

# LOCARNO

A COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS

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## PREFACE

I welcome this collection of documents which I have read with interest.

As a contrast to the obvious and regrettable tendencious documentary selections which have appeared in other countries, this full edition gives all those who are sincerely anxious to know the truth, a means whereby they can form their own verdict on the causes and events which originally led to the conclusion of the Locarno Treaty and which have now lead to its denunciation.

These documents clearly and irrefutably show how France, though a partner to the Treaty, systematically undermined both in the spirit and in the letter the foundations of the Locarno security system.

The demilitarisation of the Rhineland should by the Locarno Treaty have resulted in the disarmament of Europe, which was an obligation undertaken by those party to the treaty. The demilitarisation of the Rhineland need not have represented a serious weakening of German security if Europe had shown its peaceful intentions by completely disarming. It was a faith in this possibility which explains and justifies the German acceptance of a completely undefended Rhineland zone.

Unfortunately just the opposite occured. Instead of France and Europe disarming, the armies surrounding a defenceless and disarmed Germany, equipped with the most modern weapons grew stronger and stronger and not till Germany restored her own military sovereignty was the military equilibrium in Europe re-established.

But the one-sided concession of the demilitarised zone remained as "an unprecedentedly heavy contribution made by a sovereign State for the peace of Europe."

Furthermore, the Locarno Treaty should have resulted in a general moral disarmament and in a relaxed tension in European relationships. This again proved to be a vain hope. In spite of all our friendly approaches, France pursued her policy of hostility and military alliances against Germany. The Franco-Polish and the Franco-Czechoslovakian alliances had already created difficulties in the drawing up of the Locarno Pact and such a general policy made any permanent understanding between the two countries impossible.

## PREFACE

The conclusion and the ratification of the Franco-Russian military alliance whereby France and Russia claim for themselves the right to define the aggressor in any disturbance of the peace without a decision by the League of Nations meant the complete destruction of that equilibrium which the creators of the Locarno Pact had in mind. In these circumstances the continued existence of a demilitarised zone was an impossible and an intolerable one sided condition for Germany to accept: the consequence was the German initiative of March 7<sup>th</sup>.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> Germany in her geographically exposed position in the heart of Europe, confronted by a powerful military coalition did no more than claim the most primitive prerogative of every nation namely that of securing and defending her own frontiers

Despite all assertions to the contrary, these are the facts concerning the fate of the Locarno Treaty as proved by this completely unbiassed collection of historical documents.

Germany, however, has only a limited interest in establishing these negative historical facts. Her thoughts are concentrated on the future.

The restoration of German sovereignty — over which there can be no further discussion — has created those conditions for a general reconciliation which is only permanently possible among sovereign States enjoying full equality of rights.

Germany earnestly desires to come to a true and final peace settlement with her neighbours and to build up in the west a new security system.

In his great Peace Plan the German Leader and Chancellor offers Europe a new peace-system. There is nothing the German people desire more whole-heartedly than to see this Peace Plan realized.

This collection of documents proves clearly and unambiguously Germany's sincerity on this issue; it proves how consistently she has pursued the way of peace throughout all these years and how she was compelled to assert her rights by the failure of other countries to carry out their obligations. May it have the largest possible circulation both at home and abroad. I believe that the desire of Europe for a genuine peace system can only be strengthened by the recognition of these historical facts.

Berlin, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1936.

Joachim von Ribbentrop

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the German Reich

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## INTRODUCTION

This collection of documents is an attempt to publish the documentary material relating to Locarno with the greatest possible completeness; only documents already published are contained in this collection. It is obvious that any *collection* of documents must at the same time be a *selection* of documents, since a hundred-percent completeness would necessitate the production of every publication bearing the remotest relation to the central problem, and would thus far exceed the scope of any book intended for handy use. There is thus a fundamental difference between what is required of a collection of documents of this kind, and what is demanded of a lexicon. The decisive test of the value of such a collection is not whether it has the hundred-percent completeness of a lexicon, but the principles upon which the inevitable selection was made.

The editor claims to have followed scrupulously and conscientiously the principle of scientific objectivity as the guiding principle of the selection. The principle of objectivity means that every tendency in the selection has been rejected, and the object itself, i. e. in this case its direct connection with the Locarno question, has been the criterion for the inclusion or omission of a document. Everything which has a direct bearing on Locarno, no matter which side it comes from, has been printed. Hence it comes about that by far the greater part of the documents are utterances not from the German, but from the other side. For the sake of certain misled, not to say ill-disposed, critics, it should be repeated with especial emphasis that this volume does not pretend to be a collection of documents for the total problem of European peace, nor for the problem of European security or of disarmament; but simply for the Locarno question, which is at the moment a specially topical province of the whole European complex of questions.

The list of documents which is given at the beginning of the book may be divided into five sub-headings. Nos. 1-11 contain the most important facts up to the conclusion of the Locarno Pact, whereas no attempt is made to reproduce the very extensive direct negotiations which took place beforehand, in order not to let what is already in itself a considerable volume become swollen out of all compass. Nos. 12-16 contain the text of the Locarno Pact itself, including all

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the subsidiary pacts. Nos. 17-30 include the most important facts over the period from the conclusion of the Locarno Pact to the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Pact. Owing to the original close connection between the German membership of the League and Locarno, the most important documents bearing on Germany's secession from the League during this period are reproduced in this connection. Nos. 31-40 contain the most important material for the period from the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Pact of May 2nd 1935 up to its ratification by the French Chamber, which brought about the actual end of Locarno. The principal points are Chancellor Hitler's speech of May 21st 1935 in the text which is not known abroad in its entirety; the exchange of notes between the Locarno Powers on the subject of the compatibility of the Locarno Pact with the Franco-Soviet Pact and the complete text of Flandin's speech in the Chamber on February 25th 1936. Nos. 41-74, which comprise about half the book, contain without any omission the whole dispute over Locarno during the decisive period from March 7th to March 31st 1936, beginning with the Chancellor's speech of March 7th, and ending with the German Peace Plan of March 31st 1936. In order to bring the volume completely up to date, the period since April 1st 1936 is covered by a supplement giving the French Plan of April 8th, and the English Questionnaire of May 6th 1936.

All documents are given either in the original English texts or in English translations, with the exception of a few French documents of which no English text was available. These are reproduced in the original French text, as every Englishman who is interested in foreign politics may be assumed to have a knowledge of French; and the original French seemed preferable to a translation from the French into German and then into English.

The collection of these documents, which was carried out in co-operation with the German Academy of Political Science (Deutsche Hochschule für Politik), Berlin, and the Institute of International Affairs (Institut für Auswärtige Politik), Hamburg, is a scientific work for which the editor alone bears the intellectual responsibility. This edition of documents is undertaken in the belief that the objective collation of all the texts bearing on the Locarno problem is essential to the allround understanding of conflicting viewpoints, and that without it no real understanding between the peoples of Europe is possible.

Berlin/Hamburg, July 1936

FRITZ BERBER





## 1.

### NOTE SUBMITTED TO THE PLENIPOTENTIARIES OF THE INTER-ALLIED POWERS BY MARSHAL FOCH

#### COMMANDEMENT EN CHEF DES ARMÉES ALLIÉES.

#### LE MARÉCHAL.

G. Q. G. A., le 10 janvier 1919.

La présente Note, soumise aux Plénipotentiaires des Puissances par le Maréchal Commandant en chef des armées alliées, pose, du point de vue de la sécurité militaire des Puissances alliées et associées, le problème des frontières occidentales de l'Allemagne.

Elle n'examine pas la question des frontières propres de la France ou de la Belgique, mais uniquement la garantie européenne, collective, internationale, nécessaire à l'ensemble des nations qui, après avoir combattu pour le Droit, la Liberté et la Justice, entendent aujourd'hui préparer, sur de nouvelles bases inspirées de ces trois idées, les relations entre les peuples.

#### NOTE

Sans aucun doute on peut compter, dans un avenir indéterminé, sur un développement suffisant de la civilisation et du sens moral des peuples, pour trouver, dans une Société ou une Ligue des Nations fortement organisée, un obstacle efficace à la guerre de conquête. Mais, afin que cette Société naissante acquière une autorité assez forte pour constituer, par elle-même, une garantie du maintien de la paix, il est nécessaire qu'elle reçoive, dès à présent, la base suffisante et la force particulière qui assureront son développement. Il faut donc connaître la situation des peuples d'hier, pour fixer celle de demain, en partant de celle d'aujourd'hui; comme aussi prendre en compte les gages de paix, qu'une victoire coûteuse a mis entre les mains des Nations alliées grâce à leur parfaite union, et dont l'abandon compromettrait le maintien de la paix dans l'avenir.

## I

L'Allemagne de 1914 était le résultat d'un travail soutenu de 150 ans, commencé par Frédéric II, méthodiquement continué par ses successeurs, et qui avait abouti à prussianiser l'Allemagne.

Dès le début, les Hohenzollern ont donné comme base à la puissance prussienne un militarisme excessif. Il se traduisait notamment par l'entretien d'une armée d'un effectif très supérieur à celui qui correspondait à la population du pays. Par cet état militaire surélevé, la Prusse jouait un rôle important dans les guerres du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, réalisait de sérieuses acquisitions territoriales, et prenait une place prépondérante dans les guerres de 1813, 1814, 1815. Par là, également, elle s'assurait bientôt, dans les Puissances européennes, un rang très supérieur à celui que lui assignaient ses moyens naturels, sa population, son commerce, son industrie... En fait, le placement de ces ressources dans une forte armée, issue du service personnel et obligatoire, et la guerre pratiquée comme entreprise de conquêtes nationales avaient procuré de sérieux bénéfices à la Prusse. Elle allait les appliquer au triomphe de sa politique.

C'est ainsi qu'en 1866, par la victoire de Sadowa, elle expulsait l'Autriche du domaine allemand, renversait la Confédération germanique et prenait la direction de l'Allemagne transformée, pour la militariser à son image et à sa main.

C'est ainsi qu'en 1871, au lendemain d'une campagne victorieuse, elle créait l'Empire pour faire de l'Allemagne une unité plus forte, encore plus aux mains de la Prusse, toujours sur les mêmes bases du service personnel obligatoire et du commandement des Hohenzollern.

Mais, en même temps, l'action prussienne s'exerçait bien au delà du domaine militaire proprement dit. Toutes les classes, toutes les ressources, tous les moyens d'action ou de production, toutes les associations comme tous les individus étaient disciplinés, centralisés, militarisés. C'est un étatismes raffiné, que pratiquait une monarchie absolue et intéressée, constamment appuyée sur une forte aristocratie et se réclamant d'une incontestable supériorité militaire comme de guerres avantageuses, c'est-à-dire de la suprématie de la force. L'enseignement public était bientôt imprégné des mêmes principes, et l'instruction obligatoire, organisation déjà ancienne du pays, trouvait, sous une habile direction, les moyens de les répandre et de créer un état d'esprit allemand, la «Kultur» avec sa morale propre :

définitivement la force prime le Droit; elle le crée à son profit. Puis, en Allemagne se répand la conviction d'une nature supérieure, d'une destinée et d'une mission spéciales qui justifient les pratiques les plus iniques pourvu qu'elles mènent à la victoire allemande. Une formule résume la morale: «Deutschland über alles». L'idéal et la raison d'être de l'Allemagne sont la domination du monde au profit des Allemands.

D'ailleurs, le pouvoir centralisé du roi de Prusse, qui a concentré en ses mains toutes les forces ainsi créées, pour les appliquer à son heure au développement de l'Allemagne par la guerre, a donné par l'«indigénat» une situation favorisée à chacun de ses nationaux. Le Bavarois, le Saxon, le Wurtembergeois, le Badois est, avant tout, sujet allemand; il est protégé et réclamé par l'Empire, intéressé par suite à la conservation et à la grandeur de l'Empire. Une fois de plus, la force physique et morale de l'Allemagne passait aux mains du roi de Prusse et venait à l'appui de son système.

De là l'irrésistible, générale et aveugle levée de boucliers de 1914, à l'appel de Guillaume II.

Après avoir, au plus haut point, exagéré l'organisation militaire pour en faire un instrument de conquête, après avoir faussé la morale de son peuple et excité par l'intérêt de chacun son dévouement à la cause de l'Empereur prussien, c'est, au total, une armée de malfaiteurs savants et convaincus que l'Allemagne prussienne a lâchée, au mépris de tous les traités, sur les populations pacifiques, ou même vouées à la neutralité, de l'Europe, puis sur les mers du Monde.

C'est contre ce système complet de forces, résultant d'une formation séculaire et continue, que l'Entente a dû soutenir la lutte à l'improviste au nom des principes du droit et de la liberté, des peuples, et qu'elle s'est vue bientôt suivie par une série de nations animées des mêmes principes, les États-Unis au premier rang.

Grâce à cet effort de tous, et par une victoire particulièrement coûteuse pour les premières nations engagées, la crise est aujourd'hui terminée, mais elle peut renaître.

## II

Pour en éviter le retour, il ne suffira pas, sans doute, de changer la forme du Gouvernement allemand. Après le départ des Hohenzollern, dans des conditions particulièrement disqualifiantes pour cette

dynastie et pour toute monarchie militaire, le rétablissement du régime impérial semble certainement devoir être écarté, à tout le moins pour quelque temps. Mais une République bâtie sur les mêmes principes de centralisation du pouvoir et du militarisme, prenant en mains l'ensemble de l'Allemagne, présentera tout autant de dangers et constituera une aussi redoutable menace pour la paix. Elle est facile à réaliser, semble-t-il<sup>1</sup>, dans un pays imbu de l'esprit prussien, des méthodes prussiennes, des doctrines militaristes, et où règne encore en maître, de par le tempérament comme par la tradition, le principe d'autorité, le besoin de centralisation. Bien plus, l'Allemagne républicaine, libérée des entraves que l'existence des petites principautés occasionnait incontestablement à l'Empire, a chance de trouver un surcroît de forces dans son unité parachevée, comme aussi dans la vitalité et l'activité d'un peuple, désormais plus rapproché de son Gouvernement.

C'est seulement du redressement des esprits ramenés par la défaite, puis par la libre discussion, à des notions plus exactes du Droit et de la Justice, c'est de leur participation large au contrôle du Pouvoir exécutif, que pourra sortir un fonctionnement démocratique des institutions d'apparence républicaine qui auraient, sans cela, toute la puissance d'un pouvoir absolu. Nous ne verrons se produire une pareille évolution qu'avec le temps, beaucoup de temps sans doute, bien décidés que nous sommes à ne pas hâter la persuasion par l'emploi de la force, à ne pas intervenir dans le règlement intérieur des affaires de l'Allemagne. Mais alors, respectueux du domaine allemand, pouvons-nous, par une confiance sans réserve, laisser mettre en péril nos principes de liberté et de justice, notre existence même, par des sautes d'opinion, des essais de réaction, encore susceptibles de se produire de l'autre côté du Rhin, et capables de lancer aussitôt dans une nouvelle guerre des cadres de troupes et des classes de soldats nombreux et fortement rompus au métier des armes, c'est-à-dire une très puissante armée.

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<sup>1</sup> Pour former l'Empire en 1871, il a suffi de faire rentrer dans la Confédération du Nord les États du Sud et de remplacer dans la Constitution le mot «Bund» par «Reich» et celui de «Præsidium» par «Kaiser». Une manœuvre en sens inverse, qui remplacerait, dans la Constitution impériale, le mot de «Reich» par «Bund» et celui de «Kaiser» par «Præsidium» aboutirait à maintenir, sous une forme d'apparence républicaine, toute la force que représentait l'Empire.



Bref, l'Allemagne reste, pour longtemps encore, jusqu'à l'achèvement de sa transformation politique et philosophique, une menace redoutable pour la civilisation. Et dans ces conditions, la plus élémentaire prudence impose aux Nations alliées, embryon de la Société des Nations, la nécessité de prendre, vis-à-vis d'elle, un ensemble de mesures purement défensives et de précautions de premier plan. Elles témoigneront en même temps, par leur netteté, d'une intention bien arrêtée d'atteindre le but recherché: la Paix, et de mettre l'Allemagne dans l'impossibilité de recommencer une guerre de conquêtes, de reprendre son programme de domination par les armes.

Devant cette menace encore durable de l'Allemagne, quelles forces pouvons-nous présenter?

### III

Pendant une grande partie de la guerre qui se termine, la Russie, avec ses nombreuses armées, a retenu une notable quantité des forces allemandes. C'est ainsi qu'en 1915, 1916 et même dans la plus grande partie de 1917, l'Entente a eu la supériorité numérique sur le front occidental.

Aujourd'hui, le sort de la Russie est incertain pour de longues années sans doute. Par suite, l'Occident de l'Europe, berceau et garantie nécessaire de l'organisation future des Nations, ne peut compter que sur ses propres forces pour aborder, préparer et assurer son avenir vis-à-vis de l'Allemagne et d'une agression possible.

Pour remplir ce rôle, il ne peut avoir la supériorité du nombre. En effet, quelle que soit l'organisation politique adoptée dans l'avenir par les pays d'outre-Rhin, il y aura toujours, à l'Est de ce fleuve, une population allemande de 64 à 75 millions de sujets<sup>1</sup>, naturellement unis par la communauté de langage, et, par là, de pensée, comme aussi, rapprochés par la communauté des intérêts.

<sup>1</sup> Empire allemand (1914) .....	68,000,000
Provinces allemandes d'Autriche.....	7,000,000
Posnanie .....	2,100,000
Alsace-Lorraine .....	1,900,000
Pays rhénans de la rive gauche du Rhin ..	5,400,000
Slesvig-Holstein .....	1,600,000
	<u>11,000,000</u>
	<u>75,000,000</u>
DIFFÉRENCE .....	64,000,000

A ces forces allemandes, la Belgique, le Luxembourg, l'Alsace-Lorraine, la France ne peuvent opposer qu'un total de 49 millions d'habitants. Seul, l'appui des pays d'outre-mer peut leur permettre d'atteindre le chiffre des combattants de l'ennemi, comme en 1914-1918. Mais encore faut-il l'attendre, et cela combien de temps, pour l'Amérique notamment ?

Or, quelle a été la cause des calamités actuelles ? Avant tout, la tentation qu'était, pour l'Allemagne, la possibilité de frapper d'un seul coup, rien qu'en étendant le poing, nos parties vitales. Sans cette conviction, elle eût hésité sans doute. Avec cette conviction, elle ne s'est même pas embarrassée de prétextes. « Nous ne pouvons pas attendre », disait Bethmann Hollweg.

Par suite, pour arrêter les entreprises vers l'Ouest de l'Allemagne — de tout temps belliqueuse et envieuse du bien d'autrui, récemment encore formée et entraînée à la conquête par la force, au mépris de tous les droits, et avec des procédés des plus contraires aux lois, capable d'entreprendre promptement une formidable guerre ; — pour retarder tout au moins la décision par les armes, il faut faire appel, d'abord, à tous les moyens fournis par la nature. Elle n'a disposé qu'une barrière sur la route de l'invasion : le Rhin. Il doit être utilisé et disputé, pour cela occupé et organisé dès le temps de paix. Sans cette précaution fondamentale, l'Occident de l'Europe reste dépourvu de toute frontière naturelle, et demeure, comme par le passé, ouvert aux dangers d'une invasion qui peut être plus violente. Sans cette précaution, les pays industriels et pacifiques du Nord-Ouest de l'Europe sont immédiatement submergés par le flot dévastateur de la guerre barbare qu'aucune digue n'arrête.

Le Rhin, obstacle redoutable en lui-même, rend particulièrement difficile un franchissement, à une époque notamment où la mitrailleuse de la défense impose à l'attaque l'usage du tank.

De la Suisse à la Hollande, sur plus de 600 kilomètres, cet obstacle continu couvre les Pays alliés, sans pouvoir être tourné.

Mais en outre, par les places dont il est renforcé, les moyens de communication (routes et chemins de fer) qui y affluent ou le longent, il est une base de manœuvre de contre-offensive magnifique.

Mayence, Coblenz, Cologne ne sont qu'à trois étapes l'une de l'autre. Toute tentative ennemie pour passer entre ces villes est menacée de flanc et à revers sur les deux rives, car chaque tête de

pont que nous nous sommes assurée sur le Rhin flanque la voisine, et permet d'agir de flanc et par derrière sur cette offensive.

Le Maréchal de Moltke plaçait au Rhin la frontière militaire de l'Allemagne, et terminait certaines de ses études en écrivant: «*On ne peut méconnaître la solidité extraordinaire de notre théâtre d'opérations du Rhin. Elle ne pourrait être compromise que si nous prenions, sur la rive gauche, une offensive prématurée avec des forces insuffisantes.*» Et ailleurs: «*le front de défense de la Prusse contre la France est constitué par le Rhin avec ses forteresses. Cette ligne est si solide qu'elle est loin d'exiger toutes les forces de la Monarchie.*»

Cette situation est aujourd'hui retournée au profit de la Coalition. La Coalition ne peut renoncer aux avantages qu'elle assure, lâcher le bouclier de la défense dans cette région, le Rhin, sans compromettre gravement son avenir. Le «*Wacht am Rhein*» doit être son cri de ralliement.

Dorénavant, le Rhin devra être la frontière militaire occidentale des peuples allemands; l'Allemagne devra être privée de toute entrée et de toute place d'armes, c'est à-dire de toute souveraineté territoriale sur la rive gauche de ce fleuve, en un mot, de toute facilité pour envahir rapidement, comme en 1914, la Belgique, le Luxembourg, pour gagner les côtes de la mer du Nord et menacer l'Angleterre, pour tourner les défenses naturelles de la France, le Rhin, la Meuse, conquérir ses régions du Nord et aborder celle de Paris.

C'est là, pour le présent et l'avenir proche, une *garantie indispensable du maintien de la Paix*, en raison:

- 1<sup>o</sup> de la situation matérielle et morale de l'Allemagne;
- 2<sup>o</sup> de sa supériorité numérique sur les pays démocratiques de l'Europe occidentale.

#### IV

Le Rhin, frontière militaire indispensable au maintien de la Paix que poursuit la Coalition, ne constitue aucun profit territorial pour aucun pays. Il ne s'agit pas, en effet, d'annexer la rive gauche du Rhin, d'augmenter le territoire de la France ou de la Belgique, et de le protéger contre une revendication allemande, mais bien de tenir au Rhin la barrière *commune* de sécurité nécessaire à la Société des Nations démocratiques. Il ne s'agit pas de confier à une seule Puissance la garde de cette barrière commune, mais bien d'assurer,

par le concours soit moral, soit matériel, de toutes les Puissances démocratiques, la défense de leur existence et de leur avenir, en interdisant une fois pour toutes à l'Allemagne de porter la guerre et son esprit de domination au delà du fleuve.

Bien entendu, il appartiendra au Traité de Paix de fixer le statut des populations de la rive gauche du Rhin non comprises dans les frontières françaises ou belges.

Mais cette organisation, quelle qu'elle soit, devra tenir compte de la nécessité militaire exposée ci-dessus et, par suite :

1<sup>o</sup> Interdire totalement à l'Allemagne l'accès militaire et la propagande politique dans les pays rhénans de la rive gauche, peut-être même couvrir ces pays par une zone de neutralisation militaire sur la rive droite.

2<sup>o</sup> Assurer l'occupation militaire des Pays rhénans de la rive gauche par des forces alliées.

3<sup>o</sup> Garantir aux Pays rhénans de la rive gauche les débouchés nécessaires à leur activité économique, en les associant aux autres États occidentaux par un régime douanier commun.

A ces conditions, et conformément au principe, admis par tous, de la liberté des peuples, on peut concevoir la constitution, sur la rive gauche du Rhin, d'États nouveaux autonomes, s'administrant eux-mêmes sous les réserves développées ci-dessus, constitution qui, avec l'aide d'une frontière naturelle solide, le Rhin, sera seule capable d'assurer la paix à l'Occident de l'Europe.

## V

En somme, dans le passé, les Puissances de la Coalition, la France, malgré la légitimité de ses revendications, ses droits imprescriptibles; la Belgique, tenue par la neutralité; l'Angleterre, dans sa situation insulaire, n'ont jamais préparé d'offensive contre l'Allemagne; mais, en 1914, elles ont été brutalement assaillies par cet État. Pendant une certaine période de temps, le fait peut se représenter. Si en 1914, 1915, 1916, et 1917 ces Puissances ont pu résister à l'Allemagne, donner à l'Angleterre le temps de faire le plein de ses armées, notamment par son service obligatoire et d'autres mesures de circonstance, aux États-Unis la possibilité d'arriver avec leur apport décisif, c'est que la Russie se battait à leurs côtés et que, par ce fait, elles ont eu, pendant un certain temps, la supériorité numérique

sur le front occidental. La Russie n'est plus une aide, pour un temps impossible à prévoir. Par là, il devient nécessaire que la barrière d'Occident contre l'invasion allemande soit plus solidement constituée que par le passé, et que les Puissances de l'Entente qui sont, de par la géographie, au premier rang des défenseurs de la civilisation, soient, dès à présent, organisées militairement pour pouvoir donner aux autres États protecteurs de la civilisation la possibilité d'intervenir à temps.

L'organisation défensive de la Coalition s'impose donc.

Elle comporte avant tout une frontière naturelle, première barrière mise à l'invasion germanique. Il n'en existe qu'une: le Rhin. Elle doit être, jusqu'à nouvel ordre, tenue par les forces de la Coalition.

## VI

Cette disposition, purement défensive, et à régler immédiatement, a pour objet de parer et de répondre aux premiers besoins que créerait une agression allemande. Elle est indispensable, car la guerre, le jour où elle se présente, ne vit que de réalités, de forces matérielles mises en jeu dans un temps déterminé: lignes de défense naturelles ou organisations défensives, effectifs, armements; ce sont celles indiquées ci-dessus comme nécessaires. Elle serait effectuée, comme on l'a vu, sous les auspices des Nations fondatrices de la Ligue des Nations du Droit: France, Angleterre, Belgique, États-Unis.

A l'abri de ces mesures de sûreté, et pour les renforcer d'un appui moral, la Ligue des Nations, solidement établie, se grossirait des Nations qui sont venues défendre les mêmes principes de Droit et de Justice, et elle établirait des statuts définitifs désormais viables.

La Ligue, une fois fondée de la sorte, avec ses statuts et ses sanctions, pourrait progressivement devenir la Société des Nations; par des adhésions successives d'autres Nations, Nations neutres d'abord, Nations ennemies ensuite. Les résultats qu'elle poursuit, une fois acquis, seraient de nature à diminuer peu à peu les charges militaires des Nations qui la composeront.

C'est là un idéal à poursuivre pour un avenir qui ne peut être qu'indéterminé.

*Il ne sera réalisable qu'à l'abri des mesures de sûreté exposées ci-dessus; sinon, la civilisation sera mise en péril par une nouvelle agression germanique, qui, cette fois, ne pourra être arrêtée à temps.*

La fortune des armes a mis entre nos mains la ligne du Rhin grâce à un concours de circonstances et à une réunion de forces alliées qui ne peuvent se reproduire de longtemps. Abandonner aujourd'hui cette solide barrière naturelle, sans autre garantie que des institutions morales et d'un effet lointain et inconnu, c'est, dans le domaine militaire, courir au-devant des plus grands risques.

Les armées savent d'ailleurs le sang qu'elle leur a coûté.

*(Documents relatifs aux négociations concernant les garanties de sécurité contre une agression de l'Allemagne (10 janvier 1919—7 décembre 1923). Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Documents Diplomatiques. Paris, Imprimerie Nationale 1924, No. 1.)*

## 2.

### MEMORANDUM BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT ON THE FIXING OF GERMANY'S WESTERN FRONTIER AT THE RHINE AND THE OCCUPATION OF THE BRIDGE- HEADS OF THE RHINE BY AN INTER-ALLIED FORCE

25 février 1919.

#### I

##### LE BUT A ATTEINDRE

Les considérations que le Gouvernement français soumet à la Conférence au sujet de la rive gauche du Rhin n'ont pas un caractère égoïste.

Elles ne tendent pas à des annexions de territoire. Elles visent à la suppression d'un danger commun et à la création d'une commune protection.

C'est un problème d'intérêt général, un problème que la France, la première exposée au danger qu'il s'agit de conjurer, a le devoir et le droit de poser, mais qui affecte directement l'ensemble des Pays alliés et associés et ne peut être résolu que par eux tous.

Le but essentiel que la Conférence veut atteindre, c'est d'empêcher, par des moyens justes, que ce qui a été ne puisse recommencer.

Or, ce qui s'est produit en 1914 n'a été possible que pour une seule raison: l'Allemagne, en raison de sa maîtrise des ponts du Rhin et de l'organisation offensive faite par elle sur la rive gauche du fleuve, s'est crue capable d'écraser les démocraties occidentales,

France et Belgique, avant que celles-ci eussent l'aide des démocraties d'outre-mer: Grande-Bretagne, Dominions, États-Unis.

C'est parce que cela était possible, que l'Allemagne s'est décidée à attaquer.

C'est donc cette possibilité qu'il faut supprimer en privant l'Allemagne des moyens qui lui ont permis de croire au succès de son plan.

En un mot, il ne s'agit pas ici d'agrandir tel ou tel des Pays alliés; il s'agit de mettre l'Allemagne hors d'état de nuire en lui imposant des conditions indispensables à la sécurité commune des démocraties occidentales et de leurs alliés et associés d'outre-mer, en même temps qu'à l'existence même de la France.

Il ne s'agit pas d'annexer un pouce de sol allemand: il s'agit de retirer à l'Allemagne ses instruments offensifs.

#### NÉCESSITÉ DE L'OCCUPATION INTERALLIÉE DES PONTS DU RHIN.

Il convient d'abord d'examiner la nature du danger qu'on veut conjurer, de montrer qui il menace, en quoi il consiste, par quels moyens il peut être supprimé.

##### *1<sup>o</sup> Le risque est commun à tous les Alliés.*

a) Si, en 1914, les Allemands, bousculant les Belges, les Français et les quelques divisions anglaises alors en ligne, avaient pris les ports de la Manche, l'aide apportée par la Grande-Bretagne en 1915 à la cause commune aurait été ralentie, sinon empêchée.

Si, en 1918, les Allemands avaient pris PARIS, la concentration des armées françaises au Sud de la Loire et le repli de nos industries de guerre auraient certainement apporté au débarquement et au transport par fer de l'armée américaine, qui commençait seulement à arriver, des retards dont les conséquences eussent été des plus graves.

Donc, pas de doute: à deux reprises — et on pourrait multiplier les exemples — l'aide militaire des deux Grandes Puissances d'outre-mer a failli être entravée et même compromise avant d'avoir pu prendre corps.

b) Pour qu'il en soit autrement, c'est-à-dire pour que les Puissances maritimes puissent utilement participer, sur le Continent, à une guerre défensive contre une agression venant de l'Est, il faut qu'elles

aient la garantie que le territoire français ne sera pas envahi en quelques jours.

En d'autres termes, s'il ne reste pas assez de ports français pour que les armées d'outre-mer débarquent leurs troupes et leur matériel, pas assez de sol français pour qu'elles se concentrent et se déploient en avant de leurs bases, la guerre continentale contre une Puissance visant à dominer le Continent sera interdite aux démocraties d'outre-mer. Elles seront privées de leur champ de bataille le plus proche et le plus naturel. Et il ne leur restera que la guerre maritime et la guerre économique.

Donc, la leçon parfaitement claire de la dernière guerre, c'est qu'une forte protection naturelle à l'Est est de l'intérêt commun des démocraties occidentales et d'outre-mer. Et cette leçon est soulignée par le fait que la Russie, aujourd'hui, n'existe plus.

Pour déterminer cette protection, voyons d'abord d'où vient le danger.

*2<sup>o</sup> Le risque vient de la possession par l'Allemagne de la rive gauche et des ponts du Rhin.*

Si l'Allemagne a pu concevoir et réaliser l'attaque brusquée qui a failli décider en cinq semaines de l'issue de la guerre, c'est qu'elle tenait la rive gauche du Rhin et en avait fait, contre ses voisins, une place d'armes offensive, rapidement et constamment alimentée grâce au débit des ponts du Rhin.

Toute l'histoire militaire, depuis 1815, le démontre, et le plan est inscrit tout au long dans les écrits comme dans les actes de l'État-Major allemand.

a) L'histoire d'abord — celle de 1870 comme de 1914.

En 1870, malgré l'imperfection, à cette époque, du réseau ferré prussien, c'est sur la rive gauche que s'est faite la concentration.

Ce fait est d'autant plus significatif, que l'État-Major prussien était alors sous l'impression de la réputation offensive de l'armée française et, par suite, très prudent. Malgré cela, et même dans l'hypothèse où la France aurait pris l'initiative des opérations, la Prusse s'était bornée à étudier un plan de concentration plus à l'Est, mais toujours sur la rive gauche.

En d'autres termes, elle n'avait pas songé à se couvrir du fleuve, et en toute éventualité, elle le considérait comme la base offensive



indispensable à l'exécution d'un plan d'attaque. On sait qu'en fait, grâce à sa concentration sur la rive gauche, l'armée prussienne, en moins de trois semaines, envahit le territoire français.

En 1914, la même situation a produit les mêmes effets. Mais les choses sont allées plus vite grâce à l'énorme développement des moyens. L'Allemagne, massée cette fois encore sur la rive gauche du Rhin (et beaucoup plus près qu'en 1870 de la frontière française, grâce à la perfection de son réseau ferré), a pu, en quelques heures, porter la guerre en Belgique et en France; en quelques semaines, au cœur même de la France.

Avant même la déclaration de guerre, elle a occupé un territoire d'où la France tirait 90 p. 100 de sa production de minerai, 86 p. 100 de sa production de fonte, 75 p. 100 de sa production d'acier, et 95 hauts fourneaux, sur 127, sont tombés aux mains de l'ennemi.

Cette situation a permis à l'Allemagne de multiplier ses ressources de guerre, en même temps qu'elle privait la France de ses moyens de défense les plus nécessaires. Elle a failli aboutir à la prise de Paris en septembre 1914, de Dunkerque, de Calais et de Boulogne six semaines plus tard.

Tout cela n'a été possible que parce que, à nos portes, à quelques jours de marche de notre capitale, l'Allemagne disposait de la plus formidable place d'armes offensive que l'histoire ait jamais connue.

b) Cette place d'armes, elle l'a, depuis un siècle, par une politique d'agression qui n'a jamais varié, — visant les têtes de pont de la Sarre en 1815, du Rhin et de la Moselle en 1870, de la Meuse en 1914 — constamment renforcée en déclarant ouvertement que, pour cela, la rive gauche du Rhin lui était indispensable.

Pendant les négociations du Congrès de Vienne, Gneisenau et Grolman indiquaient déjà que «la concentration principale de l'armée prussienne devait se faire entre *Rhin et Moselle*».

Convaincu par leur insistance, Castlereagh écrivait à Wellington, le 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 1815: «M. Pitt était tout à fait dans le vrai quand, dès 1805, il voulait donner à la Prusse plus de territoire sur la rive gauche du Rhin et la mettre ainsi davantage en contact militaire avec la France.»

En 1832, Boyen répétait que la concentration devait se faire à Trèves.

En 1840, Grolman, reprenant la même idée, fixait, comme premier

objectif de la concentration allemande, l'offensive en Lorraine et en Champagne.

C'est la même idée qui inspirait à Moltke son plan d'opérations contre la France en 1870. C'est ce même plan que l'Allemagne a exécuté en 1914, avec une violence et une ampleur sans précédent.

Faut-il rappeler enfin qu'en novembre 1917, l'amiral Tirpitz déclarait, devant la Ligue de la Partie allemande, que, sans la possession de la rive gauche, l'Allemagne n'aurait pas pu «faire passer ses armées par une Belgique neutre»?

c) Telle étant la doctrine, l'Allemagne l'a traduite en actes en organisant militairement la rive gauche et les ponts du Rhin, clef de cette organisation.

Pour cela, elle a construit des forteresses, des camps de concentration, enfin et surtout, un réseau ferré formidablement outillé pour l'attaque, et relié par les ponts du Rhin à tout le réseau de la rive droite, orienté lui aussi dans ce dessein offensif.

Les fortifications du Rhin et de sa rive gauche comportaient, outre les régions fortifiées de *Metz-Thionville* et *Strasbourg-Molsheim*, dont le rôle se trouvera annulé par le retour de l'Alsace-Lorraine à la France, les forteresses du Rhin: Cologne, Coblenz, Mayence... , points de passage des voies ferrées stratégiques et vastes camps retranchés (approvisionnements, matériel, casernes, ateliers de fabrication ou de réparation, etc.).

Les camps d'instruction, tels que celui de Malmédy, étaient susceptibles d'être transformés en camps de concentration, procédé facile pour réaliser, sous prétexte d'instruction, des concentrations de troupes à proximité d'États pacifiques ou même neutres (France, Belgique, Luxembourg).

Le réseau ferré a une signification plus large encore. Si l'on regarde la carte des chemins de fer allemands de la rive droite du Rhin, on constate que neuf grands courants de transports indépendants convergent vers les ponts du fleuve et se prolongent par eux sur la rive gauche.

Huit sur neuf de ces grands courants passent entre Duisburg et Rastatt, inondant de troupes la frontière française et préparant l'agression.

C'est donc, de toute évidence, *sur le débit des ponts* du Rhin qu'a été basé le plan d'agression, conçu et préparé dès 1815, réalisé par

deux fois en 1870 et en 1914. Sans la rive gauche, et surtout sans les ponts, les seconds alimentant la première, l'agression n'aurait pas été possible.

d) Cela est si vrai que, dès 1909, le général allemand von Falkenhausen, dans son ouvrage *Der grosse Krieg der Jetztzeit*, montrait que, grâce à la maîtrise des ponts, l'Allemagne pourrait porter la guerre en territoire ennemi, même si, par hypothèse, les armées françaises, britanniques, italiennes avaient utilisé, avant l'ouverture des hostilités, les territoires hollandais, belge, luxembourgeois et rhénan, et opéré leur concentration en avant de la ligne Schlettstadt, Sarrebourg, Saint-Avold, Luxembourg, Bastogne.

Même dans ce cas, d'après le général, l'Allemagne, faisant sa concentration sur le Rhin et maîtresse des ponts *du fleuve*, pouvait, grâce au débit de ces ponts, porter en trois jours la moitié de ses forces, soit plus de 20 corps d'armée, sur la ligne Juliers, Düren, Kochem, Birkenfeld, Kaiserslautern, Haguenau, sans que ses adversaires eussent le temps de s'y opposer.

On voit que l'hypothèse du général von Falkenhausen correspondrait exactement à la situation qui serait créée si la paix laissait à l'Allemagne la possession des ponts du Rhin. Cette possession, d'après la démonstration même du général, suffirait, en tout état de cause, à assurer à l'Allemagne le bénéfice d'une guerre offensive.

Cette hypothèse démontre, en d'autres termes, que le danger vient de la possession par l'Allemagne, non pas seulement de la rive gauche, mais aussi et surtout des ponts du Rhin.

Ainsi la géographie, l'histoire, la doctrine de l'État-Major allemand s'accordent pour établir que la capacité offensive de l'Allemagne est essentiellement *fonction du réseau* stratégique qu'elle a construit sur la rive gauche du Rhin, en combinaison avec les forteresses du fleuve, c'est-à-dire, en dernière analyse, que *cette puissance d'agression* est fonction du débit des ponts.

Si l'on veut supprimer cette puissance d'agression, il faut enlever à l'Allemagne, non seulement la rive gauche, mais aussi les ponts du Rhin, ce qui revient à fixer au Rhin sa frontière occidentale.

C'est là une condition strictement nécessaire. Est-ce une condition suffisante ?

3<sup>o</sup> *La sécurité des démocraties occidentales et d'outre-mer exige, dans les circonstances actuelles, que les ponts du Rhin soient gardés par elles.*

La non-occupation par l'Allemagne de la rive gauche et des ponts suffirait-elle à lui interdire le renouvellement de son attaque brusquée de 1870 et de 1914? Certainement non.

a) Si, en effet, les ponts ne sont pas gardés contre l'Allemagne, celle-ci, grâce à la disposition de son réseau ferré de la rive droite, peut aisément s'en saisir. La carte des chemins de fer en témoigne.

Dira-t-on que, dans ce cas, il suffirait de détruire le réseau ferré stratégique de la rive gauche? Ce serait, ou impossible, ou inopérant.

Impossible: car une destruction totale ne peut pas se concevoir; en effet, les chemins de fer répondent à des besoins économiques en même temps qu'à des plans stratégiques.

Inopérant: car une destruction partielle portant sur les installations militaires seules serait inefficace; en effet, les quais militaires et les quais commerciaux sont souvent confondus.

Il serait donc toujours possible à l'Allemagne, soit de construire de nouveaux quais sous un prétexte commercial, soit d'y suppléer par l'organisation de chantiers de débarquement en pleine voie.

b) D'autre part, même démantelées, les villes du Rhin, avec leurs ponts, leurs gares, leurs installations commerciales, constitueraient toujours de vastes chantiers de débarquement et de concentration de forces.

En d'autres termes, seule l'occupation des ponts par les troupes interalliées sera, contre une agression allemande, une garantie positive; car si, cette occupation une fois réalisée, l'Allemagne formait, de nouveau, des desseins agressifs, elle aurait, pour se préparer, à modifier d'abord son réseau ferré de la rive droite, et cela serait facilement connu.

L'occupation des ponts est donc la protection minima des démocraties occidentales et d'outre-mer.

c) C'est aussi une protection indispensable pour les États nouveaux que les Alliés ont appelés à la vie à l'Est et au Sud de l'Allemagne.

Supposez en effet l'Allemagne maîtresse du Rhin et voulant attaquer la République de Pologne ou la République de Bohême.

Installée défensivement sur le Rhin, elle tiendra en échec (pour combien de temps?) les peuples d'Occident venus au secours des

jeunes Républiques, et celles-ci seront écrasées avant d'avoir pu être secourues.

4<sup>o</sup> *Conclusion.*

En résumé:

a) La sécurité commune des démocraties occidentales et d'outre-mer exige que l'Allemagne ne puisse pas recommencer l'attaque brusquée de 1870 et 1914.

b) Pour empêcher l'Allemagne de recommencer cette attaque, il faut interdire à ses forces l'accès de la rive gauche du Rhin et fixer au fleuve sa frontière occidentale.

c) Pour lui interdire cet accès, il faut occuper les ponts du fleuve. Par ce moyen, et par ce moyen seul:

a) l'Allemagne sera privée de sa base offensive;

b) les démocraties d'Occident trouveront une bonne protection défensive résultant, en premier lieu, de la largeur du fleuve (obstacle à une attaque brusquée par tanks, gaz, etc.), ensuite, de sa direction rectiligne (obstacle à une attaque enveloppante).

C'est l'histoire d'un siècle qui démontre la nécessité de cette protection. C'est la sécurité commune des Alliés qui exige que le Rhin devienne, suivant l'expression du Président Wilson, «la frontière de la Liberté».

III

INSUFFISANCE ACTUELLE DES GARANTIES RÉSULTANT SOIT DE LA  
LIMITATION DES FORCES MILITAIRES DE L'ALLEMAGNE, SOIT DE LA  
LIGUE DES NATIONS.

Tout le monde, croyons-nous, sera d'accord sur le but à atteindre. Mais on peut se demander s'il n'y a qu'une seule façon de l'atteindre.

En d'autres termes, cette garantie, — l'Allemagne et sa force militaire rejetées à l'Est du Rhin, les ponts du Rhin gardés par les Alliés, — qui apparaît au Gouvernement français comme totalement indispensable, est-elle la seule qui se puisse concevoir pour atteindre le but ?

Ou, ne trouverait-on pas, au contraire, une protection suffisante, soit dans la limitation des forces militaires de l'Allemagne, soit dans les clauses de l'avant-projet de Ligue des Nations ?

A la question ainsi posée, le Gouvernement français, pour les motifs suivants, répond négativement.

1<sup>o</sup> *La limitation des forces militaires de l'Allemagne n'est pas, actuellement, une garantie suffisante.*

La force militaire de l'Allemagne repose sur trois facteurs :

a) les effectifs (70 millions d'âmes fournissant des classes de 650,000 hommes); le matériel de guerre (stocks existants et possibilités de production); l'État-Major (dont l'organisation constituait un véritable État dans l'État).

Des mesures de limitation sont à l'étude. Elles devront porter sur les trois facteurs ci-dessus et comprendre notamment la limitation :  
du nombre et de la composition des divisions, du contingent annuel, etc.;

du matériel et des approvisionnements;

de l'organisation militaire ancienne (Kriegsakademie, manœuvres, etc.).

Supposons que l'Allemagne accepte ces conditions; sera-ce la sécurité totale? Non.

b) D'abord l'Histoire, sans que nous entendions exagérer la portée actuelle de ses leçons, conseille un certain scepticisme.

Un seul exemple: en septembre 1808, Napoléon a imposé à la Prusse l'engagement de ne pas entretenir pendant dix ans plus de 42,000 hommes, et celui de ne recourir ni à une levée extraordinaire de milices ou de gardes nationales, ni à aucune combinaison pouvant aboutir au dépassement de ce total de 42,000 hommes.

Or, qu'est-il arrivé?

Malgré le contrôle diplomatique et militaire incessant de Napoléon, la Prusse éluda ou tourna toutes les clauses: estimant qu'avec une population de 5 millions d'habitants elle pouvait, dès cette époque, maintenir une armée de 150,000 hommes, elle fit passer, dans le temps minimum, toute la population valide par l'armée, en réduisant la durée du service actif, et elle organisa l'instruction militaire préparatoire par l'enseignement scolaire.

En dépit des menaces du vainqueur et malgré les moyens de pression dont il disposait, cette réorganisation militaire se poursuivit sans interruption et aboutit à créer la grande armée nationale, de plusieurs centaines de mille hommes, qui fut mobilisée en 1813.

c) Voilà le passé. Dira-t-on que nous aurons demain des moyens de contrôle plus efficaces que ceux de Napoléon? Peut-être. Mais

nous répondons que les difficultés de ce contrôle seront accrues beaucoup plus encore que ne le sera l'efficacité de nos moyens.

Au lieu d'un petit pays de 5 millions d'habitants, nous aurons affaire à un pays de 70 millions.

Au lieu d'un pays sans industrie, nous aurons affaire à un pays disposant de ressources industrielles considérables.

Pour que notre contrôle soit réel, il devra s'exercer :

sur le budget de la guerre ;

sur le budget de l'industrie ;

sur l'organisation de l'État-Major et de l'instruction de l'armée :

sur les effectifs et les lois de recrutement ;

sur le matériel existant ;

sur les possibilités de fabrication dans tout le territoire allemand ;

sur les directives morales, y compris l'enseignement scolaire.

Croit-on que ce contrôle s'organisera en un jour ? Croit-on que nous serons fixés, avant de longues années, sur son efficacité ? Assurément non.

Peut-on méconnaître, d'autre part, que, pour les années prochaines, l'Allemagne conservera, par la force des choses, une puissance militaire dont certains éléments sont impossibles à réduire, notamment :

des États-Majors instruits ;

un énorme cadre d'officiers de réserve exercés (110,500 en août 1918, non compris la Bavière) ;

des millions de soldats aguerris ;

une population d'âge militaire qui ne fera que croître pendant de longues années, vu la courbe ascendante des naissances depuis vingt ans ;

un matériel et des possibilités de fabrication dont elle pourra dissimuler une partie, puisque nous-mêmes, les Alliés, nous n'arrivons pas à chiffrer exactement notre propre matériel existant.

Et peut-on, d'autre part, compter dans le temps présent sur une exécution sincère des engagements pris, alors que la soi-disant démocratie allemande, faisant preuve, sur tous les terrains, d'une immoralité totale, a mis à sa tête les hommes qui ont été les plus actifs agents de l'impérialisme et du militarisme : Ebert, Scheidemann, David, Erzberger, Brockdorff-Rantzau, sans oublier Hindenburg ?

Au sujet, d'ailleurs, de leurs intentions, lisons leurs propres déclarations; le Gouvernement Ebert a fait connaître son projet d'appliquer le système militaire suisse: traduit en chiffres, qu'est-ce que cela veut dire?

Cela veut dire que l'Allemagne pourrait, sur la base de la loi suisse, mobiliser 193 divisions avec les éléments d'armée correspondants: exactement l'effectif qu'elle a jeté sur le front occidental dans son offensive du printemps 1918.

Autre indice: les «*Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*» du 25 janvier 1919, reproduisant une déclaration du Ministre des Affaires étrangères bavarois, évaluent à 7,700,000 hommes environ (dont 3,200,000 combattants) la future armée allemande du temps de guerre.

d) De tout cela nous tirons une conclusion, dont nul ne saurait contester la légitimité et la modération: c'est que, au moins pour le moment, et pour les années prochaines, il n'y a pas de limitation de la force militaire allemande, il n'y a pas de contrôle de cette limitation qui puisse assurer, soit aux peuples victimes de l'agression de 1914, soit aux nouveaux Etats en voie de formation, une sécurité complète.

Sur mer, la livraison totale aux Alliés de la flotte de guerre allemande crée, dans une large mesure, une telle sécurité. *Sur terre, rien de tel n'est possible.*

Il en résulte que, quelque progrès que l'avenir puisse apporter dans la situation générale du monde, la limitation des forces militaires allemandes ne peut, dans l'état actuel, donner aux démocraties occidentales que des espérances — sans certitude.

Or, des espérances — sans certitude — ne peuvent pas suffire à ceux qui ont subi l'agression de 1914.

Des espérances — sans certitude — ne peuvent pas suffire à la Belgique, victime de sa fidélité à la parole donnée, punie de cette fidélité par l'invasion, l'incendie, le pillage, le viol, la ruine.

Des espérances — sans certitude — ne peuvent pas suffire à la France, envahie avant la déclaration de guerre, privée en quelques heures (parce qu'elle avait éloigné ses troupes de la frontière pour éviter les incidents), de 90 p. 100 de sa production de minerai et de 86 p. 100 de sa production de fonte; à la France qui a eu 1,351,000 tués, 734,000 mutilés, 3,000,000 de blessés, 438,000 prisonniers martyrisés dans les prisons allemandes; qui a perdu 26 p. 100 de



ses mobilisés, 57 p. 100 de ses soldats de moins de 31 ans, c'est-à-dire de la partie féconde de la nation; — à la France qui a vu anéantir le quart de son capital productif, détruire systématiquement ses régions industrielles du Nord et de l'Est, emmener en captivité ses enfants, ses femmes et ses jeunes filles.

A ces deux pays il faut des certitudes, non seulement la certitude de n'être pas exposés derechef à ce qu'ils ont souffert il y a cinq ans, mais celle aussi de n'avoir pas à s'imposer, faute d'une garantie d'ordre physique, d'écrasantes charges militaires. Or, ces certitudes, ni la Belgique, ni la France ne les peuvent présentement trouver dans la limitation et le contrôle de la force militaire allemande.

*2<sup>o</sup> La Ligue des Nations ne peut pas non plus fournir une garantie suffisante.*

Cette sécurité totale, qui est indispensable, et que ne peuvent donner dès maintenant ni la limitation de la force militaire allemande, ni le contrôle de cette limitation, pouvons-nous la trouver dans le Pacte de la Ligue des Nations, tel qu'il est présentement soumis à la Conférence?

a) Huit articles du projet du Pacte (art. X à XVII) définissent les garanties assurées aux participants contre une agression. On peut dire que ces garanties consistent dans un double intervalle de temps:

1<sup>o</sup> le plus long possible entre la menace de guerre et l'acte de guerre (afin d'accroître les chances d'entente);

2<sup>o</sup> le plus court possible entre l'acte de guerre et la décision par laquelle les membres de la Ligue apportent solidairement leur aide au pays attaqué.

Les choses étant ainsi, nous estimons que cette garantie n'est pas suffisante pour empêcher le renouvellement de ce qui s'est passé en 1914, — attaque brusquée dirigée par l'Allemagne contre la France et la Belgique et invasion immédiate de leur territoire.

Les raisons de notre conviction sont nombreuses; voici les principales:

b) Première raison: les mesures qui définissent les divers temps à marquer entre la menace d'agression et l'acte d'agression (procédés ordinaires de la diplomatie, arbitrage, enquête du Comité exécutif, engagement des parties de n'avoir pas recours à la force armée

avant arbitrage ou enquête, et seulement trois mois après jugement ou décision), ne sont applicables que si le désaccord survient entre nations ayant signé le pacte de la Ligue.

Or l'Allemagne n'est pas et ne peut pas être présentement membre de la Ligue.

Le Pacte prévoit, il est vrai, toute une procédure applicable aux États non-membres. Mais rien ne garantit que cette procédure serait acceptée par l'Allemagne, si elle méditait de nouveau une attaque brusquée.

Au contraire, tout permet de prévoir qu'elle passerait aux actes avec le maximum de rapidité.

Dans une telle hypothèse, il est clair, en effet, que l'Allemagne d'aujourd'hui, l'Allemagne qui esquive la question des responsabilités, l'Allemagne de Scheidemann, Erzberger, Brockdorff-Rantzau, ne sera arrêtée dans son dessein d'agression, ni par une invitation à devenir membre de la Ligue, ni par la menace d'un blocus financier et commercial. Il est clair que l'Allemagne, — avertie des sanctions qu'elle encourt si elle laisse le temps aux forces internationales de jouer, — se jettera sur la France et la Belgique avec l'idée, plus nette encore qu'en 1870 et 1914, que le temps est facteur du succès.

Nous pensons donc que les clauses du Pacte, qui imposent une procédure entre la menace de guerre et l'acte de guerre, ne suffiraient pas à arrêter l'Allemagne, si celle-ci était résolue à attaquer; c'est notre première raison.

c) Deuxième raison: L'Allemagne procède par attaque brusquée. Que nous apporte le Pacte comme garantie immédiate?

On sait que les propositions de la Délégation française tendant à la création d'une force internationale permanente n'ont pas été acceptées.

Un des associés étant attaqué, qu'arrive-t-il donc? Le Comité exécutif de la Ligue entre en action et spécifie l'importance des contingents militaires ou navals à fournir par chaque membre de la Ligue.

Supposez que cette décision du Comité intervienne avec le maximum de rapidité. Il ne lui manque qu'une chose: c'est d'être, par elle-même, exécutoire.

Prenons, pour fixer les idées, un exemple, celui de l'Amérique; qu'arrive-t-il?

Les forces américaines de terre et de mer ne peuvent pas être engagées sans un vote du Congrès. Admettons que le Congrès soit en vacances; il faudra prévoir, entre l'agression de l'Allemagne et le moment où l'aide américaine se fera sentir, les étapes suivantes:

une décision du Comité exécutif de la Ligue;

une réunion du Congrès américain où le quorum sera assuré, ce qui peut demander quatre ou cinq jours;

la discussion du cas d'espèce;

la mobilisation et le transport du corps expéditionnaire américain en France.

Nous avons cité le cas de l'Amérique, mais ce n'est pas le seul qu'on puisse produire.

Reprenez les stades successifs qui viennent d'être indiqués et faites-en l'application à l'attaque allemande de 1914.

Supposez que la France et la Belgique envahies aient eu à faire jouer ce mécanisme compliqué avant d'obtenir le concours de l'Angleterre, et que celle-ci, au lieu de commencer ses embarquements de troupes dans les huit jours, eût dû (après réunion et décision du Comité exécutif, transmission de cette décision, délibération de son Gouvernement, réunion de son Parlement, débat et vote) reculer, de tout le temps nécessaire à ces diverses opérations, son intervention effective, — la gauche de l'armée française eût été tournée à Charleroi et la guerre perdue le 24 août.

En d'autres termes, admettez qu'au lieu de l'engagement militaire défensif, — très limité, mais positif, — qui liait à la France la Grande-Bretagne, il n'y ait eu entre les deux pays, en août 1914, que les engagements généraux du Pacte de la Ligue, la rapidité de l'intervention britannique eût été moindre et la victoire assurée, de ce fait, à l'Allemagne.

Nous pensons donc que, dans les conditions présentes, l'aide fournie par le Pacte de la Ligue risque d'arriver trop tard; et c'est notre seconde raison.

d) Notre troisième raison, et elle est décisive, c'est que, vu la situation géographique de la France, nous avons deux objectifs également impérieux:

l'un est la victoire;

l'autre est la protection de notre sol.

On peut admettre comme certain que, grâce à la solidarité inscrite dans le Pacte de la Ligue, la victoire finale nous appartiendrait dans le cas d'une nouvelle agression allemande.

Mais cela ne suffit pas. Nous ne voulons pas qu'entre l'agression et la victoire intervienne, comme cela a été le cas en 1914, l'invasion de notre sol, sa destruction systématique, le martyre de nos concitoyens du Nord et de l'Est.

C'est contre ce second risque, autant que contre le risque de la défaite, qu'une garantie est nécessaire, garantie que la Ligue ne fournit pas, et qui résultera, au contraire, de la solution proposée par le Gouvernement français.

e) Résumant ici notre argumentation en ce qui touche la garantie résultant de la Ligue, nous disons :

Pour un temps indéterminé :

d'une part l'Allemagne restera en dehors de la Ligue des Nations ;

d'autre part, les décisions du Comité exécutif, au lieu de mettre en jeu automatiquement une force internationale placée à pied d'œuvre, devront être soumises à l'approbation de Parlements nationaux qui décideront si, oui ou non, les forces nationales pourront se joindre à la force armée de l'État attaqué.

Nous ne trouvons donc aucune des deux garanties sur lesquelles est fondée l'action pacificatrice de la Ligue, savoir :

intervalle très long entre l'idée de guerre et l'acte de guerre ;

intervalle très court entre l'acte de guerre et le groupement solidaire de toutes les forces armées des membres de la Ligue.

A défaut de ces deux garanties, nous demandons, contre une Allemagne deux fois plus nombreuse que la France, contre une Allemagne qui, pour longtemps, ne pourra être crue sur parole, — nous demandons une garantie d'un autre ordre — *une garantie d'ordre physique*.

Cette garantie d'ordre physique, dans notre esprit, n'est pas destinée à suppléer l'autre — celle qui viendra de la Ligue — mais à lui donner le temps de jouer, avant qu'il soit trop tard.

Cette garantie d'ordre physique, nous avons montré *qu'il y en a une et qu'il n'y en a qu'une* : la garde des ponts du Rhin par une force interalliée.

Ajoutons que, pour le moment présent, c'est l'intérêt même de la Ligue des Nations que cette garantie supplémentaire vienne assurer

le jeu normal et efficace du double mécanisme qu'elle a conçu pour assurer le maintien de la paix.

#### IV

##### SUPPRESSION PAR L'OCCUPATION INTERALLIÉE DES PONTS DU RHIN DE PLUSIEURS FACTEURS DE GUERRE.

Nous avons établi que :

1<sup>o</sup> une garantie commune contre le renouvellement d'une attaque brusquée de l'Allemagne est nécessaire ;

2<sup>o</sup> que cette garantie ne peut pas être totalement fournie soit par la limitation et le contrôle de la force militaire de l'Allemagne, soit par les clauses projetées du Pacte de la Ligue des Nations ;

3<sup>o</sup> que cette garantie ne se trouve que dans la fixation au Rhin de la frontière occidentale de l'Allemagne, et dans l'occupation des ponts de fleuve par une force interalliée.

Il est facile de montrer, en outre, que la garantie commune trouvée dans l'occupation des ponts du Rhin concorde avec l'intérêt général de la Ligue et avec l'idéal pacifique qui est le sien ; elle supprime, en effet, un certain nombre de facteurs permanents de guerre qu'il est de son intérêt et de son devoir d'éliminer.

##### 1<sup>o</sup> *Suppression d'un dangereux déséquilibre de forces.*

L'Allemagne (même diminuée de la Posnanie, du Slesvig, de l'Alsace-Lorraine et des provinces rhénanes de la rive gauche) représente encore 57 millions d'habitants, à quoi s'ajouteraient probablement, en cas de guerre, 7 millions d'Autrichiens allemands, soit au total 64 millions. La France, la Belgique et le Luxembourg ne représentent au contraire que 49 millions.

Or, comme contrepoids, la Russie de 1914 n'existe plus et les États récemment créés n'existent pas encore. A la séance du Conseil supérieur des Alliés du 15 février 1919, M. Winston Churchill l'a signalé avec force en disant : « Il y a deux fois plus d'Allemands que de Français, et, en raison de la forte natalité allemande, il y a, en Allemagne, chaque année, trois fois plus de jeunes gens en âge de porter les armes qu'en France. C'est un fait formidable. » Ce « fait formidable » est un facteur de guerre. S'il est impossible de le supprimer, il est au moins utile d'essayer de le réduire.

2<sup>o</sup> *Suppression de l'une des causes économiques des agressions allemandes.*

Il est généralement reconnu qu'il y a intérêt à protéger les zones industrielles qui sont vitales pour chaque pays.

En effet, l'occupation rapide de ces zones vitales assure à l'agresseur un avantage décisif, puisqu'il ajoute par là à ses moyens propres de production ceux qu'il retire à son adversaire. Il est donc certain que la possibilité de s'assurer cet avantage constitue un facteur de guerre.

L'histoire le démontre d'ailleurs. L'Allemagne a visé en 1815 le charbon de la Sarre, en 1870 le minerai de Lorraine, en 1914 le minerai de Briey.

Elle a reconnu explicitement que, si elle a pu mener la dernière guerre, c'est en se saisissant, par une attaque brusquée, du minerai français, «sans lequel jamais, au grand jamais, elle n'aurait pu conduire victorieusement cette guerre». (Mémoire des industriels allemands du fer et de l'acier, de décembre 1917).

Si le Rhin avait séparé les deux Puissances, ce genre d'opération n'eût pas été possible. Et c'est consolider la paix que de retirer à l'Allemagne, en l'éloignant de son objectif historique, l'un des motifs principaux de ses agressions passées.

3<sup>o</sup> *Protection assurée aux petits États que la Ligue des Nations a pour objet de garantir.*

D'abord, à la Belgique en écartant d'elle un voisin redoutable. L'amiral Tirpitz, déjà cité, a déclaré devant la Ligue de la Patrie allemande (*Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* du 11 novembre 1917): «Représentez-vous bien ce qui arriverait si le front actuel, qui s'appuie à la mer, se trouvait à la frontière Est des pays rhénans: nous ne pourrions pas recommencer une seconde fois à faire passer nos armées à travers une Belgique neutre.»

Ensuite, à la Pologne, à la Tchéco-Slovaquie, à la Yougo-Slavie, qui, dans le cas où l'Allemagne profiterait des difficultés de leurs débuts pour chercher à les étrangler, ont besoin que le Rhin, tenu par l'Allemagne, n'arrête pas le secours, attendu par elles, des démocraties occidentales.

4<sup>o</sup> *Fermeture de la grande route historique des invasions.*

La rive gauche du Rhin a été, pour les invasions, une route séculaire. Sa disposition naturelle, d'une part, l'orientation des voies

ferrées qui la sillonnent, d'autre part, en ont fait un champ de bataille historique où les peuples de la rive droite (toutes les fois qu'ils étaient en même temps maîtres de la rive gauche) ont trouvé des possibilités d'agression que l'intérêt de la paix conseille de supprimer.

5<sup>o</sup> *Création d'une frontière naturelle égale pour tous.*

Le Rhin, par sa largeur, d'une part, par la direction rectiligne de son cours, d'autre part, offre aux peuples des deux rives une garantie naturelle et égale contre une agression.

6<sup>o</sup> *Conclusion.*

De ce qui précède, il est permis de conclure que la garantie commune trouvée dans la fixation au Rhin de la frontière occidentale de l'Allemagne et l'occupation des ponts du Rhin par une force interalliée, non seulement est nécessaire, mais encore qu'elle concorde avec les principes mis en œuvre par la Ligue des Nations pour empêcher les guerres futures.

V

IDENTITÉ DE L'INTÉRÊT COLLECTIF ET DE L'INTÉRÊT FRANÇAIS.

Il est maintenant possible d'avoir, de l'ensemble du problème, une vue qui peut se résumer ainsi :

a) En cette question, la France ne demande rien pour elle-même ; ni un pouce de territoire, ni aucun droit de souveraineté. Elle ne veut pas annexer la rive gauche du Rhin.

Ce qu'elle propose, c'est la création, dans l'intérêt général, d'une protection commune à toutes les démocraties pacifiques, à la Ligue des Nations, à la liberté et à la Paix.

Mais la France a le devoir d'ajouter que sa demande, conforme au bien commun et exempte de tout dessein égoïste, exprime pour elle-même *une nécessité vitale*, sur le principe de laquelle elle ne peut pas transiger.

Elle y trouve, en effet, la seule garantie immédiate et totale *que ce qu'elle a subi en 1870 et en 1914 ne se renouvellera pas*. Et elle doit à son peuple, — aux morts, qui ne veulent pas être morts pour rien, aux vivants qui entendent refaire leur pays dans la paix et ne pas succomber sous des charges militaires écrasantes, — d'obtenir cette garantie.

Sur les modalités d'application, le Gouvernement français est prêt à prendre l'avis des Alliés, afin d'assurer, dans les conditions les plus favorables, le régime national, politique et économique de la région dont il demande que l'accès soit interdit à l'Allemagne. Il acceptera, à cet effet, toutes les suggestions qui ne porteront pas atteinte au principe lui-même.

Ce principe peut se résumer en trois articles :

1<sup>o</sup> Pas de force militaire allemande sur la rive gauche du Rhin et fixation au Rhin de la frontière occidentale de l'Allemagne.

2<sup>o</sup> Occupation des ponts du Rhin par une force interalliée.

3<sup>o</sup> Pas d'annexion.

Voilà ce que, dans l'état présent des choses, la France demande comme garantie nécessaire de la paix internationale, comme le gage indispensable de son existence nationale.

Elle espère que tous ses Alliés et Associés apprécieront *l'intérêt général* qui s'attache à cette proposition.

Elle compte, d'autre part, qu'ils reconnaîtront le droit et le devoir qu'elle a de la soutenir *pour sa propre sécurité*.

b) Aussi bien n'est-ce pas le seul cas où l'intérêt vital d'un peuple se rencontre avec un intérêt général de l'humanité.

De tous temps, les Puissances maritimes ont affirmé, — qu'il s'agit de Philippe II, de Napoléon I<sup>er</sup> ou de Guillaume II, — que leur force était la seule arme capable de contrebalancer les tentatives impérialistes sur le continent.

C'est à ce titre qu'elles ont justifié, à leur profit, l'existence de flottes puissantes.

Mais, en même temps, elles n'ont jamais dissimulé que ces flottes constituaient pour elles une nécessité vitale.

Nécessité vitale pour les Iles Britanniques et pour l'Empire britannique, qui ont fait connaître leur volonté de ne rien abandonner des moyens maritimes qui leur ont permis de garder les mers contre l'Allemagne.

Nécessité vitale pour les États-Unis qui, riverains de deux grands océans, intéressés par leurs richesses naturelles et industrielles à garantir leurs exportations, ont créé, si pacifiques qu'ils fussent, une marine de guerre qu'ils développent en ce moment même.

C'est qu'en effet la flotte, pour la Grande-Bretagne comme pour les États-Unis, c'est le moyen de reculer de leur centre la frontière



qu'ils auraient à défendre en cas d'agression, et de créer une zone de sécurité en avant de cette frontière, en avant du territoire national.

Pour la France, la question posée est la même, avec cette triple différence que: d'abord, les mers ne la protègent pas contre l'Allemagne; qu'ensuite, il est impossible pour elle d'obtenir, sur terre, la garantie complète que représente, sur mer, pour la Grande-Bretagne et les États-Unis, la livraison aux Alliés de la flotte de guerre allemande; qu'enfin le chiffre de sa population par rapport à la population allemande (1 contre 2) ne lui permet pas d'espérer, au début d'une guerre, l'avantage que les Puissances maritimes ont toujours attendu de la règle du «two power standard».

Pour la France, il s'agit, comme pour la Grande-Bretagne, comme pour les États-Unis, de créer une zone de sécurité.

Cette zone, les Puissances maritimes la créent par leurs flottes et par la suppression de la flotte allemande. La France, que l'Océan ne couvre point et qui ne peut pas supprimer les millions d'Allemands aujourd'hui entraînés à la guerre, est obligée de la créer par le Rhin, grâce à l'occupation du fleuve par une force interalliée.

Si elle ne le faisait point, elle serait exposée une fois de plus, sinon à la défaite finale, du moins à la destruction d'une partie de son sol par l'invasion ennemie.

C'est un risque auquel elle entend n'être plus désormais en butte.

c) Au surplus, comme nous l'avons exposé plus haut, la garantie de paix qui résulte de l'existence des Puissances maritimes ne pourrait pas jouer complètement, si la garde du Rhin n'assurait aux démocraties occidentales une garantie équivalente.

Dans une récente séance du Conseil suprême des Alliés (15 février 1919), M. Winston Churchill et le Colonel House ont, tour à tour, démontré ce qu'on pouvait craindre, pour l'avenir, d'un rapprochement russo-allemand.

Dans ce cas, ce n'est pas avec leur flotte, capable exclusivement d'assurer le blocus, que les Puissances maritimes défendraient le continent contre une tentative impérialiste.

Il leur faudrait encore la possibilité de débarquer sur le Continent et de s'y battre. Pour cela, la garde interalliée du Rhin est indispensable.

Mais il y a plus, et l'on peut se demander si, dans cette hypothèse, le blocus même, assuré par les flottes, serait efficace. Que vaudrait-il

contre une Allemagne, maîtresse de la Russie, la colonisant, l'exploitant, réussissant en outre, par une attaque brusquée, à mettre hors de cause la France et la Belgique, à occuper leurs ports et à dominer toutes les Puissances neutres de l'Europe ?

C'est d'ailleurs la crainte qu'exprimait le Colonel House lorsque, à la séance du 15 février, il signalait le risque d'union *du monde entier à l'Est du Rhin*. Pour empêcher une telle union ou, du moins, pour en conjurer les conséquences, un seul moyen : que le Rhin, au lieu de pouvoir servir, comme dans le passé, à l'Allemagne contre les Alliés, protège désormais les Alliés contre les entreprises de l'Allemagne.

d) En signalant ce point de vue à l'attention de ses Alliés et Associés, à celle notamment des deux Grandes Puissances maritimes, que sont l'Empire Britannique et les États-Unis, le Gouvernement français a profondément conscience de travailler pour la paix, de même que les Puissances maritimes ont conscience de servir la paix en maintenant ou en développant leurs forces navales.

Et de même que le maintien ou le développement de ces forces navales n'implique, de la part des Puissances maritimes, nul dessein d'asservir les mers, de même la demande française relative à la garde du Rhin ne comporte ni gain de souveraineté ni annexion de territoire.

La France ne réclame pas pour elle la rive gauche du Rhin ; elle n'en a que faire et son intérêt, comme son idéal, lui interdit de la revendiquer.

La France ne réclame qu'une chose : c'est que les mesures, et les seules mesures, propres à empêcher de façon sûre la rive gauche du Rhin de devenir à nouveau la base d'une agression allemande, soient prises par les Puissances actuellement réunies à la Conférence de la Paix.

En d'autres termes, *sans aucune ambition territoriale, mais pénétrée de la nécessité de créer une protection à la fois internationale et nationale*, la France attend, de l'occupation interalliée du Rhin, ce que la Grande-Bretagne et les États-Unis attendent du maintien de leur force navale ; rien de plus, rien de moins.

Dans les deux cas, la nécessité nationale concorde avec la garantie internationale.

Dans les deux cas, même si la seconde faisait l'objet d'interprétations différentes, la première demeurerait pour le pays intéressé *une obligation ne comportant ni restriction ni réserve*.

Tel est le principe que le Gouvernement français prie les Gouvernements alliés et associés de consacrer par l'adoption de la décision suivante à insérer dans les clauses des préliminaires de paix :

- 1<sup>o</sup> *La frontière occidentale de l'Allemagne doit être fixée au Rhin.*
- 2<sup>o</sup> *Les ponts du Rhin doivent être occupés par une force interalliée.*
- 3<sup>o</sup> *Les mesures ci-dessus ne doivent entraîner, au profit d'aucune Puissance, aucune annexion de territoire.*

(*Documents relatifs aux négociations concernant les garanties de sécurité contre une agression de l'Allemagne* (10 janvier 1919—7 décembre 1923). Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Documents Diplomatiques. Paris, Imprimerie Nationale 1924, No. 2.)

### 3.

## ARTICLES 10-21 OF THE COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, JUNE 28, 1919

### Article 10

The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any 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.

### Article 11

Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise, the Secretary-General shall on the request of any Member of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.

Article 12

The Members of the League agree that, if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, they will submit the matter either to arbitration or judicial settlement or to enquiry by the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators or the judicial decision, or the report by the Council.

In any case under this Article the award of the arbitrators or the judicial decision shall be made within a reasonable time, and the report of the Council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute.

Article 13

The Members of the League agree that whenever any dispute shall arise between them which they recognise to be suitable for submission to arbitration or judicial settlement, and which cannot be satisfactorily settled by diplomacy, they will submit the whole subject-matter to arbitration or judicial settlement.

Disputes as to the interpretation of a treaty, as to any question of international law, as to the existence of any fact which, if established, would constitute a breach of any international obligation, or as to the extent and nature of the reparation to be made for any such breach, are declared, to be among those which are generally suitable for submission to arbitration or judicial settlement.

For the consideration of any such dispute, the court to which the case is referred shall be the Permanent Court of International Justice, established in accordance with Article 14, or any tribunal agreed on by the parties to the dispute or stipulated in any convention existing between them.

The Members of the League agree that they will carry out in full good faith any award or decision that may be rendered, and that they will not resort to war against a Member of the League which complies therewith. In the event of any failure to carry out such an award or decision the Council shall propose what steps should be taken to give effect thereto.

Article 14

The Council shall formulate and submit to the Members of the League for adoption plans for the establishment of a Permanent

Court of International Justice. The Court shall be competent to hear and determine any dispute of an international character which the parties thereto submit to it. The Court may also give an advisory opinion upon any dispute or question referred to it by the Council or by the Assembly.

#### Article 15

If there should arise between Members of the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture which is not submitted to arbitration or judicial settlement in accordance with Article 13, the Members of the League agree that they will submit the matter to the Council. Any party to the dispute may effect such submission by giving notice of the existence of the dispute to the Secretary-General, who will make all necessary arrangements for a full investigation and consideration thereof.

For this purpose the parties to the dispute will communicate to the Secretary-General, as promptly as possible, statements of their case with all the relevant facts and papers, and the Council may forthwith the publication thereof.

The Council shall endeavour to effect a settlement of the dispute, and, if such efforts are successful, a statement shall be made public giving such facts and explanations regarding the dispute and the terms of settlement thereof as the Council may deem appropriate.

If the dispute is not thus settled, the Council, either unanimously or by a majority vote, shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto.

Any Member of the League represented on the Council may make public a statement of the facts of the dispute and of its conclusions regarding the same.

If a report by the Council is unanimously agreed to by the Members thereof, other than the Representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report.

If the Council fails to reach a report which is unanimously agreed to by the Members thereof other than the Representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the Members of the League

reserve to themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice.

If the dispute between the parties is claimed by one of them, and is found by the Council to arise out of a matter which by international law is solely within the domestic jurisdiction of that party, the Council shall so report and shall make no recommendation as to its settlement.

The Council may in any case under this Article refer the dispute to the Assembly. The dispute shall be so referred at the request of either party to the dispute, provided that such request be made within fourteen days after the submission of the dispute to the Council.

In any case referred to the Assembly, all the provisions of this Article and of Article 12 relating to the action and powers of the Council shall apply to the action and powers of the Assembly, provided that a report made by the Assembly, if concurred in by the Representatives of those Members of the League represented on the Council and of a majority of the other Members of the League, exclusive in each case of the Representatives of the parties to the dispute, shall have the same force as a report by the Council concurred in by all the Members thereof, other than the Representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute.

#### Article 16

Should any Member of the League resort to war, in disregard of its covenants under Article 12, 13 or 15, it shall ipso facto be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to submit it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the Covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the Covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not.

It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League.

The Members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this Article, in order to minimise the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the Covenant-breaking State, and that they will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the Members of the League which are co-operating to protect the covenants of the League.

Any Member of the League which has violated any Covenant of the League may be declared to be no longer a Member of the League by a vote of the Council concurred in by the Representatives of all the other Members of the League represented thereon.

#### Article 17

In the event of a dispute between a Member of the League and a State which is not a Member of the League, or between States not Members of the League, the State or States not Members of the League shall be invited to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, upon such conditions as the Council may deem just. If such invitation is accepted, the provisions of Articles 12 to 16 inclusive shall be applied with such modifications as may be deemed necessary by the Council.

Upon such invitation being given, the Council shall immediately institute an enquiry into the circumstances of the dispute and recommend such action as may seem best and most effectual in the circumstances.

If a State so invited shall refuse to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute and shall resort to war against a Member of the League, the provisions of Article 16 shall be applicable as against the State taking such action.

If both parties to the dispute, when so invited, refuse to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, the Council may take such measures and make such recommendations as will prevent hostilities and will result in the settlement of the dispute.

TREATY OF VERSAILLES, ARTICLES 42-44

Article 18

Every treaty or international engagement entered into hereafter by any Member of the League shall be forthwith registered with the Secretariat and shall as soon as possible be published by it. No such treaty or international engagement shall be binding until so registered.

Article 19

The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world.

Article 20

The Members of the League severally agree that this Covenant is accepted as abrogating all obligations or understandings *inter se* which are inconsistent with the terms thereof, and solemnly undertake that they will not hereafter enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms thereof.

In case any Member of the League shall, before becoming a Member of the League, have undertaken any obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Covenant, it shall be the duty of such Member to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.

Article 21

Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace.

*(Amended text as published by the Information Section of the League of Nations.)*

4.

TREATY OF VERSAILLES, JUNE 28, 1919

PART III, SECTION III

LEFT BANK OF THE RHINE

Article 42

Germany is forbidden to maintain or construct any fortifications either on the left bank of the Rhine or on the right bank to the west of a line drawn 50 kilometers to the East of the Rhine.



ANGLO-FRENCH TREATY, 1919

Article 43

In the area defined above the maintenance and the assembly of armed forces, either permanently or temporarily, and military manoeuvres of any kind, as well as the upkeep of all permanent works for mobilization, are in the same way forbidden.

Article 44

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 as calculated to disturb the peace of the world.

*(Treaty of Versailles, official edition.)*

5.

TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE FRENCH  
REPUBLIC SIGNED AT VERSAILLES, JUNE 28, 1919<sup>1</sup>

Whereas there is a danger that the stipulations relating to the Left Bank of the Rhine contained in the Treaty of Peace signed this day at Versailles may not at first provide adequate security and protection to the French Republic; and

Whereas His Britannic Majesty is willing, subject to the consent of His Parliament and provided that a similar obligation is entered into by the United States of America, to undertake to support the French Government in the case of an unprovoked movement of aggression being made against France by Germany; and

Whereas His Britannic Majesty and the President of the French Republic have determined to conclude a Treaty to that effect and have named as their Plenipotentiaries for the purpose, that is to say: —

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<sup>1</sup> This treaty was ratified by France and Great Britain and the instruments of ratification were exchanged in Paris on November 20, 1919. It has, however, not yet come into force, as its preliminary condition, according to article 2, was not fulfilled, when the U. S. A. had declined to ratify their treaty with France (v. following document) as well as the Versailles Treaty.

## ANGLO-FRENCH TREATY, 1919

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions Beyond the Seas, Emperor of India:

The Right Honourable David Lloyd George, M.P., First Lord of His Treasury and Prime Minister;

The Right Honourable Arthur James Balfour, O.M., M.P., His Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs;

The President of the French Republic:

Mr. Georges Clemenceau, President of the Council, Minister of War;

Mr. Stéphen Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Who having communicated their full powers found in good and due form, have agreed as follows: —

### Article 1

In case the following stipulations relating to the Left Bank of the Rhine contained in the Treaty of Peace with Germany signed at Versailles the 28th day of June, 1919, by the British Empire, the French Republic and the United States of America among other Powers:

«Article 42. Germany is forbidden to maintain or construct any fortifications either on the left bank of the Rhine or on the right bank to the west of a line drawn 50 kilom. to the East of the Rhine.

«Article 43. In the area defined above the maintenance and assembly of armed forces, either permanently or temporarily, and military manoeuvres of any kind, as well as the upkeep of all permanent works for mobilisation are in the same way forbidden.

«Article 44. 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 as calculated to disturb the peace of the world.»

may not at first provide adequate security and protection to France, Great Britain agrees to come immediately to her assistance in the event of any unprovoked movement of aggression against her being made by Germany.

Article 2

The present Treaty, in similar terms with the Treaty of even date for the same purpose concluded between the French Republic and the United States of America, a copy of which Treaty is annexed hereto, will only come into force when the latter is ratified.

Article 3

The present Treaty must be submitted to the Council of the League of Nations and must be recognised by the Council, acting if need be by a majority, as an engagement which is consistent with the Covenant of the League; it will continue in force until on the application of one of the Parties to it the Council, acting if need be by a majority, agrees that the League itself affords sufficient protection.

Article 4

The present Treaty shall before ratification by His Majesty be submitted to Parliament for approval.

It shall before ratification by the President of the French Republic be submitted to the French Chambers for approval.

Article 5

The present Treaty shall impose no obligation upon any of the Dominions of the British Empire unless and until it is approved by the Parliament of the Dominion concerned.

The present Treaty shall be ratified, and shall, subject to Articles 2 and 4, come into force at the same time as the Treaty of Peace with Germany of even date comes into force for the British Empire and the French Republic.

In faith whereof the above-named Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty, drawn up in the English and French languages.

Done in duplicate at Versailles, on the twenty-eighth day of June, 1919.

D. LLOYD GEORGE  
ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

G. CLEMENCEAU  
S. PICHON

(*Cmd. 221*, pp. 3-4.)

6.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE  
FRENCH REPUBLIC SIGNED AT VERSAILLES,  
JUNE 28, 1919<sup>1</sup>

Whereas the United States of America and the French Republic are equally animated by the desire to maintain the Peace of the world so happily restored by the Treaty of Peace signed at Versailles the 28th day of June, 1919, putting an end to the war begun by the aggression of the German Empire and ended by the defeat of that Power; and,

Whereas the United States of American and the French Republic are fully persuaded that an unprovoked movement of aggression by Germany against France would not only violate both the letter and the spirit of the Treaty of Versailles to which the United States of America and the French Republic are parties, thus exposing France anew to the intolerable burdens of an unprovoked war, but that such aggression on the part of Germany would be and is so regarded by the Treaty of Versailles as a hostile act against all the Powers signatory to that Treaty and as calculated to disturb the Peace of the world by involving inevitably and directly the States of Europe and indirectly, as experience has amply and unfortunately demonstrated, the world at large; and,

Whereas the United States of America and the French Republic fear that the stipulations relating to the left bank of the Rhine contained in the said Treaty of Versailles may not at first provide adequate security and protection to France, on the one hand and the United States of America, as one of the signatories of the Treaty of Versailles, on the other;

Therefore, the United States of America and the French Republic having decided to conclude a treaty to effect these necessary purposes, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, and Robert Lansing, Secretary of State of the United States, specially authorised thereto by the President of the United States, and Georges Clemenceau, President of the Council, Minister of War, and Stéphen Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, specially authorised thereto

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. note on p. 37.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN USA AND FRANCE, 1919

by Raymond Poincaré, President of the French Republic, have agreed upon the following articles:

Article 1

In case the following stipulations relating to the Left Bank of the Rhine, contained in the Treaty of Peace with Germany signed at Versailles on the 28th day of June, 1919, by the United States of America, the French Republic, and the British Empire among other Powers:

«Article 42. Germany is forbidden to maintain or construct any fortifications either 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.

«Article 43. In the area defined above, the maintenance and assembly of armed forces, either permanently or temporarily, and military manœuvres of any kind, as well as the upkeep of all permanent works for mobilisation are in the same way forbidden.

«Article 44. 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 as calculated to disturb the peace of the world.»

may not at first provide adequate security and protection to France, the United States of America shall be bound to come immediately to her assistance in the event of any unprovoked movement of aggression against her being made by Germany.

Article 2

The present Treaty, in similar terms with the Treaty of even date for the same purpose concluded between Great Britain and the French Republic, a copy of which Treaty is annexed hereto, will only come into force when the latter is ratified.

Article 3

The present Treaty must be submitted to the Council of the League of Nations, and must be recognised by the Council, acting if need be by a majority, as an engagement which is consistent with

the Covenant of the League. It will continue in force until on the application of one of the parties to it the Council, acting if need be by a majority, agrees that the League itself affords sufficient protection.

#### Article 4

The present Treaty will be submitted to the Senate of the United States at the same time as the Treaty of Versailles is submitted to the Senate for its advice and consent to ratification. It will be submitted before ratification to the French Chamber of Deputies for approval. The ratifications thereof will be exchanged on the deposit of ratifications of the Treaty of Versailles at Paris or as soon thereafter as shall be possible.

