it now remains to examine those Articles from the document which had a direct bearing on, and contributed something to, the security of France. "Nous sommes pacifiques et nous en avons fourni la preuve en donnant notre adhesion entière à la clause de l'arbitrage obligatoire, nous sommes même prêts à une certaine réduction de notre état militaire, mais seulement en échange de garanties concrètes et précises."<sup>2</sup> Articles 1, 7, 10, 16, 18 and 19 of the Protocol dealt with the problem of compulsory arbitration, Article 10 clearly defining the word, aggressor. The French were very pleased with that yet they were critical of Article 15 which, in speaking of punishment of the aggressor says in part that neither the territorial integrity nor the political independence of an aggressor state shall be affected in the event of

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1. Text of the Geneva Protocol, International Conciliation, 1924, p. 531.

2. Anon., Le Protocole de Genève et la Réduction des Armements, Revue des Deux Mondes, Tome 28, Janvier, 1925, p. 41.

application of any of the clauses of the Protocol. In the old days, argued the French, the victor had hope of compensation but today it is better to lose on the enemy's territory than to win a battle fought on one's own. That this is a logical view is evidenced by the post-war experience of France. The French ask, what basis have we for assuming that all aggression is impossible? What would happen to France if she disarmed as is provided for under Article 17 and then Germany and Russia were suddenly to spring upon her when she became involved in internal problems? France was not convinced that this could not happen as it was only two years previous that Germany and Russia had come to an understanding in The Treaty of Rapallo.<sup>1</sup> It was this natural gravitation of these two Powers towards some understanding that France feared.

On turning to the problem of the Rhine we see a fairly satisfied France in as far as the Rhineland is concerned. So long as the French and Belgian forces were in the Ruhr and the Allied forces in the Occupied Zone the principal parts of the enemy's arsenal were in French or Allied hands. However, the war-like spirit of the Germans made the French feel that no Power, as provided for under the Protocol, could be on the spot with sufficient speed to keep the German armies from violating French soil in case of sudden attack. Again Article 11 states that in time of war the signatories of the Protocol will all promise to cooperate to the utmost in the application

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1. April 16, 1922.

of sanctions against an aggressor. But what becomes of that country whose well-being depends on its exports when it can get no market? In addition, the French say that both England and Japan show a definite aversion to acting in common in this way. Both these countries are primarily mercantile.

Why is it necessary to mention the long list of faults which the French found in the Protocol? The answer is simple. To show the extent to which the French were ready to cooperate. Professor Noel-Baker asked twelve years after the Geneva Protocol whether these plans for peace undertaken year after year were all cant? Surely it was not cant that prompted M. Briand to say, as he stood before the League Assembly, "I am here on behalf of the Delegation and with the full assent of my Government to say, in response to the appeal of your Committees, 'France adheres to the Protocol; France is prepared to sign it.'" France, whose borders were far less secure than those of Great Britain, whose obligations were far greater than any of the overseas Dominions, signed this Pact which none of the British Dominions were prepared to do. This attitude of the British government is commented on very bitterly by one French

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1. Noel-Baker, Philip, *The Private Manufacture of Armaments*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1936, vol. 1, p. 518.
  2. Noel-Baker, Philip, *The Present Judicial Status of the British Dominions in International Law*, London, Longmans, Green, 1929, p. 59.
  3. Dumont-Wilden, L., 'Le Protocole de Genève et La Question de La Sécurité', *Revue Bleue*, No. 7, 7 Mars, 1925, p. 171.

writer who says in part that this hesitating position of British politicians so characteristic of English diplomacy in post-war years has shown up very clearly in this affair of the Geneva Protocol.<sup>1</sup> The government at London imagines that to get peace all it has to do is to wish for it. He adds that in order to get peace in the new Europe it is necessary to have the adhesion of the British nations who are represented at Geneva.

Two great efforts towards making another major war in Europe impossible have failed. By both of these efforts France hoped to gain a guarantee sufficient to assure her security. Yet this inability to find agreement did not close the heart of the sincere Frenchman towards the pursuit of further means and when on February 9, 1925,<sup>2</sup> the Germans put forward suggestions for a security pact, their note was given a great reception by the French people who felt that this novel departure might bring forth real results. From the German view-point it was felt that if the French policy of continuing the formation of Alliances was to go on it would inevitably lead to the complete encirclement of Germany and prevent her liberation from her bonds of the Treaty of Versailles.

What made these very progressive agreements of Locarno possible? In order to answer this it is necessary to search

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1. Ibid., p. 172.

2. Stresemann, Gustav, op. cit., Memorandum handed in Paris by Counsellor of Legation, Forster to the French Premier M. Herriot on behalf of the Ambassador Herr von Hoesch, vol. 1, p. 457.

into the immediate background of the Peace Pacts. In the first instance we find German statesmen facing a great decision. Internally a crisis was reaching serious proportions. The Government had two alternatives to face. They could give way to the demands of the German Nationalists and insist that before any discussions began the war guilt clause in the Treaty of Versailles must be withdrawn, or they could make entry into the League the primary object on the best possible terms. This was the policy of Stresemann, the leader of the Social Democratic party, who used every means in his power to further Germany's progress towards League membership. But he did insist that entry into the League depended upon the recognition of his country's status as a Great Power. This would entail a permanent seat on the League Council. In a letter written on the sixth of September, 1924, to the Chancellor, Dr. Marx, Stresemann writes, "An essential condition...is the acknowledgement of our equality by the other Powers...If these conditions are given, then Germany is ready."<sup>1</sup>

The French people by 1925 had come to the place where they were beginning to feel that a Franco-German understanding was necessary. England and France overcame their centuries-old antagonism in 1904 due to their common fear of Germany's rising power. France and Germany in 1925 also had a common fear--war. The French people urged the ending of Poincaré's

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1. *ibid.*, Letter to Chancellor Marx; Sigmaringen, September 6, 1924, vol. 1, p. 442.

policy. "La tête à tête franco--allemand conduit à une catastrophe."<sup>1</sup> Germany would become an implacable enemy if this policy was not brought to an end. In addition, the finances of France were not in a very sound state at this time. Her large military expenses were a heavy burden and she had immense internal and external liabilities to meet in 1925 as well. M. de Mouy, one of the Treasury officials described the situation as desperate.<sup>2</sup> It was hoped that Locarno would relieve it. France also hoped that an agreement might be made because she expected that the next war would probably start in the East and she wanted to be sure that the West would remain at peace. Yet even as these steps were being taken to find grounds for discussion France was continuing the policy used so successfully three hundred years before by Richelieu and to be used again in post-Locarno years by Barthou--that of making issue of the division of her neighbors in the East. It was approximately at this time that the case of the spy,<sup>3</sup> Margot Nadau was brought to light in Warsaw. A beautiful woman with a German passport was detected in her nefarious activities in Poland, which country was an ally of France. Such exposures as these made the French officials worry but

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1. Anon., La Sécurité Continentale, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 363, 31 Janvier, 1925, p. 134.
  2. Bonnet, Georges, Les échéances de 1925, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 374, 18 Avril, 1925, p. 514.  
Anon., L'Année de Locarno, No. 410, 26 Decembre, 1925, p. 1723
  3. Anon., Une émule de Mata-Hari, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 363, 31 Janvier, 1925, p. 137.

still that nation urged a reconciliation. The average Frenchman believed that it was inevitable that Germany would regain her independent status sooner or later and that unless it was regained through peaceful methods, French security would never be a certainty.<sup>1</sup> The best way of summarizing the French viewpoint in respect to this new effort towards security would be to note the words of Henri de Jouvenel who described Franco-German reconciliation through Locarno as "le moyen de l'entrée européenne"<sup>2</sup> and adds "C'est pour cela que nous la souhaitons."<sup>3</sup>

Briand's reply to the German note of February 9 mentioned above laid down several conditions which would govern the entry of Germany into the League. It is essential that some of these factors be mentioned in this study as they assist in the orientation of France's stand at Locarno.<sup>3</sup> In the first instance, Germany must assume the obligations as laid down in the Covenant. Here there is a point of criticism which must be made against France in respect to her desire to get Germany to assume the responsibilities of League membership. Why was France so impatient at this time to see Germany in the League if not to make it complementary to the French alliance with Poland? As a member of the League it was practically impossible for her to violate the frontiers of Poland

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1. Anon., The Locarno Treaties, Round Table, vol. 16, December, 1925, p. 1.
  2. Jouvenel, Henri de, Pas d'entente franco-allemande sans l'Europe, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 452, 9 Octobre, 1926, p. 139.
  3. Cmd. 2435, cited in Toynbee, 1925, vol. 2, p. 38.

and thus her military alliance with that state would not involve her in any major incidents. This was a double form of security for France yet it was not likely to arouse any feeling but suspicion in Germany. Briand's second point was that the search for guarantees of security cannot be considered to involve any modification of the Peace Treaties. The French motive in laying down a stipulation of this nature is at once apparent when it is realized that security for France in French eyes meant the immobilization of Germany behind the German frontier as laid down in the Treaty of Versailles. The French also knew that from the German point of view security for themselves rested in their recovery of their liberty of movement. <sup>1</sup> This the French were determined to prevent without first securing adequate safeguards. In line with this last condition France would be favorable to a Rhineland Pact which would include Belgium. This Pact should be guaranteed by all signatories to the Pact who should take action if one of them should attempt hostilities. The Council should decide as to what form the coercive action should follow. Germany put forward the proposal in connection with these proposed agreements that other arbitration treaties could be undertaken in addition to the regular Pacts and that other Powers who were signatories of the Versailles Pact and the proposed Rhineland Pact could become the guarantors of these

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1. Anon., *Entre le traité de Versailles et le pacte*,  
L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 399, 10 Octobre, 1925,  
p. 1338.

Pacts if they so wished. France agreed. Why? Simply because this system of agreements was in complete accord with her system of alliances. She already had alliances with Poland, Rumania and Czecho-Slovakia and she wanted to keep herself free to guarantee any arbitral agreements into which any of her eastern allies might enter. This would further increase her security.<sup>1</sup> However, Briand was determined that the Germans should be careful as to what interpretation they might put on these French concessions. They must understand that the conditions laid down in the Versailles Treaty must be enforced. It was this phase of the Briand system which the German people found so hard to understand. Why should he strive with straight-forward realism to promote Franco-German understanding and yet at the same time be building a system of encircling alliances around Germany? For Briand the answer was simplicity itself--the security of his country.

While conversations were still in an early stage it was questioned in England as to whether the English interpretation of their obligations under Locarno was the same as that of Briand.<sup>2</sup> He thought that disputes between Germany and her neighbors could automatically come under the Locarno Pact and any decision rendered by whatever authorized authority under the Pact would automatically be guaranteed by Great

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1. Buell, R. L., Poland, Key to Europe, New York, A. A. Knopf, 1939, p. 312.

2. Swanwick, H. M., The Security Pact, Foreign Affairs (British), vol. 7, No. 1, July, 1925, p. 5.

Britain.<sup>1</sup> England had never at any period prior to this undertaken to guarantee anything further eastward than the Rhine, and she did not contemplate any such thing at this time.<sup>2</sup> Briand was taking too much for granted. The English were very cautious in their early post-war commitments and they had never been legally committed by anything other than the guarantee of the territorial "status quo" as defined in the Treaty of Versailles to protect the Franco-German and German-Belgian frontiers and to enforce Articles 42 and 43 which concern the demilitarized zone along the Rhine.

In spite of these differences sufficient unanimity of view-point had been achieved to enable the governments to come to three basic conclusions which would form the ground-work for the new Pact.<sup>3</sup> These illustrate what Briand considered to be essential to French security. In the first case the proposed Pact was to have no connection with the Treaty of Versailles other than that the French government recognized that the Treaty could be modified and also France guaranteed to observe this clause of the Treaty. Germany while in the process of entering the League can claim no special status, that is she will have no power, but must rely upon the other members to treat her with justice. In the third instance France

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1. Cmd. 2435, p. 11, cited in Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 1925, p. 34.

2. Anon., *The Locarno Treaties, Round Table*, vol. 16, December, 1925, p. 1.

3. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 1925, p. 42.

Stresemann, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 156.

insisted that all issues which might become contentious must be settled by peaceful methods. The word aggressor was automatically defined. It would refer to that nation which took up arms and crossed the frontier of a neighbor. In the case of the Rhine area--the demilitarized zone. This reference to the definition of an aggressor was the outcome of Anglo-French conversations in which Great Britain insisted that she retain the right to decide for herself the difference between a doubtful and flagrant violation of a frontier. In the doubtful case she would refer the situation to the League while in the flagrant case she would declare war without consultation. A weakness in the Pact (Treaty of Mutual Guarantee) is found in this last above-mentioned point in that in the case of a situation developing which might involve several countries England's formula might prove of little value, yet the fact that Briand accepted it shows that he was anxious to cooperate to the uttermost. At this time he was imbued with the spirit of peace which carried him through this whole period of negotiations. Of this elusive spirit he said, "il faut avoir la chose dans la coeur, il fait saisir toutes occasions, toutes possibilités de la servir et de la servir constamment."<sup>1</sup>

A meeting of juristic experts was held in London on

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1. Discours prononcé à la Chambre des députés par M. Briand, président du conseil, 26 Février, 1926, cited in L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 422, 20 Mars, 1926, p. 371.

September 1, 1925, whose object was to put into exact legal terminology any controversial problem still outstanding. The German representative, Dr. Gaus, took an active part in the proceedings.<sup>1</sup> It hardly seems possible that Dr. Gaus could have reported to Stresemann that the Rhineland Pact was the only topic discussed by the jurists, yet when just prior to the summoning of the first meeting of the official delegates at Locarno the Allies announced the inclusion of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia as participants there was a natural and justified protest from Germany. Briand had overstepped the mark. As more than one critic described it, Briand was just a bit too clever. Of course, the conflict centered around the question of a guarantee of the eastern frontiers. Germany refused to consider the Polish Corridor as lost forever. Yet Poland and Czecho-Slovakia as active participants in the negotiations would be a definite factor in Briand's security plans. The Germans had hoped that the question of the eastern frontiers would not be included in the same discussions as the Rhineland Pact but the Polish government insisted that it should. The only solution to this problem was that Germany<sup>2</sup> and Poland and Germany and Czecho-Slovakia<sup>3</sup> should make

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1. Stresemann's diaries, letters and papers, vol. 2, p. 157.

Loutre, Camille, La Réunion des juristes à Londres, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 394, 5 Septembre, 1925, p. 1173. This French writer says that the Rightists hold that he was not given power to act.

2. Cmd. No. 2525 Annex D. Initialled October 16, 1925.

3. Ibid., Annex F. Initialled October 16, 1925.

separate agreements and that these agreements should be covered by any guarantee specified in the Locarno Pact. A serious difficulty arose over Article 15 of the Covenant in this connection. In the case of a failure of the Council to reach a unanimous decision any member of the Council was at liberty to take whatever action that member felt to be in keeping with right and justice.<sup>1</sup> Poland and Czecho-Slovakia were determined that they would not be left to their own resources in such a case and France supported them. Bilateral treaties were negotiated between France and Poland<sup>2</sup> and France and Czecho-Slovakia<sup>3</sup> where in the case of failure by the Council to reach a decision they would come to each others' support if unprovoked aggression against either of them should take place. This was understood by all signatories to mean that France's response to aggressive action against Poland or Czecho-Slovakia would be to align herself automatically on the side of the invaded nation. This gave a clarity to France's stand and although there was resentment on the part of the extreme German nationalists of the Dr. Hugenberg group, Stresemann agreed. The German People's Party endorsed the stand of Dr. Stresemann that almost any sacrifice was warranted if it could speed Germany's entry into the League of Nations.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Article 15, Paragraph 7.
  2. Cmd. 2525 Annex F. p. 56, Initialled, October 16, 1925.
  3. Cmd. 2525 Annex E. p. 44, Initialled, October 16, 1925.
  4. Stresemann, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 172.

The agreements which en toto form the Locarno Pacts were accepted by the different governments and were signed on the first of December in London and were placed in the archives at Geneva on the fourteenth of the same month.<sup>1</sup> The first of the factors preventing the putting into force of these Peace Pacts was now removed, all that remained was for Germany to enter the League and take her place as a member of the Council. All nations had been agreed from the commencement of negotiations that the ultimate goal was to see Germany at the Council table, but there were certain Powers which put forward their claims to a permanent seat at this time. Poland, Spain, Brazil and China felt that the time was ripe to throw their hats into the ring. All had in their own opinions, just reasons for this demand. It would be irrelevant at this time to discuss the claims of each of these nations for our interest is only to analyze the position taken by France.

Public opinion in France and England showed a wide divergence on the Council issue. Briand favored an increase in the Council by the addition of Poland. This would provide a counter-weight against the newly-acquired power of Germany. This stand was endorsed by public opinion in France and Poland and also by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Austin Chamberlain. Yet in England both Parliament and people were definitely against an enlargement of the Council at this time for two reasons. In the first instance it would make the Council more

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1. Toynbee, op. cit., 1925, vol. 2, p. 61.

cumbersome and remove the flexibility which the smaller group would have. Secondly, it had all the appearance of a direct affront to Germany. How was the problem of French security involved in this question of increase of the Council? To answer this question we must recall that the French people, quite justifiably in their opinion, looked upon the League as an organization established especially for their support. As a result, they felt it quite in order that their government should give support to Polish interests. France was torn between two fears. First, Russia, for whom France still had a very real antagonism, made advances to Poland which resulted in a rumor of a commercial treaty and far more important, a feeling in France that a new rapprochement was in the offing between Germany and Russia as a result of the commercial treaty negotiated by M. Chicherin in Berlin on October 12, 1925.<sup>1</sup> The French had no right to question the sincerity of Germany's intention to fulfill the conditions of League membership.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of this fact, Briand was unconsciously influenced by public opinion in his efforts to find a solution to the controversy centering around the question of Germany's admission to the Council.

The special session of the League Assembly ended on March

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1. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 65. This treaty, following only three years after the Treaty of Rapallo, disturbed the French.
  2. Anon., (editorial), New Statesman, vol. 27, No. 678, April 24, 1926, p. 33.

