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SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY, 1930-1933;

The New Alignment, with special reference to the
Non-Aggression Pact as an Instrument of Soviet Diplomacy

A thesis submitted by J. Andrew Large for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Glasgow

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Summary

The central theme of this thesis is the role which the non-aggression pact played as an instrument of Soviet diplomacy in the period 1930-1933 and the consequences for Soviet foreign policy of the successful conclusion of five such pacts. It also seeks to cast light on the actual foreign policy techniques as utilized by the USSR in a detailed consideration of specific diplomatic situations.

In the opening chapter the factors which compelled the Soviet leadership to adopt a foreign policy and the diplomatic instruments by which it was to be implemented are analysed. The non-aggression pact was chosenⁿ by the Bolsheviks as a novel way of achieving the primary Soviet external goal - security. The early history of the pact is traced; its successes and failures in the twenties briefly analysed. It is argued that Soviet foreign policy by the 1930's can be examined largely in isolation from Comintern history. The extent to which the outcast Bolshevik State of 1917 had been absorbed into the international community is examined and brief reference made to Soviet foreign policy decision-making.

The second chapter surveys the Soviet diplomatic position at the beginning of the thirties, the deterioration of Soviet-German relations and the attempts by France and the USSR to overcome the obstacles which had hitherto kept them inveterate enemies. Such a cautious diplomatic re-shuffling took place against the background of the massive internal Soviet economic-political transformations and the world economic crisis, which together with the growth of extremism in Germany, created a new international environment. The cautious Franco-Soviet rapprochement is pursued in the third chapter as far as the initialling of a non-aggression pact and the growing Soviet-German estrangement despite the prolongation of/

of the Berlin treaty related. It is emphasised, however, that Soviet diplomacy did not simply abandon the Rapallo partnership but endeavoured to maintain its links with Berlin whilst pursuing a new course with France.

The fourth chapter departs from this chronological sequence somewhat to examine Soviet relations with Poland, Rumania and the Baltic States in 1930-31 before relating them to the Franco-Soviet developments of Chapter 3. The negotiations between the USSR and its western neighbours for non-aggression pacts are examined and the former's successes analysed. Reference is made to the Soviet's apprehension at Japanese activity in Manchuria and the former's attempts to secure a pact with the Nippon Empire but a more detailed survey lay outside the scope of this thesis.

Chapter 5 examines the reasons for the delay in the ratification of the negotiated pacts, the Rumanian obstacle and the eventual Soviet diplomatic successes. Germany's reaction is noted.

The last chapter seeks to emphasise the extent to which Hitler's advent to power in Germany was only the last stage, important as it was, in the destruction of the Rapallo partnership, and the emergence of a new balance of power on the European continent, for the Soviet Union epitomised by the Paris ratification of its non-aggression pact with the USSR and the latter's new orientation at Geneva. It is argued that the collective security era of the mid-thirties can only be understood in terms of the gradual destruction of Soviet-German ties in the early thirties and the readiness of hitherto inveterate enemies of Soviet Russia to begin a cautious rapprochement with Moscow even before Hitler had been appointed Chancellor. The period under review is seen as a bridge/

bridge between the near-isolationist period for the Soviet Union of the twenties, with Germany as its major international friend and the middle thirties when the USSR had entered into the ranks of the status quo powers, a member of the League and a signatory of a mutual assistance pact with the French republic.

Chapter 1: The Emergence of Soviet Foreign Policy.

1. The need for a foreign policy.

At the Smolny Institute in November 1917, a new Russian Government was formed with Lenin at its head. The revolution which had preceeded its formation was expected to be merely the prelude to a series of similar risings in the rest of Europe which would establish a United Socialist Europe. Until this occurred, Russia would be the sole proletarian state.

Little thought had been given to the foreign policy of such an isolated entity, since the Bolsheviks saw their situation as being a temporary one. Regardless of its wishes, however, the Soviet Government was compelled to deal with capitalist states by its desperate need for immediate peace. The Russian state was incapable of further efforts on the war front, soldiers were deserting en masse and the Bolsheviks fully appreciated their urgent need for an armistice; as Trotsky said "since we could not engage in war, we had to conclude peace."¹

An appeal was made for all belligerent states to open negotiations immediately for a democratic peace. The Soviets hoped that it would be un-animously accepted, but in this they were disappointed. The allies refused to participate and therefore the Bolsheviks were compelled to begin separate negotiations with Germany in December, 1917.

These negotiations at Brest-Litovsk marked a fundamental stage in the development of Soviet foreign policy. Despite the revolutionary approaches, the distribution of leaflets at the German front and Trotsky's claim that "although we are negotiating peace with Germany, we continue to speak our usual revolutionary tongue"², the final outcome after a heated debate

1. Quoted in L.Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs Vol.1.(London 1930), p.16.

2. Ibid., p.32.

inside the Bolshevik ranks was a bilateral agreement with a capitalist country to safeguard the Russian state, or rather that part of it not already under German control.

Lenin was the leader of a government which controlled, or at any rate aspired to control, a land area with definite borders separating it from other states. This area formed a unit in the international system of states, regardless of the desires of its rulers. Their need for peace forced the Bolsheviks to participate actively in this system according to the rules of the capitalist states. This was essential if a base for the future expansion of revolution was to be safeguarded. It was this point which Lenin hammered home to his followers during the debates on the acceptance or rejection of the German peace proposals. In the circumstances, his view was the only tenable one, to make concessions to imperialist Germany and so win the opportunity to consolidate Soviet rule in Russia whilst awaiting further revolutions.

The outcome of this settlement, however, was to establish the Russian state as a link in the chain leading to world revolution which must be defended at all costs. The Bolsheviks now had a dual policy; "to attempt to hasten the downfall of the capitalist governments and to attempt to negotiate with them." ³.

After Brest-Litovsk, Soviet foreign policy can be explained by the development of these two policies; the initial successes but ultimate failure of revolutions outside Russia and the initial disasters but ultimate victory in the relations of the Soviet state with the outside world. By the end of 1922, the Soviet leaders were placing primary importance on Russia's need and ability to survive without aid from a second proletarian state. Diplomacy had achieved far more than revolution.

As the period of Soviet Russia's lone existence in a hostile environment was extended, the image of a uniformly unfriendly capitalist system

3. E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution Vol.3. (London 1966), p.33.

gave way to a more sophisticated view, better suited to the survival of a weak, isolated state. The divisions which were inevitable in the capitalist world, as the Bolsheviks perceived it, could be utilised to their advantage. Russia must seize every opportunity to secure agreement with amenable capitalist states; if necessary economic^{or} military concessions could be offered as added inducements. Recent historical experience confirmed this view; Germany was indeed alienated from the victor powers of 1918. Lenin in November 1920, emphasised the importance of this principle:

(T)he fundamental thing is the rule which we have not only adopted theoretically, but applied in practice, and which will be our rule until the final victory of socialism throughout the world, that is : to exploit the contradictions and antagonisms between the two imperialisms, between the two systems of capitalist states, inciting them one against the other. ⁴

Soviet foreign policy must have flexibility, be ready to forge temporary alignments so long as these produced positive results for Russia. As Lenin expressed it:

To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states and to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilise the conflict of interests, even though temporary, among one's enemies, to refuse to temporise and compromise with possible, even though temporary, unstable, vacillating and conditional, allies - is this not ridiculous in the extreme? ⁵

The division between the victors and the vanquished of the First World War was fully exploited by the Soviet Government, a task much lightened by the pariah treatment of Germany by France and Britain which forced capitalist Germany and Bolshevik Russia into a "marriage of convenience" which produced considerable mutual benefits. By the winter of 1921-1922, political, economic and military contacts were developing between the two states, a factor of immense importance to Soviet foreign policy throughout the next decade. The Rapallo Agreement of 1922 drew together these two outcasts from international society; Russia would no longer be isolated and a possible capitalist united

4. Speech by Lenin to a Meeting of Moscow Communist Party Secretaries, November 27, 1920. J. Degras, *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol.1.* (London 1951), p.221.

5. V.I. Lenin, *Sochineniya Vol.41* (Moscow 1963), p.54.

front against the Soviet state had been forestalled. Lenin summed up the new situation in 1921, thus:

We have something more than a breathing-space; we have entered a new period in which we have won the right to our fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist states.⁶

2. The non-aggression pact as an instrument of Soviet Foreign Policy.

The foreign policy of each state in the international system has at least one factor in common, a quest for security, a constant striving to ensure that the state will remain a viable entity despite any attempts made by other members of the system to jeopardise the interests of that state by economic, military or political means.

The economic and military weakness of Russia in the 1920's, in addition to the ideological antithesis of Bolshevism and capitalism which was perceived by both camps, ensured that the Soviet leaders, once it became apparent that their state would have to survive alone in a hostile environment at least for some time, would necessarily attach perhaps an unusual degree of importance to this foreign policy goal. The historical experience of allied intervention in 1918-19 gave tangible form to these fears for the security of the new Russian state and the frequent violent verbal attacks launched on it by the capitalist world left little to the imagination of the Bolshevik leaders. In the forefront of a future, may be imminent, anti-Soviet intervention, stood Japan in the east, Britain and France with their "hirelings" Poland and Rumania in the west,

To counter the aggressive designs of these powers, the Soviet Government sought to guarantee peace to its war-ravaged state by concluding a series of non-aggression pacts with the outside capitalist world and in particular, with those states which shared a common border with Russia. In this search for security the non-aggression pact became the most popular instrument of Soviet diplomacy in its endeavours to acquire guarantees of the non-violability of its frontiers and neutrality in any future capitalist

6. Ibid., Vol.42 (Moscow 1963), p.22.

wars. The Soviet Government considered that the non-aggression pact was a new type of diplomatic instrument to be differentiated sharply from the imperialist instruments such as traditional alliances which merely fomented wars and the collective security concept which lay at the centre of the League of Nations, to the Soviets an organisation of capitalist states bent on aggression, not peace. At a reception given for the Turkish Premier and Foreign Minister in 1932 Molotov stated that "Soviet-Turkish collaboration in the sphere of political relations created a new type of political agreement, the pact of non-aggression and neutrality, the first of which was that concluded between the Soviet Union and Turkey on December 17, 1925." ⁷ It was important for the new Government in Russia to find such a method of consolidating its relations with capitalist states and increasing its security yet which was unlike those treaties which were considered to have been a contributory factor in causing the First World War. It must be able to give tangible form to the claim made later by Radek that "the foreign policy of the Soviet Government differs as much from the foreign policy of the other Great Powers as the domestic policy of this first socialist state differs from the domestic policy of the states belonging to the capitalist system". The non-aggression pact was a guarantee of neutrality in conflicts which arose among the capitalist states, conceded in exchange for their undertaking to refrain from attacking the Soviet Union or intervening in its domestic affairs. ⁸ Of course, the Bolsheviks did not think that the mere signature of such a pact with a capitalist state would guarantee peace; their assessment of such states was not so high as to expect their respect for a signature to be maintained if war seemed to offer more advantages. Yet the isolated revolutionary leaders of Russia, desperately in need of

7. *Izvestiia*, April 30, 1932.

8. K. Radek, "The Bases of Soviet Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 12, N. 2, January 1934, pps. 193, 202.

security, were compelled by their circumstances to place a similar type of reliance on this new type of treaty as were their class enemies on the old-fashioned type. No matter how flimsy a paper guarantee is in itself, it normally reflects certain underlying interests to which it gives a more concrete form, especially to third powers. As the twenties passed into the new era of the thirties, the Soviet Government became increasingly aware of the benefits which accrued from such pacts and earnestly sought them with its neighbours. Naturally, it was reluctant to concede that its diplomatic methods were similar to those of the capitalists and used rather picturesque language to justify its conclusion of these pacts, at least to its own public. Thus an Izvestia editorial stated that a pact did tell the popular masses of a given country that their government could and wanted to live in peace with the second country involved. War was therefore made more difficult since it involved that government in an open breaking of its pledge before these masses.⁹ The non-aggression pact was not a new device in that it attempted to consolidate certain common interests between two states by the signature of a treaty with the aim of increasing security by an undertaking to refrain from aggressive actions against the other signatory and to maintain neutrality in the event of that other country being the victim of aggression from a third state. Its originality lay in the fact that it was strictly a defensive non-aggression and neutrality treaty containing no contingency plans or obligations relating to joint action against third states, even though the latter be the aggressors. In addition it contained various other obligations relating to economic non-aggression, propaganda, etc. and was usually linked with a conciliation convention for the peaceful settlement of disputed questions between the signatories. It was a useful contribution to international relations and enlightened in its respect for peace and the absence of aggressive intentions. That the Soviet Government found it a useful weapon in its diplomatic arsenal was proven by the history of its foreign policy in the inter-war years and especially in the period under consideration in this thesis.

9. Izvestia, April 5, 1932.

The non-aggression pact was most successfully applied by the Soviets in the 1920's in relation to its middle-eastern border states and Germany. The early months of Bolshevik power saw Russian interest concentrated in the west; peace was the primary policy objective. The intense pressure on Russia in 1918-1919 as a result of the civil-revolutionary war, however, turned Soviet attention towards the east. Here, one powerful factor united the traditional eastern rulers with the revolutionaries in Moscow, a dislike of imperialism, especially British imperialism. A statement by the representative of the Afghanistan Emir expresses a general feeling of that time:

I am neither a communist nor a socialist, but my political programme entails the expulsion of the British from Asia. I am an implacable foe of the capitalisation of Asia by Europe, the principal representatives of which are the British. In this I approximate to the Communists, and in this respect we are natural allies. 10.

As Soviet activity expanded in the middle-eastern states on its southern border, a difference arose between its two policy goals, world revolution and the development of normal diplomatic relations. Should it actively support local communist parties at the possible expense of good relations with the governments, or should the local parties be sacrificed, if need be? This problem became more acute, as in Europe, when revolution failed to materialise and the Bolsheviks were compelled to place their state interests above those of the local communist party.

Throughout 1925 growing Turkish-British tension forced the Turkish Government to strengthen its relations with the Soviet Union and despite Turkish suppression of its local communist party, negotiations between the two countries were initiated which resulted on December 17, 1925, in the signature of a Soviet-Turkish treaty of Friendship and Neutrality.¹¹ In the event of a military attack against one of the parties by a third party, the other party undertook to observe neutrality. Each party also undertook to refrain from aggression against the other or to take part in any alliance or agreement of a political character with third states directed against the

10. Quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution* Vol.3, p.240.

11. *Dokumenti Vneshney Politiki SSSR* Vol.8, (Moscow 1963), pps.739-741.
(Hereafter, DVP)

other party.¹² This treaty reflected Soviet fears aroused by the Locarno negotiations¹³ and was hailed in Moscow as the foundation of a Soviet security system which was differentiated from the objectionable Locarno project.¹⁴ A year later, Chicherin, commenting on his meeting with the Turkish Foreign Minister, stated that "both the USSR and Turkey, engaged as they are in peaceful work within their own territories, have no intention of threatening any other country...(unlike the) world imperialists, who are always trying to extend the frontiers of their rule... threatening both the USSR and Turkey."¹⁵

This treaty was followed on August 31, 1926, by a Soviet-Afghan treaty of Non-Aggression, based on the Soviet-Turkish model, but including a provision for mutual non-interference in the internal affairs of the contracting states,¹⁶ and a year later, on October 1, 1927, by the Soviet-Persian treaty of Guarantee and Neutrality.¹⁷

This system of pacts was supplemented by a series of pacts between these three middle-eastern states but the Russians refused to expand their bilateral agreements which would have involved them in a multilateral relationship. Thus Moscow valued its pacts with Turkey and Afghanistan but refused to sign a tripartite Soviet-Turkish-Afghan treaty. Soviet reluctance to enter multilateral agreements with the outside world was a common theme in its negotiations at this time, prompted both by a reluctance to become over-involved in the relations of a group of non-communist and therefore potentially hostile states and also by a conviction that the weight of Soviet Russia would be greater in a bilateral agreement, especially when the partner was a small power, than in a multilateral agreement which might include a second state

12. The treaty was concluded for three years and was renewed on December 17, 1929.

13. See below.

14. E.H. Carr, Socialism in One Country Vol.3. Part 2 (London 1964), p.642

15. The Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, at his meeting with the Turkish Foreign Minister, November 1926. X.J. Eudin and R.C.North, Soviet Russia and the East 1920-1927 (Stanford 1957), p.324. Chicherin, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, May 1918-July 1930.

16. DVP Vol.9. (Moscow 1964), pps.406-410. This treaty was renewed on June 24 1931.

17. DVP Vol.10. (Moscow 1965), pps.396-400. This treaty continues in operation at the present time.

whose influence in the group, either alone or at least combined with the third state or states, would be as powerful as Russia's itself.

Soviet interest in a series of non-aggression pacts on its western border also came to the fore in 1925. The Locarno pact, which guaranteed the frontiers of western Europe, coupled in 1926 with the German entry into the League of Nations, that bete noir of Soviet diplomacy and the introduction of the Dawes plan in 1924, radically altered Germany's international position and was interpreted by the Soviet leadership as an attempt, especially on the part of Britain, to split the Rapallo partnership, Russia's ace card in its diplomatic intercourse with the non-communist world. In September 1924

Chicherin condemned the new German policy:

By entering the League of Nations Germany joins a definite coalition; Germany thus becomes a satellite...German policy is thus brought into collision with the Rapallo policy. 18.

This Soviet fear was not entirely without substance, since the Weimar Republic now began a balancing act between East and West, using the former in order to secure concessions from the latter whilst striving to retain good relations with Russia. The new international position of Germany could not but affect its relations with the USSR since any improvement of Germany's links with the west could only weaken its hitherto exclusive dependence on Russia.¹⁹ The change in the Soviet-German relationship was subtle, yet a hint of uncertainty had been introduced into the Rapallo understanding. A lingering doubt must have remained with the Soviet leaders that their relationship could deteriorate still further. This remained the case despite the conclusion of a Soviet-German non-aggression pact. In December 1924, Chicherin formally proposed to the German Ambassador in Moscow the conclusion of a pact of neutrality between the two states, an outcome of Soviet disconcertment concerning Germany's relations with the west. Stresemann, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, was anxious not to jeopardise his delicate Locarno negotiations with the western powers, however, and refused to be drawn into a

18. Quoted in Carr, *Socialism in One Country* Vol. 3, Part 1, p.67.

19. L.F. Kochan, *Russia and the Weimar Republic* (Cambridge 1954), p.120.

positive acceptance of the Soviet proposal. He still valued highly relations with Russia, despite the abortive Soviet-backed communist revolutionary attempt in Germany of 1923, but his major aim was to preserve Germany's freedom of manoeuvre:

The question of a choice between East and West does not arise as the result of our joining the League. Such a choice can only be made when backed by military force. That, alas, we do not possess. We can neither become a continental spearhead for England, as some believe, nor can we involve ourselves in an alliance with Russia. ²⁰.

A commercial treaty was proposed, though, and after some disagreement was signed in Moscow on October 12, 1925, when Germany's Locarno negotiations were almost completed. This treaty had political as well as economic significance as it contained a declaration that the Rapallo treaty would continue as the foundation of Soviet-German relations, but was no compensation in Moscow for Germany's new links with the west.

The formal signature of the Locarno agreements took place on December 1, 1925 and cleared the way for Stresemann to turn once again towards Russia, negotiations for a political treaty being resumed in early December, the treaty of Berlin finally being signed on April 24, 1926. This treaty of non-aggression and neutrality confirmed the Rapallo treaty as the basis of mutual relations between the Soviet Union and Germany. In the event of one party being attacked by a third power, the other party would observe neutrality and neither party was to participate in any economic or financial boycott directed against the other. The treaty was to be valid for five years. ²¹. Although it was seemingly a victory for Soviet diplomacy, it could not entirely restore the old relationship; Germany still retained its new ties with the west. This point requires stress as the downhill plunge of Soviet-German relations which occurred in the 1930's had its initiation in this period, even though for some years to come Germany remained Russia's most important "friend" in the international system.

Having briefly surveyed Soviet-German relations at the time of Locarno,

20. Quoted in Kochan, *Russia and the Weimar Republic*, p.103.

21. *DVP* Vol.9, pps. 250-252.

the close connection between the latter and the Soviet negotiations with Poland, the Baltic states and France must now be examined. The important factor here is the eventual outcome of these diplomatic moves in contrast with the outcome of a new series of negotiations which were undertaken in 1931-1932. In the investigation of the reasons for this disparity lies the major burden of this work.

Soviet relations with the Western border states tended to vary in inverse proportion to those with Germany. Polish-German hatred as a result of the Polish territorial gains at the end of the First World War, seen in Berlin as the most iniquitous clauses of the detested Versailles treaty, placed a premium on strained Soviet-Polish relations. Germany never renounced its desire to restore this "stolen" land to its bosom and such a rectification would be simplified if Poland were distracted by unsettled conditions on its eastern border with the USSR. Prior to 1925 Russia's relations with Germany had been very good and the need to placate Berlin by not adopting a friendly attitude towards Poland was strengthened by the latent hostility which existed between the two Slav neighbours, regardless of Germany's wishes, as an outcome of the Soviet-Polish war of 1920 and the following peace treaty together with more general historical and ideological factors. The small Baltic states were regarded in Moscow as artificial anti-Soviet bastions propped up by Anglo-French imperialism.

German accommodation with the western powers in 1925, however, compelled the Soviet Government to re-examine its policy towards these border states, partly as a re-insurance against the possible weakening of its Rapallo links and partly as a form of diplomatic blackmail, Poland being such a sensitive issue in Soviet-German relations that any sign of a Russian-Polish rapprochement might well have a positive effect on the Wilhelmstrasse.^{22.}

The spring or summer of 1925 heralded the opening move in this cautious Soviet approach to the Polish Government when it seems likely that Moscow

22. In fact, the Polish-Soviet negotiations seem to have had little influence on German policy,

hinted at its willingness to conclude a pact guaranteeing the existing Soviet-Polish frontier.²³ This approach in the midst of the German negotiations with the west was no coincidence. In August an agreement on the handling of frontier incidents, a recurring source of friction between the two neighbours, was signed and at the end of September, Chicherin, on route to Berlin, deliberately visited Warsaw in an official capacity.²⁴ On September 28, in a Warsaw press interview he spoke of Soviet-Polish relations:

Our relations during the past few years have shown a gradual evolution in which those things which divided us have more and more given way to an ever increasing friendliness between our countries... It is enough to look at the map of Europe to realise the enormous importance in international affairs of the relations being established between our Union and Poland... a firm rapprochement between us should have a profound influence on the whole international complex of forces and relations.²⁵

He also spoke of the importance of good economic relations and the desirability of a trade agreement. This was not all; Chicherin appears to have proposed a treaty of non-aggression which the Poles were not prepared to accept, an offer which was repeated in the spring of 1926 with the same negative Polish response. A further attempt was made by the Soviet Government in August, 1926, to persuade Poland to sign a non-aggression pact covering non-aggression, the joint renunciation of all aggressive actions, a mutual guarantee of neutrality in the event of an attack on either by a third power, non-participation in political and economic agreements directed against the other party and the settlement of disputed questions by a conciliation commission.²⁶ Beck, later to become Polish Foreign Minister, states that "while Pilsudski (the Polish leader) was quite prepared to eliminate 'trifling everyday frictions' and to settle at least some of the outstanding practical questions affecting Polish-Soviet relations, he did not believe in the possibility of a large-scale detente with Russia at that time."²⁷ Desultory negotiations

23. Carr, Socialism in One Country Vol.3, part 1, p.444.

24. J.Korbel, Poland Between East and West: Soviet and German Diplomacy Toward Poland, 1919-1933 (Princeton 1963), p.174.

25. Press Interview by Chicherin in Warsaw, September 28, 1925. Quoted in J.Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol.2, 1925-1932 (London 1952), pps. 55-56.

26. NKD Statement of August 28, 1926. DVP Vol.9, p.404.

27. J.Beck, Final Report (New York 1957), p.3.

continued until the murder of the Soviet Ambassador in Poland, Voikov, in June 1927, created such bad feeling that any lingering hopes for an agreement were dashed.

The stumbling block on the path to agreement between Poland and Soviet Russia, apart from the historical conflict between the two countries and peoples and the wide ideological rift between communist Russia and the right-wing dictatorship in Poland, was the differing conceptions of an agreement held by the two states. Poland, regarding itself as the leader of the Baltic group of states and suspecting the Russians of attempting to split up this group by conducting negotiations with each member on a bilateral basis, desired a multilateral agreement with Russia which would include the Baltic states. The Soviet Union saw in this an attempt by Poland to act as leader of this group and influence the other members in an anti-Soviet direction and therefore strenuously opposed this scheme, favouring bilateral agreements.²⁸ As in the case of the middle eastern states referred to above, the Soviet Union again demonstrated its reluctance to become involved in a multilateral arrangement because of the complications which it envisaged as resulting from such a move. In this instance, however, mutual suspicion of the other power's motives was the principal reason why neither side would compromise. On April 24, 1926, Litvinov, Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, addressed the Central Executive Committee on this theme:

Unfortunately, all our efforts to reach lasting agreement with Poland have up to now been defeated by the Polish Government's anxiety to play the part, so to speak, of the manager of external relations for all the Baltic states...We do not, and are not prepared to recognise Poland's protectorate, open or concealed, over the Baltic. The stubborn reluctance of the Polish Government to speak only on behalf of its own state has up to now brought to nothing all our attempts at rapprochement.²⁹

28. The Soviet fear of Polish schemes must have been accentuated by the conclusion in January 1925 of the treaty of Helsinki between Poland, Finland, Estonia and Latvia. J. Duroselle, Les Frontières européennes d'URSS 1917-1941 (Paris 1957), p.72.

29. Report of the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the CEC, April 24, 1926. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol.2, p.112.