In faith whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries, to wit: On the part of the United States of America, Woodrow Wilson, President, and Robert Lansing, Secretary of State of the United States; and on the part of the French Republic, Georges Clemenceau, President of the Council of Ministers, Minister of War, and Stéphen Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, have signed the above articles both in English and French languages, and they have hereunto affixed their seals.

Done in duplicate at the City of Versailles, on the twenty-eighth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and nineteen, and the one hundred and forty-third of the Independence of the United States of America.

WOODROW WILSON

CLEMENCEAU

ROBERT LANSING

S. PICHON

(*Cmd. 221*, pp. 6-7.)

### 7.

#### POLITICAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN FRANCE AND POLAND SIGNED AT PARIS, FEBRUARY 19, 1921

The Polish Government and the French Government, both desirous of safeguarding, by the maintenance of the Treaties which both have signed or which may in future be recognised by both Parties, the peace of Europe, the security of their territories and their common political and economic interests, have agreed as follows:

## THE CUNO OFFER, 1922

(1) In order to co-ordinate their endeavours towards peace, the two Governments undertake to consult each other on all questions of foreign policy which concern both States, so far as those questions affect the settlement of international relations in the spirit of the Treaties and in accordance with the Covenant of the League of Nations.

(2) In view of the fact that economic restoration is the essential preliminary condition of the re-establishment of international order and peace in Europa, the two Governments shall come to an understanding in this regard, with a view to concerted action and mutual support.

They will endeavour to develop their economic relations, and for this purpose will conclude special agreements and a Commercial Treaty.

(3) If, notwithstanding the sincerely peaceful views and intentions of the two Contracting States, either or both of them should be attacked without giving provocation, the two Governments shall take concerted measures for the defence of their territory and the protection of their legitimate interests, within the limits specified in the preamble.

(4) The two Governments undertake to consult each other before concluding new agreements which will affect their policy in Central and Eastern Europe.

(5) The present Agreement shall not come into force until the commercial agreements now in course of negotiation have been signed.

Paris, February 19, 1921.

A. BRIAND  
E. SAPIEHA

*(League of Nations. Treaty Series Vol. XVIII, 1923, p. 13.)*

## 8.

### GERMAN GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL, DECEMBER 13, 1922

The German Ambassador in Washington was instructed telegraphically on December 13th 1922 to communicate confidentially to the Government of the United States the following proposal:

«If the Government and People of the United States should come to the rescue of Europe with the proposal that the powers interested in the Rhine question, viz. France, England, Italy, Germany, should solemnly pledge themselves towards one another, and to the United States Government, to begin no war against one another, unless authorised by a plebiscite, for a generation: then Germany would not hesitate to enter into such a pledge.»

(*Materialien zur Sicherheitsfrage*, Berlin 1925 No. 4.)

9.

EXTRACT FROM CHANCELLOR DR. CUNO'S SPEECH AT  
HAMBURG, DECEMBER 31, 1922

To prove to France that we have no bellicose ideas and that she can evacuate without fear the left bank of the Rhine, we have made known to the French Government, through the intermediary of a third Power, that Germany was ready, in common with France and the other Powers having interests on the Rhine, to put in the hand of a third Power, not having interests on the Rhine, a solemn engagement by which these States would engage themselves during a generation not to make war without being authorised to this by a plebiscite. France had rejected the offer.

(*Cmd. 1812*, p. 69.)

10.

STATEMENT OF M. POINCARÉ,  
FRENCH PREMIER, REGARDING THE CUNO OFFER,  
JANUARY 2, 1923

*M. Poincaré explained his point of view to M. Jusserand, French Ambassador in Washington, as follows:*

If the German Government wished to get rid of war it might be asked why had it limited the promise of peace to thirty years? Even in less time than thirty years German propaganda might unhappily develop such desire for revenge that when the time came the popular vote in Germany might be in favour of aggression against France. The French Constitution gave the representatives of the nation full



powers over peace and war, and this right could not be withdrawn without a revision of the Constitution. Moreover, the French Parliament would never take the initiative in any war. Further, M. Poincaré had stated that he thought he knew that in England the Constitution equally debar a like procedure. He did not know if it was otherwise in Italy. For the German promise to have any value it would have to be guaranteed by positive engagements on the part of England and the United States, engagements supported by agreements assuring to France within a determined period an arranged military defensive co-operation.

The Treaty of Versailles, he had pointed out, contained already in Article 10 a formal undertaking of non-aggression which bound France. As soon as Germany was admitted to the League of Nations she would have the benefit and the burdens of that article. The proposed pact would then be superfluous and would even have the defect of appearing to diminish the engagements under Article 10, which was not limited to thirty years, and which no popular consultation could destroy. At this moment, from all the evidence, Germany wanted to throw doubt on the sanctions which, sooner or later, the Allies would be called on to take if she violated her engagements, and which are foreseen by several dispositions of the Treaty of Versailles, and notably by paragraph 18, of Annex II of Part VIII. France could not fall into that net. Besides, Mr. Hughes had not held out the least possibility of an Anglo-American guarantee. But even an Anglo-American pact of guarantee duly ratified by the Federal Senate, and assuring to France within a determined period an arranged military defensive, would not suffice entirely to relieve France of anxiety.

(*J. W. Wheeler-Bennett: Information on the Problem of Security (1917-1926)*, London 1927, pp. 56-7.)

## 11.

### TREATY OF ALLIANCE AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN FRANCE AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA SIGNED AT PARIS, JANUARY 25, 1924

The President of the French Republic and the President of the  
Czechoslovak Republic,

CZECHO-FRENCH TREATY OF ALLIANCE, 1924

being earnestly desirous of upholding the principle of international agreements which was solemnly confirmed by the Covenant of the League of Nations,

being further desirous of guarding against any infraction of the peace, the maintenance of which is necessary for the political stability and economic restoration of Europe,

being resolved for this purpose to ensure respect for the international juridical and political situation created by the Treaties of which they were both signatories,

and having regard to the fact that, in order to attain this object, certain mutual guarantees are indispensable for security against possible aggression and for the protection of their common interests, have appointed as their plenipotentiaries:

For the President of the French Republic:

M. Raymond Poincaré, President of the Council, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

For the President of the Czechoslovak Republic:

M. Edvard Benes, Minister for Foreign Affairs,

who, after examining their full powers, which were found in good and due form, have agreed to the following provisions:

Article 1

The Governments of the French Republic and of 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.

Article 2

The High Contracting Parties shall agree together as to the measures to be adopted to safeguard their common interests in case the latter are threatened.

Article 3

The High Contracting Parties, being fully in agreement as to the importance, for the maintenance of the world's peace, of the political principles laid down in Article 88 of the Treaty of Peace of St. Germain-en-Laye of September 10, 1919, and in the Protocols

CZECHO-FRENCH TREATY OF ALLIANCE, 1924

of Geneva dated October 4, 1922, of which instruments they both are signatories,

undertake to consult each other as to the measures to be taken in case there should be any danger of an infraction of these principles.

Article 4

The High Contracting Parties, having special regard to the declarations made by the Conference of Ambassadors on February 3, 1920, and April 1, 1921, on which their policy will continue to be based, and to the declaration made on November 10, 1921, by the Hungarian Government to the Allied diplomatic representatives,<sup>1</sup>

undertake to consult each other in case their interests are threatened by a failure to observe the principles laid down in the aforesaid declarations.

Article 5

The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare that they are in complete agreement as to the necessity, for the maintenance of peace, of taking common action in the event of any attempt to restore the Hohenzollern dynasty in Germany, and they undertake to consult each other in such a contingency.

Article 6

In conformity with the principles laid down in the Covenant of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree that if in future any dispute should arise between them which cannot be settled by friendly agreement and through diplomatic channels, they will submit such dispute either to the Permanent Court of International Justice or to such other arbitrator or arbitrators as they may select.

Article 7

The High Contracting Parties undertake to communicate to each other all Agreements affecting their policy in Central Europe which they may have previously concluded, and to consult one another before concluding any further Agreements. They declare that, in this matter, nothing in the present Treaty is contrary to the above Agreements, and in particular to the Treaty of Alliance between France

<sup>1</sup> These declarations are directed against the restoration of the Hapsburgs.

## LOCARNO TREATY

and Poland, or to the Conventions and Agreements concluded by Czechoslovakia with the Federal Republic of Austria, Roumania, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, or to the Agreement effected by an exchange of notes on February 8, 1921, between the Italian Government and the Czechoslovak Government.

### Article 8

The present Treaty shall be communicated to the League of Nations in conformity with Article 18 of the Covenant.

The present Treaty shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged at Paris as soon as possible.

In faith whereof the respective plenipotentiaries, being duly empowered for this purpose, have signed the present Treaty and have thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Paris, in duplicate, on January 25, 1924.

R. POINCARÉ

DR. EDVARD BENES

*(League of Nations. Treaty Series Vol. XXIII, 1924, pp. 165-9.)*

## 12.

### THE RHINE PACT OF LOCARNO, OCTOBER 16, 1925

#### FINAL PROTOCOL

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

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

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

Arbitration Convention between Germany and Belgium (Annex B).

Arbitration Convention between Germany and France (Annex C).

Arbitration Treaty between Germany and Poland (Annex D).

## LOCARNO TREATY

Arbitration Treaty between Germany and Czechoslovakia (Annex E).

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

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

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

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

They undertake to give their sincere co-operation to the work relating to disarmament already undertaken by the League of Nations and to seek the realisation thereof in a general agreement.

Done at Locarno, the 16th October, 1925.

LUTHER

STRESEMANN

ÉMILE VANDERVELDE

ARI. BRIAND

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

BENITO MUSSOLINI

AL. SKRZYNSKI

EDUARD BENES

## LOCARNO TREATY

TREATY OF MUTUAL GUARANTEE BETWEEN GERMANY, BELGIUM,  
FRANCE, GREAT BRITAIN AND ITALY

(Annex A)

The President of the German Reich, His Majesty the King of the Belgians, the President of the French Republic, and His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Majesty the King of Italy;

Anxious to satisfy the desire for security and protection which animates the peoples upon whom fell the scourge of the war of 1914-18;

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

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

Have determined to conclude a treaty with these objects, and have appointed as their plenipotentiaries: . . . . .

Who, having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows: —

### Article 1

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

### Article 2

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

## LOCARNO TREATY

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

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

### Article 3

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

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

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

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

### Article 4

1. If one of the high contracting parties alleges that a violation of article 2 of the present treaty or a breach of articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been or is being committed, it shall bring the question at once before the Council of the League of Nations.

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

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

### Article 5

The provisions of article 3 of the present treaty are placed under the guarantee of the high contracting parties as provided by the following stipulations:—

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

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



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### Article 6

The provisions of the present treaty do not affect the rights and obligations of the high contracting parties under the Treaty of Versailles or under arrangements supplementary thereto, including the agreements signed in London on the 30th August, 1924.

### Article 7

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

### Article 8

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

### Article 9

The present treaty shall impose no obligation upon any of the British dominions, or upon India, unless the Government of such dominion, or of India, signifies its acceptance thereof.

### Article 10

The present treaty shall be ratified and the ratifications shall be deposited at Geneva in the archives of the League of Nations as soon as possible.

It shall enter into force as soon as all the ratifications have been deposited and Germany has become a member of the League of Nations.

The present treaty, done in a single copy, will be deposited in the archives of the League of Nations, and the Secretary-General will

## LOCARNO TREATY

be requested to transmit certified copies to each of the high contracting parties.

In faith whereof the above-mentioned plenipotentiaries have signed the present treaty.

Done at Locarno, the 16th October, 1925.

(*Cmd. 2525*. pp. 5-13.)

### 13.

#### ARBITRATION CONVENTION BETWEEN GERMANY AND BELGIUM (FRANCE), OCTOBER 16, 1925

(Annexes B and C)

The undersigned duly authorised,

Charged by their respective Governments to determine the methods by which, as provided in article 3 of the treaty concluded this day between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy, a peaceful solution shall be attained of all questions which cannot be settled amicably between Germany and Belgium (France),

Have agreed as follows:—

#### PART I

##### Article 1

All disputes of every kind between Germany and Belgium (France) with regard to which the parties are in conflict as to their respective rights, and which it may not be possible to settle amicably by the normal methods of diplomacy, shall be submitted for decision either to an arbitral tribunal or to the Permanent Court of International Justice, as laid down hereafter. It is agreed that the disputes referred to above include in particular those mentioned in article 13 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

This provision does not apply to disputes arising out of events prior to the present convention and belonging to the past.

Disputes for the settlement of which a special procedure is laid down in other conventions in force between Germany and Belgium (France) shall be settled in conformity with the provisions of those conventions.

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### Article 2

Before any resort is made to arbitral procedure or to procedure before the Permanent Court of International Justice, the dispute may, by agreement between the parties, be submitted, with a view to amicable settlement, to a permanent international commission styled the Permanent Conciliation Commission, constituted in accordance with the present convention.

### Article 3

In the case of a dispute the occasion of which, according to the municipal law of one of the parties, falls within the competence of the national courts of such party, the matter in dispute shall not be submitted to the procedure laid down in the present convention until a judgment with final effect has been pronounced, within a reasonable time, by the competent national judicial authority.

### Article 4

The Permanent Conciliation Commission mentioned in article 2 shall be composed of five members, who shall be appointed as follows, that is to say: the German Government and the Belgian (French) Government shall each nominate a commissioner chosen from among their respective nationals, and shall appoint, by common agreement, the three other commissioners from among the nationals of third Powers; these three commissioners must be of different nationalities, and the German and Belgian (French) Governments shall appoint the president of the commission from among them.

The commissioners are appointed for three years, and their mandate is renewable. Their appointment shall continue until their replacement and, in any case, until the termination of the work in hand at the moment of the expiry of their mandate.

Vacancies which may occur as a result of death, resignation or any other cause shall be filled within the shortest possible time in the manner fixed for the nominations.

### Article 5

The Permanent Conciliation Commission shall be constituted within three months from the entry into force of the present convention.

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If the nomination of the commissioners to be appointed by common agreement should not have taken place within the said period, or, in the case of the filling of a vacancy, within three months from the time when the seat falls vacant, the President of the Swiss Confederation shall, in the absence of other agreement, be requested to make the necessary appointments.

### Article 6

The Permanent Conciliation Commission shall be informed by means of a request addressed to the president by the two parties acting in agreement or, in the absence of such agreement, by one or other of the parties.

The request, after having given a summary account of the subject of the dispute, shall contain the invitation to the commission to take all necessary measures with a view to arrive at an amicable settlement.

If the request emanates from only one of the parties, notification thereof shall be made without delay to the other party.

### Article 7

Within fifteen days from the date when the German Government or the Belgian (French) Government shall have brought a dispute before the Permanent Conciliation Commission either party may, for the examination of the particular dispute, replace its commissioner by a person possessing special competence in the matter.

The party making use of this right shall immediately inform the other party; the latter shall in that case be entitled to take similar action within fifteen days from the date when the notification reaches it.

### Article 8

The task of the Permanent Conciliation Commission shall be to elucidate questions in dispute, to collect with that object all necessary information by means of enquiry or otherwise, and to endeavour to bring the parties to an agreement. It may, after the case has been examined, inform the parties of the terms of settlement which seem suitable to it, and lay down a period within which they are to make their decision.

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At the close of its labours the commission shall draw up a report stating, as the case may be, either that the parties have come to an agreement and, if need arises, the terms of the agreement, or that it has been impossible to effect a settlement.

The labours of the commission must, unless the parties otherwise agree, be terminated within six months from the day on which the commission shall have been notified of the dispute.

### Article 9

Failing any special provision to the contrary, the Permanent Conciliation Commission shall lay down its own procedure, which in any case must provide for both parties being heard. In regard to enquiries the commission, unless it decides unanimously to the contrary, shall act in accordance with the provisions of Chapter III (International Commissions of Enquiry) of the Hague Convention of the 18th October, 1907, for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes.

### Article 10

The Permanent Conciliation Commission shall meet, in the absence of agreement by the parties to the contrary, at a place selected by its president.

### Article 11

The labours of the Permanent Conciliation Commission are not public, except when a decision to that effect has been taken by the commission with the consent of the parties.

### Article 12

The parties shall be represented before the Permanent Conciliation Commission by agents, whose duty it shall be to act as intermediary between them and the commission; they may, moreover, be assisted by counsel and experts appointed by them for that purpose, and request that all persons whose evidence appears to them useful should be heard.

The commission, on its side, shall be entitled to request oral explanations from the agents, counsel and experts of the two parties,

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as well as from all persons it may think useful to summon with the consent of their Government.

### Article 13

Unless otherwise provided in the present convention, the decisions of the Permanent Conciliation Commission shall be taken by a majority.

### Article 14

The German and Belgian (French) Governments undertake to facilitate the labours of the Permanent Conciliation Commission, and particularly to supply it to the greatest possible extent with all relevant documents and information, as well as to use the means at their disposal to allow it to proceed in their territory and in accordance with their law to the summoning and hearing of witnesses or experts, and to visit the localities in question.

### Article 15

During the labours of the Permanent Conciliation Commission each commissioner shall receive salary, the amount of which shall be fixed by agreement between the German and Belgian (French) Governments, each of which shall contribute an equal share.

### Article 16

In the event of no amicable agreement being reached before the Permanent Conciliation Commission the dispute shall be submitted by means of a special agreement either to the Permanent Court of International Justice under the conditions and according to the procedure laid down by its statute or to an arbitral tribunal under the conditions and according to the procedure laid down by The Hague Convention of the 18th October, 1907, for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes.

If the parties cannot agree on the terms of the special agreement after a month's notice one or other of them may bring the dispute before the Permanent Court of International Justice by means of an application.

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### PART II

#### Article 17

All questions on which the German and Belgian (French) Governments shall differ without being able to reach an amicable solution by means of the normal methods of diplomacy the settlement of which cannot be attained by means of a judicial decision as provided in article 1 of the present convention, and for the settlement of which no procedure has been laid down by other conventions in force between the parties, shall be submitted to the Permanent Conciliation Commission, whose duty it shall be to propose to the parties an acceptable solution and in any case to present a report.

The procedure laid down in articles 6—15 of the present convention shall be applicable.

#### Article 18

If the two parties have not reached an agreement within a month from the termination of the labours of the Permanent Conciliation Commission the question shall, at the request of either party, be brought before the Council of the League of Nations, which shall deal with it in accordance with article 15 of the Covenant of the League.

### *General Provision*

#### Article 19

In any case, and particularly if the question on which the parties differ arises out of acts already committed or on the point of commission, the Conciliation Commission or, if the latter has not been notified thereof, the arbitral tribunal or the Permanent Court of International Justice, acting in accordance with article 41 of its statute, shall lay down within the shortest possible time the provisional measures to be adopted. It shall similarly be the duty of the Council of the League of Nations, if the question is brought before it, to ensure that suitable provisional measures are taken. The German and Belgian (French) Governments undertake respectively to accept such measures, to abstain from all measures likely to have a repercussion prejudicial to the execution of the decision or to the arrangements

## LOCARNO TREATY

proposed by the Conciliation Commission or by the Council of the League of Nations, and in general to abstain from any sort of action whatsoever which may aggravate or extend the dispute.

### Article 20

The present convention continues applicable as between Germany and Belgium (France), even when other Powers are also interested in the dispute.

### Article 21

The present convention shall be ratified. Ratifications shall be deposited at Geneva with the League of Nations at the same time as the ratifications of the treaty concluded this day between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy.

It shall enter into and remain in force under the same conditions as the said treaty.

The present convention, done in a single copy, shall be deposited in the archives of the League of Nations, the Secretary-General of which shall be requested to transmit certified copies to each of the two contracting Governments.

Done at Locarno the 16th October, 1925.

(*Cmd. 2525*, pp. 15-33.)

## 14.

### ARBITRATION TREATY BETWEEN GERMANY AND POLAND (CZECHOSLOVAKIA), OCTOBER 16, 1925

(Annexes D and E)

The President of the German Empire and the President of the Polish (Czechoslovak) Republic;

Equally resolved to maintain peace between Germany and Poland (Czechoslovakia) by assuring the peaceful settlement of differences which might arise between the two countries;

Declaring that respect for the rights established by treaty or resulting from the law of nations is obligatory for international tribunals;



LOCARNO TREATY

Agreeing to recognise that the rights of a State cannot be modified save with its consent;

And considering that sincere observance of the methods of peaceful settlement of international disputes permits of resolving, without recourse to force, questions which may become the cause of division between States;

Have decided to embody in a treaty their common intentions in this respect, and have named as their plenipotentiaries the following:

. . . . .

Who, having exchanged their full powers, found in good and due form, are agreed upon the following articles: —

*(Articles 1-20 are identical with articles 1-20 of the preceding Convention between Germany and Belgium.)*

Article 21

The present treaty, which is in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations, shall not in any way affect the rights and obligations of the high contracting parties as members of the League of Nations and shall not be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world.

*(Article 22 is identical with article 21 of the preceding Convention.)*

*(Cmd. 2525, pp. 35-55.)*

15.

DRAFT COLLECTIVE NOTE TO GERMANY REGARDING  
ARTICLE 16 OF THE COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE OF  
NATIONS, OCTOBER 16, 1925

(Annex F)

The German delegation has requested certain explanations in regard to article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

We are not in a position to speak in the name of the League, but in view of the discussions which have already taken place in the Assembly and in the commissions of the League of Nations, and

after the explanations which have been exchanged between ourselves, we do not hesitate to inform you of the interpretation which, in so far as we are concerned, we place upon article 16.

In accordance with that interpretation the obligations resulting from the said article on the members of the League must be understood to mean that each State member of the League is bound to co-operate loyally and effectively in support of the Covenant and in resistance to any act of aggression to an extent which is compatible with its military situation and takes its geographical position into account.

(*Cmd. 2525*, pp. 55-57.)

## 16.

### TREATY BETWEEN FRANCE AND POLAND (CZECHOSLOVAKIA), OCTOBER 16, 1925

The President of the French Republic and the President of the Polish (Czechoslovak) Republic;

Equally desirous to see Europe spared from war by a sincere observance of the undertakings arrived at this day with a view to the maintenance of general peace;

Have resolved to guarantee their benefits to each other reciprocally by a treaty concluded within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations and of the treaties existing between them;

And have to this effect nominated for their plenipotentiaries:

. . . . .

Who, after having exchanged their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:—

#### Article 1

In the event of Poland (Czechoslovakia) or France suffering from a failure to observe the undertakings arrived at this day between them and Germany with a view to the maintenance of general peace, France, and reciprocally Poland (Czechoslovakia) acting in application of article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, undertake to lend each other immediately aid and assistance, if such a failure is accompanied by an unprovoked recourse to arms.

FRANCO-POLISH (CZECHOSLOVAK) TREATY, 1925

In the event of the Council of the League of Nations, when dealing with a question brought before it in accordance with the said undertakings, being unable to succeed in making its report accepted by all its members other than the representatives of the parties to the dispute, and in the event of Poland (Czechoslovakia) or France being attacked without provocation, France, or reciprocally Poland (Czechoslovakia), acting in application of article 15, paragraph 7, of the Covenant of the League of Nations, will immediately lend aid and assistance.

Article 2

Nothing in the present treaty shall affect the rights and obligations of the high contracting parties as members of the League of Nations, or shall be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world.

Article 3

The present treaty shall be registered with the League of Nations, in accordance with the Covenant.

Article 4

The present treaty shall be ratified. The ratifications will be deposited at Geneva with the League of Nations at the same time as the ratification of the treaty concluded this day between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy, and the ratification of the treaty concluded at the same time between Germany and Poland (Czechoslovakia).

It will enter into force and remain in force under the same conditions as the said treaties.

The present treaty done in a single copy will be deposited in the archives of the League of Nations, and the Secretary-General of the League will be requested to transmit certified copies to each of the high contracting parties.

Done at Locarno the 16th October, 1925.

(*Cmd. 2525*, pp. 57-61.)

17.

TREATY BETWEEN GERMANY AND THE UNION OF  
SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS SIGNED AT BERLIN,  
APRIL 24, 1926<sup>1</sup>

The German Government and the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, being desirous of doing all in their power to promote the maintenance of general peace,

And being convinced that the interests of the German people and of the peoples of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics demand constant and trustful co-operation,

Have agreed to strengthen the friendly relations existing between them by means of a special Treaty and have for this purpose appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

The German Government:

Dr. Gustav Stresemann, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

The Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics:

M. Nikolai Nicolaiwitsch Krestinski, Ambassador Extraordinary  
and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics;

Who, having communicated their full powers found in good and due form, have agreed upon the following provisions:

Article 1

The relations between Germany and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics shall continue to be based on the Treaty of Rapallo.

The German Government and the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics shall remain in friendly touch in order to promote an understanding with regard to all political and economic questions jointly affecting their two countries.

Article 2

Should one of the Contracting Parties, despite its peaceful attitude, be attacked by one or more third Powers, the other Contracting Party shall observe neutrality for the whole duration of the conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> The treaty together with the German-Soviet Convention relating to Conciliation Procedure of January 29, 1929, was extended indefinitely, subject to yearly notice, by the Protocol of June 24, 1931, which was ratified on May 5, 1933.

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Article 3

If on the occasion of a conflict of the nature mentioned in Article 2, or at a time when neither of the Contracting Parties is engaged in warlike operations, a coalition is formed between third Powers with a view to the economic or financial boycott of either of the Contracting Parties, the other Contracting Party undertakes not to adhere to such coalition.

Article 4

The present Treaty shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged at Berlin.

It shall enter into force on the date of the exchange of the instruments of ratification and shall remain in force for five years. The two Contracting Parties shall confer in good time before the expiration of this period with regard to the future development of their political relations.

In faith whereof the Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty.

Done in duplicate at Berlin, April 24, 1926.

STRESEMANN  
KRESTINSKI

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Berlin, April 24, 1926.

With reference to the negotiations upon the Treaty signed this day between the German Government and the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, I have the honour, on behalf of the German Government, to make the following observations:

(1) In the negotiation and signature of the Treaty, both Governments have taken the view that the principle laid down by them in Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Treaty, of reaching an understanding on all political and economic questions affecting the two countries, will contribute considerably to the maintenance of peace. In any case the two Governments will in their deliberations be guided by the need for the maintenance of the general peace.

(2) In this spirit also the two Governments have approached the fundamental questions which are bound up with the entry of Germany into the League of Nations. The German Government is convinced that Germany's membership of the League cannot constitute an obstacle to the friendly development of the relations between Germany and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. According to its basic idea, the League of Nations is designed for the peaceful and equitable settlement of international disputes. The German Government is determined to co-operate to the best of its ability in the realisation of this idea. If, however, though the German Government does not anticipate this, there should at any time take shape within the League, contrary to that fundamental idea of peace, any efforts directed exclusively against the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, Germany would most energetically oppose such efforts.

(3) The German Government also proceeds upon the assumption that this fundamental attitude of German policy towards the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics cannot be adversely influenced by the loyal observance of the obligations, arising out of Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant of the League and relating to the application of sanctions, which would devolve upon Germany as a consequence of her entry into the League of Nations. By the terms of these articles, the application of sanctions against the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics would come into consideration, in the absence of other causes, only if the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics entered upon a war of aggression against a third State. It is to be borne in mind that the question whether the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is the aggressor in the event of a conflict with a third State could only be determined with binding force for Germany with her own consent; and that therefore, an accusation to this effect levelled by other Powers against the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and regarded by Germany as unjustified, would not oblige Germany to take part in measures of any kind instituted on the authority of Article 16. With regard to the question whether, in a concrete case, Germany would be in a position to take part in the application of sanctions at all, and to what extent, the German Government refers to the Note of

THE BERLIN TREATY, 1926

December 1, 1925, on the interpretation of Article 16 addressed to the German Delegation on the occasion of the signing of the Treaties of Locarno.

(4) In order to create a secure basis for disposing without friction of all questions arising between them, the two Governments regard it as desirable that they should immediately embark upon negotiations for the conclusion of a general treaty for the peaceful solution of any conflicts that may arise between them, when special attention shall be given to the possibilities of the procedure of arbitration and conciliation.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

STRESEMANN

Embassy of the Union  
of Socialist Soviet Republics in Germany.

Berlin, April 24, 1926

Your Excellency,

In acknowledging receipt of the Note which you have addressed to me with regard to the negotiations on the Treaty signed to-day between the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and the German Government, I have the honour, on behalf of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, to make the following reply:

(1) In the negotiation and signature of the Treaty, both Governments have taken the view that the principle laid down by them in Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Treaty, of reaching an understanding on all political and economic questions jointly affecting the two countries, will contribute considerably to the maintenance of peace. In any case the two Governments will in their deliberations be guided by the need for the maintenance of the general peace.

(2) The Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics takes note of the explanation contained in Sections 2 and 3 of your Note concerning the fundamental questions connected with Germany's entry into the League of Nations.

(3) In order to create a secure basis for disposing without friction of all questions arising between them, the two Govern-

ments regard it as desirable that they should immediately embark upon negotiations for the conclusion of a general treaty for the peaceful solution of any conflicts that may arise between them, when special attention shall be given to the possibilities of the procedure of arbitration and conciliation.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

KRESTINSKI

*(League of Nations. Treaty Series Vol. LIII, 1926, pp. 392-6.)*

## 18.

### GENERAL PACT FOR THE RENUNCIATION OF WAR (KELLOGG PACT), AUGUST 27, 1928

The President of the German Reich, the President of the United States of America, His Majesty the King of the Belgians, the President of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Majesty the King of Italy, His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, the President of the Republic of Poland, the President of the Czechoslovak Republic,

Deeply sensible of their solemn duty to promote the welfare of mankind;

Persuaded that the time has come when a frank renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy should be made to the end that the peaceful and friendly relations now existing between their peoples may be perpetuated;

Convinced that all changes in their relations with one another should be sought only by pacific means and be the result of a peaceful and orderly process, and that any signatory power which shall hereafter seek to promote its national interests by resort to war should be denied the benefits furnished by this treaty;

Hopeful that, encouraged by their example, all the other nations of the world will join in this humane endeavor and by adhering to the present treaty as soon as it comes into force bring their peoples within the scope of its beneficent provisions, thus uniting the civilized



## BRIAND-KELLOGG PACT, 1928

nations of the world in a common renunciation of war as an instrument of their national policy;

Have decided to conclude a treaty and for that purpose have appointed as their respective plenipotentiaries, . . . . . who, having communicated to one another their full powers found in good and due form have agreed upon the following articles:

### Article 1

The high contracting parties solemnly declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.

### Article 2

The high contracting parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means.

### Article 3

The present treaty shall be ratified by the high contracting parties named in the preamble in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements, and shall take effect as between them as soon as all their several instruments of ratification shall have been deposited at Washington.

This treaty shall, when it has come into effect as prescribed in the preceding paragraph, remain open as long as may be necessary for adherence by all the other powers of the world. Every instrument evidencing the adherence of a power shall be deposited at Washington and the treaty shall immediately upon such deposit become effective as between the power thus adhering and the other powers parties hereto.

It shall be the duty of the Government of the United States to furnish each government named in the preamble and every government subsequently adhering to this treaty with a certified copy of the treaty and of every instrument of ratification or adherence. It shall also be the duty of the Government of the United States

## FRANCO-SOVIET PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION, 1932

telegraphically to notify such governments immediately upon the deposit with it of each instrument of ratification or adherence.

In faith whereof the respective plenipotentiaries have signed this treaty in the French and English languages, both texts having equal force, and hereunto affix their seals.

Done at Paris, the twenty-seventh day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and twenty-eight.

*(Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate. Seventieth Congress, Second Session. Washington 1928, pp. 1-3.)*

### 19.

#### PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS SIGNED AT PARIS, NOVEMBER 29, 1932

The President of the French Republic and the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,

Animated by the desire to consolidate peace,

Convinced that it is in the interests of both High Contracting Parties to improve and develop relations between the two countries,

Mindful of the international undertakings which they have previously assumed and none of which, they declare, constitutes an obstacle to the pacific development of their mutual relations or is inconsistent with the present Treaty,

Desirous of confirming and defining, so far as concerns their respective relations, the general Pact of August 27th, 1928, for the renunciation of war,

Have resolved to conclude a Treaty with this object and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

The President of the French Republic:

M. Edouard Herriot, Deputy, President of the Council, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

The Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

M. Valerien Dovgalevsky, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics accredited to the President of the French Republic;

FRANCO-SOVIET PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION, 1932

Who, having exchanged their powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:

Article 1

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes with regard to the other not to resort in any case, whether alone or jointly with one or more third Powers, either to war or to any aggression by land, sea or air against that other Party, and to respect the inviolability of the territories which are placed under that Party's sovereignty or which it represents in external relations or for whose administration it is responsible.

Article 2

Should either High Contracting Party be the object of aggression by one or more third Powers, the other High Contracting Party undertakes not to give aid or assistance, either directly or indirectly, to the aggressor or aggressors during the period of the conflict.

Should either High Contracting Party resort to aggression against a third Power, the other High Contracting Party may denounce the present Treaty without notice.

Article 3

The undertakings set forth in Articles 1 and 2 above shall in no way limit or modify the rights or obligations of each Contracting Party under agreements concluded by it before the coming into force of the present Treaty, each Party hereby declaring further that it is not bound by any agreement involving an obligation for it to participate in aggression by a third State.

Article 4

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes, for the duration of the present Treaty, not to become a party to any international agreement of which the effect in practice would be to prevent the purchase of goods from or the sale of goods or the granting of credits to the other Party, and not to take any measure which would result in the exclusion of the other Party from any participation in its foreign trade.

Article 5

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes to respect in every connection the sovereignty or authority of the other Party over the whole of that Party's territories as defined in Article 1 of the present Treaty, not to interfere in any way in its internal affairs, and to abstain more particularly from action of any kind calculated to promote or encourage agitation, propaganda or attempted intervention designed to prejudice its territorial integrity or to transform by force the political or social regime of all or part of its territories.

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes in particular not to create, protect, equip, subsidise or admit in its territory either military organisations for the purpose of armed combat with the other Party or organisations assuming the rôle of government or representing all or part of its territories.

Article 6

The High Contracting Parties having already recognised, in the general Pact of August 27th, 1928, for the renunciation of war, that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts, of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means, confirm that provision, and, in order to give effect to it, annex to the present Treaty a Convention relating to conciliation procedure.

Article 7

The present Treaty, of which the French and Russian texts shall both be authentic, shall be ratified, and the ratifications thereof shall be exchanged at Moscow. It shall enter into effect on the date of the said exchange, and shall remain in force for the period of one year as from the date on which either High Contracting Party shall have notified the other of its intention to denounce it. Such notification may not, however, be given before the expiry of a period of two years from the date of the entry into force of the present Treaty.

In faith whereof the Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty and have thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Paris, in duplicate, the 29th day of November, 1932.

E. HERRIOT

V. DOVGALEVSKY

FRANCO-SOVIET PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION, 1928

CONVENTION RELATING TO CONCILIATION PROCEDURE

Article 1

All disputes of whatever kind between France and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, relating to facts which occur after the entry into force of the present Convention and which it may not have been possible to settle through the diplomatic channel, shall be submitted, with a view to amicable settlement, to a Conciliation Commission.

Article 2

The Conciliation Commission shall be composed of four members, that is to say, two French nationals and two nationals of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, appointed for each session by their respective Governments.

It shall choose its President, for each session, from among those of its members who are nationals of the country in whose territory it is sitting.

Each of the High Contracting Parties may also appoint experts, who shall take part in the Commission's work in an advisory capacity.

The members of the Commission shall have the right to demand jointly that any person shall be heard whose evidence they regard as useful.

Article 3

The Commission shall meet once a year on a date fixed jointly by the two High Contracting Parties.

The latter may, however, in case of urgency, decide jointly to convene an extraordinary session of the Commission.

The High Contracting Party who demands such a meeting shall be required to inform the other High Contracting Party of the urgent circumstance occasioning such request.

Fifteen days at latest before the meeting of the Commission, each High Contracting Party shall deliver to the other, through the diplomatic channel, a list of the questions which it desires to submit to the Commission for examination.

The duration of each session shall not exceed fifteen days, unless an extension is agreed to by the two Governments.

## FRANCO-SOVIET PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION, 1932

The Commission shall meet alternately at Paris and at Moscow, the first meeting being held at Moscow.

### Article 4

The Commission shall not have power to take a valid decision unless all the members are present. Its decisions shall be taken unanimously.

### Article 5

The Commission shall determine its own procedure.

### Article 6

It shall be the duty of the Commission to study any disputes referred to it by the two Governments and to recommend to the latter such interpretation as it may consider sound in law or such arrangement as it may deem equitable.

With this object it shall submit to each of the High Contracting Parties, before the close of the session, a report accompanied by a draft settlement with reference to each of the disputes referred to it during the said session.

This report may not be made public, either wholly or in part, except with the consent of both High Contracting Parties.

If, during a session, the Commission does not succeed in making a unanimous proposal concerning one of the questions on the agenda, that question may, at the request of one of the Parties, be submitted to the Commission again at an extraordinary session, opened four months at latest after the close of the previous session.

Each of the two High Contracting Parties undertakes to inform the other, within a period of three months, whether it accepts the proposals submitted by the Commission.

### Article 7

The two High Contracting Parties undertake to facilitate the work of the Commission, in particular by supplying it to the utmost possible extent with all necessary documents and information.

They further undertake to abstain, during the course of the conciliation procedure, from any measures in their power which might appear to prejudice the Commission's proposals and, as far as possible, to take effective conservatory measures with reference thereto.

## DEFINITION OF AGGRESSION, LONDON, 1933

### Article 8

The present Convention, annexed to the Treaty of Non-Aggression concluded this day between the President of the French Republic and the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, shall be ratified under the same conditions. It shall take effect on the same date and shall remain in force for the same period.

*(League of Nations. Treaty Series Vol. CLVII, 1935, pp. 418-9, 428-30.)*

## 20.

### SOVIET (LONDON) CONVENTIONS FOR THE DEFINITION OF AGGRESSION, JULY 3 AND 4, 1933

#### *(a) Convention for the Definition of Aggression, July 3, 1933*

The Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., His Majesty the King of Afghanistan, the President of the Esthonian Republic, the President of the Latvian Republic, His Majesty the Shah of Persia, the President of the Polish Republic, His Majesty the King of Rumania, and the President of the Turkish Republic,

Impelled by the desire to strengthen the peace existing between their countries,

Believing that the Briand-Kellogg Pact (Pact of Paris) to which they are signatories forbids all aggression,

Deeming it necessary in the interests of universal security to define as closely as possible the conception of aggression, in order to eliminate every pretext for its justification,

Declaring that every State has an equal right to independence, security, defence of its territory, and free development of its State system,

Inspired by the desire in the interests of universal peace to assure all nations of the inviolability of the territory of their countries,

Considering it useful in the interests of universal peace to put into force as between their countries precise rules for the definition of aggression, pending the universal recognition of these rules,

Have decided for this purpose to conclude the present convention and have duly accredited: The Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.—Maxim Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign

DEFINITION OF AGGRESSION, LONDON, 1933

Affairs; His Majesty the King of Afghanistan—Ali Mohammed Khan, Minister of Education; the President of the Esthonian Republic—Dr. Oscar Kallas, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in London; the President of the Latvian Republic—M. Waldemar Salnais, Minister of Foreign Affairs; His Majesty the Shah of Persia—Fatolla-Khan Nury Esfendiary, Chargé d'Affaires in London; the President of the Polish Republic—M. Edouard Raczinski, Permanent Polish Representative to the League of Nations and Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; His Majesty the King of Rumania—M. Nicolas Titulescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs; the President of the Turkish Republic—Tevfik Rüstü-Bey, Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Who have agreed upon the following provisions:

Article I. Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes to recognize in its relations with each of the other parties, beginning with the day this convention enters into effect, the definition of aggressor outlined in the report of the Security Committee of May 24, 1933 (the Politis Report), at the Disarmament Conference, based upon the proposal of the Soviet delegation.

Article II. In accordance with the above, the aggressor in an international conflict, with due consideration to the agreements existing between the parties involved in the conflict, will be considered the State which will be the first to commit any of the following acts:

1. Declaration of war against another State;
2. Invasion by armed forces, even without a declaration of war, of the territory of another State;
3. An attack by armed land, naval, or air forces, even without a declaration of war, upon the territory, naval vessels, or aircraft of another State;
4. Naval blockade of the coasts or ports of another State;
5. Aid to armed bands formed on the territory of a State and invading the territory of another State, or refusal, despite demands on the part of the State subjected to attack, to take all possible measures on its own territory to deprive the said bands of any aid and protection.

Article III. No considerations of a political, military, economic, or any other nature can serve as an excuse or justification of aggression as specified in Article II (see below for explanation).



## DEFINITION OF AGGRESSION, LONDON, 1933

Article IV. This convention will be ratified by the High Contracting Parties in accordance with the laws of each of them.

Ratification papers will be deposited by each of the High Contracting Parties with the Government of the U.S.S.R. As soon as ratification papers are deposited by two of the High Contracting Parties, the present convention enters into force between the said two parties. As each of the other High Contracting Parties deposits its ratification papers the convention will enter into force for it.

Notice of each deposition of ratification papers will be immediately given to each of the signatories of this convention by the Government of the U.S.S.R.

Article V. The present convention has been drawn up in eight copies, one of which is entrusted to each of the contracting parties, in confirmation of which the above-mentioned representatives have signed the present convention and affixed their seal thereto.

Done in London, July 3, 1933.

MAXIM LITVINOV, ALI MOHAMMED KHAN, OSCAR KALLAS,  
WALDEMARAS SALNAIS, FATOLLA-KHAN NURY ESFENDIARY,  
EDOUARD RACZINSKI, NICOLAS TITULESCU, TEVFIK RÜSTÜ-  
BEY.

### *Appendix to Article III on the Definition of Aggression*

The High Contracting Parties which have signed the Convention defining aggression, desirous, while retaining the complete inviolability of the absolute meaning of the rule formulated in Article III of the said Convention of giving certain indications permitting the determination of an aggressor, establish that none of the circumstances mentioned below may be used to justify any act of aggression in the sense of Article II of the said Convention:

The internal position of any State, as, for example: its political, economic, or social structure; alleged shortcomings of its administration; disorder following upon strikes, revolutionary or counter-revolutionary movements, and civil war;

The international conduct of any State, as, for example: infringement or a threat of infringing the material or moral rights or interests of a foreign State or its citizens; rupture of diplomatic or economic relations; measures of economic or financial boycott; conflicts in the

sphere of economic, financial, or other obligations in connexion with foreign Governments; border incidents which do not fall under any of the cases of aggression indicated in Article II.

At the same time the High Contracting Parties unanimously recognize that the present Convention must in no case serve to justify the infringements of international law which might fall under the obligations included in the foregoing list.

(b) *Note on Conventions for the Definition of Aggression signed on July 4 and 5, 1933*

*On July 4 and 5 M. Litvinov signed two further conventions defining aggression. While the Convention with Lithuania, signed on July 5, was mutatis mutandis identical with that of July 3, that of July 4, concluded with Turkey and the Little Entente States, differed in respect of Article IV which reads as follows:*

The present Convention is open for adherence by all other countries. Adherence will carry the same rights and obligations as in the case of the original signatories. Notification of adherence shall be made to the Government of the Soviet Union which will immediately notify the other participants.

*The Convention was signed by:*

Rumania: NICOLAS TITULESCU, *Minister of Foreign Affairs;*

Czechoslovakia: JAN MASARYK, *Minister in London;*

Turkey: MEHMET MUNIR-BEY, *Ambassador in London;*

U.S.S.R.: MAXIM LITVINOV, *People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs;*

Yugoslavia: GEORGI DJURITCH, *Minister in London.*

(*J. W. Wheeler-Bennett: Documents on International Affairs 1933, London 1934, pp. 230-3.*)

## 21.

### GERMANY'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

#### I

PROCLAMATION BY THE CHANCELLOR OF THE REICH TO THE GERMAN NATION, OCTOBER 14, 1933

Filled with the sincere desire to accomplish the work of the peaceful internal reconstruction of our nation and of its political and econ-

omic life, former German Governments, trusting in the grant of a dignified equality of rights, declared their willingness to enter the League of Nations and to take part in the Disarmament Conference.

In this connexion Germany suffered a bitter disappointment.

In spite of our readiness to carry through German disarmament at any time, if necessary, to its ultimate consequence, other Governments could not decide to redeem the pledges signed by them in the Peace Treaty.

By the deliberate refusal of real moral and material equality of rights to Germany, the German nation and its Governments have been profoundly humiliated.

After the German Government had declared, as a result of the equality of rights expressly laid down on December 11, 1932<sup>1</sup>, that it was again prepared to take part in the Disarmament Conference, the German Foreign Minister and our delegates were informed by the official representatives of other States in public speeches and direct statements that this equality of rights could no longer be granted to present-day Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> *Five Power Declaration, December 11, 1932.*

(1) The Governments of the United Kingdom, France and Italy have declared that one of the principles that should guide the Conference on Disarmament should be the grant to Germany, and to the other Powers disarmed by Treaty, of equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations, and that this principle should find itself embodied in the Convention containing the conclusions of the Disarmament Conference.

This declaration implies that the respective limitations of the armaments of all States should be included in the proposed Disarmament Convention. It is clearly understood that the methods of application of such equality of rights will be discussed by the Conference.

(2) On the basis of this Declaration, Germany has signified its willingness to resume its place at the Disarmament Conference.

(3) The Governments of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy are ready to join in a solemn reaffirmation to be made by all European States that they will not in any circumstances attempt to resolve any present or future differences between the signatories by resort to force. This shall be done without prejudice to fuller discussions on the question of security.

(4) The five Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy declare that they are resolved to co-operate in the Conference with the other States there represented in seeking without delay to work out a Convention which shall effect a substantial reduction and a limitation of armaments with provision for future revision with a view to further reduction.

As the German Government regards this action as an unjust and humiliating discrimination against the German nation, it is not in a position to continue, as an outlawed and second-class nation, to take part in negotiations which could only lead to further arbitrary results.

While the German Government again proclaims its unshaken desire for peace, it declares to its great regret that, in view of these imputations, it must leave the Disarmament Conference. It will also announce its departure from the League of Nations.

It submits this decision, together with a fresh statement of its adherence to a policy of sincere love of peace and readiness to come to an understanding, to the judgement of the German nation, and awaits from it a declaration of the same love of peace and readiness for peaceful relations, but also of the same conception of honour and the same determination.

As Chancellor of the German Reich, I have therefore proposed to the President of the Reich, as a visible expression of the united will of Government and people, to submit this policy of the Government to the nation in a referendum, and to dissolve the German Reichstag in order to give the German people an opportunity of electing those deputies who, as sworn representatives of this policy and of peace and honour, can give the nation the guarantee of an unswerving representation of its interests in this respect.

As Chancellor of the German nation and leader of the National Socialist movement, I am convinced that the entire nation stands united to a man behind a declaration and a decision which arise as much from love of our people and regard for its honour, as from the conviction that the ultimate world reconciliation, which is so necessary for all, can only be attained when the conceptions of victor and vanquished give way to the nobler view of equal rights of existence.

ADOLF HITLER

## II

### PROCLAMATION OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO THE GERMAN NATION, OCTOBER 14, 1933

The German Government and the German nation are united in the determination to carry on a policy of peace, conciliation, and understanding as a basis of all decisions and all actions.

The German Government and the German nation therefore reject force as an unsuitable means of removing existing differences within the European community of States.

The German Government and the German nation renew the declaration that they will gladly agree to any actual disarmament of the world, with the assurance of their readiness to destroy even the last German machine-gun and to discharge the last man from the army if other nations decide to do the same.

The German Government and the German nation unite in the sincere desire to examine and settle all outstanding questions dispassionately by means of negotiations with the other nations, including our former enemies, with a view to overcoming the war psychosis and finally restoring a frank relationship with each other.

The German Government and the German nation therefore declare their readiness at any time, by the conclusions of continental pacts of non-aggression, to guarantee the peace of Europe for the longest period, to serve its economic progress and to take part in the general cultural reconstruction.

The German Government and the German nation are inspired by the same conception of honour that the grant of equality of rights to Germany is the unavoidable moral and material condition for any participation of our people and its Government in international arrangements and treaties.

The German Government and the German nation are therefore united in the decision to leave the Disarmament Conference and to withdraw from the League of Nations until this real equality of rights is no longer withheld from our people.

The German Government and the German nation are determined to accept every distress, every persecution, and every affliction rather than in future to sign treaties which must be unacceptable to every honourable man and for every honour-loving people and which, in their effects, would only lead to a perpetuation of the distress and misery of the position created by the Treaty of Versailles and thus to the collapse of the civilized community of States. The German Government and the German nation have no desire to take part in any competition in armaments with other States; they demand only that measure of security which guarantees to the nation tranquillity and liberty to carry on peaceful work. The German Government and

## GERMANY'S WITHDRAWAL FROM GENEVA, 1933

the German nation are prepared to secure these justified demands of the German people by means of negotiations and treaties.

The German Government addresses the following question to the German people: Does the German nation approve the policy which its Government here submits to it, and is it prepared to declare and solemnly to acknowledge this policy as the expression of its own view and its own desire?<sup>1</sup>

### III

TELEGRAM FROM THE GERMAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE,  
OCTOBER 14, 1933

On behalf of the German Government I have the honour to make to you the following communication:

In the light of the course which recent discussions of the Powers concerned have taken in the matter of disarmament, it is now clear that the Disarmament Conference will not fulfil what is its sole object, namely, general disarmament.

It is also clear that this failure of the Conference is due solely to unwillingness on the part of the highly-armed States to carry out their contractual obligation to disarm.

This renders impossible the satisfaction of Germany's recognized claim to equality of rights, and the condition on which the German Government agreed at the beginning of this year again to take part in the work of the Conference thus no longer exists. The German Government is accordingly compelled to leave the Disarmament Conference.

BARON VON NEURATH

(*J. W. Wheeler-Bennett: Documents on International Affairs 1933*, London 1934, pp. 285-9.)

### IV

LETTER FROM THE GERMAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, OCTOBER 19, 1933

In the name of the German Government, I have the honour to inform you that Germany hereby notifies her withdrawal from the League, in conformity with Article I, paragraph 3, of the Covenant.

BARON VON NEURATH

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<sup>1</sup> Of the 42 733 819 votes cast at the plebiscite of November 12, 1933, 40 632 628 were for the policy of the Führer.

V

REPLY BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, OCTOBER 21, 1933

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the letter which you have addressed to me on October 19th, 1933, on behalf of the German Government, from which it results that Germany gives notice of its intention to withdraw from the League of Nations in accordance with Article I, paragraph 3, of the Covenant, which reads as follows:

“Any Member of the League may, after two years’ notice of its intention so to do, withdraw from the League, provided that all its international obligations and all its obligations under this Covenant shall have been fulfilled at the time of its withdrawal.”

I will not fail to communicate immediately your letter and the present reply to the Members of the League.

J. A. AVENOL  
Secretary-General

(*League of Nations, C. 605. M. 282. 1933. V.*)

. 22.

EXTRACT FROM SPEECH BY SIR JOHN SIMON,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IN THE  
HOUSE OF COMMONS, NOVEMBER 7, 1933

What are our obligations under the Locarno Treaty? I am not going to argue the case on one side or the other, but just to state them. Our obligations may be summarised under four heads. First, if the Council of the League finds that a violation of the undertaking not to go to war against each other, contained in Article 2, has been committed by Germany, France, or Belgium, we are bound immediately to come to the assistance of the Power against whom the act complained of was directed. I observe that it is the Council of the League which is to make that finding, and in that case, as we are a permanent member of the Council, our assent is necessary to any finding. I do not suggest that it would not be given in a proper case, but our assent is necessary.

Secondly, if the Council finds that a breach of Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles—relating to the demilitarisation of the Rhineland zone—has been committed, we are bound to come immediately to the assistance of France or Belgium as the case may be. There again, let me state that our assent is necessary to the finding of the Council. That is the second case. Thirdly, in the event of what is called a flagrant violation of one or other of the above undertakings, which would really mean the case of something happening in so much of a hurry that you could not call a meeting of the Council of the League, we are bound immediately to come to the help of the injured party, if we are satisfied that the violation constitutes an unprovoked act of aggression, and that immediate action is necessary. In this case we are the sole judges as to whether our obligation is applicable.

Fourthly, and lastly, if either France, Belgium, or Germany refuses to submit a dispute to peaceful settlement or to comply with an arbitral or judicial decision, we are bound to comply with any proposals which the Council may make as to the steps to be taken. In that case our assent is necessary to any and every proposal that the Council may make, and the House will therefore see—of course hon. Members mostly know it, but it is not a waste of time to state it for everybody—that, with one exception, the decision to be taken before the Treaty has operative effect must be taken by the Council of the League. The Council can take no such decision unless it be unanimous, and since the United Kingdom is a permanent member of the Council, it is clear that no decision can be taken without our assent. The one exception that I have mentioned arises if it is alleged that there is a flagrant violation of the undertaking not to go to war, and so forth, by one of the parties. Such a case might be so urgent that there would be no time to take it to the Council, and consequently we are bound to go immediately to the help of the injured party, but we are the sole judges as to whether this obligation has become applicable, and, of course—a very important fact—Italy stands in exactly the same position as we do ourselves.

The House will, therefore, observe that no British Government is blindly fettered by the Treaty of Locarno. We have by that Treaty assumed certain important obligations—I do not minimise them—along with Italy and the other Powers, in the interpretation of which we have a decisive voice. I must point out further that the Treaty



which came into force in 1926 between the five European Powers cannot be denounced by us or by any other signatory by way of a unilateral act. It can be terminated only in the circumstances stated in Article 8, which, the House may take it, are not material to this purpose.

Now Locarno was entered into as a contribution to the stabilising forces of Europe, and I would submit to the House that Locarno has not exhausted its influence in that respect. We shall not increase the power of those stabilising forces by announcing that we are completely indifferent whether the events referred to in the Locarno Treaty take place or not. It is the fact that we have pledged ourselves not to be indifferent which exercises restraint and which helps to keep solid the fabric of European relationships, and it provides an argument which we will use to all proper lengths to produce the limitation and reduction of armaments in other countries.

There is another question raised in certain quarters as regards the Treaty of Locarno on which I would say a word. The question is whether the obligations of this country would be ended if Germany, two years hence, carried out the intention of which she has given notice to leave the League of Nations. Let me first observe that Germany has the opportunity of withdrawing that notice at any time during the next two years, and the Government and, I am sure, the whole House earnestly trust that the course of events will result in her doing so. Besides, a great deal can happen and a great deal will happen in the next two years, and every influence that we can use will be on the side of reconciliation and peace. Do not let us speak to-day as if the march of future events was beyond the control of men of good will. The view of the Government, after consulting the Law Officers of the Crown, is that the withdrawal of any party to the Treaty of Locarno from the League does not of itself and by itself involve the release of all parties from their obligations under the Treaty. But the withdrawal of Germany, if indeed it ever were to become effective, would raise issues of so far-reaching a character that it would be impossible to make any public statement upon them without careful consideration in consultation with the other parties to the Treaty.

(*Hansard*, November 7, 1933, cols. 60-2.)

23.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN GERMANY AND POLAND  
SIGNED IN BERLIN, JANUARY 26, 1934

The Governments of Poland and Germany consider that the time has arrived to begin a new era in the political relations of Poland and Germany by means of reaching direct understanding between the two States. They have, therefore, decided by the present Declaration to lay the foundation for the future shaping of these relations.

Both Governments proceed from the assumption that the maintenance and stabilization of a permanent peace between their respective countries constitutes an essential condition of a general peace in Europe. They are therefore determined to base their mutual relations on the principles contained in the Pact of Paris<sup>1</sup> of August 27, 1928, and desire to define more precisely the application of these principles in so far as the relations between Poland and Germany are concerned.

At the same time each of the two Governments declares that the international obligations which, up till now, they have undertaken towards third parties do not hinder the peaceful development of their mutual relations, are not in contradiction to the present Declaration, and are not infringed by this Declaration. In addition, both Governments declare that the present Declaration does not concern problems which, in accordance with international law, should be regarded exclusively as internal affairs of either State.

Both Governments declare that it is their intention to reach direct understanding on problems concerning their mutual relations. In the event of disputes arising between them on questions which could not be settled by direct negotiations, both Governments will seek such solutions in each particular case by way of other peaceful means mutually agreed upon, without, however, excluding the possibility of applying, if necessary, such modes of procedure as are provided for such cases by other agreements by which they are mutually bound. In no case, however, shall they have recourse to force in order to settle such questions under dispute.

The guarantee of peace established upon the above principles will facilitate for both Governments the important task of finding, for

<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 68.

political, economic, and cultural problems, solutions based upon just and equitable consideration of the interests of both parties.

Both Governments are convinced that the relations between their respective countries will thus fruitfully develop and will lead to the firm establishment of good neighbourly relations, which should have salutary consequences not only for their own countries but also for the other nations of Europe.

The present Declaration shall be ratified and the deposit of ratifications shall be made in Warsaw as soon as possible<sup>1</sup>. The Declaration shall remain in force during a period of ten years to begin on the day of the deposit of ratifications. If neither of the two Governments should give notice of its termination six months before the lapse of this period of time it shall continue to remain in force; after that period, however, each Government will be free to terminate it at any time by giving six months' notice.

Made in two copies, one in the Polish and one in the German language.

Berlin, January 26, 1934.

For the Polish Government: J. LIPSKI

For the German Government: VON NEURATH

(*J. W. Wheeler-Bennett: Documents on International Affairs 1933*, London 1934, pp. 424-5.)

## 24.

### JOINT DECLARATION ISSUED ON BEHALF OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC AS THE RESULT OF THE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND BRITISH MINISTERS IN LONDON, FEBRUARY 1-3, 1935

The object of the meeting between the British and French Ministers, which has been taking place in London, was to promote the peace of the world by closer European co-operation, in a spirit of most friendly confidence, and to remove those tendencies which, if unchecked, are calculated to lead to a race in armaments and to increase the dangers of war.

<sup>1</sup> Ratified on February 24, 1934.

With this object in view the British and French Ministers proceeded to an examination of the general situation. They took note of the particularly important part played by the League of Nations in the recent settlements of certain international problems, and welcomed the successful results as evidence of the conciliatory spirit of all the Governments taking part in those settlements. They declare their determination to pursue, both as regards the problems of their own countries and of the League, policies guided by the same methods of conciliation and co-operation.

With reference to the Franco-Italian agreements recently reached in Rome, the British Ministers, on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, cordially welcomed the declaration by which the French and Italian Governments have asserted their intention to develop the traditional friendship which unites the two nations, and associated His Majesty's Government with the intention of the French and Italian Governments to collaborate in a spirit of mutual trust in the maintenance of general peace.

The British Ministers expressed the congratulations of His Majesty's Government on the conclusion of the Rome Agreement regarding Central Europe, and made it clear that, as a consequence of the declarations made by His Majesty's Government in conjunction with the French and Italian Governments on the 17th February and the 27th September last, His Majesty's Government consider themselves to be among the Powers which will, as provided in the Rome Agreement, consult together if the independence and integrity of Austria is menaced.

The British and French Ministers hope that the encouraging progress thus achieved may now be continued by means of the direct and effective co-operation of Germany. They are agreed that neither Germany nor any other Power whose armaments have been defined by the Peace Treaties is entitled by unilateral action to modify these obligations. But they are further agreed that nothing would contribute more to the restoration of confidence and the prospects of peace among nations than a general settlement freely negotiated between Germany and the other Powers. This general settlement would make provision for the organisation of security in Europe, particularly by means of the conclusion of pacts, freely negotiated between all the interested parties, and ensuring mutual assistance in Eastern

Europe and the system foreshadowed in the Rome *procès-verbal* for Central Europe. Simultaneously, and in conformity with the terms of the declaration of the 11th December, 1932<sup>1</sup>, regarding equality of rights in a system of security, this settlement would establish agreements regarding armaments generally which, in the case of Germany, would replace the provisions of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles at present limiting the arms and armed forces of Germany. It would also be part of the general settlement that Germany should resume her place in the League of Nations with a view to active membership. The French Government and the Government of the United Kingdom trust that the other Governments concerned may share these views.

In the course of these meetings, the British and French Ministers have been impressed by the special dangers to peace created by modern developments in the air, the misuse of which might lead to sudden aerial aggression by one country upon another, and have given consideration to the possibility of provision being made against these dangers by a reciprocal regional agreement between certain Powers. It is suggested that the signatories would undertake immediately to give the assistance of their air forces to whichever of them might be the victim of unprovoked aerial aggression by one of the contracting parties. The British and French Ministers, on behalf of their respective Governments, found themselves in agreement that a mutual arrangement of this kind for Western Europe would go far to operate as a deterrent to aggression and to ensure immunity from sudden attacks from the air; and they resolved to invite Italy, Germany and Belgium to consider with them whether such a convention might not be promptly negotiated. They earnestly desire that all the countries concerned should appreciate that the object of this proposal is to reinforce peace—the sole aim pursued by the two Governments.

The Governments of France and of the United Kingdom declare themselves ready to resume their consultations without delay after having received the replies of the other interested Powers.

(*Cmd. 5143*, pp. 15-7.)

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<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 79.

25.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF  
GERMANY'S MILITARY INDEPENDENCE, MARCH 16, 1935

To the German people!

When in November, 1918, the German people, trusting in the promises given in President Wilson's Fourteen Points, grounded arms after four and a half years' honorable resistance in a war whose outbreak they had never desired, they believed they had rendered a service not only to tormented humanity but also to a great idea *per se*.

Themselves the most serious sufferers from the result of this insane struggle, the millions composing our people trustingly seized upon the idea of a new order in the relations between peoples, an order which was to be ennobled on one hand by doing away with the secrecy of diplomatic cabinet policies and on the other hand by abandoning the terrible methods of war. The historically severest result of the defeat seemed to many Germans to be the only sacrifice necessary in order once and for all to save the world from similar terrors.

The idea of the League of Nations has perhaps in no nation awakened more fervent acclaim than in Germany, stripped as she was of all earthly happiness. Only thus it was conceivable that the German people not only accepted but also fulfilled the conditions, verily senseless in many respects, for the destruction of every condition and possibility of defense.

The German people, and especially their governments of that time, were convinced that by fulfilment of the conditions of disarmament laid down in the Versailles Treaty and in accordance with the promises of that treaty, the beginning of international general disarmament would be marked and guaranteed.

For, only in a two-sided fulfilment of the task by the treaty could there lie a moral and sensible justification for a demand which, one-sidedly imposed and executed, had necessarily to lead to an eternal discrimination, and thereby to a declaration of inferiority of a great nation.

Under such conditions, however, a peace treaty of this sort could never create the conditions for a true inward reconciliation of peoples, nor for the pacification of the world achieved in this manner, but could only set up a hatred that would gnaw eternally.

Germany has, according to the investigation of the Interallied Control Commission, fulfilled the disarmament conditions imposed upon her. Following is the work of destruction of the German power of resistance and the means necessary therefor, as was certified by this commission:

Army: 59,897 cannon and heavy gun barrels, 130,558 machine guns, 31,470 mine throwers and barrels, 6,007,000 guns and carbines, 243,937 machine-gun bores, 28,001 cannon carriages, 4,390 machine-gun carriages, 38,750,000 bullets, 16,550,000 hand and gun grenades, 60,400,000 fuses, 491,000,000 rounds of ammunition for hand weapons, 335,000 tons of shell cases, 23,515 tons of cartridge cases, 37,600 tons of powder, 79,500 ammunition gauges, 212,000 telephones, 1,072 flame throwers, 31 armored trains, 59 tanks, 1,762 observation cars, 8,982 wireless stations, 1,240 field bakeries, 2,199 pontoons, 981.7 tons of equipment for soldiers, 8,230,350 bags of equipment for soldiers, 7,300 pistols and revolvers, 180 machine-gun sleds, 21 transportable workshops, 12 anti-aircraft gun carriages, 11 limbers, 64,000 steel helmets, 174,000 gas masks, 2,500 machines of the former war industry, 8,000 gun barrels.

Air forces: 15,714 chasing and bombing planes, 27,757 airplane motors.

Navy: Material that was either destroyed, scrapped, sunk or handed over—26 first-class battleships, 4 coastal cruisers, 4 armored cruisers, 19 small cruisers, 21 schooling and other ships, 83 torpedo boats, 315 submarines.

In addition there had to be destroyed vehicles of all sorts, utensils for gas attacks and partly for gas protection, fuel of various kinds, explosives, searchlights, gun sighting appliances, instruments for measuring distance in sound, optical instruments of all kinds, harness for horses, equipment for narrow gauge railways, printeries, field kitchens, workshops, cut and thrust weapons, steel helmets, material for transporting munitions, normal and special machines belonging to war industry, mounting frames, drawings for the latter, and hangars for airplanes and airships, &c.

After this historically unexampled fulfilment of a treaty, the German people had the right to expect the redemption also by the other side of obligations undertaken. For, firstly, Germany had disarmed; secondly, in the peace treaty the demand had been expressly

made that Germany must be disarmed in order thereby to create the precondition for general disarmament; that is, it was contended that Germany's armaments alone furnished the reason for the armaments of the other countries; thirdly, the German people at that time were filled both as regards their government and their parties with a spirit that corresponded exactly with the pacifistic-democratic ideals of the League of Nations and its founders.

But while Germany as one party to the treaty had fulfilled its obligations, the redemption of the obligation on the part of the second partner to the treaty failed to become a fact. That means: *The high contracting parties of the former victor States have one-sidedly divorced themselves from the obligations of the Versailles Treaty.*

Not alone did they refrain from disarming in a manner that could by any stretch be comparable with the destruction of German arms. No. Not even was there a halt in the armaments race, on the contrary the increase of armaments on the part of a whole group of States became evident. Whatever had during the war been invented in the way of new engines of destruction was now in peacetime brought to final perfection by methodically scientific labor.

In the realm of creating mighty armored cars, as well as in that of new fighting and bombing planes, continuous and terrible improvements resulted. New gigantic cannon were constructed, new explosive fire and gas bombs were developed.

The world, however, since then has again resumed its cries of war, just as though there never had been a World War nor the Versailles Treaty. In the midst of these highly armed, war-like States, which were more and more making use of the most modern motorized equipment, Germany was, militarily speaking, in a vacuum, defenselessly at the mercy of every threatening danger.

The German people recall the misfortune and suffering of fifteen years' economic misery and political and moral humiliation. It was, therefore, understandable that Germany began loudly to demand the fulfilment of the promises made by other States to disarm, for this is clear: The world would not only stand for one hundred years of peace, but such a period would be an unmeasured boon. It cannot, however, stand for one hundred years of division into victor and vanquished.



The conviction that international disarmament was morally justified and necessary, gained ground, not only in Germany, but also among many other peoples. From the insistence of these forces there resulted attempts through conferences to give direction to the reduction of armaments and thereby to a general equalization on a low level. Thus there developed the first proposals for an international agreement on armaments, of which we remember the MacDonald plan as significant.

Germany was ready to accept this plan and adopt it as the foundation for arrangements to be arrived at. It failed because the other States declined to accept it and was finally abandoned.

Inasmuch as under these circumstances the equality which was solemnly promised to the German people and Reich in the declaration of December, 1932, failed of realization, the new Reich's government, as guardian of the honor and right to live of the German people, was unable to continue to take part in conferences of that sort or to continue membership in the League of Nations. However, even after leaving Geneva, Germany still was ready, not only to examine the other States' proposals, but herself to make practical proposals.

In that connection she identified herself with the viewpoint which other States themselves had expressed; namely, that the creation of armies with short enlistments is not suited to the purposes of attack, and is therefore recommendable for peaceful defense. Germany was therefore ready to transform the Reichswehr with its long service period into an army with short enlistments, consonantly with the wishes of the other States.

Her proposals, made during the Winter of 1933—34, were practical and executable. The fact that they were declined as well as the fact that Italian and English proposals along similar lines were finally declined, justified the conclusion that on the other side of the contracting parties there no longer existed any inclination for a belated and honest fulfilment of the disarmament clauses of Versailles.

Under these circumstances, the German Government saw itself compelled of its own accord to take those necessary measures which could ensure the end of a condition of impotent defenselessness of a great people and Reich, which was as unworthy as in the last analysis it was menacing. In so doing it proceeded from the same premises which Mr. Baldwin in his last speech so truthfully expressed:

»A country which is not willing to adopt the necessary preventive measures for its own defense will never enjoy any power in this world, either moral or material.«

The government of the present-day German Reich, however, desires but one single moral and material power—namely the power to safeguard peace for the Reich and thereby, really also, for all Europe.

The government, therefore, continued to do what it could and what served the advancement of peace.

Firstly, it proposed a long time ago the conclusion of non-aggression pacts to all its neighbor States.

Secondly, it has sought for and found the adjustment laid down in the treaty with its eastern neighbor which, thanks to the great understanding shown on the other side, has, as it hopes, forever taken the poison out of the threatening atmosphere which it found on seizing power, and which will lead to lasting reconciliation and friendship between the two peoples.

Thirdly, it has finally given France the solemn assurance that Germany, after the adjustment of the Saar question, now no longer will make territorial demands upon France.

It believes thereby, in a manner rare in history, to have created the precondition for ending the century-old strife between the two great nations by making a heavy political and material sacrifice.

The German Government must, however, to its regret, note that for months the rest of the world has been rearming continuously and increasingly. It sees in the creation of a Soviet Russian Army of 101 divisions, that is, in an admitted present peace strength of 960,000 men, an element that at the time of the conclusion of the Versailles Treaty could not have been divined. It sees in the forcing of similar measures in other States further proofs of the declination to accept the disarmament idea as originally proclaimed.

Far be it from the German Government to raise complaint against any other State. It must point out, however, today that by France's introduction of a two-year service period as now decided, the idea upon which the creation of armies with short enlistment had been tested has been abandoned in favor of an organization with long enlistments. This, however, was one of the arguments advanced at the time for demanding that Germany give up her Reichswehr.

Under these circumstances the German Government considers it impossible still longer to refrain from taking the necessary measures for the security of the Reich or even to hide the knowledge thereof from the other nations.

If, therefore, it now fulfils the wish for enlightening the world on Germany's intentions, as expressed in the speech by the British Minister Stanley Baldwin, November 28, 1934, it does so: Firstly, in order to give the German people the conviction and other States the knowledge that the safeguarding of the honor and security of the German Reich henceforth will be again entrusted to the own power of the German nation; secondly, in order, by fixing the extent of German measures, to devitalize those claims which attempt to ascribe to the German people a striving for a position of military hegemony in Europe.

What the German Government, as the guardian of the honor and interests of the German nation, desires is to make sure that Germany possesses sufficient instruments of power not only to maintain the integrity of the German Reich but also to command international respect and value as co-guarantor of general peace.

For in this hour the German Government renews before the German people, before the entire world, its assurance of its determination never to proceed beyond the safeguarding of German honor and freedom of the Reich, and especially does it not intend in rearming Germany to create any instrument for warlike attack, but, to the contrary, exclusively for defense and thereby for the maintenance of peace.

In so doing, the German Reich's Government expresses the confident hope that the German people, having again reverted to their own honor, may be privileged in independent equality to make its contribution for the pacification of the world in free and open co-operation with other nations and their governments.

With this in view, the German Reich's Government today passed the following law: "*Law for the upbuilding of a defensive force, dated March 16, 1935,*" which is hereby made public:

(1) Service in defensive forces is predicated on universal military service.

(2) The German peace army, including police units which have been incorporated in the army, shall comprise twelve corps commands and thirty-six divisions.

(3) Supplementary laws for regulating universal military service will be drafted and submitted to the Reich Cabinet by the Reich Minister of Defense.

Berlin, March 16, 1935.

(*International Conciliation*, May, 1935, pp. 264-70.)

## 26.

### THE ATTITUDE OF THE BRITISH, FRENCH AND ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS TO GERMANY'S REARMAMENT

BRITISH NOTE OF PROTEST, MARCH 18, 1935

1. His Majesty's Government feel bound to convey to the German Government their protest against the announcement made by the latter March 16 of a decision to adopt conscription and to increase the peace basis of the German army to thirty-six divisions.

Following upon the announcement of a German air force,<sup>1</sup> such a declaration is a further example of unilateral action which, apart from the issue of principle, is calculated seriously to increase the uneasiness of Europe.

The proposals for an Anglo-German meeting arose out of the terms of the Anglo-French communiqué of February 3 and the German reply of February 14, supplemented by further communications between his Majesty's Government and the German Government. His Majesty's Government consider it necessary to call the specific attention of the German Government to the effect of those documents.

2. The London communiqué of February 3, while noting that the armaments limited by treaty could not be modified by unilateral action, declared the British and French Governments favored a general settlement freely negotiated between Germany and other Powers which would make provisions for the organization of the security of Europe on the lines therein indicated and would simultaneously establish an agreement about armaments which, in the case of Germany, would replace the relevant provisions of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.

<sup>1</sup> The creation of a German Air Force was notified to the foreign Military Attachés in Berlin on March 9, 1935.

The communiqué went on to state that it would be part of a general settlement by which it was contemplated that Germany would resume her active membership in the League of Nations, and proceeded to sketch out the terms of an air pact between the Locarno Powers to operate as a deterrent to aggression and to ensure immunity from sudden attacks from the air.

3. The German Government's reply ten days later welcomed the spirit of friendly confidence which the Anglo-French communiqué had expressed and undertook that the German Government would submit to exhaustive examination the questions raised in the first part of the London communiqué.

It agreed that the spirit expressed in the communiqué of free negotiations between sovereign States could alone lead to lasting international settlements in the sphere of armaments.

In particular it welcomed the proposal for an air pact, and the German reply concluded by saying that before taking part in the proposed negotiations the German Government considered it desirable to clarify in separate conversations with the governments concerned a number of preliminary questions of principle.

For this purpose, it invited his Majesty's Government to enter into a direct exchange of views with the German Government.

4. Since his Majesty's Government desired to make sure there should be no misunderstanding as to the scope and purpose of the proposed Anglo-German meeting, they addressed a further inquiry to the German Government February 21, to which the German Government replied the next day.

The result was that it was definitely agreed between the two governments that the object of the suggested meeting would be to carry the consultation a stage further on all matters referred to in the Anglo-French communiqué. It is upon this basis, therefore, that his Majesty's Government have been preparing to pay the visit to Berlin which the German Government suggested.

5. Thus, what was contemplated was "a general settlement freely negotiated between Germany and other Powers" and "agreements regarding armaments which in the case of Germany would replace the provisions of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles."

This has throughout been the purpose of his Majesty's Govern-

ment's policy, and upon its achievement they have concentrated all their efforts at Geneva and elsewhere.

But the attainment of a comprehensive agreement, which by common consent would take the place of treaty provisions, cannot be facilitated by putting forward as a decision already arrived at, strengths for military effectives greatly exceeding any before suggested—strengths moreover which, if maintained unaltered, must make more difficult, if not impossible, agreement with the other Powers vitally concerned.

6. His Majesty's Government are most unwilling to abandon any opportunity which the arranged visit might afford of promoting a general understanding, but in the new circumstances, before undertaking it they feel bound to call the attention of the German Government to the above considerations, and they wish to be assured that the German Government still desire the visit to take place within the scope and for the purposes previously agreed as set out in Paragraph 4 above.

#### FRENCH NOTE OF PROTEST, MARCH 21, 1935

Receiving the Ambassador of France March 16, the Chancellor of the Reich made known to him the text of a law promulgated the same day by which the German Government re-established in Germany obligatory military service and increased the German Army to thirty-six divisions.

A week earlier the German authorities had given an official status to German military aviation.

These decisions are definitely contrary to the contractual engagements written in the treaties which Germany signed.

They are equally contrary to the declaration of December 19, 1932, whereby the Reich Government voluntarily recognized that a general statute of armaments carrying equality of right for Germany with all nations should not be made without the establishment of a security régime for all.

After several proposals tending to give effect to this principle, the French Government, in accord with the British Government, showed its confidence in the government of the Reich by proposing to it a procedure of negotiation, free and fully compatible with

respect to the treaty rights, for the establishment by contractual means of a new arms statute for Germany in a general settlement of the problem of security and of armament; and the government of the Reich had appeared to justify the confidence in accepting the principle of such procedure.

The publication of the German law of March 16, intervening brusquely before the date fixed for the first exchange of views between the government of the Reich and one of two signatory governments of the London communiqué of February 3, constitutes new manifestations of the methods the government of the Reich intends to oppose to the offers of conciliation which had been made to it.

A double conclusion thus must be drawn by the government of the (French) Republic: on one side, and in a general fashion the government of the Reich deliberately distrusts the essential principle of the right of a people that no Power can denounce the engagement of a treaty or modify its stipulations except with the agreement of the contracting parties and by means of a friendly agreement; on the other side, and in particular, after having itself shown its desires to see cleared up between the interested Powers the immediate effect of the negotiation to which it was invited, the government of the Reich has deliberately taken the most effective measures to compromise the fate of this negotiation in taking for itself, in advance and unilaterally through a *fait accompli*, one of its essential objects.

The government of the republic has the duty to make the most formal protestation against these measures with regard to which it now makes all reservations.

Conscious of the efforts of conciliation which it has not ceased to follow, in all loyalty and with the most constant care for German dignity, to associate the Reich fully in the organization of European security, it can only place on the German Government responsibility for the state of uneasiness thus created in the world and the consequences which can result from it, that is to say, those obligations which from this fact may be imposed on the governments of the different interested countries.

Determined, so far as it is concerned, to seek all means of international cooperation designed to dissipate this uneasiness and to safeguard the peace of Europe, the French Government desires to reaffirm with its respective treaties its firm resolution not to accept

in any negotiation that consideration be given unilateral decisions taken in violation of international engagements.

## ITALIAN NOTE OF PROTEST, MARCH 21, 1935

The Chancellor of the Reich on March 16 communicated to the Italian Ambassador a law promulgated the same day on the basis of which the German Government has re-established in Germany obligatory military service and increased effectives of the German Army to thirty-six divisions.

One week previously German authorities had communicated officially the constitution of German military aviation.

The Italian Government has taken note of the notes directed to the German Government on this subject by the British Government and the French Government.

The Italian Government cannot but point out that in the accord reached in Rome January 7, 1935, between the Italian and the French Governments, and the final communiqué of the conversations in London between the British and French Governments published on February 3, there was reaffirmed the essential principle of that military statute established by Part V of the Treaty of Versailles which could not be modified by unilateral act.

The Italian Government, which, in so far as it is concerned, has always maintained the opportunity of revision of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles through negotiations among the interested governments, in conditions of perfect parity, had adhered to the principle that the question of German armament should have been the object of a general negotiation similar to what was established in the declaration of December 11, 1932, in which Germany participated.

This procedure had been accepted in principle by the German Government itself in its communication on February 14 of this year.

The Italian Government therefore feels the duty of advancing the most ample reservation concerning the decision of the government of the Reich and its probable development.

The Italian Government has always sought to link the Reich fully to the system of collaboration among the principal interested Powers which would recognize fully to the Reich the right and responsibilities of a sovereign State.



## THE STRESA CONFERENCE, APRIL, 1935

Especially for these precedents the decision of the Reich acquires particular seriousness, especially for the state of uncertainty which it excites in all countries.

The Italian Government has given many proofs, also recently, of its desire for international collaboration and proposes to continue in those directions which respond to the need of the people and to postulate neighborliness in Europe, but feels the duty of declaring that in the eventual future negotiations she cannot simply accept as situations of fact those determined by unilateral decision which annul the undertakings of international character.

(*International Conciliation*, May, 1935, pp. 271-7.)

### 27.

## THE STRESA CONFERENCE, APRIL 11-14, 1935

### I

#### JOINT RESOLUTION, APRIL 14, 1935

The Representatives of the Governments of Italy, France and the United Kingdom have examined at Stresa the general European situation in the light of the results of the exchanges of views which have taken place in recent weeks, of the decision taken on the 16th March by the German Government, and of the information obtained by British Ministers during the visits recently paid by them to several European capitals. Having considered the bearing of this situation on the policy defined in the arrangements reached respectively in Rome and in London, they found themselves in complete agreement on the various matters discussed.

1. They agreed upon a common line of conduct to be pursued in the course of the discussion of the request presented to the Council of the League of Nations by the French Government.

2. The information which they have received has confirmed their view that the negotiations should be pursued for the development which is desired in security in Eastern Europe.

3. The Representatives of the three Governments examined afresh the Austrian situation.

They confirmed the Anglo-Franco-Italian declarations of the 17th February and the 27th September, 1934, in which the three Govern-

ments recognised that the necessity of maintaining the independence and integrity of Austria would continue to inspire their common policy.

Referring to the Franco-Italian protocol of the 7th January, 1935, and to the Anglo-French declarations<sup>1</sup> of the 3rd February, 1935, in which the decision was reaffirmed to consult together as to the measures to be taken in the case of threats to the integrity and independence of Austria, they agreed to recommend that Representatives of all the Governments enumerated in the protocol of Rome should meet at a very early date with a view to concluding the Central European agreement.

4. As regards the proposed Air Pact for Western Europe, the Representatives of the three Governments confirmed the principles and procedure that should be followed as envisaged in the London communiqué of the 3rd February, and agreed to continue actively the study of the question with a view to the drafting of a pact between the five Powers mentioned in the London communiqué and of any bilateral agreements which might accompany it.

5. In approaching the problem of armaments, the Representatives of the three Powers recalled that the London communiqué envisaged an agreement to be freely negotiated with Germany to take the place of the relevant clauses of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, and took into careful and anxious consideration the recent action of the German Government and the report furnished by Sir John Simon of his conversations with the German Chancellor on this subject.

It was regretfully recognised that the method of unilateral repudiation adopted by the German Government, at a moment when steps were being taken to promote a freely negotiated settlement of the question of armaments, had undermined public confidence in the security of a peaceful order. Moreover, the magnitude of the declared programme of German rearmament, already well in process of execution, had invalidated the quantitative assumptions upon which efforts for disarmament had hitherto been based and shaken the hopes by which those efforts were inspired.

The Representatives of the three Powers, nevertheless, reaffirm their earnest desire to sustain peace by establishing a sense of security, and declare for themselves that they remain anxious to join

<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 87.

## THE STRESA CONFERENCE, APRIL 1935

in every practicable effort for promoting international agreement on the limitation of armaments.

6. The Representatives of the three Governments took into consideration the desire expressed by the States, whose military status was respectively determined by the Treaties of Saint-Germain, Trianon and Neuilly, to obtain the revision of this status.

They decided that the other States concerned should be informed of this desire through the diplomatic channel.

They agreed to recommend the other States concerned to examine this question with a view to its settlement by mutual agreement within the framework of general and regional guarantees of security.

### II

#### ANGLO-ITALIAN DECLARATION, APRIL 14, 1935

The following joint Declaration was made by the Representatives of Italy and the United Kingdom in reference to the Treaty of Locarno:—

The Representatives of Italy and of the United Kingdom, the Powers which participate in the Treaty of Locarno only in the capacity of guarantors, formally reaffirm all their obligations under that Treaty, and declare their intention, should the need arise, faithfully to fulfil them.

Inasmuch as the two Powers have entered into these obligations in relation to all the other parties to the Treaty of Locarno, this joint declaration, which has been made at the Stresa Conference in which France is participating, will also be formally communicated to the Governments of Germany and Belgium.

### III

#### FINAL DECLARATION, APRIL 14, 1935

The three Powers, the object of whose policy is the collective maintenance of peace within the framework of the League of Nations, find themselves in complete agreement in opposing, by all practicable means, any unilateral repudiation of treaties which may endanger the peace of Europe, and will act in close and cordial collaboration for this purpose.

(*Cmd. 4880.*)

## 28.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT  
REGARDING THE EASTERN PACT, APRIL 15, 1935

In order to deal with misleading statements in various press commentaries, the German Government has the honour to define in the following manner the attitude as regards the Eastern Pact, with the request that this explanation may be forwarded to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir J. Simon:—

"1. In the course of the Berlin conversations the Leader and Chancellor of the Reich informed the British delegation that the German Government was, to its regret, not in a position to announce its accession to the Eastern Pact in the proposed form. The German Government was, however, ready to give its consent to such a collective security pact if—

"First, it were based on mutual and general obligations of non-aggression and arrangements for arbitration; and

"Secondly, in the case of a breach of the peace, a consultative procedure were provided for;

"Thirdly, the German Government would be ready, while emphasising the difficulty of clearly defining an aggressor, to adhere to general measures for withholding support from such an aggressor.

"The German Government still stands by this offer to-day.

"2. The Leader and Chancellor of the Reich, in the course of these conversations, also stated that the German Government was not in a position to agree to a proposal for a pact which contained more or less automatic obligation for military assistance as between all or certain individual parties. The German Government saw in such a proposal not an element for the maintenance of peace, but rather an element of menace to peace. The German Government to-day still adheres to this view and to the attitude which must result from it.