17 without fulfilling its obligation to Germany.<sup>1</sup> Briand had again over-reached himself. Sir Austin Chamberlain was equally at fault, yet he took his lead from Briand, who had a greater understanding of the European situation.<sup>2</sup> Although Germany was admitted to membership in the Fall of 1926, yet if M. Briand and the British Foreign Secretary had had the true Locarno spirit, Locarno could have become a reality several months before.<sup>3</sup> During the period which elapsed after the fiasco in March over the question of enlarging the Council and the acceptance of Germany in the Fall, seeds of doubt were planted. Russia rained a veritable barrage of abuse against the League, a Treaty of Friendship between Germany and Russia was signed<sup>4</sup> and most serious of all, the wisdom and sincerity of Sir Austin Chamberlain and Briand was challenged. Once awakened, particularly in the mind of the oppressed Germans, this doubt was hard to eradicate. If Stresemann could have addressed his people he might with justification have said, "In spite of all this our best policy is still to get in the League. We will by this gain concessions which will make us stronger. When we are strong enough we will throw off all pretence and take our rightful place. We will not have to bargain then."

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1. Toynbee, op. cit., 1926, p. 52.

2. Huddleston, Sisley, Briandissimo, New Statesman, vol. 26, March 20, 1926, p. 702.

3. Harris, H. Wilson, The Breakdown at Geneva, Contemporary Review, vol. 129, April, 1926, p. 416.

4. April 24, 1926, Toynbee, 1926, p. 151.

that he did not is greatly to his credit, but the nationalists in Germany were busily at work along this very line.

It was hoped that Locarno would mean the end of the Great War. It was hoped that it would mean the emergence of Germany from political and psychological isolation. It was hoped that it would dry up what Lord Baldwin in 1925 called the "quaking bog"<sup>1</sup> of European uncertainty. Yet it did none of these things. To know why we can best turn to a remark made by Briand who said, "Locarno gave us all the security we need, but the French armies must be kept on the Rhine to assure payments of reparations and the fulfillment of Dis-<sup>2</sup>armament conditions."

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1. Steed, Wickham, Locarno and British Interests, Journal of the British Institute of Foreign Affairs, vol. 4, November, 1925, p. 286.
2. Anon., France and America Renew a Treaty, New York, Outlook, vol. 148, February 15, 1928, p. 258.

CHAPTER IV.

BRIAND'S WORK AND INFLUENCE 1926-1932

## CHAPTER IV.

### BRIAND'S WORK AND INFLUENCE 1926-1932

It has been stated earlier in this study that the French were willing to extend every form of assistance within their power to the League of Nations to assure the peace of the world. In return France expected the League to provide her with adequate national security. Yet until the time should come when she could trust entirely to the League as the sole means for her protection she must continue her system of forming alliances. This was the policy of Briand.

During the summer of 1926 when a solution was being sought for the problem which had arisen over Germany's entry into the Council of the League, Briand turned his attention to the completion of his system of Alliances already well begun in the period prior to Locarno. When observers examined the Central European scene during this "breathing space" from the tension of the Locarno conferences they noted several very important factors. In the first instance Czecho-Slovakia, Jugo-Slavia, and Rumania were busy unifying their relationships with each other by renewing treaties of friendship and also with alliances involving military commitments. At the same time these smaller Powers were coordinating their efforts in order to present a unified front on questions of territorial adjustments advanced by Germany and her former allies. The second observation was the realization that the Little Entente Powers were closely watching to observe the extent to which

the Great Powers carried out their Locarno commitments.

Owing to his failure--or refusal--to understand the complexities of French finance, Briand was forced from the Premiership shortly after Locarno. His successor, M. Poincaré, carried on Briand's policy owing to the fact that it had the popular support at the moment. He retained Briand as Foreign Minister. Thus began Briand's long term as Minister of Foreign Affairs during which his policies did much to shape the course of events in Europe.

Briand felt that a firm system of alliances with the Little Entente Powers was vitally necessary to the security of France, inasmuch as the French geographical situation made them integral factors in the French objective, the preservation of the "status quo". In accordance with this plan Briand announced the Franco-Rumanian Treaty in Paris on June 10, 1926.<sup>1</sup> This treaty was made when the Locarno spirit was at its height. It omits any provisions which are obviously directed against a third Power and in addition contains a supplement which lays down a procedure for the peaceful settlement of disputes between the two countries. This treaty compares very favorably with the treaty already negotiated with Czecho-Slovakia which was entered into during a period when little sympathy was extended to the defeated powers. In addition to the Franco-Rumanian Treaty, an agreement was negotiated between France and Jugo-Slavia at this time although

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1. Toynbee, A. J., Survey of International Affairs, 1926, p. 156.

it was not made known for fear of arousing hostility in Italy.<sup>1</sup>

Comment should be made at this juncture on the general European situation as it presented itself after the drawing up of these treaties. France now had established a network of alliances which included Jugo-Slavia, Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Poland. Poland already had treaties with these other smaller powers. Thus Briand's security picture should have been complete. Yet it was not. Already a new menace had presented itself in the form of the aspiration of Italian Fascism for expansion into the south-east of Europe.

The fundamental conflict between France and Italy in post-Locarno years lay in the fact that Mussolini wanted to share equally with France in the pacification of Europe, whereas France hoped to keep Italy in a position of permanent inferiority. This antagonism in the south-east had its counterpart in the Mediterranean where naval rivalry led to animosity between the two nations.<sup>2</sup> It was not long before France was forced to recognize the truth of Count Bethlen's statement to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian Chamber when he said that the development of the situation in Central Europe no longer depends on France alone but also on the influence of various other states.<sup>3</sup> The implication was not lost

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1. Anon., *Italo-French Relations*, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 17, No. 24, December 16, 1927, p. 465.
  2. This stand was taken by France at the Washington Naval Conference, 1922, and held throughout efforts at naval disarmament.
  3. Anon., *Traite' franco-yougoslav*, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 513, 10 Decembre, 1927, p. 1645.

on the French yet Briand felt that a pacific approach to the Italian problem was the wisest policy. Consequently when the Italian dictator launched a policy of treaty-making in the Balkan area, the French stood quietly but ever watchfully on guard. France was brought directly into the picture when Italian overtures to Jugo-Slavia failed owing to the fears of that country that Mussolini had some unrevealed plans regarding Albania. Jugo-Slavia asked for ratification of the Franco-Jugo-Slav Pact mentioned above. This was accomplished November 11, 1927.<sup>1</sup> Briand would have preferred to delay publication of this agreement owing to his fear that the Italian dictator would view the Treaty in much the same light as did both the Left and Right press in France--as a direct attack on Italy.<sup>2</sup> It is of interest to note that opinion in France which in the last nine years had endorsed the treaties with Poland, Rumania and Czecho-Slovakia without serious comment, reacted vigorously to the treaty with Jugo-Slavia. These treaties were directed towards defeated powers. Yet it was felt that the above-mentioned pact was directed against a former ally which was a rising power in Europe as well and Briand was thought to be "involving France in an undertaking, the danger of which was as real as it was unnecessary."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Anon., France's Network of Alliances, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 17, No. 19, November 11, 1927, p. 364.

3. Ibid., p. 364.

Although Premier Mussolini maintained that this treaty was merely a part of Briand's policy of building alliances, the enthusiasm with which it was received in Belgrade convinced observers that there it was looked upon as a counter-balance to the increasing intimacy between Italy and Albania.<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Tirana signed eleven days later by these two states<sup>2</sup> was a direct answer to Jugo-Slavia and an indirect one to Briand. The former Allies of France, Great Britain and the United States had left France with an estate which she was finding it hard to maintain in face of rising opposition, not the least of which was the new threat from Italy. For France, Jugo-Slavia was a buffer state against Italian expansion.

One of the basic problems in the Italo-French differences was that Italy demanded everything from France and had nothing but the offer of friendship to give in return. Briand could not see wherein France could benefit in a practical sense. He hoped that the Yugo-Slav Pact would be followed by Italian reconciliation with that state. The Treaty of Tirana was his answer.<sup>3</sup> He was convinced by this action that the Italian aim was to construct a system of alliances to counter-balance

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1. Anon. (editorial), Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 16, no. 23, June 10, 1927, p. 444.
  2. Anon., Traité d'alliance défensive entre l'Italie et l'Albanie, signé à Tirana, le 22 Novembre, 1927, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 513, 10 Décembre, 1927, p. 1647.
  3. Anon., Le traité franco-yougoslav, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 509, 12 Novembre, 1927, p. 1494.

that of the French.<sup>1</sup>

Although both systems of alliances aimed at the preservation of peace yet the tension which developed caused relations to become so strained that other European nations began to fear that post-Locarno security was menaced and that the danger might spread to other areas through the involvements of these respective nations with their alliances. Briand sensed this growing fear and eight days after the Treaty of Tirana he temporarily relieved Franco-Italian tension by declaring that he was always ready to undertake discussions with Italy at any time and that he had the support of the whole Cabinet in this assertion. The first result of this statement was an agreement made by the Italian ambassador in Paris with France towards the clarification of the status of nationals of either country resident in the other. The Italian dictator responded to these overtures of Briand in his statement to the Italian Senate that efforts towards an understanding with France which would eliminate causes of friction would be undertaken in the near future.<sup>2</sup> This effort of Briand might be regarded as a return to the pure Locarno spirit. What success this attempted rapprochement would have was questioned in Italian quarters in Great Britain--where it was felt that because of Italy's inability to offer France

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1. Gerando, F. de, Les Balkans Après Le Pacte de Tirana, Revue Politique and Parlementaire, Tome 130, 10 Mars, 1927, p. 422.
  2. Speech made at Rome, December 15, 1927.

much to complete a bargain it was problematical whether any lasting settlement could be achieved. Italy's demands were two-fold. In the first instance she demanded that France grant her complete equality with herself in the work of consolidating south-eastern Europe on the Treaty basis. This the French felt in the interests of their national security, they could not do. In the second case the Italians insisted that they be given naval equality with France. Here again, in the interests of their national security, the French felt that they could not comply. However, as a direct result of the lessening of tension between France and Italy the announcement of the Italian dictator that the Four Great European Peace Treaties were not beyond the pale as far as revision was concerned did not arouse bitter protest in France. It could be looked upon as a deliberate play to the dissatisfied Powers in south-eastern Europe. In his observation of the situation, Herr von Rheinbaben, a former under-secretary in the German ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote in April of 1927, that: "Ruled as she is today by a nationalist government, Italy is more than usually inclined to expansion, and from an expansionist policy she is principally restrained by the attitude of France."<sup>2</sup> Italo-French relations did

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1. Anon., Italo-German Relations, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 17, No. 24, December 16, 1927, p. 465.
  2. Jouvenel, Henri de, France and Italy, Foreign Affairs, vol. 5, No. 4, July 27, 1927, p. 546, citing statements of Herr von Rheinbaben from the Tagliche Rundschau, April 27, 1927.

improve however, and this enabled Briand to focus his attention on the Rhineland problem.

The idea of a real entente was one of the aspirations of both Briand and Stresemann when they met at Thoiry to try and move nearer to a settlement of their national differences through personal consultations. In order that a definite basis for security could be achieved Briand felt that the firm establishment of Republican sentiment throughout Germany was necessary. This would prevent any ideological clash between the two countries and help to curb the power of the reactionary forces in Germany. Secondly, France wanted Germany to show some real willingness to make good the destruction wrought on French soil, and lastly, to grant a more cordial reception to Poland and her Little Entente Allies as political entities. France believed that these smaller Powers would grow as political entities in spite of the opinion of economists to the contrary.<sup>1</sup> German commentators questioned the sincerity of the French for they asked why did they force the post-war German government to assume responsibility for the war when they had already laid responsibility at the door of the Kaiser.<sup>2</sup> In 1815 the Allies did not place a heavy indemnity on the French people. They were merely required to pay a comparatively small sum and to support an army of occupation. Castlereagh himself had made the assertion that no

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1. Sanchez, J. A. M. de, Further Economic Consequences of the Peace, Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, No. 1, September 15, 1922, p. 158.
  2. Kautsky, Karl, Germany Since the War, Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, No. 2, December 15, 1922, p. 101.

peace could be wise that involved the ruin of one of the countries concerned in the making of the treaty. To a large extent they blamed Napoleon for the unrest and let responsibility rest there. In addition, in 1918 the German people repudiated the Kaiser, necessitating his flight to Holland for safety.<sup>1</sup> Stresemann felt himself faced with a situation however, the realities of which were only too apparent.<sup>2</sup> The German Foreign Minister called for the evacuation of the Rhineland.<sup>3</sup> Briand offered the second and third zones.<sup>3</sup> French troops from those zones were to be transferred into the territory still under French occupation. However, at this time the influence of M. Poincaré had to be considered and he was able to interpret Article 431 of the Treaty of Versailles (If before the expiration of fifteen years Germany complies with all the undertakings resulting from the present treaty, the occupying forces will be withdrawn immediately) so as to justify continued occupation by linking up evacuation with Reparations. Part of the compensation for evacuation discussed at Thoiry was to have been 250-300 millions of gold marks specifically earmarked for the Saar mines.<sup>4</sup> At that

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Stern-Rubarth, Edgar, *Three Men Tried*, London, Duckworth, 1939. An excellent character study of Stresemann is given in this volume.

3. Toynbee, op. cit., 1929, p. 110.

4. Figure stated in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 22, 1926, cited by Toynbee, op. cit., 1927, p. 110.

time this sum would have been of invaluable assistance because of the precarious financial situation in France, but M. Poincaré had succeeded in restoring confidence through re-establishing the soundness of the franc and this enabled the French to disregard this factor as a consideration in the question of evacuation. The occupation of the Rhineland might be regarded as a monument to diplomatic stupidity. During the period 1926-1928 the French and British could come to no understanding on a common policy. Dr. Stresemann, <sup>1</sup> feeling that the British were sympathetic to the idea of evacuation, tried to get the English to bring pressure against France which Sir Austin Chamberlain would not do. At this period the English Rhineland policy seemed to be merely to feebly endorse that of the French, while within Germany Stresemann was trying to hold the support of the people in favor of his reconciliation policy. French propaganda maintained that there was still no security in Europe. It was unquestionably right, but it failed to realize that the reason for it lay at home. <sup>2</sup> It is difficult to estimate to what extent Briand was responsible for this unfortunate turn which French policy had taken following Locarno. Poincaré had himself

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1. Glasgow, George, The Gloom of 1928, Contemporary Review, vol. 135, January 1929, p. 101.  
Statement made by Mr. Stanley Baldwin, November 9, 1928, at banquet of the Lord Mayor of London.
  2. Rober-Raynaud, M., La France en Sarre, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 507, 29 Octobre, 1927, p. 1455.  
The French thesis is supported by this writer throughout this article.

shown his support of the policy of Briand throughout the Locarno conferences, yet he never fully persuaded himself that his policy of intimidation in the Ruhr was wrong, even after ~~the Anglo-British~~ stand forced his withdrawal of the French forces from that area. To Briand after Locarno, his occupancy of the Quai d'Orsay became somewhat of a religion with him, yet in this lesser post he was forced to fall in line with the wishes of Poincaré in order to retain his office. During this period scant progress was made towards evacuation of the Rhineland and as a result France was no nearer permanent security.

Turning to survey the course of Franco-Russian relations we find they have followed just as tortuous a route as the Franco-German negotiations over the Rhineland. Angered by the withdrawal of Russia from the Allied side and piqued by the defeat of the White Russians in South Russia whom they had publicly supported, the French found it easy to erect a wall between themselves and the new and unknown state of Soviet Russia. Their support of Poland during the Russo-Polish war did not soften the hearts of the Russians towards France and the Soviet refusal to honor the debts contracted by Imperial Russia united the French people behind their Government's anti-Russian policy. Much has been written about the venality of the French press, and there is small doubt that prior to the Great War this criticism was deserved. Certain sections of the French press were responsible for the contraction of these very debts which they ranted on so bitterly after the war was over. In return for money considerations the French newspapers

persuaded the peasants and industrial workers to loan their savings to the Russian government. Poincaré was involved as well in this manoeuvring. It is estimated that one thousand million pounds sterling of the savings of small holders went to Russia in this way.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet authorities were loath to acknowledge their responsibilities for payment. However on October 28, 1924, the French government formally recognized the Soviet administration as the legal government of Russia. The French leaders were trying to adjust the new Russia to their post-war security system and as well were anxious to share in the Russian markets which had been opened to Germany by the Treaty of Rapallo negotiated during the Conference of Cannes.<sup>2</sup>

The period of the Franco-Russian effort to re-establish normal diplomatic relations as well as commercial, runs fairly parallel to the improvement of relations with Germany prior to and immediately following the Locarno Pact. The Russians felt that establishing the French connection would aid them in strengthening their own particular institutions.<sup>3</sup> They needed, above all, cash and credits. But before any agreement could be made the French government insisted that some understanding

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1. Anon., The French Press and Russia, The Nation and Athenaeum, vol. 34, No. 19, February 9, 1924, p. 659.
  2. Anon., Franco-Soviet Trade, Foreign Policy Association Information Service, vol. 6, No. 19, November 26, 1930, p. 371.
  3. Rakovsky, Christian, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, Foreign Affairs, vol. 4, No 4, July, 1926, p. 574.

be arrived at concerning the debts of the Imperial Régime. Many conferences were held, the course of which does not enter into the field of this study, but the two parties were unable to come to any decision. Any payments which Russia could undertake must of necessity be extended over a long period of time and the French were adamant that the payments should be larger and cover a shorter period.