In accordance with its policy of bilateral approaches, the Soviet Government made advances to the Baltic states as well as to Poland in 1925 on the subject of a neutrality agreement, but received no reply.^{30.}

On March 5, 1926, Moscow made fresh overtures to Finland and the three Baltic states, apparently waving its insistence on separate negotiations with each of the Baltics whilst still refusing to include Poland, but achieving very little. The following year a new effort was made by Moscow but the negotiations which were initiated made little headway except in the case of Lithuania. The Soviets absolutely rejected the concept of arbitration as a means of settling any future dispute between the signatories and refused to accept a proposal for a neutral chairman in the event of a conciliation commission being agreed upon. The Russians, comprehending the world in terms of capitalist or non-capitalist, saw no place for a neutral. Latvia did eventually initial a non-aggression pact with the USSR in March 1927, largely because its social democratic government was anxious to reach agreement with its large neighbour on economic grounds, but the victory, if so be it, was a hollow one for Moscow. The Latvian Government made its signature dependent on the simultaneous signature of a conciliation convention providing for a neutral chairman and Soviet assent to a multilateral declaration of Latvia's fidelity to its League Covenant obligations.^{31.}

The only success for Soviet diplomacy on its western border was the signature of the Soviet-Lithuanian Neutrality pact on September 28, 1926, in which both parties undertook to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other, to refrain from any aggressive action, financial or economic boycott against the other party and to observe neutrality in the case of an attack on the other by a third party. In the event of a conflict arising between them which should prove impossible to solve by diplomatic means, a conciliation commission would be appointed, to be defined in a sep-

30. Royal Institute of International Affairs, The Baltic States; Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (London 1938), p.71.

31. Ibid., p.73. The pact was never signed.

arate agreement. The treaty was to operate for five years with an automatic extension unless one party gave notice of a desire for change.^{32.}

These negotiations between the Soviet Union, Poland and the Baltic states illustrate several important factors in the policies of these states which were maintained into the 1930's. One crucial factor was the key role played by Germany in the external relations of all these states; a deterioration of relations between Germany and one of them tended to force that state to turn more towards the others. A local balance of power operated in this region of eastern Europe. In this case the Soviet Union was the "victim" of a new German policy, later Poland (and France) as well as Russia would feel the current of change in the Germany of the 1930's and adjust accordingly. The differing conceptions held by Poland and the USSR concerning bilateral versus multilateral non-aggression pacts has already been mentioned and will be encountered again, as will be the position of Poland as a leader in this area of Europe whose influence was critical in any negotiations involving the Baltic states.^{33.}

Lithuania, the only state to accept the Soviet offer of a pact, is an exception in that the Polish occupation of Vilna and the Lithuanian occupation of Memel estranged Lithuania from Poland and Germany respectively and therefore complicated its relations with the other Baltic states. In addition, Lithuania had no common frontier with the Soviet Union and thus did not suffer from the trying frontier incidents which frequently disrupted the relations between the other Baltic states and the USSR. A further positive factor contributing to the Lithuanian signature was a great victory of the "left" in the elections of May 1926 and the formation of a government presided over by a social-democrat.^{34.}

32. DVP Vol.9, pps. 446-448.

33. Duroselle states that Poland tried every means of preventing Finland, Estonia and Latvia from signing non-aggression pacts with the USSR. Duroselle, Les Frontieres europeenes d'l URSS 1917-1941, p.77.

34. Ibid.

In the case of Rumania, the Soviet Union's south-western neighbour, the bitter territorial dispute concerning Bessarabia, seized by the former during the First World War but never recognised by the latter, prevented any attempt at an improvement in relations by the signature of a pact or otherwise. Rumania's role in the French alliance system, including its close ties with Poland, did nothing to improve its relations with the Soviet state.

The other arena in which repercussions from Locarno were experienced was that of Franco-Soviet relations. France, like Britain, had accorded de jure recognition to Soviet Russia in 1924, yet this move had done little to advance amicable relations between the two states. The seemingly^g intransigent debt problem still loomed at the forefront of the issues which prevented a meaningful rapprochement. The unstable Soviet-German partnership in 1925, however, encouraged Moscow tentatively to take steps to improve its links with Paris. The appointment of Rakovsky as Soviet Ambassador in Paris at the end of October, 1925, marked the beginning of an intensive Soviet campaign to improve relations.³⁵ In December conversations took place between the two countries in Paris. Chicherin, one of the Soviet representatives at these talks, gave a press statement on December 17:

I think the present general situation most propitious for the development of stable friendly relations between the Soviet Federation and France, I have noted, on the part of the French leaders, the existence of clear and undoubted good will, and of a really serious wish to reach a settlement, beneficial to both interested parties, of all the questions pending between our Governments. ³⁶

This statement proved to be too optimistic. The new year witnessed the renewal of debt negotiations but once again, as in the past, they broke down, in June 1926. The French ratification of the Locarno agreements in March 1926 ended any Soviet hope that France might be detached from Britain so as to compensate for the new international situation. At the same time, Germany's new ties with the west seemed to be foundering, there was a set back in its attempt to join the League and negotiations between the Rapallo partners took a favourable turn. Although no tangible gains were secured by Soviet diplomacy, it is

³⁵. Carr, Socialism in One Country Vol.3, part 1, p.421.

³⁶. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol.2, p.67.

of interest to note Soviet foreign policy's flexibility and its willingness to utilise the friction between Germany, France and Britain to achieve its policy objectives.

The Soviets once again turned to France in 1927, a bleak year for Russia's external relations with the western powers, in an endeavour to counter their deteriorating international position following the break of diplomatic relations with Britain. The Russians, who constantly feared the formation of an international combination to harass and possibly even attack their country, perceived this threat looming ever-closer during 1927. In the autumn they offered France a non-aggression pact, agreed to resume debt negotiations and to ~~spare~~^{resume} talks with France's ally, Poland, which had been languishing since the previous year, an offer renewed in February 1928.³⁷ The pact remained unformulated, however, a consequence of the continued refusal of Moscow to accept France's condition that a multilateral pact including Poland and the Baltic states be concluded.

The failure of these negotiations ended the brief and shallow rapprochement between Paris and Moscow and their relations once again deteriorated to the old level. Mutual financial claims continued to balk Soviet efforts at improving this situation. In December, 1928, Litvinov expressed his country's desire to maintain good relations with all states, including France, but no response was elicited from Paris.³⁸

During the troubled year of 1927, Germany adopted a neutral position in the Anglo-Soviet dispute. Whilst Moscow was re-assured by Germany's refusal to be drawn into any British conspiracy, Berlin had shown that it would not go so far as to support Russia against the west. After 1927, Soviet-German relations in general deteriorated, despite intervals punctuated by temporary improvements.³⁹ A Wilhemstrasse note written at the time of the first session

37. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky and the French Foreign Minister, Briand, February 10, 1928. DVP Vol.11 (Moscow 1960), p.79. V.S.Dovgalevsky, Soviet Ambassador in Sweden, 1924-1927; Japan, 1927; France, 1927 - 1934.

38. Report of the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the GSS, December 10, 1928. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol.2, p.349.

39. Military relations, established in the early 20's, continued much as before and provided a sphere of sound collaboration. See F.L.Carsten, "The Reichswehr and the Red Army," Survey N.44-45, pps. 114-132.

of the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament in November 1927 provides a clear indication of the problems facing German decision-makers in pursuing their Rapallo course. It urged that collaboration at Geneva "not be made too evident outwardly." ⁴⁰ Germany could not be too pro-Soviet for fear of losing its newly-won position in the west. If the eastern card was played too heavily it ceased to be a means of extracting concessions from the west and had the opposite effect.

Soviet-German relations deteriorated, however, for more positive reasons than the desire of the latter not to alienate Britain, France and the United States. The Soviet-French talks concerning a non-aggression pact in the autumn of 1927, whilst barren of results, had nevertheless alarmed Germany and in September, Brockdorff-Rantzau, the German Ambassador in Moscow, held a heated ⁴¹ discussion with Chicherin in which the Russian adopted a conciliatory attitude.

The new left turn in Comintern policy which was adopted in 1928 alarmed Rantzau. Hitherto a staunch supporter of the Rapallo line, he now began increasingly to discern a new internal and external Soviet policy. At a time when, in fact, Soviet internal policy was becoming more inward-looking and the Comintern ceasing to be of importance except for its verbal outpourings, he became impressed with the contrary notion of a new revolutionary course. Germany's strengthening external but weakening internal position made its government less anxious to overlook unorthodox Soviet interference in internal German affairs. Unfortunately for Russia, this occurred at a time when Comintern declarations were becoming more extreme and it is not surprising that German officials took such declarations at their face value; they were not to know that Stalin had no intention of countenancing a revolutionary attempt in Germany.

The "Special relationship" continued because it still benefited both

40. Notes by the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, for a conversation of Stresemann with Litvinov, November 24, 1927. Quoted in H.L. Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia 1926-1933 (London 1966), p.110.

41. Korbelt, Poland Between East and West, p.221.

parties, but was weakened by each new blow struck. The "spirit of Rapallo" was struggling with the "spirit of Locarno" and the odds on Rapallo's ultimate victory were beginning to lengthen. The crisis of the last few years had not been the result of any positive Soviet decision. On the contrary, Moscow desired to maintain and strengthen the relationship. Problems were created partly by a Soviet desire to improve its relations with other countries which on the economic plane, at least, could only adversely affect Germany, and partly by Soviet policies adopted for internal purposes to which the German Government took exception. The years 1929-1930 produced little on the credit side and for the first time since 1925 a Soviet commentary spoke of a Rappalo crisis.⁴³ Dirksen, who had replaced Brookdorff-Rantzau at the German Embassy in Moscow on the latter's death at the end of 1928 reported in February 1930 that Litvinov was deeply depressed about the state of Soviet-German relations.⁴⁴

The Soviet quest for security and the use of the non-aggression pact in this quest was not restricted to Europe and central Asia. In the east lay a further potential danger to the continued existence of the first socialist state. The Far East was never-far removed from the centre of Moscow's attention, Japanese expansionist plans and interests in northern China were no secret and gave scant cause for complacency within the Kremlin walls. On the initiative of the Soviet representatives in Tokyo, unofficial negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement in defence of peace in the Far East were begun in the middle twenties.⁴⁵ The Japanese stated that in principle they had no objection to a pact but insisted that its conclusion be postponed until "a situation of complete economic and political understanding" was reached.⁴⁶

In June 1927, Dovgalevsky, Soviet Ambassador in Japan, stated the desire of the Soviet Government to conclude a non-aggression pact but again the

42. Blows such as the Holz Affair and the Shakhty trial.

43. Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, p.160.

44. Korbel, Poland Between East and West, p.260.

45. Soviet State Archives, quoted in L.N.Kudashev, "Iz istorii borbi Sovetskogo gosudarstva za razvitie dobrososedskikh otnosheniy s Yaponiei 1925-1936", Istoriya SSSR, 1960 N.5, p.26.

46. Ibid., p.27.

Japanese refused, demanding as a pre-requisite a trade agreement. Similar Soviet proposals made in December 1927 and March 1928 met further negative responses. The failure to secure even a paper guarantee of Japan's future peaceful behaviour left another running sore for Soviet diplomacy which would plague it in the not-too-distant future.

3. The Comintern.

The relationship between the Comintern, the organisation whose aim was to assist the spread of communist revolution to the rest of the world and Soviet diplomacy in the period 1928-1935 is complex and by no means clear from the evidence hitherto revealed by the Soviet authorities. The fact that very early in its history it became a component part of the Russian state machinery, however, warrents some examination of its role and significance in Russia's external relations.

The Third World Congress of the Comintern met in June 1921 after the revolutionary failures in Hungary, Poland and Germany. Both the internal and external situation favoured a period of restraint in Soviet Russia; new Comintern tactics were required.⁴⁷ Trotsky admitted;

Now for the first time we see and feel that we are not so immediately near to the goal, to the conquest of power, to the world revolution...in 1919, we said to ourselves; "It is a question of months," Now we say; "It is perhaps a question of years."⁴⁸

The Comintern would renounce attempts at revolution for the time being and begin preparations for a future revolutionary period. These united front tactics with the slogan, "to the masses," marked the first radical change of direction. The Comintern was to undergo several more before its dissolution.

These new tactics, whilst complementing the new policies of the Soviet state, raised doubts in the minds of some Comintern delegates. Was the world revolution being subordinated to Russian state interests? Radek said that any measure "which is a necessity from the stand point of Soviet Russia is also a

47. NEP had replaced War Communism in 1921 and inaugurated a new period of moderation within Russia. Diplomatically contacts were being concluded with the capitalist world.

48. Quoted in Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution Vol.3, p.383.

necessity from the standpoint of the world revolution."⁴⁹ The Soviet-German Rapallo agreement intensified these doubts; what would the German Communist Party's tactics be towards its government, which was Russia's only important friend? No straightforward answer can be given to the question as to which interest was upper most for the Soviet leaders, at least in the early twenties. Events in Germany, and in Asia where the Comintern provided the Narkomindel with grave difficulties in its British relations, show that revolutionary interests were not necessarily subordinated to diplomatic relations in every case. As Carr says, only the vital decisions were taken by the Politburo and Central Committee; lesser matters were handled by the individual organs and co-ordination was largely missing.⁵⁰ Further, when a situation arose in which revolution seemed to have a good chance of success, the Soviet leadership would not always "play safe" with their diplomatic assets. In the early and middle twenties, they still, perhaps, remained revolutionaries at heart.⁵¹ Yet Soviet prestige did continue to grow whilst Comintern failures in comparison appeared even more lamentable. At the Fourth Congress in 1922 the world proletariat was urged to give all assistance to Russia's interests in all other countries.⁵² The Theses on Tactics said;

The mere existence of the Russian Soviet Republic represents a permanent element of weakness in bourgeois society; it is the most important factor in the world revolution.⁵³

Although Rapallo was not mentioned by name, Bukharin said;

I maintain that we have now grown so strong that we can conclude a military alliance with the bourgeoisie of another country in order to use it to smash another bourgeoisie...This is nothing but a question of pure strategic and tactical expediency.⁵⁴

49. Radek to the Third Comintern Congress, June-July, 1921. J.Degras, The Communist International Vol.1 (London 1956), p.225.

50. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution Vol.3, pps. 330-331.

51. In the middle twenties not only revolutionary fervour but fractional struggles within the Soviet leadership, however, had a strong influence on Comintern policy.

52. K.F.McKenzie, Comintern and World Revolution 1928-1943 (New York 1964), p.54.

53. Degras, Comintern Vol.1, p.420.

54. Bukharin speaking to the Fourth Comintern Congress on the Programme of the Communist International, December 1922. Ibid., p.445.

The German crisis induced by the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 is an interesting case study in Comintern-Narkomindel relations. Both the Soviet Government and the German Communist Party (KPD) opposed the occupation, but with one important difference. The former opposed it because it threatened the peace of Europe for the still-weak state and because it depleted Russia's only important ally.⁵⁵ The KPD not only opposed the French action, however, but treated the German and French Governments as equal enemies. It was utilising the crisis to attack a government which the Soviets could only look upon as being the best possible to prevent French influence in Germany expanding. This inconsistency continued for several months until August when the collapse of the German Government seemed to indicate that perhaps there was a revolutionary situation. The revolutionary attempt, supported by the Politburo, was a complete failure but luckily for the Russians it did not adversely affect the Rapallo partnership which was too beneficial to be jeopardised even by these unorthodox Soviet tactics. Brockdorff-Rantzau, the German Ambassador in Moscow, reported to his foreign office in May 1923;

We have been and shall continue to depend on (Soviet Russia) for a long time...This has nothing to do with ~~the~~ likes or dislikes, but only with the sober fact that we need Russia, and that every other (Russian) government must seek support among the Allies, and what that would mean for Germany is obvious.⁵⁶

The complexity of the relationship between the two strands of Soviet policy is apparent. In this case a developing revolutionary situation, as the Soviet leaders saw it, induced them to back the KPD at the risk of their diplomatic relations with the German Government. Nevertheless, it is probable, that this decision was swayed by the fear that Stresemann, the new Chancellor, would adopt a pro-western rather than a Rapallo course. Would the Russian leadership have backed the revolutionary attempt if they had thought Stresemann to be pro-Soviet? It is impossible to say, but they would not have been

55. The Soviet Government informed Poland that the Red Army would cross its frontier if Poland attacked Germany. E.H.Carr, German-Soviet Relations between the Two World Wars, 1919-1939 (London 1952), p.70.

56. K.Rosenbaum, The Community of Fate (New York 1965), p.62.

inconsistent if they had put diplomatic relations foremost. As the Comintern failed to achieve success and Russia became stronger, more importance was attached to the latter and its well-being was less likely to be jeopardised for the sake of a doubtful revolutionary exercise.

The United Front tactics adopted at the Third Comintern congress by 1927 were in ruin. In China and Britain, especially, the attempts of the communist party to collaborate with other parties had ended in disaster. These short-comings were the more embarrassing to the Soviet leadership in that the Left Opposition within Russia, and particularly Trotsky, concentrated its attacks on these very failures. The cautious right policy had become almost impossible to maintain and the virtual elimination of the Left group in 1927 facilitated a change of front. The break with the Kuomintang, the futile Canton rising in December ⁵⁷ and the dissolution of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee marked a change in policy. At the Fifteenth Party Congress Stalin spoke in a very different vein from previous United Front clichés:

Whereas a couple of years ago it was possible and necessary to speak of the ebb of the revolutionary tide in Europe, to-day we have every ground for asserting that Europe is obviously entering a period of new revolutionary upsurge. ⁵⁸

The new policy was explicitly stated at the Ninth Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee (ECCI) in February 1928. Its slogan was "Class against Class" and implied the abandonment of United Front tactics. Ordinary trade union and parliamentary activity were ended.

The Sixth Comintern Congress officially endorsed these new tactics in July. Social-democracy was attacked as being bankrupt. Bukharin expressed a very real Soviet criticism of it when he said that social democracy now embodied the aggressive aspirations of the capitalist fatherland; its chief task now was ideological preparation for war against the USSR. ⁵⁹

57. It is alleged that Stalin deliberately organised this rising to boost his prestige at the Party Congress. See L. Trotsky, Problems of the Chinese Revolution (New York 1932), p.291, B. Souvarine, Stalin (London n.d.), p.476.

58. Stalin Works Vol.10. (Moscow 1954), pps. 292-293.

59. ECCI Report presented by Bukharin to the Sixth Comintern Congress, July 1928, J. Degras, The Communist International Vol.2. (London 1960), p.446.

Though this tactical change was introduced in Britain, China and France in the last months of 1927 before the Right Wing ^{Opposition} ~~Operation~~ created by the grain crisis in the Soviet Union had developed, the latter did affect the new policy. By 1928 it was automatic that any purge within Russia should be extended to the foreign parties. At the Sixth World Congress Bukharin already was seriously involved in a factional struggle with Stalin and though he played a leading role at the Congress, as Trotsky later said, the number of hours Bukharin spoke was in inverse proportion to his influence.^{60.} The Left Opposition was still attacked, but to quote the Theses on the International Situation, "Within the communist parties...the main deviation is to the right of the correct political line."^{61.}

The impact of this new line on the foreign policy proper of the Soviet Union is an intriguing problem. Despite the revolutionary slogans and the onset of the world depression at the end of 1929, there is no evidence that plans were ever made for a revolutionary attempt in any western country during this phase.^{62.} Further, Soviet diplomatic activity was engaged in a concentrated effort to conclude non-aggression pacts with the very states which were so vilified by Comintern propaganda. Simultaneously with Comintern instructions to its member parties to withdraw from political collaboration with other left-wing parties in their respective countries, the Narkomindel was engaged in negotiations with the leaders of these countries in an attempt to improve Russia's relations with them and thus bolster its security. Nowhere was the contradiction between Comintern and Narkomindel policies to appear so striking as in Germany. Growing political instability, the growth of extreme right-wing nationalism and especially the Nazi party in the Weimar republic provoked grave doubts within the Narkomindel as to the wisdom of continuing Russia's hitherto almost exclusive reliance on Germany in the

60. Degras, Comintern Vol.2. p.452.

61. Theses of the Sixth Comintern Congress on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International, August 29, 1928. Ibid., p.464.

62. F.Borkenau, World Communism. A History of the Communist International (Michigan 1962), p.340.

international system. The decision to negotiate non-aggression pacts with France and Poland was taken despite the inevitable German hostile reaction because it was perceived that Germany's future developments promised to be threatening to Russia. Yet at this very time the Comintern was venting its fury principally at the German Social Democrats and not at the Nazi party. The "Class against Class" tactics continued until 1935 when they were replaced by those of the popular front. Only at this point did Comintern policy move into line with Soviet diplomacy. Even the accession of Hitler to the German Chancellorship, the termination of Soviet-German military collaboration, Soviet support for the Versailles treaty and the status quo in general, which occurred in early 1933⁶³, did not produce any effect on the Comintern for two years. The reasons for this contradiction are still far from clear. It seems certain that foreign policy requirements did not motivate the change of tactics in the Comintern in 1928 nor their continuance for so many years. They were initially introduced because the old united front policy had become unworkable. A communist party could only use such tactics if other parties were also willing to co-operate but by 1927 such a willingness had been exhausted. The "Class against Class" tactics were continued and strengthened, but not initiated by the later need of the Stalinist leadership to eliminate the right wing opposition in the Comintern as well as in Russia, since to credit Stalin with the foresight of introducing in 1927 a left Comintern policy in order to destroy his future right opponents is to bestow him with psychic qualities he presumably did not possess.⁶⁴ Further, the old Comintern tactics would have made a strange bedfellow alongside the industrialisation and collectivisation, the frantic search for saboteurs and the war-scares. Inertia also

63. See Chapter 6.

64. Henri Barbe, a member of the French Communist Party and ECCI, was told by Jacques Doriot, who was well informed on the internal situation of the Russian party, that all the Comintern discussions were only a side product of the Russian situation and that all measures introduced were meant mainly to isolate Bukharin and strengthen Stalin. Henri Barbe, "Stalin and the Rebellion of Tasca & Humbert-Dros", in M.M. Drachkovitch and B. Lazitch, The Comintern-Historical Highlights (New York 1966), p.224.

probably played a part in the continuation of this policy, so ill-adjusted to the realities of the situation outside Russia.⁶⁵ In addition, it must be remembered that in Germany, where the contradiction between foreign policy considerations and Comintern policy was greatest, the communist attacks on the social-democrats were in a sense compatible with Soviet security requirements since the German social-democrats were seen in Moscow as being pro-western and opposed to German collaboration with the USSR.⁶⁶ Their defeat would be advantageous to Russia though, of course, if this defeat was sustained at the cost of a Nazi victory, the benefit which the USSR would reap seems much more problematical. The Comintern itself gave no convincing reason for its policy. Its theoretical justification for attacking the social-democrats and thus possibly hastening a Nazi victory was that the fascist regime was not a new type of state but merely a form of the bourgeois dictatorship. Anyone who thought otherwise was a bourgeois liberal. The appearance of fascism showed that the objective conditions for the transformation of society were present. It was a stage towards a communist revolution.⁶⁷ Social-democracy led the working class astray and had to be smashed before the revolution could succeed. It would seem that the Soviet decision makers, probably Stalin himself, failed to realise fully the disastrous consequences for the Soviet Union were fascism to gain control in Germany. By 1928 the Comintern's chief function was to aid the ruling Soviet group in its factional fights within the Russian Communist party rather than to operate as an instrument of external Soviet policy. As Degras says, this period in its life could be regarded as being "positively injurious to the Soviet Union."⁶⁸ Either its value as a means of consolidating the

65. In July 1928 Trotsky wrote, "Anyone who merely repeats from year to year that 'the masses are becoming radicalised, the situation is revolutionary' is not a Bolshevik leader but a tub-thumping agitator." L. Trotsky, "What Now" in The Third International After Lenin (New York 1957), p.261.

66. For example, the resolution of the KPD Central Committee noted at a meeting of the Enlarged Presidium of ECCI in February 1930 that German social-fascism, (i.e. social-democracy) was the chief organiser of an anti-Soviet war. J. Degras, The Communist International Vol.3 (London 1965), p.100.

67. See the speech of Manuilsky to the Eleventh ECCI Plenum, April 1931. Ibid., pps. 151-152.

68. Ibid., Preface, p.VIII.

position of the ruling group in Moscow was perceived as being of more importance than the harm done to Soviet security interests, or else the contradictions between the latter and the Comintern's policy were not even perceived. For the purpose of this thesis, the crucial point is that Soviet diplomacy worked independently of the Comintern and its history by 1930 can be examined in isolation from that of the Comintern. Even in Germany, where the Rapallo partnership was seriously strained after 1928 by the extreme slogans of the KPD and the Comintern officials in Russia, it is probable that German susceptibilities were provoked as much by the growth of the powerful KPD at a time of worsening political conditions within the Republic as by the new Comintern tactics. The main influence of these tactics on Soviet diplomacy was that in so far as they added Hitler's rise to power they helped to create the environment in which Soviet foreign policy, alongside that of many capitalist countries, had to struggle in the years after 1933.

4. The Soviet Union and the International Community.

Soviet foreign policy from 1917 onwards attempted to gain acceptance in the international society of capitalist states, the existence of which it was compelled to recognise by the circumstances of a successful revolution in Russia and failures elsewhere. Experience of the allied intervention had confirmed the Bolsheviks' ideological belief in the hostility of the capitalist world. Their state's existence could only be maintained by diplomatic efforts to utilise the inevitable cracks in the enemy camp and so avoid isolation. In fact, Russian diplomatic activity shows that Russia was prepared to reach agreement with any and every capitalist state; it was the latter which held the decisive card. Germany alone of the great powers accepted fully the proffered Soviet hand, a step necessitated by its own isolated situation in the post-war world. Britain, France and the United States, whilst finding it impossible to ignore Soviet Russia's existence, were unwilling to accept that state as an equal.