"3. The German Government immediately after its accession to power expressed the wish to conclude pacts of non-aggression with the neighbouring States. It made this proposal without having full knowledge of existing bi- or multi-lateral military agreements between individual States and without any relation to them. As it has no aggressive intentions itself, it does not feel affected by real

## GERMANY AND THE EASTERN PACT

defensive agreements either. The German Government still holds this view to-day.

“Just as it is, therefore, unable to join any pact which contains such military engagements as an essential element of its contents, and therefore of its existence, so can agreements of this sort, which lie outside this pact, not deter the German Government on its side from concluding pacts of non-aggression on the basis set out above.

“Such was the sense of the German Government’s reply to the British Ambassador’s enquiry whether Germany was ready to conclude an Eastern Pact on the basis which it had itself indicated even if other States had concluded or would conclude other special agreements among themselves.

“The German Government, however, will not refrain at this point from the following observations:—

“The amplification of pacts of non-aggression and no-force pacts which is considered necessary by various Governments, through agreements for military assistance, rests upon an inherent contradiction. Either one believes in obligations which have been freely undertaken or one does not believe in them; if one believes in them, the necessity of such military agreements is not apparent. But if one doubts the sincere fulfilment of a non-aggression obligation, this doubt is equally justified in regard to the proper fulfilment of the amplifying military obligations of such peace pacts. If it is possible that wars may arise out of non-aggression pacts, it is just as possible that out of defensive mutual assistance pacts there may come offensive acts of aggression. Now, to the German Government the distance from a pact of non-aggression and a no-force pact to a forcible breach of the peace seems further than the distance from military obligations of a defensive character to a military policy of an offensive character. The German Government now, as before, sees in this development of military alliances in Europe no element of collective peaceful development or, indeed, of any guarantee of peace. It is therefore not in a position to sign pacts in which such obligations are an integral part, whether they apply to all or only individual contracting parties.”

(*Cmd. 5143*, pp. 22-4.)

29.

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, APRIL 17, 1935

The Council,

Considering,

(1) That the scrupulous respect of all treaty obligations is a fundamental principle of international life and an essential condition of the maintenance of peace;

(2) That it is an essential principle of the law of nations that no power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty nor modify the stipulations thereof unless with the consent of the other contracting parties;

(3) That the promulgation of the Military Law of March 16th, 1935, by the German Government conflicts with the above principles;

(4) That, by this unilateral action, the German Government confers upon itself no right;

(5) That this unilateral action, by introducing a new disturbing element into the international situation, must necessarily appear to be a threat to European security;

Considering, on the other hand,

(6) That the British Government and the French Government, with the approval of the Italian Government, had communicated to the German Government as early as February 3rd, 1935, a plan for a general settlement, to be freely negotiated, for the organisation of security in Europe and for a general limitation of armaments in a system of equality of rights, while ensuring the active co-operation of Germany in the League of Nations;

(7) And that the unilateral action of Germany above referred to was not only inconsistent with this plan, but was taken at a time when negotiations were actually being pursued:

I. Declares that Germany has failed in the duty which lies upon all the Members of the international community to respect the undertakings which they have contracted, and condemns any unilateral repudiation of international obligations;

II. Invites the Governments which took the initiative in the plan of February 3rd, 1935, or which gave their approval to it, to continue the negotiations so initiated, and in particular to promote the

conclusion, within the framework of the League of Nations, of the agreements which may appear necessary to attain the object defined in this plan, due account being taken of the obligations of the Covenant, with a view to assuring the maintenance of peace;

III. Considering that the unilateral repudiation of international obligations may endanger the very existence of the League of Nations as an organisation for maintaining peace and promoting security;

Decides:

That such repudiation, without prejudice to the application of the measures already provided in international agreements, should, in the event of its having relation to undertakings concerning the security of peoples and the maintenance of peace in Europe, call into play all appropriate measures on the part of Members of the League and within the framework of the Covenant;

Requests a Committee composed of . . . to propose for this purpose measures to render the Covenant more effective in the organisation of collective security and to define in particular the economic and financial measures which might be applied, should in the future a State, whether a Member of the League of Nations or not, endanger peace by the unilateral repudiation of its international obligations.

*(League of Nations, Official Journal, 16th Year, No. 5, May 1935, pp. 551-2.)*

### 30.

#### GERMAN NOTE OF PROTEST, APRIL 20, 1935

The German Government contests the right of the Governments which as members of the League Council took the decision of April 17th to set themselves up as judges of Germany.

It sees in the League Council's decision an attempt at a new special treatment as regards Germany, and consequently rejects it most resolutely.

It reserves the right shortly to make known its attitude regarding the different questions touched on in the decision.

*(The Times, April 22, 1935.)*

## 31.

FRANCO-SOVIET PACT OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE,  
MAY 2, 1935<sup>1</sup>

The President of the French Republic and the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, animated by the desire to consolidate peace in Europe and to guarantee its benefits to their respective countries by ensuring more completely the strict application of the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which aim at the maintenance of the national security, territorial integrity and political independence of States;

Determined to devote their efforts to the preparation and conclusion of a European agreement with this object, and in the meantime to promote, as far as they are able, the effective application of the provisions of the Covenant of the League,

<sup>1</sup> Compare herewith the texts of the treaties of alliance between France and Imperial Russia:

Franco-Russian Military Agreement, August 17, 1892

*The Agreement signed by Obroucheff and Boisdeffre, Chiefs of Staff of the French and Russian Armies, was finally approved by the Tsar in December 1893, and ratified by exchange of notes between the French Ambassador de Montebello and the Russian Chancellor Giers.*

La France et la Russie, étant animées d'un égal désir de conserver la paix, et n'ayant d'autre but que de parer aux nécessités d'une guerre défensive, provoquée par une attaque des forces de la Triple Alliance contre l'une ou l'autre d'entre elles, sont convenues des dispositions suivantes:

1 — Si la France est attaquée par l'Allemagne, ou par l'Italie soutenue par l'Allemagne, la Russie emploiera toutes ses forces disponibles pour attaquer l'Allemagne.

Si la Russie est attaquée par l'Allemagne, ou par l'Autriche soutenue par l'Allemagne, la France emploiera toutes ses forces disponibles pour combattre l'Allemagne.

2 — Dans le cas où les forces de la Triple Alliance, ou d'une des Puissances qui en font partie, viendraient à se mobiliser, la France et la Russie, à la première annonce de l'événement, et sans qu'il soit besoin d'un concert préalable, mobiliseront immédiatement et simultanément la totalité de leurs forces, et les porteront le plus près possible de leurs frontières.

3 — Les forces disponibles qui doivent être employées contre l'Allemagne seront, du côté de la France, de 1,300,000 hommes, du côté de la Russie, de 700,000 à 800,000 hommes.

Ces forces s'engageront à fond, en toute diligence, de manière que l'Allemagne ait à lutter, à la fois, à l'Est et à l'Ouest.



FRANCO-SOVIET PACT, MAY 1935

Have decided to conclude a treaty with these objects and have appointed as their plenipotentiaries:—

The President of the French Republic:

M. Pierre Laval, Senator, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

The Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

M. Vladimir Potemkin, Member of the Central Executive Committee, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the President of the French Republic;

Who, having exchanged their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon the following provisions: —

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4 — Les États-Majors des Armées des deux pays se concerteront en tout temps pour préparer et faciliter l'exécution des mesures prévues ci-dessus.

Ils se communiqueront, dès le temps de paix, tous les renseignements relatifs aux armées de la Triple Alliance qui sont ou parviendront à leur connaissance.

Les voies et moyens de correspondre en temps de guerre seront étudiés et prévus d'avance.

5 — La France et la Russie ne concluront pas la paix séparément.

6 — La présente Convention aura la même durée que la Triple Alliance.

7 — Toutes les clauses énumérées ci-dessus seront tenues rigoureusement secrètes.

Franco-Russian Naval Agreement, July 16, 1912

*The Agreement was signed by Aubert and Prince Lieven, Chiefs of Staff of the French and Russian Navies, as well as by the respective Ministers of Naval Affairs, Delcassé and Grigorovitch.*

1 — Les forces navales de la France et de la Russie coopéreront dans toutes les éventualités où l'alliance prévoit et stipule l'action combinée des armées de terre.

2 — La coopération des forces navales sera préparée dès le temps de paix.

A cet effet, les Chefs d'État-Major de l'une et l'autre Marines sont dès maintenant autorisés à correspondre directement, à échanger tous renseignements, à étudier toutes hypothèses de guerre, à concerter tous programmes stratégiques.

3 — Les Chefs d'État-Major de l'une et l'autre Marines conféreront en personne, une fois l'an au moins; ils dresseront procès-verbal de leurs conférences.

4 — Pour la durée, l'efficiencie et le secret, la présente Convention est assimilée à la Convention militaire du 17 août 1892 et aux accords subséquents.

(*L'Alliance Franco-Russe.* Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Documents Diplomatiques. Paris, Imprimerie Nationale 1918. No. 71 Annex and No. 102.)

Article 1

In the event of France or the U.S.S.R. being threatened with, or in danger of, attack on the part of a European State, the U.S.S.R., and, reciprocally, France, undertake to proceed mutually to immediate consultation as regards the measures to be taken for the observance of the provisions of article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Article 2

In the event of France or the U.S.S.R., in the circumstances specified in article 15, paragraph 7, of the League of Nations Covenant, being the object, in spite of the genuinely peaceful intentions of both countries, of an unprovoked attack on the part of a European State, the U.S.S.R., and, reciprocally, France, shall immediately give each other aid and assistance.

Article 3

In consideration of the fact that under article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations any member of the League who has recourse to war contrary to the obligations undertaken in articles 12, 13 and 15 of the Covenant is *ipso facto* considered as having committed an act of war against all the other members of the League, France and, reciprocally, the U.S.S.R. undertake in the event of one of them being the object, in these circumstances and in spite of the genuinely peaceful intentions of both countries, of an unprovoked attack on the part of a European State, to give each other immediately aid and assistance in execution of article 16 of the Covenant.

The same obligation is assumed in the event of France or the U.S.S.R. being the object of an attack on the part of a European State in the circumstances specified in article 17, paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Article 4

The obligations laid down above being in conformity with the obligations of the high contracting parties as members of the League of Nations, nothing in the present treaty shall be interpreted as restricting the mission of the League to take appropriate measures to safeguard effectively the peace of the world or as restricting the

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obligations laid upon the high contracting parties by the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Article 5

The present treaty, of which both the French and Russian texts are equally valid, shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification exchanged at Moscow as soon as possible. It shall be registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

It shall come into force as soon as the ratifications have been exchanged, and shall remain in force for five years. If it has not been denounced by either of the high contracting parties giving notice of denunciation at least one year before the expiration of this period, it shall remain in force for an unlimited period, each of the high contracting parties being at liberty to terminate it at a year's notice by a declaration to that effect.

In witness whereof the Plenipotentiaries have signed the present treaty and have affixed their seals thereto.

Done at Paris, in duplicate, this 2nd day of May, 1935.

PROTOCOL OF SIGNATURE

At the moment of proceeding to the signature of the Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Agreement of to-day's date, the plenipotentiaries have signed the following protocol, which shall be included in the exchange of ratifications of the treaty:—

I. It is agreed that the effect of article 3 is to compel each contracting party immediately to give assistance to the other by complying forthwith with the recommendations of the Council of the League of Nations as soon as they shall have been made in accordance with article 16 of the Covenant. It is further agreed that the two contracting parties will take joint action to ensure that the Council issue their recommendations with all the speed required by the circumstances of the case, and that, should the Council nevertheless, for some reason, make no recommendation or fail to reach a unanimous decision, effect shall nevertheless be given to the obligation to render assistance. It is also agreed that the provisions for mutual assistance embodied in this treaty refer only to the case of an attack on either of the contracting parties' own territory.

[III]

II. The joint purpose of both Governments being in no way to invalidate by the present treaty the obligations previously undertaken by France and the U.S.S.R. towards third countries, in published treaties, it is agreed that effect shall not be given to the provisions of the aforesaid treaty in a way which, being inconsistent with the treaty obligations assumed by one of the contracting parties, would expose the latter to sanctions of an international character.

III. The two Governments, recognising the desirability of concluding a regional agreement aiming at the organisation of security as between the contracting States and which, furthermore, might contain or be accompanied by provisions for mutual assistance, leave each other free to become parties, by mutual consent and should the occasion arise, to agreements of this nature, in such form, direct or indirect, as may seem appropriate, the obligations undertaken in these various agreements being intended to take the place of those assumed in the present treaty.

IV. The two Governments declare that the negotiations which have just resulted in the signature of the present treaty were originally started with a view to drawing up a security agreement covering all the countries of North-Eastern Europe, namely, the U.S.S.R., Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Baltic States neighbours of the U.S.S.R.; besides this agreement a treaty of assistance between the U.S.S.R., France and Germany was to have been concluded, under which each of these three States would be pledged to come to the assistance of that one among them which had been the object of an attack by one of these three States. Although circumstances have not hitherto permitted the conclusion of these agreements, which the two parties continue to regard as desirable, it is nevertheless the case that the obligations laid down in the Franco-Soviet Assistance Agreement should be understood as coming into play only within the limits contemplated in the tripartite agreement previously projected. Apart from the obligations resulting from the present treaty, attention must at the same time be called to the fact that, in accordance with the Franco-Soviet Pact of Non-Aggression<sup>1</sup> signed on the 29th November, 1932, and without prejudice to the universal character of the obligations laid down in this pact, in the event of either of the two parties being the object of an attack on

<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 70.

the part of one or several other European Powers not referred to in the above-mentioned tripartite agreement, the other contracting party must abstain, during the period of the conflict, from giving any aid or assistance, direct or indirect, to the aggressor or aggressors; each party, moreover, declaring itself to be bound by no assistance agreement which would be inconsistent with this obligation.

Done at Paris, this 2nd day of May, 1935.

(*Cmd. 5143*, pp. 26-9.)

### 32.

#### STATEMENTS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS REGARDING THE PACT OF LOCARNO AND THE FRANCO-SOVIET PACT OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE, MAY, 1935

May 2

Sir Herbert Samuel.—We were engaged under Locarno to intervene at once if there was anything which could be described as an aggression as between certain countries of Western Europe. We knew that Herr Hitler—he made no concealment of it—was animated by feelings of strong animosity against Russia. Suppose some untoward incident in Eastern Europe were to bring Russia and Germany into conflict, and therefore make operative the clauses of any pact which France might have entered into, so extending the war into Western Europe, should we be automatically obliged to intervene in such a case in Western Europe?

The Prime Minister indicated dissent and he assumed that we should not. The nation would not endorse any binding obligation to take part in any war in circumstances not specified, but would insist on reserving its right to act in any circumstances as the conditions required. Unquestionably it would be guided in such eventualities by the state of public opinion, by the merits of the dispute, and by the prior actions of the parties to that dispute.

Sir John Simon.—It had been asked by Sir H. Samuel whether the “automatic” responsibilities of this country under the Treaty of Locarno would be extended or affected if there was a Franco-Russian agreement, and if, thereafter, conflict arose between Russia and

Germany. If the report which reached him was well founded in fact, an agreement between France and Soviet Russia had been reached that evening, and the question was therefore very pertinent. Suppose that Russia and Germany were to get into conflict and France went to the help of Russia by invading Germany, would that bring this country "automatically" in on the side of Germany? The answer was "No." If Germany attacked Russia and, in view of the Franco-Russian treaty of mutual assistance, France went to the assistance of Russia by attacking Germany, the Locarno Treaty did not put this country, in those circumstances, under any obligation to go to the assistance of Germany. That was the general proposition, but there was a proviso that should be stated.

In order that that should be the position and Germany having no claim under Locarno upon us, then, of course, the assistance of France to Russia must be given in virtue of certain stipulations of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The terms of the prospective Franco-Russian pact, so far as they were known, would be subordinated to the operation of the Locarno Treaty. It followed, therefore, that British obligations would not be increased, any more than they were under Locarno by the treaties of mutual assistance which France concluded with Poland and Czechoslovakia.<sup>1</sup>

(*The Times*, May 3, 1935.)

May 7

Mr. Mander asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether in the event of any alteration by Germany in the demilitarized zone under the Treaty of Versailles it was to be understood that this country would immediately come to the assistance of France with the whole of its armed forces under the Treaty of Locarno.

Sir J. Simon. — The circumstances in which the British guarantee under the Treaty of Locarno would operate are specified in that Treaty itself. As stated in the Anglo-Italian declaration embodied in the resolution of the Stresa Conference, his Majesty's Government stand by all their obligations under the Treaty of Locarno, and intend, should the need arise, faithfully to fulfil them.

(*The Times*, May 8, 1935.)

<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 62.

May 14

Mr. Mander asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether representations had been received from the German Government with regard to the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland, and whether it had been made clear that the obligation to render military assistance under the treaties of Locarno applied either to France or to Germany, according to who was the aggressor.

Mr. Eden, Lord Privy Seal. — The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative. As regards the second part, I would refer the hon. member to Article 4 of the Treaty of Locarno.

Mr. Mander. — It is a fact, is it not, that the treaty applies both ways?

Mr. Eden. — Article 4 makes it quite clear that assistance is to be given equally either to Belgium, France, or Germany in the event of the *casus foederis* arising.

(*The Times*, May 15, 1935.)

May 16

Mr. T. Williams asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, as the Locarno pact could only become effective after Germany became a member of the League of Nations, it was still the intention of his Majesty's Government, following the withdrawal of Germany from the League, to adhere to the pact or to amend the same in cooperation with the other signatories to it.

Mr. Eden, Lord Privy Seal, who replied, said: — While it is the case that the Treaty of Locarno provided for the entry of the Treaty into force as soon as all the ratifications should have been deposited and Germany had become a member of the League, the Treaty contains no provision for its amendment or alteration should any of its signatories at any time cease to be members of the League. As my right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary stated in the House on November 7, 1933<sup>1</sup>, it is the view of his Majesty's Government, after consulting the law officers of the Crown, that the withdrawal from the League of any party to the Treaty of Locarno does not of itself and by itself involve the release of all parties from their obligations under

<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 83.

CZECHO-SOVIET PACT, MAY 16, 1935

the Treaty. I would remind the hon. member that by the Anglo-Italian Declaration embodied in the Resolution of the recent Stresa Conference, his Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom formally reaffirmed all their obligations under the Treaty of Locarno and declared their intention, should the need arise, faithfully to fulfil them.

(*The Times*, May 17, 1935.)

33.

CZECHO-SOVIET PACT OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE,  
MAY 16, 1935

Article 1<sup>1</sup>

In the event of Czechoslovakia or the U.S.S.R., being threatened with, or in danger of, attack on the part of a European State, the U.S.S.R., and, reciprocally, Czechoslovakia, undertake to proceed mutually to immediate consultation as regards the measures to be taken for the observance of the provisions of article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Article 2

In the event of Czechoslovakia or the U.S.S.R., in the circumstances specified in article 15, paragraph 7, of the League of Nations Covenant, being the object, in spite of the genuinely peaceful intentions of both countries, of an unprovoked attack on the part of a European State, the U.S.S.R., and, reciprocally, Czechoslovakia, shall immediately give each other aid and assistance.

Article 3

In consideration of the fact that under article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations any member of the League who has recourse to war contrary to the obligations undertaken in articles 12, 13 and 15 of the Covenant is *ipso facto* considered as having committed an act of war against all the other members of the League,

<sup>1</sup> The formalities, the preamble and article 6 are here omitted; they are identical, as are articles 1, 2, 3 and 5, with those of the Franco-Soviet Pact (p. 108, above).



Czechoslovakia and, reciprocally, the U.S.S.R. undertake in the event of one of them being the object, in these circumstances and in spite of the genuinely peaceful intentions of both countries, of an unprovoked attack on the part of a European State, to give each other immediately aid and assistance in execution of article 16 of the Covenant.

The same obligation is assumed in the event of Czechoslovakia or the U.S.S.R. being the object of an attack on the part of a European State in the circumstances specified in article 17, paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

#### Article 4

Without prejudice to the conditions laid down in the preceding part of this treaty, it is agreed that, in the event of either of the high contracting parties being attacked by one or more other states not signatories of this treaty, under circumstances which do not presuppose the rendering of assistance and support according to the terms of this treaty, the other high contracting party has to abstain from rendering any direct or indirect assistance or support for the duration of the conflict; each party, moreover, declaring itself to be bound by no assistance agreement which would be inconsistent with this obligation.

#### Article 5

The obligations laid down above being in conformity with the obligations of the high contracting parties in their capacities of members of the League of Nations, nothing in this treaty shall be interpreted as restricting the task of the League of Nations of taking appropriate measures to safeguard effectively the peace of the world; or as restricting the obligations laid on the high contracting parties by the Covenant of the League of Nations.

#### *Protocol of Signature*

At the moment of proceeding to the signature of the Czechoslovak-Soviet Mutual Assistance Agreement of to-day's date, the plenipotentiaries have signed the following protocol, which shall be included in the exchange of ratifications of the treaty:—

I. It is agreed that the effect of article 3 is to compel each contracting party immediately to give assistance to the other by complying forthwith with the recommendations of the Council of the League of Nations as soon as they shall have been made in accordance with article 16 of the Covenant. It is further agreed that the two contracting parties will take joint action to ensure that the Council issue their recommendations with all the speed required by the circumstances of the case, and that, should the Council nevertheless, for some reason, make no recommendation or fail to reach a unanimous decision, effect shall nevertheless be given to the obligation to render assistance. It is also agreed that the provisions for mutual assistance embodied in this treaty refer only to the case of an attack on either of the contracting parties' own territory.

II. The two governments make it clear that the scope of the obligations contained in Articles 1, 2 and 3 of this treaty, which was concluded in the endeavour to make a contribution to the formation of a regional system of security in Eastern Europe, a beginning having been made with the Franco-Soviet treaty of May 2nd, 1935, is limited in the way laid down in Point IV of the Protocol of Signature of the aforesaid treaty.

Both governments alike recognize that the obligations to afford mutual assistance will only be effective in so far as the conditions provided for in that treaty are given, and assistance guaranteed by France to the victim of the attack.

III. The two Governments, recognising the desirability of concluding a regional agreement aiming at the organisation of security as between the contracting States and which, furthermore, might contain or be accompanied by provisions for mutual assistance, leave each other free to become parties, by mutual consent and should the occasion arise, to agreements of this nature, in such form, direct or indirect, as may seem appropriate, the obligations undertaken in these various agreements being intended to take the place of those assumed in the present treaty.

Done at Prague in duplicate, this 16th day of May, 1935.

(From *Prager Presse*, May 17, 1935.)

34.

CHANCELLOR HITLER'S SPEECH TO THE GERMAN  
REICHSTAG, MAY 21, 1935

Members of the German Reichstag:

At the wish of the Government, General Göring, my party colleague and Chairman of the Reichstag, has called you together for the purpose of hearing from me, as representative of the German nation, some explanatory statements which I consider necessary for the understanding of the attitude taken up by the Government of the Reich and the decisions it has made in regard to certain great issues which affect us all at the present time.

For this purpose I am speaking to you and through you to the German nation. But I wish that my words may also have a wider echo and reach all those in the outside world who, from duty or interest, have endeavoured to obtain an insight into our thoughts on those same problems which also concern themselves.

I consider this to be the fitting place to make such a statement, because experience has shown that it is necessary to guard against the danger of diverse interpretations arising out of conversations which take place between two or only amid a small circle of hearers, the natural result of which is that the public can receive only a fragmentary account of what was said.

I regard this manner of making such a declaration as specially useful because it gives me not only the right, but indeed the sacred duty, to be absolutely open and to speak with all frankness about the various problems. The German nation has the right to demand this from me and I am determined to comply with the demand. From Anglo-Saxon countries I often hear expressions of regret that Germany should have departed from just those principles of democratic government which such countries consider as specially sacred. This opinion is based upon a serious error. Germany too has a "democratic" constitution. The present German Government of the National Socialist State has also been elected by the people and feels itself in the same way responsible to the people. It does not matter how many votes a deputy must have in the individual countries. There are countries which consider 20,000 votes necessary for a deputy, others consider 10 or 5 thousand sufficient, while in others again the number is 60,000 or more.

The German people has elected a single deputy as its representative with 38 million votes. This is perhaps one of the most important differences between ours and the conditions existing in other countries. It means that I feel myself just as responsible to the German people as would any parliament. I act on the trust they have placed in me and I carry out their mandate. The German people therefore have the right to expect that an explanation such as I am about to give to-day should be the unvarnished truth and that it should frankly discuss those questions which affect not only the rest of the world but also, and at least to the same degree, the German nation itself. And I am glad of this for the following reasons:—

As Führer and Chancellor of the nation and as head of the Government of the Reich, unfortunately I have often to make decisions which are of themselves hard enough to decide upon and which are all the more difficult because it is not possible for me to share the responsibility and even less to shift it to someone else's shoulders. And it is for this reason that I desire at least to be able to give to the nation itself an insight into the ideas on which I act and thus make it easier for them to understand the decisions and measures which arise from these ideas. But the more difficult the decisions, so much the more I as a German should like to make sure that my actions are completely uninfluenced by instincts of weakness or fear and to bring them into harmony with my conscience towards my God and the nation which He permits me to serve.

When the late President entrusted me on the 30th of January two years ago with the formation of a new government and the conduct of the affairs of the Reich many people were sceptical—and among the sceptics were many patriots—about the success of the task laid before me. Envy and anxiety were current among the then distracted German people. For only the inner enemy could draw hope from our position as it then was, whereas friends were unspeakably down-hearted. In many spheres national life was in sore jeopardy. Even though for numbers of people—quite naturally—the economic catastrophe was the most serious of all, for those who could think more deeply it was only a consequence. The inner causes which necessarily gave rise to the economic effects were many. Some of them were of a social character. Others were a matter of political organisation and others again had their origin in the moral order.

In view of the overwhelming number of the tasks, the apparent hopelessness of the situation, and the paucity of all means at our disposal, it demanded an enormous amount of courage not to falter—but immediately to set to work to help the nation out of the slough of misery and disruption into which it had fallen.

The economic situation was as follows:—

After a war which had lasted for four years and had already done untold damage to the national resources, the victor Powers imposed upon the German nation a peace dictate devoid of all political and economic reason and which aimed at making the relation of forces that existed at the end of the War the legal basis for the life of the nations for all time. Without considering the conditions and laws that govern economic life, and even in direct contradiction to them, the victor Powers deprived Germany of every possibility of an economic revival while demanding on the other hand payments and services which lay within the realm of the fantastic. The edifice of German economics was razed to the ground under the watchword “Reparations”. This incomprehensible disregard for the most elementary economic laws resulted in the following situation:—

1. The nation has a surplus of workers.
2. It is in urgent need of something to replace the values pertaining to the high standard of life to which it had been accustomed and which had been destroyed by the War, the inflation, and the reparations.
3. It suffers from a lack of natural resources of foodstuffs and raw materials.
4. The international market which it needs in order to overcome all these evils is too small and is further increasingly limited in practice by various measures and by a certain inevitable trend in developments.

It is a very poor testimony to the economic sense of those who were then our political opponents that until their action had not only completely destroyed German economy but had begun to show its ill effects in the economic life of other countries they did not begin to see that it was impossible for us to fulfil unlimited and sometimes incomprehensible demands.

The result of this madness was that German industry was paralysed, agriculture was destroyed, the middle classes were ruined, trade had

shrunk to almost nothing, the whole economic life was overladen with debt, the public finances were rotten to the core and there were six and a half million unemployed on the register—in reality more than seven and a half millions.

To overcome the economic catastrophe alone very difficult measures were necessary. Formerly the German nation could find room for its ever increasing population in a limited space, thanks to the adequate conditions of life which resulted from its participation in international trade. As long as this latter condition was fulfilled the 67 million inhabitants of Germany could, in spite of the comparative smallness of the country, feel not only that their livelihood was assured at home but that they were a useful factor in world economy. The course of the War, and especially the result of post-War politics, will one day serve as a classic, though terrible, disproof of the naive idea—which unfortunately was held by some statesmen before the War—that the economic advantage of one European state can best be promoted by the economic destruction of another.

For the German nation the economic consequences of the peace on the one hand and the disadvantages from which Germany suffered in her home and foreign trade and commerce, on the other, must inevitably have compelled any government, whether it willed or not, to take the actual situation into account. We are all convinced that the complete carrying out of the idea of economic self-sufficiency for all states, which is threatening us today, is, when seen from a higher standpoint, foolish and can only result in harm for all nations. Economically regarded, it is not very reasonable to endeavour artificially to turn natural agricultural and raw-material districts into industrial districts, or on the other hand to endeavour to compel the overpopulated industrial countries to produce raw-materials or even substitutes to an adequate degree.

For Europe this development will one day have very unpleasant and evil consequences. But to alter it is unfortunately not within Germany's power. Looked at from the broad economic angle, it is against the dictates of reason. What happens is that in so far as we are deprived of foreign markets for our exports we are forced to restrict our imports. To that extent, so that German productive labour may not stagnate, we must either employ a complicated process for the production of the raw-materials that we lack internally or else we must

use substitutes. This task can be undertaken only by means of a planned economic system. And that is a perilous adventure; for planned economics lead to bureaucratic control and thus to the suppression of individual creative effort. In the interests of our own nation it was not desirable to risk the eventuality of having the productive efficiency of our people reduced, and the standards of living lowered rather than raised by an economic system not far removed from the communist ideal and by the accompanying paralysis of initiative effort. This danger was accentuated by the following fact: Every planned system of production only too easily invalidates the hard laws of the economic survival of the fittest and elimination of the weak; or at least it hampers the activity of these laws inasmuch as it guarantees the preservation of the least valuable average, to the detriment of higher efficiency and greater productive power and quality, all of which work out finally to the detriment of the community.

If, despite such knowledge, we have nevertheless taken this path it was only under the hard pressure of necessity. What we have achieved in two and a half years in the way of a planned provision of labour, a planned regulation of the market, a planned control of prices and wages, was considered a few years ago to be absolutely impossible. We only succeeded because behind these apparently dead economic measures we had the living energies of the whole nation. We had however first to create a number of technical and psychological conditions before we could carry out this purpose. In order to guarantee the functioning of the national economy it was necessary first of all to put a stop to the everlasting oscillations of wages and prices. It was further necessary to remove the conditions giving rise to interference which did not spring from higher national economic necessities, *i. e.*, to destroy the class organisations of both camps which lived on the politics of wages and prices. The destruction of the trade unions, both of employers and employees, which were based on the class struggle, demanded an analogous removal of the political parties which were maintained by these groups of interests, which interests in return supported them. Here arose the necessity for a new constructive and vital constitution and a new organisation of the Reich and State. If this was to be more than a purely superficial reorganisation however, then the nation itself had to be educated to a new social way of thinking and living. All these

were tasks of which each would require a century for its fulfilment, and in the carrying out of which many a people and state foundered in former times. To bring such a programme to realisation, which either succeeds in its entirety or is bound from the very beginning to fail at every point, success depends upon two conditions:—

(a) The extent of peace and quiet at home.

(b) The amount of time at one's disposal.

We Germans can only regret that the rest of the world still takes so little trouble to study objectively what has been going on in Germany within the last two and a half years and that it does not study the ideals which are solely responsible for these achievements.

For the aims adopted and also the carrying out of the tasks which impart their special stamp to present-day Germany have their origin exclusively in National Socialist ideas, and are to be ascribed to the National Socialist Party, its organisation, and to that characteristic energy which emanates from it. In the course of the last two years a revolution has taken place in Germany that is greater than the average man has yet realised. The extent and profundity of this revolution have not suffered owing to the leniency with which its former opponents were treated. For this leniency was by no means due to a feeling of weakness, but on the contrary to a conviction of vast superiority and to a sure confidence in victory. Hence the Germany of to-day cannot be compared with the old Germany. Its ideas are just as new as its actions. Both bourgeois jingoism and marxist internationalism as political factors have disappeared.

If the present Germany advocates peace it is due neither to weakness nor to cowardice. It advocates peace from that new angle with which National Socialism regards People and State. National Socialism regards a forcible amalgamation of one people with another alien people not only in itself as a worthless political aim, but in the long run as a danger to the internal unity and strength of a nation. National Socialism therefore dogmatically rejects the idea of national assimilation. It denies the bourgeois belief in a possible germanisation of a non-German people. We have neither the wish nor the intention to deprive alien sections of our population of their nationhood, language or culture in order to replace these by something foreign to them. We have given no instructions for the substitution of German for non-German names. We do not want to do



it. We believe that a war which results in the subjection and in the domination of an alien people must lead to internal changes and weaknesses in the victorious nation which leads ultimately to its defeat.

We do not for a moment believe that in an age when nationalism is recognized as a first principle and has become completely consolidated that the people of Europe can under any circumstances be deprived of their national existence.

Of this we have had enough instructive warnings in the last 150 years. In no future war will any European state be able to achieve apart from the temporary weakening of its opponents more than petty adjustments of national frontiers of no consequence in comparison with the sacrifices made.

But the chronic state of war that will result between various peoples by such intentions may perhaps appear useful to various political and economic interests. For the nations themselves however, it merely means added burdens and new misfortune. The blood shed on the European continent in the course of the last 300 years bears no relation to its effect on nationalities. In the end, France has remained France, Germany Germany, Poland Poland and Italy Italy. What dynastic egoism, political passion and patriotic blindness have attained in apparently far reaching political changes by shedding rivers of blood, has done no more than touch the fringe of national feeling and has not substantially altered its fundamental characteristics. If these states had applied only a fraction of their efforts to wiser purposes the results would certainly have been greater and more permanent.

When I as a National Socialist put forward these views perfectly frankly, I am in addition influenced by the following considerations: The principal effect of every war is to destroy the flower of the nation. As there are no longer any uninhabited spaces in Europe an increase in the number of inhabitants of a country can at best be the only result of victory, without making any difference whatever to the fundamental causes of the distress in Europe. But if the nations attach so much value to such increases of population they can achieve the same end in a simpler and more natural way without tears.

A sound social policy can increase the birthrate of a nation. This will, in a few years lead to a bigger addition to the population than can be obtained by conquering and subjecting an alien people.

No! National Socialist Germany wants peace because of its innermost convictions. It also wants peace because it realizes the simple fact that no war could modify the causes of distress in Europe. It is much more likely to intensify them. Present-day Germany is engaged in the tremendous task of repairing the internal damage it has suffered. 10 to 20 years will be required for the completion of our immediate practical projects. 50 to perhaps even 100 years will be required before we can complete our tasks of an ideal kind. By bringing the movement into being I started the national socialist revolution which I have since directed into constructive activity. I know that none of us will live to see more than the very beginning of this great revolutionary development. What else should I wish for than tranquillity and peace? But if it is said that this is merely the desire of the leaders I can reply that if only the leaders and rulers desire peace the nations themselves will never want war. Germany needs peace and desires peace and when I now hear from the lips of a British statesman that such assurances are nothing and that the only proof of sincerity is a signature appended to collective pacts I must ask Mr. Eden to be good enough to remember that it is a question of an "assurance" in any case.

It is sometimes much easier to sign treaties with a mental reservation that one will reconsider one's attitude at the decisive hour than to declare, before an entire nation and with full publicity one's adherence to a policy which serves the cause of peace because it rejects anything that may lead to war.

I might have signed ten treaties but such action would not have been of the same importance as the statement I have made to France, on the occasion of the Saar-plebiscite. When I as the Führer and representative of the German nation gave the world and my own people the assurance that with the settlement of the Saar-question no further territorial demands will be made on France that is a contribution to peace much greater than many a signature under many a pact. I believe that this solemn declaration ought really to put an end to the long standing quarrel between these two nations. We have made it in the belief that this quarrel and the sacrifices it involved were for both nations out of all relation to the object in view which without being queried has been and will otherwise continue to be the cause of so much general suffering and misfortune. But if the

only answer to such a declaration is that "it has been noted" there is of course nothing else for us to do but "to note" this reply as well.

But here I must protest against all attempts to vary the weight of declarations according to requirements. If in the name of the German people the German Government declares that it desires nothing else but peace, then this declaration has exactly the same value as the signature under any specially worded pact or otherwise this signature can have no more value than the solemn declaration.

One has to note that there are times in history when there occur real inflations of formulas which will not bear any close examination of reason.

For some time the world has been suffering for instance from a regular mania for collective cooperation, collective security, collective obligations etc. all of which seem to have a concrete meaning at the first glance, but which when examined more closely at least are open to many different interpretations.

What is meant by collective cooperation?

Who should determine what collective cooperation is and what it is not?

Has not the term "collective cooperation" been interpreted in the most different ways for the last 17 years?

I believe, I am right, in saying that besides many other rights the victorious states of the Versailles Treaty have also arbitrarily assumed the right to decide without allowing any contradiction what "collective cooperation" is and what it is not.

I propose to criticize this attitude of the victorious states in order to show exactly why the German Government was forced to take the recent decisions and also as it offers a simple method whereby German intentions can be made clear.

The current ideas of collective cooperation among nations have their fundamental and essential inspiration in the ideas of President Wilson. Pre-war policy was primarily based upon the idea of alliances between those nations which had common interests. Rightly or wrongly this policy was at one time held responsible for the outbreak of the World War. Its termination — at least as far as Germany is concerned — was hastened by the doctrine of Wilson's Fourteen Points, and the three points that supplemented them later. The follow-

ing basic propositions were laid down to prevent a similar catastrophe happening again:

The Peace should not be a peace of unilateral rights but of general equality and of universal justice. It should be a peace of reconciliation, of general disarmament and thus a peace of general security. The crowning idea was international collective cooperation of all states and nations within the League of Nations.

At this point I should like to reaffirm that no nation greeted these ideas at the end of the war with greater enthusiasm than Germany. Her sufferings and sacrifices were far heavier than those of any other nation which had taken part in the war. Relying on these promises the German soldiers laid down their arms.

When in 1919 the Peace of Versailles was dictated to the German people, death sentence was pronounced upon collective cooperation among nations.

Where there should have been an equality there was division into victors and vanquished. Instead of equal rights there was discrimination between those with rights and those without. Instead of general reconciliation there was punishment of the defeated. Instead of international disarmament there was disarmament of the vanquished alone. Instead of general security there was security only for the victors.

Yet even in the dictated Peace of Versailles it was expressly laid down that the disarmament of Germany should be carried out first only in order to enable other countries to disarm as well. Here we have an example of the extent to which the principle of collective collaboration has been violated by those who are to-day its loudest protagonists.

Germany has fulfilled almost fanatically every requirement imposed upon her by the Peace Treaty; financially to the utter derangement of her finances; economically to the total destruction of her economic life and in national defence to the point of absolute defencelessness. I reiterate here in broad outline the indisputable facts of Germany's fulfilment of the Treaties.

The following armaments were destroyed:

Pertaining to the Army:

1. 59,000 Guns and Gun tubes
2. 130,000 Machine-guns

3. 31.000 Trench Mortars and tubes
4. 6007.000 Rifles and Carbines
5. 243.000 Machine-gun tubes
6. 28.000 Gun Chassis
7. 4.390 Trench Mortar Stands
8. 38750.000 Projectiles
9. 16550.000 Hand and Machine bombs
10. 60400.000 Priming caps
11. 491000.000 Rifle projectiles
12. 335.000 (tons) Cartridge cases
13. 23.515 (tons) Cartridge and Shell cases
14. 37.600 tons of Explosives
15. 79.000 Munition Gauges
16. 212.000 Telephones
17. 1.072 Flame-throwers etc., etc.

In addition to this were destroyed: sledges, portable workshops, anti-aircraft guns, armoured cars, amunition chests, helmets, gas-masks, machines belonging to the old war industries, gun tubes etc.:

Pertaining to the Air Force:

- 15.714 Chasers and Bombing planes
- 27.757 Aeroplane motors

Pertaining to the Fleet:

- 26 Battleships
- 4 Armed Ships for Coastal Defence
- 4 Light Cruisers
- 19 Small Cruisers
- 21 Training and Special Ships
- 83 Torpedo Boats
- 315 Submarines

The following equipment was also destroyed: —

- Waggons of all descriptions.
- Equipment for and against Gas Attacks.
- Material used in the making up of projectiles and explosives.
- Search lights.
- Direction finders.

Range finders and Shell gauges. Optical Instruments of all kinds.

Harness etc. and all aerodromes for aeroplanes and airships etc., etc.

Germany on her part has in almost complete submission paved the way to collective collaboration among the nations as it was conceived by the President of the United States.

Now, at any rate after the completion of German disarmament the rest of the world ought to have taken similar steps to establish equality. The truth of this is born out by the fact that also in other countries and in other states warnings were uttered by statesmen who urged the fulfilment of these obligations. I will quote only from one or two of those men who certainly cannot be regarded as friends of the new Germany to demonstrate by means of their statements that the contractual obligation to disarm is binding not only on Germany but on the other states as well, obligations too easily forgotten and overlooked.

Lord Robert Cecil, Member of the British Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference and leader of the British Delegation to the Disarmament Conference, made the following statement, which I quote from the text published in the "Revue de Paris" (November 5th, 1924):—

"The armament stipulations laid down in the Versailles Treaty and the other Peace Treaties begin with a preamble which runs as follows: 'In order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations, Germany undertakes strictly to observe the military, naval and air clauses which follow.' This preamble entails a common agreement. It is a solemn promise on the part of the Governments to the Democracies of all the states which signed the Peace Treaty. If it will not be maintained, then the system erected by the Peace Treaty cannot abide, and even partial disarmament will in a short while cease to be observed."

On April 8th, 1927, at the third meeting of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, called together by the League of Nations, M. Paul Boncour said: —

"It is true that the preamble to Part V of the Versailles Treaty refers to the reduction of armaments which Germany was to carry out as a beginning and example for a general reduction of armaments.

This differentiates very clearly between the reduction of armaments in Germany and other such reductions which in the course of history were carried out at the close of wars, and which generally proved themselves ineffective. On this occasion such a provision refers for the first time to the whole world, and binds not merely one signatory to the Treaty but establishes a moral and juridical obligation for the other signatories to undertake a general reduction of armaments."

On January 20th, 1931, Mr. Arthur Henderson declared: —

"It is for us to bring it home to our Parliaments and peoples that every Member of the League is bound to this policy of collective disarmament by solemn obligations that are binding upon us in international law and national honour.

"May I remind the Council that Article 8 of the Covenant, the Preamble to Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, the Final Act of the Conference of Locarno, and resolutions adopted by the Assembly every year since 1920 mean that all Members of the League share a common responsibility with regard to this question? We all have obligations, and, if we fail to fulfil those obligations, doubt may be cast upon our pacific intentions and the influence and the authority of the League may be impaired."

On January 20th, 1931, M. Briand declared: —

"In the name of my country, I conclude with the words which were used by our President in opening the session . . . I believe with you, and I have often had the chance of saying so, that the obligations which the nations contractually agreed upon when they signed Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations must not remain a dead letter. They represent a sacred pledge, and any country which should wish to shirk it would do so with dishonour to itself."

On February 27th, 1927, M. Vandervelde, Belgian Foreign Minister and Member of the Belgian Delegation at the Peace Conference, declared: —

"From now on we are confronted with the following dilemma: The other Powers must either reduce their armies to a level with the German Reichswehr or the Peace Treaty will collapse and Germany will claim for herself the right to possess forces powerful enough to guarantee her territorial integrity. From this fact there are two conclusions to be drawn: first, that all measures of control

are little effective, second, that disarmament must be general or not at all."

The same Foreign Minister declared, on December 29th, 1930, as reported in the "Populaire": —

"The Versailles Treaty will become a 'scrap of paper' if the moral and legal obligations embodied in the Treaty are not fulfilled — those obligations which bound the defeated German nation to disarm as a preliminary to the disarmament of the others."

In his wireless address of December 31st, 1930, Lord Robert Cecil said:—

"International disarmament is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of our national interests. Over and over again we have pledged ourselves to the reduction and limitation of the armaments of the victorious nations in return for the disarmament we imposed upon our enemies. If we disregard these pledges we shall make enough scraps of paper to destroy all faith in international obligations. It is almost of minor importance, to my mind, that if we do not disarm we shall have no answer to a claim to rearm by Germany and the other ex-enemy countries."

Once again M. Paul-Boncour declared, on April 26th, 1930, as reported in "Le Journal": —

"It is not necessary to prophesy. It suffices to keep one's eyes open in order to perceive that — in case disarmament negotiations are shattered — or even in case they are adjourned to a future date — Germany which is rendered free from other constraint, will get ready to rid herself of this obligation and will no longer submit to the disarmament which the Versailles Treaty laid down as a condition and also as a promise of all-round disarmament. We have no other choice."

But what had happened?

While Germany faithfully fulfilled the obligations which had been dictated to her in the Treaty, the victor states failed to fulfil their obligations.

If an attempt is made to-day to excuse this failure on various pretexts it is really not difficult to dispose of such excuses. We are amazed to hear from foreign statesmen that there was every intention to fulfil these obligations, but that there has not been time to carry out this intention.



What does that mean?

All the necessary conditions for the disarmament of the other states had then been completely fulfilled.

1) Germany had disarmed. They could not assert that any danger really threatened them from a state which had become completely helpless, from a military point of view.

If on the other hand other nations had also disarmed this would have given such tremendous moral strength to the League of Nations that no state would have subsequently dared to pursue a policy of violence against a partner in this collective system of general disarmament.

This would have been the time to convert "theoretical doctrines" into a real action and this all the more so because: —

2) from the political point of view the necessary conditions had also been fulfilled. Germany was at that time a democracy such as had never before existed. Everything had been exactly copied and dutifully imitated from the existing great models. It was not national socialism which ruled in Germany. Even bourgeois nationalism had almost completely disappeared. Party-politics stretched from Social Democracy by way of the Centre Party to the Democratic Party, and not only resembled outwardly in its philosophical outlook the world around but felt itself bound up with it.

What then were they waiting for?

Could there ever have been a better moment to set up a collective system of cooperation than at the time when the same spirit ruled in Germany which also inspired the world around her? The time was ripe, the opportunity was there, but the will was not there!

In demonstrating the breaches of the Treaty of Versailles by the other side I will not refer to the fact that they had not disarmed. Even if one believes that at that time there were many valid excuses for failing to carry out the obligations to disarm, it will be hard to find excuses which led to an ever increasing rearmament.

This is the crucial point.

The other states have not only failed to disarm, but they have on the contrary supplemented their armaments, improved them and increased them.

The point has been made that to some extent limitations of personnel have taken place — but this point has no real validity. The

restrictions of personnel are more than made up by the technical improvement of the latest weapons of war. In any case deficiencies in personnel can easily be made good.

I draw special attention to the following:

During the course of the disarmament negotiations the attempt was made to divide armaments into weapons of defence and weapons of aggression.

I must here point out that Germany did not possess any of the weapons designated as suitable for aggression. They were all destroyed without exception. And I must further point out that it was these very weapons which are suitable and designed for aggression which the allies of the Peace Treaty developed, improved and increased, to the very utmost extent.

Germany had destroyed all her air-craft. She not only had no aerial weapons for attack, but she did not even have any weapons for defence against air-attack. At the same time, however, the other partners to the treaty, not only did not destroy their existing air-craft but on the contrary they increased their air-armaments to a vast extent.

The speed of the interceptor fighters for instance has been increased from some 220 km per hour at the end of the war to nearly 400 km per hour to-day with the most modern types. The armaments of these planes have been increased from 2 machine-guns to 3, 4 and 5 and even to small automatic guns. The maximum altitude at the end of the war was 6000 meters, it has now been increased to 9000, 10,000 and 11,000 meters.

Instead of destroying as Germany did the bombing aeroplanes other nations proceeded to improve, to develop and to substitute them by bigger and bigger types. The maximum carrying capacity which at the end of the war stood at 500 to 1000 kilos was increased from 1000 to 2400 kilos. The average speed of 125 to 160 km per hour at the end of the war was increased to 250 to 280 km per hour in the case of night-bombers to 350 in the case of day bombing machines. The climbing capacity at the end of the war stood at 3 to 4000 meters, has been increased to 6000, 7000 and finally 9000 meters.

The armament per plane rose from 2, 3 and 4 machine guns to 4, 6 and even 8 machine guns and now includes automatic guns. The sighting equipment was so enormously improved that it is now

generally admitted that any target can be hit with a deadly certainty. The nose-diving bombing machine is an entirely new development. The explosive quality of bombs has since the war been constantly increased and the demand for a better system of gasing has been met by new inventions. The destruction of residential towns can be done with modern incendiary bombs, which according to the technical papers of the different air-forces cannot by any means be extinguished. The direction finding apparatuses and aiming gears of these bombing machines have been steadily improved, and the latest triumph of disarmament is that by means of long distance control without pilots, bombers can now be sent off against defenceless victims.

Not only has there been no reduction in the number of aerodromes and aerial bases but actually these have been increased every-where. Individual battle-ships have been supplied with fighting and bombing planes, as auxiliary weapons and enormous air-craft carriers have been built. All this has gone on with all weapons of aggression under the catch cry of disarmament. Thus has the obligation laid down in the Treaty of Versailles that Germany's example should be followed in the destruction of aeroplanes been carried out.

Germany has fulfilled the obligations laid upon her to destroy her tanks which remained at the end of the World War. She has thus once more in loyal fulfilment of the Treaty destroyed and done away with another weapon of aggression. It should have been the duty of the other states to have begun with the destruction of their tanks. Not only have they failed to do this but instead they continued to improve them both in speed and in power of resistance and aggression. The tanks which during the war had a speed of 4 to 12 km per hour have now been improved so as to be able to travel at 30, 40, 50 and finally to 160 km per hour.

When Germany no longer possessed a single rivet of her former tanks, France began first to build medium tanks weighing between 10 and 15 tons, then heavier tanks weighing 25 to 30 tons and finally the very heaviest types of about 90 tons.

During the war any tank could be pierced with a 13 millimeter projectile but the new war monsters are fitted with armour plate 50 to 60 millimeter thick and thus are absolutely protected against the shells of even field artillery. Hand in hand with this terrible advance in

these types of armaments as regards speed, weight, wading capacity, gas security, field of vision and thickness of armament there has at the same time been an enormous advance in the weapons of attack carried by these engines of war. The machine guns or guns of 4.5 calibre were superseded by next combinations. Tanks with guns of 7.5 cm, 10 cm and 15 cm calibre and even more are no longer things of fancy but terrible realities.

At the same time after Germany had destroyed her tanks and was waiting for the other countries to destroy theirs in fulfilment of their undertaking, those other countries had built more than 13,000 new tanks and had improved and enlarged them into weapons, more frightful than before. Under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles Germany was compelled to destroy her entire heavy artillery. While the German howitzers and mortars were being cut up by the acetylene burners and thrown into the blast furnaces as scrap iron, the other partners of the Treaty not only failed to carry out a similar destruction of the heavy artillery but on the contrary continued with the same constructional development, improvement and perfection.

Long after all German 42 cm mortars had been destroyed the French factories succeeded in constructing a 54 cm howitzer.

Long-range guns firing at a distance from 60 to 120 km have been newly constructed. The newest and heaviest artillery has been divided through a most convenient device into portions for road and rail transport in order to increase its mobility to the very utmost with the help of wheel tractors and caterpillar tractors.

This was being done in the case of weapons which are really of a very powerful aggressive type and against which we in Germany have not only no counter-weapon, but not even a possibility of a defence.

Gas: Under the Treaty of Versailles Germany had to destroy all her gas weapons as a condition preliminary to disarmament on the part of the other signatories. This she has done. But in the other countries chemical laboratories had been busily working not to destroy this weapon but to improve it to the very utmost extent. From time to time and with full publicity amazing information has been given to the world about the invention of a new and still more deadlier gas as well as new gas shells and gas bombs.

Submarines: Here also Germany has fulfilled her obligations under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles in order to render

international disarmament possible. Anything that even looked like a submarine was completely destroyed by the acetylene burners, dismantled and scrapped.

The rest of the world has, however, not only failed to follow this example, but it has not even kept the same number — on the contrary, it has continually supplemented, improved and increased it. The increase in displacement finally reached the 3000-ton submarine, and the increase in armament up to 20 cm guns. The number of torpedo tubes per submarine was increased, as well as their calibre, and the torpedoes themselves given an increased range and explosive effect. The radius of action of these submarines increased enormously in comparison to that reached during the War. They can now dive deeper, and their periscopes have been improved in an ingenious manner.

This was the contribution to the problem of disarmament on the part of the states which under the Treaty of Versailles had undertaken to follow the example of Germany and destroy the submarine weapon. These are only single facts. They could be supplemented and completed at will in every direction. Taken together, they are a proof, which can be supported by documentary evidence at any time, that contrary to the obligations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, not only was the disarmament policy ignored by the signatories, but a constant increase and improvement of high-class weapons of war was undertaken.

What they did was absolutely contrary not only to President Wilson's intentions, but also — in the opinion of the most prominent representatives of the other side — contrary to the obligations to which they had subscribed in the Treaty of Versailles.

If that is not a glaring example of a breach of the Treaty and indeed a one-sided breach of the Treaty, after the other partner had completely fulfilled his obligations, it will be difficult to see what use the signing of treaties in future will be.

No: There can be no excuse and there can be no glossing over that fact. For Germany in her completely defenceless and unarmed state was really anything but a danger to the other states. In spite of years of waiting in vain for the fulfilment of the Treaty by the other side, Germany was still prepared to take part in a plan for genuine collective cooperation. The British Lord Privy Seal, Mr.

Eden, says that everywhere there was readiness to arrive at parity in the quantitative determination of defensive strengths. If that is so, it is all the more regrettable that no practical steps were taken as a consequence. It was not Germany that wrecked the plan for an army of 200,000 men for each European state, but the other states which had no desire to disarm. And finally it was not Germany that rejected the British proposal for mediation in the spring of 1934, but the French Government, which broke off the negotiations on the subject on the 17th of March, 1934. The hope is now frequently expressed that Germany might herself come forward with a constructive plan. I have made proposals not once but several times. If my constructive plan for an army of 300,000 men had been adopted, then perhaps many a care would be less and many a burden lighter to-day. But it is almost useless to present constructive plans when their rejection can be regarded as certain from the start. Nevertheless, I propose once more to give a short survey of our views. This is done solely from the feeling that it is our duty to leave no stone unturned in order to restore the necessary internal security to Europe and the feeling of solidarity to the European nations.

Since the other states have not only failed to carry out their obligations to disarm but in addition have also declined all proposals for a limitation of armaments, I, as the Führer of the German nation responsible to God and my own conscience, felt it to be my duty in the face of the growth of new military alliances and of the fact, that the peace strength of the Russian army amounted to 960,000 men, and after receiving the information that France was introducing a two year period of service, to restore once more equality in defence, which had been internationally refused to Germany by virtue of the right of life of the nation. It was not Germany who broke a contractual obligation which had been laid upon her but those states which had compelled us to adopt this independent action. The introduction of universal military service and the promulgation of the law for the establishment of the new German army were nothing else than the restoration to Germany of a status of equal rights which threatens nobody but guarantees German security.

In this connection I must express my astonishment at a statement which was publicly made by the British Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who said — with reference to the restoration of a Ger-

man defence force — that the other states had been right after all in being cautious about disarmament. If this view is generally adopted any sort of conduct may be expected in the future. For, according to this view, every breach of a treaty will be subsequently condoned because the other partner is supposed to deduce the same consequences; that is to say, A and B conclude a treaty. B fulfills his obligations and A fails to observe his obligations: After years of warning B also finally states that the treaty is no longer valid for him, whereupon A is entitled to declare that thereby his previous breach of the treaty has now received subsequent moral justification, in that B has now also abandoned the treaty.

I want to deal here just briefly with the reproaches and imputations which have been levelled against the reintroduction of German military service.

It is stated in the first place that Germany is menaced by no-one and hence, secondly, that it is not comprehensible why Germany should rearm at all.

This would give rise to the counter-question of why the other side, who in any case could feel less menaced by a disarmed Germany than *vice versa*, did not stop rearming and finally reduce armaments. But when it is asserted that Germany menaces the other states by rearming, then the increase of the armaments of the other states was at least a much greater menace for a disarmed and defenceless Germany.

I believe that in this case there is only a choice of one thing or the other. If warlike armaments are a menace to peace, then they are a menace to all states. But if they are not a war menace, then they are not a menace for any state. It will not do for one group to represent their armaments as an olive branch of peace and those of the others as the devil's wand. A tank is a tank, and a bomb is a bomb. The opinion that it is possible to divide up the world for all time into states with different rights will always be recognised only by the one side. The German nation, in any case, is not prepared to be regarded and treated for all time as a second-class nation or one with inferior rights. Our love of peace is perhaps greater than that of other nations, for we suffered most from this unhappy war. We threaten nobody. We are only determined to secure and maintain equality for the German people. But this equality is also the primary prerequisite for every form of practical and collective cooperation.

So long as there are any mental reservations in this respect, really successful European cooperation will be impossible from the start. Once in possession of absolute equality of rights, Germany will never refuse to join in with those efforts which aim at serving the cause of human peace, progress and economic welfare. I believe, however, that I must not refrain here from criticising certain methods which have their origin in the dictated Peace Treaty of Versailles and which are responsible for the failure of so many endeavours that were certainly well meant.

The world is living to-day in the age of conferences. If many of these conferences were unsuccessful then the reason for their failure is frequently to be found in the way in which the agenda was drawn up and in the objects aimed at. It happens, that a Government feels that something must be done to maintain peace which is generally considered to be threatened. But instead of communicating the general idea to all those with whom it is proposed to cooperate with a view to finding out what various states and Governments have to suggest to solve the problem, a complete agenda is drawn up by consultation between only two or three Governments. In such a case one cannot avoid the conviction that such an agenda is drawn up under the intention to mix the possible with the impossible and thus to bring about certain failure for which those who are invited to participate later can be held responsible. For, while two or three states agree upon a programme laid down in such detail, the party subsequently invited is merely informed of the contents of such a programme, with the remark that this programme is an inseparable whole, and must either be accepted or rejected in its entirety. As very good ideas may naturally be found in such a programme, the state which does not agree to the whole draft is thereby held responsible for the failure of the useful parts as well. The procedure is very reminiscent of the practice of certain film distributors who adopt the principle of always distributing good and bad films together. But this is comprehensible only as a final atavistic phenomenon which has its origin in the example of the so-called peace negotiations at Versailles. Draw up a programme, hand it as a dictated document to a third party and then declare that the whole is a solemnly signed treaty. With the aid of this recipe an attempt was made to bring the greatest struggle in the history of the world to the beneficial con-



clusion which the nations who had taken part in it so much desired. The results of this procedure were indeed more than tragic — not only for the conquered but also for the conquerors.

So far as Germany is concerned, I can only say the following regarding such attempts:—

We shall take part in no further conference if we have not had our share in the drawing up of the programme from the outset. Because two or three states dish up a draft treaty, we have no wish to be the first to sample it; which is not, however, to say that we do not reserve the right to give our assent and signature subsequently to a treaty because we were not present when it was drafted or at the conferences themselves. It is quite possible that in its final shape and form a treaty may satisfy us as being useful although we were present neither when it was drafted nor at the conference in which it was accepted by a number of states. We would not on that account hesitate to assent to and sign such a treaty afterwards under certain conditions, in so far as it seemed desirable and possible. But the German government must reserve the right to decide for itself when this is the case.

I must, however, again emphasize the fact that to draft programmes for conferences with the heading “All or Nothing” seems to me to be the wrong method.

Such a principle I consider to be altogether unpractical in political life. I believe that much more would have been achieved towards the pacification of Europe if people had been content to accept what was attainable in each instance as it arose. In recent years hardly a draft treaty has come up for discussion where one point or another was not generally accepted. Because, however, it was assumed that these points necessarily hung together with others which for some states were difficult to accept and for other states absolutely unacceptable, the good that could have been accomplished was left unattained and the whole attempt miscarried. It seems to me an equally doubtful procedure to misuse the thesis of the indivisibility of peace as an excuse for interpretations which — intentionally or unintentionally — serve the cause of collective war preparation rather than that of collective security. In this respect the World War should serve as a terrible warning. I do not believe that Europe can survive such a catastrophe for a second time without the most

frightful upheaval. But such a catastrophe can arise all the more easily when the possibility of localising smaller conflicts has been rendered less and less by an international network of intersecting obligations, and the danger of numerous states and nations being dragged into the struggle becomes all the greater. So far as Germany is concerned I wish to leave no shadow of doubt in what I am about to say: —

Germany has solemnly recognised and guaranteed France her frontiers as determined after the Saar plebiscite. Without taking the past into account Germany has concluded a non-aggression pact with Poland. This is more than a valuable contribution to European peace, and we shall adhere to it unconditionally. We dearly wish that it may continue without interruption and that it may tend to strengthen still more profound and friendly sincerity in the mutual relationships between our two countries. We did all this although we thereby finally renounced, for instance, all claims to Alsace-Lorraine, a land for which we have also fought two great wars. But we did it in particular to spare our own German nation a new and terrible sacrifice of lives. We are convinced that in so doing we are benefitting not only our own people, but also this frontier territory. We are prepared to do everything on our part to arrive at a true peace and a real friendship with the French nation. With the understanding and heartfelt friendship of genuine nationalists, we recognise Poland as the home of a great and nationally conscious people. While wishing to spare the German nation further bloodshed even where the renunciation of war implies a certain sacrifice, we certainly have no intention of pledging our blood, without right of choice, for the sake of foreign interests. We do not intend to enable anybody to sell by treaty the people of Germany, her manhood and her sons, in some conflict for which we cannot lay down conditions and which we cannot influence. The German soldier is too valuable and we love our people too well to commit ourselves to mutual assistance pacts where our undertakings are not defined. We believe that we can thus serve the cause of peace much better. For it can but enhance the necessary feeling of responsibility on the part of every individual state to know from the beginning that it possesses no mighty and powerful military allies in an eventual conflict.

Here too, of course, there are things which are possible and things which are not.

As an example I should like to deal briefly with the Eastern Pact as proposed to us.

In this pact we find a mutual assistance clause which in our view may lead to completely unforeseeable consequences. The German Reich — and in particular the present German government — have no other wish than to live on friendly and peaceful terms with all neighbouring states. We entertain these feelings not only towards the neighbouring larger states, but also towards the neighbouring smaller states. Indeed, in so far as they have a really independent existence we welcome them as peaceable neutral factors on our frontiers, which are otherwise from the military standpoint quite open and unprotected. Much as we ourselves love peace, it does not lie in our power to prevent inter-state conflicts breaking out, and especially in the East. In itself it is infinitely difficult in such a case to determine the guilty party. A divinely inspired court, which would be able to discover and pronounce the eternal truth in such a case, does not exist on this earth. As soon as the dogs of war are loosed on the nations the end begins to justify every means. And then people soon begin to lose all clear sense of Right and Wrong. More than twenty years have passed since the beginning of the World War and every nation lives in the sacred conviction that right stood on its side and wrong on the side of the opponents. I am afraid that if such a conflict were to break out again treaty obligations would contribute less to the identification of the aggressor than to the support of a state on ground of selfinterest. It would perhaps be more serviceable to the cause of peace if the other nations were to withdraw at once from both sides at the outbreak of such a conflict rather than to allow themselves to be involved in this conflict from the outset by treaty obligations.

But apart from these considerations of principle we have a special case. Germany to-day is a National Socialist state. The ideas by which we are governed are diametrically opposed to those of Soviet Russia. National Socialism is a doctrine which applies exclusively to the German people. Bolshevism lays emphasis on its international mission.

We National Socialists believe that in the long run man can be happy only in his own nation. We live in the belief that the happiness and the achievements of Europe are indissolubly connected with the

existence of a system of independent and free national states. Bolshevism preaches the constitution of a world empire and only recognises sections of a central International.

We National Socialists recognise that every people has the right to its own inner life according to its own needs and character. Bolshevism on the other hand sets up doctrinaire theories, to be accepted by all nations, without regard for their particular character, disposition and traditions.

National Socialism strives to solve social problems, together with questions and conflicts in its own nation, by methods which are compatible with our general human, spiritual, cultural and economic ideas, traditions and circumstances.

Bolshevism preaches an international class conflict and the carrying out of a world revolution by means of terror and force.

National Socialism aims at bridging over and equalising unfavourable contrasts in social life, and in uniting the whole population in collaborative work.

Bolshevism teaches the overthrow of the rule of one class by means of a forcible dictatorship on the part of another class.

National Socialism places no value upon a purely theoretical rule of the working class, but lays all the more value on the practical improvement of their conditions of life and way of living.

Bolshevism fights for a theory and to this theory it sacrifices millions of human beings and incalculable cultural and traditional values. In comparison with ourselves it achieves only a very low general standard of living.

As National Socialists we are filled with admiration and respect for the great achievements of the past, not only in our own nation but far beyond it. We are happy to belong to the European community of culture which has inspired the modern world to so large an extent.

Bolshevism rejects this cultural achievement of humanity and asserts that real culture and human history began with the year in which Marxism was born.

We National Socialists may perhaps not have the same views as our church communities in respect to this or that question of organisation. But we never want to see a lack of religion and faith and do not want our churches turned into clubrooms and cinemas.

Bolshevism teaches godlessness and acts accordingly.

We National Socialists see in private property a higher grade of human economic development which regulates the administration of rewards in proportion to the differences in achievement, but which in general makes possible and guarantees to all the advantages of a higher standard of living.

Bolshevism destroys not only private property but also private initiative and zest for personal responsibility. In this way it has failed to save millions of men from starvation in Russia, the greatest agrarian state in the world.

The results of such a catastrophe in Germany would be inconceivable. In Russia there are 90 people living on the land to only 10 living in the cities, whereas in Germany there are only 25 peasants to every 75 city dwellers.

One might go on with all this interminably. Both we National Socialists and the Bolsheviks are convinced that there is a gulf between us which can never be bridged. But moreover there are more than 400 murdered National Socialists between us. Thousands of National Socialists have fallen in other organisations to forestall a communist revolt. Thousands of soldiers and policemen have been shot and massacred in the fight for the protection of the Reich and the states from the everlasting Bolshevist uprisings, and more than 43,000 members of the National Socialist Party have been wounded. Thousands of them have been either blinded, or crippled for life.

In so far as Bolshevism can be considered a purely Russian affair we have no interest in it whatever. Every nation must seek its salvation in its own way. So far as Bolshevism draws Germany within its range, however, we are its deadliest and most fanatical enemies.

The fact is that Bolshevism feels itself to be a world-revolutionary idea and movement, and freely proclaims this.

I have here a mere selection of the revolutionary happenings in the last 15 years with which the Bolshevist press, Bolshevist literature, and prominent Bolshevist statesmen and orators openly admit their connection and even boast of it. Here is the selection:—

November, 1918: Revolution in Austria and Germany.

March, 1919: Proletarian Revolution in Hungary. Revolt in Korea.

April, 1919: Soviet Revolution in Bavaria.

- September, 1920: Occupation of Business Premises by the workers in Italy.
- March, 1921: Uprising of the Proletarian Leaders in Germany.
- Autumn, 1923: Revolutionary crisis in Germany.
- December, 1924: Insurrection in Esthonia.
- April, 1925: Revolt in Morocco.
- April, 1925: Explosion in the Cathedral of Sophia.
- April, 1925: Beginning of the Revolutionary movement in China.
- December, 1926: Communist rising suppressed at the opportune moment in the Dutch East Indies (Java).
- July, 1927: Revolt in Vienna.  
Extension of the Revolution in China. Communist movement among the Negroes in the U.S.A. Agitation by Communist Agents in the Baltic States.
- 1928: Manifestations by Communist organisations in Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Bolivia, Latvia, Finland, Esthonia, Italy, Japan, Lithuania. Communist revolt in China. Communist agitation in Macedonia. Communist bombs in the Argentine.
- May, 1929: Barricades in Berlin.
- August, 1929: Communist "World Day against Imperialism".
- August, 1929: Rising in Columbia.
- September, 1929: Bomb explosions in Germany.
- October, 1929: Invasion of Manchuria by Bolshevists from Russia.
- February, 1930: Communist manifestation in Germany.
- March, 1930: "Communist Worker's World Day".
- May, 1930: Armed Communist rising in China.
- June/July, 1930: War against the Communist movement in Finland.
- July, 1930: Communist Civil War in China.
- January, 1931: War against Communist Bands in China.
- January, 1931: Official revelations about Communism in the United States of America.
- May, 1931: Revolution breaks out in Spain.

June/July, 1931: Renewal of War against Communist Bands in China.

August, 1931: Campaign against Communism in the Argentine, the Communist Business Agencies in South America are closed — numerous arrests.

It is an endless, endless series!

From the last speech of the British Lord Privy Seal, Mr. Eden, I gathered — if I am not mistaken — that in his opinion such tendencies, and especially aggressive military tendencies, are completely foreign to the policy of the Soviet Union. Nobody would be happier than we if this opinion should prove to be right in the future. The past, however, does not confirm it.

If I may take the liberty of opposing my opinion against this I can only refer to the fact that the success of my own struggle in life is not entirely due to chance and any especial lack of ability on my part. I believe that there are a few things that I understand in this connection. I began my activities in Germany at about the same time as Bolshevism celebrated its first success in Germany, *i. e.* the first civil war in Germany. After 15 years Bolshevism counted 6 million adherents in our country. By that time the number of my adherents had risen to 13 million. Bolshevism was defeated in the decisive battle. National Socialism has saved Germany, and perhaps the rest of Europe, from the most frightful catastrophe of all times. If the West-European critics of this idea had the same practical experience as I have, then I believe that they would perhaps come to quite other conclusions than those which they hold at the present time. If, however, my struggle in Germany had been a failure and the Bolshevistic revolt had first overwhelmed Germany, then I know that the greatness of our historic achievement would be understood. As things now stand my part seems to be that of the warner who is perhaps laughed at by the rest of the world. But so far as Germany is concerned, I must, in accordance with my conscience and my position of responsibility, make the following statement:—

The Bolshevistic uprisings and revolts in Germany could never have taken place without the aid of moral and material preparations on the part of International Bolshevism. The foremost leaders in all these troubles were not only trained and financed in Russia for their revolutionary activities in Germany; but they received public honours

and decorations and were even appointed to official positions in command of Russian troops. Such are the facts.

Germany has nothing to gain by a European war of any kind. What we want is freedom and independence. For this reason we were ready to conclude pacts of non-aggression with all our neighbours, Lithuania excepted. The sole reason for this exception, however, is not that we wish for a war against that country, but because we cannot make political treaties with a state which ignores the most primitive laws of human society. It is sad enough that, owing to the way in which the European peoples are split up territorially, very difficult circumstances would be encountered by any practical plan for the delimitation of frontiers which would coincide with the various national groups. It is sad too that in the making of certain treaties national affiliations have been consciously disregarded. But this makes it all the more necessary that people who have had the misfortune to be torn away from their national kindred should not be oppressed and maltreated.

A few weeks ago I saw the statement made in a great international newspaper that Germany could easily renounce her claim to the Memel Territory because she is big enough already. But the noble humanitarian author of that statement forgot one thing—namely, that 140,000 people have the right to live in their own way and that it is not a question whether Germany wants them or not but whether they themselves want to be Germans or not.

They are Germans. By a surprise attack in the midst of peaceful conditions they were torn away from Germany and this act of aggression was subsequently sanctioned. As a punishment for still adhering to their German feelings, they were persecuted, tortured and maltreated in a most barbarous way. What would be said in England or France if members of one of these nations were subjected to similar treatment? When people who have been torn away from their own nation, in defiance of every natural right and sentiment, still preserve a feeling of allegiance to their motherland and that feeling is considered as a punishable crime, then this means that such human beings are denied even the right that is allowed to every beast of the field. By this I mean the right of remaining devoted to the old master and the community in which it was born. In Lithuania 140,000 Germans have been reduced to so low a status that they are



even denied this primitive right. Therefore as long as the responsible guarantors of the Memel Statute fail to induce Lithuania to respect the most primitive of human rights, it will be impossible for us to conclude any treaty with that country.

With this exception however — an exception which can be removed at any time by the Great Powers who are responsible—we are ready, through pacts and non-aggression undertakings, to give any nation whose frontiers border on ours that assurance which will also be beneficial to ourselves. But we cannot supplement such treaties by giving undertakings to assist other countries in case of war. Such undertakings would be unacceptable to us because of the political doctrines in which we believe, and also for technical reasons. National Socialism cannot call upon the German people, who are its adherents, to fight for the maintenance of a system which is looked upon in our own country as deadly inimical. An undertaking to keep the peace? Yes. We ourselves do not wish for military assistance from the Bolsheviks and we should not be in a position to render them military assistance.

Moreover, in the concluding of certain assistance pacts which are known to us we see a development that in no way differs from the old type of military alliances. We regret this in a special way because, as a result of the military alliance between France and Russia, an element of legal insecurity has been brought into the Locarno Pact, which is the most definite and really most valuable treaty of mutual assurance in Europe. The questions that have recently been raised of these new alliances are presumably the result of similar misgivings and prove, both in the way the questions are put and the manner in which they are answered, how great is the number of possible eventualities which might give rise to corresponding differences of opinion. The German Government would be specially grateful for an authentic interpretation of the retrospective and future effects of the Franco-Russian military alliance on the contractual obligations of the single parties who signed the Locarno Pact. The German Government also does not wish to allow any doubts to arise as to its own belief that these military alliances are contrary to the spirit and letter of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

The signing of individual pacts of non-interference, as long as it is not clearly defined what this non-interference means, is just as

impossible for us as to undertake the aforementioned unlimited obligations. On our part we, Germans, would have more reasons to rejoice than anyone if finally a way or method could be found to prevent the exercise of influence by outside forces on the inner political life of the nations. Since the end of the War Germany has been the victim of such interferences continually. Our Communist Party was a section of a political movement which had its headquarters abroad and was directed from abroad. All the revolts in Germany were fomented by teaching from abroad and were materially supported from abroad. The rest of the world knows this quite well but has never taken much pains about it.

An army of emigrants is working against Germany from abroad. In Prague and Paris and in other towns revolutionary newspapers are still being printed in the German language and are constantly being smuggled into Germany. Public incitements to acts of violence are published not merely in these papers but also in several of the great papers which have a large circulation. What are called "blackleg" radio stations broadcast appeals which call for murderous activities in Germany. Other stations make propaganda in the German language for terror-organisations which are forbidden in Germany. Courts of justice are publicly set up abroad which endeavour to interfere in the German administration of justice. We are interested in seeing all these ways and methods abolished; but besides our own interest we recognise that if such operations are not defined with great exactitude a Government which — in its own interior — does not govern by any other right but that of force might attribute any internal revolt to the influence of outside interference and then, in order to maintain its position, demand such military assistance as had been guaranteed contractually.

The fact that in Europe political frontiers do not correspond to the cultural frontiers is a fact that can be and is very much regretted. Since the rise of Christianity certain ideas have spread in an unbroken tradition throughout Europe. They have formed groups which have had a decided influence on the destiny of Europe. They have bridged across frontiers of states and nations and have created elements of union.

If, for instance, some foreign cabinet minister should express his regret that certain ideas which are held valid in Western Europe are not recognised to-day in Germany, then it will be easier to under-

stand how the doctrines of the German Reich cannot be entirely without their influence in one or other of the German countries.

Germany neither intends nor wishes to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annex Austria, or to conclude an "Anschluss". The German people and the German Government have, however, the very comprehensible desire, arising out of a simple feeling of solidarity due to a common national descent — namely, that the right to self-determination should be guaranteed not only for foreign nations but to the German people everywhere. I myself believe that no regime which does not rest on public consent and is not supported by the people can continue permanently. If there are no such difficulties between Germany and Switzerland, which is to a large extent German, that is due to the fact that the independence and self-reliance of Switzerland is a reality, and because nobody doubts that the Swiss Government represents the real legal expression of the will of the people.

We Germans have every reason to be glad that there is on our frontier a State, a large percentage of whose population is German, which is firmly established and possesses a real and actual independence. The German Government regret the tension which has arisen from the conflict with Austria all the more because it has resulted in disturbing our former good relations towards Italy, a State with whom we otherwise have no conflict of interests.

The German Government will therefore unconditionally respect the remaining articles touching the relations of the nations, including the territorial provisions, and will carry out the revisions which become inevitable in the course of time only by means of peaceful agreement.

Passing from these general considerations to a more precise summing up of the present issues, I hereby declare that the position of the German Government is as follows:—

1. The German Government reject the Geneva resolution of April 17th. It was not Germany which unilaterally broke the Versailles Treaty. The Versailles Dictate was unilaterally broken, and thereby rendered invalid as regards the points at issue, by those Powers who could not decide to carry out in their turn the disarmament which was imposed on Germany and which should have followed in their case by virtue of the Treaty.

The new discrimination introduced at Geneva makes it impossible for the German Government to return to that institution until the preconditions for a real legal equality of all members have been established. For this purpose the German Government consider it necessary to make a clear separation between the Treaty of Versailles, which was based on a classification of the nations into victors and vanquished, and the League of Nations, which must be constituted on the basis of equal valuation and equality of rights for all the members.

This equality of rights must be extended to all functions and all property rights in international life.

2. The German Government, consequent on the failure of the other states to fulfil their disarmament obligations, have on their part renounced those articles of the Versailles Treaty which, because of the one-sided burden this laid on Germany contrary to the provisions of the Treaty, have constituted a discrimination against Germany for an unlimited period of time. They hereby most solemnly declare that these measures of theirs relate exclusively to the points which involve moral and material discrimination against the German people and of which notice has been given. The German Government will therefore unconditionally respect the articles concerning the mutual relations of the nations in other respects, including the territorial provisions, and those revisions which shall be rendered necessary in the course of time will be put into effect only by the method of peaceful understandings.

3. The German Government intend not to sign any treaty which seems to them incapable of fulfilment; but they will scrupulously maintain every treaty voluntarily signed, even though it was concluded before their accession to power and office. In particular they will uphold and fulfil all obligations arising out of the Locarno Treaty, so long as the other partners are on their side ready to stand by that pact. In respecting the demilitarised zone the German Government consider their action as a contribution to the appeasement of Europe, which contribution is of an unheard-of hardness for a sovereign State. But they feel bound to point out that the continual increase of troops on the other side can in no way be regarded as a complement to these endeavours.

4. The German Government are ready at any time to participate

in a system of collective cooperation for safeguarding European peace, but regard it necessary to recognise the law of perpetual evolution by keeping open the way to treaty revision. In making possible a regulated evolution in the treaty system they recognise a factor for the safeguarding of peace and in the suppression of every necessary change a preparation for future explosions.

5. The German Government are of the opinion that the reconstruction of European collaboration cannot be achieved by the method of imposing conditions unilaterally. In view of the fact that the various interests involved are not always concordant, they believe it right to be content with a minimum instead of allowing this collaboration to break down on account of an unalterable maximum of demands. They have the further conviction that this understanding—with a great aim in view—can be brought about only step by step.

6. The German Government are ready in principle to conclude pacts of non-aggression with their neighbour states and to supplement these pacts with all provisions that aim at isolating the war-maker and localising the area of the war. In particular they are ready to assume all consequent obligations regarding the supply of material and arms in peace or war where such obligations are also assumed and respected by all the partners.

7. The German Government are ready to supplement the Locarno Treaty with an air agreement and to enter upon discussions regarding this matter.

8. The German Government have announced the extent of the expansion of the new German Defence Force. In no circumstances will they depart from this. They do not regard the fulfilment of their programme in the air, on land or at sea, as constituting a menace to any nation. They are ready at any time to limit their armaments to any degree that is also adopted by the other Powers.

The German Government have already spontaneously made known the definite limitations of their intentions, thereby giving the best evidence of their good will to avoid an unlimited armaments race. Their limitation of the German air armaments to parity with the individual Great Powers of the West makes it possible at any time to fix a maximum with Germany will be under a binding obligation to observe with the other nations. The limitation of the German

Navy is placed at 35% of the British Navy,<sup>1</sup> and therewith still at 15% below the total tonnage of the French Navy. As the opinion has been expressed in various press commentaries that this demand is only a beginning and would increase, particularly with the possession of Colonies, the German Government hereby make the binding declaration: For Germany this demand is final and abiding.

Germany has not the intention or the necessity or the means to participate in any new naval rivalry. The German Government recognise of themselves the overpowering vital importance, and therewith the justification, of a dominating protection for the British Empire on the sea, precisely as we are resolved conversely to do all that is necessary for the protection of our continental existence and freedom. The German Government have the straight-forward intention to find and maintain a relationship with the British people and State which will prevent for all time a repetition of the only struggle there has been between the two nations hitherto.

9. The German Government are ready to take an active part in all efforts which may lead to a practical limitation of boundless armaments. They regard a return to the former idea of the Geneva Red Cross Convention as the only possible way to achieve this. They believe that first there will be only the possibility of a gradual abolition and outlawry of weapons and methods of warfare which are essentially contrary to the Geneva Red Cross Convention, which is still valid. Just as the use of dum-dum bullets was once forbidden and, on the whole, thereby prevented in practice, so the use of other definite arms should be forbidden and prevented. Here the German Government have in mind all those arms which bring death and destruction not so much to the fighting soldiers as in the first instance to non-combatant women and children.

The German Government consider as erroneous and ineffective the idea of doing away with aeroplanes while leaving bombardment free. But they believe it possible to proscribe the use of certain arms as contrary to international law and to excommunicate those nations still using them from the community of mankind—its rights and its laws.

Here also they believe that gradual progress is the best way to success. For example, there might be prohibition of the dropping

<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-German Naval Agreement was concluded on this basis on June 18, 1935.

of gas, incendiary and explosive bombs outside the real battle zone. This limitation could then be extended to complete international outlawry of all bombing. But so long as bombing as such is permitted, any limitation of the number of bombing planes is questionable in view of the possibility of rapid substitution.

Should bombing as such be branded as an illegal barbarity, the construction of bombing aeroplanes will soon be abandoned as superfluous and of no purpose. If, through the Geneva Red Cross Convention, it turned out possible as a matter of fact to prevent the killing of a defenceless wounded man or prisoner, then it ought to be equally possible to forbid, by an analogous convention, and finally to stop, the bombing of equally defenceless civil populations.

In such a fundamental way of dealing with the problem Germany sees a greater reassurance and security for the nations than in all pacts of assistance and military conventions.

10. The German Government are ready to agree to any limitation which leads to abolition of the heaviest arms, especially suited for aggression. Such are, first, the heaviest artillery, and, secondly, the heaviest tanks. In view of the enormous fortifications on the French frontier such international abolition of the heaviest weapons of attack would *ipso facto* give France 100 per cent security.

11. Germany declares herself ready to agree to any limitation whatsoever of the calibre-strength of artillery, battleships, cruisers and torpedo boats. In like manner the German Government are ready to accept any international limitation of the size of warships. And finally they are ready to agree to limitation of tonnage for submarines, or to their complete abolition in case of international agreement. And they give the further assurance that they will agree to any international limitation or abolition of arms whatsoever for a uniform space of time.

12. The German Government are of the opinion that all attempts to bring about an alleviation of certain strained relations between individual states by means of international or multilateral agreements must be in vain until suitable measures are taken to prevent the poisoning of public opinion among the nations by irresponsible elements orally or in writing, through the theatre or the cinema.

13. The German Government are ready at any time to reach an international agreement which shall effectively prevent all attempts

at outside interference in the affairs of other states. They must demand, however, that such a settlement be internationally effective, and work out for the benefit of all states. As there is a danger that in countries where the Government does not rest on the general confidence of the people, internal upheavals may all too easily be ascribed to external interference, it seems necessary that the conception of "interference" should be subjected to a precise international definition.

Members of the German Reichstag.

I have been at pains to give you a picture of the problems which confront us to-day. However great the difficulties and worries may be in individual questions, I consider that I owe it to my position as Führer and Chancellor of the Reich not to admit a single doubt as to the possibility of maintaining peace. The peoples wish for peace. It must be possible for the governments to maintain it. I believe that the restoration of the German defence force will contribute to this peace. Not because we intend to increase it beyond all bounds, but because the simple fact of its existence has got rid of a dangerous vacuum in Europe. Germany does not intend to increase her armaments beyond all bounds. We have not got ten thousand bombing-planes and we shall not build them. On the contrary; we have set for ourselves such limits as we are convinced are necessary for the protection of the nation, without coming into conflict with the idea of a collective and regulated security. Nobody would be happier than we if such a regulation should make it possible for us to apply the industry of our people to the production of more useful things than instruments for the destruction of human life and property.

We believe that if the peoples of the world can agree to destroy all their gas, inflammatory, and explosive bombs this would be a more useful undertaking than using them to destroy one another.

In saying this I am not speaking any more as the representative of a defenceless state which would have no responsibilities but only advantages as a result of such a procedure. I do not intend to take part here in discussions such as have recently been started in various places as to the value of other armies or one's own army and the cowardice of foreign soldiers and the supreme bravery of one's own.