During the Russo-Polish War the Russian leader, Trotsky, vouchsafed the fact that the Soviet was about to launch a grandiose scheme which would involve the conquest of Germany and France after the suppression of Poland.<sup>1</sup> It was not long, however, before these dreamers began to appreciate the scope of their problem and they turned to the use of subversive methods. The Third International which had been formed a year prior to the public declaration of this plan was the agency used.<sup>2</sup> It was this organization which the French feared. France had, since the establishment of the Third Republic been a refuge for exiles of many nationalities and this made her task of counteracting the work of this organization very difficult. In spite of the fact that there grew up in France a large group which felt that the Third International was actually a menace to the security of the country, Herriot, Poincaré and

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1. Chernov, Victor, *Bolshevik Romance and Reality*, Foreign Affairs, vol. 5, No. 2, January, 1927, p. 307.
  2. Anon., *La iii<sup>e</sup> Internationale contre la France, son armée et ses colonies*, *Le Correspondant*, Tome 299, 10 Mai, 1925, p. 321.

others refused to sever diplomatic relations with Russia as did the English government. They felt that shutting their eyes to an existent danger did not remove that danger. Briand, also was in favor of the continuation of diplomatic relations. "It is by charity, patience and tolerance that we can be of service to Russia," Herriot said about the time France entered into formal relations with that country, and Briand carried on that policy in spite of Russia's rather difficult behavior during the period of the Locarno negotiations. She looked upon the whole League system as an innocent-looking organization built up by Britain and France to strengthen their grasp on their "ill gotten gains". In accordance with this belief she tried to detach Poland from her alliance with France at the time of the difficulty over the Council seat. French statesmen, anxious about the security of their country, might well have been pleased when Poland curtly informed Russia that economic discussions were quite in order but that security issues should be left to Locarno.

During the three years immediately following Locarno the ideological differences between Russia and the western

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1. Over the Zinovieff Letter partially. Text in Toynbee, op. cit., 1924, Appendix, p. 493.
  2. Herriot, Edouard, The Program of Liberal France, Foreign Affairs, vol. 2, No. 4, June 15, 1924.
  3. Machray, Robert, The Red Reaction to Locarno, Fortnightly Review, vol. 119, January 1, 1926, p. 158.
  4. European Economic and Political Survey (issued by the Reference Service on International Affairs, Paris), No. 18, May 31, 1926, p. 14.

democracies were still too potent a force to make for close cooperation. No success was achieved between France and Russia towards settlement of their debt problem and from the security angle Russia still remained an enigma. On August 27, 1928, <sup>1</sup>Russia received an invitation from the United States through France to adhere to the Briand-Kellogg pact. The French fear of Germany, the gradual stabilizing of Russia internally and the waning French fear of that country made France the ideal country through which to transmit such an invitation. Russia had come within the range of French statesmen guarding security.

In looking at the European scene in 1928 with the object of getting a panoramic picture we see a continent beset with alliances and counter-alliances. Under the cover of the League the western nations have established fundamentally the same system as was in use in pre-war Europe. In some groups the partners are different. Not the least responsible of post-war statesmen for this situation was Briand. Locarno was a great step forward for peace, yet by 1928 considerable of the enthusiasm of 1925 had disappeared and a new note of cynicism seemed to be creeping in. Briand envisaged a Europe at peace through the League of Nations, but he was not big enough to place his whole trust in that organization. That he genuinely sought peace is never questioned, but only his method is open to censure. His reactions during the negotiations of the pact

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1. The United States was not in diplomatic relations with Russia at this time.

which bears his name partially illustrate this weakness. Anxious to improve Franco-American relations which had become somewhat strained owing to the refusal of the French government to take part in a new maritime conference, Briand said:

France wishes to live in an atmosphere of confidence and peace and the evidence of this is her signature of the agreements tending to hold at bay the threat of conflict...For those whose lives are devoted to securing this living reality of a policy of peace the United States and France already appear before the world as morally in full agreement...France would be willing to subscribe publicly with the United States to any mutual agreement to outlaw war...as between these two countries. <sup>1</sup>

What was behind Briand's proposal? His desire was to conclude a bilateral agreement between France and the United States which would eliminate war between these two countries only. By thus limiting the proposal it would not commit France to any such policy on the European continent thus leaving the way open for her to take defensive action in case of aggression by Germany. Thus Briand would preserve the institution of war as the means of assuring the triumph of his post-war policy in Europe and at the same time protect France by making the pacific settlement of all differences with the United States mandatory. Mr. Kellogg was not deceived by this line of approach on the part of Briand. A treaty of this kind between the two countries only would tie the American hands in respect to France and might even involve the United States in a war of which France was a part. The attitude of Mr. Kellogg was shown

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1. Foreign Policy Association Information Service; Text of Letter, vol. 3, No. 7, June 8, 1927, p. 87.

in his reply to Briand through the French ambassador at Washington.<sup>1</sup> He was very favorable to a declaration of peace but he declared that it should be a general one. He argued that since the aim of both France and the United States is to abolish war, why limit it, let all the Great Powers be included. Briand's proposal was being stretched far beyond his original idea. He began to realize from the point of French security the situation was becoming complicated. This broadening of the scope of the proposal by the American statesman caused much disquiet in France where it was felt that the complete renunciation of war would tie French hands in case Germany should repudiate the Versailles Treaty. Also it would nullify the value of the sanctions created by the Covenant and by the Locarno treaties in which France placed so great a faith. In accordance with this sentiment Briand tried to solve the problem by specifically introducing the qualification of a war of aggression which he maintained would cover the French objections to the phrase "war as an instrument of national policy" which was too broad from a French point of view. Thus the basic cause of disagreement, it will be seen, was that Mr. Kellogg wanted to outlaw war on any grounds while Briand maintained that defensive wars should be permitted.<sup>2</sup> French public

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1. The Secretary of State at Washington to the French Ambassador (Claudel), December 28, 1927, International Conciliation, No. 243 Documents, 1928, p. 465.
  2. The French Ambassador (Claudel) to the Secretary of State, Washington, January 5, 1928, International Conciliation, No. 243 Documents, 1928, p. 466.
  3. Miller, David Hunter, The Pact of Paris, New York, G. Putnam's Sons, 1928, p. 38.

opinion at this time was conjecturing as to whether the American Secretary of State was not just trying to give satisfaction "aux aspirations du mysticisme pacifiste"<sup>1</sup> without enough attention to the realities of the post-war situation in Europe. It is of vital interest to observers that Briand had brought on a situation through his letter to the American people from which he now might have to retreat. In order to avoid this Briand dispatched a new note in which he laid down conditions for which the commentator, "Pertinax"<sup>2</sup> felt the Foreign Minister should be congratulated as they would likely put an end to the discussions and if by chance they should be accepted, they would deprive the proposed treaty of any value or significance.<sup>3</sup>

The expected stagnation in the negotiations did not occur as Mr. Kellogg disregarded the latest objections of Briand and re-stated the American thesis in a new note<sup>4</sup> dispatched to the Governments of Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Japan. This was followed almost immediately by a new Draft Treaty thought by the French to safeguard their

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1. Anon., La Réponse de M. Briand à Mr. Kellogg, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 530, 7 Avril, 1928, p. 450.
  2. At this time a political writer on The Conservative Echo de Paris.
  3. Anon., War Outlawry Proposal, Manchester Guardian Weekly vol. 18, No. 15, April 13, 1928, p. 284.
  4. International Conciliation No. 243, p. 478, April 13, 1928.

country's security.<sup>1</sup> With these two texts before them, it was hoped that the Great Powers could see both sides of the problem and that some common ground could be reached. As one French writer said, "Cristallisées dans des textes rendus publics, les oppositions de points de vue vont s'affirmer encore d'avantage et la conciliation des deux thèses n'en sera sans doute pas rendue plus facile."<sup>2</sup> France was vitally concerned that the proposed pact should cover the League Covenant (Article 1, French draft of April 20), in order that she could protect her continental alliance system particularly her involvements with her ally, Poland, which country had already caused considerable difficulty at Locarno, and also over the question of the enlarging of the League Council.

Public opinion in France seemed to favor the American draft of April 13, which had been dispatched by Mr. Kellogg to the Powers. It was feared that further French objections would put France in a very bad light.<sup>3</sup> However, the American Secretary of State dispatched a new draft to the Powers previously mentioned and in addition, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. It was accepted by all countries named. In addition all other countries having constitutional governments were invited to

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1. Ibid., p. 481. It was thought that M. Poincaré was behind much of these negotiations, as M. Briand was ill at the time. Round Table, The Outlawry of War, vol. 18, June 1928, p. 455.
  2. Anon., Le project Kellogg, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 532, 21 Avril, 1928, p. 55.
  3. Huddleston, Sisley, European Alliances, New Statesman, vol. 31, No. 782, April 21, 1928, p. 38.

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What was the significance of the Briand-Kellogg Pact insofar as French security was concerned? It has been stated earlier in this study that the new element of cynicism was creeping into international affairs during the period preceding this pact. To a certain extent this was temporarily arrested. This was important for France because it meant that the accusation that she might not really desire peace at all would be stilled. She had shown her desire and willingness to cooperate. France had particularly to face this criticism from the United States and Briand hoped that for a while at least this would be silenced. Yet at the time of the signing of this Paris Peace Pact, France was staging the greatest military manoeuvres in her history.<sup>2</sup> From the viewpoint of the outside observer this appeared inconsistent, but for the realist, Briand, it was good business. It showed the German people that France was still a supporter of the peace efforts yet was not prepared to brook any trifling over the Reparations question. By the Briand-Kellogg pact the right of a nation to self-defense was retained.<sup>3</sup> This

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1. Miller, David Hunter, op. cit., Addendum, p. 149.
  2. Huddleston, Sisley, An Act of Faith, New Statesman, vol. 31, No. 801, September 11, 1928, p. 628.
  3. Articles 1 and 2 of the text of the Briand-Kellogg treaty. Although not specifically mentioned this situation is understood. If Germany should take action, the conditions governing an aggressor come into play.

Sieburg, Friedrich, Briand, Foreign Affairs, vol. 10, No. 4, July 1932, p. 586.

particularly pleased France as the French were left the power to protect themselves in case of attack by Germany. The treaty of Versailles, (Covenant) and the Treaties of Locarno were not affected by the new Pact. Any breach of the Briand-Kellogg Pact would mean a simultaneous breach of the Covenant of the League of Nations.<sup>1</sup> In the world at large the new Pact was received with varying degrees of enthusiasm. The reactionary and radical press was largely condemnatory or apathetic<sup>2</sup> but the more moderate organs<sup>3</sup> felt that this Pact was a step in advance and that it would assist the cause which every nation maintained was the goal of its international policy--peaceful cooperation. This thought was very ably expressed by an American critic, George W. Wickersham, when he wrote that if people realize the full scope of the pact "they will visit with political infamy those who would deride their faith and violate their honour by making a mockery of its real import."<sup>4</sup>

Briand's record in italo-French relations in the post-war years has shown moderation and restraint. Rather than conclude an exclusive pact with Jugo-Slavia he urged the

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1. Miller, David Hunter, op. cit., p. 131.
  2. Cocks, F. Seymour, The American Dove and the British Lamb, London, The Socialist Review, New Series, No. 24, June, 1928, p. 8.
  3. Dumont-Wilden, L., La Ratification du Pacte Briand-Kellogg, Revue Bleue, No. 3, 2 Février, 1929.
  4. Wickersham, G. W., The Pact of Paris; A Gesture of a Pledge? Foreign Affairs, vol. 7, No. 3, April 1929, p. 356.

inclusion of Italy and even refrained from signing that Pact until later so that the Italian dictator could be the first to append his signature.<sup>1</sup> However, Signor Mussolini refused to adhere and the Franco-Jugo-Slav Treaty was ratified November 11, 1927. It appeared from this that Italy was determined to enter upon a path divergent from that of France. To the French, their own lay on the road to peace, and therefore that of Italy could only lead to war. This feeling was confirmed immediately after the refusal of Mussolini to enter into a treaty with France and Jugo-Slavia when Italian engineers began to construct military roads all converging on the French frontier.<sup>2</sup> In addition, during the period of approximately one year while Briand was waiting for Mussolini's answer to his overtures for peace, the Italian dictator concluded a treaty of conciliation and neutrality with Spain.<sup>3</sup> The French regarded this as a direct affront to Jugo-Slavia and as the first move towards encirclement of France. Fascist Italy was becoming a potential menace to French security.

Both France and Italy in common with other European countries adhered to the Briand-Kellogg Pact to outlaw war. During the months which followed it became apparent that

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1. Sforza, Comte Carlo, *Italie et France*, *Revue de Paris*, Tome 4, 15 Juillet, 1930, p. 721.
  2. Aubert, Louis, *France and Italy*, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 9, No. 2, January 1931, p. 237.
  3. August 7, 1926. *Foreign Policy Association Information Service*, vol. 3, No. 1, March 16, 1927, p. 1.

neither country was prepared to take it too seriously until after they had achieved their respective aims. The entry of Germany into the League and the growing power of Italy caused a loosening of the bonds between France and the Little Entente states. Where once these nations would have jumped at the crack of the French whip now a gravitation of Czecho-Slovakia towards Germany and Rumania towards Italy took place.<sup>1</sup> However, Briand persisted in his efforts towards a peaceful settlement of differences. In spite of the dispatch of M. Beaumarchais, one of the most successful French colonial administrators, to Rome, no settlement was reached. The efforts of French statesmen were to a considerable extent thwarted by the press and people of both countries which indulged in a campaign of mutual recrimination which went to absurd lengths. Accusations by the French that the Italians were savages and the friendship of French Cabinet ministers for anti-Fascist émigrés did nothing to further the efforts towards conciliation.<sup>2</sup> When it became apparent that no progress could be made towards settlement of differences on the continent, the sphere of interest shifted to the Mediterranean where the problem of naval parity was rapidly coming to the fore in Italo-French relations. This will be dealt with later in this study.

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1. Huddleston, Sisley, *A Diplomatic Shifting*, *New Statesman*, vol. 31, No. 788, June 2, 1928, p. 249.
  2. Newman, E. W. P., *Franco-Italian Relations*, *Contemporary Review*, vol. 138, August 1930, p. 155.

An act of faith must never be made to look ridiculous. In the Pact of Paris the Great Powers solemnly renounced war as an instrument of national policy. The continued occupation of the Rhineland looked foolish after Locarno, its continuation after the Pact of Paris would almost appear offensive. For years the occupation of the Rhineland had been explained by the French on the ground of security. No further reason had been vouchsafed even although the Treaty of Versailles called for the complete fulfilling of all conditions laid down there before evacuation would be considered. <sup>1</sup> Almost at the moment of the signing of the Briand-Kellogg Pact Briand was presenting new demands to Stresemann. The financial situation must be adjusted. German public opinion received a severe shock. The Germans might well have asked "Why should our every effort towards sincere cooperation be regarded as new evidence of hypocrisy? Why should not the same judgment be meted out to France, to Britain and even the United States of America?" For Stresemann, Briand's attitude was a severe blow, for he only too well realized the criticism his policy of reconciliation was going to have to contend with from his nationalist opponents. Yet it is not hard to find a logical reason for this stiffening of the attitude of the French Foreign Minister. He was no longer solely in control of the foreign policy of France. Poincaré, the man who had saved

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1. Article 431.

the franc in 1926<sup>1</sup> was making his presence felt in the international field. Briand, who by the end of 1930<sup>2</sup> had served in twenty-four Cabinets and had been prime minister many times as well, was beginning to look upon himself as an institution, as a man above politics, as the father of Briandism--the accepted foreign policy of France. In order to retain his place in the Quai d'Orsay he would make himself amenable to the opinions of the premier of the time. Hence to a certain extent it was a different Briand which Stresemann had to reckon with in his struggle for the evacuation of the Rhineland during the period following the ratification of the Briand-Kellogg Pact.

The question of evacuation was officially raised by President von Hindenburg to be followed shortly afterwards by Stresemann. The latter maintained that the principal obstacle to improving Franco-German relations was the presence<sup>3</sup> of Allied troops in the Rhineland.

It was a French semi-official newspaper which said, referring to the President's speech, that the world had become accustomed to the rhetorical efforts of German policy, and therefore expressed the belief that German demands should not be taken too seriously. French public opinion would be gravely mistaken if it accepted this point of view.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Sanchez, J. A. M. de, A Year of M. Poincaré, Foreign Affairs, vol. 6, No. 1, October 1927, p. 41.
  2. Huddleston, Sisley, The Group System, New Statesman, vol. 36, No. 922, December 27, 1930, p. 353.
  3. Woyntee, op. cit., 1929, p. 170.
  4. Address to the German Reichstag, January 30, 1928, Wheeler-Bennett, J. W. ed., Documents of International Affairs, 1928, p. 33.

Briand replied on February 2, 1929, in a statement to the Senate in which he summarized the stand of France. Germany must consent to placing the Rhineland under perpetual supervision of the League of Nations. Dr. Stresemann's proposal that supervision should continue only until 1935 Briand said was inadequate. In addition, Germany must make positive financial proposals.<sup>1</sup> He maintained that Germany must pay cash down at once. He advocated that German railway bonds be brought in under the Dawes scheme.<sup>2</sup> The French Foreign Minister had lost a considerable amount of his idealism. For him this was purely a matter of business. Just as in the Pact of Paris of 1928, when the American Secretary of State took Briand's protestations of peace too literally and proposed a world pact instead of one restricted to their two nations only, now he was experiencing the same qualms. Equality between France and Germany had been recognized in the Locarno Pacts and in the Briand-Kellogg Pact yet Briand wished to maintain some means of supremacy over Germany through the Rhineland either by military or financial means. Perhaps Briand did not believe so much in the worth of Locarno as he protested or possibly his quest for security was so much of a phobia to him that it warped his sense of justice. Evidence of this was given during the ninth session of the League Assembly when

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1. Anon., M. Briand's Terms to Germany, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 8, No. 6, February 10, 1928, p. 104.

2. Loc. cit.

he stated that he doubted whether Germany had really disarmed. "Who would care to maintain," he asks, "that a great country, so powerfully equipped for peace, that is to say, for industrial development, would be at a loss to supply an army with war materials?"<sup>1</sup> It must be admitted that Briand had some grounds for this statement for it was approximately at this time that the German trade union leader, Bullerjahn, was sentenced to prison by a military tribunal on a charge of treason for revealing to the Allied Commission of Control that machine-guns<sup>2</sup> were being manufactured illegally in German foundries. In any case, his address seemed to dispel the hope that the German plea for evacuation would be treated sympathetically by the French government. Lord Cushendun, who was taking Sir Austin Chamberlain's place at this session seemed to take up a stand by the side of Briand. One French correspondent wrote, "Lord Cushendun, en définissant la position Britannique est venu confirmer<sup>3</sup> puissamment la position française."

