

Venue and accommodation for all participants:
Courtyard by Marriott Pilsen,
Sady 5. května 57, Plzeň (Pilsen)

**Centenary of the Locarno Treaties and
Collective Security Policy in Europe:
Reality – Reflection – Reassessment – Re-establishment?**

Abstract Booklet

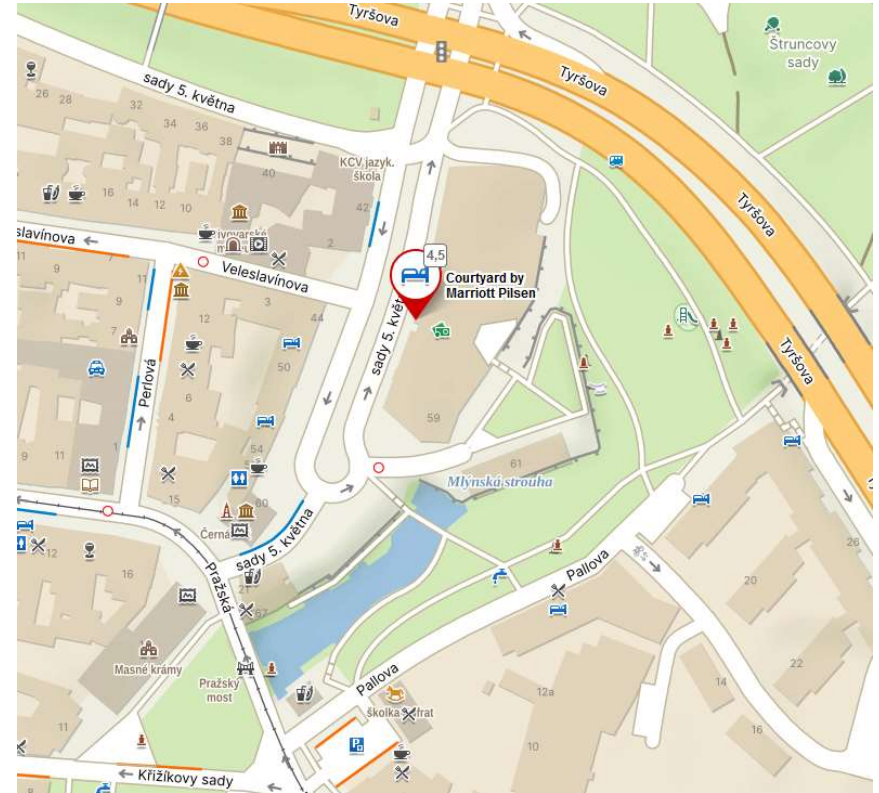
German Historical Institute Warsaw

Charles University

Philipps-University Marburg

University of West Bohemia

Pilsen 2024



International Conference

Centenary of the Locarno Treaties and Collective Security Policy in Europe: Reality – Reflection – Reassessment – Re-establishment?

under the auspices
of the Rector of the Charles University
and the Rector of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen

Held on:

24–25 October 2024, Courtyard by Marriott Pilsen

Venue:

Ballroom Pilsen, Sady 5. května 57, Pilsen

Annotation:

In October 1925, seven international treaties were concluded in Locarno and signed in London on 1 December 1925. Germany was admitted to the League of Nations in September 1926. The Locarno Conference was attended by Reich Chancellor Hans Luther and German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, Austen Chamberlain for Great Britain, Aristide Briand for France, Émile Vandervelde for Belgium, and, briefly, Edvard Beneš for Czechoslovakia, Aleksander Skrzyński for Poland and Benito Mussolini for Italy.

For European security policy since the Peace Treaty of Versailles, the de-militarisation of the Rhineland, the securing of Germany's western borders and options for its eastern borders, and last but not least the Soviet Union's perspective on Central Europe, the treaties laid important foundations for Europe within the framework of the League of Nations. They were based on the principle of peaceful conflict resolution and were designed to take account of different security needs. Arbitration and defence treaties contributed to this.

However, the Locarno Treaties were not without controversy and led, for example, to the resignation of the German nationalist ministers in October 1925. In conjunction with the Treaties of Rapallo (April 1922) and Berlin (April 1926), they reflect German power and security policy, which defied clear Western or Eastern European categorisation.

The potential for revisionist demands in the form of the return of German colonial territories, the shifting of the German eastern border and a possible unification of Austria with the German Reich was as much a part of the policy of understanding as was the conciliatory "spirit of Locarno," but ended abruptly with the occupation of the Rhineland in 1936.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

24th October 2024

Venue: Ballroom Pilsen

08:30–09:00 *Registration*

09:00–09:20 Opening Speeches: German Historical Institute Warsaw; Charles University; Philipps-University Marburg; University of West Bohemia

09:20–10:50 Moderator: STUCHTEY, Benedikt (University of Marburg, Germany)

Keynote Speaker: GOLDSTEIN, Erik (Boston University, United States of America): Locarno and British Grand Strategy

Keynote Speaker: JACKSON, Peter (University of Glasgow, United Kingdom): The Locarno Accords and the Evolution of French Strategy and Diplomacy between the Two World Wars

Discussion

10:50–11:15 *Coffee Break*

11:15–13:00 Section I: Reassessment of the Treaties of Locarno and Collective Security Policy in Europe from an International Perspective

Moderator: DZIEWANOWSKI-STEFANŃCZYK, Bartosz (German Historical Institute Warsaw, Warsaw Branch, Poland)