We all know how many millions of fearless opponents, contempt-



uous of death, faced us, alas, in the World War. But history has certainly often shown of us Germans that we understand less the art of living reasonably than that of dying nobly. I know that if ever this nation should be attacked the German soldier will do more than his duty, remembering from the experiences of one and a half decades what is the fate of a conquered people. This conviction is for us all a serious responsibility, and at the same time a noble duty. I cannot better conclude my speech of to-day to you, my fellow fighters and trustees of the nation, than by repeating our confession of faith in peace. The nature of our new constitution makes it possible for us in Germany to put a stop to the machinations of the war agitators. May the other nations too be able to give bold expression to their real inner longing for peace. Whoever lights the torch of war in Europe can wish for nothing but chaos. We, however, live in the firm conviction that in our time will be fulfilled, not the decline but the renaissance of the West. That Germany may make an imperishable contribution to this great work is our proud hope and our unshakable belief.

(From *Völkischer Beobachter*, May 22, 1935.)

### 35.

## EXCHANGE OF NOTES RESPECTING THE COMPATIBILITY OF THE FRANCO-SOVIET PACT WITH THE TREATY OF LOCARNO

### I

#### GERMAN MEMORANDUM TO THE SIGNATORY POWERS OF THE TREATY OF LOCARNO, MAY 25, 1935

The German Government has taken note of the treaty signed on the 2nd May last between France and the U.S.S.R. It follows from section 4 of the protocol of signature which accompanies the treaty that the obligations agreed upon between the two contracting parties, and particularly the obligation to lend mutual assistance, refer only to the case when one of those parties finds itself in armed conflict with Germany. In consequence, the German Government sees itself obliged to consider the question whether the new treaty is in har-

mony with the obligations towards Germany which one or the other of the two contracting parties has assumed in consequence of former treaties. The treaty signed at Locarno on the 16th October, 1925, between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy, known as the "Locarno Rhine Pact," is especially relevant in this respect.

By the terms of this treaty, Germany and France "mutually undertake that they will in no case attack or invade each other or resort to war against each other." The exceptions to this obligation are enumerated and defined in article 2, section 2, of the treaty. Apart from the case of legitimate defense, which can be left on one side in the present connexion, these exceptions have the effect of making the renunciation of all attack, invasion or warfare against one another agreed upon by Germany and France inapplicable in the case of "(a) action in pursuance of article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, (b) action as the result of the decision taken by the Assembly or by the Council of the League of Nations or in pursuance of article 15, paragraph 7, of the Covenant of the League of Nations, provided that in this last event the action is directed against the State which is the first to attack."

At first sight the new Franco-Soviet Treaty in its provisions concerning the obligation of the two parties to render mutual assistance against Germany seems in harmony with the exceptions laid down in cases (a) and (b) above. It provides in article 2 for assistance in the case where article 15, paragraph 7, of the Covenant of the League would be applicable and in article 3 for the case provided for under article 16 of the Covenant. In addition to these two cases there are also cases not mentioned in the Locarno Treaty, that is to say, those provided for under article 17, paragraphs 1 and 3, of the Covenant, an article which on its side provides under certain defined conditions for the application of article 16 against a State which is not a member of the League of Nations.

These provisions of the new treaty which refer to articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant demand the very particular attention of the Powers signatories of the Treaty of Locarno. All these Powers find themselves faced with the serious question whether the obligations which France has just undertaken *vis-à-vis* the U.S.S.R. are within the limits fixed by the Locarno Treaty. The complementary provisions contained in section 1 of the protocol of signature are especi-

ally, in the opinion of the German Government, of decisive importance in answering this question. Under the said paragraph 1 the text reads: "Il est entendu que l'effet de l'article 3 est d'obliger chaque partie contractante à prêter immédiatement assistance à l'autre en se conformant immédiatement aux recommandations du Conseil de la Société des Nations, aussitôt qu'elles auront été énoncées en vertu de l'article 16 du Pacte. Il est également entendu que les deux parties contractantes agiront de concert pour obtenir que le Conseil énonce ses recommandations avec toute la rapidité qu'exigeront les circonstances et que, si néanmoins le Conseil, pour une raison quelconque, n'énonce aucune recommandation ou s'il n'arrive pas à un vote unanime, l'obligation d'assistance n'en recevra pas moins application."<sup>1</sup>

It follows from this text that the two contracting parties, before undertaking any action which they intend to base upon article 16 of the Covenant, will address themselves first of all to the Council of the League of Nations, but that they are, none the less, decided to fulfil the obligations of assistance agreed upon between themselves, if, for some reason or other, the Council of the League does not produce a recommendation or if it does not reach a unanimous decision. This provision can only be understood in the sense that France claims for herself, in the event of a conflict between Germany and the U.S.S.R., the right to take military action against Germany in virtue of article 16 of the pact, even if she cannot cite a recommendation or some other decision of the Council of the League of Nations. It seems that, after the departure of Germany from the League of Nations, this course of action is also intended in the case where the decision of the Council regarding the invitation to be addressed to Germany in virtue of article 17, paragraph 1, of the pact has not been reached. The German Government considers that military action

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<sup>1</sup> — It is agreed that the effect of article 3 is to compel each contracting party immediately to give assistance to the other by complying forthwith with the recommendations of the Council of the League of Nations as soon as they shall have been made in accordance with article 16 of the Covenant. It is further agreed that the two contracting parties will take joint action to ensure that the Council issue their recommendations with all the speed required by the circumstances of the case, and that, should the Council nevertheless, for some reason, make no recommendation or fail to reach a unanimous decision, effect shall nevertheless be given to the obligation to render assistance.

undertaken in such conditions would be outside the limits of article 16 of the pact, and would, consequently, constitute a flagrant violation of the Treaty of Locarno. The wide scope of the Franco-Soviet understanding in this respect is manifest. It is true that the treaty lays down that assistance shall only be given in the event of an unprovoked aggression on the part of Germany. This event will never occur, for Germany has no intention of taking any aggressive action against the U.S.S.R., but, none the less, the problem is not solved, for the decisive point is that France, according to the section of the protocol of signature above mentioned, claims for herself the right in the event of a German-Soviet conflict to decide unilaterally and at her own discretion who is the aggressor, and, in virtue of her decision, to take military action against Germany.

The objections formulated above are not invalidated by the general clause in the second section of the protocol, which lays down that this treaty is not inconsistent with any of the engagements already undertaken by France or the U.S.S.R. towards third parties and that the provisions of the Franco-Soviet Treaty will not be applicable in the event of one of the contracting parties, by reason of obligations already undertaken, exposing itself to sanctions of an international character. This general clause does not in any way alter the fact that the special clause in section 1 of the protocol exists, a clause which, as has been pointed out above, stipulates the contrary in a concrete case, namely, the case of the application of the Treaty of Locarno.

The Treaty of Locarno is fundamentally so important for the relations between the Western European Powers that no doubt, however slight, and no uncertainty, must be allowed to arise as to the interpretations of its clauses. It is for this reason that the German Government has considered it indispensable to communicate the above considerations to the other Powers signatories of this treaty. They hope that all the signatory Powers will agree with them in recognizing that the provisions of the Treaty of Locarno cannot legally be modified or interpreted by the fact that a treaty has been concluded with a third party by one of the signatories.

## II

## FRENCH REPLY TO GERMAN MEMORANDUM, JUNE 25, 1935

In a memorandum dated the 25 th May, 1935, the German Government, thus indicating the interest attached by them to respect for the Rhine Pact of Locarno as regards the relations between the Powers of Western Europe, felt constrained to express to the French Government their desire to be assured that the Franco-Soviet Treaty of the 2nd May last was consistent with the obligations undertaken in the Locarno Pact.

The Government of the Republic, who are no less faithfully attached to the Locarno Pact than the Government of the Reich, is entirely in agreement with the latter in recognising "that the provisions of the Rhine Pact of Locarno cannot legally be modified or interpreted by the fact that a treaty has been concluded with a third country by one of the signatories."

The French Government's anxiety in no way to invalidate the application of the Locarno Treaty is the guiding principle of their whole policy; they could not consequently have proceeded to sign the Franco-Soviet Treaty without being completely certain that they had not thus undertaken any obligations inconsistent with those laid down in the Locarno Treaty.

If any assurance on this point were necessary, it would be sufficient to recall, in general terms, the fact that in paragraph 2 of the protocol of signature accompanying this treaty, the two signatory Governments have declared that it is their joint purpose not to invalidate in any way the obligations previously contracted by the two countries towards third States in published treaties, and that consequently it has been formally laid down that effect could not be given to the provisions of the treaty in any way which would be inconsistent with the treaty obligations already assumed by one of the contracting parties.

Unless doubt is entertained regarding the good faith of the two signatory States, it is impossible to ignore a provision which lays down so clearly the scope of their obligations.

The French Government might confine their reply to this general statement. To show, however, their sincere desire to remove all obscurity in connexion with this matter, they are fully prepared to

enter into the analytical arguments contained in the German memorandum.

The German Government cannot have failed to note that the provisions of the Franco-Soviet Treaty regarding the obligation to render mutual assistance are based on the very provisions of article 2 of the Treaty of Locarno. They have merely pointed out that to the cases contemplated in this article "further cases, not mentioned in the Rhine Pact of Locarno, have been added, namely, those contemplated in article 17, paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Covenant of the League of Nations." But the German Government, on the other hand, draws attention to the fact that this latter article contemplates the application of article 16 against a State not a Member of the League of Nations; which brings us back to the cases contemplated in article 2 of the Treaty of Locarno. The addition to which reference is made does not, therefore, lay itself open to any objection in principle on the part of the German Government.

It is in connexion with the putting into effect of the provisions for assistance in execution of article 16 of the Covenant, that the German Government has thought it possible to dispute that the obligations undertaken by France towards the U.S.S.R. remain within the limits fixed by the Treaty of Locarno; with this in mind they lay stress upon "additional obligations" said to be laid down in article 1 of the protocol of signature. Actually, however, it is a question in this article, not of supplementary obligations, but, on the contrary, of clarifying and limiting the obligations laid down in article 3.

It is not the case that under the terms of the first part of the protocol of signature, France, in the event of a conflict between Germany and the U.S.S.R., claims the right to decide, unilaterally and in her own free judgment, who is the aggressor. First and foremost it is her duty to secure recommendations by the Council of the League of Nations, to compliance with which she is committed in advance. Even after having fulfilled this requirement of the Covenant of the League of Nations, if the Council has not made any recommendation, or has not been able to reach a unanimous decision, she must still, under article 2 of the protocol, make sure that, apart from this, her judgment of the circumstances is not such that action taken by her might call down upon her the sanctions prescribed in the Treaty of Locarno.

As regards the point that the obligation to render assistance might arise in the absence of a recommendation or of a unanimous decision of the Council, attention should be called to the fact that the application of article 16, in accordance not only with its terms but also with the most authoritative interpretations thereof, does not necessarily require a recommendation of the Council. In laying down the principle that in the absence of a recommendation the obligation to render assistance nevertheless arises, the signatories of the Franco-Soviet Treaty have thus kept strictly within the framework of article 16, which prescribes that "should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under articles 12, 13 or 15, it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League." It is consequently not possible to detect in article 1 of the protocol any contradiction with the terms of article 2 of the general Treaty of Locarno.

Moreover, the preoccupations of the German Government seem only to relate to a case in which, Germany having withdrawn from the League of Nations, action taken by France against Germany in execution of article 16 would be based on article 17 of the Covenant, which refers back to the aforesaid article 16. In this case the German Government consider that military action undertaken without a previous decision of the Council regarding the invitation to be addressed to Germany under article 17 might go beyond the scope of article 16 and thus constitute a violation of the Treaty of Locarno.

This interpretation is not justified; in fact, article 1 of the protocol of signature of the Franco-Soviet Treaty refers only to recommendations "made under article 16" by the Council of the League of Nations and does not affect in any way the conditions laid down for the issue of an invitation in article 17.

The French Government do not doubt that in the light of the foregoing observations the German Government will be satisfied that the provisions of the agreement of the 2nd May are perfectly consistent with the obligations resulting from the Treaty of Locarno.

During the whole period of the Franco-Soviet negotiations, the constant preoccupation of the French Government was to avoid anything which might, even indirectly, invalidate in the slightest degree the Treaty of Locarno or the rights and obligations of the Guarantor Powers.

The Rhine Pact, as an element of collective security, is so much an essential basis of the general policy of France that no French Government could have risked, by their own action, the introduction of an element of doubt with regard to it. The Franco-Soviet Treaty of the 2nd May is conceived in the same pacific spirit and on the same lines as the Franco-Polish and Franco-Czechoslovak treaties, of which the German Government took official cognisance at Locarno and to which they raised no objection. The new treaty has no other purpose than to extend the network of obligations, designed to ensure, on the basis of the principles laid down in the Covenant of the League of Nations, the development of European security.

The first proposals for a regional Eastern Pact, which were submitted to the German Government in July 1934, had already shown the efforts which the French Government were prepared to make in order to extend to this part of Europe the application of the principles of collective security contained in the Treaty of Locarno. It was contemplated that French participation therein should be strictly confined to the conditions laid down in the Rhine Pact.

Furthermore, the signatories of the treaty of the 2nd May specifically contemplated an extension of the agreement permitting of the inclusion of the Reich among the countries which would benefit by participation in the agreement. The obligations mutually undertaken by France and the U.S.S.R. would thus be extended to Germany. Nothing could more clearly show the objective spirit by which the French Government are inspired in their constant desire to foster, in a collective sense, the development of European security in accordance with principles designed to ensure equal advantages and equal rights for all States.

### III

#### BRITISH REPLY TO GERMAN MEMORANDUM, JULY 5, 1935

I have the honour to refer to the memorandum which your Excellency was so good as to hand to my predecessor on the 29th May, and in which were set forth various considerations regarding the manner in which the Treaty of Locarno was, in the view of the German Government, affected by the terms of the Franco-Soviet Pact of the 2nd May. Since then His Majesty's Government in the United



Kingdom have had cognisance of the note which the French Government communicated to the German Government on the 25th June in reply to this same memorandum.

2. His Majesty's Government are in entire agreement with the views expressed and the arguments used by the French Government in this note, and after further consideration of the points made by the German Government they are satisfied that there is nothing in the Franco-Soviet Treaty which either conflicts with the Locarno Treaty or modifies its operation in any way. They likewise agree with the French and German Governments in holding that the provisions of the Locarno Treaty cannot legally be modified or defined by the fact that a treaty has been concluded with a third party by one of the signatories.

3. I would also observe in this connexion that, under the Treaty of Locarno, the United Kingdom, as one of the guarantors of that treaty, has the right and duty of deciding, subject to the findings and the recommendations of the Council of the League of Nations, when and whether the circumstances are such as to call its guarantee into operation, and that this right and duty cannot be affected or altered by the act of another signatory to the treaty.

4. I venture to express the hope that, after examining the views thus set forth in the French note of the 25th June and in this present communication, the German Government will recognise that the rights and duties of the signatories of the Treaty of Locarno, including those of Germany, have in no way been prejudiced or modified by the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Treaty.

#### IV

##### ITALIAN REPLY TO GERMAN MEMORANDUM, JULY 15, 1935

The Royal Government has carefully examined the German Government's memorandum of the 25th May last regarding the Franco-Soviet Treaty of the 2nd May in relation to the Locarno Treaty.

The Royal Government, which has been informed by the French Government of the reply which the latter returned to the German memorandum on the 25th June last, desires, first of all, to declare itself entirely in agreement with the German Government and with

the French Government in considering that the provisions of the Rhine Pact of Locarno cannot legally be modified or interpreted by the fact that a treaty has been concluded with a third State by one of its signatories.

As regards the observation set out in the German Government's memorandum, the Royal Government, taking note of the explanations furnished by the French Government in their reply, has the honour to inform the German Government that, so far as it is concerned, it shares the point of view expounded by the French Government regarding the scope of the Franco-Soviet Treaty in relation to the Treaty of Locarno.

The Royal Government desires to add that under the Treaty of Locarno Italy, as one of the Powers guarantors of the treaty, has the right and duty of deciding, subject to the findings and recommendations of the Council of the League of Nations, when circumstances have arisen which render its guarantee operative, and that these rights and obligations cannot in any way be prejudiced or modified by the act of another signatory of the treaty.

## V

## BELGIAN REPLY TO GERMAN MEMORANDUM, JULY 19, 1935

In an aide-mémoire, dated the 25th May last, the German Government were good enough to inform the Belgian Government of the observations suggested to them by the treaty signed on the 2nd May, 1935, between France and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, particularly with regard to the question whether certain dispositions of this treaty were in harmony with the obligations of the Rhine Pact.

The Royal Government have examined this problem with the greatest attention for, like the German Government, they consider that the Rhine Pact is of fundamental importance in the relations between the Powers of Western Europe.

After having studied the objections developed in the above mentioned aide-mémoire, as well as the explanations furnished by the French reply of the 25th June, the Belgian Government do not consider that the Franco-Soviet Treaty is in conflict with the stipulations of the Rhine Pact. They concur, moreover, in the principle

insisted on by both the German and the French Governments, according to which "the dispositions of the Rhine Pact of Locarno cannot legally be modified or interpreted by the fact that a treaty has been concluded with a third State by one of its signatories."

The Belgian Government feel that they should add that as regards more particularly the rendering of assistance contemplated in article 4 of the Locarno Treaty, they have, in accordance with this article and subject to the findings and recommendations of the Council of the League of Nations, the right and the duty to decide if and when the conditions have been fulfilled on which the obligation to respond to an appeal for assistance depends. This right and duty remain intact and cannot be modified.

(*Cmd. 5143*, pp. 36-9, 42-7.)

## VI

ORAL STATEMENTS BY THE GERMAN REPRESENTATIVES IN LONDON,  
PARIS, ROME AND BRUSSELS AT THE END OF JULY, 1935

The German Government has informed the Belgian, British, French and Italian Governments, through diplomatic channels, at the end of July 1935, after the despatch of the replies to the German Memorandum of May 25th 1935, that it must still maintain fully, as before, its objection to the Franco-Soviet Pact, and that the matter could not be regarded as settled.

(From the periodical "*Völkerbund*", March 20, 1936.)

## 36.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN  
APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL UNDER ITS RESOLUTION  
OF APRIL 17, 1935: MEASURES TO RENDER THE COVENANT  
MORE EFFECTIVE IN THE ORGANISATION OF  
COLLECTIVE SECURITY

### CONVOCATION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee of Thirteen, appointed under the resolution of the Council of April 17th, 1935, met at Geneva from May 24th to May 29th, 1935.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN, 1935

The following countries had been invited by the Council to send representatives to sit on the Committee:

United Kingdom	Poland
Canada	Portugal
Chile	Spain
France	Turkey
Hungary	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Italy	
Netherlands	Yugoslavia

The Committee elected as its Chairman M. Caeiro da Matta (Portugal).

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE FRENCH DELEGATION, DATED  
MAY 22, 1935

The French delegation, in a memorandum distributed to the members of the Committee on May 23rd, 1935, prior to its meeting, submitted a proposal to the effect that a Protocol should be drawn up for the signature of all European States, to enter into force between the signatories as soon as a limited number of accessions had been received. The signatories would pledge themselves, in the event of a breach, duly recorded by the Council, of an undertaking of concern to international security and the maintenance of peace in Europe, (*a*) to carry out any recommendations which the Council might make to the Members of the League other than the delinquent State, and (*b*) to concert together on measures to be taken with a view to effectively prohibiting the export to the territory of the delinquent State of arms and implements of war and of such other products and raw materials of which it might be considered desirable to deprive the delinquent State.

It was proposed that the execution of this undertaking should be provided for in such arrangements of a general or regional character as might be recognised as necessary. Non-European States would be requested, under conditions to be considered, to facilitate the operation of these various arrangements.

The French delegation, in making this proposal, observed that the Council would, in taking decisions of the character contemplated, be acting under Article 11 of the Covenant. A question of procedure,

which was of vital importance, accordingly arose regarding the application of such a system. While it was obvious that recommendations addressed to the State or States concerned could not be valid if they were voted against by one of the parties in the case, it was inconceivable that the right to vote should allow the States concerned to prevent the adoption of recommendations addressed to third States Members of the League with a view to exercising pressure on a State or States which had committed breaches of their obligations.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN

The French delegation, in the course of an exchange of views between the members of the Committee, submitted, on May 27th, 1935, the following suggestions:

I.

(a) In the event of a repudiation having the characteristics defined by the Council resolution, the signatory Powers, acting either jointly or severally, shall report it to the Council, in conformity with Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Covenant.

(b) If the Council finds that the safety of peoples and the maintenance of peace in Europe are threatened by the repudiation reported to it, the contracting parties undertake to co-operate by every means in their power in carrying out such measures as the Council may recommend for the purpose of safeguarding peace.

(c) With a view to the execution of the above provision, the signatory Powers declare that they agree that the unanimity required for the Council's decision shall not include the vote of the State guilty of repudiation.

II.

(a) Without prejudice to the obligations contemplated in the first part of the agreement, the signatory Powers shall concert together to stop the export and transit, to the State found guilty of repudiation, of implements of war and raw materials suitable for use in the manufacture of such implements, and of any other products of which it may be found expedient to stop the export to the guilty State.

(*b*) A list of materials to which this prohibition applies shall be drawn up, with special regard to the particular needs of that State in the matter of armaments.

(The Committee may consider the desirability of drawing up in advance, for purposes of guidance, a list of articles to which these prohibitive measures may be applied, and will also consider the desirability of enquiring forthwith into the best methods of ensuring the prohibition of the export of the listed products.)

(*c*) Should it appear that the efficacy of the contemplated measures depends upon the co-operation of any non-signatory State or States, the contracting parties might request the Council of the League to communicate with such State or States with a view to securing their co-operation.

(*d*) The signatory Powers will undertake to refuse permission for the floating, on the markets under their control, of any loan, either by the State guilty of repudiation or by companies established in its territory. They will also do all in their power to prevent any financial facilities from being given to the guilty State.

The Committee decided that it would not at that stage discuss the proposal of the French delegation in detail. It seemed at that stage preferable to obtain the views of legal and of financial and economic experts.

The United Kingdom accordingly submitted to the Committee two resolutions providing for the appointment of (1) a Sub-Committee of Jurists to report on the legal questions involved in the resolution of the Council of April 17th, and (2) a Sub-Committee of Experts to study and report upon the economic and financial aspects of the problem with the assistance of the Financial, Economic and Transit Sections of the Secretariat of the League.

The Committee adopted this suggestion, appointing the members of the Sub-Committees and approving their terms of reference.

The Committee, concluding its first session, decided that the Sub-Committee of Jurists should meet on June 24th, that the Economic and Financial Sub-Committee should meet on July 1st and that the Plenary Committee should meet again on July 24th, 1935. M. Caeiro da Matta, at the request of his colleagues, agreed to act as Chairman of the two Sub-Committees.

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF JURISTS

The Sub-Committee of Jurists met at Geneva from June 24th to June 28th, 1935.

The following were the members of the Committee: Sir William Malkin (United Kingdom), M. Basdevant (France), M. Perassi (Italy), M. Rutgers (Netherlands), M. Kulski (Poland), M. Cemal Hüsnü (Turkey), M. Hirschfeld (U.S.S.R.) and M. Stoykovitch (Yugoslavia).

The Committee, under its terms of reference, was required to consider:

1. How, in the circumstances contemplated in the resolution of the Council of April 17th, 1935, economic and financial measures could be taken within the framework of the Covenant whether

(a) As "action that might be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations" taken by the League under Article 11 of the Covenant;

(b) As steps to be proposed by the Council under Article 13 to give effect to an award in the event of failure to carry out the award; or

(c) Under any other provision of the Covenant.

2. Whether, in each of the above cases, the negative vote of "the State which had endangered peace by the unilateral repudiation of its international obligations" could prevent the Council from taking the necessary decisions with a view to the measures above referred to, without prejudice to the case, in which these measures might require the collaboration of such State.

The Sub-Committee decided that it was called upon to examine only measures of a pacific character and it accordingly excluded from its field of study such measures as a blockade properly so-called.

The Sub-Committee held, in regard to measures taken under Article 11, that the Council, in the presence of a repudiation of an international engagement such as was contemplated in the Council's resolution dated April 17th, 1935, might, if it failed to secure an agreement which removed the danger to European security and peace, recommend economic and financial measures which appeared to it to be calculated to contribute to the maintenance of peace. Such

recommendations would be addressed to States other than the State which had repudiated its international obligations.

Measures recommended under Article 11 would be directed to removing a threat of war and would have a preventive character, their object being to check preparations for war on the part of a State whose attitude was endangering the peace by, for example, depriving it of particular supplies. States, in the absence of any special undertaking to that effect, would not be under a legal obligation to comply with the recommendation.

The Sub-Committee, in reference to measures taken under Article 13, held that, in the presence of a repudiation of an international engagement (of the kind contemplated in the Council's resolution of April 17th) which had given rise to an award or judicial decision, the Council might propose economic and financial measures which appeared to it calculated to ensure effect being given to the award or decision. The Sub-Committee observed, however, that the object of such measures would be the execution of the award or decision and not the maintenance of peace and that, if the supposition contemplated in the Council's resolution of April 17th were realised, Article 11 would also apply.

The Sub-Committee did not find any other article of the Covenant to be relevant.

The Sub-Committee, discussing the second question—namely, whether the negative vote of the delinquent State could prevent the Council from taking the necessary decisions—was unable to reach an agreed decision.

Some members of the Sub-Committee were convinced, in reference to Article 11, that the necessity of allowing that article to be properly executed implied that the vote of the State which had repudiated its obligations should not be counted, since it was evidently impossible for the Council to recommend economic and financial measures or in general any measures directed against a State which was endangering peace if that State must vote for the recommendation. Reference was made in this connection to the advisory opinion given by the Permanent Court of International Justice in the Mosul case when the Court had ruled that, from a practical standpoint, to require that the representatives of the parties should accept the decision of the Council in such circumstances would be tantamount to giving them



a right of veto enabling them to prevent any decision being reached. Other members, on the other hand, contested the scope attributed to the opinion of the Court and argued that, in the absence of any expressed provision excluding application of the unanimity rule laid down in Article 5 of the Covenant, the rule must be applied without any limitation or restriction.

Opinion was similarly divided in the Sub-Committee regarding Article 13.

The Sub-Committee did not find it necessary to take into account other provisions of the Covenant.

The final conclusion of the Sub-Committee was expressed in the following terms:

“The Sub-Committee, while it reached agreement on the reply to the first question submitted, has to report that two divergent opinions were put forward on the second question. One opinion, based on the consideration that the Council has a duty to perform, and on grounds of common sense, would refuse to count the vote of the State which has endangered peace by repudiating its international obligations; the other view, which flows from the language of Article 5, does not permit that State’s vote not to be counted. The Sub-Committee has thought that, so far as it is concerned, it should not give an answer to the question by a majority vote. It has felt it preferable to confine itself to setting out the opposing views.”

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL  
MEASURES

The Sub-Committee on Economic and Financial Measures, which, like the Sub-Committee of Jurists, was presided over by M. Caeiro da Matta, consisted of the following members: M. Coulongre (France), Mr. Hawtrey (United Kingdom), M. Hirschfeld (U.S.S.R.), M. de Lapuerta y de las Pozas (Spain), Mr. Riddell (Canada), H. E. M. Rivas Vicuña (Chile), M. Tumedei (Italy), H. E. M. de Velics (Hungary).

The Sub-Committee appointed to consider economic and financial measures met from July 1st to 13th, 1935.

The terms of reference of the Sub-Committee, as framed by the Plenary Committee, were as follows:

The Committee of Thirteen desires to have the assistance of an expert study of the economic and financial measures referred to in the Council's resolution of April 17th.

The Committee has to study the question whether a selection of measures less comprehensive than those prescribed under Article 16 of the Covenant and not such as to disturb the whole economic life of the country concerned could be found which could effectively be applied in the circumstances postulated with a view to inducing that country to modify its course of action.

The Committee suggests, as examples of such matters which might be studied, the following:

(1) The withholding from the country concerned of supplies of a limited number of key products required for the production of arms and warlike preparations;

(2) The withholding of any other special classes of supplies (other than food supplies essential for the subsistence of the civilian population);

(3) The interruption of the export trade of the country concerned or any special part of it;

(4) Measures of financial pressure, such as the withholding of credit facilities;

(5) What will be the means (administrative and legislative) to be used by the participating States in carrying out each measure in the list?

(6) To what extent and in what conditions the requisite effect can be obtained by arrangements of a regional character or requiring the action of only a limited number of States?

(7) Relation to the measures proposed of the obligations of the countries concerned under such instruments as commercial and transit treaties and multilateral conventions dealing with commercial and transit matters.

The Committee requests a sub-committee to study and report on the foregoing matters with the assistance of the Financial, Economic and Transit Sections of the Secretariat of the League.

The Sub-Committee, noting that the measures to be recommended should not be such as to disturb the whole economic life of the

country concerned, nevertheless assumed that the economic life of the country subjected to such measures should not be safeguarded against any disturbance whatever. It sought, however, to give preference to such measures as would secure the maximum of effect with the minimum of disturbance, and which would not be incompatible with the pacific spirit in which they would be adopted. They should be preventive measures of a more or less deterrent character, such as might be applied to a country assumed to have repudiated its obligations with a view to breaking the peace at an early date and to be engaging in intensive warlike preparations.

The Sub-Committee considered that the supplies to be withheld as a preventive measure might be divided into three categories: (1) arms, ammunition and implements of war; (2) "key products" required for the manufacture of armaments, whose importation into a country might be prohibited without seriously interfering with its economic life; and (3) other products required for the manufacture of armaments and warlike preparations widely employed in industry.

It was pointed out, in reference to the first category, that the most recently compiled list of arms, munitions and implements of war was contained in the report of the Committee of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments which had been dealing with the control of the manufacture of and trade in arms. That list, however had only been adopted at a first reading, subject to reservations and observations on the part of the several delegations. A similar list, however, was to be found in Article 1 of the Convention for the Regulation of the Trade in Arms of 1925, which had been signed by the majority of the countries concerned. The list would doubtless require further examination by technical experts; but the items included should be all of a kind that had been irrevocably put into warlike form, and the withholding of such products could not interfere in any degree with economic interests as such.

The second category was composed of key products required for the manufacture of armaments, and for this list commodities should be selected whose use for warlike purposes would, in all probability, outweigh in importance their use for commercial or civilian purposes. The disturbance caused by the application of such a list would be limited to a small number of highly specialised industries. The

Sub-Committee considered that such a list could be most usefully prepared by a body of specialised and technological experts.

The third category included products useful or necessary for the manufacture of armaments and warlike preparations, but would necessarily include commodities widely employed in industry and agriculture. Measures of exclusion in regard to articles in this category should only be applied with the greatest caution. It was obviously impossible to compile in advance an exhaustive list of such commodities, and their selection must be left until a specific case should arise.

The Sub-Committee, turning to the question of interrupting exports from the repudiating State, observed that the main purposes of such interruption would be to diminish the financial resources derived by the country in question from abroad and their use for procuring the sinews of war. The exclusion of exports from the repudiating country might usefully supplement and, to a certain extent, replace other measures in cases where those measures should prove to be inadequate or inapplicable. There were, however, serious disadvantages in the exclusion of exports. The purpose of such measures was to deprive the repudiating country of external resources, and they might accordingly go so far as to deprive that country of the possibility of importing essential requirements for its civilian population or of raw materials necessary for normal and peaceful production. They might, moreover, act unfairly as between one country and another, the pressure exercised under this measure being obviously more effective in the case of exporting countries which were financially in a weak position. Exports from the countries in question might, moreover, correspond to necessary imports or imports greatly needed by the countries receiving them in normal times.

The Sub-Committee, turning to the subject of financial pressure, considered that there should be no difficulty in prohibiting the granting of financial accommodation directly to the repudiating Government in any of the participating countries. The prohibition of such transactions should extend to issues and operations by any person acting as the agent of the Government concerned, and to issues guaranteed by that Government.

The Sub-Committee submitted a series of detailed observations on the legislative and administrative means for the application of the proposed measures.

The Sub-Committee, on the question to what extent and in what conditions the requisite effect could be obtained by arrangements of a regional character or requiring the action of only a limited number of States, observed that the non-participation of a single important producer of a designated product would be sufficient to stultify measures for limiting supplies to the country concerned, and that no merely regional agreement which conflicted with this principle could be effective. It was for the Plenary Committee to consider whether the proposed Convention might, with advantage, take the form of a series of regional agreements, which together would produce the required co-operation.

The extent to which the proposed measures might be reconciled with existing commercial and transit treaties and multilateral conventions dealing with commercial and transit matters was a question of a predominantly legal character, and it should be examined by competent legal experts. The Sub-Committee confined itself in this connection to a number of general observations. It suggested, among other things, that all participating countries should introduce into their commercial treaties a safeguarding clause excepting from the operation of the treaties any prohibitions imposed in accordance with the proposed Convention and that the participating States might, if they considered it necessary, notify States with which they had concluded commercial treaties that they considered the obligations assumed under the Convention as not conflicting with the provisions of those treaties.

The Sub-Committee, in its concluding remarks, observed that it had purposely taken no account of certain difficulties and repercussions which could not be ignored. It referred more particularly to the complexity of the administrative system which would be required for the withholding of supplies of designated products from a repudiating country. It further emphasised that it had not entered upon the political and legal difficulties which the application of the proposed measures might create. Restrictive measures of the kind which were contemplated were only too likely to involve loss to some of those engaged in production or dealing in the designated commodities in the participating countries. It was not possible to measure such loss or to provide appropriate compensation, and the fact that

sacrifices might be imposed upon private interests must not be overlooked.

(*League of Nations: A. 6 (a.) 1935*, pp. 13-7.)

### 37.

#### EXTRACT FROM SPEECH BY M. HERRIOT IN THE FRENCH CHAMBER, FEBRUARY 20, 1936

Messieurs, ce traité est, de toute évidence, en accord avec le pacte de la Société des Nations.

On s'est demandé, au cours du débat, s'il est en accord avec le pacte de Locarno.

Je crois que la question n'a pas besoin d'être longuement débattue: que le traité soit en accord avec le pacte de Locarno, en droit, l'article 2 du protocole le prouve surabondamment, puisque la France, en signant ce traité, déclare qu'elle ne veut manquer à aucun des engagements conventionnels qu'elle a souscrits déjà.

Non seulement le pacte franco-soviétique couvre Locarno en droit, mais il l'a couvert en fait.

Il faut qu'on sache que la France ne s'est pas bornée à inscrire dans le protocole l'article 2. Depuis le 2 mai 1935, où le pacte a été signé par M. Pierre Laval, il y a eu une série d'échanges de vues entre les chancelleries.

Il appartiendra à M. le ministre des affaires étrangères, quand il interviendra à cette tribune, d'extraire de ces notes ce qu'il lui conviendra de présenter à la Chambre.

Mais, je puis dire que, le 25 mai 1935, vingt-trois jours après la signature du pacte, il y a eu une note de l'Allemagne<sup>1</sup> qui, tout en reconnaissant que le pacte de Locarno n'était pas touché par le nouveau projet de traité franco-soviétique, a fait tout naturellement quelques réserves. La Grande-Bretagne a été consultée. Les Soviets ont été renseignés. L'Italie a été abordée.

Il y a eu des notes qui sont du 14 juin pour l'Italie, 17 juin pour les Soviets, 18 juin 1935 pour la Grande-Bretagne.

Je dois dire d'abord que, dans la note allemande, une phrase est à retenir, car elle a une grande importance historique. L'Allemagne

<sup>1</sup> The exchange of notes is printed above, p. 157.

déclare qu'elle n'attaquera pas la Russie. C'est une affirmation dont, à mon avis, il faut prendre acte.

Les notes italienne et britannique établissent un accord complet avec le Gouvernement français sur la conformité du pacte franco-soviétique avec les accords de Locarno. La réponse française à l'Allemagne, en date du 25 juin, tient compte des ces négociations.

Je crois qu'on peut résumer la discussion, sur ce point, en disant: ce qui est notre grande sauvegarde, c'est que, le traité franco-soviétique étant conforme au pacte de la Société des Nations, en accord avec celui de Locarno, il est bien entendu que la France garde, à tout moment et surtout au dernier moment, sa souveraineté, sa liberté d'interprétation des faits.

(Chambre des Députés. *Journal Officiel*, February 21, 1936, p. 496.)

### 38.

#### COMMUNIQUE REGARDING THE ATTITUDE OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TOWARDS M. HERRIOT'S SPEECH, FEBRUARY 21, 1936

In yesterday's debate in the French Chamber on the Franco-Soviet Pact of Alliance M. Herriot stated that in its note of the 25th May, 1935, that is to say, twenty-three days after the signature of the pact, the German Government had recognised, although with certain reservations, that the Treaty of Locarno was not affected by the new pact of alliance.

We are informed by the competent authorities that this assertion is in direct conflict with the facts.

The German Government's memorandum of the 25th May, which was communicated to the Powers signatory to the Treaty of Locarno, discusses exhaustively the question whether the obligations which France undertakes by the new pact with the Soviet Union come within the limits laid down by the Treaty of Locarno and reaches the clear conclusion that, in the view of the German Government, this is not the case.

Of primary importance in reaching this decision is, as the German memorandum points out, the provision of the protocol to the Franco-Soviet Treaty of Alliance, under which the two partners,

while undertaking to apply to the Council of the League before proceeding to any action such as they could base upon the well-known article 16 of the Covenant of the League, have, none the less, to carry out the obligation of assistance agreed upon between them if for some reason or other the Council fails to give a recommendation in this sense or is unable to reach a unanimous decision.

France thus claims freedom in the case of a conflict between Germany and the Soviet Union to proceed militarily against Germany on the basis of article 16 of the Covenant even though she is unable to base her action on a recommendation or on some other decision of the Council of the League, but rather decides unilaterally for herself the question of the aggressor.

Furthermore, the terms of the Franco-Soviet Protocol are in conflict with the provisions of the Covenant, according to which article 16 can be applied to a non-member State like Germany only after a special preliminary procedure before the Council of the League.

The German memorandum of the 25th May emphasises that any military action which is started under such circumstances would be, in the view of the German Government, outside the scope of article 16 of the Covenant, and therefore would constitute a flagrant violation of the Treaty of Locarno.

Still clearer than the legal violation of the Locarno Treaty by the new pact, which is alone discussed in the German memorandum, is the incompatibility of the two treaties from the general political point of view which has from the beginning been emphasised by the German Government.

It is well known to the other Powers signatory to the Treaty of Locarno that the German Government maintained this point of view in the discussion which arose of its memorandum and maintains it still to-day.

Under these circumstances the statements of M. Herriot referred to above can only be explained on the assumption that he is not correctly informed of the contents of the German memorandum and of the point of view adopted by the German Government in the discussions which followed it.

(*Cmd. 5143*, pp. 67-8.)



## 39.

INTERVIEW GIVEN BY CHANCELLOR HITLER TO  
M. BERTRAND DE JOUVENEL, FEBRUARY 21, 1936

Paris, February 28th. The "*Paris Midi*" publishes to-day an interview granted to the celebrated French writer, Bertrand de Jouvenel, by the Führer and Chancellor some days ago, and therefore before the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Assistance Pact by the French Chamber took place<sup>1</sup>. In this interview, the Führer and Chancellor stated:

"I know what you think. You are thinking, Hitler makes declarations of peace to us, but is he really being sincere? Would it not be better, however, instead of trying to solve psychological puzzles, to apply the celebrated French logic? Would it not be disastrous for the two countries to meet again on the field of battle? Is it not mere logic that I should strive to attain what is most advantageous for my country? And is not peace the most advantageous thing for my country?"

In the course of further discussion with M. Bertrand de Jouvenel, the Führer proceeded to discuss what he described as the "enigma" by which he had become the Führer of the German people. As a solution of this enigma, he indicated, *inter alia*, the fact that he had simplified the apparently extremely complicated problems which the professional politicians could not solve. In this connection he cited the problem of class war also. Precisely as he had proved to the German People by an appeal to reason that class war was an absurdity, he was now directing an appeal to reason in the international sphere.

The Führer said: "I wish to prove to my people that the idea of hereditary enmity between France and Germany is an absurdity. The German people has understood this. I have been successful in a far more difficult task of reconciliation, the reconciliation of Germany and Poland."

After the Führer had said this, M. de Jouvenel came to the topic of the repeated protestations of peace by the Führer, and said:

"We Frenchmen certainly read your declarations of peace with great pleasure, but we are nevertheless disturbed on account of

<sup>1</sup> This was done on February 27.

other, less encouraging things. For instance, you have said very bad things about France in your book *Mein Kampf*. Now, this book is regarded throughout Germany as a kind of political Bible. It is sold without the successive editions being in any way subjected to revision as regards the passages dealing with France."

The Führer replied: "When I wrote this book, I was in prison. It was the time when the French troops were occupying the Ruhr. It was at the moment of greatest tension between our two countries. . . . Yes, we were enemies, and I stood for my country, as is fitting, against yours; just as I stood for my country for four and a half years in the trenches. I should despise myself if I were not first of all a German in the moment of a conflict. But today there is no longer any cause for a conflict. You want me to correct my book, like a man of letters bringing out a new and revised edition of his works. But I am not a man of letters. I am a politician. I undertake my corrections in my foreign policy, which aims at an understanding with France. If I succeed in bringing about the Franco-German rapprochement, that will be a correction which will be worthy to be made. I enter my correction in the great book of history!"

In the further course of the conversation, M. de Jouvenel asked what was Germany's attitude towards the Franco-Soviet Assistance Pact, which would undoubtedly be a big strain on the chances of the Franco-German understanding.

The Führer replied: "My own personal efforts towards such an understanding will always continue. Nevertheless, in actual fact, this worse than deplorable fact would create a new situation. Do you realize in France what you are doing? You are allowing yourselves to be caught in the diplomatic toils of a power whose only aim is to stir up the great European peoples into a disorder from which it alone will benefit. It should never be forgotten that Soviet Russia is a political factor which has at its disposal an explosive revolutionary idea and gigantic armaments. As a German, it is my duty to take account of such a situation. Bolshevism has no prospect of infecting us, but there are other great nations which are less immune to the bacillus of Bolshevism than we."

The Führer then came back once more to the question of the Franco-German relations, declaring that he was speaking for the whole German people when he said, addressing himself to France,

that France herself, if she only wished, could put an end for ever to that 'German peril', because the German people had the fullest confidence in its Leader, and this Leader desired the friendship of France.

(From the German News Agency *D. N. B.*, February 29, 1936.)

#### 40.

SPEECH BY M. FLANDIN, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IN THE FRENCH CHAMBER, FEBRUARY 25, 1936

Le maintien de la paix par l'organisation de la sécurité collective: tel est le but que se sont assigné les Etats en souscrivant au pacte de la Société des nations.

A cet engagement, nul pays plus que la France n'est resté fidèle, aucun de ses gouvernements, depuis 1920, n'a cessé de s'employer à en faire une réalité vivante au service de la paix, et tous ont toujours trouvé, pour atteindre ce but, l'unanime appui et du Parlement et de l'opinion.

C'est sur l'initiative française que fut adopté en 1923 le principe de l'assistance mutuelle, que fut signé en 1924 le protocole.

Ces actes, inspirés du même principe d'universalité que le pacte de la Société des nations lui-même, ont malheureusement dû être abandonnés. Il a fallu rechercher dans un cadre plus modeste le renforcement des garanties de la paix: ce fut Locarno, ce devait être plus tard le projet d'union européenne, présenté à Genève par Aristide Briand, car Locarno ne devait être qu'un point de départ et un exemple, et l'assemblée de la Société des nations, où jusqu'en 1933 siégeait l'Allemagne, ne cessait de préconiser la conclusion de traités de non-agression et d'assistance mutuelle comme le moyen le plus pratique qui pût être recommandé aux nations soucieuses d'augmenter leur sécurité.

C'est en conformité de cette politique que le gouvernement français et le gouvernement soviétique ont conclu, en novembre 1932, un premier pacte de non-agression.<sup>1</sup> Puis, en juillet 1933, le gouvernement soviétique conclut avec ses voisins un pacte de

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<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 70.

définition de l'agresseur.<sup>1</sup> En automne, il donne à entendre au quai d'Orsay qu'il est prêt à entrer dans un système de consolidation de la paix et à signer des traités de garantie et d'assistance mutuelle. Voilà l'origine du pacte que vous êtes appelés à ratifier.

Mais tant de commentaires l'ont accompagné — pour ne parler même que de vos délibérations — qu'il me paraît nécessaire d'en retracer l'histoire depuis ses origines.

En automne 1933, donc, proposition soviétique officieuse. Mais il ne pouvait s'agir pour nous d'accepter un pacte pur et simple d'assistance mutuelle générale qui, sur le plan politique, risquait d'engager la France en Extrême-Orient, et, sur le plan juridique, d'être incompatible avec les clauses du pacte rhénan de Locarno. D'autre part, nous désirions faire bénéficier les Etats de l'Orient européen, et notamment la Pologne, des garanties que nous recevions pour nous-mêmes.

Là-dessus portèrent les négociations de 1934, puis les entretiens entre M. Barthou et M. Litvinov, au cours desquels furent fixées la portée et les conditions du pacte: la garantie d'assistance ne jouerait qu'en Europe, le pacte devait s'étendre à tous les pays de l'Est européen, y compris l'Allemagne, il devait être conclu dans le cadre de la Société des nations, où dès lors les Soviets entraient.

Un premier schéma fut envisagé: un premier traité d'assistance régionale lierait l'Allemagne, les Pays baltes, la Pologne, la Tchécoslovaquie et l'Union des Républiques soviétiques; par un second traité, la France, dans la limite du pacte de Locarno et des articles 15 et 16 du pacte de la Société des nations, promettait assistance à l'Union soviétique contre toute agression commise en rupture du premier traité; la Russie, réciproquement, prêterait assistance à la France en cas d'agression. Un troisième acte, enfin, constatait et affirmait l'accord des deux autres avec les principes de la Société des nations.

La Tchécoslovaquie et la Petite-Entente se déclarèrent tout de suite d'accord; l'Angleterre fit connaître son approbation, s'engageant même, avec l'Italie, à appuyer le projet à Berlin et à Varsovie; les Etats baltes manifestèrent à diverses reprises un intérêt certain.

L'Allemagne, au contraire, prenait dès l'abord une position négative. Je me permets de rappeler la date: 1934. Sa principale

<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 75.

objection portait contre le caractère automatique de l'assistance, alors que les circonstances dans lesquelles elle serait appelée à jouer étaient fort difficiles à préciser d'avance. Le gouvernement du Reich ajoutait qu'il était plutôt favorable à des ententes bilatérales.

L'attitude de la Pologne, pour être moins formellement négative, restait dilatoire: M. Beck déclarait que, pour des raisons d'équilibre politique, il ne pouvait donner sa réponse tant que l'Allemagne différerait de donner la sienne.

La tâche de la diplomatie française était dès lors de donner toutes les explications et tous les apaisements de nature à faire céder les résistances de Varsovie et de Berlin. Elle en vint même, dans les premiers mois de 1935, à envisager une modification du plan primitif et de limiter les engagements à ceci: non-agression, non-assistance à l'agresseur, consultation.

Un article nouveau aurait seulement précisé que chacun des contractants aurait la faculté de s'engager dans des pactes d'assistance avec d'autres contractants.

Pendant toute la période où ils se sont poursuivis, les efforts de la France ont bénéficié de l'approbation et de l'appui du Foreign Office, ainsi, qu'en témoigne la déclaration franco-britannique du 3 février 1935. D'autre part, notre collaboration avec Moscou était à ce point intime qu'elle avait conduit M. Laval et M. Litvinov à signer, le 5 décembre 1934, à Genève, un protocole stipulant qu'aucun des deux gouvernements ne se prêterait à aucun accord susceptible de compromettre la conclusion du pacte de l'Est.

Cependant, le 16 mars 1935, un événement d'une portée considérable se produisait en Allemagne: la promulgation par le gouvernement du Reich de la loi instituant le service obligatoire.

Cet événement, dont la portée était vraiment considérable sur le rapport des forces en Europe, rendait plus urgente l'organisation de la sécurité collective en Europe orientale. D'autre part, les informations recueillies tant par Sir John Simon que par M. Eden dans divers pays témoignaient des dispositions pacifiques de la Russie et des réserves de l'Allemagne.

Dans ces conditions, le cabinet britannique se déclara prêt à envisager formellement la conclusion d'un traité d'assistance mutuelle entre la France et la Russie. Fin mai 1935, M. Laval se rendait à Moscou.

A ce moment, le gouvernement allemand marqua un certain progrès sur ses propositions précédentes. Il fit savoir qu'il accepterait des accords de non-agression, comportant consultation sur la désignation de l'agresseur, mais qu'il continuerait à écarter tout accord d'assistance mutuelle.

Alors se réunit la conférence de Stresa.<sup>1</sup> L'organisation de la sécurité collective en Europe y fut étudiée de très près. Les représentants de la France, de l'Angleterre et de l'Italie déclarèrent qu'il convenait de poursuivre les négociations tendant à organiser la sécurité collective en Europe orientale.

Avec la préoccupation de ne pas compromettre les possibilités d'une organisation collective de la paix, le gouvernement français continua ses négociations directes avec l'U.R.S.S.

Dès le début, la conception d'une alliance analogue à celle d'avant la guerre avait été résolument écartée.<sup>2</sup> Le gouvernement français estimait que l'assistance ne devait jouer que dans le seul cas où le pacte de la Société des nations et le pacte de Locarno laissaient aux signataires toute liberté d'action.

Les négociateurs, M. Laval et M. Litvinov, acceptèrent les directives suivantes: l'assistance ne devra jouer que dans le cadre de la Société des nations. Rien dans le texte de l'accord ne pourra être interprété comme contraire au pacte de la Société des nations ni aux engagements antérieurement souscrits par les contractants; l'accord ne devra pas être considéré comme un instrument diplomatique fermé, mais comme une première étape de l'organisation de la sécurité collective dans l'est européen.

Ainsi, bien qu'elle ne fût pas liée elle-même par le pacte de Locarno, l'U. R. S. S. admettait sans réserves ces principes. C'est ce qu'enregistrait le traité signé à Paris le 2 mai 1935 par M. Laval et par M. Litvinov. Le désir de faire de cet accord une des bases de la sécurité dans l'Europe orientale, la volonté de poursuivre la négociation pour la conclusion d'un pacte de l'Est étaient solennellement affirmés à plusieurs reprises, et notamment au mois de mai dernier, lors de son voyage à Moscou, par M. Laval.

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<sup>1</sup> The Stresa Conference was held from 11th to 14th April 1935, i. e. before Laval's visit to Moscow (for the text of this agreement, v. above p. 101).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the text of these agreements, p. 108, note 1, above.

En juin,<sup>1</sup> entre la Tchécoslovaquie et la Russie, un accord était conclu sur des bases analogues à celles de l'accord franco-soviétique. Cet accord a été déjà ratifié par les deux gouvernements.

Le nouveau traité de mai 1935 fut accueilli avec faveur par la généralité des Etats intéressés. A Varsovie même, M. Beck admettait sa parfaite compatibilité avec l'alliance franco-polonaise.

Toutefois, le gouvernement du Reich entamait aussitôt, tant sur le plan juridique que sur le plan politique, une campagne contre cet instrument diplomatique.

Sur le plan juridique, il faisait, les 25 mai et 1<sup>er</sup> juin, remettre aux signataires du pacte de Locarno un mémorandum protestant contre de prétendues incompatibilités du nouveau traité avec le pacte de Locarno. Le 25 juin, nous répondions à ce mémorandum par une note qui réfutait point par point les objections de la Wilhelmstraße. Cette note avait été soumise auparavant aux signataires du pacte rhénan, et elle avait été remaniée selon leurs observations.

Le gouvernement britannique avait de son côté marqué au gouvernement allemand que rien dans le nouveau pacte n'était contraire au pacte de Locarno.

Sur le plan politique, le Reichsführer manifestait, le 21 mai, son hostilité au pacte; il s'élevait contre tout engagement d'assistance mutuelle et déclarait que le Reich ne souscrirait aucun accord de cette nature avec la Russie.

Un mémorandum fut adressé par la France à M. von Neurath pour lui proposer un examen en commun de la situation. Ce mémorandum devait demeurer sans réponse.

En conséquence de quoi, le projet de ratification fut présenté aux Chambres. Le 10 décembre dernier, le rapport de M. Torrès était publié. A cette date la ratification du pacte entre la Tchécoslovaquie et la Russie avait déjà été faite.

M. Laval avait, au mois d'août, fait savoir à M. Benès qu'il avait l'intention de soumettre le pacte à l'approbation du Parlement dès la rentrée. Je rappelle qu'au cours d'une interview accordée à M. Sadoul et reproduite dans les *Izvestia* du 8 décembre, M. Laval se déclarait de plus en plus convaincu de l'importance de l'acte signé en mai pour l'organisation de la sécurité européenne.

<sup>1</sup> Actually the Mutual Assistance Pact between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia was signed on May 16, 1935 in Prague. (Cf. above, p. 116.)

Le 16 janvier, mon éminent prédécesseur a déclaré qu'il demanderait la mise à l'ordre du jour du projet de ratification dès son retour de Genève.

Telles sont les circonstances qui ont accompagné la conclusion du pacte franco-soviétique.

J'en déduirai deux faits, qui sont essentiels. Le premier, c'est la continuité absolue de la politique française. Des polémiques ont essayé d'opposer les uns aux autres les divers ministres des affaires étrangères qui se sont succédés.

Or, chacun d'eux a pris sa part dans la responsabilité de cette négociation. Aucun ne l'a reniée. Le second fait, c'est que, depuis l'origine de la négociation, dans la conclusion même du pacte, et même par delà le pacte, la France n'a jamais cessé de vouloir associer l'Allemagne à cette entreprise de garantie spéciale de la paix. J'ai rappelé les résolutions<sup>1</sup> votées à Genève en 1927 et 1928. La délégation allemande, qui était alors à Genève, s'est associée à ces votes.

Il est donc difficile de s'expliquer certaines critiques, certaines accusations même, émanées d'un pays dont le gouvernement a cru devoir modifier sa politique, et qui s'adressent à des gouvernements dont la politique est restée fidèle à une conception élaborée en commun.

Ces gouvernements ont pris soin de ménager, dans leurs initiatives, la place de l'Allemagne. Ils ont voué tous leurs efforts de persuasion à obtenir son concours. A Londres, l'an dernier, à Stresa, même après la répudiation des clauses militaires du traité de Versailles, ils lui ont tendu la main.

L'Allemagne ne s'est pas associée à leurs projets. Mais sa réserve n'était pas, pour le gouvernement français, une raison suffisante pour abandonner une entreprise de sécurité collective. Le pacte a été négocié; les négociateurs ont marqué leur volonté de conclure un pacte de portée européenne.

Ainsi se trouve exactement réalisé le but défini dans tous les projets d'assistance mutuelle élaborés à Genève; je rappelle, d'ailleurs, qu'il est prévu que lorsque les accords régionaux seront possibles,

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<sup>1</sup> The two resolutions affirm that the security of states rests not only upon their own armaments but also upon the collective measures organised by the League of Nations and upon regional pacts.



les engagements qui en résulteront se substitueront à ceux qui découlent du pacte franco-soviétique.

Un texte est toujours ouvert à certaines critiques; mais personne ne pourra reprocher à ce pacte de n'être pas dans la ligne politique suivie par la France depuis seize ans; personne ne pourra non plus lui reprocher d'avoir été conclu pour isoler l'Allemagne puisque, au contraire, il a été conçu dans l'espoir de son adhésion ultérieure.

Cependant les débats ont révélé certains désaccords entre nous sur ces deux points. Je voudrais les élucider.

Dans l'argumentation présentée notamment par M. Vallat, vous avez sans doute distingué que ce n'est pas la continuité de la politique extérieure de la France, qui est en cause, mais bien cette politique même. J'y ai relevé les termes péjoratifs tels que «pactomanie»; certains orateurs ont déclaré le pacte inutile, voire même dangereux.

Je n'avais donc pas tort de souligner, dès le début de ce débat, l'importance capitale qu'il présente pour l'avenir de notre politique extérieure. Nous sommes tous également préoccupés par la sécurité de la France; nous recherchons tous passionnément à maintenir la paix. Je ne sais rien de plus odieux que les accusations portées par des Français contre d'autres Français de vouloir ou de préparer la guerre.

Je vous supplie donc de ne pas détruire l'unité morale de la nation. Or j'ai entendu prononcer ici des paroles que leurs auteurs regretteront les premiers lorsqu'ils les verront tournées au dehors contre la France.

Nous pouvons différer d'opinion sur les moyens d'assurer les destins pacifiques de notre pays. Mais s'ils étaient un jour menacés, vous savez que l'unanimité de l'opinion, formée dans la liberté réfléchie, resterait la première garantie de notre défense nationale.

Je répondrai aux reproches que j'ai signalés en me privant volontairement des arguments à l'égard des personnes et je m'abstiendrai de souligner de surprenantes variations dans le temps.

Pactomanie? Certes, cela évoque un désaccord qui a régné ici — moins dans les votes que dans les esprits — à l'égard de la Société des nations et de son œuvre constructive. Une fois de plus, nous sommes devant le problème de l'organisation internationale, en présence des impératifs de force.

Personne ne conteste que le pacte en discussion ne soit un complément du pacte de la Société des nations. Les uns ont dit qu'il

était inutile, car il n'y ajoutait rien; les autres l'ont estimé dangereux par les obligations nouvelles et importantes, qu'il nous impose. Je souligne, en passant, la contradiction évidente de ces deux thèses et j'aborde l'étendue et le jeu des obligations d'assistance mises à notre charge par le pacte.

Dès maintenant, aux termes du pacte de la Société des nations, du fait que la Russie est membre de la Société des nations, et par le jeu de l'article 17, nous sommes déjà tenus, d'une manière générale, de maintenir contre toute agression extérieure, comme dit l'article 10, «l'intégrité territoriale et l'indépendance politique» de ce pays.

Plus spécialement, nous avons à prendre les mesures prévues à l'alinéa 1<sup>er</sup> de l'article 16, mesures communément appelées «sanctions économiques».

Nous avons, en outre, l'obligation de prêter un mutuel appui pour résister à toutes mesures spéciales qui seraient dirigées par le pays agresseur contre un membre de la Société des nations en raison de l'application de ces sanctions.

Mais là s'arrêtent nos obligations du fait du pacte de la Société des nations.

Sans doute, le conseil de la Société des nations a le devoir de recommander aux divers gouvernements intéressés des mesures d'assistance militaire. Mais il s'agit là, je le rappelle, d'une recommandation qui ne crée pas une obligation aux membres de la Société.

D'autre part, l'article 15 suppose que les deux Etats en conflit ont recouru aux procédures qu'institue le pacte de Genève pour le règlement de leur différend. Si la solution recommandée par le conseil réunit l'unanimité de ses membres, le vote des parties ne comptant pas, nous sommes tenus de ne pas recourir à la guerre contre la partie qui se conforme aux conclusions du conseil. S'il n'y a pas unanimité, nous demeurons libres d'agir comme nous le jugeons nécessaire pour maintenir, ainsi que le précise le pacte, le droit et la justice.

C'est cette liberté, si je ne me trompe, que M. Montigny notamment a craint de nous voir aliéner par le traité en discussion.

J'examinerai tout à l'heure dans quelle mesure cette critique est fondée. Mais je voudrais tout d'abord préciser les obligations complémentaires que comporte pour nous le traité franco-soviétique.

Il n'y a pas lieu d'insister sur celle que nous ferait l'article 1<sup>er</sup> du

pacte de procéder, en cas de menace ou d'un danger d'agression, à une consultation mutuelle immédiate. Cette procédure, on en conviendra, n'a que des avantages, même si d'une telle consultation on ne peut attendre tous les avantages qu'aurait la consultation collective que prévoyait le projet de pacte de l'Est, dont le gouvernement allemand, comme je l'ai déjà dit, reste saisi.

Par l'article 2, nous nous engageons à user de la liberté que nous laisserait l'article 15, alinéa 7, du pacte de Genève pour prêter assistance à la Russie au cas où elle serait l'objet d'une agression non provoquée.

Il convient de remarquer qu'en pareil cas il faut déjà supposer qu'un différend aura été porté devant le conseil, que celui-ci n'aura pas pu aboutir à une recommandation unanime sur la solution du différend, que le délai de trois mois après la recommandation prescrite par le pacte aura été respecté et qu'après l'expiration de ce délai une agression non provoquée a été commise contre la Russie.

A défaut de cette procédure et de ce délai, ce serait dans les conditions de l'article 16 du pacte de la Société des nations et en vertu de l'article 3 du traité franco-soviétique que nous aurions à prêter assistance à la Russie.

En pareil cas, nous sommes tenus d'agir de concert d'abord pour obtenir que le conseil de la Société des nations énonce ses recommandations avec toute la rapidité qu'exigeront les circonstances.

Ces recommandations énoncées, et il s'agit évidemment de recommandations d'ordre militaire, nous avons l'obligation, et non plus la faculté, de nous y conformer.

En outre, si le conseil n'a pas pu arriver à une recommandation, par exemple par défaut d'unanimité, notre obligation d'assistance subsiste, prolongeant celle qui, de toutes manières et pour tous les membres de la Société des nations, résulte en matière économique et financière de l'alinéa 1<sup>er</sup> de l'article 16.

Mais, pour que joue notre engagement d'assistance, il ne suffit pas que les conditions qui viennent d'être exposées soient remplies. D'autres encore doivent être réunies, qu'il appartient au gouvernement français d'apprécier en toute loyauté, mais aussi en toute souveraineté.

Notre assistance n'est due que s'il y a agression non provoquée. Elle n'est applicable que si elle ne nous expose pas à des sanctions de

caractère international, c'est-à-dire au jeu des garanties contenues dans le pacte rhénan de Locarno.

Nous aurions donc à rechercher tout d'abord s'il y a agression, et quel est l'agresseur; puis, ces points établis, à nous assurer que l'agression n'a pas été provoquée, car on peut concevoir qu'en cas de recours à la force tous les torts ne soient pas du côté de celui qui y a eu recours. L'examen des faits et des circonstances dont elle s'entoure permet seul d'apprécier pleinement le caractère de l'agression.

Dans une telle hypothèse, dois-je rappeler que le conseil de la Société des nations aura été nécessairement saisi? Les gouvernements qui y sont représentés auront à se former une opinion à cet égard. Le gouvernement français aura pu y trouver les plus utiles éléments pour sa propre appréciation sans qu'il y ait eu lieu à une consultation spéciale. Il sera ainsi à même de se rendre compte du sentiment des autres gouvernements et, notamment, des garants du traité de Locarno.

Il est ainsi en mesure de s'assurer, par leur appréciation, du caractère de l'agression, que l'assistance prévue par le traité avec l'Union soviétique n'est pas jugée incompatible avec ses propres obligations aux termes du traité rhénan et ne l'expose pas au jeu des garanties prévues par cet acte.

Dans la négative, les dispositions du traité franco-soviétique n'auront pas à recevoir application.

C'est donc dans l'appréciation la plus complète de la situation internationale, en pleine connaissance des sentiments des membres de la Société des nations, en toute conformité avec les principes de la sécurité collective, dans le respect de tous ces engagements enfin, qu'auraient à jouer éventuellement les dispositions du traité qui est actuellement soumis à votre approbation.

On a paru penser, cependant, que nous aliénerions par avance cette liberté d'appréciation.

Je crois me rappeler que M. Montigny, notamment, a exprimé la crainte que, par des accords militaires, on vienne créer un jour au gouvernement français des obligations d'assistance plus étendues que celles que comportait le traité franco-soviétique lui-même.

Je crois même qu'il a rappelé l'expression d'alliance militaire, l'opposant à celle de traité d'assistance mutuelle.

Il importe du point de vue général de ne pas laisser subsister une confusion. C'est par des traités politiques, par des actes publics enregistrés à Genève que le gouvernement français a contracté des engagements d'assistance. Par quels moyens, comment sera réalisée cette assistance? C'est une autre question. Des accords techniques peuvent intervenir à ce sujet, mais il ne saurait rien être ajouté par là aux obligations publiquement contractées.

Pourquoi, a-t-on dit d'autre part, ce traité avec la Russie qui, dans l'hypothèse d'une agression de l'Allemagne, reçoit plus qu'elle ne donne, n'ayant pas comme nous une frontière commune avec cette dernière?

Le pacte franco-soviétique, comme tous les pactes complétant celui de la Société des nations, a pour objet principal de garantir la paix en prévenant l'agression. C'est par là qu'ils diffèrent des alliances d'avant guerre, réglant la guerre défensive ou même offensive.

Les pactes constituent des barrières à l'esprit d'agression. Le système de la sécurité collective, c'est l'encerclement de l'esprit d'agression. Qui s'en plaindrait reconnaîtrait qu'il reste animé de l'esprit d'agression; personne ne s'en est réclamé, et je ne ferai l'injure à personne de le lui assigner *a priori*.

Mais si l'on envisage un conflit avec l'Allemagne, ceux qui ont élevé des objections n'échappent pas à la contradiction: dans la mesure même, en effet, où il leur paraît que la situation géographique de l'Allemagne et de la Russie rend l'assistance de cette dernière plus difficile, cette situation réduit les possibilités d'incidents, d'événements précipités, facilite l'examen des circonstances. Quant à déterminer la valeur du concours russe, je n'en méconnais pas la difficulté, mais il ne faut pas oublier qu'en 1914 la pression des armées russes a permis la victoire de la Marne et la mobilisation britannique.

Si l'on objecte que les frontières entre l'Allemagne et la Russie ne sont plus celles de 1914, je répondrai que des traités en vigueur nous lient à la Pologne, à la Tchécoslovaquie, à la Roumanie, et qu'il ne peut être indifférent à ces Etats de savoir que la grande puissance voisine sera leur alliée. Nous sommes déjà engagés par des traités d'assistance mutuelle avec la Pologne et la Tchécoslovaquie.

Je n'ai pas à rechercher les raisons pour lesquelles la Pologne n'a pas voulu souscrire à une sécurité collective qui pourra être un

jour précieuse pour son intégrité. Mais la Tchécoslovaquie a signé un traité d'assistance mutuelle avec l'Union des républiques soviétiques.

Alors je pense que la critique dominante contre le nouveau traité soumis à votre ratification doit s'énoncer ainsi: pourquoi la France s'est-elle engagée par tous ces actes dans un engrenage qui risque de l'entraîner à des conflits qu'elle aurait pu éviter? Cela se relie à une autre propagande qui a consisté à minimiser le pacte de Genève, à en diminuer les obligations, à en émasculer les textes.

Ne nous y trompons pas, c'est le point crucial du débat.

Le vrai débat est entre ceux qui ont gardé la foi dans la paix garantie par l'organisation de la sécurité collective et qui, pour en acquérir le bénéfice, acceptent ses obligations et ceux qui, pour éviter la menace de la guerre, sont prêts à céder devant la force, en sacrifiant la sécurité des autres aux garanties personnelles que la force daignera leur concéder, au moins provisoirement.

On nous a dit: «Laissez le pangermanisme et le panslavisme s'affronter; repliez-vous derrière votre ligne fortifiée par Maginot et marquez les coups!»

Paroles impies et qui pourraient causer en Europe des ravages profonds si elles étaient acceptées comme l'opinion de la France.

Ainsi, nous défendrions la thèse de l'isolement contre laquelle nous n'avons cessé de lutter et qui est condamnée par l'histoire!

La guerre de 1914 est née d'un incident auquel nous étions étrangers. Si l'égoïste isolement l'avait emporté, alors, ni l'Angleterre, ni l'Italie, ni surtout les Etats-Unis ne seraient intervenus. Et le premier des traités d'assistance mutuelle signé dans le cadre de la Société des nations l'a été à notre profit, c'est celui de Locarno.

Mais, a-t-on dit, vous allez précisément compromettre Locarno. Ecoutez les avertissements qui nous viennent de l'autre côté du Rhin. Nous ne les avons pas négligés. J'ai rappelé les notes échangées entre les signataires de Locarno, et la réponse française aux réserves du gouvernement allemand a été approuvée par les signataires de Locarno.

Le traité franco-soviétique procède du même esprit que celui de Locarno, dont le préambule précise qu'ils doivent contribuer, en attendant un accord plus large, à l'application du pacte de la Société des nations, et l'article 4 qu'il ne s'agit en rien d'en restreindre les stipulations.

Le protocole, enfin, constate la volonté commune des deux parties de ne contredire en rien aux engagements précédemment contractés. Il faut donc voir en lui une simple confirmation de l'accord de Locarno et du traité signé à Berlin entre l'Allemagne et l'U. R. S. S.

Il n'a, en effet, d'autre but que de prêter assistance contre une agression, et, connaissant la science juridique allemande, je m'étonne qu'on puisse venir dire outre-Rhin qu'une quelconque de ses stipulations soit en désaccord avec le texte de Locarno. Par contre, ce que personne, ici, ne pourrait admettre, — et à ce sujet je regrette certaines paroles prononcées, un peu légèrement peut-être, à la tribune, — c'est que ce pacte puisse servir de prétexte à une répudiation unilatérale des accords antérieurs.

Le président du conseil, dans sa déclaration ministérielle, a montré combien sincère était notre désir de collaborer loyalement avec l'Allemagne pour assurer la paix en Europe. Ce serait d'ailleurs faire au gouvernement allemand une injure purement gratuite que de lui attribuer le désir de provoquer un grave conflit avec les signataires de l'accord de Locarno, dans le moment même où son gouvernement ne cesse d'exprimer sa volonté pacifique.

Notre vœu le plus ardent est de voir une grande nation — qui a rendu à la civilisation des services incontestables et incontestés — reprendre sa place, sur un pied d'absolue égalité, à Genève et concourir à la reconstruction d'un monde où le chômage, la misère et la guerre seront bannis par la bonne entente de toutes les nations.

Tôt ou tard, les nations s'apercevront que la course aux armements les conduit inévitablement à la ruine économique et au désordre social. Et elles verront également que la paix est une et indivisible.

Il n'est pas d'exemple, sachez-vous-en, que dans l'évolution humaine les précurseurs n'aient dû affronter le scepticisme et les sarcasmes : mais il n'est pas d'exemple non plus que leur foi n'ait finalement triomphé.

Ouvrons donc à notre jeunesse inquiète et déçue dans ses espérances le chemin de la paix. Certes, la voie se révèle difficile, car la paix durable et définitive, celle pour laquelle la France a sacrifié 1 million 500,000 de ses enfants, sera seulement la récompense des cœurs purs, qui auront su souffrir et espérer.

Le pacte franco-soviétique, que le gouvernement vous demande de ratifier, constitue une nouvelle étape sur ce chemin de la paix.

Nous vous demandons de le juger tel qu'il est, tel que je viens de le définir, et non tel que des propagandes, qui se ressentent de la proximité des luttes électorales ont tenté de le déformer.

La politique intérieure des partis n'avait jusqu'à présent jamais été confondue avec la politique extérieure de la France.

Aucun gouvernement français n'acceptera, j'en suis certain, l'intrusion d'un gouvernement étranger dans notre politique intérieure.

A ce point de vue et à l'égard des interventions possibles du Komintern, qui n'est peut-être pas, soit dit en passant, le seul exemple d'une activité politique étrangère, toutes les précautions ont été prises par un traité, conclu en 1932 entre l'Union des républiques socialistes soviétiques et la France, qui reste en vigueur et dont je désire lire devant vous l'article 5 :

“Chacune des hautes parties contractantes s'engage à respecter à tous égards la souveraineté ou l'autorité de l'autre partie sur l'intégralité de ses territoires tels qu'ils sont définis à l'article 1<sup>er</sup> du présent traité, à ne s'immiscer en aucune façon dans ses affaires intérieures, à s'abstenir notamment d'une action quelconque tendant à susciter ou à favoriser toute agitation, propagande ou tentative d'intervention ayant pour but de porter atteinte à son intégrité territoriale ou de transformer par la force le régime politique ou social de tout ou partie de ses territoires.”

Que prouve cet article? Une seule chose, c'est qu'il dépend du gouvernement français de veiller strictement au respect de ces stipulations, comme il appartient d'ailleurs aux pouvoirs publics nationaux de fixer les limites légales de la propagande communiste sur nos territoires.

Il vous sera loisible, dans le présent, comme dans l'avenir et comme par le passé, de signaler à l'attention vigilante du gouvernement les entorses qui pourraient être faites.

Je suis surpris de vos rires, car je me souviens d'avoir fait partie de beaucoup de gouvernements, même du gouvernement de M. Doumergue et de celui de M. Laval; et, à cette époque, sous le bénéfice du même article qui existait déjà, je ne vous ai jamais vus ni intervenir ni refuser vos votes.

Au surplus, et pour bien marquer combien en cette matière il faut savoir distinguer entre la politique extérieure et la politique intérieure,



me sera-t-il permis de rappeler, sans exciter les passions, que M. Mussolini, par exemple, fut un des premiers à reconnaître le gouvernement des Soviets et à commercer avec lui et que la République turque, qui depuis fort longtemps entretient les meilleures relations avec l'Union des républiques socialistes soviétiques, n'admettait cependant sur son territoire non seulement aucun parti communiste, mais même aucune propagande communiste ?

Je souligne donc que rien, dans le pacte actuellement soumis à vos délibérations, ne pourra entraver demain l'action répressive contre certaine propagande anticoloniale ou antinationale.

Mais si, par aventure — et je m'associe là aux paroles qu'a prononcées tout à l'heure le distingué président de la commission des affaires étrangères, — une communauté plus étroite de vues et d'action, sur le plan de la politique extérieure et pour le maintien de la paix en Europe, entre la France, qui est après tout héritière de la Révolution de 1789 et l'Union des républiques socialistes soviétiques, ramenait les dirigeants et les militants du parti communiste à une conception et à une action patriotiques de solidarité nationale, je ne pense pas, messieurs, que vous seriez les derniers à vous en féliciter.

Mais je ne veux pas déborder le cadre que je me suis assigné.

La politique extérieure de la France — je veux le rappeler une fois de plus — n'a jamais dépendu et ne doit pas dépendre du régime intérieur des Etats étrangers avec qui nous traitons.

Nous avons reçu des gouvernements qui nous ont précédé l'héritage de ce traité. Il n'est ni dangereux ni inutile. En augmentant la sécurité propre de la France, il participe à cette organisation de la sécurité collective en Europe qui a été et demeure le but de nos efforts, comme il me plaît de constater qu'il est et demeure le but des efforts de la Grande-Bretagne, ainsi que l'exprimait éloquemment, hier même, à la Chambre des communes, mon ami M. Eden.

Il se rattache à la tradition continue de la politique française qui est de perfectionner et d'étendre le pacte de la Société des nations.

Il laisse intacte la souveraineté de la France dans la détermination de sa politique extérieure et intérieure. Il n'a de pointe dirigée contre personne. Il n'aliène aucun des droits français à l'égard de la Russie soviétique.

Libre à ceux qui soutenaient de leurs votes les gouvernements suc-

cessifs qui ont conçu et conclu ce pacte de renier aujourd'hui leur œuvre.

Pour nous, messieurs, et au-dessus des vicissitudes de la politique intérieure, la France continue.

(*Le Temps*, February 27, 1936.)

#### 41.

CHANCELLOR HITLER'S SPEECH TO THE GERMAN REICHSTAG AND GERMAN GOVERNMENT'S MEMORANDUM TO THE SIGNATORIES OF THE LOCARNO TREATY, MARCH 7, 1936

Members of the German Reichstag,

I have asked the President of the Reichstag—my Party colleague, General Göring—to summon you together in to-day's session so that you might hear an explanation from the Government of the Reich regarding those questions which you instinctively feel to be important and even decisive; and not you alone, but the whole German people as well.

Millions of men throughout the world heaved a sigh of relief on those grey November days in the year 1918 when the curtain fell on the tragic drama of the Great War. Like a breath of spring, the hope came over the minds of the nations that therewith not only the most tragic blunder in human history had come to an end, but that at the same time an era which had taken a false road and therefore led to disaster, would now change its historical trend.

Through all the tumult of war, through savage threats, accusations, execrations and denouncements, the opinions of the American President had reached the ears of mankind, bringing them promise of a new era and a better world. Summed up in 17 points, an outline was given of this new social order which would affect the nations and mankind. Whatever objection may be made against these points, the President's message had undoubtedly one thing in its favour: namely, the recognition that a mere mechanical restoration of former conditions, institutions, and the views of life that went with them could only lead to a repetition of the tragedy within a short period

of time. The lure of these theses lay in the fact that, with undoubted largeness of view, they endeavoured to formulate new laws for international relations and to inspire those relations with an entirely new feeling out of which might spring and develop that institution which was first called together as a League of All the Nations and which would unite them not merely externally but would, above all, bring them closer together in mutual respect and understanding. No nation succumbed more to this lure than the German. It had the honour to be compelled to fight against a world in arms and the misfortune to have lost the struggle. As a vanquished foe, the blame for the responsibility of the struggle was laid on the shoulders of the German people although they had never wished or looked forward to the war or desired it. The Germans believed in those 14 points with all the force of a people who were in despair both in regard to themselves and the world at large. This was the spirit that opened the way to a time of deepest suffering for our people. For many years past we all have been the victims of this fantastic belief and therewith have been the objects of its terrible consequences. It is not within the scope of my explanations here to describe the terrible disillusion that came upon our people in ever increasing measure. I will not speak of the despair and the suffering and the misery which those years brought upon the German people and upon us. We had been dragged into a war for the outbreak of which we were no more guilty or innocent than the other nations. But we, who had made the greatest sacrifices, were the first to believe that a better time was coming.

We, the vanquished, were not alone in witnessing that fantastic dream of a new era and a new age of progress turned into a disastrous reality. The victorious nations had the same experience.

Since the statesmen of those days gathered together at Versailles to formulate a new world order 17 years have gone by. That is sufficient time to form a verdict on the general tendency of a development. It is not necessary for us here to go back to literary and publicist sources for the critical opinions that have been expressed in regard to this period of time and to bring them together and collate them so as to be able to come to a final judgment. No. It is quite sufficient to cast a glance over the world to-day and over its actual conditions, its hopes and its disillusionings, its crises and its strifes, in order to

have a clear answer to the question of how this development ought to be rightly judged.

Instead of feeling the consolation of a gradual betterment in human controversies we are confronted with a condition of unrest which is not diminishing but rather on the increase. Enmity and hatred, envy and greed, mistrust and suspicion are only too visible and palpable as ruling forces among the nations to-day. The Peace which was to have been the keystone in the arch of that vault in which War was to have been buried for ever has turned out to be the dragon seed of new wars. Since that time we have been confronted with the spectacle of internal and external unrest wherever we may turn our eyes. In each year that has gone by since then we hear the rattle of weapons rather than the bells of peace sounding throughout the world. Is it to be wondered at that so tragic a disillusion has shattered in the hearts of the nations their belief in the justice of a world order which has manifestly failed in such a catastrophic way? New ideas struggle for the mastery of men's hearts in order to send them forth on new conquests. History will one day record that since the end of the Great War the Earth has been a prey to mental, political and economic revolutions such as usually occur only once in a thousand years and impress upon peoples and continents their special meaning and character. Remember that since that time the tension between the nations has become more acute than ever before. The Bolshevist revolution has not merely set its external mark on one of the largest countries of the world, but has set up within that country a principle of life and a religion which are absolutely unacceptable to the nations and states around it. Not only human economic or political ideas are collapsing and burying beneath their debris parties and organisations and states which had believed in them—not only that, but a world of supernatural ideas has been destroyed, a God has been dethroned, religion and churches destroyed, the world beyond has become a waste and this world, with all its suffering, is proclaimed as the only existence. Empires and Kingdoms are falling and even the memory of them is being wiped out; just as, on the other hand, parliamentary democracies are being abandoned by the nations in order to make way for other political principles. And, parallel with this, economic maxims which formerly were regarded as the very foundation of human society are

being overcome and wiped out by opposing principles. Meanwhile, the horrors of unemployment, hunger, and misery are haunting the nations and have already engulfed millions of human beings. But mankind is astounded to see that the God of War has not laid aside his armour but that, on the contrary, he is striding the Earth more strongly armoured than ever before. In former times armies of hundreds of thousands fought for the political aims of an imperialistic dynasty, a cabinet, or a national policy; but to-day armies which are counted by the millions are preparing for war in order to champion new abstract principles, world revolution and bolshevism or even the "no more war" idol. And all these movements are agitating the nations. Fellow Members of the Reichstag, in bringing those facts to your attention and to the attention of the German people, I do so not to awaken your understanding for the greatness of the times in which we live, but rather to show you the failure of the ideas and the work of those who once claimed to be the chosen ones who would give to the world a new era of peaceful evolution and the blessing of a better order of things.

And there is something else I would like to state here. We are not responsible for this development; because it was not in our power or capacity to prescribe ideas or laws of life for the world at the time of our humiliation and disgrace, for we were defenceless against it all. That was done by those who then ruled the Earth by reason of their might. For more than 15 years Germany was ranked among the governed. I mention this because I should like to open the eyes of the German people and perhaps others to the fact, that to follow principles which are false, and hence wrong, must inevitably lead to false and unhappy results. The fact that we ourselves suffered specially as the victims of this development is due, as I have already said, partly to the completeness of our downfall. But the fact that during this period the whole world has been subjected to strained tension and continued crises is to be attributed to the lack of reason and insight with which the problems of the nations, both national and international, have been regarded and treated.

This development, however, originated with that unhappy Treaty which will one day stand in history as the leading example of human short-sightedness and unreasonable passion, an example of how not to end a war when the wish is to bring fresh disorder among the

nations. On account of its close connexion with the constitution of the community of nations, the spirit of this Treaty has been a burden to the League of Nations and therewith has rendered it valueless. Since that time a distinction has been made between those nations that have been ranged on the one side by the Peace Treaty as the vanquished—which have no rights—and those ranged on the other side as the victors, which alone have rights. This arrangement is contrary to the idea of the League of Nations, which should be a community of free and equal peoples. The spirit of the Treaty gave rise to short-sighted treatment of numerous political and economic problems in the world. National frontiers were drawn, not according to obvious vital necessities or with regard to existing traditions, but were inspired by the spirit of revenge and punishment, so that these frontiers on their part became the occasion of fears and anxieties and awakened new thoughts of possible revenge. There was a moment when statesmen had the opportunity to introduce the spirit of brotherly understanding among the nations by one appeal to the minds and hearts of millions of ex-soldiers in the belligerent countries. Perhaps that would have brought lasting relief to the world and made possible a collaboration among the nations which would have endured for centuries. But the very opposite was done. And the worst of all was that the spirit of hatred inspiring this Treaty spread to the general mentality of other peoples, so that it poisoned public opinion and began to rule everywhere. As the result of this spirit of hatred, unreason began to triumph and the simplest problems in international life, even those which were in a nation's own interests, were confused in the blindness of passion.

One can neither overlook nor dispute the fact that the world to-day is suffering seriously. But the worst is that, as the result of this wrong-headedness, people are not only unwilling to recognize the causes of this misfortune, but even seem to revel in it and in public discussions gloat over the fact that the decreasing means of living are threatening the life of this or that other nation.

It is regrettable that the world is not willing to understand the causes of the difficulties with which the German nation is confronted in its effort to live. It is indeed astounding to read day after day, in this or that section of the Press, expressions of satisfaction when people hear of the trials which are inevitably connected with our

national life. So far as this is a question of irresponsible dilettantes it is a matter of indifference. But it is a very bad sign when statesmen begin to regard presumptive signs of poverty and need in a nation as welcome symptoms for assessing the general situation and forming judgments as to the future.