The Russians constantly were aware of their isolated position and fearful of a hostile combination. Britain, for a time (1924-7) seemed to pose the ^{main} ~~most~~ threat, but France and its allies were perceived as the really great danger to the continued existence of the USSR:

All the blocs and alliances concluded by the rightist circles in France during the last thirteen years have had the aim of safeguarding the military and political predominance of France in Europe, struggling with the communist danger and most of all the struggle with the Soviet Union. ~~42.69.~~

To counter this isolation and ensure a reasonable level of security for their state, the Soviet leaders attempted to negotiate a series of non-aggression pacts with their neighbours. This was particularly stimulated by the feeling of insecurity generated by the ambivalence shown in German foreign policy in 1925, Germany being the major Soviet "friend" amongst the great powers.

These negotiations had mixed success, as the preceeding pages have sought to outline. The outstanding failures were in relation to France, Poland and the Baltic states (with the exception of Lithuania) in the west and Japan in the east, failures which prolonged the nightmare of a new military intervention.

These failures remained real despite the successful introduction of the "Litvinov Pact". In August, 1928, the Soviet Union had signed the Briand-Kellogg Pact which renounced war as an instrument of national policy and was the first state to ratify it. Whilst Soviet scepticism concerning the pact was considerable, it might at least provide a minimum level of security in eastern Europe, although by no means serving as a substitute for the favoured non-aggression pact. Unfortunately, the Kellogg pact would not be activated until all the original fourteen signatories had ratified it. Therefore in December, 1928, Litvinov proposed to the Polish Government that a protocol be signed which would bring that pact into force between them:

Since it regards the securing of peace in eastern Europe as a

69. K.Viktor, "K podgotovke frantsley voyni protiv SSSR" Bolshevik N 1
15 January 1931, p.55.

matter of first-rate importance, and since, of the states on the western frontier of the Soviet Union, Poland has signed the (Kellogg Pact), the Soviet Government decided to propose to the Polish Government the signature of the attached protocol, under which the... (Pact) would enter into force between the Soviet Union and Poland immediately after its ratification by these two states. ⁷⁰.

The protocol was open to any other state which signed the Kellogg Pact, Lithuania also receiving a similar proposal as that made to Poland.

The Polish reply to the Soviet offer, on January 10, 1929, accepted Litvinov's proposal in principle, but expressed astonishment that the Soviet Government should have excluded Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Rumania. It reminded Moscow that it had always insisted on the necessity for collective action by all states concerned in the settling of the problem of security in eastern Europe. ⁷¹. It was agreed that the Baltic states and Rumania should be eligible to join the protocol and Russo-Polish discussions began in Moscow on the procedure to be followed. ⁷². The Soviets were anxious to secure Poland's signature as quickly as possible. ⁷³. On January 22, 1929 the Soviet press announced that both governments had agreed to sign the protocol immediately. Then the Soviet Government would apply to the governments of Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Rumania, proposing that they join the protocol in so far as they considered themselves already joined to the Kellogg Pact. ⁷⁴. The Russians continued to complain about Polish procrastination in signing the protocol, ⁷⁵. the Polish delay being stimulated by the desire to postpone it until the Baltic states and Rumania had completed the Kellogg Pact procedure, thus

70. Note from the Soviet Government to the Polish Government, October 29, 1928
DVP Vol. 11, p. 641.

71. Times, January 12, 1929.

72. Note from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Polish Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, January 11, 1929. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol. 2, pps. 359-363.

73. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, January 21, 1929.
DVP. Vol. 12. (Moscow 1967), p. 41.

74. Report of the Soviet press on a proposal by the Soviet Government to the Polish Government, January 22, 1929. Ibid., p. 42.

75. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky and the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Briand and the General Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry, Berthelot, January 25, 1929. Ibid., p. 47.

permitting a multilateral signing of the Litvinov Protocol.

The protocol was eventually signed on February 9, 1929 by the USSR, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Rumania.⁷⁶ Finland declined to adhere and Lithuania preferred to add its signature on April 1 to avoid a joint declaration with Poland, its adversary in the Vilna dispute. Poland could consider it a victory for its multilateral rather than bilateral form which the Soviets had at first opposed but eventually accepted. Perhaps the Bolsheviks were prepared to concede ground because they viewed the protocol as of secondary importance, desirable mainly from a propagandistic angle. Certainly they maintained their demand for bilateral agreements in the case of the more important non-aggression pacts, which in Moscow's eyes at least were in no way substituted for by this latest protocol. The German Government did not react favourably to this Soviet diplomatic move, Dirksen informing Litvinov of German doubts and criticisms, especially in the event of the Kellogg Pact being brought into force by the protocol between the USSR and Poland before it entered into force between Germany and Poland.⁷⁷

The diplomatic achievements which had been accorded the new Russian Government in the 1920's, great as they were, still left much to be desired in the Kremlin. The long Soviet frontiers were still seriously exposed on many sectors. Despite twelve years of diplomatic activity the Soviet Union was still a partial outcast from the international community whose actions were distrusted by the capitalist states and whose widely differing ideology made mutual perception of the interests and intentions by both sides sadly lacking in depth. The only outstanding gain for Soviet Russia in the external field remained its old relationship with Germany, yet even here the seeds of disenchantment were germinating at an increasingly fast, if irregular, rate.

The USSR, it is true, had finally entered the Geneva scene in 1927 with its participation in the World Economic Conference and the Preparatory

76. DVP Vol.12, pps. 68-70.

77. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, January 19, 1929. Ibid., p.38.

Commission on Disarmament. The former brought important economic gains to Russia and the latter, at any rate, helped to bolster the sagging Rapallo relationship by uniting Russia and Germany in their minority vote. Yet the Soviet presence at the Preparatory Commission also served to convince the world leaders that they had no common view point with the Bolshevik leaders who sought to use the hallowed halls of the League to reveal the hypocrisy of western disarmament discussion and to propose "wild" schemes for general and total disarmament. Moreover, the Soviets still maintained their long-held disdain for the League of Nations itself.

The inadequacies of Soviet foreign policy became increasingly apparent in the 1930's as Germany drifted away from the USSR and towards internal chaos and upheaval. The apprehension with which this was perceived in Moscow was not unique, however; in other capitals of Europe the situation in Germany was being followed with increasing alarm. Might not Soviet foreign policy find new hope in this common fear?

5. Decision-Making.

Although it is not the intention of this thesis to investigate decision-making or power concentration in the Soviet governmental structure, it is advisable to comment briefly on the role of personalities in Soviet foreign policy.

The elimination of the last active opposition group in the Soviet Union left Stalin as virtual dictator by the spring of 1929. Both the Narkomindel and the Comintern were very closely integrated with the highest state decision-making organs and Stalin's control at that level presumably gave him an extremely powerful voice in foreign policy formulation. A more detailed analysis cannot here be attempted and in any case the dearth of information available reduces any comment on this subject to little more than speculation.

No matter how great the degree of governmental centralisation, however, there are limits to the capabilities of any one man; Stalin could at most

concern himself only with the general line of policy or vital individual incidents; lesser matters must be delegated to subordinate officials. It may be noted here that a dictator's control over foreign policy is more restricted than in the case of internal policy since the ^{foreign} following policy decisions of other states, so important to his own state's reactions, are beyond his power. Inevitably, the foreign minister cannot be ignored in the decision-making process, whether he acts as a top level or only an intermediate level policy-maker, or merely as a two-way communication channel between the foreign and diplomatic personnel and the centre. Many scholars have attempted to provide a much more detailed analysis of the Soviet foreign minister's precise sphere of activity, powers and limitations, without reaching very satisfactory conclusions. Especially is this so in the period 1927-9 when the post of Commissar for Foreign Affairs changed hands, Litvinov replacing his superior effectively after 1927, though formally only in July 1930.

What effect, if any, did this replacement have on Soviet foreign policy? There is a certain amount of evidence that it influenced some aspects of that policy. Barmine, one time secretary to Chicherin, says that the latter "had no sympathy whatever for the League of Nations, which he regarded as a thinly disguised coalition of the victors against the vanquished."⁷⁸ Litvinov, on the contrary, is reputed to have been a strong supporter of international collaboration. Talking of the Kellogg Pact, Fischer says "Litvinov was a ^{staunch} ~~staunch~~ protagonist of ^{adhesion} ~~adhesion~~, and contributed much towards finally overcoming the opposition of Chicherin and other prominent Soviet leaders whose attitude towards it was either hostile or indifferent."⁷⁹ It is also plain that Chicherin was a stronger supporter of Russo-German collaboration than was Litvinov.⁸⁰

78. A.Barmine, Memoirs of a Soviet Diplomat (London 1938), p.153. Also see T.H.Von Laue, "Soviet Diplomacy: G.V.Chicherin 1918-1930" in G.A.Craig and F.Gilbert, The Diplomats 1919-1939 (Princeton 1953), p.278.

79. L.Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs Vol.2, p.761. Also, A.U.Pope, Maxim Litvinov (New York 1943), p.242.

80. Carr, Soviet-German Relations, pps.97-98.

Litvinov had both a higher rank in the party apparatus and a closer personal relationship with Stalin than did his predecessor, which may have gained him a more independent decision-making role. Fischer, who knew both men, says that Litvinov "is a fighter and several times refused to yield to Stalin." He won his point against Stalin; "indeed Soviet foreign policy between 1929 and May, 1933, followed the pattern of Litvinov's mind more than of his chiefs".⁸¹ Certainly, after 1927 Soviet-German relations did worsen and participation in League affairs and the Kellogg Pact demonstrated an increasing willingness to co-operate in international movements. Whether this was connected with the change at the Narkomindel, whether in fact Litvinov's appointment was made because of the impending new policy, or whether it was a mere coincidence, it is impossible conclusively to answer. It is useful to note the re-organisation of personnel and to bear in mind its possible effects on policy, but the main factor is the policy itself rather than the hand which directed it.

81. L.Fischer, Men and Politics (London 1941), p.124.

Chapter 2: The Opening Move.

On April 20, 1931, Berthelot, General Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry, during the course of an interview in Paris with the Soviet Ambassador, Dovgalevsky, intimated that the French Government was ready to give the Soviet Union proof of its desire for peace and on its behalf proposed the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with conciliation procedure and a temporary trade agreement.¹ This French initiative, the outcome of several months' talks on this theme, was accepted by the Soviet Government in the person of Dovgalevsky on April 24.²

Since 1917 the Soviet Government had sought agreements with the European states in order that its security might be increased. France, the most steadfast Soviet opponent, had so far resisted all such approaches. The year 1931 which had witnessed a reversal of this attitude marked a fundamental stage in Soviet foreign policy. The next two years were to bring a flood of pacts inspired by Moscow which paved the way for the new Soviet role of the middle thirties.

All was not dazzling success for Russia, however; these new victories were made possible only by the dark changes now in motion in the world and especially in Germany, which inspired fear in the west and Russia alike. The very contradictions between the capitalist states which Russia exploited and relied upon to gain acceptance in the international system were the insurmountable obstacles to its policy of acquiring reliable non-aggression pacts

1. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, April 20, 1931. DVP Vol. 14 (Moscow 1968), p.252. Philippe Berthelot was the powerful permanent senior official in the Quai d'Orsay. For a short biographical essay see, R.D.Challener, "The French Foreign Office: The Era of Philippe Berthelot" in Craig and Gilbert, The Diplomats, pps.65-85.
2. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, April 22, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p.266. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, April 25, 1931. Ibid., p.282.

with all its neighbours. No matter how much the Soviet Union might try, it could not utilise the opportunity afforded by France and Poland's new policy towards it without worsening its relations with Germany, since it was the very contradiction between the two capitalist groups which now was making Russia an important factor in the European balance of power. Russia must ultimately choose one bloc, for to remain on good terms with both was impossible. This was only partially appreciated in Moscow and Soviet policy for the next few years attempted to promote its new-found relations whilst retaining its German partnership. This attempt was doomed in a Europe which was experiencing a strengthening rather than a weakening of the old Versailles divisions. The opening of negotiations between France and the Soviet Union in Spring, 1931, to all appearances marked a surprising change in their mutual relations which had previously been of a most hostile and uncompromising nature. To the security-conscious Soviet leaders, pondering on the possibilities of a renewed intervention against their state, one country stood above all others as the major threat; this country was France.

1. The Anti-Soviet Bloc.

The reasons for the specially strong Soviet fear of France above any other capitalist states were many-fold; perhaps the major one was the position which France inherited on the conclusion of war in 1918. The defeat of Germany, the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the Tsarist Empire and the withdrawal, by varying degrees, of the United States and Britain from European affairs, left France as the major power on the continent.

The continual search for security which plagued the Government in Paris, led France to insist that harsh terms be imposed on Weimar Germany, thus ensuring its open hostility and doubting the long-term effect of even this stringent policy, ^{it} sought to erect a system of alliances with the states of central and eastern Europe. This French alliance system was feared not only by Germany. Its members were as hostile towards the new Bolshevik state in the east as towards defeated Germany. France was suspected of striving for

hegemony in Europe, a policy which could only alarm the weak, outcast Russian state, the dearth of sympathy for which the French Government had amply demonstrated, along with the other great powers, in its interventionary attempt of 1918-1919 to neutralise the communist menace. The Soviet leaders feared France as the strongest and most active of the European states as they feared Japan in the east. Super-imposed on this foundation were economic and ideological factors which further aggravated Franco-Soviet relations at the beginning of the 1930's. In his political report to the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party on June 27, 1930, Stalin characterised France as "the most aggressive and militarist of all the aggressive and militarist countries in the world."³.

The fact that France was allied with Poland and Rumania was, perhaps, the most disconcerting element for the Kremlin leadership. Both these east European states were violently anti-Soviet, Poland because of ideological and historical, Rumania because of ideological and territorial reasons - Bessarabia had been seized by Rumania and incorporated into its territory, a fact which the Soviet Government refused to recognise. Soviet concern about these border states was frequently expressed. *Izvestia*, on May 1, 1930, writing of them said:

The major imperialist powers consider these states as a future vanguard and a staging area for anti-Soviet intervention... Fascist Poland is undoubtedly the most important point for the application of forces acting against the USSR.⁴

On February 9, 1931, an article appeared in *Izvestia* entitled "Polish Sejm Votes for war"⁵ and two days later an editorial stated that the Polish militarists continued to put questions of war before all other policies.⁶ Litvinov expressed the opinion to the British Ambassador in Moscow in March that an attempt was being engineered in Europe to mobilise some form of attack on the USSR and that in Poland, especially, there was a large body of

3. J.V. Stalin, Works Vol.12 (Moscow 1955), p.263.

4. Izvestia, May 1, 1930.

5. Ibid., February 9, 1931.

6. Ibid., February 11, 1931.

feeling anxious to seize any opportunity of attacking his country.⁷ Spring and summer of 1930 saw such a level of tension in Soviet-Polish relations and the rumours of impending war became so wide-spread that Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Minister, was forced to deny them officially.⁸

Soviet apprehension was not limited to Poland. For example, an article in International Press Correspondence in early 1931 claimed that "a glance at the manoeuvres of Rumanian foreign policy during the past year and at the military measures during the same period" sufficed to prove that the Rumanian Government had taken part in preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union in the summer of 1930.⁹ Soviet relations with Finland existed on a far from amicable level and attacks on anti-Soviet provocations frequently appeared on the pages of the Russian press.¹⁰ The conclusion of a Latvian-Lithuanian trade pact stimulated an Izvestia editorial on Soviet fears of a Baltic bloc, an objective for which Poland had been striving for more than ten years in order to create a single anti-Soviet front from the Baltic to the Black seas.¹¹

Whilst these east European states were themselves feared by the Soviet Union, this fear was multiplied by the belief that the major imperialist states and especially France lay behind their efforts. Paris was suspected of being the organising centre for anti-Soviet agitation in Poland and Rumania and the financial power behind the strengthening of their armed forces. Voroshilov, speaking at the Sixteenth Congress of the CPSU on the feverish rate of armament in Poland and Rumania, mentioned their "historical mission" assigned by world imperialism, to act as "a military vanguard of the bourgeois

7. The British Ambassador in Moscow, Sir E. Ovey, to the British Foreign Secretary, A. Henderson, March 10, 1930. Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Second Series, Vol. 7. Edited by E. L. Woodward and R. Butler (London 1958), p. 115. (Hereafter, DBFP).

8. B. B. Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, 1932-1939 (New York 1963), p. 8.

9. M. Kahana, "Rumania's role in the Preparation of Intervention", International Press Correspondence Vol. 11, N. 2, January 15, 1931, p. 38.

10. For example, Izvestia, January 2, 1931; April 20, 1931.

11. Ibid., January 2, 1931.

world against the USSR."¹² Kaganovich, member of the Politburo, at the December Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission talked of the visits of French generals to Poland and Rumania, visits which could only have as their raison d'etre, anti-Soviet plans.¹³ A long Izvestia article in March 1930 discussed Polish preparations for war and the close links between this activity and world imperialism:

All the measures of the internal, feverish work of the Polish militarists, which express the interests of the bourgeoisie and its highest patrons, the imperialists, with whom Poland is linked by a series of military conventions and treaties, are closely linked with external policy, the aim of which is the grouping together of a strong military bloc of all the western contiguous states under the leadership of Poland...Poland lives and works in the interests of world imperialism.¹⁴

Hostility engendered by alliances was not confined to the French security system. The relatively close and mutually beneficial Soviet-German collaboration could not but alarm the Paris Government which saw any increase in German strength or influence as a potential threat to the post-Versailles status quo. Similarly, Poland, wedged between a revengful Germany and Russia, viewed the rapprochement of these two states with apprehension; there was an obvious need for Poland to maintain good relations with one of these neighbours, yet factors beyond the realm of the "balance of power" concept prevented, at the initiation of the thirties era, any such policy formulation by the Government in Warsaw.

If French hegemonical drives had been a constant factor in post World War One international relations, the opening years of the 1930's witnessed even stronger moves in this direction with the consequent results for Franco-Soviet relations. A new impetus to Soviet fears was provided by the French

12. X.J.Eudin and R.M. Slusser, Soviet Foreign Policy 1928-1934 Vol.1 (Pennsylvania 1966), p. 285. K.E.Voroshilov, a leading supporter of Stalin. Military leader in civil war, member of the Central Committee, 1921; Commissar for ~~Defence~~ ^{the Army and Navy}, 1925; member of Politburo from 1926; Commissar for Defence, 1934; first Marshal of the Soviet Union, 1935; Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and Chairman of the Committee of Defence, 1940; Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, 1946.

13. "The Results of the Joint December Plenum of the CC and CCC of the CPSU; Report of Comrade Kaganovich", Impreccor Vol.11 N.1, January 8, 1931, p.2.

14. Izvestia, March 11, 1930.

Foreign Minister's project for a Pan-European Union, first broached on September 5, 1929, at the tenth session of the League of Nations Assembly and inspired, at least in part, by a need to salvage Europe's predominant role in world affairs, a role which was being jeopardised, it was thought, by the grave situation created by the economic crisis just appearing on the horizon. Briand told the League:

I think that among peoples constituting geographical groups, like the peoples of Europe, there should be some kind of Federal bond; it should be possible for them to get in touch at any time, to confer about their interests, to agree on joint resolutions and to establish among themselves a band of solidarity which will enable them, if need be, to meet any grave emergency that may arise. That is the link I want to forge.¹⁵

The favourable response to this speech encouraged Briand to invite representatives of the other 26 European members of the League of Nations to discuss his project as a result of which all the representatives agreed to recommend a study of the project to their governments. It was proposed that the Union be founded on the principle of absolute sovereignty and be subordinated to the League of Nations. On this account, Briand proposed that membership be confined to those European states which were League members, thus excluding the Soviet Union and Turkey, neither of them in the French camp and furthermore, each having good relations with a state, Germany in the case of the Soviet Union, Italy in the case of Turkey, which France considered as an enemy.

This inevitably raised doubts in certain states and especially in the Soviet Union as to the genuine French motives behind Briand's plans. Moscow was always suspicious of international movements which sought to exclude its participation; when the instigator of the scheme was a French statesman, this suspicion was further magnified. The belief that any capitalist collaboration inevitably was directed ultimately against the Soviet Union pre-occupied the Russian decision-makers throughout the inter-war period, often based on a misconception of Russia's importance as seen through western eyes. In fact,

15. Survey of International Affairs, 1930, A.J. Toynbee (Ed.) (London 1931), p.136.

the main problem facing the USSR was rather a western under-estimation of the former's strength and importance in international society.

Litvinov, in a briefing letter to his ambassadors on June 7, 1930 presented the Soviet reaction to the Pan-Europe Plan. The Soviet diplomatic representatives were to indicate the absolutely negative Soviet reaction to it, since it was mainly motivated by a French desire to increase its influence on the policy of European countries and even to establish its hegemony: "it is possible that the Briand Plan has as its basis the aim of a struggle against the USSR." Litvinov did add the proviso, however, that "if, unexpectedly, Briand decided to send an invitation to our Union, then it would not be difficult for us to give an answer in compliance with this invitation."¹⁶. The Soviets did not in principle refuse to participate.

The question of the status of European non-League members was raised in January 1931 at the second session of the Commission of Inquiry for a European Union, which had been constituted in September 1930 by the League Assembly to look into the French idea. The Soviet case for participation was sponsored by Germany and Italy, both with good cause to support any measure which would weaken the French position and also enhance their relations with the USSR. In June 1930, the German Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remarked to the British Ambassador in Berlin that the exclusion of Russia and Turkey from Briand's memorandum on the European Union seemed rather to vitiate his proposals for an organisation to deal with European affairs.¹⁷ In July, the same German official told journalists that "a European Union without Russia is inconceivable."¹⁸ On January 19, despite the resistance of France and its allies, it was agreed that the Soviet Union, as well as Turkey and Iceland,

16. Letter from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet representatives in Austria, Britain, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Estonia, June 7, 1930. DVP Vol.13 (Moscow 1967), pps. 316-317.

17. Sir H. Rumbold, British Ambassador in Germany, to A. Henderson, British Foreign Minister, June 13, 1930. Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Second Series, Vol.1, Ed. E.L. Woodward and R. Butler (London 1946), p. 334.

18. Quoted in A.E. Joffe, Vneshnyaya politika sovetakogo souza 1928-1932 (Moscow 1968), p. 189.

also non-League members, should be invited to attend the Commission, but only in its study of the world economic crisis as it affected the European countries.¹⁹ This decision was based on a desire to prevent the establishment of a new international organisation controlled by France and its allies.²⁰

The Soviet reaction to this invitation can be judged from a conversation between Krestinsky, the Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the Italian Ambassador in the USSR, on January 26, 1931. Krestinsky said that the result was not a victory for the supporters of a Soviet unconditional invitation to the Pan-European Conference; it was more a semi-victory for Italy and Germany. Soviet enlistment only for the study of the economic situation naturally, could not be seen as an unconditional invitation and consequently was not a victory for the supporters of such a participation.²¹ Nevertheless, in early February Litvinov replied in the affirmative to the League invitation, though his criticisms of the Union's aims and the difficulties encountered in securing Soviet participation left no doubt as to Moscow's far-from enthusiastic response.²²

This eventual invitation in no way erased the memory of the initial French desire to block Soviet entry. The Russian press conducted a barrage against the scheme, seeing in it a further weapon in the imperialists' ~~armory~~ armoury held in readiness for an anti-Soviet intervention. In February 1931, *Izvestiia* carried the headline, "The Paris Conference is occupied not with economics but with politics - the preparation of a blockade of the USSR."²³ In a March editorial the same paper commented:

19. K.W.Davis, The Soviets at Geneva (Geneva 1934), p.227.

20. Survey of International Affairs, 1931, Ed.A.J.Toynbee (London 1932), p.35.

21. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky and the Italian Ambassador in the USSR, Attolico, January 26, 1931. DVP Vol.14, p.43. N.I.Krestinsky, Soviet Ambassador in Germany, 1921-1930; First Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, 1930-1937; executed, March 1938.

22. The Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the League of Nations, February 6, 1931. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol.2, pps. 470-472.

23. Izvestiia, February 25, 1931.

From the beginning it was clear that Briand in proposing a Pan Europe, not only did not propose to invite the Soviet Union to participate in the new international organisation, but on the contrary, looked on the Pan-European Union as a preliminary step towards the creation of an anti-Soviet bloc.²⁴

Molotov, in his report to the Sixth Soviet Congress on March 8, 1931, went so far as to describe the European committee as the biggest factor in the creation of an anti-Soviet front: "the stubborn opposition of Briand and the representatives of the states dependent on France to the invitation of the USSR...showed that the leaders of the European committee had the definite desire to turn this organisation into the headquarters for the preparation of an anti-Soviet attack."²⁵

Two Soviet authors have described the Soviet struggle against the creation of the "so-called" Pan European Union, "a bloc of imperialist powers directed against the USSR," as one of the most important spheres of Soviet foreign policy activity during the world economic crisis.²⁶ Only the imperialist contradictions between the major capitalist powers gave Soviet diplomacy the possibility of taking part in the commission and prevented its use in anti-Soviet aims.²⁷

If the anti-Soviet hand of French imperialism was at least suspected in the case of the Pan Europe scheme, in the economic sphere the events of 1930 presented the Soviet leadership with clear evidence of the hostility evinced in France towards the first socialist state. From the summer of 1930 a campaign was initiated in the west against the dumping of Soviet goods on western markets at a price below the cost of production. It was claimed that this was a concerted effort by the Russians to undermine the capitalist economies already suffering under the strain of the world crisis. This crisis reached France later than most other industrialised countries and made it less

24. Izvestia, March 29, 1931.

25. Report of the Soviet Government to the Sixth Congress of Soviets, March 8, 1931. DVP Vol.14, p.146.

26. M.E. Airovetyan and G.A. Deborin, Etapi vneshney politiki SSSR (Moscow 1961), p. 183.

27. A.N. Krasilnikov, Politika Anglii v otnoshenii SSSR 1929-1932 (Moscow 1959), p.24.

dependent on Soviet orders and therefore better situated to give vent to the growing anti-Soviet feeling occasioned by the Soviet export policy.²⁸ On October 3, 1930, the French Government imposed a series of restrictions on Soviet exports on the ground that they were being dumped on the market, so undermining French home industries, an initiative which was copied by a number of other countries.²⁹ Although Soviet trade with France was not of primary importance,³⁰ the need to expand economic intercourse with the capitalist countries in view of the enormous requirements of the First Five-Year Plan as well as the underlying perceived anti-Soviet nature of the French act, generated a strong response from Moscow. On October 14, Dovgalevsky handed a memorandum to Berthelot protesting against the "dumping" decree:

The Soviet Government considers the decree of October 3 an act... which has created a general tension in the economic and political relations between both countries...(T)he measure taken by the French Government is motivated neither by the character of the economic exchange between France and the USSR nor by the conditions in which this exchange takes place.