QUIROGA-VILLAMARIN, Daniel R. (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Switzerland): Architectural Appeasement: A Material History of Fascism and the League of Nations as Told by its *Palais des Nations* (1926–1938)

HORČIČKA, Václav (Charles University, Czech Republic): Little known Aspects of the Saint Germain Peace Treaty: Czechoslovak Land Reform on the Estates of Austrian Citizens in the Interwar Period

ENGELKING, Wojciech (University of Warsaw, Poland): Kantian Foundations of Kelsen's Theory of the International Law in 1920s [online]

VALKOUN, Jaroslav (Charles University, Czech Republic): The Dominions and the Locarno Conference: Reflection and Reassessment

GAUL, Jerzy (Central Archives of Historical Record, Poland): Józef Piłsudski's Attitude towards Locarno and Collective Guarantee Pacts in the Light of the Polish *raison d'état* (1925–1935)

Discussion

13:00–14:00 *Lunch*

14:00–15:30 Moderator: STUCHTEY, Benedikt (University of Marburg, Germany)

Keynote Speaker: JOHNSON, Gaynor (University of Kent, United Kingdom): The Treaty of Locarno: Personalities and the International System in the Interwar Period

Keynote Speaker: COHRS, Patrick O. (University of Florence, Italy): Towards a New Concert of Democracies: Locarno's Broader Significance in the International History of the "Long" 20th Century

Discussion

15:30–16:00 *Coffee Break*

16:00–17:50 Section II: The Locarno Conference from a Central European Perspective
Moderator: STUCHTEY, Benedikt (University of Marburg, Germany)

SUPPAN, Arnold (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria): Prag und Wien zwischen Paris und Berlin (1924–1927)

NOVOTNÝ, Lukáš (University of West Bohemia, Czech Republic): Die Tschechoslowakei und ihre Stellung in der Wahrnehmung der britischen Gesandtschaft in Prag in den 1920er Jahren

DÖMÖK, Csilla (University of Pécs, Hungary): Friedenssicherung in Europa – Gustav Stresemann: Zwischen Revisionismus und Verständigung

JAKUBEC, Ivan (Charles University, Czech Republic): Tschechoslowakisch-deutsche Wirtschafts- und Verkehrsbeziehungen im Schatten von Locarno

LEIN, Richard (University of Vienna, Austria): Zwischen allen Stühlen: Österreichs Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik 1920–1938

Discussion

18:30–21:30 *Festive Dinner*

25th October 2024

Venue: Ballroom Pilsen

08:30–09:00 *Registration*

09:00–10:40 Section III: The Locarno Conference from a Western European and Czechoslovak Perspectives

Moderator: HORČIČKA, Václav (Charles University, Czech Republic)

BENE, Krisztián (University of Pécs, Hungary): The Impact of the Locarno Treaties on Franco-Hungarian Relations during the Interwar Period

FERENČUHOVÁ, Bohumila (Learned Society of Slovakia, Slovakia): French Eastern Alliance Policy and the Negotiations of the Locarno Treaties in 1925

ARHIRE, Sorin (University of Alba Iulia, Romania): British Foreign Policy towards Europe during 1920s

ČAPO, Hrvoje (Croatian Institute of History, Croatia): U.S. View on the Locarno Treaties of 1925

HUBENÝ, David (National Archives, Czech Republic): Czechoslovak Aspects of the Locarno Conference

Discussion

10:40–11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00–13:00 Section IV: The Locarno Pact: Between Germany and South-Eastern and East Europe

Moderator: STUCHTEY, Benedikt (University of Marburg, Germany)

LÜDKE, Tilman (University of Freiburg, Germany): The Treaties of Locarno: Final Building Block of Germany's Re-Internationalisation

SCHMIDTCHEN, Robert (German Federal Archives, Germany): In Locarno's Shadow: Germany and the Soviet Union

SANTORO, Stefano (University of Trieste, Italy): Fascist Italy, Central and South-Eastern Europe, and the Project of a "Danubian-Balkan Locarno"

ŽIVOTIĆ, Aleksandar (University of Belgrade, Serbia): The USSR and the Possibility of Extending the Locarno Pact in Southeast Europe (1924–1927)

JEZIORNY, Dariusz (University of Łódź, Poland): The Locarno Treaty Enlargement? London and the Idea to Join the USSR

MIČIĆ, Srđan (University of Belgrade, Serbia): The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Locarno Pact

Discussion

Closing Discussion

13:00–14:00 *Lunch*

Conference languages: English, German

Conference papers: approximately 15–20 minutes

We kindly ask for registration by 10th October at:

conference2024@ff.cuni.cz

Change of programme reserved

24th October 2024

Keynote Speaker

Erik GOLDSTEIN

Locarno and British Grand Strategy

In 1925 the Locarno Pact was formally signed in London, and the ‘Locarno Room’ remains one of the British Foreign Office’s main reception venues. As one of the chief architects of the Pact the British Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain was acclaimed for having changing the atmospherics of European international relations, transformed by the new ‘Spirit of Locarno.’ The Pact did indeed resolve a number of issues arising from the postwar settlement for the continent, though many problems remained unresolved. For Britain, however, Locarno was only one component of an evolving post-First World War Grand Strategy. British diplomacy at Locarno illustrates the challenges that confront a power balancing both global and regional roles. Placing Locarno in a wider context helps to explain key aspects of British policy and how in turn this affected efforts to create a stable international order.