No progress seemed possible by direct negotiation between Briand and Dr. Muller<sup>4</sup> but in a private discussion between

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1. Documents of International Affairs, 1928, p. 43, Verbatim records of the speech by M. Briand in the Assembly, September 10, 1928.
  2. Noel-Baker, Philip, Private Manufacture of Armaments, vol. 1, p. 373. Bullerjahn was accused by Paul von Gontard, Chief Engineer of Deutsche Waffen und Munitions Fabrik, who before the war by his machinations had done much to cause the race in machine-gun manufacture between France and Germany.
  3. Anon., Négociation rhénane, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 553, 15 Septembre, 1928, p. 1239.
  4. Dr. Stresemann's fatal illness was the cause of his absence.

the delegates of France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Japan a basis for future efforts was agreed upon. Three conditions were laid down.

1. The opening of negotiations at the request of the German Chancellor on the anticipated evacuation of the Rhineland.
2. The need for the settlement of the problem of Reparations and the naming for this purpose of a committee by the six governments.
3. The acceptance of the principle of the constitution of a Committee on Verification and Conciliation. (The function and duration of this committee was to be settled by common agreement later.)<sup>1</sup>

Chancellor Muller's agreement to these conditions was regarded with mixed feelings in Germany. Dr. Marx, a former Chancellor, declared that Dr. Muller had succeeded in getting no better terms than any other party might have done. He regretted that Stresemann had not been the negotiator.<sup>2</sup> Yet it is pointed out in *L'Europe Nouvelle*, that Dr. Stresemann had agreed to the three conditions prior to their acceptance by Dr. Marx.<sup>3</sup> In 1926 when a nationalist government had been in power in Germany Briand had held out the hand of friendship

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1. Anon., *Le Rhin vu de Genève*, *L'Europe Nouvelle*, No. 554, 22 Septembre, 1928, p. 1271. Clause 3 had been advocated by Briand in February 1928, before the French Senate.
  2. Anon., *French Uneasiness at German Criticism*, *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, vol. 19, No. 2, September 24, 1928, p.224.
  3. Anon., *Le Rhin vu de Genève*, op. cit., by telephonic communication, p. 1271.

and had been favorable to evacuation, but at this time, in spite of the fact that there was a socialist administration there, he appeared to rebuff their efforts. Why? Because the Locarno spirit, even in Briand, was wearing off under the pressure of internal public opinion in France which evinced great uneasiness due to the violent reaction in Germany to the agreement outlined above.

It could be said of Briand that he was playing a game of political poker. Because of the bitter feeling in Germany, he was in a state of great uneasiness, but the speech of Sir Austin Chamberlain in the House of Commons caused his spirits to revive. The British Foreign Minister stated that "the concession provided for in Article 431<sup>1</sup> of the Text of the Treaty of Versailles could only take effect when Germany had completely executed and discharged the whole of her Reparations obligation.<sup>2</sup> This assertion was received in Paris with great elation because no French authority had ever put such a liberal interpretation on Article 431 before. German official opinion was shocked and the nationalist elements grew more critical than ever. It seemed that the old entente between France and Britain was being revitalized and that the new spirit of Locarno was fast being forgotten.

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1. Article 431 (Text of the Treaty of Versailles)--Provided for the withdrawal of Allied troops prior to 1935 if Germany fulfilled all her obligations.
  2. Anon., Treaty Pledges on Evacuation, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 19, No. 23, December 7, 1928, p. 445.

The two main points at issue between Germany on the one hand and the Allies on the other were the relationship of the impending Reparation agreement to the contemplated agreement for Rhineland evacuation and the relationship between Rhineland evacuation and the French desire for a Committee of Verification and Conciliation. No progress was possible towards evacuation until some understanding had been arrived at on the financial question and for this purpose an Expert Committee on Reparations was appointed which began work on February 11, 1929.<sup>1</sup> An attempt had been made towards an understanding on the question of a Committee of Verification and Conciliation at the fifty-third session of the League Council held at Lugano,<sup>2</sup> but this had failed owing to the refusal of Dr. Stresemann to consider under any circumstances the extension of control of the Rhineland beyond the treaty limit prescribed in Article 431.<sup>3</sup> His stand was taken in accordance with his speech made to the Reichstag the previous November in which he stated that the moral and legal right of Germany to the evacuation could not be questioned; so he refused to compromise his position.<sup>4</sup>

The report of the Expert Committee on Reparations, called

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1. Toynbee, op. cit., 1929, p. 177.
  2. Loc. cit.
  3. Anon., The League and Rhineland, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 19, No. 25, December 21, 1928, p. 490.
  4. Documents of International Affairs, November 19, 1928, p. 49.

the Young Plan was issued on June 7, 1929.<sup>1</sup> Objection to it was raised by some sections of French opinion. In France the idea still found much support that war debts had been incurred in a common cause and therefore the United States should overlook the French obligation on that score. The Young Plan was not based on that premise. Only if some plan is ratified for the settlement of the Reparations issue could positive steps be taken towards evacuation. Official French opinion led by Poincaré<sup>2</sup> was determined that France should accept the Young Plan for to refuse it would cause "une crise économique avec toutes ses conséquences sociales." An agreement was reached between Poincaré, Briand and Stresemann that a special conference should be called by the Powers for the ratification of the Young Plan and also to arrange for evacuation<sup>3</sup> of the Rhineland. It was opened at the Hague on August 6, 1929.

It was at this conference that Briand brought up the question of the Committee for Conciliation and Control. For him it was a question of prestige that some form of commission be established. M. Wladimir d'Omesson, an influential French writer outlined, at that time what would be practical type of commission. "Elle ne constituerait qu'une simple mesure de précaution et n'agirait qu'en cas de danger européen. Elle resterait en harmonie avec l'article 213 du traité de

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1. Toynbee, op. cit., 1929, p. 179.

2. Dumont-Wilden, L., Le Règlement de la Paix, Revue Bleue, No. 11, 1 Juin, 1929, p. 340.

3. Toynbee, op. cit., p. 180.

paix."<sup>1</sup> He envisaged the intervention of the Committee only in exceptional cases. This desire for a Committee on the part of Briand was not so much as a measure for security as to enable him to return to Paris with something definite to show to the Chamber of Deputies. For if he should return and merely declare that the Rhineland was to be evacuated, even although his action was correct, he probably would be relieved of his post. It would be too radical an action for the Chamber. This would be in keeping with the tradition of the French system. The Deputies never take much interest in foreign affairs until some minister does something in a precipitate manner--he is usually ejected at once.<sup>2</sup> Briand had to have some card which would carry him through the play. A commission would be able to see that demilitarization was enforced. By this proposal he implied that as soon as the withdrawal of Allied troops had taken place, Articles 42, 43 and 44<sup>3</sup> of the text of the Treaty of Versailles would be broken by the Germans and they would proceed to rebuild their fortifications. "We will withdraw our troops," Briand might have said, "but in return we want a permanent committee of control." "We will agree to a temporary committee," Dr. Stresemann might have replied, "but according to the Treaty

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1. Ormesson, Wladimir d', L'Evacuation de la Rhénanie, Revue de Paris, Tome 4, 11 Aout, 1929, p. 492.
  2. Seigfried, André, France, A Study in Nationality, Yale University Press, 1930, p. 72.
  3. Deal with demilitarization.

of Versailles which your own countrymen helped to draw up, you have no just right to expect it to act beyond 1935."<sup>1</sup>

The acceptance of the idea of a committee would have meant the delaying of a sincere rapprochement between France and Germany beyond 1935.<sup>2</sup> Poincaré at this time seemed to favor the plan of an immediate settlement rather than the creation of machinery which would serve to prolong hostility by raising points of contention between the two countries. The legality of the committee was questioned and a board of jurists decided that Briand had no legal right to demand a committee of this type according to the Treaty of Versailles and that the problem of Rhineland supervision should be left in the hands of a committee created under the Locarno Agreements.<sup>3</sup> The British and Belgian governments had announced that their troops would be withdrawn by the end of the year 1929. This plainly placed the onus on Briand. On the financial question, he remained adamant insisting "il ne fait aucune concession."<sup>4</sup> Until a satisfactory financial settlement

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1. Article 429, clause 3 provided for continuation of the occupation if Germany had not fulfilled her obligations. Stresemann's appeal for justice obtained much support both from many French people and outside of France as well.
  2. Vallin, Charles, L'Occupation Française Des Pays Rhénans, Revue Politique et Parlementaire, Tome 148, 10 Octobre, 1929, p. 124. He maintains that continued occupation had become an anachronism and would be difficult to defend.
  3. Toynbee, op. cit., p. 180.
  4. Anon., La Conférence de la Haye, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 602, 24 Aout, 1929, p. 1131.

had been reached he refused to tie France down to a definite date for evacuation. He insisted that in the settlement the Young Plan should be considered as indivisible. If it were not it would be tantamount to demolition.<sup>1</sup> At the Hague the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Snowden, insisted upon a larger share of the Reparation payments for Britain which demand was conceded by Briand only after Snowden gave vent to a great show of rage which one French writer says compromised the financial security of the British Empire.<sup>2</sup> An agreement was reached between the British, Belgian, German, French, Italian and Japanese delegations.<sup>3</sup> In the Chamber of Deputies the cry was raised that Briand had compromised the security of France. M. Franklin-Bouillon stated that Germany was already at work building railroads for military purposes near the French frontier.<sup>4</sup> In view of the fact that the new French war budget brought in at this time by M. Maginot<sup>5</sup> the minister of war, set aside 4,567,000,000 francs for war purposes, 2,900,000,000 of which was for a new line of fortifications along the Rhine frontier, the French government

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1. Huddleston, Sisley, The Hague, New Statesman, vol. 33, No. 850, August 10, 1929, p. 546.
  2. Anon., L'Accord de principe à la Haye, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 603, 31 Aout, 1929, p. 1151.
  3. Documents of International Affairs, 1929, p. 4.
  4. Le Temps, December 19, 1929, cited by Toynbee, op. cit., 1929, p. 187.
  5. Anon., More Armaments for France, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 22, No. 1, January 3, 1930, p. 10.

seemed to be quite aware of any danger. Briand replied to his accusers that this was no time to be criticising the lack of measures of security--"...pourquoi donc n'ont elles pas été inscrites dans la traité de Versailles? Pourquoi?"<sup>1</sup> This retort was quite justified for Briand had had no part in the making of that treaty owing to the hatred with which he was regarded by Clemenceau.<sup>2</sup> Briand had to take criticism even from his own personal supporters for his acceptance of a post under Tardieu, but like Stresemann, Briand would work with any man for the sake of furthering his policy.<sup>3</sup> Both men were to a considerable extent above party. Tardieu supported Briand but when the death of Stresemann took place he feared that the nationalist reaction in Germany would result in an increase in the tension between Germany and France. France eagerly awaited the result of a vote taken by the German nationalist leader, Hugenberg, based on the rejection of the Young Plan and in a general disapproval of Franco-German negotiations.<sup>4</sup> The people rejected it by an 86% vote. As a result the new Social Democratic Foreign Minister, Dr.

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1. Documents of International Affairs, 1929, p. 59.  
Extracts from Speech of M. Briand on Foreign Policy in the Chamber, December 27, 1929.
  2. Lloyd George, The Truth About the Peace Treaties, vol. 1, p. 581.
  3. D'Abernon, (Viscount), Stresemann, Foreign Affairs, vol. 8, No. 2, January 1930, p. 208.
  4. Anon., France and Germany, Round Table, vol. 21, June 1931, p. 506.

Curtius was able to decree the endorsement of the Young Plan and the agreements made at The Hague.<sup>1</sup> The ratification of the French Chamber of Deputies was obtained on April 4, 1930<sup>2</sup> and soon after Tardieu informed the German ambassador at Paris that the French troops would be entirely withdrawn. This<sup>3</sup> was completed by the thirtieth of June.

The vote in the Chamber of Deputies was a vote in favor of the policy of Briand. It also signified that the French government had confidence in the pacific spirit of the German people and in the good faith of the German government. But what guarantees of security were left for France after the evacuation of the Rhineland? M. Tirard, the French High Commissioner in the Rhineland said that the withdrawal of French troops removed "le dernier, le seul obstacle au rapprochement à l'entente sincère et définitive entre la France et l'Allemagne."<sup>4</sup> There were the Locarno Pacts and the Briand-Kellogg Pact, which, if honestly adhered to, would provide ample security. But could they be honestly adhered to? There were powerful elements in France which believed that several

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1. German Freedom, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 22, No. 11, March 14, 1930, p. 207.
  2. Payen, Edouard, Le Douzième D'Avril, La Ratification du Plan Young, Paris, Journal des Economistes, Tome 96, Avril, 1930, p. 3.
  3. Huddleston, Sisley, French Foreign Policy, Contemporary Review, vol. 140, July 1931, p. 1.
  4. Anon., Une déclaration de M. Tirard sur l'évacuation de la Rhénanie, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 642, 31 Mai, 1930, p. 830.

thousand soldiers on the Rhine were far better security for France than a hundred Facts. "C'est notre armée qui, par sa seule existence remplit le rôle de la gendarmerie internationale, qui l'on a refusé à la société des Nations." <sup>1</sup> Yet France had taken the step. The Rhineland had been evacuated and whether Frenchmen thought their frontier was the Rhine or the Vistula was of no matter now. If the growing forces of the reactionary elements won out in Germany there was the rapidly rising Maginot line of fortifications, but if the moderates remained in control and reason triumphed then the policy of Briand would be vindicated.

1. Dumont-Wilden, L., La France Accusée, Revue Bleue, No. 22, 15 Novembre, 1930, p. 696.

CHAPTER V.

FRANCE AND THE YEARS OF CRISIS, 1929-1932

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### FRANCE AND THE YEARS OF CRISIS, 1929-1932

The evacuation of the Rhineland by the occupying forces removed one of the most pressing causes of bitterness between France and Germany. Briand with his great knowledge of European affairs realized the terrifying weakness of the relationships of European nations and felt that a further effort should be made to strengthen those bonds already existent. To this end he introduced to the tenth meeting of the League<sup>1</sup> Assembly a plan for closer cooperation between European nations. Already numerous pacts had been made between the nations, all professedly aiming at the prevention of any future war. As Briand said, "I think that among peoples constituting geographical groups, like the peoples of Europe, there should be some kind of federal bond; it should be possible for them to get in touch at any time, to confer about their interests; to agree on joint resolutions and to establish among themselves a bond of solidarity which will enable them, if need be, to meet any grave emergency which might arise."<sup>2</sup> This proposal on the part of Briand was not original with him. During the Great War of 1914-1918 Friedrich Naumann published a book "Mittel Europa," which had a great circulation in Central Europe. During the decade

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1. September 5, 1929.

2. Toynbee, op. cit., 1930, p. 136.

following the Treaty of Versailles one of the most important apostles of the Pan-Europe idea was Count Coudenhove-kalergi, a distinguished Austrian publicist, who by his great qualities of personality helped keep the idea alive.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on the influence which Coudenhove-kalergi had on Briand, Alfred Duff Cooper remarks, "...I had known...that he was working on plans for the federation of European nations which was known as the Pan-Europa movement and that he had gained the support of no less a person than Aristide Briand..."<sup>2</sup> With this support the movement took on a new importance. Of the great French statesman's action, Count Coudenhove-kalergi wrote, "Une fois accomplie la liquidation définitive de la guerre...l'Europe se trouve en face de la décision suivante; ou bien retomber dans le système des alliances et des contre-alliances, qui il ya quinze ans à conduit à la guerre mondiale, ou bien se réunir en un seul bloc, afin de constituer, par la collaboration de toutes les nations..."<sup>3</sup> His proposal found a favorable reception on all sides and this encouraged him to seek the concrete views of twenty-six European nations

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1. Amery, L. S. (The Right Hon.), The British Empire and the Pan-European Idea, London, Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, vol. IX., No. 1, January, 1930, p. 1.
  2. Cooper, A. Duff; The Second World War, London, Jonathan Cape, 1939, p. 92.
  3. Dumont-Wilden, L., Les États-Unis D'Europe, Revue Bleue, No. 16, 7 Aout, 1929, p. 508.  
Count Coudenhove-kalergi in Vossische-Zeitung is cited.

through a "Memorandum d'Union Federale Européenne" dispatched<sup>1</sup>  
on May 17, 1930.

Prior to his advocacy of the idea of a European Federation, Briand's work in the international field had been largely negative in character, that is, he utilized his great qualities to the smoothing away of difficulties which beset post-war Europe. He was always, however, working for the security of France. By the plan for a United States of Europe he hoped to strengthen that security and yet to make a move towards the goal he had envisioned--the eventual political union of nations in continental Europe through their immediate economic union.

In looking at this proposal put forward by Briand from the stand-point of security there is one important factor which must be recalled, namely, the attitude of European nations towards, the United States of America. For several years it had been felt in Europe that the American nation constituted a distinct menace to the security of European peoples.<sup>2</sup> M. Dumont-Wilden, an authoritative French critic, writes that although Briand has warned that this proposed Federation must not be interpreted as being directed against the United States, this project is interpreted by a great number of Europeans "comme une réponse au berger à la bergère

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1. Text in International Conciliation, Special Bulletin, June, 1930, p. 325

2. Aron, Robert and Dandieu, Arnaud, America: Europe's Cancer, Living Age, vol. 341, October, 1931, p. 117. (translated from "Europe".)

l'Amérique, maîtresse du trésor métallique du monde manifeste l'intention de coloniser la vieille Europe, ou du moins de la réduire a une sorte de vassalité économique vers laquelle le plan Young n'est qu'un premier pas." <sup>1</sup> In 1930, European nations purchased goods to the value of \$21,341,000,000 from the United States and American capital invested in Europe amounted to \$650,000,000. <sup>2</sup> This heavy financial hold which the United States was getting in Europe was partly due to the fact that Europeans had become fascinated by American life. <sup>3</sup> An attempt was made to draw a parallel between the United States and Europe. If, with her vast hinterland and no internal tariffs, the United States could become so prosperous, surely European nations could eliminate their tariffs and do the same. <sup>4</sup> Only the sober thinkers realized that the states of Europe could not be united without the peoples, that passports and frontiers are only outward signs, that the inner substance, the national spirit is the factor which makes peoples really different. In America industry is homogeneous, production is devoted to no particular specialization, but in Europe the

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1. Dumont-Wilden, L., *Les États-Unis D'Europe*, op. cit., No. 16, 17 Aout, 1929, p. 508.
  2. Bidwell, P. W., *The New American Tariff: Europe's Answer*, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 9, No. 1, October, 1930, p. 13.
  3. Lüddecke, Theodor, *Germany Goes American*, *Living Age*, vol. 338, July 1, 1930, p. 544. (translated from *Revista de Occidente* of Madrid.)
  4. Mitrany, David, *Pan-Europe--A Hope or a Danger*, London, *Political Quarterly*, vol. 1, No. 4, 1930, p. 457.

nationals of different countries are engaged in a variety of production, the nature of which has been established through many years of tradition.<sup>1</sup> Possibly in France, above all countries, have craftsmen been bitter opponents to standardization and rationalization in industry. Just as a man raises his arm to ward off a blow so does a country use the tariff to protect its trade. It is theoretically possible that fear could be turned into trust and rivalry into cooperation. However, as some non-European nations have a greater volume of trade with individual European countries than those countries have with each other, it would be very difficult to erect a European Federation without including these nations. This would defeat one of the basic purposes of the Federation-- it would give the United States of America even a greater hold in European markets.