The memoraddum presented evidence to show that the decree was not adopted on economic grounds and classified it as an unfriendly act. The Soviet Government desired to achieve a relaxation of tension in its relations with France, a result which could only be obtained by the abrogation of the decree and the conclusion of a trade agreement.³¹

The Soviet response was not confined to a diplomatic protest, however; on October 20 a Soviet counter measure was adopted relating to economic relations with countries which had imposed a special restrictive regime on trade with USSR. Orders and purchases in such countries were to be ended completely or at least reduced to a minimum, their shipping was not to be used and

28. See, for example, the anti-Soviet nature of an article by T.Aubert, "L'URSS et la crise mondiale," Revue des Deux Mondes, February 15, 1932, pps. 753-769.

29. Belgium, Rumania, Hungary, Luxembourg, Spain and Canada. Poland imposed a rail tariff on Soviet goods passing through Polish territory.

30. In 1928-1929 Soviet exports to France constituted only 5% of the total Soviet exports and 4.6% in 1930.

31. Memorandum from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the General Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry, Berthelot, October 14, 1930. DVP Vol.13, pps. 566-569.

restrictions were to be placed on the transit of goods to or from those countries.³² Rozengolts, the Soviet Vice Commissar for Trade, explained the motive behind this retaliation:

The Soviet Government cannot remain a passive spectator of the anti-Soviet actions with which this campaign (against Soviet exports) is accompanied...The French Government attempted to justify its decree by an utterly unfounded reference to reciprocity. The monopoly of foreign trade existing in the Soviet Union and the Soviet licence regulations apply equally to all countries and we should have no ground for complaint if the French Government had issued similar regulations for all countries. We cannot, however, be reconciled with the passing of regulations applied exclusively to the USSR and it was against this that our protest was directed.³³

The Russians saw this French act not as an isolated economic response to the difficult conditions of the world crisis, but as an integral part of the French anti-Soviet provocations. Molotov, in his report to the Central Executive Committee on January 4, 1931, speaking of the anti-dumping campaign said:

Clearly it is no accident that up to the present the group of states which have taken special steps against Soviet exports by and large coincide with the French military-political bloc.

It was but "one preparatory step for further and more aggressive action against the USSR."³⁴ Two months later the same speaker said that the only purpose behind this aggressive French policy was the organisation of an economic blockade of the USSR.³⁵ Izvestiia, commenting on a French senator's proposal for a French monopoly to handle foreign trade with the USSR, said this "would only be new proof of the non-desire of the leaders of French foreign policy to bring Franco-Soviet relations to a normal position."³⁶

This Russian response was motivated by the genuine fear of a capitalist economic blockade which might have disastrous effects on the Soviet economy. It did not content itself with attacks on these French moves, however, but endeavoured to reach an economic understanding with that country, an approach

32. Decree of the Council of Commissars, October 20, 1930. DVP Vol.13, pps. 584-585.

33. Interview by the Deputy Commissar for Trade, Rozengolts, October 22, 1930. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol.2, p. 461.

34. Ibid., p.467.

35. Report of the Soviet Government to the Sixth Congress of Soviets, March 8, 1931. DVP Vol.14, p.145.

36. Izvestiia, April 25, 1931.

which will be followed below. The immediate result of this anti-dumping campaign, however, together with the widespread western accusations of the use of forced labour in the Soviet Union, was to superimpose on the long-standing debt problem a new source of friction between Paris and Moscow.

Two further sources of conflict between these states must be mentioned briefly, neither of them new-comers to the international arena. French complaints about Soviet subversive propaganda were echoed by Russian protests at the activities of white guardists on French soil.³⁷ Mutual recriminations were exchanged on the hostile attitudes adopted by the press of each state. Between Poland and the USSR such recriminations and accusations were even greater. In November, 1930, a Soviet diplomat made one of many similar complaints about white emigre activity in Poland.³⁸ The Polansky trial in April, 1931, concerning an attempt by a Pole to murder a Soviet diplomat, created a violent response in the Soviet press. *Izvestia* labelled the attempt as one undertaken to aggravate Soviet-Polish relations and accused the Polish press of using the trial for anti-Soviet aims.³⁹ A *Pravda* editorial blamed the affair on the anti-Soviet atmosphere existing in Poland which was a result of the aggressive Polish foreign policy in relation to the USSR. Poland was the most faithful ally of French imperialism and considered itself the vanguard of world imperialism against the USSR. The Polansky business was "a link in the preparation of military intervention against the USSR."⁴⁰ Two days later, the paper in a long article spoke of the serious and real threat of an anti-Soviet intervention, "in the first place by French imperialism, with its faithful ally, Polish fascism."⁴¹

Whilst the use of newspaper articles for internal purposes in the USSR

37. For example, the declaration of the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the General Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry, Berthelot, September 15, 1930. *DVP Vol. 13*, p. 509.

38. Note of a conversation between the Councillor of the Soviet Embassy in Poland, Brovkovich and the Deputy Head of the Eastern Department of the Polish Foreign Ministry, Rachinsky, November 6, 1930. *Ibid.*, p. 623.

39. *Izvestia*, April 10, 1931.

40. *Pravda*, April 10, 1931.

41. *Ibid.*, April 12, 1931.

and their consequent tendency to exaggerate external dangers to consolidate the regime and brand as traitors any opposition groups should not be overlooked, nevertheless they provide a clear indication of the state of relations between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Poland and France on the other. No doubt other positive factors could surmount this ideological distrust but in their absence this press war did serve further to multiply distrust and breed enmity.

The other sphere of Franco-Soviet dispute was located at Geneva in the preparatory commission on disarmament. The Soviet view that "immediate total disarmament is the best guarantee of security for all peoples,"⁴² clashed with the French desire for an effective security system before disarmament could be undertaken. The Russians were undoubtedly suspicious of the position adopted by France and its allies:

No land in sight! The Soviet Union is surrounded by a stormy sea of capitalist anarchy. The waves of hatred for the Soviet state are rising higher...We, in Geneva, are struggling for peace...(but) the growing activity of the interventionists and their accomplices, reveal more clearly every day the predatory plans of the imperialists directed against the USSR...⁴³.

In 1930-1931, disarmament was just one more issue on which France and its supporters adopted a position diametrically opposed to that of the USSR.

2. Diplomatic Moves.

Despite this extremely strained atmosphere which existed between France and the Soviet Union, diplomacy continued to function between them in an endeavour to clear the air. The Soviet Union, in its isolated position, had no intention of idly watching the growth of French hostility without making an attempt to minimise its consequences. The breathing space had to be expanded:

42. Litvinov speaking to the Preparatory Commission in November, 1927.

DVP Vol. 10, p. 509.

43. Izvestia, November 19, 1930.

The later the imperialist front attacks the Soviet Union, the longer we can peacefully build our Soviet economy, the longer the communist parties of the west will be able to close the ranks of the working class, the longer the national revolutionary movement will develop in the oriental states and the inevitable attack against the Soviet state on the part of the capitalist encirclement will take place in better conditions for international socialism.⁴⁴

The old ideas for a non-aggression pact were never placed at the very back of the Kremlin attic and together with plans for the improvement of trade relations, they once more appeared in the weaponry of the Soviet Embassy in Paris and also in that of France's ally Poland.⁴⁵ Side by side with the acrimonious diplomatic and press exchanges concerning dumping, forced labour, Pan Europe etc., cautious diplomatic skirmishing began which had as its outcome the agreement reached on April 24, 1931, to commence negotiations for a Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact and temporary trade agreement.

Since 1927 and early 1928 the idea of a non-aggression pact between these two countries had faded into the background but never been formally abandoned, at least on the Soviet side. The problem of a settlement on loans and debts and the possibility of a trade treaty were at a similar stage of development. Throughout 1930 conversations on the theme of an economic settlement were held between Soviet and French diplomats until finally agreement was reached to negotiate.

The Russians considered that the French were to blame for the impasse in trade relations between the two states. They were anxious to consolidate their economic relations with the west whereas France, in early 1930, was still not in the iron grip of the world economic crisis and therefore under less economic pressure to expand trade. Litvinov expressed Soviet exasperation at the French tactics on February 26, 1930, in conversation with Herbette, the French Ambassador in Moscow:

I noted that relations between governments cannot be confined to one-sided proposals and that the proposals are usually made in the

44. Izvestia, January 22, 1929.

45. Soviet-Polish diplomatic exchanges will be examined in a later chapter.

process of negotiations which, however, the French Government in fact have avoided. When negotiations were conducted...(in 1937) we, of course, made the proposals to which, however, until now we have received no answer.⁴⁶

The tangible answer to this Soviet lament was provided by France in the form of an increased agitation in some circles against Soviet dumping, resulting in the decree of October 3. Briand, however, was much more conciliatory in his assessment of the French position vis-a-vis the USSR in a statement meant for the personal attention of Litvinov given to Dovgalevsky on July 2. Briand, with satisfaction, stated the low tide of hostile will towards the USSR in eminent French political and business circles. He himself was convinced of the necessity for a change to a practical policy in relation to the USSR. The time for a rapid elimination of the obstacles in the path of Franco-Soviet economic relations had arrived. Dovgalevsky was to tell Litvinov that the latter's fears concerning Briand's aggressive intentions towards the Soviet Union were absolutely unfounded. He specifically added that the idea of a European federation was not in the slightest degree directed against the USSR.⁴⁷

A less rosy picture of economic relations was painted for Litvinov several weeks later by Herbette. Whilst the Ambassador believed that the French were very willing to buy Soviet raw materials, he admitted that dissatisfaction existed at the discrepancy between Soviet exports to and imports from France. He also doused Soviet hopes regarding a trade treaty, maintaining that it could not be considered without the sanction of parliament, a doubtful measure prior to the regulation of loans, the ageing bogey of France-Soviet economic relations.⁴⁸

The increasing anti-Soviet mood in France and its paranoid reception in

46. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the French Ambassador in the USSR, Herbette, February 26, 1930. DVP Vol.13, p.111.

47. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, July 2, 1930. Ibid., p. 428. 373.

48. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the French Ambassador in the USSR, Herbette, July 26, 1930. Ibid., p.428.

the Soviet Union could do little to enhance the chances of success for these tentative diplomatic probes. In France a legal case concerning the claims of a Russian emigre against "Dobroflot" was disrupting the operations of the Soviet foreign trade organisations in France and creating concern in Moscow.⁴⁹ Stomonyakov, a member of the collegium of the Narkomindel told the French Ambassador in early August that in the present atmosphere "it is impossible to conduct any kind of normal trade relations." The French Government must give the Soviet trade agency the opportunity to work and expand trade between the two countries or else answer for the consequences. Despite this strong protest, the Soviet Government did not threaten to terminate trade operations in France; economic links were too valuable. Herbette, in reply, adopting a conciliatory attitude, said that the French Government was interested in the development of trade relations with the USSR and was prepared to do everything possible in order to protect and facilitate their further development.⁵⁰

Despite this assurance, on October 3, the French Government introduced the anti-dumping decree aimed at Soviet exports, plunging economic relations between the two countries to an even lower level. Perhaps by an unfortunate coincidence, a Soviet expression of the desirability of the relaxation in tension between the states had been made the day previous to the French promulgation,⁵¹ a fact which the Russians chose to interpret as the French answer to their appeal. On October 5, the French Government, through Herbette, officially answered this appeal, considering it interesting and worthy of

49. For a brief account see DVP Vol.13, pps. 789-790, note 41.

50. Note of a conversation between a member of the collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov and the French Ambassador in the USSR, Herbette, August 8, 1930. Ibid., pps.450-451. B.S.Stomonyakov, from 1926 collegium member, NKD; Head of the Dept. of Central and East European Countries, NKD; Soviet Second Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, 1934-1938.

51. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the French Ambassador in the USSR, Herbette, October 2, 1930. Ibid., p.527. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, December 3, 1930. Ibid., pps.696-697. The French Government maintained that it was coincidence.

attention but adding that this desire could not be fulfilled before the liquidation of the existing economic tension created by the sale of Soviet exports in France at dumping prices which was creating pressure on the French Government from the side of French industrialists.^{52.}

The effect of this decree, together with the Soviet retaliatory measure of October 20, on Franco-Soviet relations has already been examined. French diplomacy attempted to persuade the Russians that the decree should not hinder the development of trade between the two states but with little success. In fact the conciliatory line of French diplomacy in contrast with the harsh reality of the decree led Krestinsky to think it "highly probable that, especially on the eve of the opening of the Geneva debates on disarmament, the Quai d'Orsay is interested in some mollification (smyagchenie) of mutual relations with us and hopes thereby to avert an anti-French clash with our delegation at Geneva."^{53.}

The cause of the discrepancy between certain diplomatic statements by the French Foreign Ministry and the actions taken by the French Government and press in relation to the USSR may well lie in the conflict of interests within France. The Soviet Union in communications with foreign governments generally spoke with one voice (excepting the Soviet-controlled Comintern revolutionary statements). The French side was not so monolithic. Political and industrial circles were divided as to the gains and losses from trade with communist Russia and this was reflected in French policy.

A move forward was made on November 22 when Berthelot informed the Soviet Government that "the French Government...is ready to enter into negotiations with the Soviet Government with the aim of finding a practical means of achieving a satisfactory equilibrium in the trade between both countries."^{54.}

52. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dvoglevsky, October 5, 1930. DVP Vol.13, p.545.

53. Letter from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dvoglevsky, November 6, 1930. Ibid., p.620.

54. Memorandum from the French Government, November 22, 1930. Ibid., p.570.

He explained, however, that the abrogation of the Soviet counter-measure could not result in the abrogation of the French decree in view of the legal status and validity of the latter. He added that a proposal to abrogate the Soviet decree could not be seen as a measure which would call forth trade negotiations.⁵⁵ Such was the state of economic relations at the close of 1930. After much diplomatic activity, the question of future negotiations was finally being raised, if not yet finalised; the French decree still remained a big obstacle to any further progress.

Economic relations between the two countries had a close bearing on the more purely political theme of a non-aggression pact. The slow progress being made in economic relations was inauspicious for any startling advance in the potentially more delicate realm of politics. Nevertheless, the question of such a pact did not lie dormant during 1930. A recent Soviet book states that on March 10, Litvinov made it clear to the French Ambassador in Moscow that the Soviet Union was prepared to sign a pact with France but this sounding produced no results.⁵⁶ Dovgalevsky, in a conversation with Berthelot in April, 1931, mentioned that Litvinov had proposed a non-aggression pact to the French Ambassador at the beginning of October 1930.⁵⁷

The first document in the recently published Soviet collection which refers directly to such a pact is dated December 3, 1930, and is a telegram from Dovgalevsky to the Narkomindel concerning a conversation held with Berthelot. In reply to Litvinov's statement of December 1 in which he said that "the Soviet Government will welcome any practical proposals of the French Government which could lead to the establishment of really normal and correct relations,"⁵⁸ Berthelot after assuring the Soviet Ambassador of his

55. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, November 25, 1930. DVP, Vol. 13, pps. 681-682.

56. History of Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1945, Ed. B. Ponomarev, A. Gromyko, V. Khvostov (Moscow 1969), p. 287. Quotes USSR Foreign Policy Archives.

57. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, April 21, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 255.

58. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, December 1, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, p. 692.

belief that the French Government sincerely sought to establish normal and calm relations between the two countries, raised the issue of a non-aggression pact:

He (Berthelot) again repeated his past statement in relation to a pact, emphasising that a non-aggression pact without conciliation procedure has no significance for it is completely covered by the Kellogg Pact. 59.

The Kellogg Pact, of which both France and the USSR were signatories, required states to renounce war as a means of policy. In this respect it could be likened to a non-aggression pact, yet for the USSR, although a party to it, the pact was little more than a piece of paper. The Russians had never considered this somewhat vague, multilateral agreement an effective substitute for the bilateral non-aggression pact. In his report to the Central Executive Committee on December 10, 1928, Litvinov emphasised this point:

Our Government regarded (the Kellogg Pact) critically, noting its inadequacy and limitations. The principle of renouncing war was included in the drafts for a non-aggression pact which we proposed to a number of states. But our proposals were of wider scope, including questions of non-aggression, and left no room for equivocation. The pacts we proposed also included the undertaking to remain neutral and not to take part in any hostile association or alliance...Nevertheless, considering that the states signing the Kellogg Pact undertake certain moral obligations regarding non-aggression, and that the pact has a certain though limited significance, our Government did not hesitate to adhere to it. 60.

In other words, the Russians did not share the French view that a non-aggression pact would be nothing more than a second Kellogg Pact without some form of conciliation procedure.

On the actual question of conciliation procedure, the Russians had no strong objections; only arbitration was opposed on the grounds that a "neutral" chairman could only be an ^{imaginary} ~~imaginary~~ figure who in fact would be either socialist or capitalist and thus biased against either the capitalist state or the Soviet Union. The Russian Government was not in fact an enthusiastic supporter of conciliation procedure but was prepared to accept it as "a sort of compensation for the conclusion of a pact!"⁶¹. Thus if France was prepared to accept

59. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD December 3, 1930. DVP Vol.13, p.697.

60. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol.2, pps. 345-346.

61. Letter from a Member of the Collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Norway, Kollontai, August 22, 1930. DVP Vol.13, p.463.

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a non-aggression pact which also included a conciliation agreement, the Soviets were prepared to tolerate the latter so long as it brought them a non-aggression agreement.

As in economic relations, the political sphere of contact between France and the USSR by the end of 1930 seemed somewhat improved. The Italian Ambassador in Moscow confidentially told Litvinov on December 19 that his French counterpart was in a very peace-loving mood and was saying the very opposite to his comments only a week previously. The Italian formed the impression that he had received new instructions from Paris. In reply Litvinov confirmed that "the French Government has never been so friendly with us as now."⁶²

A few days later, Dovgalevsky expressed to Briand dissatisfaction at "the present unsatisfactory state" of Soviet-French relations and enumerated a number of complaints against hostile statements made by members of the French Government and against overt emigre activity within France. He ended by expressing a plea for better relations:

The need is for the establishment of really normal relations between both countries, to which the Soviet Government, for its part, has always unflinchingly sought and seeks, having made in this direction not a little effort, which up until now, unfortunately, has remained without success. In these efforts my Government always was and is led by the interests of the preservation of general peace, which in considerable degree depends on the state of Soviet-French relations.⁶³

The spring of 1931 witnessed a new setting on the course of Soviet-French relations. They did not improve overnight, of course, and Soviet comments, especially public declarations, remained hostile, yet not without holding out some hope for the future and expressing a Soviet readiness to respond to any French desire for better relations. Such were Molotov's comments on France in his report to the Sixth Soviet in March:

Unfortunately, it must be recognized that in the sphere of Soviet-French relations is concealed an extremely serious and grave danger to general peace. It is not for nothing that the French Government has persistently rejected our proposal for the conclusion of a pact

62. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Italian Ambassador in the USSR, Attolico, December 19, 1930, DVP Vol. 13, p. 744.

63. Statement by the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the French Foreign Minister, Briand, December 24, 1930, Ibid., p. 759.

of non-aggression, as if the elimination of the danger of a violation of peace were not in the French Government's field of interests. None the less, we are prepared to continue our efforts to strengthen our relations if we see that the French side is also sincerely prepared to improve Franco-Soviet relations.⁶⁴

The diplomatic intercourse was of a more restrained and hopeful tone.

On March 10, Litvinov held an important conversation with Herbette in Moscow, in which the question of economic and political negotiations was advanced a stage further towards their initiation. Litvinov began by enumerating the standard Soviet complaints - the anti-dumping decree, white guardist activity, etc. - and pointed out that these tactics had not and would not take France any nearer to either financial compensation for its creditors or political concessions:

If these facts are leading the French Government to a belief in the necessity of another policy towards the USSR, then we shall willingly go to meet it. The military alliances of France remain a hindrance, but apart from this I cannot see any objective causes which could prevent the establishment of normal and even close relations between France and ourselves.

Herbette enquired as to whether the Russians wanted to begin negotiations on political or economic questions to which Litvinov expressed indifference, adding that in relations with France economic questions acquired a definite political character. On the economic plane, Litvinov noted two questions on which the countries radically diverged: the French Government wanted to impose the principle of mutuality on the Soviet Union and on this principle justified its decree on the licensing of Soviet exports.⁶⁵ France also desired to apply the principle of net-balance to international trade between itself and the USSR,

Herbette then raised the issue of a conciliation commission; a non-aggression pact, an agreement on disarmament and a settlement of loans. He pointed to Briand's breadth of view and the possibility which this gave to deal with the whole perspective of relations. Whilst Litvinov did not oppose a wide agreement

⁶⁴ Report of the Soviet Government to the Sixth Congress of Soviets, March 8, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 155.

⁶⁵ The French Government claimed that Soviet external trade was controlled by the Central authorities and that the French therefore ought to be allowed to reciprocate by controlling French trade with the USSR. The Soviets argued that their control applied to all states whereas the French measure was directed only against them and was therefore anti-Soviet in nature.

he felt that it was unwise to seize such big and complex questions at the outset: "a conciliation commission on its own has no significance and is unacceptable for us; we have proposed a non-aggression pact and are always ready to sign it." He was not opposed in principle to a settlement of Franco-Soviet claims but thought that if this was introduced at the beginning it would delay the settlement of more urgent matters. Litvinov favoured negotiations for a trade pact as a beginning, Herbette correcting him, "a temporary trade agreement." The question of Moscow or Paris as the venue of the negotiations was briefly raised, Litvinov favouring Paris where the Soviet trade agency was fully-aware of the problems involved, Herbette suggesting Moscow.^{66.}

The scene was now almost set for the opening of negotiations and on April 20, Berthelot inquired of Dovgalevsky as to how the Soviet Government would receive the readiness of the French Government to conclude a non-aggression pact with conciliation procedure and simultaneously a trade pact on the principle of equality and specifically equilibrium of balance and the regulation of the question of claims. Dovgalevsky ignored the last issue and objected to the connection of a trade agreement with the non-aggression pact negotiations, Since they were not only heterogeneous but both parties must sincerely desire the rapid conclusion of the pact whilst the conclusion of a trade agreement might well be a lengthy business. He refused to be drawn into the question of balance between Soviet imports and exports vis-a-vis France. Berthelot, after some thought, then put the following proposal to the Soviet Government; to open negotiations for a non-aggression pact with conciliation procedure and for a temporary trade agreement which could be activated by a decreed order, that is without parliamentary confirmation. The simultaneous negotiation of both questions would not signify either the co-ordination of one to the other

66. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the French Ambassador in the USSR, Herbette, March 10, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 172-175. It is probable that Herbette favoured Moscow so that he could play a leading role in the negotiations and Litvinov opposed this on the same grounds; the Russians had a very low opinion of the French Ambassador.

or the necessity for a simultaneous signing. Negotiations for a trade treaty could be started after the conclusion of a temporary trade agreement.

Dogdalevsky expressed doubt as to the possibility of beginning trade negotiations before the abrogation of the October 3 decree where upon Berthelot suggested a fitting compromise might be arranged.^{67.}

This French proposal met most of the Soviet Government's requirements. Litvinov was in fact prepared to accept the annulment of the French decree at a definite stage of the negotiations. On April 22, Dovgalevsky was instructed to inform Berthelot of the Soviet Government's acceptance of the French proposal and promised to deliver a project of a pact and a trade agreement in the near future. The Russians considered it desirable that the French decree and the Soviet countermeasure be annulled after the beginning of the negotiations.^{68.} This answer was communicated to the French Government on April 24, 1931.

3. The New World Environment.

This was not, of course, the first time that France and the Soviet Union had assembled delegates to negotiate on the complex questions of a political and economic treaty, though previous attempts had only been of a cursory nature and success had eluded all efforts.^{69.} The Soviets, pursuing their quest for security, had always expressed the desire to conclude non-aggression treaties with all capitalist states and in this number France was naturally included, the more so given its hostility and its great potential threat to Russia. Previous efforts at agreement had ended in failure because of a French reluctance, founded on a general disinclination of powerful sectors of French society to deal with the communist state and on the particular problem of Soviet Russia's relations with France's east European allies.

To explain the opening of negotiations in 1931 by a constant Soviet

67. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, April 20, 1931. DVP Vol.14, pps. 252-253.

68. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dogdalevsky, April 22, 1931. Ibid., p.266.

69. See Chapter 1.

desire for agreement meeting a new and positive French response is to simplify, however. The world of 1930-1931 was not that of the 1920's and to understand this change it is necessary briefly to plunge into the realm of business and finance, for in 1929 the capitalist world was shaken at its very foundations by an economic crisis which spread its tentacles from Wall Street to the rest of the developed world, creating despair and exacerbating relations in the capitalist world.