Keynote Speaker

Peter JACKSON

The Locarno Accords and the Evolution of French Strategy and Diplomacy between the Two World Wars

The paper will explore various strands in French policy toward Eastern Europe after 1918. It will make two key arguments. First, France’s Locarno policy was the result of process of adaptation as French foreign policy adjusted to the new post-1919 international and European order, with its emphasis on multilateralism as opposed to traditional alliances. Second, it will demonstrate that, for French policy-makers, the accords marked the first step in an attempt to create a Europe-wide security system that included Great Britain. After 1925 French policy aimed consistently at extending the commitments embedded Locarno eastward through the creation of an ‘Eastern Locarno’ or a ‘Danubian Pact’. These efforts were doomed to failure. The French ‘security system’ in Eastern Europe, which was never more than a grand ambition, was dismantled by the bi-lateral strategy of German foreign policy under the Nazi regime.

Daniel Ricardo QUIROGA-VILLAMARIN

Architectural Appeasement: A Material History of Fascism and the League of Nations as Told by its *Palais des Nations* (1926–1938)

Would architects from non-member states be eligible to participate in the international competition to select the design for the League of Nations’ *Palais des Nations* (Palace of Nations in French)? The League Secretariat faced this thorny question in early 1926. Despite some protests from US architects who tried to brandish their pro-League credentials, no exceptions were made. The same severity was applied, of course, to architects from Eastern and Central European empires who had suddenly found themselves stateless in the wake of the great war. In principle, architects from the defeated German Empire received the same treatment. And yet, should this general exclusion also impact Teutonic architects based in “internationalized” or “occupied” German territories (like Danzig and the Saar)? As I argue in

this article, the exception made for all German architects – orchestrated by the Under-Secretary-General Joseph Avenol in tandem with the League’s Legal Section – effectively prefigured Germany’s admission to the League later that year in the wake of the Locarno accords. By foregrounding the material history of the making of the League’s Palais, in this contribution I trace the ways in which this international institution engaged in what I call “architectural appeasement” *vis-à-vis* Germany (and later, Italy after its invasion of Ethiopia) as the roaring twenties gave way to the terrible thirties. In this way, I engage with the question of the history of European and Global collective security from a rather heterodox different perspective: the League’s built environment.

Václav HORČIČKA

Little known Aspects of the Saint Germain Peace Treaty: Czechoslovak Land Reform on the Estates of Austrian Citizens in the Interwar Period

The paper will be devoted to the issue of the implementation of the Czechoslovak land reform on the estates of Austrian nationals in the years 1918–1938. It will point out the importance of this issue in the complex of Czechoslovak-Austrian relations. It will present the approach of both sides. While the Czechoslovak authorities tried to defend the reform, the Austrian diplomacy tried to limit its effects on its citizens as much as possible. It will be explained why in the end the reform on the estates of the Austrians took place with only insignificant modifications compared to the original intention of the Czechoslovak land office and why Austria failed to negotiate more favourable conditions for its citizens. In this context, attention will also be paid to the legal framework of the reform both at the national and international level.

Wojciech ENGELKING

Kantian Foundations of Kelsen’s Theory of the International Law in 1920s

Wojciech Engelking

Like many legal and political theorists of the last century, Hans Kelsen responded with his thought to the external, historical circumstances of the times in which he lived. His theory of international law, which came to full expression in the 1940s, was thus shaped by the conditions of such projects in his field as the establishment of the League of Nations, the Locarno Treaties and the Brand-Kellogg Pact. The aim of the proposed lecture is to find Kantian sources in Kelsen’s early, still in the first half of the 1920s, interpretation of the shape of contemporary international law – present in works such as *Vom Wesen und Wert der Demokratie* and *Das Problem der Souveränität und die Theorie des Völkerrechts. Beitrag zu einer reinen Rechtslehre* – and to ask how Kelsen’s thinking of this period is situated between realism and idealism. This juxtaposition may seem paradoxical in Kelsen’s case, since his late writings contain the idea of peace through law. The question to be asked, however, is how young Kelsen perceived the stakes of this peace; what was the alternative to it? In the proposed paper, the author will present the Kelsenian objective character of international law as an attempt to overcome the Kantian view of human nature as “crooked wood ... [out of which] nothing quite straight can be made”, whereby a universal peace achieved through law, which Kelsen saw his era attempting to achieve, is in fact not a universal, cosmopolitan arrival point, but a transcendence of the institution of the state as that in which the emergence of peace is blocked.

Jaroslav VALKOUN

The Dominions and the Locarno Conference: Reflection and Reassessment

The paper is focused on the analysis of how the Dominion representatives viewed the negotiations on the Locarno treaties. The British government was criticised by European countries for not adopting the Geneva Protocol and it decided for “new foreign policy course”: a guarantee of the borders between Germany, Belgium and France as a basis for achieving a pact on European security. British guarantee in Western Europe was possible only to the extent that the Dominions and India were in concurrence. There were “warning signs” suggesting the Dominions did not entirely agree to the discussions taking place on a European security pact, and that they might reject such a pact. France and Belgium’s eastern borders were now to be in Britain’s vital interests. The defence of the British Isles was also to be of equal Imperial importance as the protection awarded Australia against invasion, and the guarding of Canada’s borders. Chamberlain thus judged that, “if the Dominions would admit that Britain’s defence was an imperial interest, then they must also understand that the first line of that defence was now on the Rhine”. The issue of continental security guarantees would always be a delicate matter for traditional common Imperial diplomacy.