The reply of official Germany to the Memorandum conveyed to Briand the concurrence of Stresemann in the proposal insofar as economic union was concerned.<sup>2</sup> He saw in the plan a means whereby Germany's recovery could be advanced through protection for her industries and the increased markets which would result from a lowering of tariff barriers by her neighbors. However, the non-official German press saw a sinister

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1. Madariaga, Salvador de, Our Muddling World, Forum, vol. 83, January 1, 1930, p. 9. He mentions the wine and dress industry as being good examples.
  2. Anon., Réponse du gouvernement allemand, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 659, 27 Septembre, 1930, p. 1388.

motive behind the plan. It was interpreted as a new diplomatic move to strengthen the hegemony of the French Republic in its efforts to dominate continental Europe.<sup>1</sup> The moderate French press, on the other hand, asserted that the plan was simply an effort to get back to the Protocol of 1924, but of this view it can be said that it proves that French policy has not changed. It was an attempt to obtain guarantees, perhaps of a pacific type, yet still they were guarantees. Briand speaks in his Memorandum of agreements or security as a vital necessity before economic unity could be achieved. It is fairly obvious that he is thinking of security in the French sense, because he only too well knows that the British and French view of the use of sanctions are at complete variance. The British government was criticized for its cool reply to the Memorandum<sup>2</sup> but it was felt in Great Britain that the plan of Briand would cause an unnecessary duplication of the League machinery<sup>3</sup> and was in addition a disguised attempt by Briand to increase French security.

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1. Hanotaux, Gabriel, Le Project D'Union Européene, Revue des Deux Mondes, Tome 58, 15 Aout, 1930, p. 766, citing Berliner Tageblatt.

Stone, W. T., The Briand Plan for European Union, Foreign Policy Association Information Service, vol. VI. No. 14, September 17, 1930, p. 261.

2. Anon., Europe Meets Briand Half-way, New York, Nation, vol. 131, No. 3395, July, 1930, p. 112.

3. Anon., Réponse du gouvernement Britannique, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 659, 27 Septembre, 1930, p. 1397.

On March 20, 1931, the news that Austria and Germany intended to consummate an economic union electrified Europe. It had been realized from the nature of the replies received by Briand from European nations generally that in protection-<sup>1</sup>ist Europe economic union among most nations was impossible. Yet the bitter denunciation which Briand accorded the proposed Austro-German move revealed that in the mind of Briand even the broad vision of economic union in Europe was secondary to French security. Yet economic union was the very policy which Briand had been urging for Europe. In addition the principle of regional economic agreements had already been endorsed by the supporters of European union at the 1930 Assembly of the League. Whether the move had been premeditated or not by Dr. Curtius, the German Foreign Minister and his Austrian counterpart, Dr. Schober, is of little consequence; it did put Briand in a very awkward position. It gave Europe, especially the revisionist countries, the prerogative of doubting Briand's sincerity. However, it should be said in his favor that he might have been influenced somewhat in his stand by Dr. Benés of Czecho-Slovakia. Germany and Austria formed the greatest markets for Czecho-Slovakian goods so that any union which those two nations might consummate would likely be a serious blow commercially to Czecho-Slovakia.

Aristide Briand was a realistic idealist. His ideal was

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1. Sorel, R., *Fédération européenne*, Paris, *Journal des Economistes*, Tome 97, Octobre, 1930, p. 198.

the United States of Europe. His realism lay in the use of this union as a means for gaining further security for France. However, leaders of Germany and Austria were realists as well. Yet when they tried to solve a problem which faced their two countries without consulting France, Briand lost some of his idealism. His vigorous denunciation of Anschluss led to its reference to the Permanent Court of International Justice. A ruling was given by which it was declared illegal. This decision was based on Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain and the Geneva Protocol of October 4, 1922.<sup>1</sup> By the latter Austria promised to undertake no agreements which would endanger her economic independence. The decision against the Union was given by a group of eight judges which included French, Polish, Rumanian and Italian. With the exception of the Italian, all the other leading states voting against Anschluss were closely connected with France. British and American judges voted in favor of the Union.<sup>2</sup> This decision weakened the prestige of this Court. Some English comment was particularly caustic. The Spectator remarked that "it was a choice between the safety of the Treaties and the safety of Europe. Evidently the sanctity

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1. Dean, Vera Micheles, European Efforts for Economic Collaboration, Foreign Policy Association Information Service, vol. VII., No. 12, August 19, 1931, p. 233.

2. Glasgow, George, Germany, The Hague and Disarmament, Contemporary Review, vol. 140, October, 1931, p. 522.

of the "Treaties won out."<sup>1</sup> The tone of the French press was just as sharp from the opposite side. The writer "Pertinax"<sup>2</sup> called for Briand's removal from office. However, the latter's apparent success resulted in the retirement of Dr. Curtius in disgrace and his departure from office marked the end<sup>3</sup> of the policy of Stresemann in foreign affairs. National Socialism was on the ascendant in Germany.<sup>4</sup> The German nation was undergoing a far-reaching transformation. Only two years had passed since the reactionary referendum of Hugenberg was so soundly defeated and now many millions in Germany "run after any rat-catcher as if he were 'the Pied-Piper of Hamelin' or else they go into ecstasies over tinsel-decked military figures."<sup>5</sup> Such was the Germany under the growing power of the groups of reaction.

"Till France can change her spirit," wrote J. St. Loe Strachey in 1923, "Europe cannot recover."<sup>6</sup> This same comment

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1. Anon., Germany and Europe, London, Spectator, vol. 146, June 13, 1931.
  2. Pertinax, Briand Must Go, Living Age, vol. 339, November 1930, p. 240. (translated from Echo de Paris.)
  3. Carr, E. H. International Relations since the Peace Treaties, London, Macmillan, 1938, p. 139.
  4. Glasgow, George, The German Crisis, Contemporary Review, vol. 138, November, 1930, p. 653.  
Nazis gained 12 seats in 1928, 107 in 1930.
  5. Wolff, Theodor, The Republic Will Live, Living Age, vol. 339, November, 1930, p. 237. (translated from Berliner Tageblatt.)
  6. Strachey, J. St. Loe, Reparations and Debts, Spectator, vol. 130, June 23, 1923, p. 1032.

might have been made of the France of the years of crisis. Frenchmen looked askance at the changes taking place in Germany. Their feeling was marked by deep suspicion. In 1930 the German state insurance fund faced a deficit of £20,000,000 and an extra £20,000,000 was needed for special relief and unemployment schemes.<sup>1</sup> One French Senator, looking at the situation in Germany asked how in face of the dire financial stress in Germany could the budget for the Reichswehr be increased from 178,000,000 marks in 1929 to 197,000,000 in 1930.<sup>2</sup> The failure of the policy of Stresemann combined with the stringent economic conditions led to a decline in the power of the Social Democratic party. A corresponding increase in the strength of the extreme elements, the National Socialists, took place.<sup>3</sup> Behind the growing strength of these two groups the broadening shadow of the Reichswehr became apparent. All Frenchmen were disturbed by these conditions within Germany, yet, like in the days before Locarno, elements favorable to compromise came to the fore in France. The French people were in a prosperous condition. "La France est un éden. Nos réserves d'or notre épargne reconstituée, notre industrie sans

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1. Lloyd, C. M., *The Edge of the Precipice*, *New Statesman and Nation*, vol: 1, No. 6, (new series), June 13, 1931, p. 569.
  2. Eccard, Frédéric, *Le Budget Militaire Allemand en 1930*, *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, Tome 144, 16 Juillet, 1930, p. 2.
  3. Dobb, Maurice, *The Crisis in Germany*, London, Labour Monthly, vol: 13, August, 1931, p. 491.

chômage, notre population de bon sens content d'une politique extérieure tranquille, autour de biens rares aux regards d'une Europe sans argent et sans travail en de grandes régions, minée d'armes clandestines." <sup>1</sup> These moderate forces put forward proposals for active Franco-American cooperation in a financial effort to help stave off the financial disaster in Europe which all felt to be impending. Yet the statesmen in France were not sufficiently convinced that they should advance funds to help the great Kredit-Anstalt, when Austria so recently tried to endanger French security through the Anschluss proposal. French assistance was offered to Austria only at the cost of impossible political concessions. Britain came to the aid of Austrian finance with an outright loan which staved off the total collapse of the bank until the <sup>2</sup> Austrian government could take it over. The effect of these difficulties of this Austrian bank resulted in a general lack of confidence in other countries bordering on financial panic and only the proposal of President Hoover of a years' moratorium prevented a possible European financial collapse. In view of the fact that the French felt they had made a major sacrifice under the Young Plan they objected to its being set aside in this manner. In a statement before the Chamber of Deputies Briand had stated that the Young Plan was a final

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1. Anon., La Prosperité de la France, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 675, 17 Janvier, 1931, p. 68.
  2. Anon., (editorial), Living Age, vol. 340, No. 4379, August, 1931, p. 527.

settlement.<sup>1</sup> Hence he came in for much abuse when it was learned that the Hoover Moratorium would necessitate what was stated to be a temporary postponement of the Young Plan, but what was felt by all would be permanent in view of world conditions. Even the Socialists in the Chamber voted solidly for the government in its denunciation of the manner in which the moratorium was proposed.<sup>2</sup> France already had aroused world hostility over her attitude in the Kredit-Austaldt problem and virtual isolation was not an impossibility. However, one French writer observed that, "if there could be no prosperity in Europe without prosperity in Germany, there can be no prosperity in Germany without or in spite of France."<sup>3</sup>

The eventual concurrence of France in the Hoover Moratorium came too late to be of much help. The psychological improvement which had followed the announcement of the moratorium had dissipated and in the month which followed conditions in Germany became so difficult that that country had practically to declare a moratorium on her short-term loans. This had a serious reaction in England, which country had heavy investments in Germany.<sup>4</sup> England's financial structure was endangered.

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1. Anon., M. Briand's Declaration, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 24, No. 24, June 12, 1931, p. 464.
  2. Anon., French Stand on the Hoover Proposal, London, Statist, vol. CXVIII., No. 2784, July 4, 1931, p. 14.
  3. Loc. cit., citing M. Gignoux in *Journée Industrielle*.
  4. Armstrong, H. F., France and the Hoover Plan, Foreign Affairs, vol. 10, No. 1, October, 1931, p. 30. Great Britain had 1,800,000,000 marks invested in Germany. France had 300,000,000 marks invested, a considerable part being through Great Britain.

Although the British withdrawal from the gold standard was the first major defeat received by France in her progress towards national political security through financial dominance in Europe yet this set-back was more than counter-balanced by other successes achieved by the French. In the south-east Hungary was forced to discontinue her accord with Italy. The Hungarian government could get no financial aid from either Italy or Great Britain. It had to meet the price of the French.<sup>1</sup> This can be regarded as a great triumph for Briand's Italian policy initiated shortly after Locarno. France had become undisputed arbiter of Balkan finance through her monetary position in Europe. Turning to the New World we see, the United States forced to bow to the dictates of Laval under threat of taking measures which might result in the collapse of the dollar. The French statesman left Washington with Mr. Hoover's promise to grant France a free hand in European financial affairs upon the expiry of the Hoover Moratorium on June 1, 1932.<sup>2</sup> The most discordant note from the French point of view was Senator Borah's insistence that the best guarantee of French security would be the revision of the Peace Treaty of 1919.<sup>3</sup> The whole French political and

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1. Toynbee, op. cit., 1931, p. 100 ff.
  2. Anon., Résultats de cinq jours aux États-Unis, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 717, 7 Novembre, 1931, p. 1487.
  3. Anon., The Franco-American Discussions, Statist, vol. CXVIII., No. 2801, October 31, 1931, p. 592.

financial policy aimed to prevent any further destruction of the sacred documents which formed this treaty.

Why, it might be asked, could France pursue this apparently extremely selfish policy? The answer can be found in the fact that she was apparently self-sufficient. The prosperity of Great Britain depended largely on the prosperity of the world, but in Paris this great financial success led to the development of the belief that France could aggravate the world with perfect equanimity as any consequences would leave her comparatively unaffected. Franco-Rumania relations presented a particularly glaring example of the French system. In Rumania the French government allowed the failure of one of the largest banks to take place, because its administration, friendly to King Carol, was favorable to the furthering of the German connection rather than the French. Yet the "spider and fly" policy of the French would not permit the crisis to go too far, for thus it would endanger French interests. The French exports to the whole of the Danubian countries amounted to only a small fraction of the national trade but French security required that a keen interest in Balkan economic and political life be maintained. The threat to French security was of far greater scope than merely the question of finance. That was but the lever. The main concern of France was to

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1. Banca Marmorosch and Co., Ltd.

2. Armstrong, H. F., Danubia: Relief or Ruin, Foreign Affairs, vol. 10, No. 4, July, 1932, p. 610.  
7% of French exports went to the Balkan area in 1927-28.

use Rumania as a means to prevent Germany and Russia from becoming too friendly. It was the French ambition to isolate both Germany and Russia. For capitalistic France, Russia contributed the most dangerous enemy of the day. Since the days of Rapallo, Russo-German relations had been comparatively harmonious. Besides considerable commercial contact, German officers had been active in training the reorganized Russian army and the extent of Reichswehr influence in the Red Army was a constant source of fear to the French.<sup>1</sup> Russian foreign policy since 1926 had been consistently based on an offer first made in that year to guarantee herself security by the conclusion of non-aggression pacts with whatever nations would consider it to be in their own interests to enter one. It was the aim of the French Radical Socialist leader, Herriot, to promote a settlement between Russia and Rumania over the disputed territory of Bessarabia. His efforts brought a new orientation to French policy which showed a different view of the problem of security.

When Herriot became premier in the spring of 1932, his attitude towards Russia showed the change in official French policy. His efforts were completed by a Franco-Soviet Pact of Non-Aggression of which he said, "The present treaty completes a whole series of non-aggression treaties which must

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1. Eccard, Frédéric, *Politique De L'Allemagne et de la Russie A L'Égard De La France*, *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, vol. 146, 10 Mars, 1931, p. 329.

contribute towards the consolidation of peace."<sup>1</sup> A Polish-Russian non-aggression treaty had been signed in July, 1932, followed later by a conciliation convention. Herriot felt if he could encourage the Rumanian government to come to an understanding with Russia over the problem of Bessarabia the greater certainty of peace which would result would be a means to increased security for France.

Negotiations towards a Russo-Rumanian understanding were begun at Warsaw between M. Cadere, the Rumanian minister at Warsaw and M. Litvinoff. These negotiations were fruitless, due some authorities state, to the machination of André Tardieu, who hated Herriot intensely, and the idea of a Franco-Russian rapprochement even more. Thus it can be seen how internal animosities between political parties can be made to seriously disrupt French foreign policy. Somewhat the same tactics had been used by Herriot's own Radical Socialist party to seriously hinder Tardieu in his work at the London Naval Conference, by bringing about his temporary defeat over an internal financial question.<sup>2</sup> It is one of the peculiarities of the French political system that a government carrying on a very important negotiation in the foreign sphere can be brought down over a comparatively insignificant phase

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1. Anon., Pacts of Non-Aggression, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 27, No. 23, December 2, 1932, p. 445.

2. Glasgow, George, A French Respite, Contemporary Review, vol. 137, April, 1930, p. 513.

in internal policy.<sup>1</sup> This failure of French policy to encompass the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact between Russia and Rumania was a distinct blow to the efforts of some French statesmen to guard their eastern frontiers because it meant defeat in their plan to complete the circle of countries bound to France by promises not to make war.

What can be estimated as the basic objective behind French policy in the years of crisis? French eyes were still directed at Germany across the Rhine. The efforts to build up a union among the nations of Europe as was envisioned by Briand failed and French statesmen from then onward proceeded to strengthen their country's security through the establishment of the financial hegemony of France. This was supported by non-aggression treaties. It was unfortunate that this policy in both its phases aroused only bitterness in the German people who naturally felt that French efforts were aimed at domination, if not strangulation, of the German financial structure and the exclusion of Germany from normal contacts with her neighbors. Such was the legacy of suspicion which followed in the wake of the French search for security.

1. Siegfried, André, *Tableau des Parties en France*, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1930, p. 153 ff.

CHAPTER VI.

BRIAND AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DISARMAMENT 1921-1932

## CHAPTER VI.

### BRIAND AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DISARMAMENT. 1921-1932

"We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!...."  
T. S. Eliot, 1925.

Since the close of the Conferences which drew up the Treaty of Versailles, the world has become accustomed to witnessing two forms of international gatherings whose purport was to advance the cause of peace--in the first case the meeting of idealists without power and in the second the meeting of realists without principles.<sup>1</sup> These conferences and meetings came in the wake of the Great War of 1914-1918 when the passions of the great nations of the world were unleashed and the road towards the settlement of differences was bound to be a difficult one to travel. All peoples of the world had sincerely hoped that the Treaty of Versailles would provide the nations with security which would then be able to reduce their great armament. However, it did not in the French view give France adequate guarantees so when President Harding issued an invitation to take part in a conference at Washington to discuss the problem of disarmament, Aristide Briand, who was premier of France at the time, accepted with what might be classified as mental reservations.