Any lingering hopes for a new world following the end of the First World War were shattered by the slump which hit the industrial countries and threatened to destroy the very bases of their societies. During 1929-1932, industrial production was reduced by 16.5% in England, 31.9% in France, 46.7% in Germany, 32.4% in Japan and 46.2% in the USA. In 1933 international trade was only 56% of the 1929 figure. The consequent unemployment provided ample fuel for extremist views. This state of affairs was hardly an omen for increased international solidarity, much as it was needed. The sober Survey of International Affairs in its 1931 volume opens with the words:

The year 1931 was distinguished from previous years...by one outstanding feature. In 1931, men and women all over the world were seriously contemplating and frankly discussing the possibility that the western system of society might break down and cease to work.⁷⁰

1931 was not isolated in its black colour. The Survey describes the situation in 1931 as being substantially that of 1930 "and perhaps no single statement could go further than this towards accounting for the acuteness of the world crisis; for in 1930 the state of tension in Europe had been extreme."⁷¹

Although the economic crisis reached France later than most countries, by 1931 its effect was crushing. Furthermore, its consequences for that country did not end with its direct economic impingement.⁷² France's previously

70. Survey of International Affairs, 1931, p.1.

71. Ibid., p.28.

72. In conversation with a British diplomat Berthelot attempted to justify his country's negotiations with the USSR for a non-aggression pact by the irresistible pressure within France for an improvement in Franco-Soviet economic relations, those negotiations merely being a bait to entice the Russians into commercial negotiations. The British Charge d'Affaires in France, Campbell, to the Foreign Office, September 5, 1931. Public Record Office, Unpublished document Foreign Office file (Hereafter FO)N6077/431/38. Whilst France was anxious to improve commercial relations, it being the prime sufferer in the "economic war", political considerations were of great importance in the French decision.

mentioned almost pathological concern for security and the maintenance of the status quo in Europe made it unusually conscious of any increased tension on the Continent. The back-lash from the economic chaos in Europe and especially in Germany, France's major source of worry, seemed to undermine yet further its precarious hold on its existence. The withdrawal of allied troops from the Rhineland in July 1930 served to increase rather than decrease Franco-German tension, heightened by the Nazi and communist victories in the Reichstag elections of September. This new state of tension in Germany was transferred to the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament where the German stance became more rigid. The tendency for Germany and the USSR to vote together in a minority was now given a more disconcerting turn by Italy's adherence to this group, a state with whom France's relations were becoming increasingly strained. Paris viewed with alarm this new international combination at Geneva; at present it was confined to casting votes, but what of the future?

In this situation, France was that much more willing to seek an agreement with the Soviet Union, even if its results would be minimal. In pre-war days Russia had been France's ally against a resurgent German state. Ideological barriers had severed this link in the 1920's but as the international threat grew, ideology might have to adopt a subordinate role to that of security, especially since the world crisis was having a serious effect on the capability of France's major ally, Poland.

The news in March 1931 of the plan for a German-Austrian customs union provoked a strong reaction in France and was perhaps the last push needed by Paris to send it in the direction of the Soviet Union. Faith in the Locarno policy was deeply shaken and the concept of a rapprochement with Russia no longer was considered with indifference or hostility. A revanchist Germany must be countered, no matter how. It was feared that such a union was merely a first step towards the anchluss of Austria and Germany. Briand, the French Foreign Minister, was angered by this surprise move. On March 28, he answered it in the Senate:

59.

I repeat to you, in this affair the position of France is unequivocal : what has been done has been done contrary to treaties and conventions. We shall do everything possible to oppose the realisation of this enterprise.⁷³.

Dovgalevsky thought that the French decision to open negotiations was linked with the French presidential elections, taking place on May 13. Berthelot hinted to him at the personal interest of Briand, who intended to stand, in the opening of negotiations for a pact and a trade agreement before that date:

The other cause, needless to say, lies in the foreign policy situation; deadlock in the Franco-Italian naval negotiations...and the Austro-German customs union...Thus May is fraught with big events for France as well as Briand himself and in this, evidently, can be seen the cause of the haste with which Briand wants to turn the Russian card into a trump.⁷⁴.

If the Soviet Union was to gain concessions from Paris's hitherto rigid stance, now might be the opportunity.

The decision of April, 1931, concerning a non-aggression pact and trade agreement was not an outcome merely of this new French position, however, important as it was, for the USSR was also facing a new external and internal environment at the turn of the 1920's.

The world economic crisis, though appearing as a horrendous shock to the capitalist world, was not unexpected in Moscow. Stalin, presenting the political report of the Central Committee to the Fifteenth Party Congress in December 1927, discussed the imminent crisis of capitalism:

(T)his very stabilisation, the fact that production is growing, that trade is growing, that technical progress and production potentialities are increasing, whereas the world market, the limits of that market, and the spheres of influence of the individual imperialist groups, remain more or less stable - precisely this is giving rise to a most profound and acute crisis of world capitalism.⁷⁵.

Whether such a conclusion could be deduced from the contemporary situation in 1927 is doubtful; on the other hand, the communist did believe that such capitalist crises were inevitable and through his Marxist-Leninist spectacles would perceive factors pointing towards this conclusion which to

73. Quoted in W.E. Scott, Alliance Against Hitler (Durham N.C., 1962), p.9.

74. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, April 21, 1931. DVP Vol.14. p.256.

75. Stalin, Works Vol.10, p.280.

the western bourgeois economist, would not exist. Be this as it may, in autumn 1929, no one, Marxist nor conservative, could deny the reality of the capitalist economic crisis.

This crisis raised conflicting issues for the Russians. On the one hand, it confirmed the analysis made at the Fifteenth Party and the Sixth Comintern Congresses (1927 and 1928 respectively), that a world crisis was imminent. It justified the expectations of a revolutionary situation and amply displayed the weaknesses of their arch-rivals. Molotov, in his report to the Sixteenth Party Congress in July 1930, emphasised the correctness of the party line. He stressed the contradictions within the capitalist world, especially "the struggle for world hegemony between the USA and Great Britain."⁷⁶ Again, Kaganovich, at the Joint December 1930 Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission, said:

As a result of the crisis the antagonisms between the capitalist countries are growing; the contradictions between the capitalists and the workers are increasing as well as (sic) the antagonisms between the capitalist powers and their colonies. At the same time there is to be observed a growth of the revolutionary movement.⁷⁷

Capitalist stabilisation was breaking down, though "whether the present economic crisis will grow into a general political crisis depends on a number of contributing factors, and primarily on a subjective factor, the power and fighting readiness of the communist parties."⁷⁸

Yet the economic crisis which was besetting the capitalist world was by no means an unqualified blessing; "from the increased acuteness of international contradictions follows the increase^{in the menace} of a new imperialist war and an attack on the USSR."⁷⁹ As the world crisis increased tensions both within the capitalist societies and between them, there would develop a tendency to overcome the contradictions at the expense of the USSR, a common enemy against

76. V.M.Molotov, The Developing Crisis of World Capitalism (London 1930), Report to the Sixteenth Congress of the CPSU, p.17.

77. "The Results of the Joint December Plenum of the CC and CCC of the CPSU..." International Press Correspondence Vol.11. n.1, p.2.

78. Manuilsky to the Enlarged Presidium of the Comintern, February 1930; Eudin and Slusser, Soviet Foreign Policy Vol.1, p.242.

79. Molotov, The Developing Crisis of World Capitalism, p. 19.

which capitalism could unite to save itself. This posed a grave danger to the Russian state and one which could only be circumnavigated by the Leninist policy of exploiting these contradictions in order to secure advantageous results for the USSR. The negotiation of further non-aggression pacts, if the opportunity arose, would be one way of achieving this aim.

As with all Soviet statements of this period concerning threats from external and internal enemies, a certain discretion must be exercised, since the requirements of propaganda were not necessarily best served by the truth. It must always be remembered, however, that the environment as perceived by an observer is dependent not only on the objective situation, but on the individual concerned. Thus "truth" for the Soviet decision-maker may not correspond with "truth" for the western politician, diplomat or scholar. To say that the frequent war fears were absolutely genuine is to overstate, but the deliberate tendency to exaggerate should not be allowed to obscure the real fears which were held by the Soviet leadership at this time.

4. The Internal Soviet "Revolution".

This sense of isolation in an increasingly hostile world was made the more disconcerting for the Russians as a result of the immense internal political and economic changes which were set in motion at the end of the 1920's and which transformed the shape of Soviet society. The ending of the New Economic Policy and the adoption of the First Five Year Plan and mass-collectivisation were a consequence of the problem of industrial development, the desire to build up rapidly industry and especially heavy industry, in the framework of "socialism in one country," the desire of Stalin and many other party members to eliminate the individual peasant and solve the growing problem of grain procurement for the cities. Accompanying and related to these economic transformations was the consolidation of political power by Stalin with the virtual elimination of both the "left" and "right" oppositions.

The impact of these events on the Soviet Union cannot be under-estimated

yet their effect on Soviet foreign policy, though important, was perhaps not so great as is often claimed.⁸⁰ Foreign policy, it is true, is only one facet of the total policy of the state. For the communist, this is an axiom: "It is fundamentally wrong, un-Marxist and unscientific to single out foreign policy from policy in general, let alone counterpoise foreign policy to domestic policy."⁸¹ It must be noted, however, that foreign policy has to take into consideration factors outside the state and therefore to a large extent beyond the control of the state's decision-makers - especially the foreign policies of other states. This gives it a certain detachment from domestic policy since it can respond only partially to the pulls from within the state.

The early chaos created by collectivisation left the country ill-prepared to resist attack and required the Soviet state to avoid conflict at almost any price. Yet the extent to which this imbued Soviet foreign policy with a new element should not be exaggerated. A genuine desire for peace had always been an important objective of its foreign policy; for such a weak, isolated state there was no rational alternative. Thus to say that the new internal developments necessitated a great concentration on peace is true only in so far as peace did indeed remain a foremost objective. As Molotov stated in his concluding remarks to the Sixth Congress of Soviets, "our slogan remains, the struggle for the strengthening of universal peace and the strengthening of peaceful relations with other states."⁸²

The industrialisation plan had considerable effect on the outside world's perception of the USSR. To some observers, it provided a striking positive contrast to the foundering capitalist system, to others, including many eminent

80. For example, Max Beloff considers that the First Five Year Plan "provides the master-key to every aspect of Russian policy in the years immediately following 1929," M. Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia 1929-1941 Vol. 1, 1929-1936 (London 1947), p. 27.

81. Lenin, Soch. Vol. 30, (Moscow 1962), p. 93.

82. Izvestia, March 14, 1931. Emphasis added.

western politicians, it emphasised either the growing threat of the communist menace or the opposite view of the long-awaited collapse of the communist system.

Soviet industrialisation had a more important effect on its economic relations with the outside world. Large quantities of machinery and skilled labour were required which could only be obtained from the capitalist states. To pay for these in the absence of sizeable long-term loans, which the western business community was reluctant to provide, called for large Soviet exports.⁸³ Trade played a greater role in foreign policy in the late twenties and early thirties than before. There was also a reverse feedback between foreign and domestic policy in that the internal economic changes were probably, at least to a degree, introduced because of foreign policy considerations, the urgent need to forge a modern and effective military arm which could only be provided by a powerful and modern industrial base.

The fundamental impact of the internal developments was to direct Soviet attention inwards. Diplomacy still had the important task of maintaining security and promoting economic intercourse, but certainly the dynamic sphere of activity was now to be found within Russia itself. The tremendous steps being undertaken which involved the whole population, together with the dominant theory of "socialism in one country" had the effect of concentrating Soviet hopes for the future on its own achievements.

5. The Erosion of Rapallo.

To the Soviet observer the world economic crisis increased the threat from the capitalist world yet provided the opportunity for the USSR to utilise

⁸³. The situation aggravated for the USSR by the world economic crisis. The prices of Russia's main exports, timber, oil, furs, grain and other food products, fell heavily throughout the world. See the report by the British Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, Strang, to the foreign office, September 8, 1930. DBFP Vol.7, p. 161.

the inherent contradictions to advantage. The economic upheaval inside Russia increased its short-term vulnerability but provided an expanding market in which the growing surplus of goods in the capitalist states could be profitably sold. Alongside the capitalist propensity for adventurist attacks on the Soviet Union was their fear of defeat at that country's hands or by their own workers. The growing economic and political strength of the USSR would encourage a tendency towards peaceful relations between the two blocs. Stalin, in June 1930, said that the conflict between this aggressive tendency and peaceful tendency would determine the USSR's external situation.⁸⁴ It must do everything possible to encourage the latter. Litvinov, on his appointment to the post of People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, stated this view point:

We are building socialism in one country surrounded by capitalist countries, occupying 5/6 of the land surface of the globe. We cannot and will not ignore this fact and therefore aspire to the finding and putting into practice of the means of peaceful co-existence of both social systems.⁸⁵

Soviet Russia's efforts in this direction during the first ten years of its existence had been most successful in relations with Germany. The links forged at Rapallo had helped the new state to charter its course through the vicissitudes of international society despite numerous setbacks. Nevertheless, since Germany's signature of the Locarno treaty and its entry into the League of Nations the "special relationship" had gradually and unevenly experienced a deterioration, reaching a hitherto unknown nadir in early 1930.⁸⁶

The motivating force in this deterioration was mainly supplied by Germany. Its gradual incorporation into the international community reduced its need for Russia as a bargaining point in dealings with the west and could even become a handicap. The ratification of the Young Plan by the Reichstag in March 1930 and the allied evacuation of the Rhineland three months later marked a

⁸⁴. Stalin, Works Vol. 12, pps. 264-265.

⁸⁵. Press interview by Litvinov, July 26, 1930. DVP Vol. 13. p. 425.

⁸⁶. See Chapter 1.

new phase in Germany's relations with its conquerors of 1918. Kochan quotes
 an article from Der Borsenkurier which is indicative of the new mood within
 German
 influential circles:

We can now settle our relations with Russia independently of all tactical considerations. The time is past when there existed friendship for Russia, when Moscow was the only active post in the foreign policy of the Reich. The Rhineland is evacuated and there is no longer any need to fear complications in the West...Russia must ask herself if she is willing to do all that is necessary in order that our position in regard to her may remain the same as before.⁸⁷

Germany was no longer prepared to tolerate the eccentricities of Russia's external policy and especially Comintern interference in the affairs of the KPD. Such interference was the more unwelcome in that the internal position of the Weimar Republic was rapidly deteriorating. Extremism of both the right and left was mushrooming and the activities of the German Communist Party could no longer be indulgently overlooked. In February 1930, Krestinsky, the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, met Schubert, the German State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, who complained of Soviet interference in German affairs, referring to the activities of the KPD.⁸⁸ He asked for a Soviet assurance that such interference would end. The usual Russian denial of any connection between the Comintern and the Soviet Government enunciated by Krestinsky could have given little encouragement to the German Government, especially since it was under heavy pressure from within Germany to control Soviet-sponsored communist activity. The Russian Prime Minister remarked to the British Ambassador in Berlin that the Russian trade delegation in that city was directly concerned in stirring up trouble amongst the communists there. He stated that the German Foreign Office was always concerned "to shield or exculpate the Russians," but that if these subversive Russian activities continued, the Prussian Government "would take action against the Russians concerned in them without regard for the reactions that this might have on

87. L. Kochan, Russia and the Weimar Republic, p. 142.

88. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Krestinsky and the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry, ~~Schubert~~ Schubert, February 19, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, p.100.

Russo-German relations."⁸⁹ In March 1930 the German press was replete with complaints about Comintern activity in the Republic.

Vociferous anti-Soviet comment in the German press called forth repeated diplomatic complaints from the Russian side. In a telegram from Litvinov to Brodovsky, the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Berlin, sent on January 28, 1930, the latter was instructed "to emphasise the organised and systematic character of the (anti-Soviet) campaign in the press" and to tell the German Government that the Soviets "link this with the ending of the reparation question and with the new moves in German foreign policy." ⁹⁰

The Soviet Government was fully aware of the dangers for the old Rapallo course inherent in Germany's strengthened diplomatic position vis-a-vis the west and feared a further German turn in this direction.⁹¹ To counter this tendency and to improve economic relations which were important for both countries, especially in the period of the world crisis and the Five Year Plan, an attempt was made to settle the outstanding problems between them.⁹² At a meeting with Krestinsky in Berlin on March 6, 1930, Curtius, the German Foreign Minister, declared his desire not only to preserve but to expand and deepen the existing friendly relations between the USSR and Germany and for this purpose suggested diplomatic talks in Berlin and Moscow. He ended his talk by raising the issue of the Comintern and received the reply he presumably expected.⁹³ Litvinov sent Krestinsky an angry reply to these proposals which he characterised as "nothing more than red tape." The Deputy Commissar

89. The British Ambassador in Berlin, Rumbold, to the Foreign Secretary, Henderson, January 31, 1930. DBFP Vol. 7, p. 89.

90. Telegram from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Germany, Brodovsky, January 28, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, p. 52.

91. For example, a letter from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov to the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Germany, Brodovsky, February 7, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, p. 81.

92. Schlesinger, the leading expert at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Russia, told the British Ambassador in Germany that the Soviet-German economic treaty, even after its partial revision in 1928, was proving very unsatisfactory from the German point of view and while he hoped that it might be possible to improve it without giving notice of termination, he was doubtful whether that would be possible. Memorandum from the British Ambassador in Berlin, Rumbold, to the British Foreign Secretary, Henderson, February 4, 1930. DBFP Vol. 17, p. 96.

93. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Krestinsky, to the NKD, March 6, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, pps. 129-130.

settlement

claimed that for more than a year the ~~decision~~ of a whole complex of Soviet-German questions had been postponed under the pretext of the necessity for a preliminary settlement of the reparations question and in awaiting the end of the Hague conference work on this topic, the agreement of which was signed on January 20. Then Curtius had further stalled by referring to the necessity for the conducting of the Hague decisions through the Reichstag. Now, when this had been completed, Curtius was searching for a new pretext to postpone talks by suggesting the need for a preliminary settlement of current conflicts.^{94.}

The Soviet view was that only by clearing the generally bad atmosphere which was polluting Soviet-German relations could the settlement of specific matters be reached, such as the dispute over German concessions, ^{Siberian} ~~German~~ peasants ^{of German origin} ~~resident in the USSR~~, etc. In particular, the Russian Government demanded a public statement by the Berlin Government disassociating itself from the virulent anti-Soviet campaign being conducted in the German press and by influential German individuals and re-affirming its stand on the ground of the Rapallo treaty. A refusal to comply would signify that "Soviet-German relations really have suffered serious changes, that the previous basis of these relations has vanished and that it is necessary to review them all over again."^{95.}

March 1930 was a most tense period in Soviet-German relations. Press attacks in Izvestia answered those of the German papers.^{96.} The Russian Government was anxious that the public manifestations of anti-Soviet feeling in the Weimar Republic should be countered by the Government lest the world assumed that Germany was seeking a new orientation in its foreign policy with the resulting damage to the Soviet position. As Litvinov expressed it:

At one of the most critical moments for Soviet-German relations, when the German press, party and industrial circles have given sufficient cause for the whole world to include Germany in the number of states hostile to the Union, the German Government declines to answer our

94. Letter from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Krestinsky, March 7, 1930. DVP Vol. 13. p. 132.

95. Letter from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Krestinsky, March 17, 1930. Ibid., p. 145.

96. For example, Izvestia March 12, March 17, 1930.

question on its relation to this evaluation of Germany's role.^{97.}

Such a public declaration was especially requested on March 31 by Krestinsky in view of the installation of a new German Government. Whilst Curtius confidentially informed him that he had discussed the basic questions of foreign policy and specifically of relations with the USSR, with Brüning, the new Chancellor, and received a guarantee of an unchanged policy, he did not think a public declaration expedient, presumably because of the general anti-Soviet feeling within Germany.^{98.}

Soviet disappointment at this non-committal attitude was expressed at length by Krestinsky in a statement to Curtius on April 11, 1930:

The policy of the Soviet Union in relation to Germany in the whole of the post-Versailles period has remained clear and unchanged... Throughout the whole time of the existence of... (the Rapallo and Berlin treaties) the Soviet Government in its foreign policy did not take a single step which could be seen as being directed against the interests of Germany. At the same time, our state leaders did not miss a single opportunity before the Soviet, German and world public opinions, to emphasise the friendly relations of the Soviet Government and people towards Germany.

In contrast with this Soviet position Krestinsky then described German policy in this period:

For the past eight years since Rapallo the German Government has been compelled to conclude a series of agreements with the western powers which produced a severe struggle in Germany, which part of the German press saw as a change of German policy in relation to the Soviet Union which could not but result in definite alarm on our part...

At the present time German foreign policy has reached a very important stage. I have in view the conclusion of the Hague reparation agreements and in connection with these various liquidation agreements and especially the liquidation agreement with Poland. This agreement signifies the beginning of a new era in the policy of rapprochement with Poland. The objective development of this policy can inflict a blow on relations with the Soviet Union, independently of the wish to - the subjective factor.

Krestinsky ended this examination of the current situation by asking whether the German Government wanted to maintain its previous policy of friendship in relation to the USSR or whether it wished to revise it.^{99.}

97. Letter from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Krestinsky, March 17, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, p. 146.

98. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Krestinsky to the NKD, March 31, 1930, Ibid., pps. 182-183

99. Statement by the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Krestinsky, to the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Curtius, April 11, 1930. Ibid., pps. 204-206.

89.

Izvestiia, on the fourth anniversary of the signing of the treaty of Berlin, carried a violent attack on Germany, accusing its press of shattering the Rapallo policy and the German Government of implying its agreement with this view. The article argued against those Germans who maintained that Rapallo had meaning for their country only when it had contradictions with the western states: "Only people with an inability to understand can affirm that a weakening of the Rapallo policy can strengthen and not weaken Germany's position before the face of Anglo-French imperialism." The USSR, as before, continued to support the Rapallo and Berlin treaties, but in order that this should have meaning, the German Government must also operate from such political pre-conditions.^{100.}

Alongside these diplomatic and newspaper broadsides, hurled by each side against the other, talks were proceeding on the questions in dispute, but with no great success. The Russians continued to assert that only a general settlement of the major lines of their respective foreign policies in relation to each other could produce positive results. Apart from growing general mistrust, the main concrete problem was that of a declining international trade between the two states. Many German industrialists expected the imminent collapse of Soviet rule and therefore were unwilling to strengthen their ties with Russia.

Despite this deterioration in the Rapallo partnership, neither side was prepared to end abruptly the mutually-beneficial co-operation. Both continued to reap advantages from military collaboration and, notwithstanding present economic difficulties, the needs of the Soviet economy complemented the requirements of the flagging German industry. Germany's position in international society, though much stronger than in the early days of Rapallo, still was not such that it could alienate the USSR needlessly. Although the benefit to be gained from playing the Russian card in dealings with the west was much reduced, it would have been short-sighted to throw this card away.

From the Soviet view-point, good political relations were still a desirable asset. The USSR was in no position to reject its German connections in

100. Izvestiia, April 24, 1930.

the face of continuing hostility from the other great powers. It was anxious to demonstrate to the world that its links with Germany were substantially undamaged despite the attitude adopted by the German press and certain sections of the public.

The diplomatic conversations settled most of the outstanding problems and the remaining issues were submitted to the conciliation commission provided for in the treaty of January, 1929. On June 14, 1930, both governments issued a joint communique stating that the spirit of the Rapallo treaty remained the basis for their relations which they would continue to follow for many years to come. In addition, they agreed to refrain from any attempts at actively influencing the internal affairs of the other.¹⁰¹ *Izvestiia*, commenting on this communique, said that its very publication was evidence that both sides considered it possible to find "a mutually acceptable evaluation of the nature of Soviet-German relations and their prospects," and in the future friendly relations between the two states would continue even in a changing international situation.¹⁰²

This Soviet reception was perhaps more an optimistic hope than a calculated conclusion. Military collaboration was never closer than in the second half of the 1930 and economic trade again expanded; even political relations seemed to have surfaced from the recent trough of foul weather. On July 3, Litvinov congratulated the German Government on the allied evacuation of the Rhineland,¹⁰³ but this very act, whilst harking back to the good old days of the lone Soviet-German stand against the entente powers, signified that Germany, at least, was no longer in quite its old, isolated and weak position imposed by the Versailles treaty. Furthermore, the atmosphere between the two states had not been completely purified by the conciliation commission and the diplomatic meetings. In August, Stomonyakov expressed to Dirksen Soviet dissatisfaction at the one-sided information appearing in the German press on the

101. Soviet German Communique, June 14, 1930. *DVP* Vol. 13, p. 354.

102. *Izvestiia*, June 14, 1930.

103. Telegram from Litvinov to the German Foreign Minister, July 3, 1930. Degras, *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, Vol. 2, p. 447.

results of the work of the conciliation commission.^{104.} An Izvestia article in September 1930 revealed Soviet concern that the Nazis might enter a government coalition which "would necessarily result in a worsening of German-Soviet relations."^{105.} Even in the sphere of economics, Soviet discontentment continued to be voiced, especially as regards the insufficient development of Soviet exports to Germany and the latter's credit policy.^{106.} Unless these points were satisfactorily cleared up, the USSR could not expand its imports from Germany. To this end, economic negotiations were planned in early 1931 and as a preliminary the Russians desired a group of "responsible German industrial leaders" to visit Moscow for talks on trade,^{107.} which took place in February. On March 10 a communique stated that these negotiations had satisfactorily eliminated the obstacles in the path of economic relations and had included discussion on the question of expanding them.^{108.} This was followed on April 14 by a credit agreement by which the USSR placed orders up to 300 million marks in addition to normal Soviet-German business, between April and August 1931.^{109.} This was received in Russia as a successful political as well as economic achievement. Izvestia commented that although the emphasis in Germany was on the economic and not the political aspects, "the conclusion of the agreement has great political significance," showing that the USSR was economically important and credit-worthy. It would help to counter the pro-western tendency in German foreign policy.^{110.}

In March 1931, Molotov, reporting to the Sixth Soviet Congress, whilst being unable to "pass over in silence the fact that ^{the} German Government and public opinion, to our most profound regret,...(at the end of 1929 and early 1930) appeared to be carried away by the waves of ^{an} anti-Soviet 'crusade', which

104. Note of a conversation between a Member of the Collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov and the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, August 12, 1930. DVP Vol.13. p. 454.