Jerzy GAUL

Józef Piłsudski’s Attitude towards Locarno and Collective Guarantee Pacts in the Light of the Polish *raison d’état* (1925–1935)

The security of the Polish state occupied an important place in Józef Piłsudski’s concept of *raison d’état*, who saw its military, political and civilizational dimensions. France and England, signatories of the Treaty of Versailles, guaranteed the western border of the Republic of Poland, and mutual ties were strengthened by belonging to Western civilisation. Germany did not want to come to terms with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and sought to revise its eastern borders. In Rapallo, Germany reached an agreement with Soviet Russia, despite its differences in civilisation, political system and ideology. In Locarno, Germany undertook to respect the inviolability of the borders with France and Belgium in the Rhine Pact, leaving the course of the border with Poland open.

The different status of Germany’s western and eastern borders disturbed the balance in Central Europe. The restoration of state security became a matter of Polish *raison d’état*. As the alliance with France loosened, Piłsudski opted for bilateral agreements: with the USSR in 1932 and Germany in 1934, taking care to maintain an equal distance from them. The weakness of the policy of neutrality consisted in taking into account only ad hoc interests, without the bond of common values, because Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, destroying civilizational standards, plunged into barbarism.

Poland’s security in the long run was at risk because it had no reliable allies and was not a superpower. In 1934, along with Poland’s isolation, the concept of the Eastern Pact was established. The Machiavellian concert of Western powers, with the participation of the USSR, according to Piłsudski the greatest enemy, was to guarantee the security of the eastern border of France at the price of the right to march Soviet troops through Polish territory. Piłsudski’s opposition coincided with the refusal of Nazi Germany, which further weakened the position of Poland, still stuck in the Locarno trap.

Keynote Speaker

Gaynor JOHNSON

The treaty of Locarno (1925) are often seen as being the ‘high point’ in the diplomatic relationship between Britain, France and Italy and their former wartime foe, Germany. They have been described as the real peace settlement at the end of the First World War, at which the German delegation was placed on equal footing with those from other nations, in notable contrast to the Paris Peace Conference six years earlier. That said, several generations of historians have been increasingly critical about the significance and the long-term legacy of the treaties, seeing them as failures, as features of 1920s European international history that promised much but which did not live up to expectations. Much of the narrative has focussed on the dynamics of the personal relationship between the respective foreign ministers from Britain, France and Germany, Austen Chamberlain, Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann. Another strand has been concerned with the failure of the treaties of Locarno to prevent the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939, to contain the territorial ambitions of the fascist dictators who chose to operate outside the terms of the treaties. This paper examines both of these themes but asks a different question. Were there other more systemic reasons why the treaties of Locarno failed to live up to the expectations of those who negotiated them? The answer lies in the tectonic tensions within the international system between the so-called old and the new diplomacy. These undermined the efficacy of the treaties from the beginning and can be most clearly seen at work during the League Council Crisis of September 1926.

Keynote Speaker

Patrick O. COHRS

Towards a New Concert of Democracies: Locarno’s Broader Significance in the International History of the “Long” 20th Century

Building on my recent book *The New Atlantic Order*, my talk will offer a new interpretation of the Locarno agreements of 1925 by bringing out their broader significance in the history of Euro-Atlantic and global order in what I call the “long” 20th century (ca. 1860–2022). In particular, it will illuminate how Locarno politics not only addressed cardinal problems of order and security in the wake of the First World War that had been left unresolved at the Paris Peace Conference but also initiated a momentous European and transatlantic transformation process that had far-reaching global repercussions: the forging of a novel concert of democratic states or, more precisely, its nucleus.

In a wider perspective, it will throw into relief how the Locarno pact, and the new concert it established, can be seen as formative advances prefiguring modern regional systems of order, collective security and peaceful settlement of disputes that emerged in Europe, the Atlantic world and in other parts of the globe in the course of the “long” 20th century. And while also considering alternative approaches to international politics and order that stood in conflict and competition with them, it will reflect on the key question of how far Locarno principles, modes and practices indeed became exemplary in an even more general sense – exemplary for modern conceptions of peace, collective security, democratic government, self-determination and a rule-based international system.

Arnold SUPPAN

Prag und Wien zwischen Paris und Berlin (1924–1927)

Nach der Gewährung der Völkerbundanleihe im Oktober 1922 versuchte Bundeskanzler Seipel durch Reisediplomatie und dem Abschluss von Schiedsgerichts- und Handelsverträgen neue Beziehungen zu den Nachfolgestaaten der Habsburgermonarchie aufzubauen. Als Reichskanzler Marx und Reichsaußenminister Stresemann im März 1924 nach Wien kamen, fragten sie Seipel auch nach seiner Einschätzung der Persönlichkeit von Beneš. Obwohl Seipel und Außenminister Grünberger über die Rolle des tschechoslowakischen Außenministers auf der Friedenskonferenz einigermaßen Bescheid wussten, hoben sie nun die Verdienste von Beneš in der Sanierungsperiode Österreichs hervor. Die Berliner Politiker blieben freilich skeptisch, da Paris und Prag im Jänner 1924 einen Vertrag über Allianz und Freundschaft geschlossen und in einem geheimen Briefwechsel der beiden Außenminister einander gemeinsame Maßnahmen gegen die Aggression eines gemeinsamen Feindes zugesagt hatten – womit nur Deutschland gemeint sein konnte.