But all this began in 1918. It was then that statesmanship became remarkable for creating problems by its own lack of reason and then failing to solve them, or crying out in fear about them. That lack of reason which overlooks the fact that splitting up nations in a way that does not take account of historical facts cannot of itself blot out the historical traditions of a nation, but can only hamper or even make impossible the preservation of vital interests and their maintaining. This was that lack of reason which in the case of Germany, for instance, resulted in artificially and methodically cutting off a nation of 67 millions from all vital connexions with the outer world. All economic relations were destroyed, all capital abroad was confiscated. Trade was ruined. And then this nation was burdened with a debt whose proportions can be expressed only in astronomical figures. Then in the end, foreign credits were granted in order to pay off this debt. To pay the interest on these credits, Germany had to expand her exports artificially, no matter what the cost. Finally, high tariff walls were erected against her goods. Thus Germany was plunged into fearful misery and then accused of being unable or unwilling to pay. All this was what is called wise statesmanship. Members of the German Reichstag: I have dealt extensively with these psychological problems because I am convinced that mankind will never have real peace unless there is a change of spirit in the way international problems are regarded. The present tensions in Europe are full of foreboding. We have to attribute their origin to that flagrant stupidity with which it was believed that one could play at will with the most natural rights that belong to the nations. There are politicians to-day who seem to feel themselves safe only when inner conditions in neighbouring states are as unfavourable as possible. The worse these conditions are, the more triumphant do the politicians believe their own far-seeing policy to have been. I should like the German people to learn a lesson from this absence of common sense and not make the same mistakes themselves. I wish that in other peoples the German nation should recognize those

historical realities which fancy would like to banish but which, as a matter of fact, are not to be banished by the mere wish. I should like the German people to see that it is unreasonable to wish to oppose these historical realities and impose upon nations conditions contrary to their proper vital interests and also contrary to their reasonable vital claims. Therefore, I should like the German people to understand the inner principles that are the motivating forces in the foreign policy of National Socialism. We feel it unpleasant for instance that access to the sea, accorded to a nation of thirty-three millions, should cut through former territory of the Reich; but we recognize that it is unreasonable, because impossible, to dispute the question of access to the sea for so great a state. A reasoned foreign policy cannot have for its purpose or aim the establishment of conditions which would of necessity cry out to be changed immediately afterwards. It may be quite possible, especially behind the appeal to what they call "Might", for politicians to gainsay natural and vital interests; but if this be frequently done, and if the cases in which it is done be serious, then the urge towards an explosion will be all the stronger. In its turn, this leads to increase in new means of defence, whereby we have an ever-increasing strain in the counterpressure of those national and vital energies which it is sought to restrain. Then the world becomes anxious and restless before the threat of an explosion and refuses to recognize that the real responsibility for this state of affairs must be attributed to the stupidity of its so-called statesmen. How many troubles would be spared humanity, and especially Europe, if natural and inevitable vital conditions were respected and if these had been taken into consideration in the political readjustment of Europe and also if economic co-operation had been taken into account.

This is what seems to me absolutely essential if better and more peaceful results are to be achieved in the future. And this applies especially to Europe. The European nations now form a family in the world. Sometimes it is a quarrelsome family; in spite of everything, the members are related to one another in diverse ways. Culturally and spiritually and economically they are indivisible. In fact, their break-up is unthinkable. Every attempt to regard and deal with the European problem by any other rule than that of calm and cool reason would be bound to lead to reactions that would be



unpleasant for all. We are living in a time of internal social readjustments among the various nations. The statesman who does not understand the significance of this era and who does not strive by concessions to alleviate, and if possible to remove, the various internal tensions among his people, will one day become the victim of explosions which will then inevitably bring about either the removal of the tension or, what is more possible, will at first only bring chaotic ruin in its train. It is an act of wise statesmanship to curb turbulent unreason; but at the same time, attention must be paid to the manifest trend of the times, and social adjustment must be found which removes one extreme without falling a victim to the other. To-day one can safely prophesy for Europe that where this course is not wisely taken, or should prove a failure, tension will increase and finally follow the trend of the times by bringing about an adjustment of itself. In constructing and consolidating a family of nations, such as we have in Europe, it will be wise to apply these inner laws of each state in a super-national manner. It is not wise to imagine that in so small a household as Europe, there can be a permanent commonwealth of nations in which each nation has its own jurisprudence and in which each wants to uphold its own concept of law and justice. Every tendency of that kind leads to an explosion of will-energies on the part of those who have been unjustly treated and must necessarily lead to a fear psychosis on the part of those who have inflicted such treatment. I consider such a course of action as not only unreasonable but also meaningless and furthermore very dangerous. I regard such a state of affairs as specially critical when this is supplemented by an intellectual agitation led by short-sighted literary dilettantes and internationally known agitators who stir up passions among the excited and bewildered populace. In expressing my fears on this point I am only stating what millions of people already feel as a presentiment, or actually realise in their own lives, perhaps without being able to understand its real causes. And I have a right to make these clear statements before you, my fellow members of the Reichstag, because I am thus giving expression to our own political experience, explaining the work which we are doing for our people at home and our attitude towards the outside world.

Seeing that the outside world often speaks of a "German Question", it would be worth while for us to try to gain an objective and clear

understanding as to the nature of this. For quite a large number of people this "question" is to be found in the present German regime, in the difference between the German regime and other regimes — which difference is not understood at all—, in the so-called "Rearmament", which is felt as a pressing menace, and in everything else that is conjured up by fervid imaginations as to the results of this rearmament. For many other people the question lies in the alleged militarist intentions of the German people, in their latent desire for aggression or in the satanic efficiency which they are capable of in getting the better of their opponents.

No, my dear political dabblers, the German question is something quite different.

Here sixty-seven millions of people are living in a very restricted area of the earth and on land which is not everywhere very fertile. This means that we have about one-hundred-and-thirty-six persons to each square kilometre. These people are not less industrious than the other European peoples, but their vital needs are not smaller or fewer. They are not less intelligent but their will to live is also not a whit less strong and they are no more ready than the Englishman or Frenchman to allow themselves to be shot down as heroes for the sake of some dream or other. But they are not less courageous and by no means less honourable than the members of other European nations. They have already been drawn into a war in which they believed just as little as the other Europeans and for which they were just as little responsible. The German who is twenty-five years old to-day was exactly one year old at the outbreak of the Great War. Therefore he can hardly be held responsible for that international catastrophe.

Even the youngest German who could possibly be held responsible was twenty-five years old at that time; because that was the youngest age at which Germans could vote. Therefore this man is nearly fifty years old to-day. All this means that the great majority of Germans now living were forced to share in the War whether they wished it or not. The same is true of the surviving masses of the English and French nations. Those Germans who were inspired by principles of honour and responsibility fulfilled their duty at that time insofar as their age obliged them to do so, just as every decent Frenchman and Englishman did. Others, however, shirked their

duty or exploited the war or worked for revolution. Such people are, however, no longer with us; but as immigrants they are enjoying the hospitality of some other country. The German people are just as rich in good qualities as any other people and naturally have quite as many faults and failings. Now, to take one point: the German question consisted in the fact that as late as 1935 this nation was still held responsible for a crime which it had never committed and had to put up with an inferior position in the community of nations which no honourable people could endure, least of all an industrious and intelligent nation. Furthermore, another phase of the German question arises out of the fact that the unreasoning line of conduct adopted towards the German people was developed into a system wherein measures and agitations inspired by hatred made the German struggle for life still more difficult, although it was hard enough already. And all this was done, not merely against the dictates of nature, but also against the dictates of common sense. And it was against common sense for the reason that the rest of the world reaped no benefit whatsoever from the penalties which Germany was made to bear.

Comparing the German nation with the Russian in regard to territory, the Russians have eighteen times more land for each member of the population than the Germans have. Manifestly this fact alone renders the daily struggle of life difficult. Without the ability and industry of the German peasant and the organising capacity of the German nation, existence would hardly be conceivable for these sixty-seven millions. But what is to be said of the mental simplicity of those who probably even recognize these difficulties and yet talk with childish delight about them in press articles, various publications and speeches. Not only that, but they even seek out every symptom of distress in Germany in order to be able to shout triumphantly about it to the rest of the world. Apparently they would be delighted if our distress were even greater than it is, and it would be greater did we not succeed, through our industry and intelligence, in making the situation such that it can be borne when one crisis comes up after another. They do not seem to have the least idea that the German question would take on quite a different aspect if the efficiency and industry of these millions should become paralysed and if Germany should thus be made to suffer, not only the pains of poverty, but also be drawn into the vortex of political

madness. And this is one of the German questions. And the world may be interested only in seeing that this question of assuring the livelihood of the German people from year to year should be successfully solved. In like manner I wish that the German people should also understand and appreciate that it lies in their own innermost interests to have the same vital questions successfully solved in the case of other peoples.

The solution of this question, however, in Germany is first and foremost the business of the German people themselves and need not awaken any interest at all in the outside world. It touches the interest of other nations only insofar as the German people, by the solution of this question would thereby resume trade relations with the rest of the world as buyers and sellers. And here it would only be to the advantage of their own interests if other nations of the world would understand this question. This means that they should realise that the cry for bread on the part of a nation of forty, fifty or sixty millions is not a deliberate evil engineered by the regime or by certain forms of government, but that it is the natural assertion of the urge to live. And it ought to be quite clear to everybody that contented people are more reasonable than hungry people and that not only their governments ought to be interested in seeing that the citizens get enough to eat but also that this is a matter which affects neighbouring states and peoples. And, furthermore, it is in the interests of all to see that each individual nation is enabled to find the proper externalisation of its own life, in the highest sense of this term. Before the war the opposite opinion still held sway and was even proclaimed as a reason for war. This opinion specifically held that one part of the European family of nations would fare all the better if the other part fared worse.

The German nation needs no special aid to help it in following out its own way of life. But it will not be content with the possession of opportunities which are inferior to those granted to other people. This is the German question on the one hand. The second German question is as follows:—

As a result of exceptionally unfavourable conditions, the struggle for economic existence among the German nation is extremely difficult; but their intelligence, industry, and consequently the standard of life natural to them, are very high. Therefore an exceptional effort

on the part of all the forces of the nation is necessary in order to master this first German problem. But such an effort can be made only if the German nation feels itself on a footing of political equality with other nations, and thus politically secure. It is impossible to hold together a nation which has a high sense of honour and courage if that nation be treated permanently as the world's slave and, under such conditions, it would be impossible to govern it. There is no better proof of the German love for peace than the fact that, despite its ability and its courage, which can scarcely be called in question by its opponents, and in spite of its numbers, the German nation has secured for itself only quite a modest share of the world's space and the world's goods. But it is just this very internalised character of the German nature which makes it impossible for the Germans to bear humiliation and ill-treatment.

The unfortunate Peace Treaty of Versailles was historically unique by reason of the fact that it officially perpetuated, in the moral sense, the conditions that existed as the immediate result of the war. Thus it created that German question which constitutes a fatal burden for Europe as long as it remains unsolved and on the solution of which the freedom of Europe depends.

In the year 1919, when the Peace Treaty had been signed, I took upon myself the duty of solving this question. Not because I wanted to injure France or any other State but because the German people cannot permanently bear the wrong which has been done to them. They shall not bear it and they will not bear it.

In the year 1932 Germany stood on the verge of a Bolshevist collapse. Perhaps at a future date some European statesmen will have the occasion to study elsewhere what this chaos in so great a nation would have meant to Europe. Anyhow, I myself was able to master the crisis that followed in Germany, which was most apparent in the economic sphere, only by mobilising the ethical and moral forces of the whole German nation. The man who wished to save Germany from Bolshevism was necessarily bound to make the question of Germany's equality of status a decisive one and solve it at the same time. Not to bring any injury whatsoever to other people but on the contrary, by preventing the inrush of the Bolshevist wave, they were thus saved from the terrible experience that would have followed such a break-up and which would have brought such ruin to Europe

as can hardly be imagined. The re-establishment of German equality of rights has had no harmful effect on the French people; but the red revolution and the break-up of the German Reich would have shattered the social order of Europe and its economic system, the consequences of which are unfortunately not properly understood by most European statesmen. This struggle for German equality which I have carried on for three long years has not raised a new European question but has solved one.

It is indeed a tragic misfortune that this Treaty of Versailles created a situation the maintenance of which was considered by the French people to be in their own interests. This situation contained in itself little that could bring real advantage to the individual Frenchman, and yet the French people clung to this fantastic association which coupled the Versailles discrimination against the German nation together with the interests of France. Perhaps it may have been the weakness of character displayed in Germany during the post-war period by our governments, and especially by our parties, which is to blame for the fact that the erroneous character of this policy was not adequately brought home to the conscience of the French nation and of serious French statesmen. For the more incompetent the various governments before our time were, the more reason they had to fight shy of a national awakening on the part of the German people. Consequently, when they were confronted with an awakening of national self-consciousness their fear became all the greater and their attitude towards the general international defamation of the German people was accordingly all the more subservient. This disgraceful state of bondage was a necessity for them so that they might support their wretched regime in this way. The collapse which at last menaced the nation showed clearly where this regime had led Germany.

In view of the fact that the idea of inequality had become so rooted in the minds of our neighbours, it was naturally difficult to show that the restoration of German equality was not only unharmed to them, but that on the contrary it was, in the last analysis, an international benefit. You, my fellow members of the Reichstag, know how hard was the road that I have had to travel since January 30, 1933, in order to free the German people from the dishonourable position in which it found itself and to secure equality of rights

step by step without thereby alienating Germany from the political and economic commonwealth of European nations, and particularly without creating new ill-feeling from the aftermath of old enmities. There will come a time when I may appeal to history for confirmation of the fact that at no moment of my struggle on behalf of the German people have I ever forgotten the duty incumbent on me and on us all, firmly to uphold European culture and European civilisation. But the special character of this continent is after all the diversity of its various civilisations. For that reason it is a necessary condition for its existence that there should be free and independent national states. Each European nation may feel convinced that it has made the greatest contribution to our West-European culture. But on the whole we should not wish to be without anything which the individual nations have contributed, and we shall not therefore dispute the value of their individual contributions. We must rather acknowledge that the greatest achievements in all spheres of culture have undoubtedly arisen from rivalry between individual European efforts. Although we are quite ready to cooperate as a free and equal member in this world of European culture, we are obstinately determined to remain what we are.

In these three years I have again and again endeavoured—unfortunately too often in vain—to throw a bridge of understanding across to the people of France. The farther we leave behind the bitterness of the World War and the fears that followed it, the more do evil memories fade from the minds of men, and the more do the beautiful aspects of life and knowledge and experience come to the fore. Those who once faced one another as bitter opponents honour each other to-day as men who fought bravely in a great struggle that is past and gone and regard each other as the depositories and trustees of a great and common cultural inheritance.

Why then should it not be possible to put an end to this useless strife which has lasted for centuries and which has never been and never will be finally decided by either of the two nations concerned? Why not replace it by the rule of reason? The German people have no interest in seeing the French people suffer. And on the other hand what advantage can come to France when Germany is in misery? What boon can the French peasant expect to come to him when times are bad with the German peasant, or *vice versa*? Or

what advantage can the French worker expect from the distress of the German worker? What blessing could it bring to Germany, to the German labourer and to the German middle classes or the whole of the German people, if France were overwhelmed with misfortune?

I have followed the principles of common sense in trying to solve questions which arose from the mischievous preaching of class war among the German people themselves. And I have been successful in my effort. Why then should it not be possible to lift the general problem of conflicting interests between the European States above the sphere of passion and unreason and consider it in the calm light of a higher vision?

I once swore to myself that I would fight boldly and steadfastly for Germany's equality and obtain it in one way or the other; but at the same time my earnest desire has been to increase the feeling of responsibility for the necessity of mutual consideration and collaboration in Europe.

If my international opponents reproach me to-day that I have refused this cooperation with Russia, I make them the following declaration: I do not and did not reject cooperation with Russia but with Bolshevism, which lays claim to a world rulership. I am German. I love and am attached to my nation. I know that this nation can be happy when it can live a life in accordance with its own nature and in its own way. The German nation has not only wept but has laughed heartily throughout its life and I will not see it descend into the gloom of international communism and the dictatorship of hate. I tremble for Europe at the very thought of what would happen to our old and over-populated continent if this Asiatic concept of the world, which is destructive of all our accepted ideals, should be successful in bringing upon us the chaos of the Bolshevist revolution. Perhaps I am looked upon as one who is accustomed to issue fantastic and at any rate inconvenient warnings. But it is for me a great honour and a justification of my conduct in the eyes of posterity that I am looked upon by the Bolshevist oppressors as one of their greatest enemies. I cannot prevent other States from going the way they think they ought to go or at least can go, but I shall prevent Germany from taking this road to ruin. And I believe that the first step to this ruin is taken when the government of a



state itself enters into an alliance with the doctrine of destruction. Should I myself, as a leader of the Nation, enter into close relations with this menace, then I do not see how it would be possible for me to convince the German worker as to the danger of a misfortune falling upon Germany in the shape of Bolshevich chaos. With respect to such matters, as statesman and Führer of the German people, I shall myself do everything that I expect and demand from each of my fellow countrymen.

I do not believe that close association with the political doctrine and outlook on life which are destructive of national existence can be helpful to statesmen. We have had many experiences of this in Germany within the past 20 years. The first contact with Bolshevism, in 1917, brought on us the revolution itself a year later. The second time that Germany entered into relations with Bolshevism the result was within a few years she herself was brought to the brink of a communistic collapse. I severed that connection and by so doing I saved the country from destruction. Nothing will force me to take any other course than that which my experience, insight, and foresight point out to me. And I know that this conviction has become a profound factor in the political thought and ideals of the whole National Socialist movement. With steadfast determination we shall deal with the social problems and tensions that exist in our nation in such a way that they may be solved by a progressive evolution and thus assure to us the blessings of a peaceful development in public affairs such as will be to the advantage of all our people. And any new tasks that fall to our lot during this process will be gladly accepted by those for whom life means work and therewith the discharge of task after task.

Let me now apply this fundamental principle to European politics in general. The moment I do so I find that Europe is divided into two groups. The first group consists of autonomous and independent national states and of nations with whom we are linked together in a thousand ways by reason of common historical experience and a common culture. With these same people we want to remain thus linked for ever, and indeed also with the free and independent nations of other countries outside of Europe. The second group is ruled by that intolerant Bolshevich doctrine which aims at international domination and which preaches the annihilation of what are to us the

most eternal and most sacred ideals relating to this world and the next. In place of all this Bolshevism would instal a world which is abhorrent to us in its culture and its outlook and its teaching. With this Bolshevistic section of Europe we desire no closer contact than the ordinary political and economic relations.

Now there is deep tragedy in the fact that after all our long years of honest striving to establish relations of confidence, sympathy, and closer understanding with the French people, this people has entered into a military alliance, the first phases of which we can see to-day, but the ultimate results of which may be incalculable, unless Providence again proves more kindly than men deserve.

During the past three years I have worked slowly and steadily to establish the conditions that are necessary for a Franco-German understanding. In doing this I have made it plain that one of the conditions of such an understanding should be absolute equality of rights and identity of legal status for the German state and nation. But in regard to this effort to reach an understanding I have clearly seen, not merely a problem to be solved by means of pacts, but also a problem as to how the two nations could be psychologically brought closer together; because the way would to be prepared for such an understanding, not merely by an appeal to reason, but also by an appeal to sentiment. For this reason I have often been confronted with the reproach that my offers of friendship did not embody any concrete proposals. That is not correct.

I have boldly made concrete proposals in regard to all those concrete factors which could be suggested as a means of lessening the strained tension existing in Franco-German relations. On one occasion I did not hesitate to support a concrete proposal for limiting the German army to 200,000 men. And when this proposal was abandoned by its own authors I made an entirely fresh concrete proposal to the French people and to the European governments, but even this proposal to limit the armies to 300,000 men each was also rejected.

I have made a whole series of such concrete proposals for the purpose of eliminating that poison with which public opinion had been infected in the various countries, and to abandon those more atrocious features of modern warfare, with the ultimate purpose of reaching a condition of practical disarmament, even though that

purpose might prove slow in the achievement. Only one of these German proposals was seriously considered. A sense of realism led an English Government to accept my proposal for the establishment of a permanent ratio between the German and the British navies, which is not only consonant with the demands of German security, but also takes into account the enormous overseas interests of a great world Empire. And here I may mention the fact that this agreement remains the only practical agreement which embodies an understanding of mutual viewpoints and therefore has been the only successful attempt at the limitation of armaments. The Government of the Reich is ready to supplement this treaty by a further qualitative agreement with England.

I have expressed the very concrete principle that collective programmes which arise from an international pactomania have as little chance of realisation as the general proposals for a world disarmament which under such circumstances proved impracticable from the very beginning. Against this I pointed out that these questions can be dealt with only step by step and always along what promises to be the line of least resistance. In this conviction I also drew up a concrete proposal for an air pact on the basis of parity of strength as between France, England and Germany. The immediate result was that this suggestion was inconsiderately rejected and subsequently a new East-European-Asiatic factor was introduced into the field of European equilibrium, a factor which is incalculable in its military possibilities.

Therefore I have been making concrete proposals for years past. And I do not hesitate to say that the psychological preparation for an understanding has always appeared to me to be quite as important as those so-called concrete proposals. In this field I have done more than any honest foreign statesman ever dared even to hope for. I have removed the problem of eternal frontier revisions from the atmosphere of public discussion in Germany. Unfortunately it is often said, even by foreign statesmen, that this attitude of mine and the negotiations arising out of it are of no particular significance. I may point out that as a German it would have been just as possible for me to make the restoration of the 1914 frontiers the moral basis of my programme and to uphold it in writing and in speaking, just as French ministers and French national leaders did after 1871.

My critics cannot deny that I have some share of ability in this sphere. It is often much more difficult for a nationalist to bring his nation to a sense of reason than the contrary. It would probably have been much easier for me to arouse instincts of revenge rather than to awaken and strengthen a feeling for the necessity of European understanding. This latter I have done. I have stopped public opinion in Germany from making attacks of this kind against neighbouring nations.

I have expurgated from the German press all expressions of hatred against the French people. I have laboured to instil into the minds of our youth an appreciation for the ideal of an understanding with France. And here my work has not been in vain. A few weeks ago, when our French guests marched into the Olympic Stadium at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, they may have taken the occasion of noticing whether and how far I had succeeded in bringing about such a change in the mentality of the German people.

The inner readiness for seeking and finding such an understanding is more important than the finely woven attempts of statesmen to ensnare the world in a legal net, and in pacts that are not clear as to the obligations they involve.

My endeavours along these lines were doubly difficult because, at the same time I had to deliver Germany from the entanglement of a Treaty which robbed her of equality of rights, a Treaty which the French people—rightly or wrongly, it does not matter—believed it in their interests to maintain.

As a German National Socialist it has fallen to my lot to make yet another particularly heavy sacrifice in the name of the German people.

At least in modern times no attempt had ever been made before on the conclusion of a war to deprive the vanquished Power, by a mere stroke of the pen, of extensive and ancient sections belonging to its own statal territory. It was only in the interest of mutual understanding that I decided to take up and bear this sacrifice, which was the heaviest that could be imposed upon us politically and morally; and I did so simply because I believed that by observing the Treaty I might thereby create a better political atmosphere between France and Germany, and England and Germany, and extend the feeling of security on all sides.

Moreover, I have often expressed the opinion even in this House, that not only are we prepared to bear this heaviest tribute for the sake of European peace so long as the other partners also fulfil their obligations, but that we look upon this Treaty as the only possible basis on which a concrete attempt can be made for the establishment of a European peace.

Fellow Members of the Reichstag: You are familiar with the content and meaning of this Treaty. It was intended to prevent for all future time the employment of force between Belgium and France on the one side, and Germany on the other. Unfortunately the treaties of alliance that had already been made by France were the first obstacles laid in the practical path of this Pact, namely the Rhine Pact of Locarno. To this Pact Germany made a contribution which represented the greatest sacrifice; because while France fortified her frontier with steel and concrete and armament, and garrisoned it heavily, a condition of complete defencelessness was imposed upon us on our Western frontier. Nevertheless we abided by that obligation in the hope that we might serve the cause of European peace and advance international understanding by making a sacrifice which meant so much for a great Power.

The agreement concluded between France and Russia last year, and already signed and accepted by the French Chamber, is in open contradiction to this Pact. This new Franco-Soviet Agreement introduces the threatening military power of a mighty Empire into the centre of Europe by the roundabout way of Czecho-Slovakia the latter country having also signed an agreement with Russia. Such being the state of affairs, it is impossible that these two countries should undertake in their agreement to decide the question of guilt, in the event of an Eastern European conflict, according to their own judgment, and accordingly to regard the obligation of mutual assistance as having arisen or not, entirely irrespective of an already existing or pending decision on the part of the League of Nations Council.

It has been asserted that in this Pact the first obligation need not necessarily apply because it is restricted by a certain condition attached to the text; but this assertion is incomprehensible. I cannot state that a certain course of action is expressly a breach of an obligation otherwise valid and therewith considered as binding, and

then, in a further paragraph, declare that no action shall be taken which would be contrary to these other obligations. In this case the first obligation would be unreasonable and therefore incomprehensible.

This problem is first and foremost a political one and must be considered as such in all its serious implications.

France has not concluded this Treaty with one or other of the European Powers. Even before the Rhine Pact came into existence France already had treaties of assistance with Czecho-Slovakia and with Poland. Germany made no objection to this, not only because these pacts, unlike the Franco-Soviet Pact, were subject to the provisions laid down by the League of Nations but because at that time Czecho-Slovakia, and more particularly Poland, were in the habit of following a policy in keeping with their own national interests. Germany has no desire to attack these States, and does not believe that it is in their interests to attack her. Above all, however, Poland will remain Poland and France will remain France. But Soviet Russia is the exponent of a revolutionary political and philosophical system organised in the form of a State. Its political creed is the confession of faith in the world revolution. It cannot be foreseen whether this philosophy will not be victorious to-morrow or the next day in France as well. But should this happen—and I as a German statesman must count on such a possibility—then it is certain that this new Bolshevich State would be a section of the Bolshevich International, which means that the decision as to aggression or non-aggression would not be made by two different States according to their own independent and objective judgments, but orders would be issued from one headquarters. Should such a development take place these headquarters would not be in Paris but in Moscow.

It is even for purely territorial reasons that Germany is not in a position to attack Russia; but Russia could at any time bring about a conflict with Germany by the indirect way of her own advanced positions. In such an event the definition of the aggressor may well be called a foregone conclusion, because it would be independent of the decision of the League Council. To object or assert that France and Russia would do nothing which might expose them to the infliction of sanctions on the part of England or Italy is immaterial here; because it is impossible to imagine what kind of

effective sanctions could be found against such an overwhelming combination welded together by its world outlook and its united military forces.

For years past we have issued warnings against such a development, not because we need to be more afraid of it than others but because one day it may entail terrible consequences for all Europe. An attempt has been made to brush aside our very grave apprehensions by referring to the unreadiness of Russia as a war instrument, by referring also to its unwieldy character and its unfitness for a European war. We have also opposed this view, not because we are convinced that the Germans would be inferior in quality, but because we all know that sheer force of numbers is of supreme importance. We are all the more grateful for the information which M. Herriot conveyed to the French in the French Chamber on Russia's importance from the standpoint of military aggression. We know that M. Herriot received this information from the Soviet Government themselves and we are convinced that the Soviet Government cannot have furnished the spiritual inspirer of this new alliance in France with false information. Nor do we doubt that M. Herriot reported his information truly. Now, according to this information it is established in the first place that the Russian Army has a peace strength of 1,350,000 men, and secondly, that its war strength and reserves amount to 17.5 million men. Thirdly, we are informed it has the largest tank force in the world and, fourthly, that it has the largest air force in the world. This most powerful military factor has been described as excellent in regard to mobility and leadership and ready for action at any time. Its introduction into Central Europe would destroy the European equilibrium existing there. Furthermore, we are absolutely unable to make any possible estimate of the means of defence on land and in the air for the European States concerned and especially for Germany, which has been singled out as the sole opponent.

This gigantic mobilisation of the East against Central Europe is opposed not only to the letter but above all to the spirit of the Locarno Pact. Not only do we feel this as the party chiefly concerned, but the same feeling is agitating the minds of intelligent men in all the nations and has been openly expressed everywhere by publicists and political writers and speakers.

On February 21 a French journalist came to me and asked me to grant him an interview. I was informed that he was one of those Frenchmen who try just as hard as we do to find a way towards an understanding between the two nations and so I did not like to refuse him, especially as my refusal might immediately be interpreted as a sign of disrespect towards French journalism. I gave him the information he desired, just as I had given it hundreds and thousands of times in Germany, and I tried once more to approach the French people with the request for an understanding on which we have set our hearts and which we would like to see carried into effect. Furthermore I expressed my deep regret about the menace of the development arising in France from the conclusion of a pact for which we are convinced that there is no conceivable necessity, but which would create a new situation in Europe in case it should be brought to realisation. This interview, as you are aware, was held back for reasons unknown to us and was not published until the day after the ratification of the Pact in the French Chamber.

In accordance with the declarations which I made at that interview, I am still ready and shall always and sincerely be ready in the future to help the cause of this Franco-German understanding; for I look upon it as a necessary element in securing Europe against dangers that are incalculable, and because I am unable to see what possible advantage could come to either nation from any other attitude, which indeed would involve the gravest general and international dangers. But when the knowledge of the final conclusion of this Pact came to me I was forced to analyse the new situation that had arisen from it and from this analysis to draw the necessary conclusions.

These are conclusions which are very grave and fill us and myself personally with a deep regret. Yet I am obliged, not only to make sacrifices for the sake of a European understanding, but I am obliged also to bow to the interests of my own nation. So long as a sacrifice is accepted with appreciation and understanding on the other side I will gladly stand by that sacrifice and will recommend the German people to do the same. At the moment, however, when it is certain that the other party no longer takes these sacrifices into account or ceases to appreciate them, a one-sided burden is laid upon Germany and therewith a discrimination which is intolerable for us.



GERMAN MEMORANDUM, MARCH 7, 1936

In this historic hour and place I should like to repeat what I said in my first important Reichstag speech, which was delivered in May 1933. I then said that the German people would rather accept distress and affliction than renounce the call of honour and the will to freedom and equality of rights.

If the German nation is to be of some value for European collaboration it can have this value only as a partner who has equal rights with all the others and is devoted to the principles of honour. As soon as it ceases to possess this characteristic value it loses everything that is of essential worth. I should not like to deceive either ourselves or the rest of the world with a nation which would then have no further value because it would be lacking in that sense of honour which is the most natural part of a nation's character. But I also believe that in the hour of such bitter recognition and grave decision, in spite of everything we ought not to fail, particularly at such a time, to play our part in European cooperation and I believe that we should now more than ever seek new ways which might make possible a solution of those questions in a way that would be advantageous to all.

I have therefore endeavoured to express the feeling of the German people by making concrete proposals. This people is anxious for its own security and is prepared to make every sacrifice for its freedom and is at every moment ready to enter into a sincere and honest European cooperation on the basis of equal rights for all.

After a hard inner struggle with myself I therefore decided, on behalf of the German Government of the Reich, to hand the following Memorandum to the French Government to-day and to the other signatories of the Locarno Pact.

MEMORANDUM

Immediately the pact signed between France and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics on May 2, 1935, had been made known the German Government drew the attention of the Governments of the other signatory Powers to the Rhine Pact of Locarno and the fact that the obligations to which France had committed herself in the new pact were not reconcilable with those of the Rhine Pact. The German Government have fully substantiated their point of

view both juridically and politically; juridically, in the German memorandum<sup>1</sup> of May 25, 1935; politically, in the many diplomatic conversations which followed that memorandum. The other Governments which took part in those conversations are aware that neither their written answers to the German memorandum nor the arguments brought against it, either through diplomatic channels or in public declarations, have been able to alter the standpoint of the German Government.

In fact, the whole discussion which has been conducted diplomatically or publicly on these questions since May, 1935, has only served to substantiate in all respects the view which the German Government had put forward from the outset.

(1) It is undisputed that the Franco-Soviet Pact is directed exclusively against Germany.

(2) It is undisputed that France undertakes by this treaty obligations in the event of a conflict between Germany and the Soviet Union which far exceed her commitments in the Covenant of the League of Nations and which themselves compel France to military action against Germany, even if there is no warrant for such, either by recommendation or by actual decision of the League of Nations Council.

(3) It is undisputed that in such a case France claims the right to decide, at her own discretion, who is the aggressor.

(4) It is therefore clear that France has committed herself to obligations with regard to the Soviet Union which mean in practice that under certain circumstances France would act as though neither the Covenant of the League nor the Locarno Pact, which refers to this Covenant, were still valid.

This outcome of the Franco-Soviet Pact is not nullified by the fact that France has made the proviso that she should not be obliged to adopt military measures against Germany, if by so doing she would expose herself to sanctions on the part of the guarantor Powers, Italy, and Great Britain. As against this reservation there remains the decisive fact that the Locarno Pact does not rest alone on the guarantee of Great Britain and Italy, but primarily on the undertakings laid down for the relations between France and Germany.

<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 157.

It is only a question, therefore, whether France, by assuming these treaty obligations, has remained within those limits imposed by the Locarno Pact for her relations with Germany.

That that is the case the German Government must deny. The Locarno Pact was designed to achieve the purpose of ensuring peace in Western Europe, in that Germany, on the one hand, and France and Belgium on the other, renounce recourse to military force for ever in their reciprocal relations. If, on the conclusion of this pact certain exceptions were admitted to his renunciation of war, which went beyond the rights of self-defence, the political reason for this lay, as is generally known, in the fact that France had previously undertaken obligations towards Poland and Czechoslovakia which she was not willing to sacrifice to the idea of an absolute guarantee of peace in the West. Germany was able to agree to these exceptions with a clear conscience at that time. She did not object to the treaties with Poland and Czechoslovakia, which the representative of France laid on the table at Locarno, only on the natural condition that these treaties were reconcilable with the Rhine Pact and contained no stipulations as to the application of Article XVI of the League Covenant, such as are provided in the new Franco-Soviet agreement. The contents of those special agreements, which were known to the German Government at that time, fulfilled these requirements. The exceptions admitted to the Locarno Pact did not, of course, expressly mention Poland and Czechoslovakia, but were, on the contrary, abstractly formulated. It was, however, the purpose of all negotiations in that respect to find a balance between the Franco-German renunciation of war and the wish of France to maintain her existing pact obligations.

If, therefore, France now makes use of the abstract formulation of the possibilities of war admitted in the Locarno Pact, in order to conclude a new pact against Germany with a highly armed State, and if in so doing she further decisively limits the range of the renunciation of war agreed upon with Germany, and at the same time does not even keep to the formally defined, juridical limits, then a completely new state of affairs has been brought about and the political system of the Locarno Pact has been destroyed both in the letter and in the spirit.

The recent debate and resolutions of the French Parliament have

shown that France, in spite of German representations, is determined to put the pact with the Soviet Union into force. Indeed, it has been gathered in a diplomatic conversation that France already considers herself bound by the signing of this pact on May 2, 1935. Confronted by such a development of European politics, the German Government cannot and will not remain inactive, and thus neglect and abandon the interests of the German people entrusted to their care.

In their negotiations during the past years the German Government have always emphasized their willingness to abide by and fulfil all the obligations of the Locarno Pact so long as the other treaty partners for their part are also prepared to stand by this treaty. This natural condition cannot now any longer be regarded as having been fulfilled by France. The repeatedly friendly offers and peaceful assurances of Germany have been met by France with a military pact with the Soviet Union exclusively directed against Germany and in violation of the Locarno Pact. The Locarno Pact has thereby lost its significance and practically ceased to be. Germany regards herself, therefore, as no longer bound by this extinct pact. The German Government are now compelled to meet the new situation created by this pact, a situation which is aggravated by the fact that the Franco-Soviet Pact is amplified by an exactly parallel treaty of alliance between Czechoslovakia and Soviet-Russia. In the interests of the natural right of a nation to protect its frontiers and preserve its means of defence, the German Government have therefore restored once more, as from to-day, the full and unrestricted sovereignty of the Reich in the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland.

In order to prevent any doubt as to their intentions, and to make clear the purely defensive character of this measure, as well as to give expression to their lasting desire for the true pacification of Europe between nations of equal rights and mutual respect, the German Government declare themselves prepared to negotiate new agreements for the establishment of a system of European security on the basis of the following proposals:—

(1) The German Government declare themselves prepared to negotiate with France and Belgium for the establishment of a bilateral demilitarized zone and to assent to other proposals with

regard to the extent and effects of such a zone, under the stipulation of complete parity.

(2) In order to assure the inviolability and integrity of the frontiers in the West, the German Government propose the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Germany, France, and Belgium with duration which they are prepared to fix at 25 years.

(3) The German Government desire to invite England and Italy to sign this treaty as guarantor Powers.

(4) The German Government are willing to include the Government of the Netherlands in this treaty system should the Government of the Netherlands desire it, and the other treaty partners approve.

(5) For the further strengthening of these security arrangements between the Western Powers, the German Government are prepared to conclude an air pact which shall be designed automatically and effectively to prevent the danger of sudden attacks from the air.

(6) The German Government repeat their offer to conclude with States bordering on Germany in the East non-aggression pacts similar to that concluded with Poland. Since the attitude of the Lithuanian Government has undergone a certain modification as regards Memel, the German Government withdraw the exception which they once had to make with regard to Lithuania and declare themselves ready to sign a non-aggression pact with Lithuania also, under the stipulation of an effective organisation of the guaranteed autonomy of the Memel territory.

(7) With the achievement, at last, of Germany's equality of rights and the restoration of full sovereignty over the whole territory of the German Reich, the German Government regard the chief reason for their withdrawal from the League of Nations as eliminated. Germany is therefore prepared to enter the League of Nations again. In so saying, she expresses at the same time her expectation that, in the course of a reasonable space of time, the problem of colonial equality of rights as well as of the separation of the League Covenant from its Versailles Treaty base will be clarified in the course of friendly negotiations.

Gentlemen, Members of the German Reichstag: In this historic hour as German troops are moving into their future peace garrisons

in the western provinces of the Reich let us all unite in two sacred vows.

First, we swear an oath that we will yield before no power and before no coercion in our determination to restore the honour of our nation. And we swear to succumb with honour to the gravest distress rather than capitulate before it.

And, secondly, we proclaim now more than ever before our wish to further the cause of mutual understanding between the nations of Europe and particularly an understanding among our western nations and neighbours.

Thus after three years I believe that to-day I can look upon the struggle for the restoration of German equality of rights as now concluded. I believe that therewith the first condition which was responsible for our abstinence from European collective collaboration has now disappeared. Therefore we are ready to return to this collaboration and we do so with the sincere wish that these events and a review of these years will help to create a deeper understanding for this collaboration also among the other European nations.

In Europe we have no territorial claims to put forward. We know that all the strained tension resulting from erroneous delimitation of territory, or from a disproportion between the populations and the space at their disposal cannot be solved through wars in Europe. But we also hope that human intelligence will cooperate in alleviating the sufferings caused by these conditions and in lessening the strained tensions by means of a slow evolutionary development in peaceful collaboration. And particularly I feel, to-day more than ever before, the necessity which is laid upon us to honour the obligations which our regained national honour and freedom now impose. These are obligations not only towards our own people but also towards the other European States.

Therefore I should like again to remind European statesmen of the thoughts which I expressed in the thirteen points of my last speech in this House, while giving an assurance that we Germans will gladly do everything that is possible and necessary in order to bring about a realisation of these very practical ideals.

Fellow Members of the National Socialist Party: For the past three years I have directed the affairs of the Government of the German Reich and therewith the German nation. The successes

which Providence has allowed me to achieve for our Fatherland during those three years have been great indeed. Our position has been improved in every sphere of our national, political and economic life. To-day I may say that during this time numerous cares have weighed upon me and countless sleepless nights and days full of work have been my lot. I was able to do all this only because I never felt myself as a dictator of my people, but only and always their leader, that is to say, their mandatory. For fourteen years I struggled to bring my ideals to the inner conviction of the German people and then, thanks to their confidence in me, I received my call from the venerable Field Marshal. Since then all my strength has come from the happy consciousness of being inseparably united with my people as man and as leader. I cannot close this historic period of the restoration and honour of the freedom of my nation without asking the German people to give to me and also to all my collaborators and fellow combatants their retrospective approval of all that I have had to demand of them during these years, of the decisions that had to be made and the hard measures that had to be carried through.

I have therefore decided to dissolve the German Reichstag to-day so that the German people may give their verdict as to my leadership and that of my collaborators. In these three years Germany has regained her honour, has recovered faith in herself, has overcome her greatest economic distress and, finally, a new cultural resurgence has begun. I believe I can say this frankly before my conscience and my God. I now beg the German people to strengthen me in my faith and through the force of their will further to endow me with the strength to take a courageous stand at all times for their honour and their freedom and their economic welfare. And I specially request the German people to support me in my struggle to bring about a real peace.

(From *Völkischer Beobachter*, May 8, 1936.)

42.

STATEMENT BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT GIVEN TO  
THE PRESS, MARCH 7, 1936

Le 28 février, un journal parisien publiait une interview du chef de l'Etat allemand contenant un appel solennel à la réconciliation franco-allemande.

Cette manifestation a retenu aussitôt toute l'attention du gouvernement français. Il n'avait d'ailleurs pas attendu qu'elle se produisît pour manifester son souci d'un rapprochement entre les deux pays, et le ministre des affaires étrangères avait donné à ce souci une expression publique dans un discours prononcé à la Chambre des députés, bien que, depuis plus d'un an, le gouvernement allemand se fût abstenu de répondre aux ouvertures qui lui étaient faites et que, notamment, au mois de novembre dernier, pressé par l'ambassadeur de France de se prêter à la conclusion d'un pacte aérien, le gouvernement du Reich eût invoqué la situation internationale pour ajourner toutes négociations.

Le 29 février, instructions étaient envoyées à l'ambassadeur de France de demander d'urgence audience au chancelier et de le prier de préciser sur quelles bases il voyait la possibilité de ménager un rapprochement que la France souhaitait autant que l'Allemagne. M. François-Poncet s'acquitta immédiatement de ces instructions.

Au cours d'une audience de M. Hitler, en présence de M. von Neurath, le 2 mars, il lui fut répondu qu'une étude allait être faite en vue de saisir à bref délai le gouvernement français de propositions de caractère précis.

Pour faciliter la négociation ainsi amorcée, le gouvernement allemand nous demandait que le secret fût provisoirement gardé sur la visite de l'ambassadeur de France; satisfaction fut donnée à ce désir.

Informé, hier, que M. von Neurath désirait le voir ce matin, M. François-Poncet recevait ce matin communication d'un mémorandum par lequel le gouvernement allemand répudie unilatéralement le traité de Locarno et annonce son intention de donner des suites immédiates à sa décision. Or, il est expressément prévu dans cet acte qu'il doit rester en vigueur jusqu'à décision contraire du conseil de la Société des nations.



Le gouvernement allemand invoque l'existence du traité franco-soviétique, dont il donne une interprétation entièrement inexacte et qu'il présente ainsi comme incompatible avec le traité de Locarno. Il fait abstraction des justifications qu'à cet égard le gouvernement français a fournies depuis près d'un an et qui ont reçu l'appui de l'opinion concordante des autres signataires du traité de Locarno.

Quelque valeur qu'il attribuât à ses griefs, le gouvernement allemand devait, si la voie diplomatique lui paraissait insuffisante, les soumettre à la procédure de conciliation et d'arbitrage prescrite en pareil cas par le traité signé à cet effet à Locarno par la France et l'Allemagne.

A la question de savoir si le mémorandum remis ce matin constituait la réponse promise lundi dernier à l'ambassadeur de France, il a été répondu que ce document énonçait les bases sur lesquelles des échanges de vues ultérieurs pourraient être fructueux et que la réponse à la demande de la France s'y trouvait contenue.

L'œuvre de réconciliation franco-allemande devrait donc prendre pour base la dénonciation unilatérale d'un traité librement conclu et dont les auteurs s'étaient donné précisément pour tâche de préparer cette réconciliation. Elle s'accompagnerait d'une acceptation du fait accompli puisque, contrairement aux engagements pris, le gouvernement allemand a fait entrer, dès aujourd'hui, des détachements militaires dans la zone rhénane.

Le gouvernement avait le devoir de porter ces faits à la connaissance de l'opinion publique. Le gouvernement a examiné avec soin les termes du mémorandum allemand. Sans préjudice de toutes autres mesures, il s'est mis en contact avec les autres signataires du traité, en vue d'une opposition commune à une répudiation unilatérale des traités.

Fidèle au traité de Locarno, il a décidé de saisir le conseil de la Société des nations.

(From *Le Temps*, March 9, 1936.)

43.

GERMAN STATEMENTS OF MARCH 8 AND 9, 1936

I

The following statement was broadcast from all French stations in the late afternoon of Saturday:

“On the day after the Chancellor’s last interview, M. Flandin did not let a single day pass before sending the French Ambassador to the Führer to ask him what basis he offered for a Franco-German discussion. The Chancellor answered that he recognized in fact that bases must be provided, but he earnestly requested the French Ambassador to treat his démarche as confidential. In accordance with the Chancellor’s wishes, M. Flandin made no public communication about these proceedings. The astonishment of the French Government is, therefore, all the greater to find itself confronted with a unilateral German declaration, and to see agreements repudiated which Germany signed of its own free will.”

On this, the following comment should be made:

1. In actual fact, the Führer’s interview was placed before the French Embassy on the same day, and therefore certainly in the hands of the French Government on the following day. Unfortunately, however, the French Government postponed the publication not one, but several days, until the Chamber had in the meantime completed the ratification of the Franco-Russian Agreement; and only then, *i. e.*, about a week later, was the Ambassador instructed to present a counter-enquiry.

2. This counter-enquiry presented by the French Ambassador was whether the Führer and Chancellor would “define precisely” the proposals for Franco-German negotiations made in the interview. In reply to this, the French Ambassador was reminded that repeated and precise German proposals had always remained unanswered from the French side.

No suggestion was ever made to the French Ambassador that his visit should be kept secret from the French Government. All that happened was that the German Government refused to publish a joint communiqué. There was of course nothing to prevent the French Government on its side from making the fact of the visit public.

It is quite understandable that no impulse was felt on the German side to publish a joint communiqué and thus retrospectively sanction the remarkable delay, with all its attendant circumstances, in the publication of the interview.

II

The essential point of the statement of the French Foreign Minister, M. Flandin, to the French press is the claim that a misconstruction has been put upon the Franco-Soviet Pact by Germany, and that the French justification of the Pact a year ago has been disregarded. These attempts at justification were, however, rejected at the time by the Reich Government as insufficient, and the four complaints of the German Memorandum of March 7th have remained untested. As everyone must recognize, these are based upon the declarations made by M. Flandin himself before the French Chamber.

Furthermore, M. Flandin's official statements to the press contain numerous inaccuracies. It was not the Anglo-French proposals of February 3rd, 1935 which remained unanswered, but the Führer's proposals in his Reichstag speech of May 21, 1935. It was not that Germany declined negotiations for an Air Pact, but rather that France frustrated them by making them dependent upon the conclusion of an Eastern Pact, a Danubian Pact, a disarmament convention and other impossible conditions. The misrepresentation of the French Ambassador's visit to the Führer and Chancellor, occasioned by the interview in the "Paris Midi", has already been corrected yesterday.

When M. Flandin claims that Germany, before taking the step, should at least have called an international court of arbitration, in order to establish the incompatibility of the Franco-Soviet Agreement with Locarno, it is only necessary to reply with the counterquestion, why the French Government on its side, in spite of the prompt notification of the German legal view, felt justified in bringing about a *fait accompli* by the conclusion of the Agreement.

(From the German News Agency *D.N.B.*, March 9, 1936.)

44.

APPEAL BY THE FRENCH AND BELGIAN  
GOVERNMENTS TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS,  
MARCH 8, 1936

I

TELEGRAM FROM THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT

Paris, March 8th, 1936

By Article 1 of the Treaty negotiated at Locarno to which Belgium, France, the British Empire and Italy are parties with Germany, Germany confirmed, *inter alia*, her intention to observe the stipulations of Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, which provide for the demilitarisation of the German territory on the left bank of the Rhine and on the right bank of the zone situated between that river and a line drawn fifty kilometres to the east.

In virtue of Article 8 of the Treaty of Locarno, that Treaty cannot cease to have effect otherwise than by a decision of the Council of the League of Nations voting by a two-thirds majority.

Notwithstanding these explicit provisions, the Government of the Reich, by a communication made yesterday to the representatives in Berlin of the signatory Powers, has just repudiated this Treaty by a unilateral act.

Moreover, in reply to a question put by the French Ambassador when this notification was made to him, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Reich announced that the German Government proposed to send small detachments into the demilitarised zone as a symbolical act.

In fact, the appearance of considerable military forces is already reported in several localities in the zone.

The German Government has thus expressly violated Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles and Article 1 of the Treaty of Locarno.

Consequently, in conformity with Article 4 of the last-named Treaty, the French Government has the honour to seize the Council of the League of Nations of the violation thus committed.

In view of the urgency of the matter, I should be obliged if you would take all necessary measures for the Council to meet as soon as possible.

Pierre-Etienne Flandin

II

TELEGRAM FROM THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT

Brussels, March 8th, 1936

By a communication made on March 7th to the Belgian Government, the German Government gave notice that it no longer considered itself bound by the Treaty of Guarantee of Locarno and that German troops were entering the demilitarised zone. This fact constituting a violation of articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, the Belgian Government has the honour, in conformity with Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Treaty of Guarantee of Locarno, to lay the question immediately before the Council of the League of Nations. I should be grateful if you would take the necessary measures in order that the Council may be convened as soon as possible.

Paul van Zeeland

*(League of Nations, C. 112. M. 52. 1936.)*

45.

BROADCAST STATEMENT BY M. SARRAUT,  
FRENCH PREMIER, MARCH 8, 1936

Le peuple français, auquel le chef du gouvernement adresse ce message, et l'opinion internationale qui doit en recueillir le fidèle écho, ont besoin, en cet instant, qu'une parole loyale, calme, mesurée, dont l'objectivité contraste avec les accents passionnés qui retentissaient hier à la tribune du Reichstag, souligne l'extrême gravité et récuse l'insoutenable prétexte de la double décision par laquelle, au mépris de ses propres et libres engagements, l'Allemagne vient de dénoncer le traité de Locarno et de violer avec ses armes le territoire de la zone démilitarisée du Rhin.

Un bref rappel des faits de l'histoire d'hier doit, à la fois, éclairer et étayer cette démonstration.

Lorsque, au lendemain de la guerre et de la victoire, on voulut mettre la France à l'abri d'une nouvelle invasion, plusieurs voies s'ouvraient. On pouvait, suivant la méthode commune, donner à notre pays, par des annexions territoriales, de solides frontières; mais

c'eût été violenter le caractère de populations qui, allemandes, avaient le droit de vouloir demeurer allemandes. On pouvait, par une occupation permanente, créer en avant des frontières un solide glacis qui mettrait le territoire national hors de l'atteinte d'un adversaire; on écarta également ce système qui aurait imposé aux populations rhénanes des charges pénibles.

On se borna donc à décider que les territoires allemands de la rive gauche du Rhin, et une zone de 50 kilomètres sur la rive droite, seraient démilitarisés; l'Allemagne n'y entretiendrait pas de troupes, elle n'y construirait pas de fortifications.

Il fut, d'autre part, convenu que, pour assurer l'exécution du traité pendant quinze ans, c'est-à-dire jusqu'en 1935, les troupes alliées occuperaient la région rhénane, la zone occupée étant d'ailleurs progressivement réduite.

Le régime de l'occupation était, à maints égards, pénible aux Rhénans; il était clair que dès le moment où serait obtenue une amélioration durable des relations franco-allemandes l'occupation disparaîtrait.

Et ce fut précisément pour améliorer les relations franco-allemandes que le gouvernement allemand prit lui-même l'initiative des propositions qui aboutirent, en 1925, au pacte rhénan de Locarno.

Par ce traité, dont la préparation fit l'objet de longues négociations entre Français, Allemands, Anglais, Belges et Italiens, la France et la Belgique d'un côté, l'Allemagne de l'autre, s'interdirent tout acte d'agression. En même temps, l'Allemagne renouvela son engagement de respecter la zone démilitarisée. Toute une procédure fut élaborée pour régler, par des voies de conciliation et d'arbitrage, les différends qui viendraient à s'élever soit entre la France et l'Allemagne, soit entre la Belgique et l'Allemagne, et le respect des obligations ainsi contractées fut placé sous la garantie de l'Angleterre et de l'Italie, qui s'engagèrent, sous réserve des décisions du conseil de la Société des nations — lequel devait être saisi en cas de violation — à prêter leur assistance à l'Etat au détriment de qui les traités se trouveraient violés, notamment en cas de violation de la zone démilitarisée.

La conclusion du pacte de Locarno fut saluée dans toute l'Europe comme le début d'une ère nouvelle dans les relations franco-allemandes; progressivement, la libération anticipée des territoires occupés de la Rhénanie se trouva hâtée. Prévue pour durer jusqu'en

1935, l'occupation prit fin dès 1930. Le traité de Locarno suffisait à tout.

En se prêtant à cette évacuation anticipée, la France avait donné la preuve la plus éclatante de son désir de voir améliorer les relations entre les deux pays.

C'était cependant l'époque où le gouvernement allemand se déclarait incapable de faire face aux engagements des réparations qu'il avait contractés, laissant ainsi à notre charge la plus large part des dépenses de reconstruction des régions dévastées.

Mais les plaies de la guerre se cicatrisaient peu à peu. On oubliait, et les anciens combattants étaient les premiers à prêcher généreusement l'oubli du passé.

Les Allemands se sont plaints, néanmoins, que l'on n'ait pas toujours fait de leurs avances tout le cas qu'ils attendaient. C'est que l'expérience rend prudent et le peuple de notre pays a été trop souvent victime de déceptions. Au surplus, au cours de ces dernières années, les actes de l'Allemagne étaient en contraste singulier avec ses paroles. L'Allemagne se déclarait animée des intentions les plus pacifiques et, cependant, elle quittait à grand bruit la conférence du désarmement et rompait avec la Société des nations. L'année suivante, elle rétablissait le service militaire obligatoire et, aux prix d'un effort gigantesque et des sacrifices les plus lourds, reconstituait dans les délais les plus courts une grande armée.

En vain, lui offrons-nous de prendre sa place dans des systèmes de sécurité collective en Europe. En vain, depuis six mois, pressait-on le gouvernement de se prêter à la négociation d'un pacte aérien. Que les ouvertures fussent faites par Paris ou Londres, Berlin se déroba.

L'opinion gardait pourtant confiance. L'Allemagne n'affirmait-elle pas sa volonté de se conformer au traité de Locarno et de respecter la zone démilitarisée ?

Or, le respect de la zone démilitarisée, cela veut dire que le jour où une attaque brusquée se trouverait déclenchée contre nous, cette attaque pourrait être repoussée à la frontière même. C'est l'intégrité du territoire national assurée.

Depuis la fin de janvier dernier, le gouvernement que je préside avait, comme celui qui l'avait précédé, donné des preuves certaines de son souci d'engager avec l'Allemagne une négociation générale pour tenter de liquider les différends accumulés.

Devant la Chambre, le ministre des affaires étrangères avait donné à ce souci une expression publique.

Le 28 février, un journal parisien publiait une interview du chef de l'Etat allemand, contenant un appel pathétique à la réconciliation des deux pays. Bien qu'elle fût de caractère assez vague, cette manifestation retint aussitôt toute l'attention du gouvernement. Dès le lendemain, le samedi 29 février, l'instruction était envoyée à l'ambassadeur de France à Berlin de demander d'urgence une audience au chancelier et de le prier de préciser sur quelles bases il voyait la possibilité de ménager un rapprochement que la France souhaitait autant que l'Allemagne.

M. François-Poncet s'acquitta immédiatement de ces instructions. Reçu le 2 mars par le chancelier Hitler, en présence de M. de Neurath, il lui fut répondu qu'une étude allait être faite en vue de saisir à bref délai le gouvernement français de propositions de caractère précis.

Pour faciliter la négociation, le gouvernement allemand demandait que le secret fût provisoirement gardé sur la visite de l'ambassadeur de France. Satisfaction fut donnée à ce désir: c'est hier seulement, pour la première fois, que la nouvelle a été rendue publique.

Nous attendions donc à bref délai des propositions nettes, qui auraient permis enfin d'apprécier les possibilités d'un rapprochement des deux pays et de déterminer la mieux adaptée à sa réalisation.

C'est dans cette situation que, convoqué par le ministre des affaires étrangères du Reich, l'ambassadeur de France a reçu hier matin communication d'un mémorandum par lequel le gouvernement allemand répudie unilatéralement le traité de Locarno et annonce son intention de donner des suites immédiates à sa décision. Pour expliquer son attitude, il invoque la conclusion du traité franco-soviétique, dont il donne une interprétation entièrement inexacte, déjà maintes fois réfutée par la France, en le déclarant incompatible avec le traité de Locarno. Ce qui prouve qu'il n'y a là qu'un vain prétexte pour le gouvernement allemand, c'est qu'au lendemain même de la conclusion de ce traité, signé par M. Laval, le 2 mai 1935, le chancelier Hitler, dans un discours du 21 mai 1935, déclarait que le gouvernement allemand «voyait dans le respect de la zone démilitarisée une contribution à l'apaisement de l'Europe». Peu important à ses yeux les explications que, depuis près d'un an, le gouvernement français a fournies, avec la pleine approbation des autres signataires du traité



qui, consultés au mois de mai dernier par l'Allemagne, ont été unanimes à déclarer que les engagements du traité franco-soviétique ne violaient en aucune manière les obligations du pacte rhénan. Comme M. l'ambassadeur François-Poncet demandait si le mémorandum répudiant un traité aussi solennel constituait bien la réponse promise lundi dernier pour jeter les bases d'un accord franco-allemand, il lui a été répondu que ce document énonçait bien les bases sur lesquelles les échanges de vues ultérieurs pourraient être fructueux et que la réponse à la demande française s'y trouvait en effet contenue.

En même temps, joignant l'acte aux paroles, des détachements armés, qui atteignent déjà la valeur de plusieurs divisions, entrent en Rhénanie.

Voilà la situation devant laquelle le gouvernement allemand a entendu nous placer. L'Allemagne a librement contracté, en 1925, des engagements solennels; elle a renouvelé les promesses du traité de paix concernant la démilitarisation de la zone rhénane. Engagements et promesses sont aujourd'hui répudiés.

Je l'ai déjà dit, la raison que l'on invoque n'est nullement fondée. Même si elle l'était, le gouvernement allemand ne serait en aucune manière autorisé à se faire justice lui-même. Le traité de Locarno prévoit que, si entre les deux pays un différend s'élève, sur lequel ils ne peuvent s'accorder, ils auront le devoir d'en référer à des juges ou à une commission de conciliation. Le gouvernement allemand pouvait saisir la Cour de la Haye. Nous avons déjà déclaré publiquement, il y a quinze jours, que nous étions prêts à nous soumettre à l'arbitrage de cette juridiction. Il pouvait s'adresser à une commission de conciliation. Il ne l'a pas fait. Là encore, il a manqué à ses engagements.

Personne ne se persuadera que les circonstances aient exigé une hâte particulière; personne, ni même l'Allemagne; au surplus, l'existence d'une zone démilitarisée n'est pas un déshonneur; pendant soixante-sept ans, la France a connu la démilitarisation de la Savoie. Elle ne s'en est libérée que par des négociations.

Il est vrai que, dans le document remis hier à l'ambassadeur de France, le gouvernement allemand propose, ayant violé ses engagements, d'en contracter de nouveaux. Je n'examinerai pas ses propositions, pour deux raisons. D'abord parce que le double exemple qu'à un an de distance le gouvernement allemand nous donne de répudia-

tion unilatérale d'engagements solennels ne saurait nous mettre en confiance envers sa nouvelle proposition. La seconde raison est encore plus claire: au mépris du droit le plus certain, le gouvernement allemand a fait entrer dans la zone démilitarisée des forces importantes, et cela sans avoir au préalable manifesté son intention de s'affranchir de ses obligations, sans même avoir cherché à entrer en négociations à ce sujet. Nous sommes mis en présence du fait accompli sous sa forme la plus brutale. Il n'y a plus de paix en Europe, il n'y a plus de relations internationales si cette méthode se généralise. En nous y opposant, nous servons les intérêts de la communauté européenne. Le gouvernement français, pour sa part, est bien résolu à ne pas négocier sous la menace. Le seul fait qu'au mépris d'engagements solennels des soldats allemands sont maintenant installés sur les bords du Rhin interdit pour le moment la négociation.

Ayant mûrement examiné la situation, au nom du gouvernement français, je déclare que nous entendons voir maintenue cette garantie essentielle de la sécurité française et de la sécurité belge que constitue, contresigné par les gouvernements anglais et italien, le traité de Locarno. Nous ne sommes pas disposés à laisser placer Strasbourg sous le feu de canons allemands.

Le traité de Locarno a stipulé qu'en cas de violation de ses clauses, le conseil de la Société des nations doit être saisi. Nous saisissons donc le conseil. Il est, d'autre part, indispensable que des échanges de vues aient lieu entre les signataires du traité mis brusquement en présence de la dénonciation allemande. Il va être procédé sans délai à ces échanges de vues.

Notre cause est juste et forte. En la défendant, nous avons conscience de défendre, avec notre destin, un élément essentiel de la paix européenne. Le peuple français s'en rend compte; oubliant toutes vaines querelles, il est, nous le savons, et il restera unanime pour appuyer l'action du gouvernement.

Au vrai, et c'est bien là ce qui fait plus amplement justice du fallacieux prétexte invoqué, le gouvernement allemand a cru avoir bien choisi son heure pour son coup de force. Non pas l'heure du vote du pacte franco-soviétique qui, soumis encore à l'examen du Sénat, ne peut pas encore fournir au Führer le fait de ratification<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The adoption by the Senate took place on March 12, and the exchange of the instruments of ratification on March 27.

dont il se réclame, mais l'heure de la période électorale qui est, en France, virtuellement ouverte. Le gouvernement allemand a escompté le climat ou, pour mieux dire, l'effet des discordes, des troubles, des discussions intérieures que le conflit des partis politiques dans la compétition législative pouvait provoquer au sein de la nation. Le désarroi national issu de nos luttes intestines, voilà la véritable explication de la décision brusquée du gouvernement allemand. Il oublie, une fois de plus, qu'à toute heure grave de notre histoire de tels désarrois se sont effacés dans l'union immédiate des énergies françaises, des volontés de tous les partis pour la défense de l'indépendance nationale et de sa sécurité. Aucun Français ne peut mériter l'injure qu'on fait outre-Rhin à certains de nos concitoyens en les supposant capables de trouver une apparence d'excuse à l'acte de force germanique. Le peuple français reste prêt, en toute conjoncture, à faire la preuve que l'on ne saurait compter sur ses divisions pour espérer son abdication et préparer son asservissement.

(From *Le Temps*, March 10, 1936.)

#### 46.

#### GERMAN REPLY OF MARCH 9, 1936

With the passion of negation, the French Premier declared in his broadcast speech that France would not examine the German proposals. He based this attitude upon the unilateral repudiation by Germany of obligations solemnly undertaken, and upon the reoccupation of the Rhineland by the German troops, without previous notice having been given. If M. Sarraut believes he can thus establish a German *fait accompli* of the most brutal kind, he is forgetting that the 7th March was only the conclusion of a development which had been a long series of French *faits accomplis*. By the disregard of these obligations of its own, which forbade France to perpetrate any act of aggression and hence any enhancement of the possibility of conflict, France has increased the possibilities of a conflict with Germany, arrogating to itself the power to judge who is the putative aggressor. The reproach that Germany has claimed for itself the right

to judge from its own side accordingly recoils on France, which has even incorporated this claim in a treaty by signing the Russian pact.

Now M. Sarraut complains that through the disappearance of the demilitarised zone, of which the security had been intolerably undermined by the action of France, the latter is unprotected, and in this connection he formulates the sentence: "We do not wish Strassburg to lie within the range of German guns!" M. Sarraut apparently considers it right and tolerable for a great nation that Freiburg, Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Saarbrücken, Trier, and many other German cities should lie within the range of French guns, which have the additional advantage of being built into an impregnable system of fortification, constructed with a view to all strategical advantages and, according to the testimony given not long since by a well-known Russian General, also excellently suited to offensive purposes.

It is especially regrettable that M. Sarraut is so possessed by his passion of negation that he dismisses the constructive proposals of Germany. In this respect he is not in accord with much opinion of weight, in other countries outside Germany, which has recognized the decisive value of the constructive German proposals. By so doing, he closes the door to the concrete possibilities of a complete Franco-German understanding according to which the range of guns and bombing-machines would no longer be a factor of importance in Franco-German relations.

If the French Premier arrives at the assumption that the moment of the German declaration was chosen with a view to the French elections, it can be proved that Germany has never seen any advantage to itself in the division of the French people, but has always considered a unified and indivisible France an obvious and necessary European phenomenon. On the contrary, the coming election struggle can only be put forward as an excuse if M. Sarraut wishes to regard the safeguarding of German territory with German soldiers as a capitulation and subjection of the French people. Where would the general applicability of this principle lead the peoples of Europe? It was against this spirit that the Führer and Chancellor strove with the whole passion of his personality in promoting the claim for a Franco-German understanding.

(From the German News Agency *D.N.B.*, March 9, 1936.)

47.

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
MARCH 9, 1936

SPEECH BY MR. EDEN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On 6th March I asked the German Ambassador to come and see me at the Foreign Office, and I made to him a proposal which His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin had made to the German Chancellor on 13th December last that the Powers signatory of the Treaty of Locarno should proceed with the negotiation of an air pact. The House will recall that such a pact was suggested during the course of the Anglo-French conversations held in London in February, 1935. On this occasion I reminded His Excellency of the hopes which Herr Hitler himself has expressed for the betterment of international relations in Western Europe, and I told him that it seemed to me the time had now come when a real effort must be made to translate these hopes into facts, and attempt to achieve a real improvement in the relations of the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

I pointed out to the Ambassador that the air pact touched what was in some respects a point of junction, and a sensitive point of junction, in the relations of the three great Western Powers, and His Majesty's Government considered that the conclusion of such a pact would constitute a stabilising element in our relations in the West. I did not feel that it was impossible to negotiate such a pact even while the situation was complicated by the Italo-Abyssinian war, and I asked the Ambassador to communicate with his Government at once in this sense. I added that His Majesty's Government were genuinely anxious to convert into practical resolutions the sentiments so often expressed in speeches.

The German Ambassador came to see me on the morning of 7th March and informed me that he had a communication of very great importance to make. He then handed to me a Memorandum of which he read a translation and the English text of this Memorandum is now available in the Vote Office. I do not therefore propose to give the House a full account of this Memorandum, but I should like to draw attention to certain salient points in it. The Memorandum falls into two parts. In the first part the German Government have developed at considerable length their objections to the Franco-

Soviet Pact and the reasons why, in their view, the intention of the French Government to conclude this pact has created an entirely new situation and destroyed the political system of the Locarno Treaty. The German Government hold that for these reasons the Locarno Treaty has ceased in practice to exist, and that Germany consequently regards herself for her part as no longer bound by this no longer valid Treaty. The Memorandum then announces that the German Government has restored the full and unrestricted sovereignty of Germany in the demilitarised zone of the Rhineland.

The second part of the Memorandum contains a series of proposals which are described as being designed to promote the establishment of a system of peaceful security for Europe. These proposals are, first, that a demilitarised zone should be created on both sides of the Franco-German and Belgian-German frontiers; secondly, that non-aggression pacts for 25 years should be concluded between Germany, France and Belgium, and that Great Britain and Italy should guarantee these pacts; thirdly, that the Netherlands might be invited to join this Treaty system; fourthly, that these security arrangements should be supplemented by an air pact; fifthly, that non-aggression pacts should be concluded between Germany and the States bordering Germany on the East similar to the agreement between Germany and Poland, the exception previously made in regard to Lithuania being conditionally withdrawn. Finally, it is stated that Germany is willing to re-enter the League of Nations now that equality of rights and the restoration of her full sovereignty over the entire German territory has been attained. In this latter connection the German Government express the expectation in the course of a reasonable period the question of colonial equality of rights and of the separation of the League Covenant from the Treaty of Versailles may be settled through friendly negotiation.

On receiving this communication from the German Ambassador I told His Excellency that he could not expect me to make any detailed observations on a document of this importance until I had had an opportunity to study it and to consult my colleagues on the situation which it created. At the same time I told His Excellency that there was one observation which I must make at once. I deeply regretted the information which the Ambassador had given me about the action which the German Government was taking in respect of

the demilitarised zone. The Ambassador would appreciate that this amounted to the unilateral repudiation of a treaty freely negotiated and freely signed.

I had a clear recollection of the statement that the Chancellor had made to me at our first meeting in Berlin on the subject of the Treaty of Locarno, when he had drawn a clear distinction between that Treaty and the Treaty of Versailles and emphasised that Germany had freely signed the Treaty of Locarno. I was aware—I said to the Ambassador—of the view of the German Government as to the effect of the Franco-Soviet Pact on the Locarno Treaty. That view was not, however, shared by the other signatories of the Treaty, and if the German Government, despite the opinions of the other signatories, still maintained their own conclusion, then there was the proper arbitration procedure available for their use. I feared that the effect of the unilateral repudiation of this Treaty upon His Majesty's Government and upon British public opinion must inevitably be deplorable.

As to the later parts of the Ambassador's communication, I said that His Majesty's Government would have carefully to consider these, but clearly the declaration in respect of Germany's attitude towards the League was most important. The Ambassador at this point informed me that the German Government's decision in regard to the League was to a large extent due to their desire to meet the views frequently expressed by the Prime Minister and myself when we emphasised that the policy of His Majesty's Government was based upon the League and upon collective security. Germany, he said, was willing to share in such a policy and there were no conditions attached to her return to the League; Germany was willing to re-enter the League of Nations. While the German Government expected that in due time the Covenant would be divorced from the Treaty of Versailles and the question of colonial equality of rights would be settled, these were not conditions but matter for negotiation subsequent to Germany's return to the League. I do not need to emphasise the importance of the communication from the German Government of which I have given the House an account. Similar memoranda have been communicated to the other signatories of the Locarno Treaty, namely, France, Italy and Belgium.

Before passing on to observations of a more general nature, it

may be well for me to inform the House of the steps which are to be taken in the immediate future. The French and Belgian Governments, with the full knowledge and agreement of His Majesty's Government, have asked that the Council of the League of Nations may be summoned as soon as possible to consider the situation. I must emphasise that the Council of the League is the proper body for this purpose. The Council will, it is understood, meet on Friday next, and no decision can, of course, be reached in advance of that meeting, but an exchange of views will take place in Paris to-morrow between the representatives of the four Locarno Powers, other than Germany, and these conversations will be resumed at Geneva on the following day. His Majesty's Government will be represented at these conversations by the Lord Privy Seal and myself. I have now given the House an account of recent events, together with some comment upon them. I have also given the House such details as are in my possession of the procedure to be followed in the immediate future.

But hon. Members will no doubt expect to receive some immediate indication of the ideas and intentions with which the representatives of His Majesty's Government must approach at Geneva a problem the development of which is as yet in some important respects obscure. It is clearly desirable to do this, for no one can fail to realise the stabilising force of a clear-sighted and united British opinion in the affairs of Europe at this juncture. Let us not delude ourselves. The course taken by the German Government in unilaterally repudiating obligations into which they have freely entered and in simultaneously acting as if they did not exist both complicates and aggravates the international situation. The abrogation of the Locarno Treaty and the occupation of the demilitarised zone have profoundly shaken confidence in any engagement into which the Government of Germany may in future enter. There can be no one in this House or this country who would wish to condone or excuse such a step. It strikes a severe blow at that principle of the sanctity of Treaties which underlies the whole structure of international relations.

There is, I am thankful to say, no reason to suppose that the present German action implies a threat of hostilities. The German Government speak in their Memorandum of their "unchangeable longing for a real pacification of Europe" and express their willingness to



conclude a non-aggression pact with France and Belgium. But in case there should be any misunderstanding about our position as a signatory of the Locarno Treaty, His Majesty's Government think it necessary to say that, should there take place during the period which will be necessary for the consideration of the new situation which has arisen any actual attack upon France or Belgium which would constitute a violation of Article 2 of Locarno, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, notwithstanding the German repudiation of the Treaty, would regard themselves as in honour bound to come in the manner provided in the Treaty to the assistance of the country attacked.

It must be obvious to all that in existing circumstances the transition from a bad past to a better future will be an arduous and hazardous enterprise. At the same time, we are not merely concerned with the past or the present; we are concerned also with the future. One of the main foundations of the peace of Western Europe has been cut away, and if peace is to be secured there is a manifest duty to rebuild. It is in that spirit that we must approach the new proposals of the German Chancellor. His Majesty's Government will examine them clear-sightedly and objectively, with a view to finding out to what extent they represent a means by which the shaken structure of peace can again be strengthened. In the present grave condition of international affairs His Majesty's Government feel that no opportunity must be missed which offers any hope of amelioration. In the anxious circumstances of the present time I feel justified in asking all sections of opinion in this House for their support in the exacting and arduous task which now confronts the combined wisdom and statesmanship of the world.

EXTRACT FROM SPEECH BY MR. BALDWIN, PRIME MINISTER

The House will have heard the statement read by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary with mingled feelings, but there is not a man in the House who will not wish him well. As I said earlier in my speech, I wish to make one more observations on a subject to which I drew attention, with reference to the failure of the Disarmament Conference. Again the observations that I make are made without any apportionment, openly or even in my mind, of blame to either party. There never can be permanent peace in Europe so long

as that secular suspicion goes on between France and Germany. The reason for that suspicion go far back into history. Among the peoples and the nations and the Kingdoms which are now incorporated, on the one hand in the West of Germany and, on the other, in the East of France, we have to remember that they represent a historical cleavage which goes back to the partition of Charlemagne's Empire. There is nothing in our history which enables us to understand, except in imagination, the roots of these feelings which have caused such havoc in Europe through the centuries. But with those suspicions, with the French desire for security and with the German desire for equality, our best hopes have been blighted time after time, sometimes by the French, in our view, missing an opportunity of accepting some offer or, on the other side, by Germany doing some act to liberate herself as in the breaking of a treaty which has shocked our conscience. Too often when she has acted in that way—I do not believe deliberately but she has acted in such a way as to touch the most delicate, the most raw susceptibilities of the French.

So it is at this moment. After all these years since the War it looks as though these old evil influences were asserting themselves, and there might be less hope to-day than there has been for long of bringing these countries together. And yet, neither of these old historic feelings touches our country. We have our own difficulties, we have our own problems. In Europe we have no more desire than to keep calm, to keep our heads and to continue to try to bring France and Germany together in a friendship with ourselves.

I repeat what I said five minutes ago. There can be no hope of permanent peace so long as present conditions exist. The only hope of it lies in the achievement of that tripartite friendship, and until that day comes there will be, in a greater or a less degree, times of trouble, times of crisis and times of panic in Europe. In those times, when our influence may be all-powerful—that is the last time when this country should choose to be weak.

(*Hansard*, March 9, 1936, cols. 1812-7, 1844-5.)

48.

COMMUNIQUÉS BY THE LOCARNO POWERS,  
PARIS, MARCH 10, 1936

I

Ce matin se sont réunis, à 10 h. 30, au ministère des affaires étrangères, les représentants des puissances signataires et garantes de Locarno.

La Grande-Bretagne était représentée par M. Eden, ministre des affaires étrangères, Lord Halifax, Lord du Sceau Privé, et Sir George Clerk, ambassadeur d'Angleterre; l'Italie, par M. Cerruti, ambassadeur à Paris; la Belgique, par M. van Zeeland, président du conseil, ministre des affaires étrangères, et le comte de Kerchove de Denterghem, ambassadeur à Paris; la France, par M. P.-E. Flandin, ministre des affaires étrangères, et M. Paul-Boncour, ministre d'Etat.

En ouvrant la séance, M. P.-E. Flandin a souhaité la bienvenue aux délégués des puissances signataires et garantes de Locarno, et il a tenu à préciser que la réunion avait pour but d'échanger des informations et de préciser la situation, mais qu'il ne serait proposé aucune résolution ni pris aucune décision avant la réunion du conseil de la Société des nations.

La procédure ayant été ainsi définie, les différents délégués ont exposé leur point de vue.

Cet échange de vues sera continué peut-être à Paris dès ce soir et, en tout cas, à Genève, où les délégués doivent se retrouver dès demain.

*(Le Temps, March 11, 1936.)*

II

Une nouvelle réunion des représentants des puissances signataires et garantes du traité de Locarno s'est tenue au ministère des affaires étrangères, à 19 h. 30.

D'un commun accord il a été décidé que les conversations se poursuivraient à Londres dès jeudi.

D'autre part, le gouvernement britannique a invité le président du conseil de la Société des nations, à tenir également à Londres sa prochaine réunion, qui suivrait immédiatement la réunion des puissances signataires du pacte de Locarno.

*(Le Temps, March 12, 1936.)*

49.

STATEMENT BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT,  
MARCH 10, 1936

*The statement was read by M. Sarrant in the Chamber and by M. Flandin in the Senate.*

Messieurs,

Un événement s'est produit dont vous avez déjà mesuré la gravité dans l'ordre international et les conséquences pour la sécurité de la France. Le gouvernement devait au pays de l'éclairer dès le premier jour. A ses représentants maintenant réunis il a le devoir d'exposer la situation sous tous ses aspects.

Il y a plus de dix ans, par un traité solennel dont la conclusion justifiait les plus ardents espoirs de paix, la France, la Belgique et l'Allemagne, avec la garantie de l'Angleterre et de l'Italie, s'interdisaient réciproquement de recourir à la guerre. L'Allemagne s'engageait en même temps à maintenir le régime de démilitarisation qui déjà, dans un intérêt de sécurité générale, avait été instauré dans la zone rhénane par le traité de paix.

Il y a trois jours, à la date du 7 mars, par une communication aux autres gouvernements signataires du pacte rhénan, le gouvernement du Reich répudiait ce traité auquel il était convenu que seule une décision du conseil de la Société des nations pouvait un jour mettre fin. En même temps, il annonçait son intention d'envoyer dans la zone interdite, «à titre symbolique», de petits détachements de l'armée nationale allemande. En fait, dès le lendemain, plus de trente bataillons d'infanterie ou groupes d'artillerie, d'après ses propres déclarations, étaient installés dans les différentes villes de la zone.

Dans le mémorandum remis aux gouvernements signataires, puis dans un discours du chancelier au Reichstag, le gouvernement du Reich a tenté de justifier un acte qu'aucune nation ne saurait admettre, aussi longtemps qu'il y aura un droit des gens, incompatible avec les doctrines de force qui tendent à placer le fait accompli au-dessus du respect des engagements librement consentis.

Le motif immédiat allégué est la conclusion récente par la France d'un traité qui serait incompatible avec le traité rhénan de Locarno.

Le gouvernement allemand avait émis des doutes au sujet de cette compatibilité. Le gouvernement français les a examinés avec un soin scrupuleux. Il croit y avoir, depuis longtemps, pleinement répondu, puisque aussi bien sa réponse a rencontré l'avis concordant des gouvernements qui, pour l'Allemagne comme pour la France, sont les garants du pacte rhénan, dans son esprit comme dans sa lettre. Il a tenu en même temps à affirmer toute la valeur, toute l'autorité qu'il attachait à cet acte.

En vain le gouvernement allemand soutiendrait-il aujourd'hui que le traité franco-soviétique fût dirigé exclusivement contre l'Allemagne. Son texte même établit qu'il a pour seul objet l'assistance contre un Etat agresseur, et l'Allemagne n'y est pas visée en elle-même, puisque les deux contractants renouvellent l'engagement de poursuivre la conclusion d'un traité plus large, où leur assistance serait assurée à l'Allemagne si cette dernière venait à être attaquée. Tout aussi inexacte est l'affirmation que la France assumerait à l'égard de la Russie des engagements allant au delà de l'assistance que, comme membre de la Société des nations, elle est en droit de prêter à un autre membre de la Société. Inexacte enfin l'affirmation que la France s'attribuerait le droit de décider de sa seule appréciation quel est l'agresseur. Il suffit, en effet, que le conseil de la Société des nations reconnaisse l'agresseur, pour que cette appréciation s'impose à la France, de même que la recommandation du conseil constitue la limite de son engagement. Aucun engagement, enfin, ne peut l'amener à agir comme si le pacte de la Société des nations ni le pacte rhénan n'étaient en vigueur, puisqu'elle ne saurait agir à l'encontre d'une décision du conseil, ni à l'encontre de l'appréciation des garants du traité de Locarno.

Dix mois bientôt se seront écoulés au cours desquels le gouvernement français a fourni au gouvernement allemand toute occasion de dissiper ses doutes, au cours desquels le gouvernement allemand pouvait recourir à une instance impartiale, suggérée encore récemment par le gouvernement français. Le gouvernement du Reich a préféré se faire seul juge de la cause, pour dénoncer librement le pacte rhénan et nous placer devant le fait accompli.

Répudiant ses engagements librement consentis, le gouvernement du Reich voudrait pouvoir exciper d'une inobservation par la France du pacte rhénan il allègue que le gouvernement français se serait

fait, de cet acte, une conception contraire à son véritable esprit. Si une exception a été faite — prétend-il — à l'interdiction réciproque de toute action militaire, ce serait uniquement pour un motif politique et au seul bénéfice d'alliances déjà conclues entre la France et la Pologne, entre la France et la Tchécoslovaquie. Il doit être fait justice d'une telle allégation, contraire non seulement aux faits, mais aux principes de justice et de droit auxquels la France est et demeure attachée.

La seule exception faite par le pacte rhénan à l'interdiction de la guerre l'a été, non pas en raison de certains traités — qui, au surplus, conformes au pacte de la Société des nations ne sont pas des «alliances» — non pas pour des intérêts politiques particuliers, mais pour des motifs supérieurs de morale internationale, parce qu'il y a une morale entre nations, parce qu'il y a une Société des nations fondée sur le principe que l'assistance est due à la victime d'une agression, parce qu'il y a un pacte qui contient des dispositions à cet égard, et qu'aucun autre traité ne peut s'opposer à l'observation de ces dispositions imprescriptibles. Ce n'est que sous réserve de ce principe de justice internationale que des traités particuliers peuvent être conclus, comme c'est en vertu de ce seul principe que des traités d'assistance ont pu être librement consentis.

Messieurs, s'il y avait opposition entre l'esprit des traités d'assistance conclus par la France et l'esprit du traité de Locarno, c'est qu'il y aurait opposition entre le pacte de la Société des nations et le traité signé à Locarno.

Par le traité de Locarno du 16 octobre 1925, la France et la Belgique d'une part, l'Allemagne d'autre part, se sont réciproquement reconnu l'inviolabilité de leurs frontières communes. L'Allemagne y a explicitement et librement confirmé son adhésion sans réserve aux dispositions du traité de paix instituant la zone rhénane démilitarisée. L'inviolabilité de ces frontières était en outre garantie tant en faveur du Reich qu'en faveur de la France et de la Belgique, par la Grande-Bretagne et l'Italie.

Il était en même temps prévu que toute méconnaissance des engagements pris en vertu du traité de Locarno (et, parmi ces engagements, ceux concernant la zone rhénane démilitarisée étaient expressément spécifiés) serait soumise aussitôt au conseil de la Société des nations, et que, dès que celui-ci aurait constaté une telle violation,

avis en serait donné aux puissances signataires appelées à prêter leur assistance immédiate.

A ce traité de garantie étaient jointes des conventions d'arbitrage, notamment entre la France, la Belgique et l'Allemagne, dans le même souci d'assurer le règlement pacifique de toute question susceptible de troubler la paix.

Pour apprécier l'acte de Locarno, il importe de se souvenir de ce qu'a été l'action de la diplomatie française depuis les traités de paix.

Après la guerre qui a laissé une profonde impression d'horreur au peuple français, celui-ci, qui n'a jamais cessé de pouvoir librement s'exprimer dans le cadre toujours maintenu de libres institutions démocratiques, a ratifié sans réserve l'effort d'organisation de la paix générale contenu dans le pacte de la Société des nations.

Ce pacte se proposait d'établir, à la base des relations internationales, le respect des traités, de tous les traités, sans distinction entre la puissance et la faiblesse des Etats signataires. C'était le régime du droit substitué à celui de la force.

Il ne comporte, d'ailleurs, aucune consolidation obligatoire et statique des Etats, dans l'évolution historique de la civilisation humaine. Mais il prohibe formellement toute revision unilatérale sous l'empire de la force.

Toute proposition intéressant un meilleur aménagement des relations politiques ou économiques des nations entre elles est incontestablement recevable dans le cadre de la Société des nations, où elle doit être discutée et librement réglée, selon les lois d'une communauté qui n'a exclu entre ses membres que les abus de la force et la guerre.

Il n'a pas dépendu de nous que certains Etats n'aient pas adhéré à la Société des nations ou, ce qui est pire, qu'après y avoir adhéré, ils s'en soient retirés.

Mais nous sommes toujours restés fidèles, quelles qu'aient pu être certaines de nos déceptions, au pacte de Genève.

Récemment même et dans des circonstances qui troublaient nos sentiments d'amitié à l'égard d'une grande puissance voisine, nous avons accompli, non sans réaction douloureuse pour nous, notre devoir de sociétaire fidèle.

Récemment aussi, lorsqu'un traité, le pacte franco-soviétique, conclu par nous, a été critiqué dans son esprit et dans sa lettre par l'Allemagne, nous n'avons pas hésité à accepter par avance l'arbitrage

de la Cour permanente de justice internationale, montrant par là notre respect et notre confiance dans le droit et la justice, suprême sauvegarde de paix pour les peuples, comme pour les individus.