The Washington Conference had been summoned primarily to

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1. Anon., Lessons from Washington, New Statesman, vol. 18, December 17, 1921, p. 308.

discuss the problems of the Pacific. Although France was vitally concerned in Pacific questions, her main interest at this time was in the Italian demand for naval parity which was rapidly assuming the proportions of a major issue. In view of this fact and also considering that the French people were expecting him to cooperate in any effort towards disarmament and yet to protect French security, Briand went to Washington with no predetermined fixed policy. André Tardieu maintained that this was a serious blunder for Briand to make. He felt that a concrete policy formulated in advance would have enabled the French delegation to present a stronger front. It was felt by a large section of public opinion in France that France had suffered repeated diplomatic defeats through Clemenceau in the Treaty of Versailles and Briand hoped that through his personal representation at Washington he would be able to stimulate American interest in the French position.

A second factor which Briand felt to be of great importance was the need to convince the delegates at Washington that in the present situation of uncertainty in Europe further French land disarmament in Europe was impossible. At the same time he realized that he must convince the men at the Conference that a peace policy was the dominant feature of French diplomacy. This was proclaimed at Versailles, at St. Nazaire and now at Washington. Briand had a difficult

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1. Tardieu, André, The Policy of France, Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, No. 1, September 15, 1922, p. 11.

assignment. He had to proclaim to the world that his country would consent to no further land disarmament yet at the same time he was expected by his countrymen to so present the French case that the world would not think France militaristic.

What was the specific reason lying behind Briand's stand on the question of land disarmament? It was French apprehension regarding Germany and Russia. This fear was widely felt in spite of the fact that the French president of the Inter-Allied Commission had reported that Germany had disarmed in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>1</sup> The delegates at Washington were anxious that something concrete in the way of reduction should be achieved. People throughout the world were beginning to think that all Conferences must inevitably meet with the same disappointments which had resulted heretofore at Geneva. Critics, sympathetic to the work being undertaken at Washington pointed out, that the difficulty faced at Geneva, namely that the Council was in a sense primarily to administer the Treaty of Versailles,<sup>2</sup> should not impede the effort at Washington. Briand, however, lucidly expressed the French stand, that France must maintain military supremacy over Germany, and would be prepared to reduce her armament only if by means

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1. Abbot, A. H., *The League Disarmament Activities--and the Washington Conference*, New York, Political Science Quarterly, Academy of Political Science, vol. 37, No. 1, March, 1922, p. 1.
  2. Anon., *Former Conferences that Failed--and Succeeded*, Literary Digest, vol. 71, November 12, 1921, p. 44.

of security guarantees, some other nations would pledge their support to her in case of aggression by Germany.

In his speech Briand expressed the hope that owing to his stand France would not become morally isolated.<sup>1</sup> He pleaded for the recognition by other Powers of the justice of the French stand on armaments and pointed out that his country had reduced the size of her army by shortening the term of service from three to two years. However, the American critic feels that Briand seriously injured his cause by stressing the dangers of attack by Germany and Russia. The world saw the former prostrated and the latter in the throes<sup>2</sup> of revolution, so it failed to see Briand's point. To many of the delegates at Washington, Briand was pleading for a cause which they considered was a regional concern. Briand apparently had failed to see this view.

The stand taken by Briand was deeply regretted by the leading English delegate, Arthur Balfour. Briand had predicted that England would make the Washington Conference the arena for the prosecution of the Anglo-French duel which had developed in the immediate post-war years, a thing which he was sincerely anxious to avoid.<sup>3</sup> Balfour did his best to

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1. November 21, 1921. Speech made at the Third Plenary Session of the Conference.
  2. Anon.; *The Washington Conference, Independent*, vol. 107, December 3, 1921, p. 233.
  3. Tabouis, Genevieve, *Perfidious Albion--Entente Cordiale*, (translated by J. A. Dempsey), London, Butterworth, 1938, p. 200.

diminish the fears of Briand by the promise that if a situation similar to that of 1914 should develop again, British aid would again be forthcoming.<sup>1</sup> However, the French statesman was adamant in his stand and feeling that nothing further could be accomplished in respect to land disarmament the Conference turned to the naval question. One competent English critic maintains that by thus dropping the subject of land armaments from the agenda of the Conference, the representatives of the nations taking part made their first serious mistake.<sup>2</sup>

A French military attaché has said, "The main, if not the only, French naval problem consists in protecting the transportation of the resources in man-power and raw materials of the French-African block across the Mediterranean to France."<sup>3</sup> The most popular authoritative opinion at the time in France held that for this purpose warships were not a satisfactory protective weapon as they were too vulnerable and too costly. Submarines and aeroplanes supported by a group of very fast cruisers were considered to be the most satisfactory means of naval protection. In 1920 in his report on the naval program of France, Gustave de Kerguezec,

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1. Chaput, Roland A., *Disarmament in British Foreign Policy*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1935, p. 280.
  2. Anon., *The Peacemakers at Washington*, *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, vol. 6, No. 5, February 3, 1922, p. 84.
  3. Buell, R. L., *Anglo-American Naval Understanding*, *Foreign Policy Association Information Service*, vol. 5, No. 10, July 24, 1929, p. 172. Citation from *Brassey's Naval and Shipping Annual*, 1928, p. 37.

spokesman for the Chamber Committee on Naval Appropriations, recommended the permanent abandonment of work on five battle-ships which had been authorized in 1916, with the declaration that France refused to enter upon an armaments race and was prepared to be acknowledged as a second rate naval power in spite of the 34,484 miles of coast-line which she had to protect throughout her Empire.<sup>1</sup>

When Briand turned to consider the problem of naval reduction he found that an agreement already had been reached by Great Britain, the United States and Japan to reduce their capital ship strength to the extent of approximately 40 percent.<sup>2</sup> It was not feasible to reduce the tonnage of France and Italy by the same ratio. Briand asked for a maximum replacement strength of 350,000 tons. The Secretary of State of the United States informed Briand that if he persisted in his demand the Conference would be a failure and the responsibility for that catastrophe would be on his shoulders.<sup>3</sup> Briand gave way and accepted the figure of 175,000 tons.<sup>4</sup> Anglo-American pressure had forced the hand of Briand. There is no question but that the stand taken by the French

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1. Kerguezec, Gustave de, French Naval Aims, Foreign Affairs, vol. 4, No. 3, April, 1926, p. 372. Great Britain has 66,044 miles, U. S. A. 16,507, Japan 4,822 and Italy 3,889 miles of coast-line.
  2. Toynebee, A. J., Survey of International Affairs, 1920-23, p. 495.
  3. Loc. cit., footnote 1.
  4. Ichihashi, Yamato, The Washington Conference and After, Stanford University Press, 1928, p. 68 ff.

delegation had for the time ruffled the British, but an understanding with France still remained the "fixed policy" of Britain.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in addition to the agreeing to the tonnage problem, Briand acknowledged, through M. Sarrant, whom he had left at Washington after he returned to France, the principle of naval parity with Italy in respect to battleships, heavy cruisers and aircraft carriers.<sup>2</sup> If Italy should interpret this concession as applying to the whole field of naval construction and should build to the French level it would mean that the position of France would be seriously menaced in the Mediterranean:

Why did Briand apparently give way in these phases of the naval discussions? In the first case France was in a serious internal financial situation. Her ordinary budget was between four and five times larger than that of 1913 and she would probably be able to meet less than half of it.<sup>3</sup> Briand hoped that by entering an agreement and thus promoting and not hindering the progress of negotiations he might be able to improve Franco-American relations to the extent that in the future his country might be able to obtain some form of

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1. Moutat, R. B., A History of European Diplomacy, 1914-1918, London, Edward Arnold, 1927, p. 245, citing, New York Times, January 12, 1922, p. 16.
  2. Macartney, H. H. and Cremona, Paul, Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy, 1914-1937, London, Oxford University Press, 1938, p. 137.
  3. Huddleston, Sisley, France's Position and Politics, Contemporary Review, vol. 19, March, 1921, p. 289.  
French Budget--1913--4,738,000,000 francs,  
1921--22,327,000,000 francs.

assistance from the United States.<sup>1</sup> France signed the Washington or Five Power Treaty on February 6, 1922, which laid down a definite replacement tonnage for each of the five Powers taking part, namely,

Great Britain--	525,000 tons.	
United States--	525,000 tons.	
Japan--	315,000 tons.	
France--	175,000 tons.	
Italy--	175,000 tons.	2

Much of the enthusiasm which Briand had hoped to arouse in America through his capitulation on the capital ship issue was dissipated by his reservation that his country could not accept any thesis which led to the proportional limitation of auxiliary craft on the same scale as that accepted for capital ships.<sup>3</sup> The French regarded the use of auxiliary craft as essentially defensive in nature and therefore not to be classed in the same grouping as capital ships for proportional reduction. Over the submarine issue perhaps the most bitter anti-French feeling was aroused. As a result of the terrific loss to their merchant shipping during the period of intensive U-boat campaigns, the British proposed the complete abolition of the submarine. Lord Lee suggested that all submarines<sup>4</sup> should be taken out into deep water and scuttled. To France

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1. Huddleston, Sisley, France and Washington, *New Statesman*, vol. 18, No. 444, October 15, 1921, p. 39.
  2. Latimer, Hugh, *Naval Disarmament*, Chatham House Monographs, No. 3, London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1930, p. 9.
  3. Fay, M. B., *L'Opinion Américaine et la France*, Correspondant, Tome 287, 25 Mai, 1922, p. 577.
  4. Anon., *France's Demand for Submarines*, *Literary Digest*, vol. 72, No. 1, January 7, 1922, p. 7.

this was an absurd proposal. One journal, *Intransigent* of Paris, remarked that the French brain cannot comprehend the emotion which has taken possession of at least a part of British public opinion over the idea that France will not re-  
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nounce her submarine defense. The French refused to consider any submarine restriction except after the establishment of a minimum of 90,000 tons for all nations wishing to maintain a submarine force. This would be three times as large as the  
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then existent total tonnage of France. Nothing more resulted from the discussion on submarines except that the Naval Committee of the Conference adopted several resolutions condemning the illegitimate use of undersea vessels. In these  
3  
resolutions the French concurred.

The French difficulties at Washington were increased with the publication of some allegedly secret documents which gave details of correspondence between France and Japan in which they promised to support each other in an effort to curb American power in the Far East. One document from the French Foreign Office to the minister of Foreign Affairs in Tokio is supposed to have contained the following statement, "...America's intention to secure for herself a place in Soviet Russia has been frustrated by our policy. Americans are...

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1. Anon., *Britain Puzzled by France*, *The Literary Digest*, vol. 72, No. 3, January 21, 1922, p. 17.
  2. Anon., *Drawing the Sting of Submarines*, *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, vol. 6, No. 1, January 6, 1922, p. 9.
  3. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 1920-1923, p. 497.

pushing the Eastern question so as to secure supremacy in the East." <sup>1</sup> Although the authenticity of these documents was at once questioned, yet they did great damage to the French cause at Washington as they made Briand appear hypocritical in his advocacy of an honest peace policy. In addition they provided food for thought for those elements which maintained that Briand had ulterior motives in his cautious policy in respect to disarmament.

Briand's main contribution to the disarmament problem made at Washington was his clear enunciation of the French stand--no reduction without adequate compensating guarantees by other Powers. Although the reception which his efforts at Washington received at home and abroad were at complete variance--he returned to a triumphal reception--yet his sincerity is not to be doubted. Briand is often dismissed as a scintillating but shallow statesman yet he did see as early as the Washington Conference that before disarmament could be achieved in reality there must be a moral disarmament in Ger-  
<sup>2</sup> many. It has been pointed out earlier in this discussion that Briand made too great an issue of the danger from Germany. He stressed this so emphatically that the fact that he did hold out the olive branch to Germany was overlooked. He said,

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1. Nevinson, H. W., Decisions in Conflict with America, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 6, No. 1, January 6, 1922, p. 7.
  2. Anon., The Heart of Briand's Appeal, New York, Independent and Weekly Review, vol. 107, No. 3794, December 3, 1921, p. 227.

There is one part of Germany that is for peace. There are many people, especially among the working classes, who want to work....We shall do everything to help that Germany and if she wants to restore her balance in the bosom of a pacific republic...we can help her and we shall be able to contemplate the future with feelings of security.<sup>1</sup>

Yet Briand feared the secret machinations of Hugo Stinnes and his industrialist friends going on behind the shell of a weak democratic government. It was towards these men that Briand directed his attacks. Moral disarmament in the mind of Briand called for the peaceful elements of the people of Germany to curb the reactionary industrialists and their monarchist allies. Only in this way could disarmament be made a reality in Europe.

In spite of the feeling that was current in France at the time of the Washington Conference that the Anglo-Saxon Powers were antagonistic to France, Briand never lost sight of his plan to restore amicable relations between his country and England.<sup>2</sup> If this could be accomplished the disarmament problem could be approached from another angle. An opportunity came to Briand at the London Conference, December 18-22, 1921. Mr. Lloyd George remarked that the attitude adopted by Briand at Washington had had a very adverse effect on public opinion in Britain. Briand used this statement as an excuse for bringing up a proposal for an Anglo-French Alliance, stating that such an alliance would enable France to reduce

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Fournol, Etienne, M. Aristide Briand, Revue Bleue, No. 11, 3 Juin, 1922, p. 327.

her military burdens. This proposal was in line with his assertion at Washington that there could be no reduction of armaments unless guarantees were forthcoming. These conversations were continued at Cannes, February 6-13, 1922, where Briand put forward the idea of a military convention to supplement the reciprocal guarantee under discussion.<sup>1</sup> His defeat was brought about by the direct interference of President Millerand, who supported by the Gauche Republicaine group and Poincaré felt that Briand was playing "fast and loose with the rights of France as laid down in the Treaty of Versailles."<sup>2</sup> Briand resigned. He was accused by the Chamber of Deputies of weakness which in the French view is a synonym for reasonableness. In this way ended another effort of Briand to bring about some measure of disarmament in France.

During the period immediately following the retirement of Briand from office, Franco-German relations reached a very low point. Premier Poincaré's speech at Bois-le-Prêtre on September 23, 1922, struck the warning note announcing the coming invasion of the Ruhr which took place four days later. Briand was of the common people and it was the common people of France who put an end to this dangerous adventure. The majority of French voters forced Poincaré from office and in doing so showed that it still felt that France could not find

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1. Cmd. 2169 No. 35, 1924, p. 121, Statement of the Views of the French Government sent to Mr. Lloyd George by M. Briand on January 8.
  2. Bainville, Jacques, The French Republic, 1870-1935, London, Jonathan Cape, 1936, p. 237.

security through the separate exercise of military force if that policy alienated the public opinion of the rest of the world.

The effort to trace Briand's attempts to achieve some measure of disarmament in France is, during the period between his withdrawal from office in 1922 and his return to power in 1925, marked by his collaboration with other French statesmen in the promoting of the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the Geneva Protocol. Both of these efforts sought some means to assure security for France so that disarmament could become a reality. The Draft Treaty had been acceptable to the French delegation at Geneva and in this it was supported by the French general staff which felt that the "complementary agreements" encouraged by the Draft Treaty would nullify the whole purpose of the scheme in that they would greatly aid in preventing disarmament.<sup>1</sup> Edouard Herriot presented the French case at Geneva and he was ably assisted, to a great extent behind the scenes, by Briand and other French statesmen such as Loucheur, Paul-Poncour and Henri de Jouvenel. Even although the Geneva Protocol never became a reality it gave Briand an opportunity to stand forth as a leading apostle of the new spirit of peace abroad in France--prompted by the reaction from the French invasion of the Ruhr. At the Fifth Session of the League Assembly he gave the official acceptance of the

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1. Dell, Robert, Peace, Disarmament and the League, New Statesman, vol. 23, August 2, 1924, p. 484.

French government of the Geneva Protocol.<sup>1</sup> Once again in the struggle for disarmament Briand was coming to the fore-front. In spite of the fact that Great Britain rejected the Protocol a new feeling of eventual success was evinced in many quarters.

With the exception of the thesis in respect to the problem of disarmament that there should be no disarmament without previous guarantees of security the foreign policy of France in the early post-war period was marked by a tendency to fluctuate. When he succeeded to the premiership, Herriot had adopted a policy of conciliation towards Germany but early in 1925 he discarded this conciliatory policy and took advantage of some breaches of the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles by Germany to delay the evacuation of the Cologne zone of the Rhineland. With this apparent reversal of policy it would not be likely that a disarmament program would be encouraged.<sup>3</sup>

The fall of Herriot on April 10, 1925, over a monetary question brought Painlevé to office as premier. He selected Briand as his Foreign Minister. Painlevé lent a willing hand in the negotiation of the Locarno Peace Pacts. He had escaped from the past which so influenced Clemenceau at the Paris Peace Conference. "J'ai vécu," said Painlevé, "à

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1. Toynbee, op. cit., 1924, p. 52.
  2. League of Nations Official Journal, April, 1925, p. 490, cited by Toynbee, op. cit., 1925, vol. 2, p. 24, footnote 1
  3. Anon., France and Security, Cologne as Bargaining Piece, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 12, No. 9, February 27, 1925, p. 176.