Seipel war sich bewusst, dass man aufgrund der Neugestaltung und vollkommenen Umwandlung des Verhältnisses zwischen Wien und Prag nach dem Weltkrieg nur allmählich eine „Atmosphäre des Vertrauens“ herstellen könne. Eine Mitgliedschaft Österreichs in der „profranzösischen“ Kleinen Entente kam für ihn aber nicht in Frage. Nach dem Scheitern seines „Ost-Locarno“-Projekts nahm das Misstrauen Beneš' gegenüber Berlin zu. Allerdings befürworteten sowohl Berlin als auch Wien die Regierungsbeteiligung der Sudetendeutschen in Prag ab 1926. Als Marx und Stresemann im November 1927 zum zweiten Mal in Wien empfangen wurden, unterstrich Seipel den Wunsch des Ministerpräsidenten Švebla einer engeren wirtschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit Deutschlands, der Tschechoslowakei und Österreichs, was auch von starken Gruppen der österreichischen und tschechoslowakischen Industrie unterstützt werde. Diese Kombination beunruhigte allerdings Beneš und seinen französischen Kollegen Briand, die eine Donauföderation ohne Deutschland befürworteten. Die Chance für eine Zusammenarbeit wurde 1928/29 nicht genützt; mit dem deutsch-österreichischen Zollunionsprojekt 1931 trat sogar ein Bruch ein.

Lukáš NOVOTNÝ

Die Tschechoslowakei und ihre Stellung in der Wahrnehmung der britischen Gesandtschaft in Prag in den 1920er Jahren

Die Tschechoslowakei, die nach dem Zusammenbruch der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie im Herbst 1918 gegründet wurde, hatte nach ihrer Gründung sowohl mit inneren als auch mit äußeren Problemen zu kämpfen. Dies gelang, und nach den ersten regulären Parlamentswahlen im Jahr 1920 folgte eine Periode politischer und wenig später auch wirtschaftlicher Stabilität. Die britische Gesandtschaft in Prag sah in der Tschechoslowakei einen wichtigen stabilisierenden Faktor in Mitteleuropa, insbesondere in den ersten turbulenten Jahren nach dem Zusammenbruch des bestehenden Staatensystems und der Gründung der so genannten Nachfolgestaaten. Danach, im Laufe der 1920er Jahre selbst, pendelte sich die Einschätzung der britischen Gesandten darauf ein, die Tschechoslowakische Republik als Standardstaat zu respektieren, wobei jedoch hinzuzufügen ist, dass die britischen Diplomaten das Großmachtdenken aus der Mitte heraus nicht aufgaben und die Tschechoslowakische

Republik nicht als gleichberechtigten Partner Großbritanniens behandelten (wie z.B. Frankreich oder Deutschland nach dem Beitritt zum Völkerbund).

Csilla DÖMÖK

Friedenssicherung in Europa – Gustav Stresemann: Zwischen Revisionismus und Verständigung

Gustav Stresemann gilt als Weimars bedeutendster Staatsmann. Seine historische Leistung lag in dem Vermögen, das französische Sicherheitsbedürfnis einzubeziehen und einen Ausgleich zwischen deutschen Interessen und europäischer Ordnung zu suchen. Mit den Verträgen von Locarno, die auf Initiative Gustav Stresemanns als mittlerweile Außenminister ausgehandelt wurden, garantierten sich Deutschland und Frankreich (und Belgien) im Oktober 1925 gegenseitig den Status quo am Rhein. Als vertrauensbildende Maßnahme war Locarno vor allem eine Investition in „soft power“, deren Ertrag in Form von weiteren Revisionen erwartet wurde. Als Deutschland 1926 in den Völkerbund aufgenommen wurde, gehörte es zu den drei großen europäischen Mächten. Im selben Jahr erhielt Stresemann gemeinsam mit seinem französischen Amtskollegen Aristide Briand den Friedensnobelpreis – jener Gustav Stresemann, der im Ersten Weltkrieg als Anhänger eines extremen Annexionsfriedens aufgetreten war. So drängt sich die Frage auf: Wie stand es um Verhältnis von Revisionismus und Verständigung?

Ivan JAKUBEC

Tschechoslowakisch-deutsche Wirtschafts- und Verkehrsbeziehungen im Schatten von Locarno

Der Beitrag befasst sich mit den tschechoslowakisch-deutschen Wirtschafts- und Verkehrsbeziehungen vor dem Hintergrund der Konferenz von Locarno. Mit dem Friedensvertrag von Versailles wurden scheinbar alle Probleme gelöst, auch die tschechoslowakisch-deutschen. Im Gegenteil, viele Fragen blieben auf halbem Wege stehen. Der Beitrag konzentriert sich auf die zweite Hälfte der 1920er Jahre, als einige der ungelösten Fragen entweder „definitiv“ gelöst wurden oder „definitiv“ ungelöst blieben. Zu den noch offenen Fragen der Pariser Konferenz gehörte die Unterzeichnung des Protokolls über die Einrichtung der tschechoslowakischen Pacht-Zone im Hamburger Freihafen im Jahr 1929. Andererseits war es nicht möglich, den tschechoslowakisch-deutschen Handelsvertrag von 1920 durch einen neuen Vertrag zu ersetzen. Die Verhandlungen über einen neuen Vertrag liefen seit Juli 1926, scheiterten aber im Frühjahr 1928. Das einzige Ergebnis war jedoch der Abschluss eines neuen Eisenbahnvertrags im Jahr 1929. Ein Jahr zuvor war in München auch ein Zoll- „Waffenstillstand“ zwischen den norddeutschen Seehäfen, vertreten durch Hamburg, und den südeuropäischen, vertreten durch Triest, ausgehandelt worden.