Là ne s'est pas bornée notre contribution au maintien et à l'organisation de bonnes relations avec l'Allemagne. Est-il nécessaire de rappeler les conditions dans lesquelles a été réglée la question si délicate et si grave du territoire de la Sarre?

Ce règlement s'est effectué sans incidents, sans désordre, sans que le monde entier qui l'attendait avec anxiété ait vu apparaître de menaces pour la paix. Le gouvernement français, fidèle à ses traditions, porta le problème devant le tribunal des nations; il proposa lui-même l'envoi d'une police internationale en Sarre, il s'offrit à examiner avec le gouvernement allemand, et sous l'égide de gouvernements étrangers, toutes les possibilités que pouvait offrir l'avenir et, dans le calme de réunions diplomatiques, loin de toute pression, ce grave problème fut réglé sans heurt, comme sans amertume. C'est un exemple parfait et, pour nous, précieux d'un règlement dans le cadre de la légalité internationale. Nous espérons ainsi que tous nos différends, tous nos désaccords avec l'Allemagne pourraient être réglés sur la même base.

Le chancelier lui-même, dans un discours prononcé le 15 janvier 1935, avait affirmé son désir de collaborer à l'établissement d'une solidarité européenne. Il avait déclaré que sa volonté d'obtenir la reconnaissance de l'égalité des droits ne le rendait pas sourd aux appels de cette solidarité. On en pouvait déduire qu'il n'opposerait pas une résistance absolue à la proposition d'entrer dans l'examen et la négociation des pactes élaborés. Mais, peu après, il s'élevait contre le système des pactes. En condamnant ces accords, dont il estimait difficile de mesurer les conséquences lointaines, il a paru faire aussi peu de cas du pacte danubien que du pacte oriental; il l'a laissé entendre au cours de diverses interviews, disant qu'il hésiterait longtemps avant de les signer, — puis, qu'il ne les signerait jamais.

Messieurs, vous vous rappelez la suite historique de ces événements, encore si proches. Deux mois après le règlement pacifique de la question sarroise, qui, d'après le chancelier lui-même, était le dernier différend important susceptible d'opposer la France à l'Allemagne, le Reich dénonçait unilatéralement les clauses du traité de Versailles qui limitaient ses armements.



A la suite de cette dénonciation, la conférence de Stresa se réunissait et le conseil de la Société des nations condamnait toute répudiation unilatérale d'un traité.

Spontanément, à Stresa, la Grande-Bretagne et l'Italie avaient tenu à réaffirmer le traité de Locarno.

Cependant, et passant outre à la réserve que la décision de l'Allemagne aurait pu lui inspirer, le gouvernement français n'a négligé aucune occasion de poursuivre une œuvre de rapprochement avec le gouvernement allemand.

Je tiens ici à affirmer que notre gouvernement, et la correspondance de M. François-Poncet en fait foi, n'a négligé aucune occasion de provoquer des explications précises et de faire passer la discussion franco-allemande du plan général où étaient limitées les déclarations publiques des dirigeants allemands au plan concret des réalisations.

Une fois de plus, la réponse nous est venue du haut de la tribune du Reichstag, substituant à la négociation le fait unilatéral accompli.

Alors que le gouvernement britannique et le gouvernement français, avec l'adhésion du gouvernement italien, avaient saisi le gouvernement allemand, dès le 3 février 1935, d'un programme de règlement général, à conclure par libres négociations, en vue d'organiser la sécurité en Europe par une limitation générale des armements dans un régime d'égalité de droits, et par la collaboration active de l'Allemagne à la Société des nations;

Alors que ces négociations restaient ouvertes, ainsi qu'en témoignent les entretiens qu'eurent en novembre les ambassadeurs d'Angleterre et de France à Berlin avec le chancelier Hitler;

Alors que, sur une simple interview accordée à un journaliste français, notre gouvernement envoyait immédiatement notre ambassadeur demander à nouveau au chancelier Hitler de préciser une base de conversation, il nous a été répondu par la répudiation d'un traité qui avait été maintes fois proclamé la base librement négociée et consentie des rapports franco-allemands; il nous a été répondu par la réoccupation soudaine et brutale de la zone démilitarisée, alors que le chancelier Hitler avait déclaré, dans un discours du 21 mai 1935, postérieur donc à la signature de l'accord franco-soviétique, que le gouvernement allemand voyait dans le respect de cette zone démilitarisée une contribution à l'apaisement de l'Europe.

Si l'on nous impute des torts, et toutes les fois que l'on nous impu-

terait des torts, la France sera toujours prête à se soumettre à l'arbitrage de la loi internationale.

Mais c'en serait fait du droit des peuples, et par là même de la paix commune, si chacun prétendait se faire justice soi-même, déterminer ses droits en fonction de ses ambitions, et, pour tout dire, substituer la violence du fait accompli à la loi internationale des parties.

Aussi, Messieurs, la France ne se place pas, dans le conflit actuel, sur la position d'un égoïsme blessé ou de garanties perdues de sa propre sécurité.

Non. Elle pose le problème de la valeur réelle des traités, de la garantie générale du pacte de la Société des nations pour ses adhérents, de la fidélité des sociétaires à leurs engagements; elle pose le problème angoissant de la force du droit devant les droits que s'arroge la force.

Sans doute, la violation de la zone démilitarisée atteint notre sécurité propre; mais, à notre avis, elle met en cause beaucoup plus gravement l'avenir de la paix européenne, les destinées de l'organisation de la sécurité collective, et ceux de la Société des nations.

Personne en Europe, sans doute, ne s'y trompe. Mais, en le rappelant, nous éclairons la position que nous avons prise.

Nous sommes placés dans le cadre de la Société des nations, parce que c'est son sort qui va se jouer dans un futur proche.

Nous avons sollicité les signataires et garants du traité de Locarno parce que c'est la valeur même des traités dans les rapports internationaux qui se joue.

Qui donc conserverait, en effet, la moindre foi dans les effets d'un traité, s'il suffisait pour les détruire de la volonté du plus fort?

Alors, il faudrait en revenir résolument aux alliances militaires, au surarmement, et, reconnaissons-le, à la guerre, déclenchée par le ou les plus forts au moment le plus favorable.

Si certains s'y résignent, qu'ils le disent clairement et nous en tirerons les conclusions utiles. Pour nous, nous mettrons toutes nos forces matérielles et morales à la disposition de la Société des nations afin d'éviter ce malheur irréparable pour la civilisation européenne, sous la seule condition que nous soyons accompagnés dans ce combat pour la paix par ceux qui s'y sont formellement engagés par le pacte rhénan et avec le ferme espoir que tous les signataires du

pacte de la Société des nations, selon leurs moyens, et conformément à leurs obligations, lutteront à nos côtés pour un idéal dont ils se sont déclarés solidaires.

Le chancelier Hitler, en prétendant parler au peuple français, par dessus la tête de son gouvernement, comme si un gouvernement français issu de la représentation populaire et qui gouverne sans contrainte pouvait ne pas incarner la souveraineté populaire, nous a, par là même ouvert la voie pour nous adresser, à notre tour au peuple allemand.

Nous lui demandons, au nom de sa culture et des vertus de sa race, de réfléchir aux responsabilités nouvelles que certains veulent lui faire assumer devant l'Histoire.

Nous lui déclarons solennellement que nous n'avons jamais voulu et que nous ne voudrions jamais attenter à sa liberté ni à son honneur. Nous n'avons pas davantage pensé, ni ne voulons penser qu'il puisse être traité d'une façon plus défavorable que les autres peuples. Nous sommes d'accord, avec le gouvernement allemand, pour proclamer que le peuple français n'a aucun avantage à tirer de la misère du peuple allemand. Nous acceptons parfaitement de collaborer à la recherche des moyens d'assurer l'existence, sur un sol pauvre, comme l'a dit le chancelier Hitler, de 66 millions d'habitants.

Nous lui demandons en quoi la réoccupation de la zone démilitarisée pourra aider à la solution de ces problèmes.

Nous lui demandons comment la confiance qui est à la base de toute collaboration peut être maintenue, ou surtout même développée comme cela serait souhaitable, s'il est admis que non seulement un traité solennel comme celui de Locarno, puisse être dénoncé par la seule volonté d'une des parties, mais que, sans attendre aucun accord nouveau, des actes militaires soient commis que l'on s'était formellement engagé à éviter.

Le peuple allemand aurait-il confiance dans le gouvernement français pour discuter et signer de nouveaux traités si celui-ci venait de déchirer lui-même les traités anciens?

Comment voudrait-il que le peuple français ait donc confiance pour entamer les nouvelles négociations auxquelles le convie le gouvernement allemand?

Négocié maintenant, dans la situation présente? Sur quoi faire fond, Messieurs, je vous le demande? Sur quoi construire? Avec les

ruines écroulées et sur quel fondement? Les fondations mêmes de l'édifice seraient à reprendre.

Le gouvernement français ne repousse pas les négociations qui pourraient consolider la paix future et améliorer les relations franco-allemandes dans le cadre d'une Europe tranquille et pacifique; mais la France ne peut pas négocier sous l'empire de la violence et du reniement des signatures librement échangées.

Il a saisi le conseil de la Société des nations dans les termes que vous connaissez. Il a consulté les puissances signataires et garantes du traité de Locarno.

Il est résolu, en ce qui le concerne, je le répète, à joindre dans le cadre de la Société des nations toutes ses forces à celles des autres sociétés pour répondre à un véritable attentat à la confiance internationale, à la foi des traités, à la sécurité collective, à l'organisation de la paix.

Il reste prêt à négocier avec l'Allemagne une fois que le respect de la loi internationale aura été de nouveau assuré.

Il veut garder sa foi dans la valeur réelle des engagements internationaux, du traité de Locarno comme du pacte de la Société des nations.

Il luttera pour défendre l'ordre nouveau dans les relations internationales qu'avait apporté l'organisation collective de la sécurité et de la paix dans le cadre de la Société des nations.

Pour lui permettre de mener à bien cette tâche, le gouvernement s'adresse à la représentation nationale qui exprime la souveraineté populaire.

Il compte sur son dévouement aux intérêts sacrés de la nation, sur son amour de la patrie, d'une patrie qui n'exclut aucun parti, aucune religion, aucune race, pour lui apporter, aujourd'hui et demain, au-dessus des polémiques partisans, un concours aussi ferme qu'est résolue sa propre volonté.

L'avenir de la paix européenne va se jouer. La France, fidèle à ses traditions et à son idéal, doit rester unanime dans son action pour la sauvegarde de cette paix.

(From *Le Temps*, March 11, 1936.)

50.

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS IN THE BELGIAN  
PARLIAMENT

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT, MARCH 10, 1936

*The statement was read by M. Vandervelde in the Chamber and by  
M. Hymans in the Senate*

La Chambre et le Sénat ont connaissance des graves événements politiques qui viennent de s'accomplir. Le chargé d'affaires d'Allemagne à Bruxelles a rendu visite samedi matin au premier ministre et lui a déclaré que le gouvernement du Reich ne se considère plus comme lié par le traité de Locarno et que les troupes allemandes pénétraient dans la zone démilitarisée. Il a remis un mémorandum où sont formulées des propositions tendant à la conclusion de nouveaux accords. Le texte de ce document a été publié. Le premier ministre a déclaré qu'il devait réserver entièrement l'attitude que prendrait la Belgique.

Aucune raison ne saurait justifier la répudiation d'un traité que le Reich a librement signé. Le gouvernement a chargé nos ambassadeurs à Londres, Paris et Rome de prendre contact avec les gouvernements britannique, français et italien en vue de procéder à un examen de la situation. Vous connaissez l'article 4, paragraphe 1<sup>er</sup> du traité de Locarno. En application de cette disposition, et en plein accord avec les cabinets de Paris et de Londres, le gouvernement a adressé dimanche soir un télégramme au secrétaire de la Société des nations afin que soit convoqué le conseil dans le plus bref délai. Ce télégramme a été publié.

Le ministre des affaires étrangères d'Angleterre a déclaré lundi à la Chambre des communes que «si pendant l'examen de la situation nouvelle une attaque devait se produire en violation de l'art. 11 du pacte de Locarno, contre la France ou la Belgique, le gouvernement britannique, malgré la répudiation du traité par l'Allemagne, se considérerait, en honneur, obligé de prêter assistance à l'Etat attaqué, conformément aux dispositions du traité». La Belgique prend acte de cette déclaration et elle sait qu'elle peut toujours avoir foi dans la loyauté de l'Angleterre. Le premier ministre assiste aujourd'hui à Paris à la conférence des puissances signataires du traité de Locarno. Il se rendra ensuite à Genève pour participer à la

suite des délibérations. Dès son retour il exposera la situation au Parlement.

Le respect des traités est la base même de l'ordre international. Il est en même temps une garantie de la sécurité des petits Etats. C'est un principe supérieur auquel la Belgique a toujours été fidèle. Les événements actuels commandent le calme et la fermeté. Le gouvernement a conscience de ses responsabilités. Il sait qu'il peut compter sur l'appui unanime du pays.

(*Le Temps*, March 11, 1936.)

SPEECH BY M. VAN ZEELAND, BELGIAN PREMIER, IN THE  
CHAMBER, MARCH 11, 1936

Notre pays se trouve une fois de plus placé devant de lourdes responsabilités. La violation du traité de Locarno et la réoccupation militaire de la Rhénanie sont des coups rudes pour tous les peuples pacifiques, plus particulièrement pour les voisins de l'Allemagne, pour la Belgique. L'existence d'une zone démilitarisée le long de cette frontière constituait un glacis derrière lequel nous nous sentions moins exposés.

Nos forces matérielles, quelle que soit notre volonté de les tendre à l'extrême pour la défense de notre droit, restent faibles par comparaison avec celles des grands pays entre lesquels la destinée nous a placés. Le traité de Locarno était la base même, l'élément essentiel de notre statut international.

L'acte de l'Allemagne nous atteint plus gravement et plus durement que quiconque.

Et pourtant, une fois de plus nous pouvons garder la tête haute, et affirmer, à la face du monde, que rien, dans notre attitude, dans nos actes, dans nos paroles, n'a pu offrir à aucun des co-signataires de Locarno, je ne dis pas un motif, mais même l'ombre d'un prétexte, pour nous adresser un reproche.

Tout d'abord le prétexte invoqué dans le mémorandum du Gouvernement allemand et basé sur la conclusion du pacte franco-soviétique, ne nous concerne ni de près ni de loin. Il ne nous intéresse en rien, il ne peut entraîner pour nous aucune conséquence, il ne peut exercer aucune influence sur nos propres engagements. Nous avons eu soin de le proclamer publiquement de manière à prévenir toute

confusion. Dans mon discours du 29 mai, au Sénat, je l'ai proclamé formellement.

Ainsi donc, vis-à-vis de nous, qui sommes les premiers et les principaux intéressés, la violation des engagements les plus précis reste sans l'ombre d'une excuse. Si on avait cherché cette excuse, on ne l'aurait pas trouvée.

Au surplus, notre politique étrangère est restée depuis la guerre dominée par quelques principes simples et nets, tels que: indépendance, réalisme, fidélité à nos engagements et à nos amitiés, équilibre dans toutes les directions.

Ce gouvernement, du reste, plus que jamais, a pris soin d'éviter que notre attitude internationale ne donne l'impression «d'une tour penchée».

Sans sacrifier aucune de nos amitiés antérieures, précieuses, indispensables, forgées au cours d'épreuves dont les événements d'aujourd'hui ravivent singulièrement le souvenir, nous avons eu le souci d'en étendre le cercle, et même de n'en exclure aucun pays de droite volonté. Une fois de plus, dans la crise actuelle, notre position internationale est absolument nette et loyale; nous avons le bon droit pour nous à 100 p. c.

Mais je puis donner aujourd'hui une preuve nouvelle qui montre l'esprit dans lequel se trouvaient et entendaient demeurer deux des puissances signataires de Locarno, à savoir la Belgique et la France.

Il s'agit des confusions créées autour de l'accord franco-belge de 1920.

Dans le fond même, il n'y avait bien entendu aucune difficulté, mais dans certains esprits, la persistance avec laquelle on maintenait le secret qui entourait le texte de cet accord éveillait des suspensions. Lorsque je pris connaissance de ce fameux texte, je ne vous cacherai pas que je fus surpris. La plupart de ses dispositions se réfèrent à la période d'occupation de la Rhénanie, donc complètement périmées. De tout l'accord, il ne restait qu'un seul point, à vrai dire important, celui du contact entre Etats-Majors.

La solution à apporter à la difficulté paraissait simple.

Avant que d'entrer officiellement en contact avec nos amis français, pour régler la question, nous savions que nous trouverions auprès d'eux plus que de la compréhension, un désir spontané, de tenir compte du caractère international qui pouvait se rattacher à la

convention. C'est dans une atmosphère de parfaite cordialité que nous décidâmes d'échanger des lettres remplaçant celles qui furent échangées en 1920, et dont voici la teneur :

Voici la lettre que nous écrivit M. l'Ambassadeur de France :

“Par les lettres échangées les 10 et 15 septembre 1920 entre le Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de France, et le Premier Ministre de Belgique, le Gouvernement de la République et le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Roi des Belges ont donné leur approbation à l'accord militaire signé le 7 septembre 1920.

“L'accord de 1920 avait pour objet, aux termes des lettres échangées en 1920 par les deux Gouvernements et enregistrées à Genève, de renforcer les garanties de paix et de sûreté résultant du pacte de la S.D.N. Il assurait les conditions techniques d'une coopération militaire entre la France et la Belgique dans le cas d'une agression non provoquée de l'Allemagne. En 1925 est intervenu à Locarno un traité réalisant d'une manière plus complète et plus précise les garanties prévues en 1920, traité conclu par M. le Président de la République et approuvé par les Chambres. Ce traité constitue l'un des éléments essentiels du statut international de la Belgique : les engagements qu'il définit sont, avec ceux du Pacte de la S. D. N., les seuls qui, en matière de garantie et d'assistance, lient la France et la Belgique. Il va sans dire que les deux Gouvernements sont plus résolus que jamais à y demeurer fidèles.

“Au point de vue militaire, l'accord de 1920 ne contient en même temps que des dispositions générales comportant un contact entre Etats-Majors, des dispositions particulières visant l'occupation commune de la rive gauche du Rhin.

“Les deux Gouvernements, constatant tout ce qu'il y a de périmé dans cet arrangement ont reconnu l'intérêt de n'en retenir que le seul élément aujourd'hui valable, à savoir l'accord existant entre eux et qu'ils tiennent aujourd'hui à confirmer, quant au maintien d'un contact entre Etats-Majors ayant pour objet l'exécution des engagements définis par le Traité Rhénan de Locarno ainsi que l'étude des conditions techniques d'une application éventuelle des dits engagements.

„Il demeure entendu que semblable contact ne peut engendrer aucun engagement d'ordre politique ni aucune obligation quant à l'organisation de la défense nationale pour l'une ou l'autre des parties intéressées.”



J'ai confirmé, dans les mêmes termes, l'accord du Gouvernement belge.

Il me semble que le texte même de la lettre est tellement clair qu'il y aurait danger de l'affaiblir en l'entourant de commentaires.

En conséquence, les études d'Etats-Majors ne peuvent servir que dans l'éventualité où les deux gouvernements prennent, dans la plénitude de leur indépendance politique, c'est-à-dire dans le cadre limité et dans le cadre précis du Pacte rhénan, la décision d'adopter telle ou telle attitude.

Et enfin, je répète encore que chacun des deux gouvernements garde toute sa liberté d'organiser comme il l'entend sa défense nationale, qu'il s'agisse des effectifs, des armements ou des fortifications.

Cela sera enregistré à Genève si on le désire.

Le hasard — un hasard saisissant — a voulu que cet accord des volontés, réalisé depuis quelque temps déjà, trouvât son expression formelle dans des lettres qui furent échangées le 6 mars, c'est-à-dire la veille du jour où le Reich viola le traité de Locarno.

Permettez-moi de vous rappeler ici le passage de notre lettre où nous nous référions une fois de plus à ce que Locarno représentait, aux yeux des Français et des Belges :

«... Ce traité constitue l'un des éléments essentiels du statut international de la Belgique: les engagements qu'il définit sont, avec ceux du Pacte de la Société des Nations, les seuls qui, en matière de garantie et d'assistance, lient la Belgique et la France. Il va sans dire que les deux Gouvernements sont plus résolus que jamais à y demeurer fidèles.»

Pourrait-on trouver preuve plus éclatante et plus manifeste de la correction de notre attitude, de notre entière bonne foi, du souci que nous apportons, les uns et les autres, à appliquer dans la lettre et dans l'esprit, ce que nous considérons — et que nous considérons encore — comme le devoir qui prime tous les autres: le respect des engagements pris.

La Chambre attend du Gouvernement, qu'il lui décrive les principes sur lesquels il compte, au cours de cette période difficile, baser son attitude.

Je vais essayer de le faire. Cependant, vous comprendrez que, au milieu d'une négociation dont l'issue est capitale, je dois m'imposer une certaine réserve.

Avant tout, nous devons répéter ce que nous avons inscrit dans notre déclaration d'hier: «Aucune raison ne saurait justifier la répudiation d'un traité librement signé.»

Il ne s'agit pas ici d'un document au bas duquel un Etat a été contraint, par la violence morale résultant de la défaite, à apposer sa signature; il ne s'agit pas ici d'un «Diktat». Les traités de Locarno ont été librement négociés.

Ce traité a du reste à diverses reprises été spontanément confirmé par les Allemands; et je me souviens — il y a à peine un an — d'avoir encore fait état devant vous des paroles prononcées le 21 mai par le Chancelier Hitler lui-même.

Il serait impossible d'imaginer — et je crois bien qu'à l'avenir on ne pourra pas trouver — une formule de traité qui, dans le plan juridique, concentre en lui-même plus d'éléments d'inviolabilité.

Comment ne pas être attristé à la preuve de tout ce que ruine, pour des générations, le geste de l'Allemagne? Car il faudra rebâtir et la valeur des prochains actes juridiques restera, dans l'esprit des peuples, grevée d'une lourde hypothèque morale. Leur force en sera diminuée par ce qu'a fait le Reich.

Mais enfin quoi qu'il en soit, nous devons faire face à cette situation.

La remilitarisation de la zone rhénane, même faite contractuellement, reste pour nous en toute hypothèse, un élément grave, un changement important dans l'ensemble des éléments qui forment notre sécurité.

Nous croyons, d'autre part, que dans l'ordre, dans la légalité, les systèmes juridiques internationaux doivent être appliqués avec assez de souplesse pour permettre, en temps voulu, les adaptations nécessaires à des circonstances nouvelles ou à l'évolution des événements; mais cela doit se faire dans l'ordre et la justice, par de libres négociations.

Dans les suggestions faites par le Chancelier Hitler, il y a des idées qui ont un caractère constructif, qui présentent pour nous un intérêt. Toutefois, ces suggestions resteraient évidemment incomplètes, même si on réalisait effectivement toutes les possibilités qu'elles contiennent. D'autres devraient s'y ajouter, faciles à concevoir, si l'on veut retrouver des compensations suffisantes, équitables, pour la diminution de sécurité qu'entraînerait la présence permanente de soldats allemands dans la zone jusqu'ici démilitarisée.

Le problème, qui eût été, non pas facile à résoudre mais susceptible d'un règlement s'il était présenté dans le plan d'une libre négociation, se trouve singulièrement compliqué du fait qu'il est posé par un coup de force.

La solution que l'on recherche au problème, ne peut être en aucune manière une prime à la violation des traités. Il faut donc, par une voie appropriée, tout en restant dans le plan des réalités et en prenant toutes les précautions imaginables pour éviter que les événements n'échappent au contrôle de ceux qui doivent les diriger, il faut, dis-je, trouver le moyen de restaurer l'ordre international.

Vous n'attendez de moi, au début de ces négociations, qui seront à coup sûr difficiles et peut-être même longues, ni de faire des pronostics, ni de prendre des positions qui gêneraient, tout à fait inutilement, notre pleine et nécessaire liberté d'action. Mais ce que je puis vous dire, c'est que nous comptons suivre quelques règles pratiques dont, je pense, vous serez unanimes pour apprécier la prudence et l'efficacité.

La préoccupation dominante des hommes d'Etat, dans des moments comme ceux-ci, doit être de tout faire pour diminuer, pour éliminer le risque de guerre, non seulement dans le présent, mais encore dans l'avenir.

Nous avons insisté déjà, au cours des négociations qui viennent d'avoir lieu, et nous continuerons à le faire, sur la nécessité absolue et primordiale d'établir et de maintenir entre toutes les Puissances signataires de Locarno et respectueuses de la parole donnée, une unité d'action complète, un front commun ferme et inébranlable.

Si ces Puissances restent unies et déterminées à agir de commun accord, j'ai la conviction absolue que nous finirons par sortir sans encombre de la difficulté où nous nous débattons. Au contraire, si cette unité d'action n'est pas réalisée, et si les Puissances locarniennes devaient, à un moment donné, adopter un point de vue différent sur l'un ou l'autre des problèmes qui sont aujourd'hui soulevés, les pires conséquences en seraient à craindre, pour nous, pour tous les signataires, pour le monde entier, pour l'avenir même de notre civilisation.

Quant à nous, nous sommes décidés à prendre notre part, toute notre part, sans réserve aucune, de toute action collective, de toute démarche, de toute attitude qui soit commune aux signataires

de Locarno, et plus particulièrement à la France et à l'Angleterre.

Nous demeurons sur le terrain du pacte de Locarno, aussi longtemps qu'il n'aura pas été remplacé par une autre construction avec l'accord de toutes les parties intéressées. De tels accords sont précisément destinés à assurer les signataires fidèles contre l'éventuelle infidélité de l'un d'eux.

L'impression que j'ai gardée du premier échange de vues qui vient d'avoir lieu à Paris entre les Puissances signataires de Locarno, me paraît justifier de l'espoir. L'état d'esprit dans lequel chacune des puissances représentées s'est efforcée de comprendre le point de vue et la position des autres, me paraît de bon augure. Certes, la tâche est rude; l'enjeu de ces discussions est capital, et sans doute passerons-nous encore plus d'une fois par d'étroits défilés. Mais j'ai confiance qu'à force de bonne volonté, de clairvoyance, de sens pratique et de fermeté, l'Europe réussira quand même à se tirer du pas difficile dans lequel elle se trouve en ce moment.

Il importe que le Pays tout entier déploie une fois de plus, aux yeux du monde particulièrement attentif à nos réactions, les qualités de calme, de bon sens et de froide résolution qui caractérisent notre race. A ce prix, peut-être réussissons-nous, en dépit des erreurs du passé et des dangers de l'heure présente, à épargner à nos enfants les affres, les incertitudes et les misères dont notre génération aura dû assumer le poids.

(*L'Indépendance belge*, March 12, 1936.)

## 51.

### INTERVIEW GIVEN BY CHANCELLOR HITLER TO MR. WARD PRICE, MARCH 11, 1936

The first question which I put to the Führer was: "Does your offer of a pact of non-aggression to all States along Germany's eastern frontier include Austria and Czecho-Slovakia?"

His reply was: "My proposal for the conclusion of non-aggression pacts on the east and west of Germany was meant as a universal one. There is certainly no exception intended to it. It applies equally to Czecho-Slovakia and Austria."

"Is your Excellency," I then asked, "prepared to lead Germany back into the League of Nations immediately, so that the proposals

## CHANCELLOR HITLER'S INTERVIEW WITH WARD PRICE

you have made may be discussed by the League with Germany taking her part in the discussions as a member of the Council of the League?"

Herr Hitler's answer was as follows:

"I have announced Germany's readiness to enter the League immediately, while proclaiming her expectation that within a reasonable period the questions of equal treatment in the matter of colonies and of the separation of the Covenant of the League from the so-called peace treaties will be settled.

"My feeling is that the conclusion of the non-aggression pacts which have been proposed by the German Government could be most efficiently negotiated by direct dealings between the Governments concerned.

"I mean that in the case of the pacts for the security of the frontiers between Germany on the one side and France, Belgium, and, maybe, Holland on the other, this should be a matter for the Governments of those countries and of the two Powers which would be invited to sign as sureties—Britain and Italy.

"It might perhaps be desirable that the Powers to be guaranteed by these pacts should first talk the matter over with their future guarantors.

"In the same way non-aggression pacts could be negotiated with the other border-States, as was done between Poland and Germany—in every case by direct dealings between their respective Governments.

"Germany, however, would certainly be only too glad if some other Power—Britain, for instance—would come forward as "honest broker" with practical propositions for the solution of these matters."

My third question was in these terms: "It is probable that no French Government, even if it would, could agree to discuss your proposals until after the French general elections have been held next month.

"Is Germany prepared to maintain her offer until then? Will she undertake to do nothing more meanwhile to alter the situation as it exists at this moment?"

Herr Hitler's reply to this was:

"The German Government will do nothing more on its side to alter the existing situation.

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"We have re-established the sovereignty of the Reich and have brought back one of the oldest parts of Germany under the protection of the entire nation. We have therefore no reason to fix any time-limit to the proposals that have been made.

"However, I should like to add just one thing. If these proposals, like so many that have gone before them, are again rejected or simply ignored, the German Government will not importune Europe with further overtures."

Question Four: "Having thus established Germany's complete sovereignty throughout her territory, will you limit the number of troops in the Rhineland of your own free will to a force manifestly insufficient for offensive action against France?"

Herr Hitler's reply was:

"The so-called "demilitarised zone" has been reoccupied, not because there exists any intention to undertake aggressive action against France but because the continuance of so vast a sacrifice on the part of a nation is only conceivable and justifiable when the other parties to the treaty disclose a corresponding comprehension and consideration in material and political matters.

"It is not Germany which is the treaty-breaker. Ever since the Armistice was accepted on the basis of the Fourteen Points of President Wilson, the following practice has established itself in Europe:

"When a victorious and a defeated Power make a treaty, the defeated Power is required to observe it, whereas the victor can establish and interpret his attitude as he pleases.

"You will not contest the fact the Wilsonian Fourteen Points and their three emendations were not observed, and you will not deny that the undertaking on the part of the victors to carry out universal disarmament was also not fulfilled.

"In the same way, the Locarno Pact has not only a literal but also an equitable political purpose.

"If the Franco-Russian Pact, which was signed on May 2, 1935, had been in existence when the Locarno Pact was drafted, the Rhineland clauses of the latter treaty would never have been signed.

"It is evident that one cannot make a subsequent alteration in the interpretation of a pact or change its tenor. In the case under consideration, not only the spirit but the letter of the Locarno Pact has been disregarded.

## CHANCELLOR HITLER'S INTERVIEW WITH WARD PRICE

"The conclusion of a military alliance between France and Soviet Russia creates a situation for Germany which obliges her to draw certain conclusions on her part also. I have drawn those conclusions, and no others.

"The purport of these conclusions is, that if France goes in for such military alliances, then it is certain that so densely populated and economically valuable a border-zone of the German Reich cannot be left unarmed and defenceless.

"That is the most elementary reaction to such a development.

"I doubt whether everyone in England is aware that what has hitherto been known as the "Demilitarised Zone" has almost the same number of inhabitants as Czecho-Slovakia or Jugoslavia.

"To this area garrisons on a peace-time basis have now been restored, exactly as in the whole of the rest of the country, no more and no less.

"It follows that there can be no question of the concentration of armed forces for offensive purposes because:

1. Germany has no further claims to make from France, nor will she make any;
2. Germany has herself proposed the conclusion of non-aggression pacts, with the desire that they should be guaranteed by England and Italy; and
3. Such a concentration of troops as is suggested in the question would be, from the military point of view alone, not only unnecessary but also unreasonable.

"Moreover, the task of the future is to see to it that neither Germany nor France feels herself threatened one by the other.

"When M. Sarraut declares that he cannot bear the idea of the fortress of Strassburg being menaced by German guns, it should be realised that neither does Germany want to see her open cities, such as Frankfurt, Freiburg, and Karlsruhe, menaced by the cannons of the French fortifications.

"The best way to eliminate this state of menace would be for both sides to solve the question of a demilitarised zone on a reciprocal basis."

Final question: "Will you tell the world why you chose this particular way of achieving your purpose? If you had made your proposals first and demanded the remilitarisation of the Rhineland as a counter-

## CHANCELLOR HITLER'S INTERVIEW WITH WARD PRICE

part, the world, in my view, would have accepted those with enthusiasm. What was the reason for your Excellency's action?"

Herr Hitler's reply: "I dealt thoroughly with this matter in my Reichstag speech. I would therefore only touch on your remark that my proposals would have been received with enthusiasm if I had not linked them with the reoccupation of the demilitarised zone.

"What you say may be true. Unfortunately it is not relevant.

"For instance, I once proposed an army limited to 300,000 men. I think that this was, at the time, a very reasonable proposal.

"It was a firm offer, and would certainly have contributed to relieve the strain in Europe. Beyond all doubt it was also approved by very many people. Indeed, the British and Italian Governments adopted it. Nevertheless, it was rejected.

"If, therefore, I was to restore German parity in armaments—the moral right to which could never be contested—and thus eliminate a burning European problem, I was obliged, whether I liked it or not, to act on my own responsibility.

"In this case, too, it would have been exactly the same. Supposing I had begun by laying these proposals of mine before the world, coupled with a demand for the restoration of all sovereign rights in the demilitarised zone.

"I dare say they would have received the world's appreciative approval. But, after my experience in the past, I do not believe that we should ever have reached the conference table with them.

"It is not possible for one part to a treaty to transgress the sense and letter of the bond without the other party in consequence liberating himself from his engagements. That is what I have done.

"Moreover, if, for example, a British or French statesman had ever, or should ever, be so unfortunate as to find his country in so tragic a condition as I found mine, I am certain that he would have acted, or will act, in precisely the same way under similar circumstances.

"Contemporary judgment seldom does full justice to a historical deed. The verdict of posterity, however, will not contest that it was more honourable and right to make an end of a state of tension which had become intolerable, in order finally and definitely to clear the way for a reasonable development desired by the whole world rather than to persist in maintaining an unbearable state of affairs



GERMAN OFFICIAL STATEMENT, MARCH 12, 1936

for whatever reason, very much against one's own conscience and common-sense.

"I believe that if the German Government proposals are accepted it will consequently be realised that they have rendered great service to Europe and to the cause of peace."

(*The Daily Mail*, March 11, 1936.)

52.

STATEMENT BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT,  
MARCH 12, 1936

(1) France had already, before the Locarno Pact, concluded the following military alliances, which were to become operative in the event of an attack by Germany on France:—(a) With Belgium; (b) with Czechoslovakia; (c) with Poland. As, according to information received from the French and other Governments, these alliances were of a defensive nature, and Germany had no aggressive intentions against France or these other States, they were not looked on as being incompatible with the Treaty of Locarno and were therefore accepted by Germany without further ado.

(2) Since the conclusion of peace France has concentrated on the German frontier an immense number of troops. The French frontier has, furthermore, been provided with the most tremendous defence fortifications ever known. The military authorities of all States are agreed that an attack directed against this fortification system would be, so far as can be humanly estimated, of no avail. As Germany has no aggressive designs against France she did not, and does not, make any objections.

(3) France has now concluded a further military alliance with Soviet Russia, but the functioning of this alliance is no longer dependent on an agreed decision by the League of Nations but on conditions to be taken in their own account by the contracting parties. This new alliance receives its particular character from the undisputed fact that the spiritual system of the present régime in Russia, not only theoretically, but also in fact, propagates the world revolution, that is, it wittingly proclaims an imperialistic and aggressive creed.

Before the conclusion of this alliance France had as guarantors for its invulnerability:—(a) Herself, with, nearly 100,000,000 people in the motherland and colonies; (b) Great Britain; (c) Belgium; (d) Poland; (e) Czechoslovakia. By the Treaty of Locarno Italy was also finally added as a guarantor Power.

(4) To this historically unprecedented guarantee of inviolability, France thought it necessary also to attach to herself the aid of the mighty Soviet Russian empire of over 175,000,000 people.

In this connexion it must be declared: That from the German side at no time was the least cause given which could lead France to think she was being threatened; that Germany raised no objections to the defensive securities which France considered it necessary to make for her own protection, as aggressive intentions were entirely lacking on her part and therefore she had no misgivings as regards these French measures of security.

If France, for any reason, believed, after the conclusion of the Locarno Pact, in the necessity of a new guarantee, then the French Government should at least have informed the Powers signatory to the Locarno Pact beforehand, in order to endeavour to obtain this new security as part of the Locarno Pact itself or at least to bring it into harmony with that pact.

When, in the spring of 1935, the first reports about military agreements between France and Soviet Russia were heard, they were at first denied. When M. Archimbaud declared in the French Chamber that Russia had undertaken to place her whole army at the disposal of France, this was a second time said to be incorrect and not to correspond to the facts. Finally, however, it became known that such a military agreement had been reached, and the world was eventually informed of the fact.

This alliance, as distinct from the French-Polish and French-Czechoslovak special agreements, took such a form that, without regard to decisions of the League Council or the Locarno Powers, decisions regarding the aggressor and mutual assistance could be taken by the partners to the agreement on their own account.

The following situation results:—

France has, for the protection of the independence which she considers threatened, (1) constructed on the German frontier the greatest network of fortifications ever known; (2) has legally bound

guarantors of her inviolability: Great Britain, with her entire fighting forces on land and sea, Italy, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, with more than 17,000,000 soldiers, and France herself. These States have a peace strength of over 3,000,000 men; a war strength of approximately 30,000,000 men.

In spite of these, from an historical point of view, equally mighty and unprecedented guarantees, France declares that she still needs outside the largest ring of fortifications in the world a demilitarized zone in Germany, which is open to every kind of attack. She further declares, after Germany, provoked thereto by the last action of France, announced that the Locarno Pact had been invalidated and once again exercised her rights of sovereignty in her own territory, that the 19 battalions which have re-entered that territory are a threat to the French security guaranteed by half the world.

The Reich Government makes the following declaration in regard to this:—

Germany undertook this occupation of her own territory only on an insignificant scale, in order to eliminate any chance of French fear that Germany was putting her under any kind of pressure, and in this way forcing her to negotiations under undignified circumstances.

In addition Germany has made the most magnanimous offer for the peace of Europe which is in any way possible. This offer has its especial importance in the fact that it emanates from a national German Government which has the complete confidence of its people and therewith acts on the highest commission for its people. It receives its historical value only by the actual supposition that it must be the first general European agreement to be concluded since the Treaty of Versailles without force on the part of any of the participants and containing no discrimination against any State. But this is the first and unalterable condition for a successful and therewith fruitful realization of this offer.

For Germany could also, of course, have gone another road. She might have declared invalid for Germany the Locarno Pact, which was practically invalidated by the Franco-Soviet Treaty, in order, while declining directly to occupy militarily the Rhineland, but appealing to and relying upon her own national defence, to withdraw from all further European collaboration. But the German Government refused to enter upon a path which would have led only to a further

negative dismembership of Europe, and endeavoured instead to put forward a great constructive plan for the final pacification of this Continent.

Germany wishes, therefore, nothing more ardently than to enter into sincere negotiations with France and the other European Powers for a realization of this plan, and for that reason and in order to relieve the French national soul of even the semblance of an oppressive *fait accompli* or threat, she accomplished the remilitarization of her own territory at first in a form which is in fact to be appraised as merely symbolic.

She is further ready, if this should be felt useful, to declare for the period of the negotiations that she will allow no alteration to take place in this, on condition that the French and Belgian Governments adopt a similar attitude.

She would, however, in no circumstances renounce any sovereign rights, in the conviction that therewith the future pacification of Europe would be based again on the enforced renunciations and moral discriminations which contain the seeds of gnawing disgrace on the one hand and therewith of latent discontent on the other.

What the German Government is striving for is not the conclusion of treaties which, through their being bound up with moral burdens for an honour-loving and decent people, inwardly and outwardly remain incredible, but the bringing about of a real and actual pacification of Europe for the next quarter of a century; in fact, a peace which has in itself the character of an unconditional European legal order, based on the free decisions of European nations and States with equal rights. And only what has been signed on such assumptions can, in consequence of its agreement with the ideas of the honour of nations, and will, so far as Germany is concerned, be kept honourably.

Should this attitude not meet with the consent of the other Powers, then the German Government will naturally withdraw their proposals, and, building on the trustworthiness, the loyalty, and the historic self-sacrificing courage of the German people, rather choose from now on an honourable isolation than live as a nation discriminated against in the community of the others.

(*The Times*, March 13, 1936.)

53.

COMMUNICATION BY THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON TO MR. EDEN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MARCH 12, 1936

*Mr. Eden had informed the German Ambassador on March 11 that the British Government felt justified in asking Herr Hitler to make a spontaneous contribution which would help in securing a settlement. He suggested that the German Government should withdraw all but a symbolical number of troops from the Rhineland zone, not increase the number, and undertake not to fortify the zone at least for the period necessary for the pacts to be negotiated. The German Ambassador conveyed to Mr. Eden the following reply:*

“The German Government cannot enter into a discussion with regard to a lasting or provisional limitation of the German sovereignty in the Rhineland territory. The German Chancellor wishes, however, in order to facilitate for the French Government the acceptance of the German proposals, to explain in the following way his intention, which he has declared from the beginning, to give to the re-establishment of the German sovereignty in the Rhineland at present only a symbolic character.

“The strength of the troops which have been stationed in certain garrisons in the Rhineland on a peace-time basis has been already communicated to the British and the French military attachés in Berlin. This strength will not be increased at present. It is equally not intended at present to station these troops nearer to the French or the Belgian frontier. This restriction of the military occupation of the Rhineland will be observed for the duration of the pending negotiations. It is, however, assumed that a similar attitude will be observed by France and Belgium.”

*(The Times, March 13, 1936.)*

54.

COMMUNIQUÉ BY THE LOCARNO POWERS, LONDON, MARCH 12, 1936

A meeting of the delegates of the signatory Powers to the Treaty of Locarno was held at the Foreign Office at 5 o'clock. The following

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, MARCH 14, 1936

were present:—Great Britain: Mr. Eden, Lord Halifax, and Sir Robert Vansittart; France: M. Flandin and M. Corbin; Belgium: M. van Zeeland and Baron de Cartier de Marchienne (the Belgian Ambassador); Italy: Signor Grandi. Mr. Eden presided.

It was unanimously recognized by the representatives of these Powers that the reoccupation of the demilitarized zone by Germany constituted a clear violation of Article 42 and Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles and of the Treaty of Locarno. It will be for the Council of the League of Nations, to whom France and Belgium had referred the matter, to pronounce upon this point.

In order to facilitate a more detailed study of the situation, the first delegates of Belgium, France, Great Britain, and Italy thereafter met in small committee. This committee will meet again at 11.30 to-morrow (Friday) morning.

*(The Times, March 13, 1936.)*

**55.**

MEETING OF THE LEAGUE COUNCIL IN LONDON,  
MARCH 14, 1936

SPEECH BY MR. EDEN (UNITED KINGDOM)

It is my privilege to welcome here to-day on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom the members of the Council who have been good enough to undertake the journey to London for this vitally important meeting. It is fourteen years since His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom had the honour of receiving in London, and in this very room, the Council of the League of Nations. That occasion was an important one, but its importance is overshadowed by the solemnity of the hour that unites us here to-day. It will not be too much if I say simply that the future depends on the wisdom of our decisions.

For to-day I give place to the representatives of France and Belgium, whose anxieties His Majesty's Government shares as fellow signatories and guarantors of the Treaty of Locarno. As representative of the United Kingdom, I shall have more to say at a subsequent meeting, and I shall reserve the main body of my observations for that occasion. For to-day I will only say this: In our view,

a patent and incontestable breach of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles relating to the demilitarised zone and of the Treaty of Locarno has been committed. If this conclusion is shared, it will be for the Council to deal with the situation and to endeavour to find a solution of the difficulties with which we are confronted. Our co-signatories of the Locarno Treaty and our colleagues of the Council may count upon the fullest co-operation of His Majesty's Government in all endeavours to establish peace and understanding among the nations of Europe upon a firm and enduring foundation.

SPEECH BY M. FLANDIN (FRANCE)

The facts which have given occasion for this special meeting of the Council are too well known for it to be necessary for me to recapitulate them at any length. A week ago to-day, the diplomatic representatives at Berlin of the Powers who signed the Treaty of Locarno with Germany were successively received by the German Chancellor and were told that Germany proclaimed that Treaty to have lapsed and henceforward regarded herself as discharged from its obligations. In order that there might be no misapprehension as to the reality of that decision, troops entered the demilitarised zone on the same day. These were not, as was first stated, a few "symbolical" detachments, but large forces consisting of over 30,000 regular troops, to mention only those officially reckoned by the German Government.

In bringing these facts before the Council and in denouncing the breach of Article 2 and Article 8 of the Locarno Treaty, the French Government has not so much exercised a right as performed a duty. If it were only a question of rights, the text of the Locarno Treaty would authorise the French Government to take strong and decisive measures forthwith. Being anxious, for its part, not to add any disturbing factor to the European situation, it voluntarily refrained from such action, thus giving expression in its fullest sense to the respect which it pays, and which it hopes all will pay, to international law as the essential means of maintaining peace.

In virtue of Article 4, it was France's duty as a contracting party to bring the question immediately before the Council of the League of Nations. She has done so, confident in the Council's impartiality in establishing the fact of a breach and recommending such steps as

may be considered desirable, confident also in the readiness of the guarantor Powers to perform the duties devolving on them as a result of that finding, and resolved, finally, to place at the League's disposal all her forces, both material and moral, to help it to overcome one of the most serious crises in the history of peace and of its collective organisation.

To justify her action, Germany has invoked the approval by the French Chamber of Deputies of the Franco-Soviet Pact concluded ten months previously, regarding which there had been an exchange of notes last May and June between the Government of the Reich, the French Government and the Governments guarantors of the Locarno Treaty. In these notes, the legal arguments advanced on the German side were amply refuted. The German Government gave no reply.

But, even if the German Government was not satisfied, it was bound, in virtue of the Arbitration Convention concluded at the same time as the Rhineland Pact, to refer the matter to arbitration. It has not even attempted to do so. Despite the statement I myself made in the Chamber of Deputies, before Germany's unilateral denunciation of the Treaties of Locarno and Versailles, to the effect, that we would accept the arbitration of the Hague Court of Justice the German Government has not attempted to initiate such proceedings; nor has it attempted to bring about any common discussion of the problem at a meeting of the Powers signatories of the Locarno Pact. It has preferred to repudiate a treaty which Chancellor Hitler has repeatedly recognised to have been freely agreed to and on which the signatories intended to confer particular stability, since the contracting parties forwent the right of denunciation and may only ask the Council of the League of Nations to terminate the Treaty if it finds that the League of Nations otherwise provides sufficient guarantees.

That this decision taken by Germany had been prepared long beforehand, and that the argument put forward was merely a pretext chosen from among several others which had previously been considered, there can be no doubt. But that matters little. I repeat that the French Government is prepared to let the Permanent Court at The Hague decide whether the Treaty of May 2nd, 1935, is incompatible with the Treaty of Locarno.



But not only is there repudiation of a treaty. There is also a definite breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, which Article 44 describes as a hostile act.

It is not without good reason that, at Locarno, respect for frontiers and respect for the measures intended to provide a necessary safeguard for Belgium and for France were placed upon the same footing.

Naturally, no one intended to place a derogation from the principles of demilitarisation on a point of detail on the same footing as the violation of a frontier. But the statements of the authors of the Treaty show that it was not intended to make any difference between an attack on national territory and a deliberate and large-scale violation of the zone. In asking that the violation should be recognised, the French Government simply asks that the law should be applied. Once this has been done, it will be for the guarantors to furnish France and Belgium with the assistance provided for in the Treaty.

But France's rights and her own interests are not alone at stake, nor are the duties of the guarantors alone involved. It is a question—and here I am speaking particularly to the Members of the Council who are not signatories of the Locarno Treaty—of the interests of general peace and, I might say, of the very existence of the League of Nations. The question at issue is whether the practice of the *fait accompli*, the unilateral repudiation of undertakings freely and solemnly accepted, are going to be set up in Europe as a political system; whether treaties are going to be considered as at any moment and immediately capable of modification at the will of their signatories, and whether a Government, in the exercise of its own power, may go back to-day on its promises of yesterday. I ask how such a method can be reconciled with the existence of the League of Nations, whose Covenant states that, in order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security, it is necessary to observe strictly all the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, together with a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations.

Is such a method compatible with the very notion of collective security, an expression which is meaningless if it does not express the confidence of each member in the undertakings entered into by

the others, and the conviction that all the members will contribute to defend each one of them against the breach of its undertakings by another State? Is it likely to encourage the conclusion of fresh international agreements?

The Council gauged these dangers so well that, a year ago, on April 17th, 1935, when condemning the use which Germany had already made of this method, it recognised that, in future, the Members of the League of Nations must oppose by all appropriate means the repudiation of undertakings affecting the security of the nations of Europe and the maintenance of peace.

If, having recognised that necessity a year ago, the Council, which to-day has still more serious facts before it, were to go back on its own decision, I fear that the authority of the League of Nations would suffer irreparable injury in the minds of all peoples.

Such are the facts and such, briefly, are the observations to which they give rise, and which the Council will no doubt desire to consider.

I ask the Council to pronounce that a breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been committed by Germany and to request the Secretary-General to notify the Powers signatories of the Locarno Treaty in accordance with Article 4 of that Treaty. This notification will enable the guarantor Governments to discharge their obligations of assistance. For its part, the Council will have to consider how it can support that action by recommendations addressed to the Members of the League of Nations.

SPEECH BY M. VAN ZEELAND (BELGIUM)

The French representative has brought out very clearly the general aspects of the problem with which we are faced, and the consequences it may involve for the whole world. For my part, I shall confine myself to putting before you some of the aspects of this formidable problem, which more particularly concerns my country.

The representative of the United Kingdom used just now an expression which impressed me. He said that his country shared the anxieties of France and Belgium. Anxiety, indeed! but you will realise that that anxiety is being experienced by no country more acutely than by Belgium. No country is more affected by Germany's action than Belgium. We are affected both by the remilitarisation

of the Rhineland and by the unilateral denunciation of the Treaty of Locarno.

The demilitarisation of the Rhineland constituted one of the essential elements of the system for our security, for, in proportion to the forces of the various countries, Belgium has the longest and most exposed common frontier with Germany.

Moreover, the Treaty of Locarno was, with the Covenant of the League of Nations, the very foundation of our international status. What exactly is now our position? I shall endeavour in a moment to define our attitude, but you will understand how profoundly we have been shaken. While it is true that no country, however powerful, can rely entirely on its own strength for its security, it is infinitely more true that, for small countries, respect for justice, an international organisation based on law, are of vital importance. It is we, therefore, who are the most seriously affected. And yet nothing in our attitude can ever have justified the slightest reproach on the part of any of the signatories of the multilateral pacts to which we are a party. In particular, in the present case, we have, from the outset, observed the Locarno Pact, in the spirit and the letter, with the most scrupulous care. The pretext given by Germany to justify the denunciation of the Locarno Treaty is quite obviously no concern of ours. The Franco-Soviet Pact is for us a *res inter alios acta*. Certainly, when we were asked for our opinion on the compatibility of this Pact with the Locarno Pact, we expressed our opinion: to us, as to all the other signatories of the Rhineland Pact, this compatibility appeared to be undoubted. However that may be, the Franco-Soviet Pact is of no interest to us; it does not concern us. It does not and cannot modify our international obligations in any way, and we long ago took care to state this officially. I myself made an express declaration to this effect in my country's Senate many months ago.

Our foreign policy has always been wholly dominated by the same idea: the respect for accepted obligations. The attitude of my country in the different international circumstances, in which its position has not always been easy, has, I think, shown to the world how far we meant to carry our efforts to remain true to our international obligations. Nothing in the present case, therefore, justifies Germany in modifying in any way the *de jure* and *de facto* relations existing between her and us.

The value of a signature does not depend on the strength of the party to which it has been given, and it is not because we are less powerful than others that an obligation which has been entered into towards us can be thrown off or regarded as of less importance. If I were myself the stronger party, I should add: Quite the contrary.

If we attach such importance to Locarno, it is because the conditions surrounding that Treaty might, I think, be described as unique. I cannot conceive of any international instrument which could combine more characteristics of, more reasons for, inviolability. This was no instrument bearing a signature which could be claimed as having been affixed under the kind of moral pressure involved, for example, by defeat. It was a freely negotiated, freely accepted act, spontaneously confirmed on several occasions. Two of the greatest Powers of the world were called upon to act as guarantors. The obligations, rights and advantages of this Treaty were placed, as regards some of them, on the basis of reciprocity.

The guarantor Powers were guarantors, not only for our benefit, but also for that of Germany.

Lastly, the Treaty was placed under the auspices of the highest international authority, under your own, Gentlemen, since you must intervene in various circumstances, and, in particular, if the Pact were to be terminated.

I need hardly say that in our eyes the Locarno Pact is still in being. We maintain the obligations and assurances which it involves for the signatories, and particularly for us. The purpose of pacts of this kind is precisely to protect those of its signatories which remain faithful against those which may be unfaithful. Consequently, we continue to apply it, and our presence here is evidence of the scrupulous manner in which we are applying it.

I hope you will have noted, Gentlemen, that, in the course of this brief outline, I have striven to remain strictly on the plane of reason and to eschew that of sentiment. You will realise, nevertheless, the effort we must make to restrain our emotions in the face of a situation like that in which we are placed. You will understand how vividly the past is still present to us. But I wish to remain on the plane of reason, because I desire my country to contribute to the full in all efforts at reconstruction. In spite of all, we know well that, in the future, pacts will again have to be concluded, signatures exchanged

## NOTES BETWEEN GERMANY AND THE LEAGUE

and an international structure re-established on the basis of law and respect for accepted obligations. But I cannot close my eyes to the fact—and I hope that no one else does—that the attitude which has just been adopted deals a heavy blow at these methods and that, for a long time to come, the moral value of any effort to build up a better international structure, based on law and reason, will be heavily mortgaged in the eyes of future generations, and that this weakening of the value of law will have to be compensated in some way or other; these compensations will impose on humanity, perhaps, for a long time to come, supplementary efforts and fresh burdens which it could so easily have been spared.

Be that as it may, we are determined to play, in the future as in the past, our full part in all international collective action.

You will not be surprised if I say that it was with feelings of deep sadness and bitterness that my country found itself obliged to appeal to the Council of the League of Nations.

On behalf of Belgium, it is to-day my sad duty to ask the Council to take note, in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Locarno, of the fact that a breach of Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been committed, and at once to notify the Powers signatories of the Locarno Treaty and, in particular, the guarantor Powers.

*(League of Nations, C./91st Session (Extr.) P. V. 1 (1).)*

## 56.

### EXCHANGE OF NOTES BETWEEN GERMANY AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

INVITATION BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO GERMANY,

MARCH 14, 1936

Referring to the telegram<sup>1</sup> which I sent to the German Government on March 8th, the Council of the League of Nations invites the German Government, as contracting party to the Locarno Treaty,

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<sup>1</sup> Containing the French and Belgian notes of March 8 (v. above, p. 232), and the request for a communication as to whether Germany would participate as a signatory of the Locarno Treaty in the Council meetings beginning March 13.

## NOTES BETWEEN GERMANY AND THE LEAGUE

to take part in the examination by the Council of the question of the communication from the French and Belgian Governments. The Council will meet at Saint James's Palace on Monday, March 16th, at 3.30 p. m.

### REPLY FROM GERMANY, MARCH 15, 1936

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your telegram of March 14th, in which you inform me that the Council of the League of Nations invites the German Government to take part in the examination of the question submitted to the Council by the Belgian and French Governments. The German Government is, in principle, prepared to accept the Council's invitation. It assumes in this connection that its representative will take part on equal terms with the representatives of the Powers represented on the Council in the discussions and decisions of the Council. I should be obliged if you would confirm this assumption.

The German Government must further draw attention to the following fundamental consideration. The German Government's action, which has been the occasion of the summoning of the Council by the Belgian and French Governments, does not consist merely in the restoration of German sovereignty in the Rhineland zone, but is bound up also with comprehensive concrete proposals to give a new assurance of peace in Europe. The German Government regards the political action which it has taken as a whole, the component parts of which cannot be separated from one another. For this reason, the German Government can participate in the Council's proceedings only if it is assured that the Powers concerned are prepared to enter into negotiations forthwith<sup>1</sup> in regard to the German proposals. The German Government will, with this object, place itself in touch with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, under whose presidency the Powers concerned in the Rhine Pact of Locarno are met together for discussion in London.

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<sup>1</sup> The President understood that there had been a correction of the word "forthwith". The correction was not official; but communications from Berlin indicated that the word "forthwith" should be interpreted to mean "as soon as possible", or some similar phrase.

DRAFT RESOLUTION, MARCH 16, 1936

REPLY FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, MARCH 16, 1936

I have the honour to communicate to Your Excellency the reply of the Council to your telegram of March 15 th. Germany will participate in the examination by the Council of the question submitted by the Belgian and French Governments on the same terms as the representatives of the other guaranteed Powers whose situation under the Treaty is the same as that of Germany—that is, with full right of discussion, the votes of the three Powers not being counted in calculating unanimity. In regard to the second question, it is not for the Council to give to the German Government the assurance which it desires.

REPLY FROM GERMANY, MARCH 17, 1936

I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your telegram of March 16th and have the honour to inform you that Ambassador von Ribbentrop will represent the German Government in the Council of the League of Nations in the examination of the question raised by the Belgian and French Governments. He will be available in London from Thursday morning onwards.

*(League of Nations, C./91st Session [Extr.] P. V. 2 and 3 (1).)*

57.

DRAFT RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY THE FRENCH  
REPRESENTATIVE ON BEHALF OF FRANCE AND  
BELGIUM, MARCH 16, 1936

The Council of the League of Nations,

On the application of Belgium and France, made to it on March 8 th, 1936:

Finds that the German Government has committed a breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles by causing, on March 7 th, 1936, military forces to enter and establish themselves in the demilitarised zone referred to in Article 42 and the following articles of that Treaty, and in the Treaty of Locarno;

Instructs the Secretary-General, in application of Article 4, para-

graph 2, of the Treaty of Locarno, to notify this finding of the Council without delay to the Powers signatories of that Treaty.

(*League of Nations, C. 139. M. 78. 1936.*)

## 58.

COMMUNICATION BY MR. EDEN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON, MARCH 17, 1936

*The Foreign Office received on March 17 the following communication from the German Government: "The German Government expect that His Majesty's Government will do their utmost in the circumstances of the case to bring about at the proper time a discussion with the interested Powers of our proposals." Mr. Eden gave the following reply:*

"His Majesty's Government are doing and will continue to do their utmost to find a means of bringing about a peaceful and satisfactory settlement of the present difficulties. It is clear to His Majesty's Government that the proposals of the Chancellor, as well as any proposals made by other parties concerned, must be discussed at the proper time. The German Government will appreciate, however, that it is not possible for His Majesty's Government to give any more explicit assurance at this stage."

(*The Times*, March 18, 1936.)

## 59.

MEETING OF THE LEAGUE COUNCIL IN LONDON,  
MARCH 17, 1936

SPEECH BY M. RÜSTÜ ARAS (TURKEY)

I see to-day that in certain sections of the Press I am described as having "conducted a fight", which may give rise to erroneous interpretations and to a serious misunderstanding of my views. I should therefore like to explain my position immediately in order that there should be no misapprehension.

The idea that I put forward was the following: The violation of the Rhine Pact of Locarno having been laid before the Council, it is



the latter's duty, in virtue of the stipulations of that Pact, to act as arbitrator. This is an indisputable fact. But the Council's rôle is not confined to this. In virtue of its Constitution, it has two other functions which are inherent in its nature and which were well known to the signatories of Locarno when they entrusted to it the function of arbitrator by virtue of which we have now met together.

These functions are those of mediator in international disputes and of guarantor of security.

In the debate which is now in progress, there is no question of mediation, which would, perhaps, be undesirable before the Council has given full satisfaction to France and Belgium in connection with the draft resolution submitted. But, if there had to be mediation, I should prefer that of the Council to any other arrangement.

In my opinion, the Council cannot divest itself of these two essential functions and confine itself to that of arbitrator assigned to it by the Rhine Pact.

The Council can fulfil its duty under these two heads independently of the decision which, in any case, we have to take as regards the resolution on the breach of the Rhine Pact. This duty would, in my opinion, consist, not only in associating ourselves with the Locarno guarantors, without of course relieving them of any part of their obligations, but also in giving them our help and assistance, thus complying with the spirit and the letter of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

In this way the Council would have discharged its whole duty in this very important question concerning the relations of three great European countries, the settlement of which is the keystone of European security.

SPEECH BY M. LITVINOFF (UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS)

This is the third time, in the short period of eighteen months during which the Soviet Union has been a Member of the League of Nations, that its representative on the Council of the League has had to speak on the subject of a breach of international obligations.

The first time was in connection with the infringement by Germany of the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty. The second time was on the occasion of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict. The third,

to-day, is in consequence of the unilateral infringement by Germany of both the Versailles Treaty and the Locarno Pact.

In all three cases the Soviet Union was either formally disinterested because it took no part in the treaties which had been infringed, as in the case of those of Versailles and Locarno, or, as in the case of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict, its own interests were not in the least affected.

These circumstances have not in the past prevented, and will not in the present case prevent, the representative of the Soviet Union from taking his place among those members of the Council who register in the most decisive manner their indignation at a breach of international obligations, condemn it, and support the most effective measures to avert similar infringements in the future.

This attitude of the Soviet Union is predetermined by its general policy of struggling for peace, for the collective organisation of security and for the maintenance of one of the instruments of peace—the existing League of Nations. We consider that one cannot struggle for peace without at the same time defending the integrity of international obligations, particularly such as have direct bearing on the maintenance of existing frontiers, on armaments and on political or military aggression. One cannot struggle for the collective organisation of security without adopting collective measures against breaches of international obligations.

We do not, however, class among such measures collective capitulation in face of the aggressor, in face of an infringement of treaties, or collective encouragement of such infringements, and still less collective agreement to a bonus for the aggressor by adopting a basis of agreement, or other plans, acceptable or profitable to the aggressor.

We cannot preserve the League of Nations, founded on the sanctity of international treaties (including the Covenant of the League itself), if we turn a blind eye to breaches of those treaties, or confine ourselves to verbal protests, and take no more effective measures in defence of international undertakings.

We cannot preserve the League of Nations if it does not carry out its own decisions and pledges, but, on the contrary, accustoms the aggressor to ignore its recommendations, its admonitions or its warnings.

Such a League of Nations will never be taken seriously by anyone.

The resolutions of such a League will only become a laughing-stock. Such a League is not required, and I will go further and say that such a League may even be harmful, because it may lull the vigilance of the nations and give rise to illusions among them which will prevent them from themselves adopting the necessary measures of self-defence in good time.

The responsibility of the League of Nations and of its directing body, the Council, is all the greater the more simple is the breach of international obligations under discussion. The characteristic feature of all the three cases I have just mentioned is their simplicity—simplicity in the sense that the establishment of the very fact of a breach of international obligations represented no difficulty and could arouse no disputes and differences. When I speak of the absence of disputes and differences, I do not, of course, have in mind the particular State which is accused of breaking treaties. Such a State will naturally always either deny the breach or, at any rate, invent all kinds of arguments to justify its action. One cannot conceive of a case in which such a State would openly declare that it has no justification and that it alone is to blame, and no one else.

The question under discussion at the present session of the Council even surpasses the preceding cases by its simplicity, in the sense I have indicated. Here we find, not only a substantial infringement of treaties, but the ignoring of a particular clause in a treaty, providing a method of settling disputes which may arise in the event of an alleged or actual infringement of the treaty.

Before drawing final conclusions as to the German Government's actions, I think it only just to take into account all that has been said by Mr. Hitler in justification of these actions, or in deprecation of their significance.

The German Government asserts that France was the first to break the Locarno Treaty in the spirit and the letter, by concluding a Pact of Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union.

It applied for an explanation to the other Locarno Powers—namely, Great Britain and Italy. One must imagine that, if these Powers had agreed with the German thesis that the Franco-Soviet Pact is incompatible with the Locarno Treaty, Germany would have utilised their conclusions to the utmost. But, as these Powers came to a different conclusion, Germany peremptorily declares that France,

Great Britain, Belgium and Italy—*i.e.*, the other Locarno Powers—are interpreting the Locarno Treaty incorrectly, and that the only correct interpretation is her own. Without doubt this is an extremely convenient method of resolving disputed international questions—when a country, convinced of the injustice of its case, confers upon itself, first the functions of a judge in its own cause, and then those of sheriff's officer.

That the German assertion of the incompatibility of the Franco-Soviet Pact and the Locarno Treaty will not hold water follows with absolute clarity from the entirely defensive character of the Pact. The whole world knows that neither the Soviet Union nor France have any claims to German territory, and that they are not striving to change the frontiers of Germany. If Germany undertakes no aggression against either France or the Soviet Union, the Pact will not begin to operate. But if the Soviet Union becomes the victim of an attack by Germany, the Locarno Treaty gives France, as any other Member of the League, the unquestionable right to come to the assistance of the Soviet Union. In this event, an unmistakable definition of the aggressor is facilitated by the absence of a common frontier between Germany and the Soviet Union. If the German armed forces cross the boundaries of their own country, and pass through the States and the seas dividing the two countries in order to invade the territory of the Soviet Union, the German aggression will be quite apparent, and *vice versa*.

This is perfectly obvious to the German Government too, and therefore it hastens to call to its assistance a far-reaching hypothesis of the possibility of a change of the social system in France. This hypothesis, brought into play by the German Government, only confirms the artificial and forced character of the German line of argument as to the incompatibility of the Franco-Soviet Pact and the Locarno Treaty.

But the German Government does not place particular reliance on the force and persuasiveness of this line of argument, and itself puts forward another justification for its actions. It declares that the demilitarisation of the Rhineland is itself unjust, contradicts the principle of the equality of States, and imperils the integrity of the German frontier. This argument sounds apparently more convincing, and in any case more sincere, than the sophistry about the

Franco-Soviet Pact. In order to discuss this argument in detail, I would have to repeat here what I said in the League Council on April 17th, 1935, during the examination of the French Government's complaint against the German Government for the latter's breach of its international obligations regarding armaments. The League of Nations, as a political institution setting before itself the object of organising and reinforcing peace, cannot settle questions, and still less justify a breach of international obligations, by an appeal to abstract principles. The criterion for the League's decisions must be, primarily, the degree to which the particular decision meets the requirements of the best possible organisation of peace. A considerable number of Members of the League, among whom the Soviet Union at that time was not to be found, thought, in 1919 and 1925, that the demilitarisation of the Rhineland zone answered these requirements. I do not think that the changes which have since then taken place in the ideology and foreign policy of Germany would permit one to assert that peace in Europe at the present time would gain from the remilitarisation of the Rhineland zone, the less so if it is carried out unilaterally, in breach of obligations voluntarily undertaken by Germany. Neither the foreign policy of the present German Government nor the preaching of aggression and international hatred, and the glorification of the spirit of war, initiated and ceaselessly maintained in Germany during the last three years, permit us to make such an assertion.

I shall not take up your time with the appropriate quotations from German periodicals, German text-books, German scientific works or German song-books. I will permit myself merely to remind you of the political testament of the present ruler of Germany, Herr Hitler, which you will find on page 754 of Volume II of the 1934 Munich edition of his book: "My Struggle".

"The political testament to the German nation for its external activity will, and must always, proclaim: Never permit two continental powers to arise in Europe. In every attempt to organise a second military power on the German frontier, even though it be by the formation of a State capable of becoming a military power, you must see an attack on Germany, and you must consider it not only your right, but your duty, to prevent

such a State coming into existence by all possible means, including the use of force of arms, and if such a State has already come into being, it must once again be shattered.”

These, gentlemen, are the purposes for which Germany requires the remilitarisation of the Rhineland zone bordering on France. It is a question of setting up the hegemony of Germany over the whole European continent, and I ask you, must and shall the League of Nations condone the promotion of this objective?

What I read to you was not a chance article in the newspapers, but a document which its author himself, the present ruler of Germany, describes as the political testament giving the quintessence of all his foreign policy. What is the importance, compared with this document, of individual political speeches and declarations, made with a political object, at particular moments, adapted to the psychology of particular sections of the peoples addressed, in order to attain particular temporary aims? Such speeches and declarations bear the same relation to the basic document I have read to you as the temporary tactical cessation of fire on one sector of a theatre of war bears to the main strategical aim of the whole campaign.

As for defence of Germany, if there is one State in the world which is threatened by no external danger it is Germany. I know of not a single country which makes any territorial claims on Germany, and know of no literature preaching an attack on Germany. Attacks on a State do not and cannot take place without preliminary preparations, without the preliminary presentation of territorial or other claims, without an attempt to justify these claims and to train up the people in the spirit of making them good. No such preparations are going on in a single country, and therefore there is not, and cannot be, any idea of encircling Germany.

On the day that all doubts disappeared as to Germany's desire for peace and sincere readiness to co-operate with the other European peoples in organising peace; on the day that Germany agreed to give the same guarantees of its love for peace which other European peoples are willingly giving, the representative of the Soviet Union, which has always been the champion of the equality of peoples, both large and small—but equality in peace—and which continues to cherish the deepest respect for and warmest sympathy with the great German people, would be the first to support an appeal against the

imposition upon the German people of any inequality whatsoever, and against depriving it of any arms which other peoples possess.

I have examined both the arguments put forward by the German Government in justification of the breach of international obligations which it has committed. The German Government, however, has not confined itself to these arguments. Apparently it is not itself certain that they carry conviction, and realises itself that it has caused a breach in the existing system for the organisation of peace. The German Government is therefore trying to create the impression of readiness to put right the wrong it has committed by proposing a new scheme, supposedly for a still better organisation of peace.

The question may then arise: If the organisation of peace will not only not suffer but even gain thereby, would it not be better for us to overlook some formal infringement of international treaties, and in that case is it worth while placing that infringement on record and registering condemnation? In the interests of impartiality, I will permit myself most briefly to touch on this side of the question as well.

I know that there are people who really do see a particular expression of Germany's love for peace in the offer to France and Belgium of a pact of non-aggression for twenty-five years, to be guaranteed by Great Britain and Italy. These people forget that the Locarno Treaty which Germany has just torn up represented just such a pact of non-aggression, with the same guarantees, and its validity was not for twenty-five years, but for an indefinite period. The other difference was that the Locarno Treaty included supplementary guarantees for France and Belgium, in the shape of a demilitarised zone in the Rhineland. Thus the alleged new proposal made by Germany amounts to the maintenance of that same Locarno Treaty, but with a reduction in its period of validity, and with a diminution of the guarantees for Belgium and France which they enjoyed in virtue of the old Locarno Treaty. But these limited guarantees which Mr. Hitler is now proposing might be offered to France and Belgium by the guarantors of Locarno, if they so desire, even without Germany's consent and participation. Thus, Mr. Hitler's proposal amounts to this: that, while depriving France and Belgium of certain guarantees with which they were provided by the Locarno Treaty, he wants to retain for Germany all the benefits of that treaty in their totality.

But Mr. Hitler's "love of peace" does not stop at this. He is ready to sign pacts of non-aggression, not only with France and Belgium, but with his other neighbours—true, without anybody else's guarantee. The Soviet Union has itself signed pacts of non-aggression with all its neighbours (excepting Japan, which rejects such a pact up to this day). But the Soviet Union has always attached great importance to the point that these pacts should not facilitate aggression against third parties. We therefore always included in these pacts a special clause, freeing either of the contracting parties from any obligations under the pact if the other party commits an act of aggression against a third State. Such a clause, however, will be absent from the pacts proposed by Mr. Hitler, according to the model which he has indicated. And, without such a clause, the proposed system of pacts reduces itself to the principle of localisation of war which is preached by Mr. Hitler. Every State which has signed such a pact with Germany is immobilised by her in the event of Germany attacking a third State.

This proposal of Mr. Hitler's gives me the impression that we are faced with a new attempt to divide Europe into two or more parts, with the object of guaranteeing non-aggression for one part of Europe in order to acquire a free hand for dealing with other parts. As I have already had to point out at Geneva, such a system of pacts can only increase the security of the aggressor and not the security of peace-loving nations.

Presuming, however, that the "peace-loving" proposals I have enumerated will not be reckoned sufficient compensation for a breach of international laws, Germany expresses her readiness to return to the League of Nations. In common with other Members of the League, we sincerely regret the incompleteness of the League, and the absence from it of some great countries, particularly Germany. We shall welcome the return into its midst of Hitler's Germany as well, if and when we are convinced that she has recognised those fundamental principles on which the League rests, and without which it would not only cease to be an instrument of peace, but eventually might be transformed into its opposite. Among these principles, in the first place, are the observance of international treaties, respect for the inviolability of existing frontiers, recognition of the equality of all Members of the League, support of the col-



lective organisation of security and renunciation of the settlement of international disputes by the sword.

At the present time, unfortunately, we have still too fresh in our memory cases of the unilateral infringement by Germany of her international obligations and her refusal to submit to the methods for settling disputes provided by international treaties. We have not yet forgotten that, until quite lately, Mr. Hitler combated most categorically the idea of collective security. He still preaches the principle of inequality, not only of races, but of nations. He points without ambiguity to those lands which must be taken by violence from other peoples to be colonised by Germans. We know that comparatively recently, on May 28th, 1931, one of Mr. Hitler's principal co-rulers, Mr. Goebbels, wrote in his newspaper, the *Angriff*, that "the only instrument with which foreign policy can be made is the sword", and that Mr. Hitler himself wrote in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the official organ of his party, on December 9th, 1930, that, "in the long run, the sword will decide everything". Lastly, I must remind you once more of Mr. Hitler's political testament which I have already quoted, and in which the German people is recommended not to allow any other powerful States to exist side by side with Germany, but eventually to destroy them.

We cannot shake off the fear that a Member of the League confessing such principles will have the opportunity of sabotaging the most valuable part of the League's activity, which is concerned with the organisation of peace and the greatest security of all its Members. Only when we receive convincing proof that our fears and doubts are henceforward groundless shall we consider the return of Hitler's Germany into the League to be a contribution to the cause of peace.

Analysing the sum total of Mr. Hitler's proposals, I come to the conclusion that they not only would represent no compensation for the harm done to the organisation of peace by condonation of his breach of international treaties, but would themselves strike a blow at the organisation of peace, and in the first instance at the League of Nations.

I have permitted myself to express my views with complete frankness. It was easier for me to do so than for my colleagues on the Council, because the manner in which Mr. Hitler allows himself to speak in public of the State I represent liberates me from the necessity

of resorting to circumlocution and diplomatic niceties. I have all the more right to do so because the whole sense of Mr. Hitler's statements, and of his proposals in the sphere of international political relations, amounts to the organisation of a campaign against the peoples of the State I represent, and to the formation of a coalition against them of the whole of Europe—if possible, the whole of the world. His aggression may, in fact, aim at other countries in the immediate future. His attacks on the Soviet Union may, so far, serve merely as a smoke-screen for aggression which is being prepared against other States; but the very fact that he selects the Soviet Union for this purpose, as the target of his incessant attacks, and that he has done this again in connection with his breach of the Locarno Treaty, gives me the right to speak openly and with especial energy of the inward essence of Mr. Hitler's aggressive foreign policy. In doing so I express my firm confidence that his proposals which follow from such a foreign policy will, as they now stand, never become the basis of an agreement between other Members of the League.

Before concluding, let me express the hope that I shall not be misunderstood, and that the conclusion will not be drawn from what I have said that the Soviet Union is proposing only registration, condemnation, severe measures and nothing else; that it declares itself against negotiations and a peaceful settlement of the serious dispute which has arisen. Such a conclusion would present a completely false picture of our conception. We are not less, but, on the contrary, more, interested than others in the maintenance of peace, both to-day and for decades to come, and not only in one area of Europe, but throughout the whole of Europe and all over the world. We are resolutely against anything that might bring a war nearer by even a single month. But we are also against hasty decisions, dictated rather by excessive fear and other emotions than by a sober reckoning of realities—decisions which, while represented as eliminating the causes of an imaginary war to-day, create all the premises for an actual war to-morrow. We stand for an international agreement which would not only consolidate the existing foundations of peace, but, if possible, would likewise create new foundations. We stand for the participation in such an agreement of all the countries which so desire. But we object to the idea that with-

drawal from the League of Nations, brutal infringement of international treaties and sabre-rattling should confer upon a State the privilege of dictating to the whole of Europe its conditions for negotiations, of selecting the participants in those negotiations to suit its convenience, and of imposing its own scheme for an agreement. We are against negotiations proceeding on a basis which disorganises the ranks of the sincere partisans of peace, and which must inevitably lead to the destruction of the only inter-State political organisation—the League of Nations. We are of the opinion that the sincere partisans of peace are no less entitled than the breakers of treaties to propose their scheme for the organisation of European peace. We are for the creation of security for all the nations of Europe, and against a half-peace which is not peace at all but war.

But, at whatever new international agreements we might desire to arrive, we must first of all ensure their loyal fulfilment by all those who participate in them, and the Council of the League must declare its attitude towards unilateral infringements of such agreements, and how it intends and is able to react against them. From this standpoint the greatest possible satisfaction of the complaint made by the French and Belgian Governments becomes of exceptional importance. Taking cognisance of this, I declare in the name of my Government its readiness to take part in all measures which may be proposed to the Council of the League by the Locarno Powers and will be acceptable to the other Members of the Council.

SPEECH BY M. EDWARDS (CHILE)

I find myself compelled to intervene in this debate to explain my Government's position in the serious and delicate question with which we are now concerned.

On October 16th, 1925, the Locarno Treaty was concluded after long and laborious negotiations between France, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain and Italy. The two latter Powers signed this instrument as guarantors of the obligations assumed by the three other Powers—Belgium, France and Germany. The purpose of these obligations was to guarantee the present frontiers of the three latter countries in the Rhineland and, at the same time, to ensure respect for the

legal status established by the Treaty of Versailles in Articles 42 and 43 as regards a part of German territory, which has since been known as the "demilitarised zone".

The Powers that signed the Locarno Treaty had thought it necessary to embody the legal system of Locarno in that of the League of Nations in order to supplement the guarantees of security given to them by the Covenant of the League by means of those which they had just given to each other. Germany's entry into the League of Nations being necessary for this purpose, it was stipulated that the Locarno Treaty would only come into force after the Reich's admission at Geneva.

At the same time, the Locarno negotiators had contemplated the intervention of the Council of the League of Nations in two cases: first, in order to put an end to the Treaty; secondly, in order to establish, if necessary, the fact of a breach of its provisions and to set in motion the guarantees provided for.

Certain States thus assigned to the Council of the League of Nations, on October 16th, 1925, additional obligations and powers which are not embodied in the Covenant of the League and which it had not solicited.

In the course of the ensuing years, a new factor intervened—Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations. The legal system of Locarno was thus thrown out of gear and the Council's possible intervention was deprived of an important element—Germany's voice. It might have been thought, not without reason, that the Treaty of Locarno had ceased to exist. Nevertheless, the Powers concerned made solemn declarations to inform the rest of the world that the Treaty remained in force.

The Council of the League of Nations is now meeting, at the request of the Belgian and French Governments, on the basis of the provisions of the Treaty of Locarno. France and Belgium have informed us that this Treaty has been violated by Germany, which involves at the same time a breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles. These Governments therefore ask that, in virtue of the provisions of the Treaty of Locarno, which provide for the Council's intervention, the latter should place this breach on record and should request the Secretary-General to notify the fact to the guarantor Governments, Great Britain and Italy, in order to enable

France and Belgium to submit the request for assistance provided for in the Locarno Treaty.

The Council's competence is therefore derived, in the case before us, from the stipulations of the Treaty of Locarno and the request of two of the signatories.

It is useful to recall that no article of the Covenant of the League of Nations has been invoked by the Governments of France and Belgium, from which we might think that those Powers had no other purpose, in referring the matter to the Council, than to obtain from that organ a pronouncement to the effect that the Treaty of Locarno has been infringed.

I should now like to state Chile's position with regard to this question.

My country is not bound by the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno. As far as the Treaty of Locarno is concerned, we are not obliged to act, in the Council, on the basis of its provisions. In the treaty itself, the contracting parties to which its provisions apply, are explicitly mentioned and it goes so far as to say that it imposes no obligation on the British Dominions unless they signify that they accept its obligations.

We are only bound by the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations to which we have given our signature.

Consequently, the Belgian and French Governments' application telling us that the Treaties of Locarno and Versailles have been violated and asking us to recognise and condemn this breach, only concerns us from the general point of view of a Member of the League of Nations and of the Council.

Any breach of a treaty disturbs international relations and imperils the peace of the world. It is, in consequence, a matter of concern to the Members of the League of Nations, which is based on scrupulous respect for international obligations.

Chile is the more sensitive to breaches of treaties inasmuch as she has made full respect for treaties the corner-stone of her international policy. The Council can therefore be sure of my Government's full and unreserved respect for treaties, and it can be certain that, if the violation of the Treaty of Locarno is duly established, it will fulfil without hesitation its duties as a Member of the Council.

In our opinion, the breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles,

as it is not disputed by Germany, does not give rise to the same legal doubts.

The situation, so far as we are concerned, is, nevertheless, different as regards the breach of the Treaty of Locarno which has been reported. Not being bound by the provisions of that Treaty, we must act with full impartiality towards the parties and only pronounce judgment in the event of the said breach being found to exist after a legal examination.

The French and Belgian Governments tell us that Locarno has been violated by Germany. The latter country disputes this assertion and adds that there was no violation on its part since France had previously failed in her observance of the Treaty by signing the Franco-Soviet Pact. As regards Belgium's position, the German Government adds that, the Treaty of Locarno having lapsed, it is no longer valid with regard to Belgium.

There are, therefore, differences of opinion between the three signatories to the Locarno Treaty as regards the interpretation of the duties imposed by this instrument on the parties directly concerned.

In these circumstances, my Government is of opinion that, before giving a decision on a question of a legal character, the Council might ask the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague for an advisory opinion, in accordance with Article 14 of the Covenant.

This will enable us to pronounce judgment with a full knowledge of the facts as regards the violation of Locarno, and to reinforce that judgment with the indisputable and undisputed authority of the highest Court in the world.

I do not think that the French Government, which has already shown itself prepared to resort to arbitration in the matter of the German assertion, would oppose a procedure which has many points in common with its proposal and which is provided for in the Covenant of the League of Nations.

It may be that the Council will not share our view. In such a case, Chile, in order not to obstruct a decision by the Council, will refrain from voting on the breach of the Treaty of Locarno.

Such, Mr. President, is the position, in this debate, of a country which, not being a signatory of the Treaty of Versailles and of the

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Locarno Treaty, wishes, in any event, to perform conscientiously its duties as a Member of the League and of the Council and thus to serve the cause of international peace and conciliation.

*(League of Nations, C./91st Session (Extr.) P. V. 3 (1).)*

60.

MEETING OF THE LEAGUE COUNCIL IN LONDON,  
MARCH 18, 1936

SPEECH BY MR. EDEN (UNITED KINGDOM)

The Council is being asked to fulfil the duty laid upon it by Article 4 (2) of the Treaty of Locarno—namely, to satisfy itself whether or not a breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been or is being committed. The case has been laid before us by the representatives of France and Belgium in speeches which have deeply impressed the members of the Council.

I have already stated before the Council the view of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that a patent and incontestable breach of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles relating to the demilitarised zone has been committed. It would, therefore, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, be right for the Council to come to a similar conclusion, and to notify this finding to the Powers signatory of the Locarno Treaty.

In the view of His Majesty's Government, this is far from being the only function which the Council has to perform in the present case. The provisions of the Treaty of Locarno fall within the framework of the Covenant, and Article 7 of the Treaty is as follows:

“The present Treaty, which is designed to ensure the maintenance of peace, and is in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations, shall not be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world.”

Our duty is not merely to declare that a breach has been committed. We must keep steadily before us our ultimate aim and our supreme responsibility, which is to preserve peace and to establish good understanding among the nations of Europe upon a firm and enduring foundation.

What was the object of the Locarno Treaty? It was two-fold. First, it aimed at preserving peace and, secondly, it aimed at creating international confidence by safeguarding the security of Western Europe. It is with the second object, I suggest, as much as the first, that we are to-day concerned.

The structure of security and confidence has been seriously shaken. How is it to be reconstructed?

Let us recognise this fundamental fact. The question before us does not concern a few Powers only. It is of concern to all who value the sanctity of treaty undertakings and the reign of law in international affairs. Nor is it only the structure of international law which we have to strengthen but something of which all international law is itself the indispensable foundation—namely, peace among the nations.

And, in working for this end, we have to take account of all the complex and conflicting forces of thought that lie at the root of national action. If we are to win peace, it can only be through the winning of fuller understanding on the part of us all of the things that are foremost in the thought of each.