Genève côte à côte avec Briand, les semaines de 1925 on fut préparé le pacte de Locarno." <sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that Briand and Painlevé hoped that the security which followed the signing of the Locarno Pacts would result in disarmament. Poincaré, withal a deeply sincere man had said, "Nous oublierons les crimes allemands le jour ou nous serons sûrs qu'ils ne recommenceront pas." <sup>2</sup> Briand took the opposite view. He said, "Pour qu'ils ne commencent pas, oublions-les." <sup>3</sup> Briand was undertaking a policy which was not without risks. This was brought out very forcibly by Painlevé,

...il n'est pas de geste civilisateur qui n'ait, à son origine, comporté des risques, et c'est parce que ces risques ont été bravés que l'humanité a progressé. Entre une politique qui n'est pas sans peril, et une politique qui mène sûrement à un désastre, notre choix est fait. <sup>4</sup>

This was a very bold and courageous stand to take, but Briand at the same time was not acting without "protecting his rear." On February 26, in an address to the Chamber of Deputies, he remarked,

Bien des flammèches voltigent en Europe demeurent menaçantes, bien des flammèches encore trop proches des barils de poudre qui n'ont pas été enlevés:... Gardons notre force."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Painlevé, Paul, Paroles et Écrits, Paris, Editions Rieder, 1936, p. 559.
  2. Barthélémy, Joseph, Après Locarno: Vers Les États--Unis D'Europe, Revue Politique et Parlementaire, Tome 125, Novembre, 1925, p. 238.
  3. Loc. cit.
  4. Chaumeix, André, Les Traités de Locarno, Revue de Paris, Tome 6, Novembre, 1925, p. 227.
  5. Anon., A Propos Du Désarmement, Revue des Deux Mondes, Tome 33, 1 Mai, 1926, p. 124.

After Locarno Painlevé and Briand took care to point out that in future the military organization of France would be entirely defensive in character. In line with this policy<sup>1</sup> the military budget had been greatly reduced in 1926 compared to that of 1922. In the latter year the French government set aside 3,190,000 gold francs for the armed forces while in 1926 the sum had decreased to 1,251,000 gold francs.<sup>2</sup> The return of the Crown Prince to Germany and the elevation of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg to the Presidency had caused certain uneasiness in France which the Locarno Facts had gone far to eliminate, but until the League of Nations obtained an armed force of its own the danger of war would continue to exist. Therefore every nation had the right to prepare its own system of defense although aiming at no specific other Power.

It could be said that Germany was the first of the Powers which signed Locarno to derive concrete advantage from its terms. The evacuation of the British forces from the Cologne Zone of Occupation coincided with the signing of the treaty in London on December 5, 1925. Briand was quick to press home to Germany the significance of this gesture. In a letter to the German ambassador in Paris he said, "En faisant ainsi coïncider le début de l'évacuation avec la signature des accords de Locarno, la conférence marque la confiance dont

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1. La Bruyere, René, France's New Army and Navy, Current History, vol. 24, No. 1, April, 1926, p. 21.

2. Anon., A Propos Du Désarmement, p. 124.

sont animés les gouvernements représentés par elle, que cette signature inaugurerà une nouvelle période dans leurs relations avec l'Allemagne." <sup>1</sup> The Locarno Agreements were based on the three-sided formula of arbitration, security and disarmament and although most of the treaties which make up these agreements deal with the first two problems, the short paragraph touching on disarmament is very significant. It states, "They (the Contracting Parties) undertake to give their sincere cooperation to the work relating to disarmament already undertaken by the League of Nations and to seek the realization thereof in a general agreement." <sup>2</sup> Briand, in common with the other negotiators of the Pact felt that a real forward step had been taken towards disarmament. "Away with rifles, machine-guns, cannons!" he cried, "Room for conciliation, arbitration, and peace!" <sup>3</sup>

During the Sixth Assembly of the League which met in September, 1925, a resolution calling upon the League Council to take steps towards convening a Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments was brought forward. <sup>4</sup> In accordance with this request the Council arranged for the formation

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1. Anon., Lettre de M. Briand à l'Ambassadeur Allemand, von Hoesch, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 406, 28 Novembre, 1925, p. 1619...
  2. Wheeler-Bennett, J. W. and Langermann, F. E., Information on the Problem of Security, London, George Allen & Unwin, Locarno Conference, October, 1925.
  3. Stern-Rubarth, Edgar, op. cit., p. 117.
  4. League of Nations Documents, C. P. D. I., Documents of the Preparatory Disarmament Conference, Series 1., p. 5. Cited by Wheeler-Bennett, J. W., Disarmament and Security, 1925-1931, p. 46, footnote 1.

of a Preparatory Commission to study the problem of disarmament. The first and second sessions of this Commission were held in 1926 but it was not until March, 1927, at the meeting of the third session that the French stand was clearly defined.<sup>1</sup> "M. Briand saisissant...la balle au bond, accepta d'entamer les négociations" and through M. Paul-Boncour summarized the French view "à sécurité limitée, désarmement limité."<sup>2</sup> At Washington Briand had maintained that until some guarantee was provided, his country must maintain military superiority over Germany. Even after Locarno, sincere though he undoubtedly was, Briand felt that France had disarmed unilaterally to the lowest point in keeping with national safety. The French Draft proposed the limitation of all effectives, land, sea and air in service and in formations organized on a military basis. The period of service was also to be limited and land war material was to be controlled through the limitation of budgeting expenditure. The British also put forward a Draft and the problem of harmonizing the two plans occupied the Preparatory Commission until December, 1930.

The efforts of Briand were not confined solely to the work of the Preparatory Commission. The whole of the period 1925-1931 was a time in the history of Europe when the foreign policies of all nations were directed towards finding some way

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1. Anon., La préparation du désarmement, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 483, 14 Mai, 1927, p. 634.

2. Loc. cit.

in which to establish peace on a firmer basis. Briand, the French foreign minister at the time the Locarno Treaties were consummated, had come to be regarded by Frenchmen as the logical man to best protect the interests of France while at the same time to direct it in the spirit of Locarno.<sup>1</sup> Following the First Session of the Preparatory Commission held in May 1926, Briand was faced with the important problem of reconciling these two factors. At that Session a wide divergence of opinion was revealed on the question of naval limitation.<sup>2</sup> Great Britain and France were in favor of fixing the size of vessels in each category while Briand advocated total tonnage without fixing vessel size. In order to reconcile the divergent views if possible, President Coolidge issued an invitation to the naval Powers to take part in a conference. Briand refused because he felt that such a conference on a limited field of the whole disarmament problem would jeopardize the chances for success of the movement for general disarmament. He maintained that the naval problem could not be isolated. It must be recalled, however, that statesmen do not always make their innermost thoughts public. At this time Italy, under the Fascist régime was extending her sphere of interest. There is not much doubt that Briand was alarmed,

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1. Dumont-Wilden, L., Les Accords de Locarno et La Nouvelle Orientation Politique; Revue Bleue, No. 21, 7 Novembre, 1925, p. 708.
  2. Anon., La première session de la commission préparatoire de la conférence du désarmement, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 437, 3 Juillet, 1926, p. 912.

by this expansion.

Briand, in spite of his declarations in 1927 that the naval problem could not be isolated from the main factor of general disarmament, was prepared in March, 1928, to take part in discussions with the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Austin Chamberlain. Great Britain was prepared to make some concession on the military side if Briand would give way in some respect on the naval. It is possible that Chamberlain in making these proposals to Briand was mindful of the latter's statement at the seventh session of the League Assembly when he said that in order to achieve success in negotiation it might be necessary to grant "certaines concessions reciproques."<sup>1</sup> In addition a proposal of this nature found favor with Briand insofar as it opened up a larger section of the disarmament problem in involving part of the French land forces, the trained reserves. The agreement at which Briand and Chamberlain ultimately arrived enlarged the limited categories to four. In addition to aircraft carriers and capital ships,<sup>2</sup> already limited under the Washington treaty, cruisers armed with more than six inch calibre guns and submarines of more than 600 tons were to be included. Briand surrendered the

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1. Discours prononcé par M. Briand, ministre des affaires étrangères de France, à la septième séance de l'Assemblée de la Société de Nations, le 10 septembre, 1926, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 449, 18 Septembre, 1926, p. 1321.
  2. Ibid., Note de l'ambassade de l'Angleterre au ministère des affaires étrangères en date du 28 juillet, 1928, No. 562, 17 Novembre, 1928, p. 1581.

theory so long held by the French in respect to global tonnage in favor of limitation by category and in consenting to take part in discussions in the naval phase of disarmament alone he abandoned the stand that naval, land and air armaments are interdependent.<sup>1</sup> This removed the two major difficulties which heretofore paralyzed the efforts of the Preparatory Commission. Briand secured the insertion in this Anglo-French Compromise of 1928 the important provision that the same maximum tonnage for submarines and cruisers should be fixed for all the great naval Powers. Briand said that this recognition of equality was only a question of "chiffres de prestige"<sup>2</sup> and that France would not build up to the limit. The first reaction of the United States to these conversations was favorable as they represented an effort by two nations to reach an agreement by mutual concession. However, when the conditions of the Compromise were revealed both official and public criticism was severe.<sup>3</sup> The agreement would allow the building of certain highly efficient fighting ships while imposing restrictions on those types especially suited to the needs of the United States.

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1. Anon., A Plea for an independent Foreign Policy: The Anglo-French Compromise, The Round Table, vol. 19, December, 1928, p. 17.
  2. Buell, R. L., Anglo-American Naval Understanding, Foreign Policy Association Information Service, No. 10, July 24, 1929, p. 182.
  3. Lettre de M. Norman Armour, Chargé d'affaires des États-Unis à Paris, à M. Aristide Briand, 28 septembre, 1928, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 562, 17 Novembre, 1928, p. 1582.

Why did Briand and Chamberlain make this Compromise without consulting the United States in accordance with the tradition of the Washington Conference, and Germany as required by the spirit of Locarno? Briand had made a serious error. The actions of the French and British statesmen revealed the weakness of all efforts made towards disarmament since the end of the war of 1914-1918. Each was looking at the problem of security from a narrow, nationalist view-point. Briand had consented to an agreement by which France and Britain would make their own position secure, without thinking of the security of other interested nations. Germany could not appreciate Briand's point, that if England and France came to an understanding then the security of Germany would be increased. This failure to consult Germany aroused again in the German mind the suspicion that France still held that her own security continued to rest on the permanent disarmament of Germany. Briand had left the Locarno road. The old system of secret diplomacy was back, it was charged. Briand was deeply hurt. In a speech before the Chamber of Deputies, he complained that as soon as an agreement towards disarmament was arrived at the world cried out "pas pour qui, mais contre qui."<sup>1</sup> One French critic writes, "M. Briand, M. Paul-Boucour ont eu raison de denoncer avec émotion, ce qu'il y avait de tragique dans la suspicion que declenche, aussitôt annoncé, tout accord conclu entre deux grandes nations désireuses, par cet accord.

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1. Wheeler-Bennett, J. W., Disarmament and Security Since Locarno, New York, Macmillan, 1932, p. 135.

même et par les concessions bilatérales qu'il comporte, de hâter la solution dont dépend l'évolution pacifique de l'Europe.<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-French Compromise collapsed but in spite of this Briand tried to hold the British to their agreement concerning trained reserves. In a speech before the House of Commons relative to this problem Lord Cushendun declared that the British government "were under no obligation in the matter...."<sup>2</sup>

In 1925 Briand had given French policy a definite orientation based on the Locarno spirit. At that time no statesman was accused of harboring anything but the loftiest motives. In the years following Locarno the forces in opposition to Briand's policy were steadily increasing in power. One of the factors most responsible for this trend was the armament press, not only in France and Germany but in other countries as well. In addition to the press, the armament industry was a powerful factor because its ramifications are so wide-spread in the industrial life of the country in which it is located.<sup>3</sup> In France these elements carried on such a continued attack on Briand after his conversation with Stresemann at Thoiry that French public opinion began to have fears that possibly the policy of Briand was not in the best interests of France.

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1. Ormesson, Wladimir d, *Rentrée....*, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 555, 29 Septembre, 1928, p. 1302.
  2. Cited in Wheeler-Bennett, J. W., *op. cit.*, p. 141.
  3. Spender, J. A., *These Times*, London, Cassell, 1934, p. 110.

If Briand and Stresemann had had their way, France and Germany together would have led the world to peace. That they failed to do so was very largely the work of those who thought of foreign policy in terms of selling guns. 1

One factor partly responsible for the increasing difficulty which Briand encountered in his disarmament efforts was the reaction in Germany to every concession made by France. 2 Although chauvinistic elements like the press of the Hugenberg-Konzern could not be said to represent the German people yet continued references to the injustices of the Versailles Treaty did not find a favorable reception in France. 3 The vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies and Rapporteur of the War Budget for the Chamber said, "Même, à différentes reprises, empruntant la tribune de la Presse, je l'ai crié au pays tout entière, je me suis efforcé de montrer cette nuée infernale qui s'élève là-bas dans l'Est gagnant de plus en plus vite notre ciel bleu de France." 4 A more concrete French reaction was the starting of construction on the wall of fortifications on the eastern frontier of France, the Maginot Line. 5 French opinion was beginning to harden. As early as

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1. Noel-Baker, Philip, *The Private Manufacture of Armaments*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1937, vol. 1, p. 58.
  2. Stresemann in his *Memoirs* has spoken in this vein. It is almost certain that these personal thoughts were never meant for publication.
  3. Chaumeix, André, *L'État D'Esprit De L'Allemagne*, Paris, *Revue de Paris*, Tome 1, Février, 1926, p. 943.
  4. Bouilloux-Lafont, M., *Genève et L'Aviation Allemand*, *Revue de Paris*, Tome 6, Novembre, 1926, p. 481.
  5. Brown, F., *War Strength of France*, *Current History*, vol. 42, No. 2, May, 1935, p. 197.

1926 one French writer warned Stresemann to "Stop your parakeets from repeating 'We did not cause the war, we did not cause the war!' Who knows we may strangle them one of these days."<sup>1</sup> General Maginot some years later clearly expressed this feeling when he said, "Two conditions are necessary to ensure peace--the peaceful countries must remain strong and the warlike ones must keep their mouths shut."<sup>2</sup> It is small wonder that with such a feeling beginning to take hold in France that the French delegation went to the London Naval Conference with no illusions about a moral mission, rather was its watch-word "en garde".

It is a factor of great significance that the first indication of the French stand at the London Naval Conference was not made by Briand but by Andre Tardieu,<sup>3</sup> the Premier of France at the time. Before the Foreign Affairs Naval Committee of the Chamber he stated that naval disarmament could not be dealt with as a separate problem and that the decisions reached at the London Naval Conference would have to form part of the basis of the coming World Disarmament Conference. Thus it will be seen that the man who so severely criticized Briand for his handling of the French case at the Washington Conference will now be with Briand at London or at least

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1. Flers, Robert de, Germany is to Blame, Living Age, vol. 331, No. 4294, p. 293, (translated from Paris Figaro).
  2. Bartlett, Vernon, Nazi Germany Explained, London, Victor-Gollancz, 1933, p. 195.
  3. Anon., Début de Conference, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 625, 1 Février, 1930, P. 194.

nearby at Paris, in a supervisory capacity. He was determined that there would not be a repetition of the catastrophe of Washington.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the assembling of the Conference a Memorandum was sent by the French government to the nations which were to take part in the Conference setting forth the French stand.<sup>2</sup> This enabled them to take the initiative in the necessity of relating disarmament to security and national needs and on the question of limitation on the basis of total tonnage. Having paved their way in this manner, the French had a tactical advantage.<sup>3</sup>

During the period of the Conference called the First Phase, the French delegation announced that a naval building plan had been laid down in France which by 1936 would give her a naval strength of 724,479 tons.<sup>4</sup> If guarantees were forthcoming bolstering French security, a reduction of this total would be considered. The period called the Second Phase was marked by the absence of the French delegation from London

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1. Tardieu, André, The Policy of France, Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, No. 1, September 15, 1922, p. 11.
  2. Buell, R. L., The London Naval Conference, Foreign Policy Association News Service, vol. VI., No. 6, May, 28, 1930, p. 102.
  3. Anon., Naval Conference Makes Progress, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 22, No. 5, January 31, 1930, p. 84.
  4. Ibid., Short Adjournment of the Naval Conference, vol. 22, No. 8, February 21, 1930, p. 144.

owing to the defeat of the Tardieu Cabinet on internal issues. While the French delegation was absent the remaining delegates concluded that in order for the Conference to meet with success it would be necessary to reduce the building program of France and to solve the problem of parity between Italy and France.

With the return of Briand to London after the recall of Tardieu to the premiership, the problem of security came to the fore. In accordance with the Memorandum of December 20, 1929, there could be no further reduction by France without reinforced security. Briand returned to the old stand of French statesmen, security first. However, French opinion was adamant that the security question could not be solved only by a new guarantee from Great Britain--the parity problem with Italy must also be settled. In France it was felt that Italy was pursuing a policy of prestige whereas in France superiority over Italy was felt to be a necessity. Briand hoped that Great Britain would consent to a reinterpretation of Article 16 of the League Covenant which would go considerably in the direction towards developing a formula.<sup>1</sup> However, insofar as no solution could be reached over the parity question with Italy, Briand suggested that the best plan would be for the Conference to draw up a Three-Power Pact between Great Britain, United States and Japan among which Powers some agreement had

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1. Lippmann, Walter, The London Naval Conference, Foreign Affairs, vol. 8, No. 4, July, 1930, p. 499.

been reached.<sup>1</sup> He refused to consider a Four-Power Pact which would leave Italy out. He felt that a Four-Power Pact would intensify rather than reduce the danger of the Italo-French parity issue thus rendering disarmament through limitation even more illusory. It would exasperate Italy. "M. Briand à mis là une fois de plus, au service de la paix la grande finesse de son jugement."<sup>2</sup> Italian critics were not so laudatory. One great Milan journal, the Corriere della Serra,<sup>3</sup> said that at London, France had committed a grave error, while Il Popolo d'Italia stated that while working for peace the basis for a new war had been laid.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most interesting comment was not made at a formal session at all but at the ceremony of the signing of the Treaty when Briand said, "Competition in armaments is no longer possible after the London Conference of 1930."<sup>5</sup>

This optimistic statement by Briand was somewhat premature for on his return to Paris he found himself faced with a problem of great importance. The situation in Germany was

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1. Buell, R. L., op. cit., p. 109.
  2. Joxe, Louis, Conclusions à Londres, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 639, 19 Avril, 1930, p. 615.
  3. Pernot, Maurice, Italie et La France après la Conférence de Londres, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 639, 10 Mai, 1930, p. 719.
  4. Anon., Five Powers Sign the Naval Treaty, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 22, No. 17, April 25, 1930, p. 328.
  5. Loc. cit.

taking a grave turn with the increase in power of the National Socialist and Communist forces and the failure to reach a solution of the Italian naval question further complicated the outlook for his policy of understanding. He was on the defensive. The fact that he brought forward at this time the proposal for a United States of Europe is evidence enough that he was beginning to despair of achieving security through disarmament, at least in the immediate future. In the Chamber of Deputies it was argued that the publication of the Federation idea revealed that Governments of Europe were divided into two camps; revisionist and anti-revisionist, the League of Nations had failed to organize peace on a solid foundation, and the Briand-Kellogg Pact was without force. In his own defense Briand maintained that his was the only policy. Germany was a nation of sixty million intelligent people and a foreign minister who did not try to diminish the danger of such a neighbor by agreements and understandings would fail to do his duty. Nevertheless, during the course of the same debate, Tardieu, while supporting Briand, warned that further disarmament of France would be governed by the conduct of the German delegation at the sessions of the Preparatory Commission. He insisted that until the German representatives stopped demanding that France reduce her armament to the level forced

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1. Documents on International Affairs, 1930, Extract from Speech of M. Aristide Briand in the Chamber of Deputies, November 14, 1930, p. 89.

upon Germany, France would do nothing more.<sup>1</sup> A policy of understanding was fine, said the French premier, but no chances would be taken on the future, as Briand had been prepared to do after Locarno. The way of France must be clear ahead.