Richard LEIN

Zwischen allen Stühlen: Österreichs Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik 1920–1938

Nach dem Beitritt Österreichs zum Völkerbund im Dezember 1920 schenkte die Regierung in Wien der Frage einer aktiven Sicherheitspolitik lange Zeit keine große Aufmerksamkeit. Der Grund dafür war, dass alle Territorialkonflikte mit den Nachbarstaaten nach dem Ersten

Weltkrieg entweder beigelegt waren (Kärnten, Burgenland) oder eine Lösung zu Österreichs Gunsten unwahrscheinlich erschien (Südtirol). Vor diesem Hintergrund bemühte sich die österreichische Regierung lange Zeit weder um den Abschluss von Garantieverträgen mit den Nachbarstaaten noch um den Beitritt zu einem europäischen Bündnissystem wie der Kleinen Entente, nicht zuletzt deshalb, weil derartige Bindungen als potenziell hinderlich für die eigene Außen- und Wirtschaftspolitik angesehen wurden. Stattdessen bemühte man sich um gute Beziehungen zu den Nachbarstaaten, was sich unter anderem im österreichisch-tschechoslowakischen Ausgleichs- und Schiedsgerichtsvertrag von 1926 niederschlug. Erst mit der Weltwirtschaftskrise, der Krise der europäischen Demokratien und dem Aufkommen radikaler politischer Bewegungen rückte die Notwendigkeit, die Integrität des österreichischen Staates zu wahren, wieder in den Vordergrund des Bewusstseins der handelnden politischen Akteure. Der Abschluss der Römischen Protokolle im Jahr 1934, der bereits unter der neuen autoritären Führung Österreichs erfolgte, erwies sich als ebenso wenig geeignet, die staatliche Integrität des Landes zu schützen wie die Beteiligung an den zahlreichen Mitteleuropaplänen, die in den 1930er Jahren diskutiert wurden. Schließlich geriet Österreich im März 1938 außen- und sicherheitspolitisch zwischen alle Stühle und war nicht in der Lage, der Aggression des Deutschen Reiches etwas entgegenzusetzen. Der Beitrag analysiert die Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik Österreichs in der Zwischenkriegszeit, vom Beitritt zum Völkerbund bis zum Anschluss an das Deutsche Reich im Jahr 1938.

25th October 2024

Krisztián BENE

The Impact of the Locarno Treaties on Franco-Hungarian Relations during the Interwar Period

The Franco-Hungarian political relations were traditionally informal between the two states belonging to opposing diplomatic camps. This relationship has deteriorated during First World War, when they (Hungary as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) declared war on each other. In 1920, a temporary attempt at political and economic rapprochement has failed, and France decided to treat Hungary as a hostile state. Because of this decision, Hungary suffered disproportionate territorial and demographic losses under the terms of the Treaty of Trianon. France satisfied the territorial needs of its Central European allies at the detriment of Hungary, and relations between the two countries reached a low point in the first half of the 1920s.

The political-economic-military cooperation was at an exceptionally modest level. The bilateral relations only in the cultural field were slightly more active. Even immediately after the signing of the Locarno Treaties, there was no fundamental change, but in the long term, it did bring a substantial development. Due to Germany's increasingly active foreign policy in the Central European region, France saw already Hungary as a potential ally, which contributed to the revival of cultural and economic relations. The Hungarian leadership, fearful of German hegemony, was also open to this rapprochement in the first half of the 1930s. The French government, however, was unable to support Hungarian revisionist demands against its own allies, so in the second half of the 1930s Hungary moved closer to Germany and Italy, which took substantive steps to restore the pre-1920 Hungarian borders.

This also marked the end of the Franco-Hungarian rapprochement, the reconciliation process launched by the Locarno Treaties failed spectacularly due to the issue of border revision, and relations between the two countries hit rock bottom. It was only in the last third of the 20th century that they improved significantly.

Bohumila FERENČUHOVÁ

French Eastern Alliance Policy and the Negotiations of the Locarno Treaties in 1925

The German proposal addressed to France in 1925 was particularly important for the security of the two French allies in East Central Europe – Czechoslovakia and Poland. Some years ago, I studied diplomatic documents in the Archives of the French Foreign Ministry in Paris. I would like to analyse in my contribution the reaction of Edouard Herriot to the German proposal and the politics of Aristide Briand towards Czechoslovakia and Poland during 1925 in the light of these documents. Different politics of Edvard Beneš and Alexander Skrzynski and its impact on the Czechoslovak-Polish relations will be reflected too. Finally, I would like to present some issues how improve the security conditions of the East Central Europe and Austria imagined by the Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic.

Sorin ARHIRE

British Foreign Policy towards Europe during 1920s

After the victory in the First World War and its participation in the Paris Peace Conference of 1919–1920, Great Britain adopted yet again its traditional balance of power policy among the great powers of Europe, a policy it had so well identified itself with in the past 300 years. Confident in its capacity to defend itself in case of danger, Great Britain obstinately refused, almost throughout the interwar period, to become allies with any of the European states.

The frictions between the British and the French manifested as soon as the war ended and originated in the Foreign Office's fear that France was too strong and Germany too weak after the definite defeat of the Germans, which led the British to seek to balance the scales of power on the Continent with every occasion. The argument that France was the dominant military force in Europe and that Germany underwent a much too harsh treatment, was undoubtedly correct in the short run, but it turned out disastrous in the long term as the British leaders failed to see the real threat to the security of the British Isles.