The German Government have emphasised again and again that their aim is peace and the restoration of confidence. But the German Government will surely recognise with other Governments that confidence depends on a belief in the sanctity of treaties, and that the unilateral repudiation of treaties can only nullify the object which they maintain they have in view. It was for this reason that His Majesty's Government represented to the German Government that they should, pending negotiations, take such action in the demilitarised zone as would restore confidence among the nations.

What we wished to emphasise, and what we maintain, is that after a unilateral action of this character international confidence can only be restored if each nation that has the power to do so will make a constructive contribution to this end.

In approaching a task which is at once so delicate and fraught with consequences of such gravity for the future, we should also bear in mind that there are two elements in the present situation of which advantage may, we hope, be taken in the work of appeasement and reconstruction.

The first is that the breach, however plain, does not carry with



it any imminent threat of hostilities, and has not involved that immediate action for which, in certain circumstances, the Treaty of Locarno provides. We happily have time in which to endow our action with the prudence, as well as the determination, which the situation requires.

In the second place, the situation, however grave, carries with it an opportunity. I welcome wholeheartedly the declaration of the Belgian Prime Minister, in the course of his wise and moving speech to the Council on Saturday, that, in spite of what has happened, treaties will be required in the future as in the past, and that an effort must be made to construct and reconstruct international life on the basis of undertakings above the signatures of those assuming them. I have said that the declaration of M. van Zeeland was wise. We should, I think, recognise, too, its courage.

If I have insisted on the rôle of the Council, it is because it is clear to me that, in the steps that will have to be taken towards our goal, the Council has an indispensable part to play.

The Council has the right and the duty to consider, in all its aspects the situation before it, and to take for its guidance, in dealing with that situation, the provisions of the Covenant as a whole.

I sincerely hope, therefore, that my colleagues on the Council will give us the benefit of their co-operation on the grave issues with which we are confronted, and that the collective wisdom of its members may suggest the course which is best designed to secure the object we all earnestly desire to attain—namely, the maintenance of peace on the foundation of respect for law. It is essential, not merely that peace should be maintained, but that the spectre of war should be exorcised for the future. To that end, all lines of approach should be examined. Contribution to the restoration of international confidence, which has been severely shaken, and to the creation of security will be required from all, and more particularly from those of us who are the great Powers of Western Europe. I should like to-day to give an assurance that in any such examination, in the work of reconstruction, and, in particular, in the organisation of security in Western Europe His Majesty's Government will play their full part. They are willing and anxious to make their contribution to these ends.

SPEECH BY M. GRANDI (ITALY)

At this grave juncture in European affairs, each of us is fully aware of the responsibility incumbent upon him to examine the situation with a sense of reality and with a firm determination to avoid the consequences which this redoubtable situation may involve for the whole world. It would be neither wise nor equitable to gloss over the seriousness of the problems before us. There is certainly no one who would wish to increase our difficulties, which would be contrary to the interests of all.

On Saturday morning, I listened with the greatest attention and interest to the statements made in the Council by the French and Belgian representatives. We fully realise the legitimate emotion which recent events have aroused in the French and Belgian peoples. We must be grateful to M. van Zeeland, who, after setting before us in moving terms the special causes of the disquiet aroused in his country by the occupation of the demilitarised zone, reminded us that it is necessary, nevertheless, to remain on the plane of reason and eschew the plane of sentiment.

At the meeting of the four Powers signatories with Germany of the Locarno Treaty, these four Powers had to recognise that a breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles had been committed. This conclusion has been the more painful inasmuch as it applied to a great Power whose co-operation is essential to the peace and prosperity of Europe.

Article 4 of the Treaty of Locarno and the responsibilities and obligations which it lays on the guarantor Powers are well known. I need hardly say that Italy is fully conscious of these responsibilities and will remain true to her obligations.

At the same time, it is obvious that, in view of the decisions and measures adopted at Geneva in connection with the Italo-Ethiopian dispute, the States which have taken them cannot expect my country to apply measures which would be incompatible with the position in which these same States have placed Italy. I should be failing in my duty if I did not draw the Council's attention to the contradiction which exists between the position of a country subjected to sanctions and the duties of a guarantor Power incumbent upon it.

The obligations laid down by the Treaty of Locarno for the

guarantor States are clear and definite. No doubt can exist in this connection.

It is the duty of all of us, particularly at the present time, to give our countries the assurance that a Europe still more divided and weakened than it is to-day will not emerge from this crisis.

We can only perform this duty by taking care not to ignore or even to underestimate any of the factors and causes that have brought about the present situation, in which the Treaty of Locarno is called upon to fulfil its functions and prove its effectiveness.

Among these causes is one which, in my opinion, is self-evident—I mean the weakening of the political bases of the Treaty of Locarno as a result of the decisions and measures taken at Geneva in connection with the Italo-Ethiopian dispute, the injustice of which has been keenly felt by the whole Italian people.

The Locarno Agreements spelt peace, co-operation and confidence among the Western Powers, a peace on behalf of which the two guarantor Powers—giving an example which is perhaps unique in history—offered their firm and solid support without any counterpart.

It is regrettable that, during the last few months, the political foundations on which the Locarno guarantees rested have been so seriously shaken. During the last few months, the peace of Europe has been placed at the mercy of a colonial dispute which could and should have been kept within its right proportions and which has, on the contrary, been magnified to the point of profoundly disturbing the political and economic life of Europe.

Such are the facts to which I consider it my duty to call the attention of the Council.

The present situation of Europe is such that we must be absolutely frank, and it requires us to take all the factors into account. May the experience of these last months, which is still continuing, at least serve to emphasise the fact that, in Europe, there is one single problem of peace, co-operation and confidence. If a possibility of reconstruction still exists, each of us must show his goodwill and take his share in rebuilding the ruins which have been piled up in Europe.

It has frequently been repeated in the Council of the League of Nations that peace is indivisible. If that is so, the means of preserving, guaranteeing and safeguarding peace should be equally indivisible.

Otherwise Europe will inevitably be led to transform itself into a system of besieged fortresses, mobilised fleets and armies.

Nearly twenty years have passed since the war came to an end, and twenty years after arms were laid down, Europe finds itself in a situation which the most pessimistic could hardly have dared to predict. It is possible that we may at last have reached a decisive turning-point in our history. For twenty years, my country has given its constant and loyal support to the cause of European tranquillity, peace and stability. If, in the darkest hours, there has been an appeal to a sense of justice, Italy has always responded; if there has been a sacrifice to be made, she has never refused it; if there has been a risk to be run in the common interest, she has accepted it.

My country has been obliged to note—not without bitterness—that all this has been forgotten. But Italy, nevertheless, is fully conscious of her task in the establishment of security and reconstruction in Europe.

This work of reconstruction, if it is not to be in vain, must be founded on the comprehension of our reciprocal needs, on the recognition of and mutual respect for the vital needs of our peoples and, above all, on a more unified conception of the rights, the interests and the duties of our civilisation.

SPEECH BY M. BECK (POLAND)

This question has been referred to the Council by the Belgian and French Governments under Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Rhineland Pact, which specifies the duties of the Council in the event of an infringement of Article 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles in the following terms: “As soon as the Council of the League of Nations is satisfied that such violation or breach has been committed, it will notify its finding without delay to the Powers signatory of the present Treaty”—that is to say, the Rhineland Pact.

The entry of German military effectives into the demilitarised zone is a fact which nobody disputes and which the Council must place on record. It rests, I think, with the signatories of the Rhineland Pact to judge of the circumstances in which that event has taken place.

On this occasion, I should like to make a few general remarks about the Locarno Agreements, which are at the root of the question

with which we are now concerned. As is generally known, those agreements have not been sympathetically received in my country. But although, at the time, Polish public opinion objected to them on the ground that, inasmuch as they provided special safeguards for the political stability of the Rhine, they might give the impression that the security of Eastern Europe was being left on a more precarious footing, it has nevertheless been found possible, through the joint efforts of the French and Polish Governments, to maintain the Franco-Polish Alliance by incorporating it in the general system of the 1925 Agreements in the form of a treaty of mutual guarantee. Thanks to the joint action of the two Governments, the alliance which existed before the Locarno Agreements remained, and still remains, in force.

Belgium, the second country directly interested in the problem with which we are dealing, is not linked with Poland by any special political agreement. But the long-standing friendship between the two nations makes it our duty to give the most careful consideration to Belgian interests.

As regards Poland, the declarations exchanged between her and the German Reich in January 1934 improved the situation. Through those declarations, which were negotiated in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and were the outcome of a firm resolve on the part of both parties to ensure peace on their common frontier, relations bearing the stamp of mutual respect have been established between Poland and Germany. The passages dealing with Poland in the German Chancellor's recent speeches give evidence of the German Government's intention of upholding the obligations it has contracted towards us and indicate the spirit in which it intends to carry them out.

Recent events have given rise to lively discussions on the subject of the Franco-Soviet Pact. I wish to say that that Pact, concluded between France and the Soviet Union, to which, as to the Rhineland Pact, Poland is not a party, could not in any way modify the obligations and rights which Poland derives from her previous engagements. As regards the Soviet Union, Poland's engagements have been formulated during the last few years in the Pact of Non-Aggression and in the London Protocol on the Definition of Aggression. Those two agreements, which were signed by my country in

order to consolidate the security of Eastern Europe, still represent the expression of our resolve to maintain lasting relations of friendship with our eastern neighbour.

I cannot end this declaration without expressing my gratification that the Council has been convened in London, in an atmosphere imbued with that honesty and sense of realities which are characteristic of the British people. I am sure that the Council's task has been facilitated thereby.

I must apologise for having detained you with a rather more general statement; but I felt it my duty to tell the Council on what principles Poland based her attitude.

The Government and public opinion in my country attach the highest importance to the consolidation of normal relations between the countries of Europe, which is the fundamental condition of European security. That condition cannot be fulfilled unless the principle which the Polish Government has always upheld is strictly observed—namely, that there can be no international negotiation affecting the interests of any country, whatever its importance, without the participation and consent of that country. International confidence, which is the foundation of security, cannot be restored and strengthened except by the application of that principle.

SPEECH BY M. BARCIA (SPAIN)

We are convened at the request of Belgium and France to decide, in virtue of Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Locarno Treaty, whether Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles have been infringed. Our duty is clear. It derives from the Locarno Treaty. That Treaty was, indeed, negotiated without our participation, but it has been incorporated in the general system of the Covenant by more than one explicit and unanimous declaration on the part of the Assembly. There is no need even to appeal to the Council's general competence in regard to the maintenance of peace and good understanding between nations, since the reference of the question to us, under Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Locarno Treaty, is wholly in order. Indeed, I may add—as I said here at the secret meeting on March 16th—that, in the present stage of the question, it is essential that we should adhere strictly to the Locarno basis.

The procedures for bringing into operation the individual and collective guarantees of the territorial *status quo* and of the maintenance of the provisions of Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles are specified in Article 4 of the Locarno Treaty. That article deals with the case of a violation of Article 2 of the Locarno Treaty or a breach of Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, and it defines, in paragraph 1, the manner in which the question is to be brought before the Council of the League.

In the case of a flagrant violation of Article 2 of the Locarno Treaty, or of an equally flagrant breach of Article 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, the procedure is defined and regulated in paragraph 3 of Article 4 of the former Treaty.

In the present case, there is, of course, no question of an attack upon the territorial *status quo* or upon the inviolability of frontiers. What we have actually before us is a charge alleging a breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, which forbids the maintenance and the assembly of armed forces in an area defined in Article 42 of that Treaty.

Under the terms of Article 4 of the Locarno Treaty, if one of the High Contracting Parties is of opinion that a violation of Article 2 of that Treaty or a breach of Article 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been committed, it must immediately bring the question before the Council of the League.

Under paragraph 2 of the same article, as soon as the Council is satisfied that such violation or breach has been committed, it will notify its finding without delay to the signatory Powers, who severally agree that, in such case, they will each of them come immediately to the assistance of the Power against whom the act complained of is directed.

In the present case, two High Contracting Parties—Belgium and France—being of opinion that Germany has committed a breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, have brought the question before the League Council, so that the latter may decide whether such a breach has been committed.

In our view, therefore, our duty is to state whether such a breach has been committed, and, in the affirmative, to notify our finding without delay to the Powers signatory to the Treaty in question.

We must therefore examine the concrete question laid before us.

As regards the facts, there can be no doubt. No one disputes the facts. German forces have entered the area defined in Article 42 and forbidden to them by Article 43. The German Government says that its action is justified because the Locarno Treaty has lapsed and become void, inasmuch as the Franco-Soviet Treaty is incompatible with both its letter and its spirit. We find that Article 3 of the Locarno Treaty itself, and the arbitration Conventions between Germany and France and between Germany and Belgium, annexed to the Locarno Treaty, prescribe the procedure to be followed in such case. Hence, even if we accepted the German thesis of incompatibility, the facts reported to us would still be contrary to the Locarno Treaty, which is binding upon all the contracting parties so long as the conciliation and arbitration procedures provided for settling disputes between the parties have not been utilised.

The clause *rebus sic stantibus*, which is sometimes invoked by States in order to release themselves from obligations contracted in political circumstances that have since changed, cannot be accepted as sufficient justification for the unilateral repudiation of a treaty which itself specifies the procedure to be followed and the authorities to be applied to should circumstances change.

When Germany became a contracting party to the Locarno Treaty, she was admitted to the League. By her admission she received the benefits of Article 19, but, even if it is admitted that she lost those benefits by leaving the League, she still retained the rights and obligations specified in Article 3 of the Locarno Treaty and in the annexed arbitration Treaties with Belgium and France. If, then, the entry of German forces into the demilitarised zone constitutes a breach of Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, the justification advanced for it would seem rather to aggravate the offence by the addition of manifest negligence in respect of Article 3 of the Locarno Treaty and the annexed arbitration Treaties.

Spain attaches great importance to respect for international undertakings. She regards it as the very foundation of international life. She views with anxiety the tendency of all States to seek security in armaments, then to insure themselves against the danger of armaments by means of pacts and alliances, and finally to break those pacts and alliances when they become a hindrance. She is convinced that the malady of our time is lack of confidence, but she believes



that it can not be cured by giving it a free rein through armaments, and that *faits accomplis* and unilateral interpretations of the undertakings entered into by Governments can only aggravate it.

I feel bound to recall the Spanish Government's constant attitude in these matters. We look upon our obligations as a Member of the League as forming an indivisible whole with three aspects—legal, logical and political.

Legally, we cannot consider ourselves absolutely bound by the collective security obligations laid down in Article 16, nor, *a fortiori*, by any new obligations, so long as the disarmament obligations specified in Article 8 are neglected, or, if you prefer it, suspended.

Logically, it is clear that those countries which bound themselves, by the Covenant of the League, to co-operate in maintaining the security of a country attacked did so on the assumption that the general disarmament contemplated in Article 8 would have made attacks much less likely and much less dangerous.

Politically, no Government can undertake to assist, at the last moment, in clearing up a difficult situation with the origin and development of which it had nothing to do.

The progress of collective security is therefore strictly dependent upon the progress of international co-operation at every stage in policy.

The close relation between security pacts and disarmament is, moreover, asserted in the Final Act of the Locarno Conference, the last paragraph of which is textually as follows: "They (the Governments represented) undertake to give their sincere co-operation to the work relating to disarmament already undertaken by the League of Nations and to seek the realisation thereof in a general agreement."

It is in that spirit that, on behalf of my Government, I associate myself with the draft resolution submitted by the Belgian and French Governments.

SPEECH BY M. RUIZ GUIÑAZÚ (ARGENTINE REPUBLIC)

I desire to express my country's views on the draft resolution tabled by the representatives of France and Belgium.

Following the general lines of its national policy, and upholding the scrupulous observance of international engagements upon which the peace of the world depends, the Argentine Republic associates

itself with every principle that is linked with the sanctity of treaties. It has always been our view that treaties should not be denounced unilaterally, even if they were concluded for an indeterminate period, except, of course, where explicit provision is made for unilateral denunciation.

I should like to add that the fundamental principle of modern international law, as expressed in the Declaration of London of January 17th, 1871, that "no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting Powers by means of an amicable arrangement" constitutes the international rule and practice since the war, which have once more been confirmed.

The Argentine Government supports this draft resolution, more particularly because the principle to which I have just referred is in harmony with the tradition that it has on many occasions upheld at Geneva. This problem of the inviolability of treaties is doubly delicate, doubly disturbing, doubly threatening indeed, during periods of transition such as the present.

We feel therefore, to-day more than ever before, that the aforesaid principle forms part of the very foundation of international law and is one of the conditions for the existence of a community of organised peoples—the expression used in the preamble to the Covenant of the League of which we are a Member.

SPEECH BY M. MUNCH (DENMARK)

The idea put forward by the representative of Chile—namely, that the Permanent Court should be asked for an advisory opinion on the Locarno Treaty dispute as a whole—seems to me to be an interesting one. That procedure might perhaps have been of value had the parties agreed to it; but, if I have understood aright, they do not look upon it with favour. That being so, I shall be able to vote for the resolution submitted by the representatives of France and Belgium—provided that it is put to the vote in its present form. There is no doubt that the entry of troops into the Rhineland zone is incompatible with the provisions of the treaties. The Germans themselves do not deny it. They are content to state their motives for taking that action; and the resolution merely says

that the treaties have not been respected, thus giving an answer to the question which the Council has to settle.

None the less, before we vote, I want to give expression to the profound and increasing disquietude caused by the present trend of international politics in those countries that do not belong to any of the political groups into which Europe is divided. Year by year, the dissensions between nations grow more serious; mutual suspicion becomes more and more marked; the sense of insecurity that reigns throughout international life is paralysing economic relations; the armament race grows ever faster and more frenzied. If this disastrous tendency continues, it is difficult to see any chance of avoiding a general war which would be more terrible than any previous war.

In such circumstances, a reconciliation among the nations—above all, among the great nations on whom the fate of mankind depends—is more necessary than ever. Such a reconciliation is obviously very difficult. We, too, who did not take part in the great war, realise the obstacles that must be encountered by every conciliatory effort in those countries which have suffered the misfortunes of war. Yet, when we look clearly at the calamities that now threaten mankind, we cannot surrender to fatalism, we cannot give up the hope that, in spite of everything, it may be possible, by a supreme effort to achieve reconciliation among the nations. I hope that the negotiations between the States directly concerned, which will probably follow this Council session, may represent an important step towards that reconciliation which alone can establish a lasting peace and give the peoples that sense of security that they so ardently desire.

SPEECH BY M. TITULESCO (ROUMANIA)

The request of France and Belgium to the Council is a matter of the utmost concern to the States of the *Petite Entente*. In the first place, we cannot be indifferent to French security, seeing that, as a result of the bonds which unite us, it forms part of our own security; secondly, in our view, the unilateral repudiation of treaties must of necessity have international consequences by which, not only the diplomatic instrument with which we are at present concerned, but also the foundations of the vast majority of States, the basis of which is respect for the law, would be undermined. Since precedents once established are apt to be repeated, and, since their repetition

may take place in parts of Europe where the nations are not invested with the immense stability which comes from historic tradition, but do possess the great dynamic force of faith in the law, it may well happen that their reactions to infringements of treaties by which they are affected will be far more lively, and that peace will, in consequence, be seriously imperilled.

Finally, we are interested in the French and Belgian request because it affects the whole system of collective security.

Permit me to remind you that, in so far as collective security is concerned, the *Petite Entente* has a record of service which justifies it in drawing attention to the demands of that security with the authority of parties who have submitted to those demands in the interest of the international collectivity.

If the unilateral repudiation of treaties could be accepted without any attendant consequences, that would mean the end of collective security and of the League of Nations. We should return to a world which we believed we had left once for all, a world which would be governed by the law of force instead of the force of law.

If, in the case of a treaty infringement so flagrant as that with which we are concerned; if, in the case of a treaty so important as the Treaty of Locarno, which concerns the security of the whole of Western Europe; if, in the case of two countries of such international significance as France and Belgium, the League of Nations merely legalises the accomplished fact, what are less illustrious States bound to think of the effectiveness of the League as an instrument for safeguarding the peace of the world, and what audacious projects may not be conceived by those who make it their business to overthrow the existing international order?

I am never afraid of plain speaking. If the League of Nations emerges from the present crisis as the vanquished party, it will represent in future a noble ideal of the past rather than a living reality of the present.

That being so, the countries of the *Petite Entente* have only one answer to give to the request of the French and Belgian Governments. That answer is: "Yes! We hold that the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno have been infringed."

I know that the material facts which constitute for us this infringement of the Treaties are not contested by the German Government

and that the latter contends that its action was forced upon it by the action of France, and that, in any case, it offers to substitute for the former security which it has destroyed a new plan of security which it is ready to discuss at once.

Let me say in answer that no subjective considerations can establish the right to be judge in one's own cause—especially when it is remembered that the Treaty of Locarno contains a provision for arbitration on any disputes which may arise between the signatories of the Treaty, and that the French Government has proposed to refer the issue of the compatibility of the Franco-Soviet Pact with the Locarno Treaty to the Hague Court—on the understanding, of course, that the German Government undertakes to give effect to the Court's decision, since otherwise there could be no purpose in referring the issue raised by Germany to the Court.

As regards the new security plan proposed by the German Government, the States of the *Petite Entente* have no objection to its being discussed, since they have no objection to discussing any contribution to peace which may be made by any country; but the discussion must take place at the proper moment, and that means after the previous question raised by the French and Belgian Governments has been satisfactorily settled.

So far as we are concerned, the action of the German Government has not in any way affected the validity of the Locarno Treaty. On the contrary, since the latter was concluded with an eye to the very circumstances which have developed, it is only now that it has really come into operation, and that all its effects are being felt.

But the binding force of a contract must not exclude an understanding with a view to supplementary contracts.

Provided the request of the French and Belgian Governments is given a satisfactory solution, recognising the rights of the applicants and thereby eliminating the danger of establishing a precedent, whether for Europe in general or for Central and South-Eastern Europe in particular, an understanding between all the Powers concerned and Germany with a view to the establishment of a lasting peace, one and indivisible, in all parts of Europe without distinction, would be welcomed by the States of the *Petite Entente*.

I have the honour, on behalf of the States of the *Petite Entente*, to give my vote in favour of the Franco-Belgian resolution before us.

SPEECH BY M. MONTEIRO (PORTUGAL)

My Government considers that the occupation of the demilitarised zone of the Rhineland by the German army is a unilateral breach of Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles and Article 2 of the Locarno Treaty.

For centuries past, my country has based its international activity upon respect for law and the inviolability of treaties. In our belief, neither order nor prosperity nor peace is possible unless those principles are observed. If ever the peoples lose confidence in what is already commonly spoken of as the sanctity of treaties, international relations will be disturbed for a long period, collective security will be but a dream, and the task of the Members of the Council, and of the League of Nations as a whole, will be no more than a sterile combat of words against the law of force.

I owe it to the unchangeable spirit of international co-operation in the loyal performance of our obligations, which, my country has always shown, and to our faith, which is unshakable despite the great responsibilities we have to assume, to note, with regret, that a breach of a Treaty has been committed.

But the Council owes to the peoples of the world something more than this pronouncement, which would perhaps be an empty one, and one that would only diminish our authority in the world, if it were not followed by acts which would strengthen public confidence in us. We owe it to the peoples to do everything possible to ensure that peace shall not be an evanescent reality. As the representative of Italy so well put it a little while ago, it is our duty to give our countries the assurance that the outcome of this crisis will not be a Europe even more divided and more enfeebled than it is to-day.

To achieve this aim, we must in every case, whatever sacrifices or suffering may be involved, renew the eternal struggle for the right, which is as old as mankind.

We associate ourselves with our fellow-Members of the Council in their desire for peace and justice—justice, not only in fundamental questions, but also in methods. We shall give our full and whole-hearted co-operation to those who undertake the arduous task of reconstructing the safeguards of peace in a formula of general conciliation which all can put into effect.

*(League of Nations, C./91st Session [Extr.] P. V. 4 (1).)*

61.

SPEECH BY AMBASSADOR VON RIBBENTROP AT THE  
MEETING OF THE LEAGUE COUNCIL IN LONDON,  
ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 19, 1936

The German Government has accepted the invitation of the Council of the League to its present session, in the endeavour to do its part towards clearing up the existing political situation. For this purpose, it has instructed me to present to the statesmen here assembled its views on the requests of the French and Belgian Governments concerning the Locarno Agreement, with which the Council has to deal at its present session. After long and careful consideration, the German Government has determined to lay aside the formal and comprehensible considerations arising from the fact that Germany is not at present a Member of the League of Nations, and from the fact that the agenda of the present session is based upon a Treaty which Germany must regard as no longer valid, and that through no fault of her own.

I personally have undertaken this mission with great satisfaction, because I am convinced that no nation has ever presented a juster cause, in the highest sense of the word, before this council of nations; further, I earnestly hope that this first resumption of relations between my country and the League of Nations may mark a turning-point in the history of Europe, after the many errors and confusions of the unfortunate war and post-war periods.

The fundamental attitude of Germany to the problem of Locarno, which is under discussion here to-day, has been fully presented to the world in the speech of the German Chancellor of March 7th. Nevertheless, the fact that the French and Belgian Governments have felt obliged to present the requests that are under discussion here to-day makes it necessary that I should once more present the German view concisely to the Council, in order that, in coming to its final conclusion, the Council may be able to do full justice to the important considerations which compelled Germany to take the step which she took on March 7th.

The purpose of the Rhine Pact of Locarno was to prevent for ever the resort to force between France and Belgium on the one side, and Germany on the other side. This agreement was guaranteed

by England and Italy. It was confirmed that, in the event of a violation of this Treaty, the League of Nations should be called upon to decide which State was the aggressor.

It is well known that, even at that time, certain difficulties arose from the fact that treaties of alliance between France and Poland and France and Czechoslovakia already existed, which did not seem in themselves to fit into the framework of these clearly defined western peace arrangements. In the end, however, Germany accepted these alliances, because in their structure they adjusted themselves to the Locarno Agreement.

But this Locarno Agreement, which was endorsed by the new National Socialist Government, placed a unilateral burden upon Germany, involving the extremely hard obligation to maintain the demilitarisation of the Rhineland zone, as dictated in the Treaty of Versailles. One of the most important and densely populated regions of Germany, with fifteen million purely German inhabitants, was thus to remain without any military protection.

I believe that, from the standpoint of a higher justice, such a limitation of the most elementary sovereign rights alone would, in the long run, be almost more than could be borne by any nation. If the German people has nevertheless borne it for so many years, it did so in the expectation that in return the other parties to the Pact of Locarno would fulfil their much lighter obligations, at least as loyally as Germany had fulfilled hers.

The German Chancellor has repeatedly given public expression to this feeling of the entire German nation since he took over the Government in 1933.

But what has happened?

During the course of last year, one of the parties to the Locarno Agreement—France—began to develop ever closer relations with the Soviet Union. Then came the disturbing news of a Franco-Soviet military alliance and, at the same time, of a similar alliance between Soviet Russia and Czechoslovakia. For a long time this news was uncertain. It was denied, then admitted, then denied again, until one day, to the surprise of the other Powers—which, until then, had been kept in at least official ignorance—the new Franco-Soviet military alliance was made public.

The anxiety created by this alliance, and its effects for Germany,



can be gathered from the following facts, the gravity of which is obvious:

(1) This alliance represents the combination of two States which control over 275 million people—if one includes the colonial territories, which could be called upon for military assistance.

(2) The two contracting parties are each regarded at present as the strongest military Powers in the world.

(3) This alliance is directed exclusively against Germany.

(4) Soviet Russia, which herself is separated from Germany by a considerable distance and, thus, could not be attacked by her, has indirectly pushed herself forward to the German frontier by an analogous military alliance with Czechoslovakia.

(5) According to the terms of this alliance, France and Russia have made themselves the judges in their own cause, in that, under certain circumstances, they will decide for themselves who is the aggressor, even without a resolution or recommendation of the League of Nations, and can thus resort to war against Germany at their own discretion.

This strict obligation on the part of the two States arises clearly and unambiguously from No. 1 of the Protocol of Signature to the Treaty of Alliance.

That means that, in a given case, France can decide, at her own discretion, whether Germany or Soviet Russia is the aggressor. She makes the sole reservation that any military action in conformity with such decision taken on her own initiative should not make her liable to the imposition of sanctions on the part of the guarantor Powers of the Locarno Pact: Great Britain and Italy.

From a legal and practical political point of view, this objection is irrelevant.

*Legally* the situation is as follows: How will France, after deciding on her own who is the aggressor, be able to foresee the attitude which the guarantors of the Locarno Treaty, called upon to pronounce on the matter, will adopt towards her decision?

The reply to the question whether, in any given case, France might have to fear such sanctions depends, in practice, not only on the loyal fulfilment of the treaty stipulations by the guarantors, which the German Government has not the slightest intention of doubting, but also on a number of conditions of fact whose probability or improb-

ability cannot be foreseen. Moreover, the view taken of the relationship between the new alliance and the Locarno Agreement cannot possibly be made dependent upon the contractual relations between France and Germany on the one hand, and the guarantor Powers on the other hand, but solely on the direct contractual relations between France and Germany themselves. Otherwise Germany would be expected to tolerate tacitly any violation of the Locarno Agreement by France, trusting that the guarantor Powers would look after her security. That was certainly not the meaning of the Locarno Agreement.

From the *political* point of view, the situation presents itself as follows: It is cold comfort for a State, which has been attacked by such an overwhelming military coalition as the result of a decision necessarily faulty because it is taken prematurely by a country which is judge and party in its own cause, to be put in the right through subsequent sanctions against its aggressors, adjudged as such by the Council of the League of Nations. Indeed, what sanctions could be enforced against so gigantic a coalition extending from the Far East to the Channel? These two States are such powerful and important Members of the League of Nations, and such determining factors from a military point of view, that for all practical purposes sanctions against them are at the very outset inconceivable.

It follows that this second limitation, which is based on the consideration of possible sanctions, is, from the practical point of view, quite irrelevant.

Now, however, I should like to ask the members of the Council to consider, not only the legal and the practical and political significance of this obligation, on the part of France, to take independent action, but also, and above all, to ask themselves whether it is probable that the German Government which signed the Locarno Agreements would ever have done so if the Treaty had contained such one-sided burdens as are now found to be in it.

Germany and France, by virtue of the Locarno Agreements, had renounced any resort to armed force in their mutual relations. Germany, on her part, as already stated, tacitly accepted the fact of the existence of treaties of mutual assistance with Poland and Czechoslovakia adjusted to the Locarno Pact. But subsequently to interpret the Locarno Pact as leaving it open to one of the parties

to contract, without restriction, new mutual-assistance obligations of a military character against the other party, over and above those existing when the Pact was signed, is absolutely impossible, according to the firm conviction and legal opinion of the German Government, having regard to its political obligations towards the German nation. It would mean, in the long run, that, in any conflict between Germany and a third State, France would be entitled to intervene as she thought fit, with the result that Germany (who has herself entered into no military alliances with other States) would become subject, under the treaty, to conditions of so unequal a character that no State could reasonably be expected to accept them.

If, at the time when the Locarno Pact was concluded, such an interpretation had been agreed to, it would have been expressly noted in the agreement in which each separate point is considered so thoroughly and in such detail. But, up to the time of the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Treaty, no attempt was ever made to give the text subsequently such an interpretation. In any case, the German Government, which in this matter is alone competent, must declare, so far as it is concerned, that, under such conditions, the Locarno Agreement would never have been signed; for, if such conceptions had existed at the time, it would have been the duty of the contracting parties to draw attention to them. This, however, was not done then nor at any other subsequent time until France gave the pact an extended interpretation and thereby destroyed its original meaning.

Over and above that, however, the alliance between France and Soviet Russia, according to the historical view of the German Government, has yet another significance: it involves a complete disturbance of the present European equilibrium, and therewith the destruction of the fundamental political and legal conditions under which the Locarno Agreement was signed.

The assertion of the French Government, that this new pact was necessary as a counterweight to German rearmament, is obviously due to a misconception, for the Locarno Agreement presupposed the restoration of equality of rights in military matters between Germany and France, inasmuch as it confirmed, in its Final Protocol, the obligation of France and of other States to disarm as Germany had done. And it is only because France refused to establish equality

of armaments in this way that Germany was compelled to take its own course to attain the goal of effective equilibrium as prescribed by the Locarno Pact itself.

It is not necessary for me to state here that Germany, on her part, has not entered into any kind of military alliance.

The German Government therefore takes the view that the Franco-Soviet Treaty, both in its letter and in its political meaning, is in contradiction to the Western-European security system of Locarno, and that, accordingly, the Rhine Pact of Locarno has been violated by the unilateral action of France and is thus, in point of fact, terminated.

As the members of the Council know, Germany took steps, immediately after the publication of the Franco-Soviet Treaty, to point out to the other signatory Powers of the Locarno Agreement the incompatibility of this alliance with the Pact of Locarno. Moreover, Germany maintained this standpoint in the diplomatic negotiations that followed. Nevertheless, France adhered to the established facts and finally proceeded with the ratification by its legislative bodies.

The German Chancellor could not indefinitely remain inactive in view of these developments. In the years since he became German Chancellor, he has again and again extended the hand of friendship towards France. He has made quite a number of peace offers to the world.

The offer for absolute disarmament: it was rejected.

The offer of a general equality on a basis of an army of 200,000 men: that too was rejected.

The offer of an army of 300,000 men: it also was rejected.

The offer of an air pact was rejected on the ground that such a pact could only be agreed to in combination with Germany's adhesion to an Eastern Pact.

The offer of a comprehensive European peace settlement of May 21st, 1935, was simply ignored, with the exception of the proposal which subsequently led to the Anglo-German Naval Agreement.

Again and again the German Chancellor has put forward his peace proposals, and—I can here say—he and the whole of Germany hoped that the Franco-Soviet Agreement would not be ratified. When the French Chamber ratified the Franco-Soviet Pact, however, the Ger-

man Chancellor, conscious of his obligations and his responsibility for the destiny and the security of the people entrusted to him, drew the only possible consequence of France's action. He re-established the full sovereignty of the Reich over the whole German territory. The determining factor in this decision of the German Government was the political consideration and its regard, in accordance with its actual duty, for the fact that:

(1) The Pact of Locarno, through the unilateral action of France, has been stripped of its value and thus destroyed both in its letter and in its historical meaning.

(2) In view of the new Franco-Russian military alliance, Germany must claim without further delay the most elementary right of a nation to take measures to secure its own territory. The German Government must therefore reject, as unfounded and unjust, the reproach of a unilateral breach of the Locarno Treaty. It was no longer possible for it to break a treaty which, in point of fact, by the action taken by the other party, had ceased to exist.

Furthermore, it is inadmissible that one party should act against the letter and the spirit of a treaty while at the same time requiring the other to maintain the treaty in the same letter and spirit.

On March 7th, Germany did nothing but draw the natural consequences, as a great Power, from a state of affairs which had come about through no fault of her own. I am firmly convinced that every one of the responsible statesmen here present, who love their nation as the German Chancellor loves his, would have done exactly the same under similar circumstances.

At this juncture, I would like to make the following declaration on behalf of the German Government:

If one State suddenly concludes a military pact against another, such action constitutes just as much a new state of affairs as the consequent reaction on the part of the State against which the pact is directed, particularly if this reaction involves nothing but the restoration of full sovereignty within its own boundaries. If, therefore, the reproach of unilateral action is put forward, then, indeed, Germany must reject that reproach so long as it is not also put forward against France. The representatives of the French Government have, it is true, pointed out, in this regard, that Germany had the possibility, indeed the duty, of bringing the question of the

compatibility of the new military alliance with the Locarno Agreement in the first place before an international tribunal, and some Members of the Council have again raised the question of the settlement of the dispute by arbitration. I am not going to dwell upon the question why France, in presence of the German representations, did not take this course before the coming into force of the alliance. Neither am I going to dwell on the other important question whether it would be admissible at all to submit the scope of a provision like that of Article 16 of the Covenant—because this would be the article involved in the present case—to a judicial body for decision. It is sufficient, in my opinion, to refer to the decisive fact that we are here concerned with a problem which, besides its purely legal aspects, is of undoubted political importance of the first magnitude, and its proper clarification and solution cannot therefore be expected of a judicial body.

It would have been just as unlikely for the German Government—and I deeply regret to have to say this—to have obtained satisfaction by way of negotiations with the signatory Powers. After all the experiences of the last few years, and after the way in which things have developed—for which development the German Government is not to blame—it was clear to the German Government that this method would never have achieved practical results. The French Government and the Governments of the other signatory Powers have, in diplomatic discussions, ignored the German arguments for reasons which are unknown to us, and which are still incomprehensible to us to-day.

Two things were plain to the German Government:

- (1) France was no longer prepared to give up the Treaty with the Soviet Union; and
- (2) France would not have been prepared to grant Germany the only possible compensation for the coming into force of this alliance—namely, the restoration of Germany's sovereignty over the western provinces of the Reich.

It was hardly to be expected therefore, after the countless sad experiences which, as I have said, Germany has had, for years, with her numerous proposals, that these conditions would be accepted. Further, it is clear that, when a great Power like France can, as an act of sovereignty, decide to enter into military alliances of such a

vast extent without considering existing treaties, another great Power like Germany possesses at least the right to assure the protection of the whole area of the Reich by restoring, within her own boundaries, the natural rights of sovereignty which are granted to all nations.

I have noted very carefully the observations made by the representatives of other Powers on the Council. But I regret to have to say that none of them has taken into account the German ideas which I have just developed once more. I am glad, however, to note that the representatives of some other Powers have made far-reaching observations opening up new prospects for the future, and I am now going to deal with this constructive part of the problem.

Now that the restoration of the sovereignty of the Reich over its whole territory has been accomplished and the equality of rights ardently desired for so many years has thus at last been established, the German people are willing and ready finally to close the sad chapter of moral and legal confusions and misunderstandings in Europe, of which they have been the chief victim. With the termination of the Locarno Treaty, the last relic of those discriminating conditions, born of the spirit of hatred and imposed on a great people, has vanished too. A heavy moral and political burden has been removed from the German people, which now at last, after seventeen years, sees itself re-established in honour and freedom.

This German people has now only one sincere desire: to live in peace and friendship with its neighbours and from now onwards to co-operate to the best of its ability in the building-up of a real European solidarity. Germany wishes in future to make her arrangements with the other States free and unhampered as a sovereign nation. In doing so, she wishes to terminate the long period of Franco-German tensions, crises and wars, and wishes finally, on her side, to pave the way for a better future of understanding and friendship between the two great nations. This is the wish the German people cherish within their hearts.

The historical and unique offer which the German Chancellor made to the world for securing the peace of Europe was conceived in this spirit: an agreement guaranteeing the peace of Europe for twenty-five years—that is to say, a work of peace is to be created, stretching far beyond the generation of the men called upon by history to achieve this work to-day.

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I am well aware that the Council is not the competent body for dealing with the suggestions, but I want nevertheless to call its attention at this stage to their secular importance. Together with the restoration of German sovereignty, they represent one political unit and can, therefore, not be left out of account by the Council in any endeavour to reach historically sound conclusions on the political character and the mentality underlying an action which, by removing the last remnants of discrimination among the great European nations, lays the foundation for a new great European community of the future. The indispensable condition for economic and social prosperity of this European family of nations is the consolidation of peace which, in its beneficial effects, cannot be replaced by any aggressive action, however successful such action might be.

It is unnecessary for me to comment upon the substance and the importance of the German proposals. They are so wide and comprehensive that any statesman who really cares for the well-being of Europe must wish to see them realised soon in one shape or another.

In view of this situation, I wish to express the hope that the Council, forgetting the susceptibilities of the moment, will appreciate the importance of the historical decision it is called upon to take and which is to pave the way for a better future for our peaceless Europe.

*(League of Nations, C./91st Session (Extr.) P. V. 6 (1).)*

62.

MEETING OF THE LEAGUE COUNCIL IN LONDON,  
ON THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 19, 1936

SPEECH BY MR. BRUCE (REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA AND PRESIDENT  
OF THE COUNCIL)

Before the vote is taken on the resolution that has been submitted by the representative of France on behalf of France and Belgium, it is necessary that for a few moments I should dissociate myself from my position as President of the Council and express, as the representative of Australia, the views of my Government.

I listened this morning with great attention to the very full statement which was made by the German representative. It has, however,



not altered my views as to the proper course which it is my duty to pursue in regard to the immediate issue that is before the Council. That issue arises out of the Locarno Agreements, to which some of us at this Council table were not parties. That fact, however, does not mean that we have not a very great interest and a great responsibility in regard to the situation which has arisen.

We have one immediate duty. That duty arises under Article 4 of the Treaty of Locarno, which reads:

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

“As soon as the Council of the League of Nations is satisfied that such violation or breach has been committed, it will notify its finding without delay to the Powers signatory of the present Treaty. . . .”

The Governments of France and Belgium have brought to the notice of the Council of the League circumstances such as are contemplated in Article 4, and the representative of France, on behalf of France and Belgium, has submitted a resolution inviting the Council to declare that the German Government has committed a breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles and of the Locarno Treaty.

Upon that resolution, it is now the duty of the Council to pronounce. On behalf of the Government of Australia, I declare that I propose to vote in favour of the resolution.

The duties of the Council, however, are not concluded by such a pronouncement and the notification of the decision of the Council to the signatories of the Treaty of Locarno. A further duty is imposed on the Council because the Treaty of Locarno was made part of the general system for the maintenance of security and world peace which is the basis of the Covenant of the League. Article 7 of the Treaty of Locarno stipulates:

“The present Treaty, which is designed to ensure the maintenance of peace, and is in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations, shall not be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world.”

The issue which confronts us to-day is fundamental to the whole system that it has been the endeavour of the nations to create since the termination of the world war. That system is based on the scrupulous observance of treaties and upon the fact that no Power can free itself from the obligations it has undertaken by unilateral action.

It is now for the Powers primarily concerned to take counsel with a view to resolving the situation which now confronts us.

During the period that must elapse while these important negotiations are proceeding, it is essential that all the Powers concerned should individually be prepared to make some contribution towards the maintenance of the situation until a satisfactory solution can be found. I am not without hope that such a measure of co-operation will be forthcoming. The statements made by the representatives of France and Belgium showed, under the most trying conditions, a restraint and a moderation that have impressed the world.

In many speeches, the German Chancellor has expressed his willingness and his desire to live in peace and friendship and to co-operate in creating a true European solidarity. That sentiment was again reiterated on behalf of the German people by their representative this morning.

Surely, in this atmosphere, it will be possible for a solution to be found.

But behind the immediate issue which confronts us is the wide question of the whole system for the maintenance of security and peace in the world. To the solution of that problem must be addressed the minds, not only of the Locarno Powers and the States Members of the League, but of all nations.

In the light of the experience of the years since the war, it is necessary that we should review the whole system of co-operation and common action for the maintenance of these great ideals.

In this task, it is the duty of the Council of the League to give a lead.

Unless as a result of that review we can so strengthen the system as to ensure the fulfilment of its obligations by every nation, it is idle to persist in an ideal which engenders a sense of false security and which creates incalculable dangers.

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If there are no other observations, I now propose to proceed to the vote.

I think it would be desirable that I should read to you the exact manner in which the vote will be taken:

The representatives on the Council will vote by roll-call in the following order:

- (1) The members of the Council other than the President and the parties to the Treaty;
- (2) The President of the Council;
- (3) The Guarantor Powers;
- (4) The Guaranteed Powers (the votes of these Powers will be recorded but will not be counted in calculating unanimity).

The order of voting for each category will be the French alphabetical order of the States represented on the Council. The actual order of voting will therefore be as follows; Argentine Republic, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Spain, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Turkey, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Australia, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Belgium, France.

Representatives will vote either "Yes", "No", or "I abstain".

Before calling the roll, I think it would be proper for me to read the terms of the resolution, as follows:

"The Council of the League of Nations,

"On the application of Belgium and France, made to it on March 8th, 1936:

"Finds that the German Government has committed a breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles by causing, on March 7th, 1936, military forces to enter and establish themselves in the demilitarised zone referred to in Article 42 and the following articles of that Treaty and in the Treaty of Locarno;

"Instructs the Secretary-General, in application of Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Treaty of Locarno, to notify this finding of the Council without delay to the Powers signatories of that Treaty."

*A vote was taken by roll-call.*

THE RESULT OF THE VOTING

*For the resolution:*

Argentine Republic, Denmark, Spain, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Australia, United

Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, France.

*Against the resolution:*

Germany.

*Abstention:*

Chile.

*Absent:*

Ecuador.

In recording his vote, M. Edwards, the Chilean representative, made the following declaration:

“As the resolution proposed establishes a close connection between the violation of the Treaty of Versailles (which has not been disputed and is recognised by Chile as a fact, in respect of which she would be prepared to give an affirmative vote) and that of the Treaty of Locarno (which is disputed on legal grounds, with the result that Chile is unable to pronounce on the matter in the absence of an advisory opinion of the Permanent Court of International Justice), and as Chile is not a signatory of the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno, I abstain from voting.”

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

The result of the voting is that the resolution has been carried unanimously. There was one abstention and one negative vote, that of one of the guaranteed Powers under the Treaty of Locarno, whose votes are not counted in determining unanimity. I therefore declare the resolution *carried unanimously*.

I understand that the representative of Germany desires to make a short statement.

PROTEST BY AMBASSADOR VON RIBBENTROP (GERMANY)

The German Government is profoundly convinced that it must reject the Council's resolution and must enter a formal protest against it. It is not Germany which has broken the Treaty of Locarno; it is France, by concluding a military alliance with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Germany's act of March 7th, by which she re-established her full sovereignty over her territory—the elementary right of a nation in the defence of its frontiers—is solely the consequence of France's act. This morning, I made a comprehensive statement of the German

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Government's views, from the juridical and political standpoint, and if the Council had had more time to study that statement, it would, I think, have arrived at a different resolution.

The German Government and the whole German nation are convinced that the resolution which the Council has adopted will not be ratified by history.

STATEMENT BY M. FLANDIN (FRANCE)

The representative of France would not have made any declaration if the representative of the German Government had not thought fit to do so. As it is, I must point out that, under international law, no one has the right to take the law into his own hands, and I solemnly repeat here the declaration I have already made to the effect that I, for my part, am ready, if the German Government so desires and requests, to have the dispute which the representative of the German Government has seen fit to raise again, settled by the highest international court—namely, the Permanent Court of International Justice, which is placed under the high authority of the League of Nations.

*(League of Nations, C./91st Session (Extr.) P. V. 6 (1).)*

63.

TEXT OF PROPOSALS DRAWN UP BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF BELGIUM, FRANCE, UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, AND ITALY, LONDON, MARCH 19, 1936

The representatives of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Italy, having met to examine the situation created by the communication addressed to their respective Governments by the German Government on the 7th March, 1936.

I

Take note of the draft resolution submitted to the Council of the League of Nations in the name of Belgium and France, by which the

fact of the breach by Germany of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been established with a view to giving notice thereof to the Powers Signatories of the Treaty of Locarno.

They further take note of the support given to this draft resolution by the Governments of the United Kingdom and Italy.

## II

Whereas:

(1) Scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations is a fundamental principle of international life and an essential condition of the maintenance of peace;

(2) It is an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a Treaty nor modify the stipulations thereof except with the consent of the other Contracting Parties;

(3) The breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles and the unilateral action taken by the German Government in violation of the Treaty of Locarno without recourse to the procedure laid down by the Treaty of Locarno for the settlement of disputes conflict with these principles;

Consider that:

(1) By this unilateral action the German Government confers upon itself no legal rights;

(2) This unilateral action by introducing a new disturbing element into the international situation must necessarily appear to be a threat to European security.

## III

Declare that nothing that has happened before or since the said breach of the Treaty of Locarno can be considered as having freed the Signatories of that Treaty from any of their obligations or guarantees and that the latter subsist in their entirety.

Undertake forthwith to instruct their General Staffs to enter into contact with a view to arranging the technical conditions in which the obligations which are binding upon them should be carried out in case of unprovoked aggression.

IV

Decide to invite the German Government to lay before the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague the argument which it claims to draw from the incompatibility between the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance and the Treaty of Locarno, and to undertake to accept as final the decision of the said Court, without prejudice to the operation of paragraph 7 (2) below.

The French Government declares that it has already agreed that the said Court should be seized of the question stated above.

V

Decide in the name of their Governments jointly to invite the German Government to subscribe to the following provisional arrangements, which shall remain valid until the conclusion of the negotiations referred to in paragraph 7 below:—

(1) All despatch of troops or war material into the zone defined by Article 42 of the Treaty of Versailles will be immediately suspended; in consequence, the forces stationed there will not exceed . . . . battalions and . . . . batteries of artillery (insert here the official figures given by the German Government);

(2) The paramilitary forces (S.A., S.S., Labour Corps and other organisations) stationed in the said zone will be strictly maintained as they were before the 7th March, 1936; in particular they shall in no case be formed into large units or serve directly or indirectly for the reinforcement of troops;

(3) No works of fortification or preparation of groundworks shall be proceeded with in the said zone. No landing ground will be laid out, equipped or improved there.

The Governments of France and of Belgium undertake similarly to suspend during the period any despatch of troops into the zones adjoining the frontiers between their countries and Germany.

VI

Decide to take, for the same period, all the necessary measures with a view to:—

(1) Create an international force, including detachments from the armies of the guarantor Powers, to be stationed, with the

agreement of all the Governments concerned, in a zone contained between the Belgian-German and Franco-German frontiers on one side, and on the other a line situated to the East of the said frontiers and following them at a distance of approximately 20 kilom., this zone being entirely reserved for occupation by the said international force;

(2) Set up an international commission whose duty it shall be to supervise the carrying out of the obligations undertaken by the Powers which have formed the above-mentioned force, as well as by Belgium, France and Germany for the eventual execution of paragraphs V and VI (1) above.

## VII

Taking note of the proposals made by Germany in the memorandum communicated to them on the 7th March,

Decide, so far as they are concerned—

To propose to the German Government, if that Government explicitly accepts the invitations addressed to it in pursuance of the preceding paragraphs, that it should take part in negotiations which would be based in particular on the following elements:—

(1) Examination of the proposals Nos. 2 to 5 made by Germany in the memorandum of the 7th March;

(2) Revision of the status of the Rhineland;

(3) Drawing up of mutual assistance pacts open to all the signatories of the Treaty of Locarno, and intended to reinforce their security.

So far as concerns the Four Powers represented in London, the reinforcement of their security provided for will include in particular obligations of mutual assistance between Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Italy, or any of them, with suitable provisions to ensure prompt action by the signatories in case of need as well as technical arrangements for the preparation of such measures as would ensure the effective execution of the obligations undertaken.

Further, the four Powers declare that they have agreed to press in the course of the negotiations for the adoption of provisions intended to prohibit or to limit the subsequent establishment of fortifications in a zone to be determined.



VIII

Considering that the maintenance of peace and the organisation of collective security can only be assured by the respect for treaties and the limitation of armaments; that the re-establishment of economic relations between the nations on a healthy basis is equally necessary to the process of reconstruction,

Declare themselves ready—

To support the introduction at the Council of the League of Nations of resolutions proposing to invite all the nations concerned to an international conference which would in particular examine—

(1) Agreements organising on a precise and effective basis the system of collective security, and paying attention to the definition of the conditions in which Article XVI of the Covenant of the League of Nations should be applied;

(2) Agreements tending to assure the effective limitation of armaments;

(3) International arrangements having as their object the extension of economic relations and the organisation of commerce between the nations;

(4) The proposals 6 and 7 made by the German Government in their memorandum of the 7th March, as well as the suggestions made subsequently in regard to Austria and Czechoslovakia.

IX

Recalling that, under Article 7 of the Treaty of Locarno, the obligations devolving upon their respective Governments do not restrict the duty of the League of Nations to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world;

Referring to the resolution of the Council of the League of Nations<sup>1</sup> of the 17th April, 1935, regarding the course to be adopted by the members of the League of Nations in the event of the unilateral repudiation of undertakings concerning the security of peoples and the maintenance of peace in Europe;

Decide—

(1) To notify the Council of the League of Nations, under Article 11 of the Covenant, of the unilateral action taken by

<sup>1</sup> Printed above, p. 106.

Germany, action which appears a danger for European security and a threat to peace;

(2) Consequently to propose the annexed resolutions to the Council of the League of Nations, it being understood that the German Government would be entitled to present its observations on the subject.

DRAFT RESOLUTION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE COUNCIL OF THE  
LEAGUE OF NATIONS

I. The Council:

Recalling that it has itself on several occasions recognised, as has also the Assembly, the importance of the Treaties of Locarno from the point of view of the maintenance of peace and security.

Considering that:

(1) Scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations is a fundamental principle of international life and an essential condition of the maintenance of peace;

(2) It is an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty nor modify the stipulations thereof unless with the consent of the other contracting parties;

(3) The breach of Article 43 of the Treaty of Versailles and the unilateral action taken by the German Government in violation of the Treaty of Locarno without recourse to the procedure laid down by the Treaty of Locarno for the settlement of disputes, conflicts with these principles;

Considers that:

(1) By this unilateral action the German Government confers upon itself no legal rights;

(2) This unilateral action, by introducing a new disturbing element into the international situation, must necessarily appear to be a threat to European security.

Entrusts a committee composed of . . . with the task of making proposals to it with regard to the practical measures to be recommended to the members of the League of Nations.

II. Considering:

That the German Government has claimed that the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance is incompatible with the Treaty of

Locarno, and that in consequence of this incompatibility that Government was justified, not only in denouncing the said Treaty, but also in introducing its troops into the demilitarized zone,

That there thus arises a juridical question which might be usefully taken before the Permanent Court of International Justice if the interested Powers were to declare themselves ready to comply with the decision of the Court, as the French Government for its part has already agreed to do,

The Council:

Invites the German Government to notify the Permanent Court of International Justice of the question thus defined and in the conditions indicated above, and to request it to give its decision as soon as possible, it being understood that the parties will at once comply with the ruling of the Court.

III. Considering:

That the unilateral action of Germany has necessarily appeared to be a threat to European peace, and that in consequence it ought, without prejudice to the application of Articles I and IV of the Locarno Treaty, to bring about on the part of the members of the League of Nations, by application of, and in accordance with the terms of Article 11 of the Covenant, the adoption of any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations;

The Council takes note:

(1) Of the declaration drawn up in the name of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Italy, as regards the maintenance in force for those Powers of the rights and obligations resulting from the Treaty of Locarno;

(2) Of the communications made to it by the Governments of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Italy on the subject of the measures contemplated in respect of the situation created by the violation of the zone defined in Article 42 of the Treaty of Versailles.

LETTERS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ITALY TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF BELGIUM AND FRANCE

At the moment when the representatives of Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy have just decided, as provided in to-day's

arrangement, the common line of conduct of their respective Governments, I am authorised to give you the official assurance that, if the effort of conciliation attempted in the said arrangement should fail, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom/the Italian Government:—

1.—(a) Will at once consider, in consultation with your Government and the French/Belgian Government, the steps to be taken to meet the new situation thus created;

(b) Will immediately come to the assistance of your Government, in accordance with the Treaty of Locarno, in respect of any measures which shall be jointly decided upon;

(c) Will, in return for reciprocal assurances from your Government, take, in consultation with your Government, all practical measures available to His Majesty's Government for the purpose of ensuring the security of your country against unprovoked aggression;

(d) Will, for this purpose, establish or continue the contact between the General Staffs of our two countries contemplated in paragraph III (2) of the said arrangement;

2. And furthermore, will subsequently endeavour at the Council of the League of Nations to secure the formulation by the latter of all useful recommendations for the maintenance of peace and the respect for international law.

(Cmd. 5134.)

*As Italy would not sign the above note before the raising of the sanctions imposed on her as the result of the Abyssinian conflict, the obligation to institute General Staff Discussions was in the meantime restricted to Great Britain, in the duplicate notes of the British Foreign Minister, Mr. Eden, to the French and Belgian Ambassadors in London. These notes, exchanged after the delivery of the German Peace Plan of March 31st, 1936, but recorded at this point for the sake of the logical development, have the following texts:*

MR. EDEN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO THE  
FRENCH (BELGIAN) AMBASSADOR IN LONDON

I

Your Excellency, *Foreign Office, April 1, 1936.*

I have the honour to hand herewith to your Excellency the letter contemplated in the Text of Proposals drawn up on the 19th March

by the representatives of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Italy. Your Excellency will appreciate that the delivery of this letter in no way implies that in the view of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom the effort of conciliation referred to in this letter has failed. As you are aware, we have to-day received from the German Government certain proposals which we have communicated to your Government and to which we are giving our immediate consideration.

Meanwhile, His Majesty's Government are willing, in accordance with paragraph III of the Proposals, to instruct their General Staffs forthwith to enter into contact with the French (Belgian) General Staffs, with a view to arranging the technical conditions in which the obligations referred to in that paragraph should be carried out in case of unprovoked aggression.

On behalf of His Majesty's Government I have the honour to state that it is understood that this contact between the General Staffs cannot give rise in respect of either Government to any political undertaking, nor to any obligation regarding the organisation of national defence. I shall be glad to have your Excellency's confirmation that this is likewise the understanding of your Government.

His Majesty's Government propose that the conversations between the General Staffs of the two countries, necessary for establishing the contacts in question, should be begun in London.

I am addressing a similar letter to the Belgian (French) Ambassador.

I have, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN

## II

With reference to the "Text of Proposals drawn up by the Representatives of Belgium, France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Italy," dated the 19th March, 1936, I am authorised to give you the official assurance that, if the effort of conciliation attempted in the arrangement there proposed should fail, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom—

1. (a) Will at once consider, in consultation with your Government and the Belgian (French) Government, the steps to be taken to meet the new situation thus created;

PROPOSALS OF THE LOCARNO POWERS, MARCH 19, 1936

(b) Will immediately come to the assistance of your Government, in accordance with the Treaty of Locarno, in respect of any measures which shall be jointly decided upon;

(c) Will, in return for reciprocal assurances from your Government, take, in consultation with your Government, all practical measures available to His Majesty's Government for the purpose of ensuring the security of your country against unprovoked aggression;

(d) Will, for this purpose, establish or continue the contact between the General Staffs of our two countries contemplated in paragraph III (2) of the said arrangement;

2. And, furthermore, will subsequently endeavour at the Council of the League of Nations to secure the formulation by the latter of all useful recommendations for the maintenance of peace and the respect for international law.

THE FRENCH (BELGIAN) AMBASSADOR IN LONDON TO MR. EDEN,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

I

Your Excellency,

*April 1, 1936.*

You were so good as to inform me by your letter of the 1st April that His Majesty's Government, in accordance with paragraph III of the Text of Proposals drawn up in London on the 19th March last by the representatives of Belgium, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Italy, are willing to instruct their General Staffs forthwith to enter into contact with the representatives of the French (Belgian) General Staff, with a view to arranging the technical conditions in which the obligations referred to in that paragraph should be carried out in case of unprovoked aggression.

On behalf of the Government of the French Republic (Belgium), I have the honour to state that it is understood between the two Governments that this contact cannot give rise in respect of either of the interested parties to any political undertaking nor to any obligation regarding the organisation of national defence.

The French (Belgian) Government agrees that the conversations in question should be begun in London.

(*Cmd. 5149*, pp. 4-6.)

II

With reference to the "Text of Proposals drawn up by the Representatives of Belgium, France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Italy," dated the 19th March, 1936, I note that your Excellency has given me an official assurance that, if the effort of conciliation attempted in the arrangement there proposed should fail, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom—

1. (a) Will at once consider, in consultation with your Government and the Belgian (French) Government, the steps to be taken to meet the new situation thus created;

(b) Will immediately come to the assistance of your Government, in accordance with the Treaty of Locarno, in respect of any measures which shall be jointly decided upon;

(c) Will, in return for reciprocal assurances from your Government, take, in consultation with your Government, all practical measures available to His Majesty's Government for the purpose of ensuring the security of your country against unprovoked aggression;

(d) Will, for this purpose, establish or continue the contact between the General Staffs of our two countries contemplated in paragraph III (2) of the said arrangement;

2. And, furthermore, will subsequently endeavour at the Council of the League of Nations to secure the formulation by the latter of all useful recommendations for the maintenance of peace and the respect for international law.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication, and at the same time, in the name of the French Republic (Belgium), to offer the British Government the reciprocal assurances expected in Paragraph 'c' of your note.

(From *Le Temps*, April 4, 1936.)

64.

SPEECH BY MR. EDEN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 20, 1936

I am able to announce that agreement has been reached between the representatives of France, Belgium, Italy and ourselves on proposals to be submitted to our respective governments.

I will, with the permission of the House, now proceed to give an account of the course of the events since I last made my statement to the House on 9th March. On that same afternoon, the House may perhaps recall, my right hon. Friend the Lord Privy Seal and I proceeded to Paris on our way to Geneva for the purpose of holding conversations preliminary to the meeting of the Council of the League. The full difficulties of the situation were already apparent, and, after the preliminary discussion in Paris, it became evident that further consultation with our colleagues in the Government was necessary. In these circumstances, we suggested that convenience and expedition would be best served if not only the meeting of the four Powers signatory to the Locarno Treaties, but also the impending meeting of the League Council, were held here in London. This proposal was readily accepted by all those concerned, and the first meeting in London between the four Locarno Powers was accordingly held on Thursday, 12th March. The House will realise that from the start two wholly separate but cognate sets of discussions have been taking place in London, one between the Locarno Powers and the other before the Council.

The immediate task of the Council was a relatively simple one. It was called upon to pronounce a finding on the question whether the action of the German Government in sending troops into the demilitarised zone on 7th March constituted a unilateral repudiation of its Treaty obligations. The course of the Council proceedings has been made public from day to day, and the House will be already aware that on 19th March this question was answered affirmatively and unanimously by the Council. A dissenting vote was recorded by the German representative, and it may be well if I here say something of the events which preceded his arrival in London. As soon as the appeal of the French and Belgian Governments with regard to Germany's violation of the Treaty of Locarno was received by the League, the Secretary-General sent an intimation of the date, at which the Council would meet to consider this question, to the Members of the League and also to the German Government. To this intimation no reply was received from the German Government. It was, however, thought highly desirable that Germany should be represented at these grave deliberations, and have an opportunity of stating her case on equal terms before a vote was taken. On this basis



a further definite invitation was sent, and I was glad to be able to second this invitation both to the German Ambassador here in London and through His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin. This invitation the German Government accepted and the German Delegation reached London on 18th March. The session of the Council in London has not been terminated by the decision reached yesterday. It is anticipated that a further meeting will be held on Monday, and I may add that the Committee of Thirteen may meet to-morrow to consider the replies of the two parties in the Italo-Abyssinian dispute.

I will now give the House some account of the discussions between the Locarno Powers. These, as the House will readily understand, have been both long and complicated, and have filled to overflowing the brief time at our disposal. On our side the discussions have been carried on, in the main, by the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and myself. It was clear from the outset that the occupation of the demilitarised zone by German troops presented a *fait accompli* which made the opening of negotiations with Germany very difficult. It was strongly held that negotiations could not begin until this breach of international law had been in some measure restored. Immediately on my return from Paris, therefore, I suggested to the German Government that they should make a contribution to ease the situation created by their action. The suggestion was, briefly, that pending negotiations they should withdraw troops in sufficient number to warrant their description of the re-occupation as symbolic, and that, similarly, they should abstain from the construction of fortifications. Though the German Chancellor publicly expressed his willingness not further to increase the number of troops sent in, this was not sufficient to enable much progress to be made. The discussions between the four Locarno Powers which were resumed on 12th March, were most actively pursued thereafter. The time at our disposal in these crowded days was limited, and the discussions have had to be carried on at all hours of the day and into the small hours of the morning. I should like here to pay, if I may, a warm tribute to the energy, patience and equanimity of the representatives of our fellow-signatories.

I will now give the House some particulars of the proposals which have resulted from these conversations. These proposals contain considerable detail, and I can, therefore, only now give a very

general summary. The full text will be available in the Vote Office when I sit down. The main objective of His Majesty's Government is to restore confidence in international law and create conditions in which an effort may be made to rebuild European stability. That has been our objective throughout these days. The restoration of confidence is no easy task, for it has been rudely shaken. Our main difficulty therefore has been to bridge the gap in time which will be necessary to enable negotiations for the re-establishment of a system of security in Europe to be effectually undertaken and carried to a conclusion.

During the interim period which I have described, it is proposed that Germany should be invited to refer to the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague her case as to the incompatibility between the Franco-Soviet Pact and the Treaty of Locarno. It is also proposed, with the assent of the Governments concerned, that an international force including detachments from the armies of the guarantor Powers should be stationed in a narrow zone to the East of the frontier, between Germany and France and Germany and Belgium. It is also proposed that Germany should undertake, during this interim period, not to reinforce the troops which have already been sent into the demilitarised zone, and not to modify the situation of the para-military forces which are stationed there. Germany is also asked not to proceed with fortifications there during this interim period, while the French and Belgian Governments, for their part, would undertake during the same period not to send further troops into the zone adjoining their frontiers with Germany. For our part, in addition to undertaking to supply detachments to an international force, we are making a contribution to the restoration of confidence by joining in a reaffirmation of our Locarno obligations, and by arranging for contacts between the general staffs of the guarantor Powers and those of France and Belgium. I need hardly say that the sole object of these conversations would be to meet the possibility of any unprovoked aggression.

It is proposed to submit to the Council of the League of Nations certain resolutions reaffirming, on the lines of the Resolution adopted by the Council of the League a year ago, after the Stresa meeting, the principle of scrupulous respect for Treaty obligations, proposing the reference to the Permanent Court of International Justice which

I have just mentioned and taking note of the reaffirmation which Belgium, France, Italy and ourselves propose to make of their rights and obligations under the Treaty of Locarno. The Council would also take note of the contemplated measures to which I have referred and which relate to the interim period. The House will, I venture to think, consider that these proposed arrangements to create a sense of security during the period of negotiations are fair and reasonable, and indicate the spirit in which the question has been approached by the French and Belgian Governments. Germany is asked to make certain contributions but, in the situation which has been created by the German re-occupation of the demilitarised zone, I am sure the House will feel that it is very reasonable to ask Germany to make contributions. More particularly is this so in the light of the substantial contributions which resulted from the restraint and moderation displayed by the French and Belgian Governments. If the House will appreciate the position of those Governments when we first met in Paris, and then compare that with the text of the White Paper, they will appreciate how substantial that contribution has been.

As regards the actual negotiations, what is proposed is that in the first instance the five signatories of Locarno should enter into negotiations on the basis, first, of several of the proposals, made in the German Memorandum of 7th March; secondly, of the revision of the status of the Rhineland; and, thirdly, of the drawing up of mutual assistance pacts open to all the signatories of the Treaty of Locarno.

The next stage of negotiation is a World Conference to be held under the auspices of the League of Nations, to consider, in addition to certain other proposals made by the German Chancellor, the questions of security and the limitation of armaments and of economic relations between the nations. Finally, since it is unfortunately necessary, however reluctant we may be to do so, to envisage the possibility of the failure of the proposed negotiations which I have described to the House, it is proposed that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of Italy should address letters to the Governments of France and of Belgium indicating what their position in that event would be. The House will find the terms of these proposed letters in the White Paper.

Such are the proposals which, after strenuous negotiations, have

been referred to our respective Governments. I hope that the House will agree that they are not ill-designed to meet the present grave emergency. So far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, we are prepared to accept these proposals, and it is our most earnest hope that the German Government will also look on them in this light. The German Government have stressed their wish for a relaxation of that tension which can only lead to disaster. It is now for them to show what contributions they are willing to make to this end. Last night I asked Herr von Ribbentrop, the German representative, to come and see me, when I gave him a brief outline of these proposals. His Excellency at once stated that he would take no decision until he had seen the text as a whole, and completely reserved the position of his Government. Late last night I sent to Herr von Ribbentrop the text as soon as it had been approved by the Cabinet.

Such is the present position as it has emerged as a result of this week's intensive efforts. I would stress that in the conversations between the Locarno Powers which have taken place, the object of His Majesty's Government has been two-fold throughout: We have sought to meet the peril—it has been a very real peril—of an immediate and gravely critical international situation, and we have sought to create an opportunity for the settlement of Western Europe on a firm and enduring foundation. In both these arduous tasks we have, we believe, made important progress in the last few days. I can assure the House that the Government will persist without any relaxation in their endeavours.

(*Hansard*, March 20, 1936, cols. 847-52.)

65.

SPEECH BY M. FLANDIN, FRENCH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IN THE CHAMBER, MARCH 20, 1936

Le gouvernement vous apporte, après des journées qui ont été lourdes d'angoisse, la consolidation de la paix.

Il a pu y réussir sans manquer aux principes qu'il avait énoncés dès le premier jour.

En effet, dans la déclaration qu'il avait faite au Parlement le 10 mars, le gouvernement a marqué comment l'initiative prise par l'Allemagne en répudiant le traité de Locarno et en procédant à la réoccupation de la zone démilitarisée affectait non seulement la sécurité propre de la France, mais aussi l'avenir de la paix européenne et les destinées de la Société des nations.

Fidèle aux prescriptions du traité, le gouvernement français a saisi le conseil de la Société des nations en l'invitant à procéder à la constatation de la contravention à laquelle est subordonnée, sauf en cas de péril pressant, la mise en œuvre de l'assistance des puissances garantes.

En me rendant à Londres avec M. Paul-Boncour, j'avais pour mission à la fois de soutenir devant le conseil la requête de la France, et de poursuivre avec les représentants belge, britannique et italien les échanges de vues qui nous permettraient, une fois constatée la contravention allemande à l'article 43 du traité de Versailles, de faire appel dans les conditions appropriées à l'assistance prévue par les traités.

Sur l'initiative du gouvernement français, un premier échange de vues entre les signataires du traité de Locarno avait eu lieu à Paris le 10 mars. Le gouvernement anglais demanda qu'il fût continué à Londres à partir du 12. Nous ne fîmes à cette proposition aucune objection. Elle allait nous permettre, ce dont j'ai eu tout lieu de me féliciter, de faire entendre la voix de la France à Londres, où elle avait cessé depuis quelques mois d'être écoutée et comprise. Il était important qu'elle le fût, car la sécurité française ne devait souffrir aucune atteinte du geste de l'Allemagne et le principe du respect des traités devait, dans l'intérêt de la collectivité elle-même, être sauvegardé. Si disposé qu'il fût à engager des négociations avec l'Allemagne, le gouvernement français ne pouvait accepter d'être mis en présence du fait accompli; il ne pouvait admettre d'entrer dans des pourparlers avant que le respect de la loi internationale eût été à nouveau affirmé.

Les négociations se sont poursuivies du 12 au 19 mars de jour et de nuit, on pourrait presque dire sans interruption.

Elles ont abouti d'abord à la constatation faite à l'unanimité par le conseil de la Société des nations de la violation par l'Allemagne de l'article 43 du traité de Versailles et du traité de Locarno. Cette con-

station a été faite après que le conseil de la Société des nations eut entendu les arguments de la délégation allemande. L'Allemagne ne pourra plus prétendre ainsi que son geste a été condamné sans qu'elle ait pu tenter de le justifier.

Elles ont abouti ensuite à des textes auxquels les gouvernements intéressés ont donné leur sanction.

Je vais analyser rapidement les dispositions intervenues d'un commun accord.

Le gouvernement français aurait souhaité que fût intégralement rétabli le règne de la loi internationale par le retour à la situation qui existait en Rhénanie avant le 7 mars. Ce résultat pouvait sans doute être atteint, si les puissances signataires s'étaient trouvées d'accord pour exercer à Berlin la pression suffisamment énergique. J'ai pu rapidement me convaincre que cet accord ne pouvait être réalisé. Nos efforts sont du moins parvenus à faire accepter des solutions telles que cette fois la méthode du fait accompli n'aura pas prévalu.

Pour justifier son acte unilatéral, l'Allemagne a invoqué des griefs d'ordre juridique. Elle sera donc invitée à saisir de ses griefs la Cour permanente de justice internationale de la Haye.

Par l'acte du 7 mars, le gouvernement allemand avait prétendu affranchir la zone rhénane de toute servitude internationale. Il est invité aujourd'hui, en attendant l'arrêt de la Cour et les négociations qui s'institueront, à retirer d'une zone de 20 kilomètres de large le long des frontières belge et française, les contingents qu'il y avait envoyés. Dans la zone ainsi évacuée seront installées des forces internationales dont la présence témoignera que la règle internationale l'a emporté. Dans le reste de la zone démilitarisée, les troupes allemandes ne devront pas dépasser le chiffre officiellement communiqué le 7 mars. Elles ne pourront recevoir aucun renfort; tous envois de matériel de guerre sont interdits, aucun travail de fortifications ou d'organisation du terrain n'est admis; aucun aérodrome ne pourra être créé ou agrandi. De notre côté, nous avons accepté, ainsi que la Belgique, à suspendre pendant la période de négociations tout envoi de troupes dans la zone voisine de la frontière commune entre notre pays et l'Allemagne. Une commission internationale est chargée de veiller à l'observation des engagements ainsi pris. On sera d'accord pour reconnaître que l'intervention de cette commission nous donne à l'égard de la remilitarisation et de la refortification de la zone des

garanties que nous n'avions pas précédemment. Par cet ensemble de mesures conservatoires se trouve affirmé le caractère provisoire de la situation créée par le geste allemand. La Rhénanie, après l'arrêt de la Cour de la Haye, ne pourra recevoir son statut définitif que de négociations entre les gouvernements intéressés, et il est bien entendu, par une disposition formelle, que les négociations au sujet de ce statut, comme d'ailleurs à tous les autres sujets, ne seront ouvertes avec l'Allemagne qu'après acceptation expresse par le gouvernement allemand de toutes ces conditions préalables qui forment un tout.

Dois-je ajouter enfin qu'il n'est pas question qu'une force internationale puisse occuper une partie quelconque du territoire français ou belge. C'eût été une monstrueuse iniquité que n'aurait jamais accepté un négociateur français qui n'a pas de leçons de patriotisme à recevoir de ceux dont l'action singulière n'a fait que compliquer sa tâche au cours de négociations laborieuses où il servait, au-dessus des partis, la France.

Le 7 mars l'Allemagne avait déclaré caduc le traité de Locarno. Contre cette répudiation solennelle, les quatre autres puissances signataires ont affirmé le 19 mars que Locarno subsiste. Elles en confirment les principes. Elles en reconnaissent réciproquement en ce qui les concerne les droits qui en résultent. Elles continuent d'en accepter les obligations. Rien n'est changé, si ce n'est qu'en raison de la répudiation allemande, désormais et aussi longtemps que le traité n'aura pas été régulièrement abrogé, les garanties que le traité stipulait également au profit de l'Allemagne, de la France et de la Belgique ne jouent qu'au profit de la France et de la Belgique.

Mais voici qui constitue une amélioration capitale pour notre sécurité. Dans la mesure même où l'entrée des forces allemandes dans la zone démilitarisée a pu créer sinon une menace, au moins la possibilité d'une prochaine menace, il importait que l'action des garants put s'exercer avec rapidité, donc avec une efficacité plus grande. En plein accord avec la délégation<sup>1</sup> belge, la délégation française a insisté pour qu'interviennent dès maintenant les accords destinés à assurer l'application éventuelle des garanties militaires et à défauts desquels, en présence d'un cas d'agression caractérisé, la mise en œuvre de l'assistance promise risquerait d'être tardive. Le gouvernement britannique a donné son adhésion à cette proposition. M. Grandi, dont l'attitude dans une situation pour lui fort difficile

n'a cessé d'être empreinte de la plus franche amitié, a donné de son côté la sienne. La Chambre appréciera, j'espère, l'importance de cette décision.

Elle marque une étape décisive des relations franco-britanniques d'après-guerre. Il faudra peut-être plusieurs mois pour que les deux peuples en mesurent complètement la portée. Elle réalise pour nous l'aboutissement d'un effort persévérant et d'une conception de solidarité totale devant les menaces de guerre qui permettront, mieux qu'en 1914, d'en faire reculer le spectre hideux.

Même si le pacte de Locarno était remplacé demain dans un cadre général d'organisation de la paix par un traité d'assistance mutuelle, cette garantie réciproque capitale serait insérée dans ce traité, en vertu de stipulations formelles inscrites dans notre nouvel accord.

Marquerai-je aussi combien je me suis efforcé et réjoui, par là-même, de préparer la reconstitution du front pacifique de Stresa qui doit maintenant être réalisé grâce à l'ouverture de négociations de paix que j'ai réussi à obtenir à Genève récemment, négociations qui, dans notre esprit devront entraîner rapidement la suspension simultanée des hostilités et des sanctions.

Telles sont fidèlement résumées les conditions dans lesquelles a été réglé le passé et préparé l'avenir. On peut juger insuffisants les résultats obtenus, on peut penser que la délégation française aurait dû s'obstiner à réclamer l'évacuation intégrale et immédiate de la zone rhénane. Elle aurait pu, pour l'obtenir, et à défaut d'un geste de force proposer la mise en œuvre de sanctions qui auraient lourdement atteint une économie particulièrement vulnérable. Elle n'aurait pas eu dès maintenant pour cette politique le concours des puissances garantes ni de la Belgique, comme elle garantie. Nous avons donc préféré nous rallier à un système de propositions modérées; une invitation est faite à l'Allemagne: si elle l'accepte s'ouvrent dans les conditions que je vais préciser des perspectives nouvelles pour la consolidation de la paix européenne. Si elle la refuse le gouvernement britannique est d'accord avec le gouvernement français pour estimer que la situation devra être immédiatement reconsidérée. Elle le serait, dans ce cas, nul n'en doute, dans une atmosphère d'opinion beaucoup plus ouverte à l'audience des thèses françaises. Mais je veux écarter cette hypothèse, car je souhaite sincèrement que le gouvernement allemand, prenant conscience de la gravité de la



décision qu'il avait prise et du caractère illégal du geste accompli, saura apprécier la modération des demandes qui vont lui être adressées.

Les puissances locarniennes n'ont pas voulu, en effet, se limiter à un programme négatif. Puisque le chancelier Hitler avait esquissé des propositions qui paraissaient positives, quelque réserve et quelque objection qu'elles pussent appeler, il importait de ne pas laisser dire que nous n'y opposions que des négations. Je n'ai donc eu aucune difficulté à m'associer à l'élaboration d'un programme de négociations qui pourront s'ouvrir dès que les mesures préalables que j'ai énoncées déjà seront intervenues et lorsque la consultation électorale terminée, le gouvernement français pourra y participer avec une autorité renouvelée. De ces négociations devront sortir avec un nouveau statut de la région rhénane, des conventions précises et complètes d'assistance mutuelle entre les puissances occidentales et dont l'application sera assurée par des accords techniques. Dans ces négociations les propositions du chancelier Hitler recevront toute l'attention qu'elles doivent mériter.

Mais la paix européenne ne se réduit pas au problème des relations entre les puissances occidentales, et si la région rhénane a été un des champs de bataille de l'Europe, elle n'en est pas le seul. Nous n'oublions aucun de nos amis de l'Europe centrale et de l'Europe orientale et c'est dans le cadre européen qu'un renforcement de la sécurité générale doit être recherché. Les puissances locarniennes sont donc tombées d'accord pour recommander au conseil de la Société des nations la réunion d'une conférence qui travaillerait à la réalisation de ce programme : une amélioration dans le jeu des pactes et dans les mécanismes juridiques serait à cet égard notoirement insuffisant. Par delà les textes et les clauses de traités, il y a des réalités qui viennent contrarier l'observation de ces textes et le jeu de ces clauses. Une organisation solide de la paix exige qu'une limitation effective se substitue à la course aux armements, qui pose pour les Etats dont les finances sont atteintes par la crise des problèmes chaque jour plus graves. Elle exige aussi une détente économique, une réorganisation du régime des échanges dont il faudra bien qu'on se préoccupe, si on veut rendre à l'Europe le calme et la prospérité.

Tel est le bilan d'une semaine de négociations. Entre les tendances britanniques et les tendances françaises, les résultats obtenus repré-

sentent un compromis dans la recherche duquel le premier ministre de Belgique a joué un rôle auquel je tiens à rendre hommage. Moins attentive que nous à la lettre du traité, moins directement visée par le geste de l'Allemagne, l'opinion britannique, aux fluctuations de laquelle le gouvernement de Londres est particulièrement sensible, ne pouvait apprécier de la même manière que l'opinion française l'initiative du chancelier Hitler. Mais les divergences de vues qui ont pu se produire n'ont pas altéré — elles ne sauraient le faire — la cordialité d'une collaboration qui se fonde sur des intérêts permanents et la solidité d'une entente qui répond à des nécessités fondamentales. Le gouvernement britannique entend demeurer fidèle au traité de Locarno, il entend, en cas de péril, remplir sans défaillance les engagements qu'il a contractés pour la sauvegarde de la sécurité française. Il accepte dorénavant d'en prévoir constamment et réciproquement les moyens pratiques. Les assurances écrites que j'ai reçues à cet égard du secrétaire d'Etat ont une importance sur laquelle personne, en France, ne se méprendra.

Si, d'un certain côté, l'on s'était flatté, à la faveur du trouble de provoquer un relâchement des relations entre Londres et Paris, l'on pourra constater que notre effort commun pour maintenir la paix a resserré les liens franco-britanniques.

Mais mieux que l'exposé que je viens de faire il résulte que les conversations de Londres ne constituent qu'une étape.

Ne rien négliger dans ce qu'elle a le pouvoir et par conséquent le devoir de faire par elle-même en vue d'assurer sa propre sécurité, telle est pour la France une des leçons de cette expérience comme de tant d'autres qui l'ont précédée.

Mais il n'y a pas que les forces militaires, navales et aériennes qui comptent. La défense nationale est un tout.

Vous allez, messieurs, partir dans le pays et prendre un contact direct avec le suffrage universel.

Puissiez-vous, dans l'ardeur de la bataille électorale, ne jamais oublier cette force essentielle pour notre pays que représente l'unité morale de la France.

D'autres négociations que celles que je viens d'achever m'attendent, moi ou mon successeur.

Renforcez notre autorité demain par votre affirmation unanime que les rivalités d'hommes, que les querelles de parti s'effacent

lorsqu'il s'agit de maintenir la paix, présente et future, de fortifier la sécurité nationale et de garder à la France dans le monde le prestige d'une action constructive qui s'exercera toujours au profit du rapprochement des peuples sous la garantie de la loi internationale.

(*Le Temps*, March 21, 1936.)

66.

EXTRACT FROM SPEECH BY M. VAN ZEELAND,  
BELGIAN PREMIER, IN THE CHAMBER, MARCH 20, 1936

Je vais essayer maintenant, mais avec une réserve plus grande encore, de vous donner une très courte interprétation de cet arrangement. Est-ce que la paix est assurée grâce à cet arrangement? Je le pense. Nos amis Français et nous-mêmes, nous avons fait de très sérieuses concessions. Il est entendu que si tout ceci se réalise, le statut de la Rhénanie sera révisé. On n'exige plus «per fas et nefas» que les troupes allemandes entrées en Rhénanie, en violation de l'article 43 du Traité de Versailles, soient retirées. Il apparaît donc, dans ces conditions, que si tout ceci se réalise dans son ensemble, le risque de guerre aura disparu de l'horizon.

Le second but est-il atteint? Avons-nous réussi à imaginer une solution que réclame la loi internationale, et qui donne l'impression qu'on ne viole pas impunément les traités? Je le pense. En effet, l'infraction doit cesser. Lorsque nous commencerons à négocier, il y aura eu une reconnaissance implicite du rétablissement de la loi internationale, — tout au moins dans une certaine mesure.

Pendant cette période provisoire, il y aura des troupes internationales qui seront là comme une sorte de symbole de la force mise à la disposition du droit, et il y aura une commission internationale nantie des pouvoirs nécessaires pour s'assurer et pour assurer toutes les puissances parties à cet arrangement de l'entière exécution de toutes les clauses de l'arrangement provisoire.

Je dirai plus. Ne voyez-vous pas qu'en définitive ceci est la conséquence, et une conséquence grave, de la violation de la loi internationale? Cela signifie que, pour la première fois, je pense, dans l'histoire, un acte de ce genre a provoqué immédiatement des réactions en sens opposé qui affaiblissent la position diplomatique de celui

qui a violé la loi. En effet, dès à présent, en toute hypothèse, quoi qu'il arrive, la communauté de vues et l'unité d'action entre les grandes puissances occidentales sont non seulement poursuivies mais étroitement renforcées. Cette communauté d'action et de vues trouve immédiatement son expression sous la forme de contacts entre états-majors. Il en résulte que l'Angleterre — et je pense que c'est également la première fois dans l'histoire — se prononce en vue d'une hypothèse donnée avant que cette hypothèse se soit réalisée. Vous sentez la mesure que j'essaye de mettre dans mes paroles. Je voudrais pourtant, de façon à ne rien compromettre, vous faire comprendre toute l'importance de cet élément. Je le considère comme capital, non seulement pour notre sécurité, à nous, Belges, en particulier, mais aussi pour la paix du monde.