105. Izvestia, September 19, 1930.

106. For example, letter from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky to the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Germany, Brodovsky, November 12, 1930. DVP Vol.13, pps. 641-642.

107. Letter from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, January 8, 1931. DVP Vol.14. p.16.

108. Ibid., p.172. Tass Report, March 10, 1931.

109. Ibid., pps. 246-248. Agreement between the USSR and Representatives of German Industrialists, April 14, 1931.

110. Izvestia, April 21, 1931.

for a time threatened the consolidation and development of Soviet-German relations," welcomed the visit of the German industrialists as evidence of German appreciation of Soviet-German economic collaboration.

The basic ingredient of German foreign policy in relation to the USSR has of late been one of friendly collaboration and of the further consolidation of relations which have come successfully through a number of ~~deals~~ in the last nine years and which, we are deeply convinced, can and should be developed further to the mutual advantage of both countries and in the interests of general peace. 111.

Izvestiia, commenting on this speech, said that already a few days later "it is possible to state a strengthening of the favourable factors in the mutual relations between the USSR and Germany." But there was a warning note in the question posed; "can this change be considered accidental or is there reason to consider it a genuine strengthening of the base on which the mutual relations between the USSR and Germany can be built?" 112. Only the passing of time would answer.

Collaboration took place between the two states in relation to their common distrust of Briand's Pan Europe Scheme and, as we have seen above, Germany in fact supported Soviet inclusion in the discussions on this scheme. The disarmament talks at Geneva provided another forum of common action. On March 23, 1931, Dirksen informed Litvinov that his Government had agreed to prolong unchanged the Treaty of Berlin, 113. though there was a difference of opinion on its length of duration, the German Government desiring an unspecified span with the right of abrogation after six or twenty months. The Russians preferred each side to have the right of denouncing the pact with one year's notice but only after five years. They were anxious to sign this prolongation protocol, however, and to this effect Litvinov informed Khinchuk 114. that if the Germans rejected this proposal Moscow would be willing to reduce

111. Report of the Soviet Government to the Sixth Congress of Soviets, March 8, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 151.

112. Izvestiia, March 13, 1931.

113. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, March 23, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 218.

114. Appointed Soviet Ambassador to Germany in December 1930, a post which he held until 1934. Replaced Krestinsky who was promoted to Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs when Litvinov became Commissar.

the period from five to three years and in the extreme event, to accept the German proposal.^{115.}

This Soviet anxiety to secure agreement was stimulated by fears concerning a possible rapprochement between Germany and France, especially on the basis of common anti-dumping measures against the USSR. French feelers were extended to Berlin throughout 1930 and early 1931 on this theme. In February 1931 the French Ambassador in Germany confessed French anxiety at the improvement in Soviet-German relations and admitted that "at present France feared the dangers of Germany going-together with Russia despite the opposition to such a policy that was being raised in Germany itself."^{116.} The Russian perspective was somewhat different; *Izvestia* stated that "the supporters of a western orientation (in Germany) still have not lost hope of achieving important German aims, including the problem of the (Polish) corridor, with French and English help."^{117.}

A month later the same paper contained a report on the secret journey of German political leaders to Paris and a third ^{article} which spoke of preparations for a German-French bloc against the USSR.^{118.} *Pravda*, in a long article, discussed the plans of world imperialism for such an anti-Soviet intervention:

Part of the German bourgeoisie and social democracy has been tirelessly conducting work for a rapprochement of bourgeois Germany with French imperialism and Polish fascism which represents the most important link in the preparation of an anti-Soviet war, for only the friendly neutrality of Germany (if it does not succeed in achieving direct assistance) will give Polish fascism the possibility of flinging all its army at the Ukraine and Belorussia without worrying about its rear.^{119.}

The Soviet Union's confidence in German friendship had been shaken by the events of 1930 which the partial improvement towards the end of that year could not entirely compensate for. The growing instability within Germany increased Russian concern about the future direction of German policy. Two German tendencies in relation to the USSR were discerned in Moscow, one favouring

115. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, March 25, 1931. *DVP Vol. 14*. p. 222.

116. Unpublished German Foreign Policy Documents. Quoted Dyck, *Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia*, p. 215.

117. *Izvestia*, January 6, 1931.

118. *Izvestia*, February 26, March 2, 1931.

119. *Pravda*, April 12, 1931.

anti-Soviet intervention and the other favouring the preservation of normal relations.¹²⁰ How could the Russian leadership construct a solid foreign policy on such an unstable foundation? The fear of German connivance at Polish aggressive moves against them was always a matter of great concern to Moscow; Dirksen, in April 1931, reported to his Foreign Ministry that Moscow saw France as a stable power with definite goals whilst Germany and Italy were increasingly becoming /changeable and unpredictable factors in the great European balance."¹²¹ Was it not a wise policy to insure against future changes by improving relations with France. The important point is that the decision to begin negotiations for a non-aggression pact with France was not merely a negative acceptance of the French willingness to negotiate. Such a pact with France could not but further weaken Soviet-German relations, yet the Soviet leaders were prepared to jeopardise these relations because they realised that to rely on Germany alone was to bury their heads in the sand. Russia certainly desired to maintain good relations with that state, but was not prepared to seek this at the cost of rejecting French overtures. The world environment created by the economic crisis had increased instability; state leaders were compelled to re-examine their foreign policies in the light of the new conditions. France, the major threat to the Soviet state since 1917, was now ready to negotiate a non-aggression pact. This opportunity could not be missed. A cautious rapprochement with the west could only strengthen Russia's international position and if handled well, any damage to the Soviet-German partnership might be reduced to a minimum.

Yet this was not the first occasion on which Franco-Soviet negotiations had begun; what would be their eventual outcome?

120. L.Grigorev and S.Olenev, Borba SSSR za mir i bezopasnost v Evrope 1925-1933 (Moscow 1956), p.114.

121. Report by the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, to the Foreign Ministry, April 13, 1931, German archives quoted in Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, p.238.

Chapter 3: The Dual Course.

During the summer of 1931 the key factor in Soviet diplomacy was the duality of its course. The new prospect of improved relations with the dominant continental European power, France, was exploited in negotiations for a non-aggression pact and a temporary trade agreement. Simultaneously the recent improvement of relations between the USSR and the German Republic provided Moscow with an opportunity to bolster its crumbling Rapallo partnership. The successful pursuit of these two diplomatic lines would further enhance the security of the Russian state, thereby fulfilling the major objective of Soviet foreign policy. Unfortunately, neither course was free from doubt and the chances of success problematical: could the French negotiations be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, given the history of antipathy and the record of failure between France and Soviet Russia; could the recent improvement in relations with Germany be maintained and even deepened in the face of powerful opposition from the German pro-western camp which saw a reduction of its state's commitments to Russia as the key to the further essential German absorption into the west European "community?" Further, were these twin heads of Soviet diplomacy compatible or were they in reality not merely dual but contradictory? Any contradiction in Soviet foreign policy during this summer arose not from the Soviet objectives which were to extend relations with as many capitalist states as possible, an integrated programme. To maintain the long-standing relationship with Germany whilst developing a new one with France was, in Soviet eyes, two aspects of the one policy. The dual and possibly contradictory character of the policy arose because of the external factor of Franco-German rivalry which of necessity complicated Russia's attempt to promote good relations with them both.^{1.} Specifically, would

1. Although historical parallels should be treated with caution, Germany was placed in a similar position to the USSR in the nineteenth century when Bismarck attempted to maintain good relations with the rival Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, an attempt which was eventually abandoned in favour of a dual alliance with the latter.

progress in Paris hinder Soviet-German relations? Given the deterioration in the Rapallo partnership, despite a partial recovery at the close of 1930, and the opportunities which improved relations with France would afford the USSR, Soviet diplomacy chose to gamble, at the same time seeking to minimise the odds on Germany's alienation by a cautious approach to both states.

1. The Prolongation of the Berlin Treaty.

The particular need for Soviet diplomatic activity in Berlin in the Spring and summer of 1931 arose as a result of the expiration on June 29, 1931, of the Berlin treaty.² According to its provisions, it would operate for five years and "both contracting parties would agree between themselves the future of their political relations in good time before the expiration of this period."³ In March, Dirksen had informed the Soviet Government that Germany had agreed to prolong the treaty and the Russians were anxious to finalise this step as quickly as possible.⁴

The Soviet Government was ready to renew the existing treaty or negotiate a stronger one, depending on German preferences, an indication that Moscow desired to continue in earnest the Rapallo line. Dirksen informed Litvinov that the German Government had not yet examined the question in detail but he thought that it would prefer a simple renewal.⁵ The German reasons for the continuation of the Rapallo policy were well-stated by Curtius, the Foreign Minister, to Dirksen in a lengthy policy directive quoted from the German archives by Dyck. The diplomatic and trade advantages from the Russian link were stressed, "especially at the present moment of tensions with France and the disappointment of our Locarno hopes, the policy of the Rapallo treaty and the Berlin treaty is a compelling foreign policy necessity." Germany must continue to balance between east and west; no advantage was likely to be

2. See Chapter 1. p.10.

3. Treaty of Non-Aggression and Neutrality between the USSR and Germany, April 24, 1926. Thus unlike the later Soviet pacts it contained no provision for automatic extension if neither party denounced it. DVP Vol. 9, pps. 250-252.

4. See chapter 2, pps. 72-73.

5. Dirksen to the German Foreign Ministry, February 6, 1931. German Documents, quoted in Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, p.229.

elicited from the west in return for the abandonment of relations with the USSR. The main stress in the directive, however, was on the need to renew the Berlin treaty in order to prolong the Russian anti-Polish attitude:

At a time when the German-Polish relationship is more strained than it has been for a long time, we have a twofold reason not to give up our relationship with Russia: Russia forms the natural counterweight against Poland, and Russia would be in a position to veer towards a pro-Polish course if she were not tied to us politically.⁶

The object of recovering the territory lost to Poland by the Versailles treaty remained paramount for German foreign policy and therefore the need for an anti-Polish Russia. Despite the crumbling of Soviet-German relations this Polish card remained Moscow's ace in its dealings with Berlin.⁷

From the Russian angle, only advantages could be reaped from the renewal of the treaty. It would not weaken the hand of the Soviet negotiations^{ors} in Paris, the problem there being the legacy of anti-Soviet feeling in France rather than the existence of the Rapallo partnership. In fact, a strengthened Russian-German relationship might increase the Soviet bargaining position; an isolated state normally finds it more difficult to secure a friend in the international system than does a state with a ready-made diplomatic standing in that system. Trade and military advantages continued to accrue to Russia as an additional incentive to maintain links with Berlin. Germany was no longer so reliable an associate nor the only possible contender for this position amongst the great powers but Moscow had little to lose and still something to gain by preventing the demise of the long-standing partnership. Whether the dual diplomatic course could be successfully maintained remained to be seen but that the attempt should be made never seems to have been in real question,

Negotiations for the renewal of the Berlin treaty began between the two states on March 24 and a Prolongation protocol was signed in Moscow on June 24, 1931. The 1926 treaty was extended indefinitely but each of the

6. Curtius to Dirksen, March 16, 1931. German Embassy in the Soviet Union files, quoted in Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, pps. 232-233.

7. This fact throws into sharp relief the real change in Soviet foreign policy which the negotiation of a non-aggression pact with Poland, if not France, brought about. See Chapter 4.

contracting parties had the right at any time but not before June 30, 1933 with notice of one year, to denounce it.⁸ In other words, the treaty had a minimum life of three years, a compromise between the Soviet desire for a minimum period of six years, the German for six months.⁹ The Russians were anxious to receive a guarantee of Germany's intentions at a time of ever-increasing fluctuations in its internal policy which could well have repercussions on foreign policy. Germany preferred a flexible arrangement "because we must be in a position to break off this relationship when the tendencies in Russia directed toward world revolution become more active or when the dangerous strengthening of our own revolutionary energies force us to take counter-measures."¹⁰

Izvestiia greeted the renewal with enthusiasm:

In the signing of the protocol both governments expressed their intention by means of the prolonging of the treaty to continue the friendly relations which exist between the USSR and Germany, to promote the further development of mutual collaboration which answers the interests of both countries and simultaneously to promote the strengthening of general peace.¹¹

The following day an editorial in the same paper spoke in even more glowing terms of the protocol:

This is a great political event which has enormous significance for both countries...The renewal of the Berlin treaty is proof that the sensible elements of German capitalism understood the unflinching and growing strength of the Soviet Union...This treaty strengthens the position of the Soviet Union in its struggle for peace. It also strengthens Germany's position in its struggle against those grievous consequences of war which prevent the German people from developing their technical, economic and cultural possibilities.¹²

The signature of the protocol was the result of a struggle within Germany between the "easterners" and the "westerners", in which the latter claimed Germany's links with the USSR hindered its acceptance by the western powers. The falseness of this thesis was proved by the western reaction to the Austro-German

8. Protocol for the prolongation of the 1926 treaty between the USSR and Germany, June 24, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 395-396.

9. See chapter 2, pps. 72-73.

10. Curtius to Dirksen, March 16, 1931. German Embassy in the Soviet Union files; quoted in Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, pps. 235-236.

11. Izvestiia, June 25, 1931.

12. Ibid., June 26, 1931.

customs union and the scenes at the European committee.¹³ Taken together with the growing economic and political strength of the USSR, the German bourgeoisie realised that their best interest was served by the prolongation of the treaty. Such was Pravda's editorial comment which arrived at the conclusion that this was "a success for the peace policy of the Soviet Government."¹⁴

From the German side, the official paper "Deutsche Diplomatisch Politische Korrespondenz" interpreted the protocol as signifying "the continuation in a completely unchanged way of German policy in relation to the USSR, that is the retention of all the political and economic relations with the Soviet Union in the spirit of the previous years."¹⁵

This enthusiastic reception for the protocol given by the Soviet press seemed to mark the restoration of Soviet-German relations to their high-water mark of the early twenties. Yet one wonders if the Soviet foreign ministry genuinely shared this exhilaration. It is true that the renewal again demonstrated that Germany still needed the Soviet card in its diplomatic equipment, but could this signature really halt the decline in the Rapallo partnership which must have been so apparent to the masters of Soviet policy. A glance into the future would show only too well that the protocol in fact marked the end of the brief period of improvement in Soviet-German relations and heralded the opening of a deterioration that would not stop with the demise of the Weimar Republic. Only the historian~~x~~ can claim the advantages of such hindsight in assessing any situation but even without this aid Soviet diplomacy mid-way through 1931 must have been relieved that it had more than the German string to its bow. In Paris other negotiations were being conducted.

2. The initialling of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact.

A new phase in Soviet Russia's relations with western Europe was initiated in April 1931 when the long-standing distrust which had permeated Franco-

13. See below.

14. Pravda, June 26, 1931.

15. Quoted in Izvestia, July 1, 1931.

Soviet relations for so long was fractured by the agreement to commence negotiations for a non-aggression pact and temporary trade agreement. Yet this transformation only contained the potential for a new direction in Soviet foreign policy. Important as was the decision to begin negotiations, of far more consequence was their successful conclusion or otherwise and the effect which the signature of these agreements would have on France and its east-European allies.

The Russian Government was eager to consolidate its diplomatic achievements and secure a French signature at the earliest possible date.¹⁶ In this hope it was to be disappointed; the French Government saw no cause for haste. A recent Soviet author has noted the occurrence of a reappraisal by the Quai d'Orsay of its foreign policy; "the French initiative (to open negotiations) was clear evidence that the anti-Soviet policy was bankrupt and that the Soviet Union was recognised as a great industrial power with a strong defence system."¹⁷ There is much truth in this comment but nevertheless France could not ignore its domestic opposition to the development of relations with the USSR any more than it could forget its alliance system with the countries on the eastern border of Germany and their anti-Soviet sentiments. The path towards a reconciliation of the dominant continental state and the communist giant in the east would neither be short nor easy.

Diplomatic manoeuvring by the end of April on the part of French and Soviet representatives had reached the stage of agreement to begin simultaneous negotiations for a pact with conciliation procedure and a trade agreement.¹⁸ This was confirmed in a memorandum from the Soviet to the French Government handed by Dovgalevsky to Berthelot on May 1, 1931. Further, the Russians stated that the decrees which were restricting trade between the two states should be annulled after the opening two or three meetings devoted to

16. Reference was made in chapter 2 to the Soviet desire for the separation of the non-aggression pact from the trade agreement negotiations in order that the former should not be delayed.

17. Y. Borisov "USSR-France: 45 years of Diplomatic Relations," International Affairs (Moscow) N.10. 1969, p.73.

18. See chapter 2, *ibid.* pp. 55-56.

the negotiation of the pact, a compromise agreed upon by both parties. Following this annulment, the Soviet Government agreed to hold negotiations with the representatives of French industrial and governmental circles relative to orders and credits similar to those held with Germany. Lastly, it agreed to enter into negotiations for a trade pact and the discussion of the question of loans following the conclusion of the non-aggression pact and the temporary trade agreement.^{19.}

Berthelot was unfavourable to the suggestion that the exact number of meetings after which the decrees would be annulled should be rigidly fixed. After some discussion he finally agreed to the Soviet proposal that the ⁿannulment take place after the second or third meeting but of the temporary trade agreement and not the non-aggression pact negotiations, to which Litvinov agreed on May 3.²⁰ The Soviets were adamant that the decrees must be annulled at an early date in the negotiations and on this point overcame French opposition which favoured postponing this step until the signature of the trade agreement.

The French diplomat also thought it necessary to begin and end the negotiations on the question of the trade agreement and the agreement on orders simultaneously. His reasoning was that the final trade agreement should deal with Soviet exports to and imports from France and therefore the agreement on orders must be a natural supplement to the trade agreement which would have as its result the facilitation of Soviet exports to France. Dovgalevsky strenuously opposed this interpretation and especially the view that the agreement would provide one-sided advantages to the USSR alone.^{21.}

At the meeting of May 1, Dovgalevsky presented Berthelot with a Soviet project for a non-aggression pact. According to this scheme, each of the contracting parties was to refrain from any attack on the territory of the

19. Memorandum from the Soviet to the French Government, May 1, 1931.

DVP Vol. 14, pps. 298-299.

20. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, May 1, 1931. Ibid., pps. 299-300

21. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, May 3, 1931. Ibid., p. 307.

other.(Article 1) Each contracting party was not to undertake any hostile acts directed against the other and not to participate in such acts if undertaken by a third power or powers nor to encourage any third power(s) to undertake such acts.(Article 2). Neither party was to participate in any agreement of an economic character having the aim of inflicting a blow on the other (Article 3) nor to allow on its territory the existence and activity of military organisations having the aim of the preparation of an attack on the other, or a group or individual illegally acting as an official representative for the people on territory of the contracting party.(Article 4). These last two articles obviously reflected Soviet concern at the French anti-dumping campaign and the activities of white-guardist groups in that country. The settlement of disagreements which might arise between the two contracting parties must be settled only by peaceful means and for this purpose a convention on conciliation procedure would be concluded.(Article 5). Each party would have the right to denounce the pact after five years, one year's notice being required.(Article 6)²².

This was a very comprehensive project and included all the major points of concern to the Soviet Union. Berthelot's initial reaction was to inform Dovgalevsky that Briand wanted the non-connection of the pact with each of the contracting parties' earlier-concluded pacts with third countries incorporated into the non-aggression pact.²³ France could not forget its other treaties which could foreseeably clash with a Soviet pact.

Dovgalevsky, the chief Soviet diplomat involved in the complex wranglings with the French representatives, was far from confident about the passage which the negotiation would encounter:

As concerns the forthcoming negotiations I am under no illusion on their account: they will be very difficult even if the French Government also sincerely desires to reach a favourable completion. The

22. Soviet project pact of non-aggression and neutrality between the USSR and France. DVP Vol.14, p.794, Note 105.

23. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, May 3, 1931. Ibid., pps. 307-308.

French will oscillate all the time.^{24.}

He expected that the French would find the project pact unacceptable, especially the articles on economic aggression, white guardist military organisations and the Georgian mission.^{25.} The French Government would simply reject them on the grounds that they were not directly related to the object of the negotiations, which it would restrict to the elimination of the danger of a military collision, a "simplified edition of the Kellogg Pact," as Dovgalevsky expressed it.

This pessimistic picture, if transposed into reality by French intransigence, would somewhat reduce the advantages apertaining from the pact to the Soviet side but would leave intact the main articles relating to the obligations of each party to refrain from any attack on the other's territory or to participate in such acts. In fact, the future of the negotiations would prove Dovgalevsky unduly pessimistic on this aspect of the French reaction to them.

If his expectations of the non-aggression pact negotiations were low, Dovgalevsky saw little to raise his hopes as regards the economic aspect of the transactions. In Briand's idea that the trade agreement must contain nothing of a general nature but only concrete points directed to the regulation and development of Franco-Soviet trade, specifically Soviet imports from France, he saw the negotiations as promising Russia "little comfort." In his view, "the French are thinking of the agreement only in so far as it looks at the development of their exports to the USSR and the reduction of trade passivity to a minimum!" "Dovgalevsky thought that the negotiations on orders and credits would also be a far from easy task. These difficulties, in his view, would only be increased by the position of Laval, the French prime minister, who although seeking to build a bridge between the right and the left, was severely restricted in his freedom of manoeuvre by his dependence

24. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, May 3, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 308.

25. The reference to a group illegally acting as an official representative for the people or territory of one of the contracting parties (Article 4) in the Soviet project had in mind specifically the Georgian mission in France.

on the right majority.^{26.}

This pessimism was at least justified as regards doubts concerning a French desire to reach a quick and simple agreement. May slipped away with very little advancement of the negotiations. In conversation with Litvinov, Briand did speak of his constant aspiration to establish good relations with the Soviet Union and his hopes that the non-aggression pact would not meet any difficulties, but he had not yet studied the Soviet project pact and was about to relinquish his cabinet post.^{27.} Despite Herriot's comments in the French press that "the present moment is a sufficiently favourable time to advance an acceptable 'modus vivendi,' again to bring into life a non-aggression pact...to advance the question of the regulation of economic difficulties and in this perspective...the regulation of loans,"^{28.} little tangible progress was in fact being made.

The delay was a product of the French rather than the Soviet side. On June 1, Dovgalevsky reported to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, that "for the last ten days there has been no movement of the water in the negotiations with France." Thus far, no official invitation had been received concerning the meeting of experts on the temporary trade agreement, though Dovgalevsky thought that such an invitation could be imminent. This letter sheds light on Soviet tactics as regards the non-aggression pact negotiations which also were still not underway. Dovgalevsky recommended that the Russians on the one hand must be ready to begin them at any moment, but on the other hand must not show themselves to be in a greater hurry than the French, so as not to weaken their bargaining position: "we must...show the French that we are by no means in a feverish rush and that the establishment of good relations is as much in the French interest as in ours." Dovgalevsky

26. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, May 3, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 308-309.

27. Report on conversation of Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Briand, May 22, 1931. Ibid., pps. 350-351.

28. Quoted in Pravda, May 8, 1931.

introduced one disconcerting element into the situation for the Soviet Government when he reported information received from a "completely trustworthy source" that Briand had told another French deputy that work on the political agreement had been delayed because the French Government wanted to attract Poland to it, proposing an agreement between France and Poland on the one side, Russia on the other.^{29.}

The inclusion of Poland in a multilateral agreement had been the very cause of the breakdown of the non-aggression pact negotiations between France and the USSR in 1927-1928.^{30.} In the preliminary negotiations between Dovgalevsky and Berthelot only a bilateral Franco-Soviet pact had been mentioned. If this new information were true, it might damage irreparably any future prospects for the negotiations.

Despite this somewhat alarming note, the situation at the beginning of June 1931 took a more favourable turn. On June 4, a delegation of Soviet economic experts headed by Dvoylatsky³¹ arrived in Paris and the following day negotiations began with officials from the French ministries of commerce, agriculture and foreign affairs,³² which were of a preliminary character.^{33.} Political negotiations for a non-aggression pact between Dovgalevsky and Berthelot presumably began at around the same time.^{34.}

On June 15, the political negotiations advanced when Berthelot handed Dovgalevsky the French text of a non-aggression pact in answer to the Soviet ^{project} of May 1. Its first article was similar to the first two articles of the Soviet project in its obligation not to resort to war or to undertake either in

29. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, June 1, 1931. DVP Vol. 14. pps. 358-360.

30. The Soviet refusal to countenance multilateral non-aggression pacts has been examined in chapter 1.

31. Deputy Commissar for foreign trade.

32. Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p. 11.