Britain's relations with Russia were dominated by the official recognition of the USSR in 1924, while the Locarno Conference provided an opportunity for good cooperation between the London and Rome governments, as Italy was invited by Britain for helping to normalise relations between Germany and France.

When the time came to define a policy towards Central and Eastern Europe, most British politicians of the 1920s shared Lloyd George's view that the boundaries of this part of the Continent were defective.

Hrvoje ČAPO

U.S. View on the Locarno Treaties of 1925

At the time of signing the Locarno Treaties the United States of America was under the administration of the Republican President Calvin Coolidge. The United States was in the era of promoting and practicing the isolationist foreign policy. Although Coolidge's administration was in favour of making treaties that would further stabilize the post-war world, they did not entangle with any of the current European affairs, which is why the U.S.A. had not participated as negotiating or signing party of the Locarno Treaties. On the other hand, that led to the belief that moral leadership shifted from the United States to Europe. The Locarno Treaties of 1925 were seen in Europe as the European hard-earned way of stabilizing the continent after the devastating WWI, and most importantly without the American influence. The Locarno Treaties of 1925 were seen as proof of European internal political power. Although the U.S.A. respected the Locarno Treaties as a significant contribution to European stability, especially the German borders, it did reflect certain concerns about the limitations of the Treaties. For example, as the Locarno Treaties failed to address the Eastern German Borders, the American observers saw them as a temporary solution rather than a long-lasting one. The proposed conference paper will deal with the American dogmatism and scepticism of the Locarno Treaties of 1925.

David HUBENÝ

Czechoslovak Aspects of the Locarno Conference

Czechoslovakia, whose existence depended on the maintenance of the Versailles system, actively followed the events in the field of European diplomacy and looked for ways to

consolidate the existing system and strengthen its security. For this reason, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edvard Beneš, tried to use all opportunities to achieve these goals. However, the interests of the great powers soon began to move in a different direction. Although the positives of Locarno included the improvement of relations between France and Germany and the confirmation of Germany's western borders, the negatives included the fact that Germany's eastern borders remained without guarantees, thus the Czechoslovak efforts for the security of the state suffered a significant blow, which was fully manifested in the end of the 1930s.

Tilman LÜDKE

The Treaties of Locarno: Final Building Block of Germany's Re-Internationalisation

The defeat in World War I had a de-nationalising effect on Germany: it was stripped of its colonial possessions and was forbidden to become active in territories Germany had been quite intensively involved in before the war. There was a rupture in relations with the Ottoman Empire and its successor territories; under British pressure, Iran blacklisted a large number of German individuals from entering the country. Germans were prohibited from visiting the Middle East under British and French mandate rule altogether. However, attempts to re-enter the international scene dated almost to the beginning of the Weimar Republic, and certainly pre-dated the rapprochement with the western powers. While the activities of „Easterners“, exemplified by the Rapallo Treaty with the Soviet Union, are comparably well studied, the relations with Middle Eastern countries in the years leading up to the Locarno Treaty still remain underexplored. These include the abolition of the Iranian “Black List” in 1922, and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Turkish Republic in 1924. The signature of the Locarno treaties and Germany's subsequent entry into the League of Nations in the autumn of 1926 re-opened the way of German diplomatic, commercial and cultural activities in the Middle East. The fact that German policy towards the Soviet Union and to the “East” was unaffected by the signature of the Locarno Treaties allows the argument that these Treaties – frequently hailed as a predecessor to the treaties establishing the European Communities in the 1950s and 1960s – did not mark a German turn “to the West.” They rather provided Germany with added security and a framework the Nazi Regime could build on in its commercial and diplomatic expansion to South-Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the years after 1933.

Robert SCHMIDTCHEN

In Locarno's Shadow: Germany and the Soviet Union

Since the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922, the German Reich and the Soviet Union had formed an unequal community of purpose. Although both states conducted trade relations with each other and jointly circumvented the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, the diplomatic relationship was not based on a particularly strong foundation of trust. On the one hand, Moscow was suspicious not only of the adoption of the Dawes Treaty but also of the negotiations on the Locarno Treaties. The USSR was uneasy about its partner's increasing orientation towards the West and tried to prevent it with offers and threats. On the other side was Berlin, which wanted to escape its foreign policy isolation and return to the circle of the major European powers. Stresemann's goals could not be achieved without rapprochement with the West, but for geopolitical reasons the Soviet Union was not to be dispensed with either, which is why the Reich tried to accommodate Russian concerns. This occasionally tense relationship between the

two states will be traced against the background of the Treaty of Locarno from the eve of its conclusion to the Treaty of Berlin.