Que va-t-il se passer maintenant? Très sincèrement, je suis hors d'état de faire un pronostic. L'Allemagne va-t-elle accepter? Va-t-elle refuser? Je crois très sincèrement qu'elle peut accepter — qu'elle doit accepter. Nous sommes restés aussi modérés qu'il est possible de l'être; nous avons écarté toute pensée de haine, tout sentiment d'hostilité, toute réaction, même d'ordre sentimental, contre la violation de la loi internationale qui nous a mis dans les difficultés où nous nous débattons. Nous avons essayé de nous placer sur un plan complètement objectif en ne pensant qu'à l'avenir. Il était impossible d'essayer de faire quelque chose pour l'avenir si l'on ne restaurait pas dans une mesure suffisante la loi internationale. Mais nous avons essayé de le faire dans l'atmosphère la plus objective et la plus calme possible. Je pense que nous avons été jusqu'au bout de ce qu'il est possible à des nations comme les nôtres de faire pour faciliter à d'autres l'acceptation des propositions que nous avons mises sur pied.

Si l'Allemagne accepte, je crois que nous serons sortis de cette très grande difficulté d'à présent et qu'en nous avançant sur un terrain ferme, nous réussirons probablement à créer des conditions de paix pour longtemps. Si l'Allemagne refusait, — j'hésite à envisager cette hypothèse, mais je dois cependant la faire parce qu'il faut que vous voyez sous tous ses aspects l'édifice que nous avons essayé de construire, — la position des nations occidentales se trouverait, je pense, renforcée, même dans ce cas.

Leur unité est complète. Elles ont pris des dispositions qui sont de nature à donner à leur communauté de vues et à leurs décisions

toute leur signification. Ce qu'il pouvait y avoir de fondé, dans une certaine mesure, non pas dans l'acte de l'Allemagne, mais dans les revendications ou dans les propositions du chancelier Hitler, tout ce qui pouvait faire appel à certaines fractions de l'opinion publique dans le monde, nous l'avons repris. Si l'Allemagne refuse nos propositions, c'est elle qui se met en contradiction avec elle-même. Alors la preuve serait faite que les offres auxquelles nous avons essayé de nous raccrocher n'étaient pas faites dans l'esprit où nous pouvions et devons croire qu'elles étaient faites. Alors, immédiatement, sans avoir rien abandonné de notre position d'hier ou d'aujourd'hui, nous trouverions dans une position meilleure, dans une position morale extrêmement renforcée. Nous avons fait toute notre part. Nous nous trouvons dans une position de fait également renforcée, parce que nous avons derrière nous l'Angleterre tout entière, la France tout entière, et que ce concours, que nous avons déjà, nous est assuré dans des conditions techniques qui portent à leur plein toute leur efficacité.

J'emporte de Londres certaines impressions réconfortantes. J'en ai retiré une série de leçons dont, si vous le voulez bien, je vous ferai part un peu plus tard. Ces leçons sont graves; nous aurons à en tirer certaines conclusions d'ordre pratique pour la politique à suivre dans ce pays.

Je voudrais aujourd'hui me borner à une réflexion de caractère général. On ne gagne rien à violer le droit international. L'atmosphère qui s'est créée rapidement là-bas a été, à certains moments, de nature à faire impression même sur ceux qui sont le plus rebelles aux considérations d'ordre moral. J'aurais voulu qu'un grand nombre de personnes pussent assister à la séance du Conseil de la Société des Nations où l'on s'est prononcé sur les résolutions présentées par le gouvernement belge et par le gouvernement français et constatant la violation de l'article 43. C'était simple, dans un cadre grandiose mais n'ayant rien de théâtral. Et cependant, au moment où successivement, l'un après l'autre, sont tombés dans le silence les «oui» par lesquels toutes ces puissances condamnaient la violation par l'Allemagne de la loi internationale, ce fut un moment d'une grandeur inoubliable. Je vous assure que ceux qui ont assisté à cette séance comprennent et retiendront pour toujours cette vérité dont, pour ma part, j'étais convaincu depuis longtemps: c'est que les forces morales non seulement

comptent dans l'ordre spirituel mais exercent aussi des réactions directes et immédiates dans l'ordre des réalités.

Le fait que nous étions dans toute cette affaire complètement du côté du Droit, que personne n'avait l'ombre d'un reproche à nous faire, que personne même n'a tenté de nous faire un reproche, ce fait a été pour nous une grande force, un appui considérable. Mais il y a plus: il a servi à nos amis; il nous a aidés tous. Nos amis Français, en particulier, ont bénéficié aux yeux de nos amis Anglais, ou plus exactement aux yeux de l'opinion anglaise, du fait qu'en ce qui concerne la Belgique aucun argument, aucune subtilité, aucun prétexte n'était et n'avait pu être invoqué.

Dans ces conditions au cours de ces négociations, la Belgique a pu répondre, je crois, à ce qui est sa mission historique: être un élément de paix, un élément véritablement constructif dans les efforts que font les grandes puissances occidentales pour assurer la paix à l'avenir.

De toute cette crise quelle que soit l'hypothèse que nous envisagions, soit que l'Allemagne accepte, soit que l'Allemagne refuse, je pense qu'à force de bonne volonté, de désir de bien faire, de volonté de paix chez tous les participants à ces négociations de Londres, on a réussi finalement à mettre sur pied une solution qui en définitive, se traduira un jour comme ceci: la loi internationale aura été renforcée dans le monde.

(*L'Indépendance belge*, March 21, 1936.)

## 67.

### STATEMENT BY MR. EDEN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 23, 1936

In the course of my conversations with Herr von Ribbentrop, I emphasised that the contents of the documents which had been communicated to him were in the nature of proposals. I made it clear that His Majesty's Government hoped that the German Government would be in a position to accept them, but that in any event His Majesty's Government felt that the German Government should assist them in their task by making some constructive contribution

to improve the situation. On my instructions His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin used similar language in an interview which he had with the German Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday.

(*Hansard*, March 23, 1936, col. 863.)

## 68.

### PRELIMINARY REPLY OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO THE PROPOSALS OF THE LOCARNO POWERS, MARCH 24, 1936

On the 19th March the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eden, gave Ambassador von Ribbentrop, who was then in London, the first cognisance of the draft of a proposal on the part of the Locarno Powers.

After the receipt of this document the German Government were requested to state their attitude towards it.

In complying with this request the German Government feel themselves impelled first to repeat the principles and the motives from which the inward necessity of their attitude arises.

1. The German Government, being convinced that by the Franco-Soviet military alliance the legal and political conditions on which the Rhine Pact of Locarno was based have been removed, have determined for their part to restore at last their full sovereignty over the entire territory of the Reich.

They did not, however, order the German troops to march into this territory of the German Reich in order to carry out a course of action for its own sake, but they considered this action necessary in order to provide for Germany the necessary conditions under which she could become a party to a new agreement for a clear and reasonable organisation of peace in Europe. This condition will at all times only be found in the complete equality of the nations which join in such a common action.

Therefore this German action of restoring at last the full sovereignty of the Reich in its own territory cannot be separated from the agreements proposed by the German Government to the other nations for a general establishment of European peace.

2. If the other States and Governments are ready for their part also to seek the way leading to such a new system for the establishment of peace in Europe, they cannot reject forthwith the elementary principles and the necessary conditions for such a development for the future. The following fact must be clear: Lasting agreements between the European nations with the aim of really guaranteeing peace can only be concluded in an atmosphere of sympathetic recognition and consideration of the natural equal vital and political rights of all the nations participating therein. Any attempt to introduce a new system of order in Europe by the old methods of a hate-inspired division of the nations into those with more and those with less rights, into defamed and honourable nations, or even into dictator nations and subject nations, must lead to the same result because it would be begun under the old conditions, which have proved themselves to be pernicious, *i.e.*, the new order will be no better than the old.

It would be advantageous for future developments in Europe if all parties were to understand that treaties on the one hand, and dictates on the other, have a different legal value in the life of the nations. The dictate will probably appear to the victor to be its own legal justification, but will always be regarded by the vanquished as a violation contrary to all right, and be judged from this standpoint. Only treaties which have been concluded by parties with equal rights, and of their own free will and free conviction, can claim from both partners the same lasting and sacred respect.

By the restoration of her sovereignty in her own territory Germany has only created the necessary condition which will enable her to conclude such genuine treaties. For this purpose and on this condition the German Government for their part have presented their proposals, already made known, and still abide by them.

3. The proposal for a draft treaty which was handed to the German Government by the British Secretary of State, Mr. Eden, contains not one of the necessary conditions for the successful organisation of a really lasting peace, since it is based, in the first place, on a new discrimination which is intolerable for a great nation and on a further attempt once more to lay down Germany's inequality of rights with the other States.

If the German Government were to agree to this proposal they



would share the responsibility for its inevitable results, a continued inner rejection of the humiliating subjection imposed upon the German people under such conditions.

The German Government will, however, not do this.

All historical experience shows that it is impossible to bring about on such a basis a real and lasting peace which is such because it is concluded of their own free will and with equal rights by all parties and thus is respected by all parties. The German Government must therefore reject all the provisions of the proposals of the Locarno Powers which are liable once more to infringe the honour of the nation or to bring into question or do away with its equality of rights.

4. The German Government and the German people have the most profound and earnest desire to make an important contribution to the peace of Europe after the restoration of the complete independence and sovereignty of the Reich. They are further convinced that all attempts to bring about an improvement in the social position of the peoples of Europe by means of economic conferences will be in vain until it has become possible to give to the European peoples and to the political and economic leaders the feeling of unconditional and lasting security. But this security can only be provided by a firm peace which is guaranteed for a long period.

The German Government do not disguise the fact that they themselves set more value upon this peace as one of the surest bases for a revival of the prosperity of the nations than on any assistance, support, or relief, &c., which may be negotiated by means of economic conferences.

Acting on this conviction the German Government have presented their proposals for international discussion. If, therefore, they are compelled to reject the proposal for a draft treaty presented to them by the Locarno Powers in all those points which affect the honour and equal rights of the German nation, they believe, nevertheless, recognising their co-responsibility for the fate of the European peoples, that they must comply with the suggestions of His Britannic Majesty's Government in order for their part, by presenting any possible new proposals, to contribute to a solution of this European question. For this reason the German Government do not wish in this document to go into the details of the points rejected by them, but they would like to reserve this procedure in order to bring this

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rejection of theirs into connexion with a new and detailed proposal for overcoming the European crisis, which they are determined to work out. They will present this to His Britannic Majesty's Government with the sincere wish that the latter may then succeed in finding in it a basis for starting those negotiations which shall bring peace to the European peoples and fructify anew their economic and social life.

In consideration of these facts the German Government are bound to inform His Britannic Majesty's Government that, since in this week they are making the final preparations for their elections, they are technically not in the position to draw up so extensive a document and one requiring so much profound consideration. They therefore consider it necessary to send Ambassador von Ribbentrop to London once more on Tuesday, the 24th March, for a verbal discussion of a few important questions. The German Government will then present to His Britannic Majesty's Government their carefully considered attitude and their positive proposals on Tuesday, the 31st March.

(*Cmd. 5175*, pp. 2-4.)

### 69.

#### INTERVIEW GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR VON RIBBENTROP TO MR. WARD PRICE, MARCH 24, 1936

*Late on Tuesday night, after Herr von Ribbentrop had delivered to Mr. Eden Germany's preliminary reply to the London proposals, he made — with reference to the new suggestions which the German Government had promised to put forward next Tuesday — the following statement. He declared:*

“The German proposals are still under consideration in Berlin. I cannot, therefore, yet say what proposals will be made in addition to those contained in Herr Hitler's memorandum of March 7. In any case, they will be inspired by the same spirit.”

“The German Government's reply is likely to be criticised,” I (Ward Price) said, “as vague. People expected something more precise to result from the conferences which were held by Herr Hitler during the weekend in Berlin.”

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"You must remember," was the German delegate's answer, "that we in Germany are in the middle of a national election campaign. Nearly all the Ministers were away from Berlin, since they, like the Chancellor, are making a series of speeches in the principal cities of the country.

"The problems confronting us are too large and important to be defined in the brief time that has elapsed since I left London.

"The election campaign will be over by Saturday night, and the members of the German Government will be able to devote Sunday and Monday to drafting a more detailed and complete reply than it has yet been possible to make.

"I expect to remain in London for a day or two, and may see Mr. Eden again. I shall certainly, however, return to Berlin for the elections on Sunday."

I asked the German delegate if he could give me some account of the impression which the proposals of the Locarno Powers made upon Herr Hitler and his advisors in Berlin.

"At the first sight of the document handed to me by Mr. Eden last Thursday night," said Herr von Ribbentrop, "I felt a profound conviction that it would arouse a very strong reaction not only in the minds of the German Government, but also throughout the entire German nation, for these proposals represent a lamentable lapse into the mentality which has imposed so much suffering on Germany during the years that have followed the war.

"This mentality regards it as a basic principle that the nations of Europe should be divided into conquerors and conquered.

"I can assure you that the German nation will no longer tolerate this Versailles spirit. It will submit no longer to any discrimination in the matter of its rights between Germany and other nations. The world must understand that all that kind of things is over and done with.

"It follows therefore, that the German Government will never accept any one-sided limitation of its sovereign rights within its own frontiers.

"If M. Flandin says that he feels the presence of foreign troops on French soil would be a "monstrous iniquity", we should feel the same about such a discrimination against Germany.

"When I presented the proposals of the Locarno Powers to my

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Government in Berlin, its resentment of the spirit animating them was all the greater by reason of the fact that ever since the National Socialist Party came to power its dominant desire and aim have been to bring about the pacification of the Continent of Europe on the basis of full equality of national rights.

"It has often been asked, especially by French statesmen, why Germany did not follow up her peaceable words by deeds of a similar kind.

"I think I am justified in claiming that the Führer has surpassed the deeds of any European statesman by putting forward numerous concrete propositions which he has laid before the world.

"They are a substantial proof that Germany really desires the consolidation of peace and co-operation between the peoples.

"I believe that the day will come when it is universally recognised that the step taken by the German Government in reoccupying the Rhineland was a definite advance towards the consolidation of Europe.

"I base these claims upon the following arguments: —

"(1) Quite apart from the fact that it is and must be intolerable for any nation not to be master in its own house, it was impossible, after the conclusion of an anti-German military alliance between France and Russia, to leave the densely populated western provinces of Germany any longer without military protection.

"(2) Previous experience had taught us that it was quite useless to hope that an agreement about the restoration of German Sovereignty in the Rhineland might be reached by way of negotiations.

"(3) Is it conceivable that the mere restoration of full sovereignty in any one country should prevent the consolidation of peace in a whole continent?

"The German Government therefore believes that its action in reoccupying the Rhineland on March 7 has opened the way to negotiations for a lasting peace because such negotiations can succeed only if they are carried on between equal and free peoples."

"Are you satisfied with the reception which you have had on your return to London?"

"My interview with Mr. Eden was friendly and cordial," replied Herr von Ribbentrop. "I explained to him the background of the German Government's views in the same way as I have described it to you.

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL, MARCH 24, 1936

"I have been greatly impressed since I first came to London by the manifestly sincere wish of the British people for peace and settlement in Europe. I can assure you that this wish is shared by 100 per cent of the German nation.

"The people of France, too, whom I have known for close on a quarter of a century, are equally desirous of peace and of improved relations with their German neighbours. I have no doubt that the same holds good of other European countries.

"I feel most strongly that, in view of this widespread longing throughout Europe for an all-round 25-years guarantee of peace, it should and must be possible for the statesmen of Europe to translate it into fact.

"To my mind, Europe to-day stands at a parting of the ways. Do the nations want peace, or do they not?"

"As regards the German wish for peace, at any rate, the result of the elections next Sunday will prove to the whole world what the answer of the German nation is."

*(The Daily Mail, March 25, 1936.)*

70.

RESOLUTION OF THE LEAGUE COUNCIL IN LONDON,  
MARCH 24, 1936

The Council,

Thanks the representative of the United Kingdom for his communication, dated March 20th, 1936, transmitting the text of proposals drawn up on March 19th, 1936, by the representatives of the Members of the League who are signatories of the Treaty of Locarno, and which are now under consideration by the respective Governments;

Considers that any further action on its part should remain in abeyance for the present, in view of the conversations which are being carried on;

Invites the said Governments to keep it advised of the progress of the said conversations;

Decides to meet again as soon as circumstances render further consideration of the question desirable.

*(League of Nations, C./91st Session (Extr.) P. V. 8 (1).)*

71.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS, REGARDING A PLEBISCITE,  
MARCH 25, 1936

Mr. Johnston asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the consequences to the lives and financial resources of British citizens involved in the pledge to authorise the establishment or the continuance of conversations for joint action by the military general staffs of Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Italy in the event of unsatisfactory replies being given by the Government of Germany to the proposals made to it on 19th March, he will undertake that, before such conversations begin or their continuation is permitted, he will take steps to seek authority for such military conversations in precise terms by plebiscite from a majority of the persons qualified to vote at Parliamentary elections and at present upon the electoral rolls of this country?

The Prime Minister (Mr. Baldwin): I regret that I am unable to give any such undertaking.

Mr. Johnston: Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware of the deep-seated feeling of this country against military alliances, as opposed to a policy of reliance on the Covenant of the League of Nations?

The Prime Minister: These anxieties will undoubtedly be given expression to in the Debate to-morrow. I understand that a Debate will take place to-morrow on Foreign Affairs and I hope, in the progress of the Debate, that those anxieties may be considerably allayed.

Mr. Johnston: Can the right hon. Gentleman give any reason why the people of this country are less entitled to have a say in an important matter of this kind than, say, the people of Australia or Switzerland, who are given the privilege of voting by referendum on these matters?

*No answer.*

(*Hansard*, March 25, 1936, cols. 1224-5.)

72.

SPEECH BY MR. EDEN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
MARCH 26, 1936

I should like my first sentence this afternoon to be one expressing to all parties in this House, and to the Press and the people of this country as a whole, the Government's sincere and grateful thanks for the restraint which they have shown during a most anxious international period, a restraint, if I may say so, which is all the more remarkable in that it was assumed and maintained on a purely voluntary basis. Perhaps if the same conditions of liberty of the Press and speech, and the same distinction between liberty and licence, were to-day observed throughout Europe, we should not now be confronted with the problems which unfortunately beset us.

This afternoon I stand here to give an account on my behalf and on that of the Government of our stewardship during the recent critical international situation. If in doing that I should depart somewhat, as I shall, from the usual formal restraint in speeches on international affairs, I shall justify myself in so doing because what I have to say is in the main spoken, not to nations overseas, but to the people of my own country. It is imperative in the present international situation that this country should visualise its problems in a true perspective. We can only do that if I as Foreign Secretary speak frankly.

We must distinguish between what may be national sentiment and what are, for good or ill, our national obligations. Likely enough, there may be many people in this country who say to themselves now, "In our judgment the territories of France and Germany should be treated on exactly equal terms." It may be that people feel that, but those are not the terms of the Treaty of Locarno. Those are not the terms of the Treaty of which we are guarantors and which has formed a main element in the security of western Europe for the last 10 years.

If I put the matter in this way, it is because I believe there is a special responsibility on this country at this time, and I want to begin to try and place matters in their true perspective by giving the House a brief account of the origins of this demilitarised zone, for I

do not believe that they are generally appreciated. What happened was this. After the War the original French aim was to guarantee the security of France by the separation of the Rhineland provinces from the rest of Germany. The French Government were persuaded to abandon that position and, if I may say so, rightly persuaded, by means of an arrangement comprising three things, namely, a 15 years' occupation of the zone itself, the permanent demilitarisation of the zone, and, most important of all, a guarantee of security from ourselves and the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> In actual fact, that guarantee was never forthcoming. The United States failed to ratify, and, since our ratification was dependent upon theirs, that guarantee came to nothing. It is important that it should be realised that that was the most important element in inducing the then French Government to give up the demand for the separation of the Rhineland provinces from Germany.

Then the demilitarised zone was embodied in the Treaty of Versailles. It forms Articles 42 and 43 of that Treaty. There were time limits to certain provisions of that Treaty, notably in respect of the occupation of the Rhineland. That actually came to an end before the time had expired, but there was no time limit for this demilitarised zone. It was, in fact, under the Treaty an enduring undertaking. I say that—and I know the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) will believe me—in no spirit of criticism at all. I myself never criticised the Versailles Treaty and our part in it, because I had some appreciation of the difficulties in which it must have been negotiated. All I would say to the House, and more particularly to the right hon. Gentleman, is that he too would appreciate our difficulties in facing a situation for which we are not all of us on this bench responsible. He is one of the few to whom it has been given in history—and we are happy to note it—to have the proud position of being able to criticise his own legacy to history.

I will turn from the place of the zone in the Treaty of Versailles to its place in the Treaty of Locarno. The House may imagine that this zone forms part of the Treaty of Locarno because from the outset France and Belgium clamantly demanded it. That is not the

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<sup>1</sup> Printed above, pp. 37 and 40.



position at all. This demand for the demilitarised zone figured in the original demand put forward by Germany, who herself initiated the conversations which led to the signature of the Locarno Treaty. It figured from the start in the original German proposals, and I do not think it is very difficult, looking back, to see why that was. The Locarno Treaty was signed not very long after the Ruhr, and it would not be astonishing if the German Government of that day reflected that some guarantee from us in those conditions would be of service to her.

What has happened since? Successive governments in Germany, in France and in this country have reaffirmed Locarno. The present Chancellor of the German Reich has reaffirmed it, and other German spokesmen have done the same. We have heard much, more particularly since the advent of the present regime in Germany, about the *diktat* of Versailles, but nobody has ever heard of the *diktat* of Locarno. It is hard to conceive how such a phrase could be used of a Treaty which it has been admitted on all sides was freely negotiated and freely signed. Nor is that all. If Germany wished, as she was clearly entitled to wish, to modify any part of this Treaty, negotiations were open to her. Germany has claimed, as she has from her own point of view every right to claim if she believes it to be true, that the Franco-Soviet Pact is inconsistent with the Locarno Treaty, but I would draw the attention of the House in that connection to Article 3 of the Locarno Treaty which specifically provides for just such a contingency. Under that Article

“Germany and Belgium and Germany and France undertake to settle by peaceful means and in the manner laid down herein all questions of every kind which may arise between them . . . .”

Germany was, therefore, clearly bound, under the terms of the Treaty, to settle this question by the methods which the Treaty made available. The French Government made it clear that they were willing to go to the Hague Court. The German Government regard that Court as unsuitable, but if it is not suitable it is only fair to point out that the Franco-German Arbitration Treaty signed between the two countries expressly provides that even legal questions can, by agreement, be submitted to a permanent conciliation commission which that agreement sets up. That might have been—I am not arguing it—the appropriate method for Germany to use. She did

not use it. The German Government ignored Article 3 of the Treaty and decided for themselves that the Franco-Soviet Pact was incompatible with the Treaty of Locarno, and decided moreover that that incompatibility entitled Germany to regard the whole of the Locarno Treaty as non-existent.

I would now like to say a word about the position of one country whose relations to the events of the last few weeks have not perhaps been wholly appreciated by the people of this country. I refer to Belgium. Germany's case is that the Franco-Soviet Pact conflicts with Locarno. But Belgium has signed no Pact with Soviet Russia, and more than half this zone runs along the Belgian frontier—the frontier of a country which has suffered more than any other, except perhaps Poland, as the battle-ground of Europe. Is it surprising, in these conditions, that there should be deep anxiety in Belgium to-day? I would like to pay my warmest tribute to the cool courage and constructive statesmanship of M. van Zeeland, the Prime Minister of Belgium. To sum up then this earlier part of what I wish to say to the House: I believe it to be the judgment of this country that even those in this country who think that Germany has a strong case deprecate the fact that she has chosen to present it by force and not by reason.

Now I want to say something about the position of our own country. There are some who may regard us as freely and fortunately placed at this anxious moment in European affairs, some who regard us as arbiters with a fortunate destiny. But we are not arbiters in this business; that is not so. We are guarantors of this Treaty, and as guarantors, for good or ill—I am not arguing that—we have certain commitments and they are very definite. I will draw the attention of the House to Article 4 of the Locarno Treaty. It runs as follows:

“If one of the high contracting parties alleges that a violation of Article 2 of the present Treaty or a breach of Articles 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles has been or is being committed, it shall bring the question at once before the Council of the League of Nations.”

That has been done—

“As soon as the Council of the League of Nations is satisfied that such violation or breach has been committed, it will notify its findings without delay to the Powers signatory of the present Treaty, who severally agree that in such case they will each of them come immed-

ately to the assistance of the Power against whom the act complained of is directed.”

Those words are clear. It cannot be said, in the light of them, that we are uncommitted and free arbiters. Our position is far different, and I want in all bluntness to make this plain to the House—I am not prepared to be the first British Foreign Secretary to go back on a British signature. And yet our objective throughout this difficult period has been to seek a peaceful and an agreed solution. I consider that we are bound to do so by Article 7 of the Locarno Treaty itself, which states:

“The present Treaty, which . . . is in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations, shall not be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world.”

It is in the spirit of that Article that we have sought conciliation and attempted to bring about agreement and understanding, and to do that without impairing confidence in our good faith or in our determination to carry out the obligations to which we have set our name. I do not pretend that our task would not have been easier had we been entirely free. That does not arise. We have entered upon our task with the weight of these commitments heavy upon us.

It was under these conditions that the Powers met in Paris a short while ago. There is no secret about the position which the French and Belgian Governments then took up. They stated that it would not be possible for them to negotiate with Germany unless some action were taken to show that the validity of international agreements was being upheld. When we asked, how did they propose that that should be done, the French Government told us that in their view it was necessary that Germany should withdraw her troops from a zone which she had entered contrary to the obligations of a Treaty she had signed. When we asked how that was to be brought about if Germany were to refuse, it was replied to us that if withdrawal could not be otherwise arranged it must be brought about by progressive pressure, beginning with financial and economic sanctions. We did not take that view. We neither denied the gravity of the breach of the Treaty which had been committed nor the consequences to Europe, but we thought it our imperative duty to seek by negotiation to restore confidence. That being our objective from the very

first hour of this critical fortnight, we have sought throughout to rebuild. But—we must face this fact—it is not possible to rebuild unless your foundations can be well and truly laid, and your foundations cannot be well and truly laid if some of those engaged in the task believe that the building will ultimately share the fate of its predecessor. It has been our task to create an atmosphere of confidence in which these negotiations could take place. Those, broadly, were the points of view at the outset.

We thought, the Lord Privy Seal and I thought, that in the condition of this present phase of international affairs it would be a wise step to attempt to induce our colleagues to move the scene of negotiations from Paris to London. They concurred, and as a result the meetings of the Council and of the Locarno Powers took place in this city. There were many days of anxious and even critical negotiation. The crux of our problem was always the same, how was international law to be vindicated? How were we to bridge, as we ourselves are most anxious to bridge, this difficult interim period before negotiations could begin? The White Paper contains three proposals to that end. It asks Germany to do three things: To bring the dispute as to the relation of the Franco-Soviet Pact to the Locarno Treaty before the Hague Court; to suspend fortification of the zone; and to agree to an international force for the interim period.

I would say to anyone in this House who considers those requests severe to remember the point from which we started in Paris, to remember the request which was made then, a request which could quite consistently and properly be made within the terms of the Treaty itself. I must make it plain that these proposals have always been proposals. They are not an ultimatum, still less a *diktat*. If an international force were the difficulty, and if the German Government could offer some other constructive proposals to take its place, His Majesty's Government will be quite ready to go to the other Powers interested and try to secure agreement upon them; but it must be appreciated that without some constructive contribution from the German side the task of those whose sole aim and ambition is to start these negotiations will be an almost impossible one.

Now I would say a word or two about the White Paper itself, and more particularly about our own undertakings as set out in that Paper. Those undertakings come into force at three different stages.

There are the undertakings which relate to the immediate situation, pending negotiations; there are the undertakings which we are prepared to contribute as part of the general settlement which we hope to bring about in the negotiations; and there are, finally, the undertakings which we are prepared to give in the event of a breakdown of negotiations. I want to take first and to explain to the House the undertaking given for the interim period, which is in paragraph III of the White Paper. It says:

“Declare that nothing that has happened before or since the said breach of the Treaty of Locarno . . .”

and so forth. That undertaking in paragraph III is deliberately designed to compensate for the loss of security suffered by France and Belgium at this time owing to the violation of the demilitarised zone. The first part of that paragraph repeats the statement which I made to this House—the very first statement I made after the breach of the Treaty took place.<sup>1</sup> The undertaking is strictly limited and it is clearly defined. The staff conversations are only for the purpose of obligations under the Locarno Treaty. They are purely technical conversations. They can in no measure increase our political obligations—in no measure. We shall ask, and, indeed, insist, that some such paragraph as this shall be the understanding upon which those conversations take place: “It is understood that this contact does not imply any political undertaking or any obligation as regards defence organisation between the two parties.” I do not anticipate any great difficulty in securing this undertaking, because, as it happens, those very words are drawn from an agreement between Belgium and France<sup>2</sup>. I think we must distinguish, and clearly distinguish, between staff conversations for a specific and limited purpose now and those conversations in the years before 1914. Before 1914 we had no political commitments. Consequently the staff conversations inevitably entailed a political commitment, though they might be military. (Hon. Members: “No!”) Well, that is the fear that many people had.

My point is that whether that fear was justified or not it cannot arise in the present instance, because our obligations in the present instance are clearly set out by Treaty already, and the only question that can be at issue is whether or not you are prepared to make

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 241, above.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 260, above.

arrangements to carry out those obligations should the need arise. That is all. I would remind the House in this connection that only in the last few months such conversations have actually taken place, on that occasion at our request, in connection with obligations under the Covenant which we all shared and which had arisen out of a dispute in another part of the world.

So much for the interim period. At this stage I want to say one word to those who would argue that it is our duty at this time to keep free from all entanglements in Europe. With respect, I wonder whether those who say that are quite clear about what they mean. If they mean we must turn a blind eye to all that happens in Europe, I say that is to take no account at all of realities. We have never been able in all our history to dissociate ourselves from events in the Low Countries, neither in the time of Queen Elizabeth, nor in the time of Marlborough, nor in the time of Napoleon, and still less at the present day, when modern developments of science have brought striking force so much nearer to our shores. It is a vital interest of this country that the integrity of France and Belgium should be maintained and that no hostile force should cross their frontiers. The truth is, and I say it with apologies to my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Sir A. Chamberlain), there was nothing very new in Locarno.

It was a new label, but it was an old fact, and that fact has been the underlying purpose of British foreign policy throughout history. To affirm it again is a threat to no one, for its purpose is purely defensive, and in every single Article where these conversations are mentioned it is clearly shown that they only apply in a case of unprovoked aggression. I hope that those conditions will never arise, but I am quite confident that they are much less likely to arise if we make quite clear our own position. What Locarno did was to carry a stage further commitments which we already bore under the Covenant in respect of a much wider area. It was not, of course, inconsistent with the Covenant, but complementary to it, and, in fact, the idea of these regional pacts has been blessed by Geneva.

But it may be that those who urge that we should disentangle ourselves from Europe have something in mind rather different, or very different, from what I have just described. They may be thinking

of another situation when, owing to obligations elsewhere, our neighbours may become involved in conflict and may call for help in a quarrel that is not ours. That I believe to be a general apprehension. The people of this country are determined that that shall not happen, and that is the view of the Government. We agree with it entirely. Our obligations are world-wide obligations, are the obligations of the Covenant, and we stand firm in support of them, but we do not add, nor will we add, one jot to those obligations, except in the area already covered by the Locarno Treaty. Let us make our position on that absolutely clear. We accept no obligations beyond those shared by the League except the obligations which devolve on us from Locarno.

Now I come to the second set of undertakings in this Paper. Those are the undertakings we are prepared to enter into with a view to securing, if we can, a final settlement of this troubled European situation. They are to be found in Paragraph VII of this White Paper. Briefly put, the scheme is that there should be, as suggested by the German Chancellor, a number of non-aggression pacts, that in Western Europe these non-aggression pacts should be guaranteed by Britain and Italy. That is the German Chancellor's scheme; but, over and above that, in our own proposals there will be pacts of mutual assistance between the Powers of Western Europe which would differ from Locarno in this, that the guarantees would be reciprocal, and that we should share with others in the guarantees as well as in the risks. Those mutual assistance pacts would, of course, be open to all the signatories of Locarno. I am talking now of the permanent settlement we wish to reach, not of the temporary arrangement to restore confidence open to all the signatories, including Germany. Those would be supplemented by staff conversations on exactly the same lines and with the same limitations as I have stressed before. The general scheme of this central part of our proposal is very much like the scheme of the Air Pact which has been under discussion for some time past.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, I come to the position with which we should be faced if negotiations were to fail. The House may say, "Why do you want at this stage to visualise failure? Why was it necessary, in trying to start negotiations, to contemplate failure?" The answer is a simple

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 89, above.

one. If we were to ask the Powers, as we do ask in this document, who enjoy guarantees under Locarno to come into a conference where we should seek to make a new scheme of security for Europe they would surely be entitled to turn round and say: "That is all very well, but what if those negotiations break down? Are we left without Locarno and without anything at all?" That was a situation which clearly had to be met, and it was to meet it that this draft letter was proposed. This letter contains two undertakings. The first, in paragraph (*b*) is that the Powers concerned:

"Will immediately come to the assistance of your Government, in accordance with the Treaty of Locarno, in respect of any measures which shall be jointly decided upon."

That paragraph adds nothing to the obligations of Locarno except the word "jointly", which is clearly of considerable importance to us. Paragraph (*c*) contains two most important elements to which I would draw the attention of the House. It only applies to the event of an unprovoked aggression, and the assurances which it gives are strictly reciprocal, that is to say they are dependent upon the receipt of reciprocal assurances from Belgium and from France. The staff conversations visualised in paragraph (*d*) are again under the same limited conditions as apply in paragraph III of this White Paper.

To sum up, then, the position of our engagements: Except in respect of the parts of Europe covered by our Locarno obligations, our obligations are precisely the same as those of any other member of the League of Nations. Even in respect of the area covered by the Locarno Treaty there is no new commitment, but only arrangements for the more effectual fulfilment of commitments which already exist. We have visualised these not because they necessarily appeal to us, but because we think it imperative to make some contribution to try to secure negotiations to solve our present difficulties. I freely admit that it is not impossible to find faults with this White Paper—I could find a few myself—but I have given the House the reasons for it. In the circumstances of that time, I say, deliberately, that I regret not one of these proposals, because the House must recall that we were met together in circumstances as grave as those that have faced any Governments since the War. The international position was extremely complicated. Few people in this country yet realise the immense significance to certain parts of Europe of that demilitarised



zone. There were latent dangers which are not yet wholly appreciated. Our justification for these proposals lies simply in this, that at a moment of crisis they allayed the immediate prospects of steps being taken which might have led to war. They earned us a breathing space and we have now concluded the first phase of our efforts to preserve peace in a situation of difficulty which we have done nothing ourselves to create. My justification for this White Paper, and the Government's justification, is that no less than peace was in the balance when these meetings took place. If the House will weigh the danger of war against this document, I am convinced that their judgment will be the same as that of the Government—that it was worth while.

Of all these proposals, the one to which we attach most importance is the one which opens up opportunities for new negotiations. That is the phase we want to reach. If we are to reach it, as I said, we must have a contribution from the German Government. So far, despite all our efforts and they have been many, none has been forthcoming, save the Chancellor's undertaking not to increase the number of troops that originally entered the zone. While admitting the importance of that, quite frankly, in the present international situation it is not enough. If, in addition to that, the German Government would give an undertaking that for the period of negotiations it would not fortify the zone, that would give us something to work upon, but I am informed that it is not possible for the German Government to give even that undertaking.

Our objectives in all this are threefold—first, to avert the danger of war, second, to create conditions in which negotiations can take place and third, to bring about the success of those negotiations so that they may strengthen collective security, further Germany's return to the League and, in a happier atmosphere, allow those larger negotiations on economic matters and on matters of armaments which are indispensable to the appeasement of Europe to take place. I assure the House that it is the appeasement of Europe as a whole that we have constantly before us. It would not be difficult to blame the Government because everything that each one of us would like has not been done. It would not be difficult to blame us because some particular thing has been done that an individual critic might have preferred left undone. But such a criticism is of little value, unless it

takes account of the conditions in which we have to work, of our obligations and the fact that France and Belgium on the one side and Germany on the other, view these things from different angles. Some people in this country could quickly produce an agreement that would suit Germany and ourselves. Others could produce an agreement that would suit France and ourselves. But, if we are to get agreement at all, we have to get them both at a table and our objective is to get them there.

What are the chances of achieving that now? Much, clearly, depends on the proposals which the German Chancellor has been good enough to tell as he is going to make at the beginning of next week. We know that the Chancellor, who has I believe, appreciated the efforts which the British Government have made, will understand with what anxiety Europe awaits those proposals. He can be assured, so far as we are concerned, that those proposals will be received, not only with an open mind, but with a keen desire to make the best use we can of them in order to bring about the permanent pacification of Europe. I say this all the more sincerely because we are conscious of the difficulties of our time. There is another essential condition if these conversations are to start and are to have any chance of success. We need time. We must reduce the present tempo of international exchanges and we need a calmer and quieter atmosphere in which to attempt to study these new proposals when they come next week and to take stock of the general situation as we then find it. When we have those proposals, we shall need an indispensable breathing space, and any action we shall take, will simply be calculated to try to steady the situation to that end.

I am approaching my concluding plea which is addressed not only to this country. We are, I believe, only at the beginning of a period which must be, at best, one of most critical international negotiations. I do not view the future with a light heart, but there are a few general observations which I want to make and which, I think, the Foreign Secretary of this country ought to make without restraint at this time. I do not intend to approach the problem of the immediate future with the idea of being bound to the divergent policies either of France or of Germany. Our policy is the Covenant and our membership of the League. We know our obligations and we are prepared to fulfil them. But what is uppermost in my mind and what, I believe, is

uppermost in the minds of the great mass of the people of this country, is that we must persist in our search for peace on an enduring foundation. If we are to achieve that we shall need help from all.

I say, first, to the British public: We cannot secure peace unless you are prepared frankly to recognise the real perplexities of the present international situation. We cannot ensure peace if you refuse to take upon yourselves obligations to assist us at this time. We cannot ensure peace, unless, in this country and elsewhere, we divest ourselves of prejudices about this or that foreign nation and unless in this country we can divest ourselves of prejudices about our own politicians. It is fantastic to suggest that we are tied to the chariot wheels of this or that foreign country. I would like to say to France, that we cannot ensure peace unless the French Government is ready to approach, with an open mind, the problems which still separate it from Germany. I would like to say to Germany: How can we hope to enter on negotiations with any prospect of success, unless you are prepared to do something to allay the anxieties in Europe which you have created?

If we are to bring a happy issue out of all our troubles, the British public, whose one aim is peace, whose one ambition is a European settlement and whose one political objective is support of the League of Nations will judge other nations by the spirit in which, and the extent to which, they co-operate with us in this task. We are conscious that the country feels deeply upon this issue. I would ask it to think deeply also. I do not believe that, at this time, we shall contribute to a solution of our difficulties by fashioning our foreign policy exclusively on that of any foreign country, but rather by seeking to understand the difficulties that exist in each and attempting to contrive a common meeting-place. That is our whole objective.

Nobody, I think, in this House will envy me my task at this time. He would be an unimaginative being indeed who did not appreciate its burden. But there is always some comfort in approaching a task the fulfilment of which, could it ever be attained, is one's keenest desire. A strengthened League of Nations, an ordered Europe, a greater confidence in which nations would rely less on arms and more on law and order—are these things truly impossible of achievement? They are very difficult at this time, but, out of this unpromising outlook opportunities may be offered. If we are to seize them, it is

ELECTION FOR THE REICHSTAG, MARCH 29, 1936

imperative that as a country we should be united in policy and in purpose.

(*Hansard*, March 26, 1936, cols. 1439-53.)

**73.**

FINAL RESULT OF THE ELECTION, MARCH 29, 1936,  
FOR THE "REICHSTAG FOR FREEDOM AND PEACE"

Out of 45,453,691 Voters entitled to vote 45,001,489 have cast their votes, *i. e.* 99%.

Total votes cast .....45,001,489

Votes for the Party List and hence for the

Führer .....44,461,278

Votes against and invalid ..... 540,211

The Percentage of votes cast for the Party List and hence for the Führer amounts to 98.8%.

(From *Deutscher Reichsanzeiger*, April 22, 1936.)

**74.**

PEACE PLAN OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT,  
MARCH 31, 1936, COMMUNICATED BY AMBASSADOR  
VON RIBBENTROP ON APRIL 1, 1936

It was with the heartiest approval that the German Government learnt from Ambassador von Ribbentrop that it is the wish of the British Government and the British people to begin as soon as possible with the practical work for a real pacification of Europe. This desire is in full accord with the innermost intentions and hopes of the German people and their Government. The German Government therefore regret it all the more that they are not able to recognize in the draft presented by the representatives of the Locarno Powers, which was presented to them on 20th March, a valid and fruitful basis for the introduction and carrying out of such a genuine work of peace. In the eyes of the German people and of their Government this draft lacks that spirit of understanding of the laws of honour and equality of status which have always been

in the life of the peoples the primary condition for the conclusion of free, and thus sacred, treaties.

The German Government believe that they owe it to the seriousness of the task with which they are faced to limit their statement of the negative aspects of the memorandum presented to them to the most essential points. They will however endeavour, by amplifying and clarifying the proposals made by them on 7th March, to facilitate the beginning of concrete work for the securing of European peace.

The German Government must make the following fundamental statements in order to make it comprehensible why they rejected certain discriminatory points, as well as to explain the reasons for their constructive proposals:

The German Government have just received from the German people, among other things, a solemn general mandate to represent the Reich and the German nation along the following two lines:

1. The German people are determined to preserve under all circumstances their freedom, their independence, and thus their equality of status. They regard the advocating of these natural international principles of state life as a precept of national honour, and as a necessary condition for any practical cooperation between the nations, from which they can under no circumstances make any further departure.

2. The German people most sincerely desire to cooperate with all their might in the great work of a general international reconciliation and understanding between the European nations, for the purpose of safeguarding for this continent that peace which is so necessary for its culture and its welfare.

These are the desires of the German people, which are therefore binding on the German Government.

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The German Government would like further to make the following remarks, in pursuance of their fundamental attitude, which was already stated in their preliminary note of 24th March 1936:

A. In the year 1918 Germany signed the Armistice, which was based on the fourteen points of President Wilson. None of these contemplated any limitation of German sovereignty in the Rhine territory. On the contrary, the main principle on which these

points were based was the construction of a new international order, which should lead to a better and permanent peace. It was to do the fullest justice to the principle of self-determination of peoples, and without regard to victor or vanquished.

B. The British Foreign Minister, in an address made on the 26th of March on the subject of the demilitarized zone stated that in the last analysis this was only a *quid pro quo* for the attempt made by France in 1918 to separate the Rhineland from Germany. From this statement it can be seen that the demilitarized zone is nothing more nor less than the result of an already perpetrated breach of conditions which were binding on the Allies too.

C. The provisions of the Treaty of Versailles dealing with the demilitarization were themselves based on a breach of an assurance made to Germany, and had nothing to back them except force. These provisions of the Treaty of Versailles were incorporated into the Locarno Pact, after a further infringement of right, namely the occupation of the Ruhr territory, which was characterized as a breach of international law by British law officers of the Crown.

D. The so-called "voluntary abandonment" of sovereignty rights on the part of Germany over these Western provinces of the Reich is thus a result of the Versailles "Dictate", and of a sequence of severe oppressions of the German people resulting from this dictate. In this connection especial reference must be made to the terrible distress and helplessness of the Reich in consequence of the occupation of the Rhineland.

If now the British Government declare that it was customary to speak of the "Dictate" of Versailles, but that nothing is known of a "Dictate" of Locarno, the German Government must answer by putting this question: "Was there ever or could there ever be a great nation in the world which voluntarily has given up or would give up its sovereignty unilaterally, and without any pressure from outside, and, as in this case, abandon its most primitive right of defending its own frontiers?"

Nevertheless the German nation has tolerated such a state of affairs for seventeen years, and as late as May 21st, 1935, the German Chancellor declared "that in the demilitarized zone the Reich Government was paying heavily as a sovereign State for the peace and quiet of Europe" and that the Reich "will fulfil all the obligations

arising out of the Locarno Treaty just as long as the other parties to the Treaty are willing to keep it in full force”.

The German Government in their preliminary note of March 24th, 1936, called attention to the fact that the military alliance concluded between France and Soviet Russia deprived the Locarno Treaty of the legal and especially the political assumptions on which it was based and thus of the reason for its existence.

It is thus not necessary to go into this matter again in detail for:

There is no doubt whatever that the tendency to involve Europe in a network of military alliances is contrary to the spirit and purport of the establishing of a real community of nations. There is an ever-increasing danger that out of this general entanglement in military alliances a situation will arise once more which will be similar to that to which was principally due the outbreak of the world's most frightful and most senseless war.

It is not within the power of a single Government to prevent such a development originated by certain Powers, but it is the duty of every Government within the limits of its own sovereign power to guard itself against all surprises which might arise out of such impenetrable European military and cabinet policies.

The German Government therefore, in view of the present situation, which implies the removal of the legal and political assumptions on which the Locarno Pact was based, have, for their part, declared themselves as no more bound by the terms of this Pact, and have restored the sovereignty of the Reich over the entire German territory.

The German Government are not in the position to present their measure—which they have adopted for the security of the Reich and which involves only territory of the German Reich, and is a menace to no one—for the judgement of a body which, in the most favourable case, is only in the position to judge the legal aspect of this measure, but is not under any circumstances whatsoever, capable of judging the political aspects. This is all the more true as the Council of the League of Nations has already taken a decision prejudicing the legal judgement of the question.

Furthermore the German Government are convinced that such a verdict could not possibly contribute anything of a constructive nature to the real solution of the question of European security,

but rather would only be inclined to make such a solution more difficult if not, indeed, to prevent it entirely.

Incidentally either one believes in the possibility of the securing of a general European peace, in which case such an attack on the sovereignty of a State can only aggravate matters, or one does not believe in such a possibility of securing peace, in which case such a decision would at the best only have a post factum juridical significance.

The German Government, therefore, on this point as well as on the others contained in the draft proposal presented by the representatives of the Locarno Powers, which are without exception unilaterally detrimental to Germany, not only cannot see any advantageous contribution for a truly broad and constructive solution of the question of European security, but can only see elements of discrimination against a great nation, which thus make permanent peace questionable.

In accordance with the mission entrusted them by the German people, the German Government must decline all one-sided proposals which would lead to any discrimination against Germany.

As is obvious from her offer, Germany does not ever intend to attack France or Belgium. And, taking into consideration France's colossal armaments and the enormous fortresses on her Eastern frontier, it is well known that such an attack would be senseless from the purely military point of view alone.

Also from this point of view the desire of the French Government for immediate negotiations with the General Staff is incomprehensible to the German Government. The latter would regard it as seriously prejudicial if such agreements were arrived at with the General Staff before the conclusion of the new security pacts.

They are of the opinion that such agreements can in any case only take place as a result of the political obligations to support one another of the five Locarno Powers, and then only on strictly reciprocal grounds!

The German Government are further of the opinion that to arrive at an easier solution of the present problems, these must be divided up according to the aims in view. The German Government must then put the following fundamental questions:

Towards what goal is European diplomacy going to direct its efforts?



A. Is this goal to be that division of Europe which has already shown itself unsuitable for any lasting guarantee of peace, a division of peoples into those with more or less equality, into honourable and dishonourable nations, free peoples and unfree peoples, to be preserved or continued in some new form or other or with modifications?

Impelled by such a desire, does European diplomacy further intend to arrive at conclusions on past events, based on majority decisions, and to pronounce sentences in order to find those legal grounds, apparently lacking, for continuing in such a state, or

B. are the Governments of Europe going to direct their efforts towards achieving at all costs a really constructive state of affairs amongst the nations of Europe, and thus arrive at a lasting and secure form of peace?

The German Government owe it to their people to declare plainly here that they will only participate in the second attempt, which, in their opinion is the only constructive one; and moreover they make this declaration with the profoundest possible conviction and with the whole weight of the sincere will and desire of the people behind them.

The German Government believe that the task facing the statesmen of Europe should then be divided into three periods as follows:

a) A period in which the tension has gradually calmed down, and in which to elucidate the procedure for the negotiations which are to be started;

b) a period for the actual negotiations for securing the peace of Europe;

c) a later period for dealing with those desirable supplements to the work of peace in Europe, which cannot and should not exactly be determined or limited as to contents or size from the very beginning (questions of disarmament, economics etc.). To this end the German Government propose the following peace plan:

1. In order to give the future agreements securing the peace of Europe the character of inviolable treaties, those nations participating in the negotiations do so only on an entirely equal footing and as equally esteemed members. The sole compelling reason for signing these treaties can only lie in the generally recognised and obvious practicability of these agreements for the peace of Europe,

and thus for the social happiness and economic prosperity of the nations.

2. In order to abbreviate the period of uncertainty in the economic interests of the European nations, the German Government propose a limit of four months for the first period up to the signing of the pacts of non-aggression guaranteeing the peace of Europe.

3. The German Government give the assurance not to add any reinforcements whatsoever to the troops in the Rhineland during this period, always provided that the Belgian and French Governments act in the same way.

4. The German Government give the assurance not to move during this period the troops at present stationed in the Rhineland closer to the Belgian and French frontiers.

5. The German Government propose the setting up of a commission composed of the two guarantor Powers, England and Italy, and a disinterested third neutral power, to guarantee this assurance to be given by both parties.

6. Germany, Belgium and France are each entitled to send a representative to this Commission. If Germany, France, or Belgium think that, for any particular reason they can point to a change in the military situation having taken place within this period of four months, they then have the right to inform the Guarantee Commission of their observations.

7. Germany, Belgium and France declare their willingness, in such a case to permit this Commission to make the necessary investigations through the English and Italian military attachés, and to report thereon to the Powers participating.

8. Germany, Belgium and France give the assurance that they will bestow the fullest consideration to the objections arising therefrom.

9. Moreover the German Government are willing on a basis of complete reciprocity with Germany's two western neighbours to agree to any military limitations on the German western frontier.

10. Germany, Belgium und France and the two guarantor Powers agree to enter into negotiations under the leadership of the British Government at once or, at the latest, after the French elections, for the conclusion of a 25-years non-aggression or security pact between France and Belgium on the one hand, and Germany on the other.

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11. Germany agrees that England and Italy shall sign this security pact as guarantor Powers once more.

12. Should special engagements to render military assistance arise as a result of these security agreements, Germany for her part, declares her willingness, also to enter into such engagements.

13. The German Government hereby repeat their proposal for the conclusion of an air pact to supplement and consolidate these security agreements.

14. The German Government repeat that should the Netherlands so desire they are willing to include this country too in this West-European security agreement.

15. In order to stamp this peace pact, voluntarily entered into between Germany and France, as the reconciliatory conclusion of a centuries-old dispute, Germany and France pledge themselves to take steps to see that in the education of the young, as well as in the press and publications of both nations everything shall be avoided, which might be calculated to poison the relationship between the two peoples, whether it be a derogatory or contemptuous attitude, or improper interference in the internal affairs of the other country. They agree to set up at the headquarters of the League of Nations at Geneva, a joint commission whose function it shall be to lay all complaints received before the two Governments for information and investigation.

16. In pursuance of their intention to give this agreement the character of a sacred pledge, Germany and France undertake to ratify it by means of a plebiscite of the two nations.

17. Germany expresses her willingness, for her part, to establish contact with the states on her South-eastern and North-eastern frontiers, in order to invite them directly to conclude the pacts of non-aggression already proposed.

18. Germany expresses her willingness to re-enter the League of Nations, either at once, or after the conclusion of these agreements.

At the same time, the German Government again express their expectation that, after a reasonable time and by the method of friendly negotiations the question of colonial equality of rights, and that of the separation of the Covenant of the League of Nations from its foundations in the Versailles Treaty will be cleared up.

19. Germany proposes the setting up of an International Court

of Arbitration, which shall be responsible for the observance of the various agreements concluded, and whose decisions shall be binding on all parties.

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After the conclusion of this great work of securing European peace, the German Government consider it urgently necessary to endeavour by practical measures to put a stop to the unlimited competition in armaments. In their opinion this would mean not merely an improvement in the financial and economic position of the nations, but above all a diminution of the psychological tension.

The German Government, however, have no faith in the attempt to bring about universal settlements, as this would be doomed to failure from the outset, and can therefore be proposed only by those who have no interest in achieving practical results. On the other hand they are of the opinion that the negotiations held and the results achieved in limiting naval armaments should have an instructive and stimulating effect.

The German Government therefore propose that in future conferences shall have one, clearly defined objective.

For the present, they consider the most important task is to bring aerial warfare into the moral and human atmosphere of the protection afforded to non-combatants or the wounded by the Geneva Convention. Just as the killing of defenceless wounded, or prisoners, or the use of dum-dum bullets, or the waging of submarine warfare without warning, have been either forbidden or regulated by international conventions, so it must be possible for civilised humanity to prevent the senseless abuse of any new type of weapon, without running counter to the object of warfare.

The German Government therefore put forward the proposal that the immediate practical tasks of this conference shall be:

1. Prohibition of dropping gas, poison, or incendiary bombs.
2. Prohibition of dropping bombs of any kind whatsoever on open towns and villages outside the range of the medium-heavy artillery of the fighting fronts.
3. Prohibition of the bombarding of towns distant more than 20 km. from the battle zone with long-range guns.

4. Abolition and prohibition of the construction of tanks of the heaviest type.

5. Abolition and prohibition of artillery of the heaviest calibre.

As soon as possibilities for further limitation of armaments emerge from such discussions and agreements, they should be utilized.

The German Government hereby declare themselves now prepared to join in every such settlement, in so far as it is valid internationally.

The German Government believe that if even a first step is made on the road to disarmament, this will be of enormous importance for the relationship between the nations, and for the recovery of confidence, trade and prosperity.

In accordance with the general desire for the restoration of favourable economic conditions the German Government are prepared immediately after the conclusion of the political treaties to enter into an exchange of opinions on economic problems with the other nations concerned, in the spirit of the proposals made, and to do all that lies in their power to improve the economic situation in Europe, and the world economic situation which is closely bound up with it.

The German Government believe that with the peace plan proposed above they have made their contribution to the reconstruction of a new Europe on the basis of reciprocal respect and confidence between sovereign States. Many opportunities for such a pacification of Europe, for which Germany has so often in the last few years made her proposals, have been neglected. May this attempt to achieve European understanding succeed at last!

The German Government confidently believe that they have opened the way in this direction by submitting the above peace plan.

(From the German News Agency *D.N.B.*, April 1, 1936)

## Supplement 1

### FRENCH REPLY OF APRIL 8, 1936, TO THE GERMAN PEACE PLAN

*The Reply comprises a Memorandum addressed to the British Government and communicated to the Belgian and Italian Governments, containing observations from the French Government in reply to the German Peace Plan of March 31; and a Peace Plan communicated to the representatives of the three Locarno Powers, and containing the views of the French Government for the consolidation of peace in Europe.*

#### a) MEMORANDUM

Through the French Embassy in London, the French Government received from the British Government a communication of the translation of the Memorandum handed to the Secretary of State on April 1, 1936, whereby the German Government, at the same time as it defines its attitude regarding the arrangement drawn up on March 19 by the representatives of the Locarno Powers, sets forth a number of proposals which, according to it, constitute "a peace plan."

The Government of the French Republic considers that it must formulate without delay the principal observations suggested to it by a first study of this document.

The German Memorandum having been made public, the French Government naturally reserves the right to give the same publicity to its own observations.

#### Paragraph 1

On the morrow of the repudiation by the Reich of the undertakings freely and solemnly contracted or renewed at Locarno, and following the entry into the Demilitarized Zone of armed forces, the Government of the Republic would have had the right to take, without delay, suitable measures for re-establishing the legal situation and repressing "a hostile act" constituted by the German initiative. Anxious to avoid the risks of new complications for Europe, it did not do this.

It first asked the Council of the League to take note of the infringement of the treaty and at the same time, in conversations

carried on from March 12 to March 19 with representatives of the other Powers who are parties to the Locarno Treaty, it endeavoured to seek possibilities of friendly solution.

The arrangement which resulted from these conversations is proof of the care of the four Governments represented to take into account the legitimate susceptibilities of Germany.

The German Government nevertheless rejects the proposals of March 19 as derogatory to the German people and refusing it equality of rights.

No one, however, threatens the independence of the German people, no one refuses it equality of rights, no one dreams of assailing its honour, unless it be an attempt against the honour of the nation to remind it that respect of treaties is a fundamental rule of international relations, a rule which the German Government, like any other, cannot escape by alleging that such and such an obligation hinders its liberty or its independence, or that the execution of such and such an engagement can no longer, according to its own expression, "be tolerated" by the German nation.

"In order to promote international cooperation and to achieve international peace and security," says the preamble to the League Covenant, it is necessary to maintain "a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations."

Will the Government of the Reich which announces its intentions of rejoining the League of Nations ask on that occasion that this text should be revised in order to conform with its conceptions?

Should we henceforward inscribe in it that the rule stops short at the point where for each people begins "the vital right" of which it alone shall be the judge?

#### Paragraph 2

Having thus estimated cheaply the essential principles of international law, the German Government in its Memorandum had not to take history into any further account. According to it, the demilitarization of the Rhineland is said to be in contradiction to the very bases on which peace was concluded and to run counter to engagements taken at the moment of the Armistice.

These assertions have no foundation either directly or indirectly.

The demilitarization of the Rhineland was nothing else than a

guarantee of security granted to Europe against the new enterprises of Germany.

It did not violate any of the principles inscribed in the Fourteen Points of President Wilson. If it had been otherwise, the German Delegation to Versailles would not have omitted to call attention to it.

Among the provisions of the Peace Treaty, the demilitarization clauses are among the few against which, at no moment in the course of the negotiations, did the representatives of Germany protest.

As for the Treaty of Locarno, an attempt is now being made to give credence to the view that it was negotiated under constraint of the occupation of the Ruhr.

The Ruhr was evacuated before the negotiations were even envisaged.

In reality, the Rhineland Pact tended to create a new situation in Western Europe, based on respect of undertakings freely subscribed, and its negotiation was instigated by the German Government itself, seeking a guarantee of security for the Western frontier of the Reich.

Free recognition of the Demilitarized Zone was given in exchange for a pledge of peace for Germany.

The Locarno Treaty constituted the firmest foundations of Western peace. It is these foundations which the policy of the Reich has not hesitated to destroy.

In support of the thesis, which facts and dates belie, the German Memorandum thinks that it can invoke a new juridical theory—namely, that no nation could voluntarily renounce its sovereign rights without exterior pressure; the origin of the demilitarization clauses was the constraint of necessity; and even if they were negotiated in conditions of liberty and equality, the Locarno Treaty could not have a sacred character because it reproduces the provisions already included in the treaty signed after defeat.

Here, in all its gravity, appears the strange pretension of Germany, the import of which Europe should weigh well—in so far as the European territorial statute results from the treaties of 1919, it is this whole statute which Germany reserves the right to call into question, in spite of whatever confirmations it may have been the object since the peace was made.

What then does it matter that the German Government declares



that it cherishes no territorial ambition? What does it matter that it proclaims its will to respect frontiers if, from now on, it has reserved to itself the possibility of declaring some day that the confirmation freely given by it could not have the effect of changing the initial character of the cession of the territories of which these frontiers are the issue, cession which was granted under outside pressure or under the empire of necessity?

Must we conclude that Germany, starting from this new juridical basis taken from an unpublished international law, might to-morrow call into question the Statute of Danzig, that of Memel, and that of Austria; might demand such and such a revision of European frontiers; and such and such a restitution of German colonial territories?

The French Government considers that all these questions should be clearly put to the Government of the Reich, and that the latter should reply as clearly, since no peace plan can be constructed on an equivocation so dangerous for the very maintenance of peace.

#### Paragraph 3

A return to arguments of the juridical order, by which the German Government has the pretension of justifying its initiatives of March 7, might be dispensed with.

These arguments have, moreover, been refuted countless times.

Whatever the Reich may maintain, it remains that none of the other Powers signatory to Locarno have ever admitted that the Franco-Soviet Pact was incompatible with this treaty; it remains that Germany has thought fit to stand as judge of her own case, whereas the treaty expressly provided procedure for arbitration and conciliation in case of dispute; and, finally, there remains the finding of the Council of the League.

Moreover, in again refusing to submit its claim to the Permanent Court of International Justice, the Government of the Reich admits the weakness of its juridical arguments—Germany does not want to go to The Hague because she knows the Court would condemn the German thesis.

#### Paragraph 4

Grave as was the situation on March 7, it did not divert the Locarno Powers from a policy of moderation.

Their Governments were ready, with Germany, to seek a new statute for the Rhineland; were ready to take part in wide negotiation to settle problems that the security of Western Europe involves; and to establish the whole of European peace on solid foundations.

But on the basis of a *fait accompli* such negotiation was impossible.

Reducing their legitimate demands to a minimum, the four Governments simply demanded that Germany should make the necessary "gestures" so that provisional solutions allowing the re-establishment of confidence which had been so greatly shaken might prevail.

They asked her to recognize the sovereignty of international law by submitting her claims to The Hague Tribunal, to recognize that the Rhineland question, the object of an international arrangement, could not be settled by unilateral decision, and, finally, to join in measures capable of creating a new atmosphere in countries whose security was menaced by the act of March 7.

To these generous suggestions the German Government answered only with a refusal; if the Reich admits that a *détente* is necessary it does not propose to contribute to it.

Germany was asked to apply to The Hague Court. Germany refused.

She was asked to form on her territory along the Franco-Belgian frontiers a zone occupied by international forces. She replied with silence equivalent to a refusal.

She was asked for guarantees regarding the use of para-military forces stationed in the Rhineland during the transitional period. The same silence.

She was asked to abstain from all fortification work and air equipment. Silence again.

And if the German Government agreed reciprocally, and under the control of an international commission, not to augment the present effectives in the Rhineland Zone it did not give any assurance that these effectives are not even now greater in number than the contingent officially announced on March 7.

Thus the efforts at conciliation by the Locarno Powers found no echo in the German Government.

#### Paragraph 5

The Reich Government claims, it is true, with its "peace plan" to offer a decisive contribution to the reconstruction of the new Europe.

This contribution is unfortunately more apparent than real. The Government of the Republic notes the German proposition tending to the conclusion of a new treaty for the reconstruction of the system of security which Germany saw fit to destroy on March 7; this proposition, however, will assume some value in its eyes only when it knows how the observance of its new engagements by the Reich can be guaranteed.

It also notes that the Reich Government, retracting the sentiment expressed only a few weeks ago to the British and French Ambassadors, to-day declares itself favourable to the conclusion of a Western Air Pact.

It would nevertheless like to know if, in the opinion of the German Government, this pact includes an agreement for air limitation, in the absence of which the security guarantees that it might offer would be practically non-existent.

The arrangement of March 19 contained one essential disposition concerning the prohibition or limitation of the right in future to build fortifications in a zone to be determined. In the present state of Europe the attitude of the German Government with regard to this essential clause must be known.

It will thus be possible to see if the Reich is ready to recognize, not only in word but in deed, the principle of collective security, or if, on the contrary, it reserves to itself the possibility of settling by its own will, even by force, its relations with its weaker neighbours by limiting with regard to them the carrying out of assistance.

The demilitarization of the Rhineland was not only an element in French and Belgian security; it concerned the political status of the whole of Europe. The German plan bears no guarantee which would compensate for its eventual disappearance.

#### Paragraph 6

One is forced to note that Germany replies with definitely insufficient suggestions for strengthening European peace. If she declares herself ready to negotiate directly the conclusion of non-aggression pacts with each of her neighbours on the south-east and north-east frontiers she does not admit that these facts can be included in a system of collective security. She admits even less that they can be accompanied by guarantees of mutual assistance.

But bilateral non-aggression agreements, unaccompanied by a clause providing mutual assistance in favour of the victim of a brutal denunciation and a *coup de force*, would not add to the engagements already dependent, for Germany and her neighbours, on the 1928 Paris Pact (Briand-Kellogg Pact).

European security forms a whole and the principle of collective security is not valid for only one part of the Continent. France for her part takes thought not only for her friendships but also for her obligations as a member of the League, and could not conceive of a settlement of Western security for which she would have to disinterest herself in the security of the rest of Europe.

It was the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Pact which supplied the Reich with the pretext it sought for freeing itself from the obligations of the Locarno Treaty. It denounced the menace of a military alliance directed against its own security. It is therefore strange that in its own interest it does not envisage the conclusion of some agreement of non-aggression with Soviet Russia. As a year ago, at the time of the Stresa Conference, the German Government declared itself ready to conclude such an agreement, while admitting that alongside this agreement mutual assistance pacts between Russia and other Powers might follow, the German dispositions have therefore changed—for what reason and with what aim?

#### Paragraph 7

It is true that Germany declares that she is ready to re-enter the League. Since Germany left Geneva, the Government of the Republic has not ceased to affirm that European security could only be realized within the framework of the League; it would, therefore, not be the last to express approval of the decision which the Government of the Reich announced on March 7. It must, however, ask the question: How, before the solution of the crisis which she brought about by her policy of the *fait accompli*, could Germany be considered as "giving effective guarantees of her sincere intention to observe her international engagements"? The return of Germany to the League would in the present circumstances be equivocal. It would not be accomplished, however, without conditions. By recalling in a more pressing manner than several weeks ago its pretensions in the colonial sphere, did not the Government of the Reich wish it to

be understood that, in default of a satisfactory solution, it reserved the possibility of again seceding? And as for the separation to be established between the League Covenant and the Peace Treaty, the least one can say of this formula, already put forward many times, is that its sense has never been made clear.

The Government of the Reich formulates another proposal which hardly appears compatible with the principles of the Covenant. By suggesting that respect of agreements to be concluded should be ensured by a Court of Arbitration whose decisions would be binding it not only sets aside all intervention by the Permanent Court of International Justice but also it appears to reject in advance even the competence of the Council.

If one of the agreements of non-aggression, the conclusion of which is envisaged by Germany, should be violated, would this violation fall under the Covenant?

If, in the mind of the German Government, it should be otherwise, it must conclude that the return of the Reich to the League is envisaged as a means of intervention in the policy of other States without any essential German element of policy having been submitted to the control of the League.

#### Paragraph 8

The Government of the Reich only appears disposed to enter upon the path of limitation of armaments with the greatest circumspection.

The limitation of air armaments does not appear to be envisaged in the German plan, either from the qualitative or quantitative point of view.

As for land armaments, no quantitative limitation is even suggested, and if it is a question of qualitative limitation, nothing is said of the putting into effect of an efficacious system of control, which would be an indispensable condition. It is true the German Government has proposed to deal with the humanization of war, and the proposal is not one of those which the French Government would ever think of rejecting. But rather than humanizing war one should render it impossible by organizing against an eventual aggressor effective and immediate action of a collective nature. The Government of the Reich has not up to the present given its approval to such a conception. Moreover, the prohibition proposed by Germany of air bombard-

ments with asphyxiating, toxic, or incendiary bombs is already laid down by the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which the French Government for its part has ratified. If the problem was again discussed during the Disarmament Conference, it was with a view to completing these prohibitions by energetic measures of reprisal against an eventual violator. We should have liked the German ideas on this point to be stated more precisely.

Paragraph 9

The German "peace plan" contains proposals concerning the improvement of Franco-German relations. The French Government has taken note of these and will in no wise refuse, within the measure of the possibilities provided, to seek directly with the German Government means to give fresh impulse to the efforts which have already been undertaken in this sense. But it goes without saying that as far as they concern the relations between France and Germany, dispositions of this nature are not in their place in the system of general agreements at present envisaged. On the other hand, and as far as it is a question of the general problem of moral disarmament, the League is already entrusted with the matter, and its important preparatory work has been brought to a successful conclusion which, when the time comes, should be drawn upon in direct relations between France and Germany.

Paragraph 10

As for the observance by the French Republic of undertakings which its Government takes in its name, there is no need, to ensure it, of procedure contrary to the very principles of the French Constitution.

And we should not even mention this point if there were not to be seen in it a new expression of the theory which tends to make distinction between Governments and peoples.

Fidelity to treaties is a fundamental principle of French policy, and it is not French initiative which to-day obliges peoples to ask themselves whether international relations will continue to resolve in accordance with the rules of law or whether henceforward there will be known no other rule than that of force.

For such is unhappily the primordial question which, to spare their countries bitter surprises, the Governments are obliged to ask to-day.

In conclusion, does the vital right of the people authorize unilateral cancellation of engagements undertaken; will peace be ensured by the collaboration of all in respect of the rights of each; or will States have every latitude to settle their differences as they please in a *tête-à-tête* with the States whose good faith they have taken by surprise? No European Government can undertake the conclusion of new agreements without having received a clear reply to this question. And still more directly another question may be put to the German Government: Does Germany unreservedly recognize as valid the present territorial and political statute of Europe? Does she admit that respect of this statute can be guaranteed by agreements concluded on the basis of mutual assistance? The proposals handed in in London on April 1 are silent on this point.

b) DECLARATION

France, faithful to her tradition, asserts that she does not want to seek peace in securities for herself alone, in incomplete pacts, which allow war risks to remain.

Peace for all, peace total and lasting, peace with equality of rights, peace with confidence in the honour of all and with respect for the pledged word, a happy peace and a safe peace founded on international exchange which would succeed the mortal rivalry of economic nationalism, peace made real by a wide limitation of armaments leading to disarmament.

That is what the French Government proposes to other States in circumstances which, in spite of their gravity, appear to offer Europe a new possibility of union.

A small number of precise classified rules should enable all Governments who interpret the wishes of pacific peoples with good will to agree and to bear witness to common constructive views.

Collective security, mutual assistance, disarmament, economic cooperation, and European associations of resources for credit, of work, of intelligence, and the will of the peoples in favour of peace and against war, for prosperity and against misery—such are the broad lines of action for peace that the Government, sprung from the French people, offers in its name.

Paragraph 1

The first basis of international relations should be the recognition of the equality of right and independence of all States, as well as the respect of contracted engagements.

Paragraph 2

There is no durable peace between nations if that peace remains subjected to the fluctuations, needs, and ambitions of each people.

Paragraph 3

There is no real security in international relations if all conflicts which can arise between States are not resolved according to international law, obligatory on all and interpreted by impartial and sovereign international jurisdiction, and guaranteed by the forces of all the associates of the international community.

Paragraph 4

Equality of rights does not prevent any State, voluntarily and in the common interest, limiting in certain circumstances the exercise of its sovereignty and rights.

Paragraph 5

This limitation is particularly necessary in the matter of armaments in order to avoid any danger of hegemony by a more powerful people over other weaker peoples.

Paragraph 6

The inequality in fact existing between peoples should be compensated within the international community by mutual assistance against any breaking of international law.

Paragraph 7

If mutual assistance in the general framework of the League is at present difficult to apply rapidly and efficaciously, it should be supplemented by regional agreements.

Paragraph 8

A typical regional unit is constituted by Europe, the development of which makes the organization of security on the above-defined bases easier.



Paragraph 9

Even were Europe, in the light of experience, to appear too vast a field for the application of collective security by mutual assistance and disarmament, there would be room for organizing regional ententes within the European framework.

Paragraph 10

This organization should be confided to a European Commission formed within the framework of the League.

Paragraph 11

International law demands respect of treaties. No treaty should be regarded as unalterable, but no treaty can be repudiated unilaterally. In the new European organization, wherein all peoples with equal rights shall be freely associated, each State will bind itself to respect the territorial status of the members, which cannot be modified without the consent of all. No demand for modification shall be submitted for 25 years.

European or regional treaties concerning the independence of States, and all limitations of their sovereignty accepted by common accord, notably regarding armaments, shall be placed under the mutual guarantee of the associates.

To this end special disposition shall be made whereby, after observation by a competent international authority that the aforesaid treaties have been broken, sanctions, reaching as far as force, shall be taken with a view to the re-establishment of international law.

Paragraph 12

In order that they may be able to accomplish their duties of mutual assistance, the States associated with the European framework, or in the regional framework, shall specially provide and permanently maintain military, aerial, and naval forces at the disposal of the European Commission or the Council of the League of Nations.

Paragraph 13

The permanent control of the carrying-out of treaties within the European framework, or the regional framework, shall be organized by the European Commission. All the associated European States

shall bind themselves to make its work easy and to assure the execution of the decisions which this control might cause.

Paragraph 14

Collective security having been organized in the European or regional frameworks by mutual assistance, all the associates shall proceed to a wide measure of disarmament.

The limitation of armaments in each State shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of the European Commission or any other organ appointed by the Council of the League, with the reservation that each State may appeal to a high permanent Arbitration Court, formed for this purpose by the Council of the League, and which shall be charged to pay particular attention to the application of the principle mentioned above in Paragraph 5.

Paragraph 15

All treaties existing at present in Europe, and those which may be concluded in the future between two or more members of the European community, shall be submitted to the European Commission, which shall be able to pronounce by a two-thirds majority that they are incompatible with the European pact or regional pact foreseen in Paragraphs 8 and 9.

These dispositions shall apply to economic agreements as well as political ones.

Paragraph 16

If it must be admitted that the prosperity of the peoples, and, even without speaking of prosperity, the lightening of their present sufferings, can only be obtained by the consolidation of a durable peace, founded on equal and honourable relations, then the economic cooperation of the peoples must be organized once the political work of establishing peace has been assured.

Paragraph 17

The rational organization of exchanges is at the basis of economic cooperation.

Paragraph 18

The expansion of markets provides the first solution. A first expansion should be found in a preferential system applicable to the inter-European exchanges.

Special economic relations leading as far as even a partial or total Customs Union would appreciably improve the economic conditions of certain European regions.

Paragraph 19

Security in exchanges is the second factor in economic progress. On the one hand, exchanges shall be protected by an international convention, or at least a European one, assuring guarantees against the abuse of protectionism either direct or indirect. The projected convention for concerted economic action established in 1931 by the League should be remembered to this end.

On the other hand, international exchanges must be protected against abusive interference on the part of States.

The conclusion of a European Customs truce, made possible by an appreciably stabilized standard of living in Europe, shall be set up, as also an international tribunal of exchanges to avoid the denunciations of commercial agreements and breaks in international relations between peoples, so prejudicial to the regularization and development of exchanges.

Finally, monetary instability and the restriction of international credit will have to be fought, particularly by means of the organization of money and credit in the European framework.

Paragraph 20

The double necessity for a common reservoir of raw materials and for territory for expansion for surplus European production should lead to a revision of certain colonial statutes, not in the domain of political sovereignty, but from the point of view of equality of economic rights and the cooperation of credit between European States, which, having assured themselves of collective security and mutual assistance, will accordingly have to be considered as associates, not as rivals.

Paragraph 21

All the problems will have to be treated, once political security has been established, by a special section in the European Commission before being submitted, if necessary, to the League Council or a general conference to which non-League members would also be invited.

Paragraph 22

Nothing in the present peace plan should be considered as contrary to the Covenant of the League or as providing an obstacle to its application, the Covenant and the plan being brought, where necessary, into harmony in order to take into account agreements which might be drawn up between the contracting parties.

Paragraph 23

It is suggested that the organizations aimed at in the present plan should as far as possible be identical with those already existing in the League, or that the League should be asked to create those as yet not in existence.

Paragraph 24

Final adherence to the peace plan presupposes adherence to the Covenant, of which the principles remain the supreme law for the contracting parties.

Paragraph 25

Failure to adhere to this plan by one or other State in the European community could not absolve the other States desiring to conform with it from putting it into operation. The plan would only have to be consequently modified, notably as regards the organization of collective security, mutual assistance, and disarmament.

*(The Times, April 9, 1936.)*

## Supplement 2

### BRITISH QUESTIONNAIRE OF MAY 6, 1936

*On May 7, the British Ambassador, Sir Eric Phipps, handed to the German Foreign Minister, Baron von Neurath, the questions formulated by the British Government on the subject of the peace proposals put forward by Germany in March.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, May 6, 1936.*

Your Excellency will be aware that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have for some time past had under the most careful consideration the memoranda communicated to me by the late Herr von Hoersch on the 7th March, 1936, and by Herr von Ribbentrop on the 24th March and the 1st April, 1936, respecting the reoccupation of the demilitarised zone and the peace proposals of the German Government.

2. Such consideration was naturally indispensable in view of the importance which, as your Excellency is aware, His Majesty's Government attach to the establishment in Europe of a real and lasting peace based on the recognition of the equality of rights and independence of every State, together with respect by every State for the engagements entered into by it. It is the desire of His Majesty's Government to make every effort within their power to co-operate in the promotion of the objective described by the German Government in the memorandum of the 31st March as "the great work of securing European peace"; and it is accordingly with this aim in view and in order to open the way to fruitful negotiation that I address to you this despatch and request your Excellency to seek an interview with the German Chancellor. You should preface your remarks by a statement to this effect.

3. Certain of the German Government's proposals deal, as your Excellency is aware, with temporary arrangements in the demilitarised zone pending the completion of the first stage of the general negotiations for the peace of Europe which were proposed by the German Government. On these temporary arrangements it is not my purpose to comment in the present despatch, though your Excellency knows that His Majesty's Government regret that the German Government have not been able to make a more substantial contribution towards the re-establishment of the confidence which is such an essential preliminary to the wide negotiations which they both have in view.

4. In the course of my interview with Herr von Ribbentrop on the 2nd April, I informed his Excellency that His Majesty's Government regard the proposals for the future in the German memorandum of the 31st March (that communicated to me on the 1st April) as most important and as deserving of careful study. This study is now at an advanced stage; but His Majesty's Government find difficulty

in carrying it further without discussing more closely with the German Government (as foreshadowed in the Geneva communiqué of the 10th April) a certain number of points in the three memoranda, particularly in those of the 24th and 31st March. His Majesty's Government feel sure that the German Government will share their view that the greatest possible precision is desirable before general negotiations can open, in order that in the future no misunderstandings may cloud the confident co-operation of the Powers of Europe, which it is the most earnest hope of His Majesty's Government, as they are sure also of the German Government, that the proposed negotiations may advance.

5. There are a number of passages in the German memoranda of the 24th and 31st March which leave His Majesty's Government in some doubt as to the conception held by the German Government of the basis upon which the future settlement should be founded.

6. The first point on which it is desirable to be clear is whether Germany regards herself as now in a position to conclude "genuine treaties." There are passages in the second sub-paragraph of paragraph 1 of the German Government's memorandum of the 24th March, 1936, which seem to suggest that it is the view of the German Government that by their action in the Rhineland they have established this position. On the other hand, there are passages in paragraph 2 of the memorandum of the 24th March which might be capable of a different interpretation, which, however, His Majesty's Government would not themselves wish to draw. It is, of course, clear that negotiations for a treaty would be useless if one of the parties hereafter felt free to deny its obligation on the ground that that party was not at the time in a condition to conclude a binding treaty, and His Majesty's Government will welcome a clear declaration from the German Government to remove any uncertainty on this point.

7. If the argument set out in paragraph 6 of the German Government's memorandum of the 31st March is intended to be of general application, it might give rise to doubt as to the view which the German Government take of the continued maintenance in force of the remaining operative clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, and, indeed, of any agreement which might be said to have had its origin in the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. His Majesty's Government do not wish to enter into controversy as to the historical inter-

pretation of events set forth in that paragraph, and consequently they do not propose to state their views here. But they must, of course, make it clear that they are unable to accept the views put forward by the German Government in the paragraph in question.

8. There is in paragraph 4 of the memorandum of the 31st March a further cause for uncertainty. It is stated in that paragraph that "the German Government have received from the German People ('Volk') a solemn general mandate to represent the Reich and the German Nation ('Nation') to carry out a policy which implies the preservation under all circumstances of their freedom, their independence and at the same time their equality of status." A distinction is apparently drawn between the Reich and the German Nation. The question is really whether Germany now considers that a point has been reached at which she can signify that she recognises and intends to respect the existing territorial and political status of Europe, except in so far as this might be subsequently modified by free negotiation and agreement.

9. I turn now to other matters. Sub-paragraph 13 of paragraph 22 of the memorandum of the 31st March refers to "the conclusion of an Air Pact to supplement and reinforce these (Western European) security agreements." In the spring of 1935 the German Government were understood to hold that the negotiation of an Air Pact should not be complicated by an attempt to accompany it by an agreement for the limitation of air forces. Since then a somewhat contradictory position seems to have arisen. In the Reichstag on the 21st May, 1935, Herr Hitler mentioned the possibility of an agreement for air limitation on the basis of parity between the great Western Powers, provided, so we understood, that the development of the Soviet air force was not such that revision would be necessary. The Chancellor's speech of the 21st May, 1935, was made after the signature of the Franco-Soviet Treaty; yet in December 1935 he informed your Excellency that that Treaty had made air limitation impossible. A decision not to attempt to accompany a Western Air Pact by a regional agreement for limitation of air strengths would be very much regretted by His Majesty's Government; and the statement in paragraph 2 of the German memorandum that the German Government are impressed by the results achieved in the limited sphere of the recent agreement respecting naval armaments

encourages them to hope that the German Government will be able to fall in with their views on this point.

10. His Majesty's Government are gratified to see that, in subparagraphs 10 and 14 of paragraph 22 of the memorandum of the 31st March, the German Government propose the conclusion of non-aggression pacts between Germany, on the one hand, and France, Belgium and possibly Holland on the other. They note that the German Government are willing that these pacts should be accompanied by treaties of guarantee. The exact form which these instruments will assume must be a matter for detailed negotiation.

His Majesty's Government also note the proposal in subparagraph 17 of paragraph 22 for non-aggression pacts between Germany and the States on Germany's south-eastern and north-eastern frontiers. His Majesty's Government would venture to recall the general outline of such pacts given to Sir John Simon by Baron von Neurath in Berlin on the 26th March, 1935. They would be glad to know whether the German Government suggest that these pacts should follow generally that outline, and whether they agree that these pacts also may be guaranteed by mutual assistance arrangements.

The announcement which the German Government have been able to make of Germany's readiness to re-enter the League of Nations permits His Majesty's Government to assume that no difficulty will arise as regards the conformity of the proposed non-aggression pacts with the obligations of members of the League of Nations, and that the operation of these pacts will take place within the framework of the Covenant.

There are two further points to which attention should be drawn. The first concerns the meaning of the words "the States on Germany's south-eastern and north-eastern frontiers." His Majesty's Government cannot but feel that the general settlement would be very greatly facilitated if the German Government could see their way to interpret these words so as to cover at least also the Soviet Union, Latvia and Estonia, as well as the States actually contiguous to Germany. In this connexion His Majesty's Government would venture to recall that in their memorandum of the 26th March, 1935, the German Government stated their readiness to conclude pacts of non-aggression with "the Powers interested in East European questions."



The second is that of non-interference in the affairs of other States, as distinct from non-aggression against them. His Majesty's Government recall with satisfaction the Chancellor's statement in the Reichstag on the 21st May, 1935, that the German Government were "ready at any time to agree to an international arrangement which will effectively prevent and render impossible all attempts to interfere from outside in the affairs of other States."

11. In sub-paragraph 19 of paragraph 22 "Germany proposes the constitution of an international court of arbitration which shall have competence in respect of the observance of the various agreements concluded." Presumably, these agreements are those mentioned in sub-paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 17 of paragraph 22. It would be desirable to know generally the functions and constitution of the proposed court and the relation which the former would bear to the functions of the Council of the League of Nations and of the Permanent Court of International Justice.

In view of the announcement of Germany's willingness to return to the League of Nations, the German Government will, no doubt, be willing to indicate their future attitude towards the Permanent Court of International Justice (particularly in relation to the Optional Clause) and towards the various provisions for arbitration, conciliation or judicial settlement contained in treaties to which Germany is a party.

12. When your Excellency sees the Chancellor, I request that you will discuss with him the points raised in this despatch and leave with him a copy. Your Excellency should explain that these are not exhaustive. There are other matters which will have to be raised at a later date; and before the return of Germany to the League of Nations comes under discussion, the German Government will no doubt think it desirable to give some definition of the phrase "the separation of the Covenant of the League of Nations from its basis in the Treaty of Versailles setting," which occurs in sub-paragraph 18 of paragraph 22. At the moment His Majesty's Government prefer only to deal with points the elucidation of which is essential prior to the opening of the general negotiations which, as stated above, they are sincerely desirous of promoting.

I am, &c.

ANTHONY EDEN

(*Cmd. 5175*, p. 12-6.)