33. Havas Agency (French) report; quoted in Pravda, June 7, 1931.

34. The political negotiations probably began shortly after the economic negotiations. Krestinsky told the German Charge d'Affaires in Moscow that trade negotiations had begun on June 5 but that talks on the pact still had not opened. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, and the German Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, Tvardovsky, June 5, 1931. DVP Vol. 14. p. 368.

isolation or in connection with other powers any aggression in any event, though it omitted the Soviet phrase concerning the obligation not to encourage any third power to undertake such acts and more closely defined French territory as including its colonies, protectorates and territories under French mandate. It added the important proviso that if one of the contracting parties resorted to war or committed acts of aggression against any third power, the other contracting party would be released from the obligations of the present pact and would again receive complete freedom of action within the limits of international law and in particular the pacts in which it participated. Obviously France had in mind a Soviet attack on one or more of its east European allies in which case France would be permitted to fulfil its treaty obligations towards them and if necessary be free to act against Russia. The Soviet third article on economic aggression had no counterpart in the French text. Whereas the Soviet project in article 4 contained the obligation not to allow on the territory of either party military organisations having the aim of the preparation of an attack on the other, the French second article bound both parties not to encourage and in any event to suppress any agitation which coming from the territory of one of them would be aimed at the forceful change of the political and social regime of the other, including, as far as France was concerned, the regime of its colonies, protectorates and mandated territories. France, not having any interest in such military organisations on Soviet territory as the white-guardist groups which operated on French soil and so worried the Russians, favoured a restriction on agitation obviously directed against the activities of the Comintern. Under this article the Soviet Government would be called upon to suppress any calls for revolution emanating from the Comintern headquarters in Moscow and directed at the French communist party. Like the Soviet project, the French third article proposed the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and to this end favoured a conciliation procedure. Finally the French agreed with the Russians on the duration of the pact - five years.

The actual text of the non-aggression pact was supplemented by a protocol in which the French added that "each of the contracting parties retains complete freedom of action in the region of its relations with third powers," so long as the undertakings of the present pact and the League Charter were not infringed.³⁵ Again, they were anxious to impress on both the USSR and other interested states that the eventual signature of a Franco-Soviet pact would not decisively change previous French commitments.

This formulation by both parties of project pacts was an important step towards the final conclusion of the negotiations. The projects were not identical, indeed the above outline of their contents has revealed a considerable divergence of aims, each state including in its text the points which were of most concern to itself. Nevertheless, a basis for further negotiation had now been laid down and at least there was common ground on the fundamental aim of a non-aggression pact - the undertaking by each party to refrain from attack on the territory of the other.

Negotiation on the major area of divergence between the two texts, that of neutrality, began on July 1 when Dovgalevsky handed Berthelot a new Soviet draft on this article. It accepted the French thesis relating to the right of either party to terminate the pact immediately if the other party attacked a third power but added a provision that "if one of the contracting parties, despite its peace-loving actions, is subjected to attack by a third power or powers, the other contracting party will observe neutrality during the course of the whole conflict."³⁶ The adoption of this article would leave France free to aid its allies if the Soviet Union attacked them but bound it to neutrality in the case of, for example, a Polish attack on the USSR.³⁷ The difficult

35. French text of a non-aggression pact, June 15, 1931. DVP Vol. 14.
pps. 802-803, Note 136.

36. Soviet article on neutrality handed by the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to Berthelot, the Secretary General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 1, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 803, Note 137.

37. The point that a non-aggression pact would prevent France from intervening if Poland attacked Russia was made by Litvinov in conversation with the British Ambassador in Moscow. The British Ambassador in Moscow, Ovey to Henderson, Foreign Secretary, July 28, 1931. DBFP Vol. 7, p. 217.

problem of defining the aggressor was left unresolved.

Meanwhile, negotiations on the trade agreement were progressing satisfactorily. Briand informed Dovgalevsky on July 10, that in the French Government's opinion they were sufficiently advanced to permit the opening of parallel negotiations on the question of the placing of orders by both states. Since the Russians made this step conditional on the abrogation of the French restrictive decrees, Briand proposed a simultaneous mutual abrogation of both the French and Soviet decrees.³⁸ In reply, the Soviet Government confirmed its readiness to take this measure and to begin negotiations on orders and credits.³⁹ The abrogations by both states took place on July 15 thereby removing a considerable obstacle in the path of a Franco-Soviet rapprochement.⁴⁰

Now the ground was cleared and the experts of both delegations could begin in earnest the task of expanding trade between their two countries. The French side offered lower customs duties on Soviet goods on condition that Soviet orders were greatly increased.⁴¹ From the Russian side, the problem of expanding orders was intimately linked with the granting of credits by France which would enable Russia to purchase the large quantities of goods it required for the successful fulfilment of its five-year plan. In turn, this raised the old problem of the Russian debt to French creditors. In August, during a conversation with Litvinov, the French Charge d'Affaires in Moscow expressed the opinion that it would be impossible for the French Government to give the USSR credits without the regulation of the debt problem, especially in view of the proximity of the French parliamentary elections. French public opinion would not tolerate such a concession by its government. Litvinov, in reply, categorically stated that if this was the case then there was no point in beginning negotiations on orders; the French Government knew that without credits there

38. Note from Briand, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, July 10, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 428. For the history of the French and Soviet decrees see chapter 2.

39. Note from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Briand, July 13, 1931. Ibid., p. 427.

40. Pravda, July 17, 1931. Izvestia, July 17, 1931.

41. Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p. 12.

could be no talk of the development of trade and that the question of debts must be excluded from the present negotiations.⁴² Here was a seemingly impenetrable obstacle to any worthwhile settlement of Franco-Soviet economic relations. Without credits the Soviet Government could not increase its orders; without a debt ~~settlement~~ settlement the French Government would not provide credits and French industry could not give credit without government assistance. The French Minister of Commerce on two occasions stated the refusal of the Government to consider the granting of state-guaranteed credits until the debt question had been resolved.⁴³

The economic negotiations were broken off in practice in September 1931.⁴⁴ The Soviets blamed the French for this result, accusing them of delaying the proceedings, of refusing to grant government credits and introducing the question of the Tsarist debt and of at least tacitly condoning anti-Soviet propaganda in the French press aimed at wrecking any economic collaboration.⁴⁵ Dovgalevsky, referring to these negotiations, told Berthelot "in plain terms that I consider the direction given to these negotiations from the beginning false and dangerous for their successful outcome."⁴⁶ Both sides desired a settlement yet the credit-debt problem proved too great an obstacle. The legacy of history was not on the negotiators' side. On October 16 the Director of the Trade Department of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Mezhlauk, the Soviet representative at the negotiations on orders and credits, that it was extremely important to end the negotiations successfully as soon as possible because of a hostile French press campaign and problems in parliament. He re-stated, however, the French position that credits could not be given before

42. Conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, and the French Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, Payart, August 22, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 482.

43. Semi-official communique in *Le Temps*, October 1, 1931; Statement by M. Rollin *Debats* November 24, 1931. Quoted in Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p. 13.

44. Memorandum from the Soviet Embassy in France to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 22, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 734.

45. Memorandum from the Soviet Embassy in France to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 22, 1931. Ibid., pps. 730-734.

46. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, September 23, 1931. Ibid., p. 536.

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the regulation of the debt question.^{47.}

Almost a month later Dovgalevsky was complaining that the negotiations on the trade agreement had not moved forward because of their co-ordination with the negotiations on orders. Such a connection of the two questions, whilst logical in that they were inter-related, was not to Soviet liking. As Dovgalevsky pointed out, the April proposal of the French Government stated that although the negotiations on various objectives would begin simultaneously, a junction between them would not be established. He also expressed dissatisfaction at the position adopted by France on the credits issue.^{48.} On September 26, the Vice President of the French Senate was quoted as stating that "in relation to the USSR we must establish an economic *modus vivendi* which excludes any kind of hostile operation against the regime which the Russian people created for itself."^{49.} The restrictive decrees had been abrogated and this was at least a step in the right direction. Yet overall the negotiations could only be labelled a failure; the aim of establishing a temporary trade agreement had not been accomplished. The weight of historical distrust and the hostility of powerful sections of French society to the strengthening of the Bolshevik Russian economy proved too strong for the diplomatic efforts.

To return to the political negotiations on a non-aggression pact, the article concerning neutrality remained at the centre of dispute and to its resolution was being concentrated the diplomatic activity of both parties. In answer to the Soviet text given to the French on July 1,⁵⁰ the French negotiations on July 16 proposed the following formula:

If one of the contracting parties, despite its peace-loving actions, is subjected to attack by a third power or several third powers, then the other contracting party is bound not to render direct or indirect help and support to the attacker during the conflict.

If one of the contracting parties itself resorts to an attack on a third power or if it threatens by forcible and constant violation the

47. Conversation between Soviet representative at negotiations with France on orders and credits, Mezhlauk, and the Director of the Trade Department of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Coulondre, October 16, 1931.

DVP Vol. 14, p. 573

48. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD November 13, 1931. *Ibid.*, p. 825. Note 233.

49. Quoted in *Izvestia*, September 29, 1931.

50. See above, ~~pp. 16-17.~~ p. 87.

political independence or territorial integrity of any third power,^{51.}
the other contracting party can denounce the treaty without notice.

This article differed from the Soviet formula in its second part. Whereas the Soviet project gave the right of termination without notice only when one of the contracting parties itself resorted to an attack on any third state, the French formula included also threatening by forcible and constant violation of the political independence or territorial integrity of the third state. This section of the neutrality article was principally of benefit to France and was aimed at the possibility of Soviet aggression against its neighbours in eastern Europe. The Russians presumably objected to this new French definition in that it widened the category of action after which the non-aggression pact could be denounced. What was meant by a "forcible and constant violation of the political or territorial integrity?" To leave the interpretation open to the whim of the French Government would be to weaken the effect of the pact. On July 17, Dovgalevsky rejected this French proposal.^{52.} The French then proposed to accept the Soviet project on neutrality (July 1) with the addition of a supplementary paragraph which defined the aggressive side. This definition included the participation of one of the contracting parties in any military conflict which it refused to transfer to a peaceful examination in conformity with the Kellogg Pact and also the refusal to evacuate territory which its forces had penetrated.^{53.} Krestinsky informed Dovgalevsky on July 19 that this proposal, referring to the Kellogg Pact and therefore ^{judgment} ~~the courts~~ ^{by} ~~of~~ the USA, a country with which the USSR had no diplomatic relations, was "completely unacceptable."^{54.}

Despite these disagreements the negotiations were progressing satisfactorily.^{55.} On August 5, Dovgalevsky discussed the pact with Berthelot. The

51. French formula for article on neutrality, July 16, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p.806, Note 145.

52. Ibid.

53. Proposal of France for text of neutrality article, Ibid., p.806, Note 145.

54. Telegram from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, July 19, 1931. Ibid., p.434.

55. It should be noted that a new French Ambassador in Moscow was appointed at the end of July, replacing Herbette who had always been strongly opposed by the Russians, Pravda, August 1, 1931. Dejean, the new Ambassador, arrived in Moscow on November 20, 1931. Izvestia, Nov. 21, 1931. See Chapter 2.

French and in particular Briand, according to Berthelot's comments, categorically opposed signing the non-aggression pact before the fate of the trade negotiations had been settled and insisted on the simultaneous signing of the pact and the agreement on conciliation procedure, for them an important aspect of the total agreement.⁵⁶ Dovgalevsky persistently opposed both these demands and in addition opposed the introduction of new changes into the articles of the pact. In this he had considerable success. Berthelot agreed that the pact would be initialled immediately on all its agreed articles and that article 5 would read, "the agreement on conciliation procedure will be added to the present treaty." The pact would be initialled and signed separately from the agreement on conciliation procedure but the initialling would be accompanied by an exchange of letters stating that the ratification of the pact would take place simultaneously with that of the conciliation agreement. This compromise satisfied the Soviet desire for a rapid signature of the non-aggression pact⁵⁷ as well as the French insistence that it should only come into force as a part of a wider agreement including a conciliation procedure. Berthelot insisted that the eventual exchange of ratification instruments should take place in Paris.⁵⁸

By this time agreement had been reached between both countries on all the articles of the pact, save for article 2 referring to neutrality. The French stubbornly held to the July proposal in which the aggressor was defined with reference to the Kellogg Pact and a refusal to evacuate occupied territory.⁵⁹

This last obstacle was quickly overcome in favour of the wording of the second article in both the French text of June 15 and the Soviet text of July 1. On August 10, 1931, the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact was initialled in Paris.⁶⁰ The French asked that it be kept secret from the press to avoid any hostile campaign which would both place the French Government in a difficult

56. See Chapter 2.

57. In which Russia was to be disappointed.

58. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, August 5, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 447-448.

59. Ibid.

60. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, August 10, 1931. Ibid., p. 452.

position and threaten the actual signature of the pact. Dovgalevsky expressed doubt at the possibility of successfully preserving such secrecy but promised to consult his superiors on this matter.^{61.} This French request is an indication of the lack of support within France for its new foreign policy venture and an ominous warning for the future course of Franco-Soviet negotiations.

The final text of the non-aggression pact was a mixture of the texts of both sides. Its basic provision was contained in the first article, an obligation by each party not to undertake aggression nor resort to war against the other, the fundamental ingredient of a Soviet non-aggression pact. France succeeded in defining its territory as including that for which it was the external representative and controller of the administration, that is, its colonies, etc., and also in eliminating the phrase that each contracting party "will not encourage any third powers to undertake such acts" of aggression against the other party, which was included in the first Soviet draft of May 1.

The protracted negotiations on the neutrality article were finally resolved by accepting the Soviet text of July 1. The French dropped their demand for a more exhaustive definition of aggression and the final second part of this article read "if one of the high contracting parties undertakes aggression against a third power the other high contracting party can without notice denounce the present treaty." This was in fact a compromise agreement in order that the actual wording of the text could be agreed upon by both sides. In a note from Briand to Dovgalevsky, the former stated that the French Government, in order to establish without ambiguity which of two powers was the aggressor and which the victim in any conflict, continued to hold firm on its position that the aggressor would be that state which refused to transfer the dispute to one of the methods of peaceful settlement envisaged by the Kellogg Pact or which refused to evacuate its forces from foreign occupied territory:

Confident that the above event will remain theoretical, none the less the French Government has considered for a long time that in order to avoid any dispute in the future, it must bring to the attention of the Soviet Government now the method which it maintains the right to use in such an event, this statement not pre-determining either the joining to it of the Government of the USSR or its selection in any case of such

61. DVP Vol. 14. p. 452.

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a method.^{62.}

In reply, the Soviet Ambassador noted Briand's statement that the Soviet Government was not bound by this French decision.^{63.}

The resolution of the problem appertaining to the neutrality article is interesting in its illustration of the interplay between Soviet and French diplomacy, yet perhaps too much stress should not be laid on it. Ambiguity remained in the definition of "the aggressor," yet without good faith among the interested states no definition can be perfect and agreement on the definition in theory does not automatically signify agreement in a particular practical case. The essential article of the non-aggression pact, in any case, was the first one. This neutrality clause, in effect, meant that if the Soviet Union was attacked by Poland or Rumania, France would remain neutral; if the USSR attacked its western neighbours, France could renounce the non-aggression pact and would be free to aid its eastern allies.

Article 3, concerning the obligation not to take economic measures directed against the other party was a victory for the Soviet Union and closely followed its text of May 1. It was obviously prompted by Soviet experience of the French anti-dumping decree and appeared in the final text of the pact even though the French project of June 15 contained no such provision.

The pact contained a long article dealing with non-interference by either party in the internal affairs of the other and its provisions were a combination of the Soviet scheme of May 1 and the French scheme of June 15. It reflected both French fears of communist agitation and propaganda aimed at the forceful change of the political or social regime and Soviet apprehension at the activities of white-guardist military organisations and groups which claimed to represent areas of Soviet territory, operating on French soil.

62. Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, Briand, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky. DVP Vol. 14. pps. 454-455.

63. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Briand. Ibid., ~~Vol. 14~~ p. 455.

25.
The pact was to remain in force until the elapse of one year from the day when one of the contracting parties notified the other of its intention to terminate the agreement, but such a notification could not take place prior to the expiry of two years from the day of its entry into force. This was a revised article of both the earlier French and Soviet drafts which stipulated that the pact should remain in force for five years after which each side had the right to denounce it after one year's notice. Judging from the usual Soviet desire to fix a relatively long minimum life to their non-aggression pacts given the instability and oscillating nature of capitalist states' foreign policy together with Dovgalevsky's comment that "the denunciation of the pact not before two years has been achieved,"⁶⁴ it would appear that the French were the motivating force in reducing this minimum period and the Russians pleased to fix at least a two year minimum.

Minor differences still existed, principally concerning the release of the news of the initialling. Reference has already been made to the reluctance of the French Government to publish information on this subject because of its possible repercussions on the internal French situation. The Russians, on the contrary, were anxious to release the news, partly because such secrecy was very difficult to maintain and wild rumours likely to be more damaging than the truth, partly, one suspects, because they were anxious to demonstrate to the world their peace-lovingness, ability to negotiate political agreements even with old enemies and their newly-won diplomatic position on the European continent.⁶⁵ On August 28, the French Charge d'Affaires told Krestinsky that "the French Government considers it undesirable to publish the fact of the initiating of the treaty."⁶⁶ The French remained very cautious

64. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, August 5, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 448.

65. See conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, and the French Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, Payart, August 22, 1931. Ibid., p. 482. Also the Russians desired to keep their friends informed of the negotiations. By this date the German, Turkish, Lithuanian and Italian Governments had already been informed of the initialling. Litvinov confidentially informed the British Embassy in Moscow on August 13, Mr. Strang, British Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, to Mr. A. Henderson, Foreign Secretary, August 13, 1931. DBFP Vol. 7, p. 218.

66. Conversation between Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, and the French Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, Payart, August 28, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 811. Note 168.

in their statements relating to the non-aggression pact. The Quai d'Orsay was compelled to admit the existence of the negotiations in late August but stated that nothing definite could be expected for several months, referring to the eventual signature of the pact.⁶⁷ According to a French foreign office memorandum, Berthelot told Dovgalevsky on the occasion of the initialling that the text had only been agreed between the negotiators and that the French Government had not approved it. It would have to wait for a Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact before agreeing to a Franco-Soviet pact.⁶⁸

At this stage in the history of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact it was still really too early for either state to evaluate its significance for their respective foreign policies. That the negotiations had arrived at a text which both parties had initialled was undeniably something of an achievement when their past relations were taken into account. Two countries, the dominant European status quo power and the new revolutionary state, which previously had adopted diametrically opposed positions on practically all international issues, now could look on an initialled text of non-aggression pact.

An initialled pact is not to be equated with a signed pact, however, and this was the crucial factor for the future; when would the signature and exchange of ratification instruments take place? Until this time, the pact was merely a piece of paper. This was appreciated by Moscow. In August, Karakhan,⁶⁹ in conversation with the Estonian Ambassador in Moscow, spoke of the Soviet-French negotiators; "if we speak in mathematical formulae, it can be said that at the present time relations with France have been raised from minus up to nought; whether they will rise higher than nought it is still difficult

67. Scott, *Alliance Against Hitler*, p.13.

68. French Foreign Office Note, July 28, 1932. *Documents Diplomatiques Français 1932-1939, 1st Series, 1932-1935, Vol. 1, July 9-November 14, 1932* (Paris 1964) p.118, (Hereafter referred to as French Docs Vol.1.)

69. L.M. Karakhan, from 1918, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Soviet Ambassador in Poland, 1921-1922; Second Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs 1922; Ambassador in China, 1923-1926; Third Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, 1925; Second Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, 1930-1934; Ambassador in Turkey 1934-1937. Executed December 1937.

to say".⁷⁰ The French reluctance to announce officially the initialling plus rumours already heard by Soviet diplomats concerning a Polish involvement in the affair⁷¹ could not have encouraged the Russians. Moscow desired a quick end to the proceedings and therefore favoured the signing of the pact without further delay. In Paris the view-point was somewhat different. Domestic opposition was considerable but the future of the pact would now be decided in Warsaw as much as in Paris or Moscow. French ~~mistrust~~ insistence on a multilateral pact including Poland had been the cause of failure in 1927-1928; it remained to be seen whether the new international situation would provide a different ending to these negotiations of 1931.

3. Germany appeased.

The negotiations in Paris between representatives of the Soviet and French Governments did not signify a reversal of "traditional" Soviet foreign policy aims or means. Security remained the major goal and as comprehensive a system of non-aggression pacts as possible, the means. Thus the negotiation of the Berlin treaty's renewal in Soviet eyes was quite compatible with the negotiation of a non-aggression pact with France, though the Russians perceived the danger of complications arising with these two capitalist states because of the parallel negotiations. Ostensibly, Russian foreign policy remained true to its Rapallo course in that Germany continued to receive Soviet support in matters of European and world concern and given the fact that France and Germany on most questions occupied widely different positions, inevitably the Soviet stance clashed with that of France. This continued support for the Weimar Republic was determined by a sense of caution. Despite the deterioration of Soviet-German relations and the new possibilities opening out as a result of the negotiations in Paris, the fact remained that the USSR had behind it a number of years of successful collaboration, military, economic

70. Karakhan, the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to the Estonian Ambassador in Moscow, August 24, 1931. The Central State Archive of the Estonian SSSR, quoted in Joffe, Vneshnyaya Politika Sovetskogo Soyuza,

pps. 232-233. X

71. See above.

and political, with Germany which might still reap further harvests, whereas doubts concerning the outcome of the French negotiations were considerable. The Soviet Government was prepared to risk alienating Germany by opening non-aggression pact talks with France, since the opportunity of a French diplomatic change of heart could not be ignored, yet it would not place all its foreign policy eggs in the new French basket. A sounder policy was to take reasonable steps towards the appeasement of Germany, especially since a sudden transfer of allegiance from Berlin to Paris would run the risk of completely destroying the waning support for Russia in the former whilst benefiting little the new policy of the latter where Soviet hostility was accepted as the norm.

Soviet press reaction to the Austro-German customs union scheme is indicative of its country's foreign policy line during the spring and summer^{of} 1931. Despite intense French opposition to this scheme and its coincidence with the Soviet-French political and economic negotiations,⁷² Russian comment was markedly pro-German and anti-French.

On May 12, *Izvestia* commented on the French "anti-German" plans, asserting that recently France had placed itself across the path of German aspirations and was seeking to disrupt the customs union proposal.⁷³ A *Pravda* headline in July was quite explicit on the aims of French policy; "France insists on the complete economic and political subordination of Germany."⁷⁴ The Soviet press quoted extensively French speeches directed against the customs union which exhibited the anti-German nature of French policy.⁷⁵ It was stressed that this French opposition was only one more illustration of the fact that it was useless for Germany to consider itself accepted by the Versailles powers.⁷⁶ The obvious conclusion which the German Government and public were supposed to deduce was that Germany still had a real need of its

72. And despite the fact that the announcement of the customs plan was one of the factors involved in the French decision to begin non-aggression pact negotiations with Russia.

73. *Izvestia*, May 12, 1931.

74. *Pravda*, July 20, 1931.

75. *Izvestia*, May 10, 1931.

76. For example, *Izvestia*, March 27, 1931, May 11, 1931.

partnership with the Soviet Union. French hostility was the Soviet answer to those Germans who expressed the view that their state no longer needed the Russian link.⁷⁷ The Soviet press strove to convince its readership that although Briand might appear to use more peaceful tactics towards Germany than the French "right", in reality his policy nevertheless was basically pro-Versailles and anti-German.⁷⁸

Following the eventual decision to invite the USSR to attend the European Commission, established to look into the causes of the world economic crisis,⁷⁹ the Soviet delegation arrived in Geneva on May 15.⁸⁰ It was quite active in its attempts to explain the capitalist catastrophe and bolstered its propaganda efforts by a proposal for an economic non-aggression pact, in the hope of internationally outlawing any future economic moves against it, remembering well the recent anti-dumping campaign.⁸¹ The Soviet press, however, continued to criticise the Commission and especially the dominant state at the gathering, France.⁸² The real outcome was seen as a "victory of French imperialism over Germany." Quoting a German paper which had spoken of a friendly talk between Briand and Curtius, *Izvestia* sarcastically commented that "if a friendly talk between monsieurs Briand and Curtius could be sufficient to reconcile Franco-German contradictions, then the creation of a pan-European organisation would be child's play."⁸³

Soviet diplomacy went further than merely indicating the continuing anti-German character of the Versailles powers' foreign policies in its efforts to

77. Kochan states that "in all probability" it was the Austro-German customs union scheme which demonstrated to the Russians the need to seek reinsurance elsewhere (meaning in France). He thinks that the Soviet press, whilst not actually attacking the scheme, was very cautious in its handling. Kochan, *Russia and the Weimar Republic*, pps. 152-153. In fact, it seems more probable that whilst it was important in so far as the French reconsideration of its foreign policy in favour of the USSR was concerned, the Russians used the scheme rather as a last attempt to prove to the Germans the political advantages which they could secure from continued Soviet friendship.

78. *Izvestia*, May 15, 1931.

79. See Chapter 2.

80. *Pravda*, May 17, 1931.

81. Soviet project for a protocol on economic non-aggression, May 18, 1931.

DVP Vol. 14, pps. 342-343.

82. For example, *Pravda* editorial, May 21, 1931.

83. *Izvestia*, May 24, 1931.

educate Germany in its continued need for Soviet Russia. Moscow appreciated that the non-aggression pact negotiations with France would provoke a negative reaction in Berlin which Soviet press attacks against French foreign policy and support for Germany could not alone assuage. By a frank exposition of the policy in Paris, it was optimistic enough to hope that it would be able to secure the French pact whilst retaining its German card. In the circumstances, this was perhaps the wisest policy.