Stefano SANTORO

Fascist Italy, Central and South-Eastern Europe, and the Project of a “Danubian-Balkan Locarno”

In the 1920s, fascist Italy carried out a strategy of collaboration with the countries of central and south-eastern Europe, inaugurated in 1920 with the Treaty of Rapallo with Yugoslavia, and continued through the stipulation of a series of friendship treaties again with Yugoslavia (1924), Czechoslovakia (1924), Albania (1926 and 1927), Romania (1926) and Hungary (1927). In this perspective, Italian diplomacy had conceived the idea of creating a “Danubian-Balkan Locarno” which, on the model of the Locarno treaties, should guarantee peaceful cooperation under the Italian aegis. The idea of a Locarno for the Balkans had been proposed during the Locarno negotiations by Briand and Chamberlain to Mussolini, hoping for collaboration between the three great powers to maintain peace in the Balkan area. Mussolini, however, did not believe in collaboration with France and England, and instead aimed at the creation of a network of bilateral agreements with the countries of the area in a competitive perspective with respect to France and in a security stand with respect to a resumption of German penetration towards Central Europe. The worsening of relations with Belgrade due to the rivalry for control of Albania in the second half of the decade led Mussolini to take the path of destabilizing the neighbouring kingdom and supporting the demands of Hungarian revisionism with greater determination. The paper will analyse the project of the constitution of a “Danubian-Balkan Locarno”, within the framework of fascist Italy’s politics in the area. A project revealing the desire of Italian diplomacy to keep more options open regarding the Balkan projection of fascist Italy in the 1920s and the dynamics underway between a more aggressive anti-Yugoslav line and a more moderate line, supported by the pre-fascist diplomatic career, available for an agreement with Belgrade.

Aleksandar ŽIVOTIĆ

The USSR and the Possibility of Extending the Locarno Pact in Southeast Europe (1924–1927)

After a series of international recognitions by the great powers during 1924, the Soviet Union sought to regulate relations with the countries of the European Southeast. It sought to establish new vectors of political and military influence using the traditional geopolitical levers of the former Russian Empire. The emergence of the idea of an arbitration agreement and a guarantee pact between the Balkan countries was initially connected on the Soviet side with the desire of the Greek government to find a replacement for the treaty of alliance with Yugoslavia denounced in 1924. At the end of July 1925, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs made a proposal to conclude an agreement between the Balkan countries on the model of the Locarno Agreements, which were being prepared at that time. Great Britain supported the proposal, but France opposed it. Neither Yugoslavia nor Bulgaria supported the proposal. In this connection, British diplomacy believed that Italy could become a new British partner in the Balkans. Soviet diplomacy actively followed the new changes in the Balkans, believing that it was about the division of interest zones between Italy as a British ally and France in the Balkans itself. In this

regard, the Soviets tried to strengthen their influence in Albania, where the interests of Yugoslavia and Italy clashed. . The rapid collapse of Soviet policy in Albania resulted in a Soviet initiative in 1926 related to the attempt to establish diplomatic relations with the Balkan countries. The new role of the Soviet Union in international relations, based on distancing itself from Germany, readiness to solve disputed problems in relations with France, as well as a guarantee that it will not attack Poland and Romania, opened up space for new thoughts on the institutionalization of the Soviet presence in the Balkans. France strongly opposed this, preventing the establishment of Soviet influence in the Balkans. With the institutionalization of the Italian presence in Albania in 1926/1927. Through the Tirana Pacts, it brought Yugoslavia closer to Greece and France and distanced the Soviet Union from the Balkans.

Dariusz JEZIorny

The Locarno Treaty Enlargement? London and the Idea to Join the USSR

The USSR’s attitude towards the Locarno Treaty was totally negative during the first years after its conclusion. The arrangement implemented into the League of Nations machinery was regarded aggressive by Moscow. However, in 1933 the Soviet leaders started to re-evaluate the situation which was connected with deterioration of the Moscow–Berlin relations. In Louis Barthou’s proposal of the Eastern Pact on Mutual Assistance (April 1934) the second part formed the French guarantee for the Eastern Pact which should be reciprocated by the Soviet guarantee for the Locarno arrangements. Moscow accepted the French idea. Nevertheless, the acceptance of the other members was necessary too. The aim of the intervention is to present the British answer towards Barthou’s concept. Did London understand its meaning? Was Moscow’s game around the Eastern Pact clear for the British government? Were there any conditions London wanted to place before accepting the new scheme? What was really important for the British at the time? Who and when made the idea dead? And finally what was James Ramsay MacDonald Cabinet’s reaction to the fiasco of Locarno Treaty enlargement?

Srdan MIĆIĆ

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Locarno Pact

The goal of this presentation is to address the issue of reaction of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to the Locarno Pact, and how did it affect to Yugoslavia’s Foreign Policy. Yugoslav state was mainly focused on the Balkans and the Central Europe. Therefore, Belgrade was mainly concerned for repercussions of the Locarno Pact in these two regions. Reactions were bilateral and multilateral (through the Little Entente). Since Italy represented greatest menace for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Belgrade’s main concern was Rome’s plans to use the Locarno Pact for their own gains. Soon, Yugoslav Foreign Policy was facing Mussolini’s project for Balkans-Danubian Locarno Pact, in 1926. Also, this presentation will address Belgrade’s reaction to Greek and British initiatives for similar pacts in the Balkans and in the Central Europe, in 1925 and 1926.

Centenary of the Locarno Treaties and Collective Security Policy in Europe: Reality – Reflection – Reassessment – Re-establishment?

under the auspices
of the Rector of the Charles University
and the of the Rector of the Rector of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen

Held on:
24–25 October 2024
Courtyard by Marriott Pilsen

Venue:
Ballroom Pilsen,
Sady 5. května 57, Pilsen

German Historical Institute Warsaw
Charles University
Philipps-University Marburg
University of West Bohemia

Organization Board:
Jaromír Mrňka (German Historical Institute Warsaw)
Benedikt Stuchtey (Philipps-University Marburg)
Lukáš Novotný (University of West Bohemia)
Václav Horčíčka (Charles University)
Jaroslav Valkoun (Charles University)