The period following the London Conference was further complicated for Briand by his fruitless efforts to reach some agreement with Italy over the parity issue. Negotiations between Briand and Signor Grandi were continually upset by the violent speeches of Premier Mussolini who ridiculed the French insistence that France must have a superior fleet to the Italians and boasted that he was prepared to build ship for ship with France.<sup>2</sup> The problem was further complicated by the new orientation of Italian foreign policy--there were signs of an Italo-German rapprochement.<sup>3</sup> To the Rightist in France this was claimed to be the direct outcome of the policies of Briand.

To the world at large it was felt that the Treaty of Locarno and the entry of Germany into the League would provide France with the extra measure of security which she felt was needed so badly. When the Preparatory Disarmament Commission was set up it was expected that the problem of security would

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1. Ibid., Extract from the Speech of M. André Tardieu in the Chamber of Deputies, November 14, 1930, p. 89.
  2. Anon., Les Visites de M. Grandi, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 645, 21 Juin, 1930, p. 921.
  3. Vermeil, Edmond, Danger from Germany, Revue Politique et Parlementaire, Tome 144, 10 Avril, 1930, p. 169.

be absorbed by the greater problem of disarmament. Thus, as the efforts towards disarmament progressed and armaments decreased in quantity, then as a natural corollary, the security of France would increase. As the period 1930-31 advanced it was seen that this was not to be the case. As far back as Locarno Briand had felt that the differences between France and Germany were to be eventually regulated. Yet both at Locarno and Thoiry, there is strong evidence to show that the sentiments of not only Briand, but Stresemann as well, were not in harmony with a great part of their respective peoples. Public opinion was more nationalistic than either statesman thought. This resulted in France in an extreme reluctance on the part of many to give up the guarantees which their country had received in the Treaty of Versailles.

In spite of the growing nationalist opposition in France Briand, after the London Naval Conference, was still determined to press forward his policy. Speaking before the Eleventh Assembly he said,

The Disarmament question has just been raised from this platform. Obviously all our work for peace must, unless accompanied by its necessary corollary-- I mean the limitation and reduction of armaments-- remain hazardous and cause many disappointments to the Nation. The promise laid down in the Covenant must therefore be fulfilled.... Whatever bad times we go through... I personally mean disarmament to go straight ahead. So long as I am where I am there

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1. Lair, Maurice, Stresemann, *Revue des Sciences Politiques*, Tome 55, Octobre-Décembre, 1932, p. 365.
  2. Lichtenberger, Henri, *The Third Reich*, New York, The Greystone Press, 1937, p. 29.

will be no war."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, in spite of this statement, when the Draft Convention of 1930 came up for ratification in December 1930, the French government took the stand that unless Article LIII. of the Convention was adopted, France would not ratify the Convention. This Article says in part,

The present Convention shall not affect the provisions of the previous treaties under which certain of the High Contracting Parties have agreed to limit their land, sea or air armaments and have thus fixed in relation to one another their respective rights and obligations in this connection. 2

There was no doubt that in the German mind this was meant as a reaffirmation of the Treaty of Versailles. Germany was to be kept in a bond of perpetual inferiority.<sup>3</sup> This was not the policy of Briand. Then why was it put forward as the policy of the French government of which Briand was an integral part? Simply because, Briand is still nominally the director of French foreign policy, but actually he is being used more in the nature of a front by the nationalist forces. Also Briand was aware of the mood of the French people and even he felt that the Germany of Luther and Curtius was rapidly departing from the ways of Stresemann.

Confirmation of the correctness of this conclusion come

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1. Verbatim Record of the Eleventh Assembly, September 11, 1930, cited by Philip Noel-Baker, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 519 ff.
  2. Article LIII. of the Draft Convention, signed December 9, 1930.
  3. Heibronner, André, La Réduction Des Armements: Ses Difficultés, Revue Des Sciences Politiques, Tome 55, Octobre-Décembre, 1932, p. 254.

to by the Germans in respect to the French stand in the disarmament issue was given in the speech of one of the foremost French delegates at Geneva, M. Massigli when he said,

When the Conference meets, a certain number of Powers, including France, will submit proposals in figures, for the limitation of their armaments. These proposals will be isolated in relation to a given situation; they will correspond to a given degree of security.... By the text (Article LIII) the Powers concerned define the conditions under which they accept the figures for limitation to be inserted in regard to themselves, in the Convention.... 1

This is the statement of M. Massigli, but Briand was the head of the French delegation. The Briand who endorsed this speech was not the Briand of the Locarno days. It is a Briand who is on the defensive. Behind this speech can be seen the shadow of Poincaré and Foch. Briand was beginning to find that the "pens made from the same steel as cannons" were beginning to command an ever-widening audience in France. In view of the tension at the time of the ratification of the Convention it was felt by many that an important success had been achieved in the struggle to disarm, not so much for what the Convention contained, but simply because of its very existence.

The evacuation of the Rhineland took place in June of 1930 and if Briand's policy of appeasement had borne healthy fruit, the future of Franco-German relations would have become

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1. Toynebee, op. cit., 1930, p. 120:
  2. M. Briand speaking to a Committee of Women's Organizations at Geneva, September 23, 1930. Cited by Noel-Baker, op. cit., vol. I., p. 255.

brighter. Two months later 107 National Socialists were elected to the Reichstag.<sup>1</sup> This confirmed French public opinion in the belief that each concession made to the Germans by Briand only led to further demands. Thus the belief grew stronger that Briand's policy of appeasement was an illusion which was leading France to ruin. This growing tension between France and Germany had a direct bearing on the negotiations between Italy and France on the naval question which followed the London Naval Conference. After much consultation, a proposal whereby Italy in 1936 would have a naval tonnage of 441,256 tons to 670,723 tons for France was accepted by the Italians. The French Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, however, turned it down, maintaining that it would approve only those agreements which were connected with guarantees for international security which had already been obtained or might be in the future. In making this decision the French government linked this problem of disarmament with the broader question of the international situation. The decision was made on the same day on which the proposed customs union between Austria and Germany was announced. Briand says of this plan in an address to the French Senate, "Si vous me maintenez votre confiance, je tiendrai jusqu'au bout dans l'attitude que je viens d'indiquer avec l'espoir formel que l'Allemagne et l'Autriche prévenues de nos intentions ne persisteront pas à accomplir ce que la France considère

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1. Ormesson, Wladimir d', France, London, Longmans Green, 1939, p. 83.

comme la violation d'engagements solennels." <sup>1</sup> Thus we have Briand, the "man of peace", condemning the action of Germany and Austria. Hope for disarmament was waning in Europe.

So great had the pressure of events in the international field become in the latter part of 1931 with the consequent embitterment of international relations that it was felt in many quarters that it would be a wise step to postpone the World Disarmament Conference which was to open February 2, 1932. This move was urged by many statesmen of the Left in France who felt that if the Conference could be postponed until after the French General Election in May, 1932, a new government, freed from control of the Nationalists might bring in a change of policy in international affairs. Briand was determined however that postponement should not take place. He sincerely felt that a conference in February would help to clarify the situation which was growing extremely complex. At the Twelfth Assembly of the League of Nations held at Geneva in September 1931, he made the formal announcement that France did not propose that the Disarmament Conference should be delayed. <sup>2</sup> Yet on the other side of the picture a less promising prospect is observed. The nationalist elements of the Government are equally determined and in some cases very frank

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1. Anon., Extraits de discours prononcé par M. Briand au Sénat le 28 mars, L'Europe Nouvelle, No. 686, 4 Avril, 1931, p. 481.

2. Address by Briand before the Twelfth Assembly of the League of Nations, September, 1931. Cited by J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, 1925-31, p. 346.

as to their stand. They would consider granting juridical equality to Germany, but actual equality in armaments France was not prepared to grant.<sup>1</sup> To them Germany had never recognized that the disabilities under which she suffered were the inevitable consequences of defeat. Behind the scenes but undoubtedly a strong force urging that the Conference be held on the designated date was the French General Staff, which strongly supported Maginot, the Minister of War. This group felt that if the Conference was held in February that, in view of the difficult international situation, it would likely break down.<sup>2</sup> This would leave France free of any blame for its failure, rather would she be given credit for so vigorously urging that it be held.

On July 15, 1931, the French government had issued a very important document relative to the coming World Disarmament Conference in which was set forth the keynote of the French stand, "security first."<sup>3</sup> This document reiterated the stand taken on many previous occasions that further guarantees must precede further reduction of armaments on the part of France. By this Memorandum it was shown that France had no intention of abandoning the thesis that a perpetuation of the inequality of status imposed upon the defeated Powers was

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1. Cot, Pierre, France and Disarmament, Spectator, vol. 148, January 9, 1932, p. 38.
  2. Toynbee, op. cit., 1931, p. 287, footnote 1.
  3. Documents of International Affairs, 1931, p. 43. Extract from the French Memorandum, July 15, 1931, League Document, 1931, IX 9.

essential to the security of Europe.

Briand's position was badly shaken by the Austro-German Custom's proposal and although this scheme was condemned by the Hague Court, it nevertheless influenced Briand in his attitude towards Germany. Coupled with this reverse in the foreign field was his unsuccessful attempt to attain the Presidency of the Republic. Briand failed to appreciate the truth of the old axiom in French politics, that any statesman who has shown very pronounced views and taken a prominent place in political life had better not try for the Presidential post. These two serious reversals, one in the policy on which he had based his whole political philosophy, that of rapprochement with Germany, and the other in what he felt was a personal defeat, convinced him that his political race was nearly run. Perhaps this feeling that he had been thwarted caused him to neglect a real opportunity to take a stand at Geneva on the proposal for an Arms Truce put forward by Signor Grandi of Italy on September 8, 1931.<sup>1</sup> On September 11, Briand made a speech before the League Assembly in which he made no reference to the Italian proposal, even although it had been given a generally favorable reception by other nations. The French had always insisted that security should precede arbitration and disarmament; Briand brought this doctrine up again. Not content with this he further complicated

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1. Anon., Instant Halt in Armaments, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 25, No. 11, September 11, 1931, p. 205.

the situation by stating that France would be willing to disarm only if the Treaty of Mutual Assistance was revised. This was the most extreme of all proposals involving the use of military sanctions.<sup>1</sup>

On January 7, 1932, Aristide Briand retired from the Quai d'Orsay. Was it a retreat? Had his policy failed? Certainly during the seven years he had spent as Foreign Minister he had gone the full circle in his attitude towards disarmament. Some French critics felt that at Locarno he was prepared to risk the security of France in order to give Germany every chance. Yet at Geneva in the fall of 1931 he brought up the Treaty of Mutual Assistance. It was the gesture, not of the Briand, who with the flame of idealism burning deep in his soul, strove with Stresemann for the new day, but of a man who has lost the zest for battle. Briand had become merely the symbol of the foreign policy which was fast disappearing in France. His power was gone. He was the front used by the new forces to make their policy acceptable. He had failed to reach his goal. Upon his departure from office his country had a stronger military establishment than ever before. France did not yet feel secure.

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1. Anon., M. Briand and Disarmament, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 25, No. 12, September 18, 1931, p. 223.

CHAPTER VII.

EPILOGUE

## CHAPTER VII.

### EPILOGUE

To estimate the contribution of Aristide Briand to the security of France is a difficult task. It is difficult not solely because the structure of peace which he so laboriously built up crashed almost immediately after his retirement from office, but also because of the very nature of the man himself.

Briand was an opportunist both in his personal life and in his political career. His opportunism is largely due to the fact that he was a realist. It was his appreciation of reality that caused Briand to stay in office after he had had two successive reverses--the rejection of the Franco-German rapprochement plan which grew out of the Thoiry conversations and the refusal of his government to ratify the Anglo-French-Italian Naval Agreement of 1931. He did not resign because he felt that to stay in office would be to accomplish more than if he had withdrawn from the government. His appreciation of the reality of the European picture caused him to be content to watch and wait after his recall from the Cannes Conference because he knew that with a strongly nationalist Chamber little could be accomplished along the lines he intended to follow. He must await the swing of the political pendulum. That this swing had taken place was seen by the enthusiasm which was aroused by the signature of the Locarno<sup>1</sup> Pact. The Treaty of Versailles had been humanized.

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1. Bois, Jules, Aristide Briand, Member of Twenty-one French Cabinets, Current History, vol. 31, No. 3, December, 1929, p. 529.

Locarno was the climax of the foreign policy of Briand. Its whole spirit was a compromise, an appeal to the humanity which Briand so faithfully believed in, but above all he felt that Locarno was the work of a realist. He believed that he had a grasp not only on the pulse of France, but on that of the new Europe as well. For this reason the defeat of his Franco-German rapprochement effort was a profound blow to him but he still held true to his great ideal--France secure in a Europe at peace.

A statesman has a two-fold task. In the first instance he must be an advocate of the interests of his own country primarily, and in the second case he must be an architect trying to improve the international organization. It has been said by many responsible thinkers that Briand did not guard the security of France sufficiently, that he was willing to barter it away for the sake of compromise. Yet never once did Briand refuse to agree to the appropriations for the armed forces set aside by the French governments in which he served. In spite of this fact he felt another road could be travelled besides that of armed might to reach his goal of security. He believed that Anglo-French cooperation was imperative for the well-being of France. For this reason he accepted a reduced naval strength for France at Washington in the hope of being able to drive a wedge between the United States and Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> Failing to do this he only saved his political

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1. Carr, Philip, Aristide Briand, Contemporary Review, vol. 141, April, 1932, p. 431.

life by his famous speech in defense of French land armaments. Briand had tried for the friendship of Great Britain once-- he was to try again. Poincaré, the nationalist, scorned British advice and sent French troops into the Ruhr. It is an open question as to which French statesman was thinking primarily of the security of his country.

Briand hated war. There is no reason to disbelieve the assertion he made at Guerdon on June 19, 1931, in which he recalled with what horror war filled his spirit and that ever since he took office he had persevered in his efforts to gain security for France and peace in Europe. His sincerity in his love of peace was believed in by the statesmen of other countries with whom he came in contact. It was believed in by the common people of other lands and those of France as well. The great success of Locarno following so closely upon the condemnation of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the Geneva Protocol led Frenchmen to believe both in his sincerity and his method. As time progressed many began to question his method. His greatest and most destructive critics were the nationalist leaders and their press whose independence of the armament industry was often questioned. The accusation of the nationalist press began and ended with the one thought--the war guilt of Germany. That view would brook no compromise. Briand believed in rapprochement which would call for compromise.

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1. Anon., M. Briand's Fight for Peace, Manchester Guardian Weekly, vol. 24, No. 25, June 19, 1931, p. 491.

Briand was a revolutionary, a revolutionary in method. For him the security of France through peace in Europe was the only goal--but the ways to reach that goal were many. One of his outstanding methods was through the fostering of the idea of the Treaty for the Renunciation of War. In the Assembly of the League of Nations the idea was received in silence. Until this suggestion of Briand was brought before them the delegates had talked of peace--and thought of war. They lived in perpetual fear that war would come because of some hole in the Covenant hitherto undisclosed. Briand's proposal wrought a revolution in their whole concept. It was the proposal of an unfettered mind. Yet it was too revolutionary. The world responded with lip-service, yet each nation made reservations in its own soul.

Aristide Briand was an idealist. He was a realist. He had the support of millions throughout the world in his quest. He was sincere yet his efforts came to nought. Why? The answer is found in the story of his struggle. He knew where his goal lay, but the narrow-minded statesmen of the European nations could not wait for him to find a safe way. One of his keenest yet most appreciative critics describes him as having "a dynamic and ardent heart, an artistic sensibility, which had transferred a commonplace ugly obstinate wrangle to the loftiest and noblest plane, and which finally had squandered itself for a dream."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Stern-Rubarth, Edgar, op. cit., p. 275.

In his last speech before the Assembly of the League of Nations Briand spoke of the approaching World Disarmament Conference of 1932. "We are approaching," he said, "a date on which the eyes of the people are more and more ardently fixed... It will be a solemn hour... never will the nations have borne heavier responsibility. Will the nations, who can do everything, leave unanswered the terrible interrogation which still weighs us down?"<sup>1</sup> Were these words a portent of the fate of his own policy? Looking back over the years we see that the passing of Briand was followed by the collapse of his work. For Briand's policy was within the very soul of the man himself. When the spark went out of that soul after the announcement of the Austro-German Customs plan was made, it left a hollow shell which soon gave way. Yet perhaps no greater tribute to this statesman of France who struggled sometimes not wisely, but always valiantly, for the security of his country, can be found than in the words of a little old woman who murmured over his bier, "God keep your soul.<sup>2</sup> To the peacemakers may God give his peace."

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1. September, 1931: Cited by Wickham Steed, *The Briand I Knew*, *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 131, April 1, 1932, p. 409.
2. Slocumb, George, *A Mirror to Geneva*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1937, p. 175.

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