In May, Litvinov admitted to Dirksen that the French Foreign Ministry had suggested the idea of signing a non-aggression pact the previous month, but he stressed that the initiative had come from Paris, that great difficulties were expected and reassured the German Ambassador that there were no parallel negotiations with Poland.⁸⁴ This did not succeed in reassuring the Germans and in June Tvardovsky was accosting Krestinsky on the same subject. He told Krestinsky that Berthelot had given the German Ambassador in Paris information which differed from that given by Litvinov to Dirksen, namely, Berthelot alleged that the initiative for the negotiations in general and the conclusion of a pact in particular had come from the Soviet side. Krestinsky was explicitly asked whether in fact this was the case, which he denied, the history of the negotiations being given to the German:

From what I have said, Mr. Tvardovsky must see that to speak of our initiative in these negotiations is impossible. We, of course, willingly accepted the French proposal as we stand for the regulation of our relations with all countries.⁸⁵

German fear was not so much concentrated on the outcome of the Franco-Soviet negotiations, though this created considerable anxiety, but on what this might lead to and specifically the danger of an eventual non-aggression pact between Russia and Poland. Tvardovsky expressed this fear, stating that in German political circles there was anxiety because it was said that France had made the proposal to the USSR after a preliminary agreement with Poland. Further, it was known that the latter had asked Finland whether it would agree

84. German Documents, quoted in Korbel, Poland between East and West, p.268.

85. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, and the German Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, Tvardovsky, June 5, 1931. DVP Vol.14, pps. 367-368.

to conclude a pact jointly with the Soviet Union. Krestinsky replied that in the preliminary talks between Dovgalevsky and Berthelot from which resulted the opening of the negotiations, neither side had mentioned either Finland or Poland.^{86.}

In their desire to dispel these German fears the Russians repeated this information in Berlin. Khinchuk, the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, spoke to the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry on this theme:

The reports in the German press about Soviet-French relations contain exaggerations and false guesswork. Besides this, in our relations with France there has occurred nothing which has not already been told by Litvinov to Dirksen.

The State Secretary answered that the German Foreign Ministry had said nothing against the conclusion of a trade treaty between the USSR and France. The non-aggression pact only interested him in that recently the Poles had taken many liberties in the eastern provinces and were referring to the Franco-Soviet pact. Khinchuk again confirmed that France had never discussed any questions concerning Poland or Rumania.^{87.}

On August 12, the German Government was informed through Dirksen that the negotiations with France had led to the initialling of a non-aggression pact with France. Litvinov read him parts of the text and strove to allay his fears by stressing that the pact would weaken the Franco-Polish alliance and therefore benefit Germany.^{88.}

The threat of an eventual Soviet Polish non-aggression pact continued to haunt Germany, despite these Soviet denials. An article in "Germania" illustrates the German reaction, if in an extreme form:

Is Russia required to give guarantees that the talks with France will not lead to a basis for further, more comprehensive conversations in the East, under Franco-Polish auspices, which would then inevitably lead to the Eastern Locarno desired by Poland without Poland fulfilling Germany's conditions for such an Eastern Locarno, i.e. the return of Upper Silesia and the Corridor? ^{89.}

86. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, and the German Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, Tvardovsky ~~not~~ June 5, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 368.

87. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, and the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry, Bulow, June 5, 1931. Ibid., pps. 370-371. L.M. Khinchuk, Soviet Ambassador in Germany, 1930-1934.

88. German documents, quoted in Korbel, Poland between East and West, p. 268

89. Germania, June 18, 1931, quoted in Kochan, Russia and the Weimar Republic, pps. 155-156.

France was not obverse to increasing German suspicions at a time when negotiations between the latter and the USSR were being conducted for the prolonging of the Berlin treaty. If these negotiations could be sabotaged, France would not be too displeased.

Despite these German suspicions and worries, the Berlin treaty was prolonged;^{90.} Germany could not prevent the Franco-Soviet rapprochement and still desired to maintain links with Russia. In the past, Germany had been in a strong position because of the USSR's isolation. Now the situation was being reversed. The "Kolnische Zeitung" adopted an optimistic view of the changes which were taking place in the foreign policy orientation of its eastern partner:

Although final judgement will be possible only after we have become acquainted with the contents of the (Franco-Soviet non-aggression) pact, it is possible to say that we have no grounds for anxiety as the pact, evidently, neither in letter nor spirit, contradicts the recently renewed Berlin treaty. In principle, Germany even welcomes the conclusion of this pact as an important step on the path to the further rapprochement of the Soviet Union with the rest of Europe.^{91.}

This was not the unanimous reaction of Germany, however; others saw the pact as a real turning point in the Rapallo course, as the prelude to a new Soviet political alignment which would isolate Germany once more. Russia's dual policy was not an easy one, yet whilst it was confined to France and Germany it might have success. In the late summer of 1931 a spanner was thrown into this delicate diplomatic mechanism, however; a Polish re-assessment of its foreign policy in the light of the changing international situation raised the real possibility of a Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact. If Germany was sensitive to a Soviet rapprochement with France, it was much more concerned about this latter eventuality. Here was a real test for Russian diplomacy.

90. See above. It should be noted, however, that the German Government did not ratify the Extension Protocol until 1933. See chapter 6.

91. Quoted in Izvestia, August 22, 1931.

Chapter 4: Security on the Western Border.

The Soviet State in at least one respect was linked to all the other states of the international system by a common denominator, the pursuit of security. Indeed, its ideological isolation necessitated a particularly energetic devotion to this concept of which its leaders were not unaware. In any consideration of security, the state must pay paramount importance to those countries with which it shares a common frontier, since it is from that quarter that it can expect an attack upon its ^{heartland} headland to be mounted.^{1.}

For several reasons, the Soviet state was compelled to concentrate considerable attention on its western frontier and those states which were adjacent to it. The isolation of the Bolshevik regime amongst hostile capitalist states alone would have recommended such a policy; the sheer length of this frontier and the proven active and not merely passive aggressiveness of its neighbours added further incentive for its adoption. In the very early years of its existence, Communist Russia had actually been attacked by Poland and the peace eventually restored between the states did little to invoke a spirit of complacency in the Soviet leadership. Soviet-Rumanian relations were bedevilled by a territorial dispute concerning the seizure of Bessarabia by the latter and were, if anything, more bitter than those between Moscow and Warsaw. Russian relations with its other western neighbours, Finland, Estonia and Latvia, if not quite at such an uncompromisingly hostile level, certainly were far from amicable and the suspicion that these states were manipulated by the Polish Government did little to enhance their reputations with Moscow.

Despite the ideological, historical and territorial obstacles to good relations, the struggling communist state's urgent security requirements forced its leadership to undertake the distasteful task of alleviating the situation, especially since these western neighbours were closely linked with

1. This concept has been considerably modified by the importance of aerial and especially missile strategy in the last thirty years but certainly held true in the early 1930's.

imperialist France and might well play the role of an advance guard in a renewed western intervention. The new Soviet foreign policy tool, the non-aggression pact, was invoked in the 1920's as a means of providing such security with regard to Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Lithuania, but only in the latter's case was a successful conclusion reached.²

Russian relations with its western neighbours continued to oscillate between indifferent and bad. The key to this western border region lay in Poland, the dominant state and it was to Warsaw that the Soviet Union principally looked in both its anger and its diplomatic activity.

1. Poland.

Reference has already been made to the tense state of Soviet-Polish relations in chapter two. The tentative attempts to thaw the freeze were always halted by incidents such as a narrowly averted explosion in the Soviet Embassy in Poland which occurred in April, 1930 and called forth a strong protest. The Soviet Government maintained that such terrorist acts were intended to complicate relations between the two states and could only take place in an atmosphere of hostility which certain Polish circles and part of the Polish press were creating:

The Soviet Government, which steadfastly endeavours to develop and strengthen good-neighbourly relations with Poland, is compelled to state that the said activities, which are undoubtedly connected also with the acts of certain international elements, represent a great danger not only to the relations between the USSR and Poland, but to the whole world.³

One year later, in April 1931, an attempt by a Pole to murder a Soviet diplomat created a violent Soviet press response.⁴ Any attempt by Poland to act as a leader for the east-European countries was immediately seized upon by the Russian press as an indication of that country's anti-Soviet plans. Thus a series of conferences between agrarian countries to help combat the economic crisis, proposed by Poland and to which the USSR was not invited was

2. See Chapter 1. Rumania was considered too much beyond the pale to make such an attempt worthwhile.

3. Note from the Soviet to the Polish Government, April 28, 1930. DVP 13, p. 241.

4. See Chapter 2, p. 45.

"by no means an instrument of peace, but, on the contrary, created the preconditions for a military-political bloc against the Soviet Union."⁵

Pravda stated that "the feverish preparation of Poland for war against the Soviet Union is shown in all regions of activity of the fascist government - in its foreign and internal policy, in its economic, agrarian, national policy etc."⁶. Behind these preparations was seen the guiding hand of French imperialism. On the same day that paper also included an article entitled, "Estonian-Polish collaboration on the basis of intervention."⁷ An article in "International Press Correspondence," the Comintern journal, claimed that "Poland's feverish preparations for war against the Soviet Union are to be seen in all spheres of activity of the fascist government."⁸ Reports of visits between military leaders of Russia's western neighbours were widely reported in the Soviet press.⁹

Against this background of poor relations, as in the case of France, the year 1930 witnessed a real diplomatic effort at a rapprochement by both countries.¹⁰ Since Poland was the dominant area state, any improvement of its relations with the USSR would have a considerable influence on the attitude of the other border states to their gigantic eastern neighbour. To achieve success as regards Poland was therefore the major Soviet objective.

Poland posed considerable problems for Soviet diplomacy during this period. The conscious desire of the Soviet leadership to extend the circle of states with which it had successfully concluded non-aggression pacts has already been referred to in the preceding chapters. Such pacts Moscow interpreted as at least a limiting factor on the capitalist states' ability to resort to war against the first socialist country. Poland's known hostility,

5. Izvestia, January 13, 1931.

6. Pravda, May 6, 1931.

7. Ibid.

8. J. Bratkovski, "The Polish Armaments against the Soviet Union," International Press Correspondence, Vol. 11, N. 25, May 13, 1931, p. 463.

9. For example, the visit of the Rumanian Navy Chief to Poland, Izvestia, August 15, 1931.

10. At this stage the improvement in Franco-Soviet relations was too little developed to have influenced the Soviet-Polish moves.

its position as a hireling of French imperialism and its proximity to Soviet territory indicated a profound need for such a pact in its case. The complicating factors were Polish intransigence in its desire to lead the Baltic bloc and the Rapallo partnership.

By 1930 the international situation had wrought changes on Polish foreign policy as it had on that of many other states. Poland was particularly badly hit by the world economic crisis, experiencing a slump in industrial output and a sharp rise in unemployment. During 1930-1931 a re-assessment of French authority in Europe was undertaken by Warsaw; doubt began to accumulate as to the future ability of France to guarantee Poland's security, precariously wedged as it was between two great hostile neighbours, Germany and the USSR. The increasing uncertainty and growing extremism within the Weimar Republic provoked serious thought in Warsaw, as in Paris, as to whether foreign policy could safely continue on its old route or whether perhaps a new course should be chartered, one which would lead to Moscow. In conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko, in October, 1930, Zaleski, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, noted that the basic factor in the international situation was the indeterminateness of Germany's position:

Although Curtius was restrained and extraordinarily cautious at Geneva, giving the impression that the basic line of conduct as practised by Stresemann remained unchanged, the extraordinary strength of the extreme nationalists' position, who have expanded their activity in Germany, compels us closely to observe the situation which recently has arisen.^{11.}

The appointment of Colonel Beck to the position of Polish Deputy Foreign Minister in 1930, where he almost overshadowed Zaleski, further strengthened the tendency towards the adoption of a foreign policy line independent of France yet still maintaining the appearance of alliance.^{12.} Of course, Poland did not undertake a reorientation in its foreign policy in favour of the USSR overnight. Great problems in the development of Soviet-Polish relations

11. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko and the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zaleski, October 11, 1930. DVP 13, p.558. V.A. Antonov-Ovseenko, Soviet Ambassador in Czechoslovakia, 1924-1928; Lithuania, 1928-1930; Poland, 1930-1934; Soviet Consul-general in Barcelona, 1938. Executed at the end of 1938 or early 1939.

12. Korbel, Poland between East and West, p.272.

remained, yet the possibility of a rapprochement was at least improved by these international adjustments.

If the Soviet negotiations with France had alarmed many influential Germans and to an extent, jeopardised Soviet-German relations, this was much more so in the case of any improvement of Soviet-Polish relations. Perhaps the key factor in the German decision to renew the Berlin treaty was the desire to prolong Soviet-Polish hostility and prevent any rapprochement. This was certainly a major German foreign policy objective.¹³ If Soviet diplomacy was risking severe damage in its German ties by the development of new relations with France, it was increasing this risk considerably by any approach towards Poland. The dominant theme in Soviet foreign policy as regards Poland in late 1930 and early 1931 was therefore caution. Growing disillusionment with Germany must have tempted Moscow to probe the possibilities which Poland's new attitude might reveal, but this called for delicate handling if Germany was not to be totally alienated.

In March, 1930, *Izvestia* contained a long editorial on Polish anti-Soviet campaigns and the long-standing hostility between the two countries. It then went on to say;

To the adventurist policy of the Polish militarists, the Soviet Union counters with its policy - a policy of peace. We proposed the conclusion of a non-aggression pact to Poland and this proposal remains in force, despite the fact that in the last few years the Polish Government has refused to take on itself an obligation of non-aggression in relation to the USSR.¹⁴

Again, Litvinov, in an interview with representatives of the foreign press given on his appointment to the post of Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in July, 1930, spoke of Soviet policy towards these frontier states:

We shall with particular attention follow the policy of our nearest neighbours, where a strengthening of aggressive and chauvinistic movements has recently become discernable, representing a serious threat to peace; now as before we are of the opinion that one of the most important tasks of our diplomacy is to strengthen peaceful good-neighbourly relations with these countries in ^{the} spirit of the pacific proposals we have repeatedly made and the Moscow protocol.¹⁵

13. See Chapter 3, for example, Curlius's directive, pps. 76-77.

14. *Izvestia*, March 18, 1930.

15. Press interview by the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, July 25, 1930. DVP 13, p. 427.427.

Statements of good-will also emanated from the Polish side. Zaleski, in an interview with the Polish paper, "Gazeta Polska", was quoted as saying that Poland wanted a peaceful policy and would not take part in any military adventure.¹⁶ On June 13, Patek, the Polish Minister in Moscow, told a Soviet diplomat that no one in Poland wanted war and that there would be no war. The Soviet reply was less optimistic; it conceded that the Polish people did not want war but the same could not be said for some influential Polish circles: "under the influence of these circles our relations have worsened recently and especially worsened under the present government." Patek denied this "but weakly and uncertainly."¹⁷ In September Patek spoke to Litvinov about the need to improve relations and for this purpose he proposed the conclusion of a conciliation convention, a postal convention concerning which negotiations had been conducted over a long period, an ^{aviation} arbitration and a frontier convention. The Poles had substituted conciliation for arbitration because of the known Soviet opposition to the latter. Litvinov commented that arbitration had always been spoken of in connection with a non-aggression pact and asked Patek whether he had in mind the substitution of a conciliation commission for arbitration in the event of the signing of a pact. The Polish minister replied evasively that his country had objected to the conclusion of a pact.¹⁸

The next step in these complex diplomatic moves, according to the recently published Soviet documents, was a cautious approach made by the Polish Ambassador in Turkey to his Soviet counterpart.¹⁹ On November 19, the Pole spoke to

16. Gazeta Polska, April 18, 1930, quoted in Dokumenty i Materialy Sovetsko-Polskikh Otnoshenii Vol. 5 (Moscow 1967), pps. 458-459. (Henceforth Sov-Pol Docs)

17. Note of a conversation between Stomonyakov, member of the Collegium of the NKD and Patek, the Polish Minister in the USSR, June 13, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, p. 347.

18. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, September 27, 1930. Ibid., pps. 523-524.

19. Laroche says that the Soviet Minister in Poland proposed to reopen negotiations for a non-aggression pact in October 1930 but Zaleski expressed the fear that it would weaken the value of the Kellogg Pact. J.A. Laroche, La Pologne de Pilsudski: Souvenirs d'une Ambassade, 1926-1935 (Paris 1953), p. 104. No other reference to such a proposal has been found. In the light of Patek's evasive answer to Litvinov on September 27, it is possible that the Soviet Minister was instructed to clarify the Polish position. Also see Zaleski's letter to Patek of December 23 in which he speaks of the Soviet Minister's proposal for a pact. Sov. Pol. Docs. p. 473.

Surits ^{20.} on the question of the normalisation of Polish-Soviet and Rumanian-Soviet relations. He outlined roughly a plan whereby a bilateral neutrality pact would be concluded immediately, a policy for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Rumania and the USSR initiated and an agreement whereby the Rumanian-Polish agreement ^{21.} would not be renewed. The Polish diplomat expressed interest as to whether diplomatic relations could be established with Rumania leaving the Bessarabian question open, each side remaining on its adopted position, though ~~the~~ considered the immediate conclusion of a bilateral pact desirable independently of the course of Soviet-Rumanian relations. ^{22.}

On November 21, no lesser figure than Joseph Stalin replied to Surits's telegram stating that "the Polish Ambassador's proposal deserves attention." Surits was instructed to continue the conversation with his Polish counterpart and to state that he would be able to put the question of a bilateral pact of neutrality before the Soviet Government if it could be guaranteed that the Polish Government was really prepared to take such a step. Further, he was to hint "gently and vaguely" that the presence of such a pact could create the pre-conditions for the favourable settlement of the other questions which interested the Polish Ambassador. ^{23.} A further conversation between the two Ambassadors revealed that, according to the Pole, he had conducted the previous meeting ad referendum without the authorisation of his Government, but would be leaving for Warsaw within the next few days and there would "openly express his opinion to Zaleski." Surits reported that the Polish diplomat was much more restrained; "I do not know whether he was rebuffed by Warsaw, whether the election results in Poland or the new phase of the aggravation of our relations

20. Soviet Deputy Ambassador in Denmark, 1918-1919; Ambassador in Afghanistan, 1919-1921; Norway 1922-1923; Turkey, 1923-1934; Germany, 1934-1937; France, 1937-1940. Member of Soviet delegation at League of Nations, 1937-1939. Councillor, NKD, 1940-1945. Ambassador in Brazil, 1945-1947.

21. Military defence agreement.

22. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, to the NKD, November 19, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, p. 663.

23. Telegram from Stalin to the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, November 21, 1930. Ibid., p. 669.

with France have influenced him."²⁴.

Here the documents let the matter rest, except for a telegram from Surits on December 22 saying that the Polish Charge d'Affaires had informed him that according to Patek "the question of a pact between us has come to a standstill," and asking whether this was correct.²⁵ Two days later, Litvinov replied that "we have not received any new proposals from the Poles, but Zaleski made ambiguous hints in Warsaw."²⁶ It is unlikely that the Polish Ambassador in Turkey would have made such proposals without authorisation from Warsaw, yet this indirect mode of approach to the Soviet Government is indicative of the delicate nature of Soviet-Polish relations.

On December 23 the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote to Patek in Moscow that Pilsudski had decided "to accept in principle Ovseenko's proposal for the realisation of the never-interrupted negotiations for the conclusion of a political agreement and for the opening of negotiations on a trade treaty." Zaleski stated that he would give Ovseenko a concrete answer after the New Year as a text must first be worked out preserving the basic Polish postulates and taking into account treaties and allies. Special emphasis would be laid on the problem of conciliation. He said that telegrams had been sent to the Polish Ambassador in Bucharest, Riga, Talin and Helsinki with information on Ovseenko's proposal and the Polish position on this question, including the intention to safeguard for the Baltic states and Rumania the possibility of starting simultaneously the negotiation of identical agreements. As regards the trade pact, the Polish Government, in so far as the Soviet Government proposed a wide agreement, could not reject this proposal straight away but expected many disputed questions and considered such a wide agreement to be impossible. The Poles, however, would be favourable to the conclusion of a series of treaties on separate questions.²⁷

24. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, to the NKD, November 27, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, p. 686.

25. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, to the NKD, December 22, 1930. Ibid., p. 756.

26. Telegram from the Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, December 24, 1930. DVP Vol. 13, p. 758.

27. Letter from the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zaleski, to the Polish Minister in Moscow, Patek, December 23, 1930. Sov-Pol Docs, p. 473.

On January 5, Litvinov complained to Patek about rumours in the Polish press concerning Soviet-Polish negotiations for a non-aggression pact and trade treaty, proposals about which Litvinov denied the Soviets had either made to or received from Poland. Patek, apparently in some confusion, answered that a long time ago he had spoken of the necessity for the conclusion of some conventions including one on conciliation procedure to Litvinov, Stomonyakov and Krestinsky. Litvinov commented that these talks had taken place many months ago, that the press had not been informed of them, at least by the Soviet side and that it was a long haul from a conciliation procedure to a non-aggression pact. He explained that such a conciliation procedure could only be accepted as a part of a general pact.^{28.}

Presumably by this date Patek had received no instructions to reveal the contents of his communication from Zaleski; Later, when the Polish minister did assert that Antonov-Ovseenko had made official proposals to Zaleski, Litvinov denied this, also denying that the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw might have done so whilst acting beyond his instructions. The Soviet view was that proposals had been made in 1926 which were rejected by the Poles, who advanced unacceptable counter-proposals. Until one side changed its position there could be no agreement and the Soviets certainly had not introduced any new proposals and as far as they knew, neither had the Poles. Litvinov agreed that Patek had proposed a conciliation agreement in 1930,²⁹ but the Russian Government believed that in the absence of the necessary friendly atmosphere it would not give the desired results. In fact, it was only a feasible proposition after the signature of a non-aggression pact. Therefore, the Soviets were surprised when they saw in the foreign press reports that they had apparently made new non-aggression pact proposals. Litvinov adamantly refused to accept Patek's point that a conciliation agreement could be signed as a continuation of the Kellogg Pact or the Litvinov protocol, without the need for a non-aggression pact.^{30.}

28. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in Moscow, Patek, January 5, 1931. Sov-Pol Docs, pps. 414-415

29. See page 108.

30. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, January 29, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 48-51.

It does seem certain that at this time, although talks concerning a pact were vaguely being held between Polish and Soviet diplomats, no actual negotiations were taking place on this subject nor had any definite proposals been advanced.^{31.}

Zaleski, reporting to a meeting of the Sejm Commission on foreign affairs, said that in foreign policy Poland constantly desired the development of mutual links in the political and economic spheres with the USSR and that any Soviet initiative in the past had always met with a warm readiness to collaborate and implement by the Polish Government.^{32.} The official Polish paper, "Polska Gazeta", in a leading article commenting on this speech, said that it now depended on the Soviet Union to draw the corresponding conclusions if it desired peace with Poland.^{33.}

Despite these obvious signs that some progress was being made in Soviet-Polish relations, there was still little indication of imminent negotiations. Neither side had moved from its previously held position; Poland was still reluctant to sign a non-aggression pact, preferring a conciliation agreement by which any dispute between itself and the USSR could be settled by peaceful means. If a pact was to be signed, it should be concluded simultaneously with those of Rumania and the Baltic states on the one hand, the Soviet Union on the other.^{34.} In fact, at this stage the Poles were seeking to make capital out of the slight diplomatic advances with Russia by informing the Germans of Russian initiative on the subject of a non-aggression pact with Poland, presumably in the hope of aggravating relations between Moscow and Berlin. Dirksen, at least, does not seem to have fallen for this Polish "intrigue" and chose to

31. In conversation with the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow on January 19, 1931, Litvinov declared that the USSR had not conducted any negotiations relative to a pact of non-aggression with Poland for some months. DVP Vol. 14, p. 19.

32. Report by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zaleski, to a meeting of the Sejm Commission on Foreign Affairs, January 10, 1931. Sov-Pol Docs, p. 477.

33. Quoted in Izvestia, January 16, 1931.

34. See speech of a leading Polish politician, Goluvko, in the Sejm in February 1931. Quoted in Izvestia, February 23, 1931.

believe the Russian denials of pact negotiations.^{35.}

Polish-Soviet relations, on the surface, remained as bad as ever during 1930 and early 1931, punctuated by frequent press campaigns against each other. The tentative diplomatic feelers by both sides had produced nothing of note, as indeed they could not so long as neither state would tolerate the concept of a compromise agreement. In his report to the Sixth Soviet Congress in March, 1931, Molotov adopted a pessimistic tone:

Relations between the USSR and Poland, unfortunately, still leave much to be desired. Despite Poland's acceptance of our proposal on the signing of the well-known Moscow protocol, the repeated attempts which have been made by the Soviet Government to consolidate Soviet-Polish relations have not received the required response. On the other hand, as its adjacent neighbour, we cannot but turn our attention to the fact that at the last three sessions of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, Poland has taken a determined and active part in turning down all Soviet and other proposals for a genuine reduction of armaments.^{36.}

2. The Baltic States and Rumania.

Soviet relations with its other western neighbours, as might be expected, differed little from those with Poland. There is little of note concerning Soviet relations with either Latvia or Estonia in late 1930 and spring 1931 in either the published Soviet documents or the Soviet press, an indication of the generally indifferent state of affairs between them and their large eastern neighbour. Molotov, in his March survey of Soviet foreign relations, briefly touched on this area:

In our relations with the Baltic states - Latvia, Estonia and Finland, little has changed since the last time. It can only be said that the hostile influences of foreign great powers directed against the Soviet Union continue to exert considerable pressure on the policy of these states.^{37.}

35. Report of the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 27, 1931. Sov-Pol Docs, pps. 480-481. Budurowycz quotes certain authors who have stated that the Polish Government was insincere in concluding the non-aggression pact with the USSR and intended it merely to strengthen the Polish bargaining position in future negotiations with Germany. Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p.10, footnote 24.

36. Molotov's Report to the Sixth Soviet Congress, March 8, 1931. DVP 14, p.155.

37. Ibid., p.156.

The one point which did catch the attention of the Soviet press was a naval gathering of several fleets on the June anniversary of the tenth jubilee of the Latvian navy to which the Russians were not invited, only one example of "the general anti-Soviet policy in Latvia."³⁸ The regatta could only be seen as "a political demonstration against the Soviet Union, especially since such 'naval powers' as Estonia and Poland" had been invited.³⁹ The foreign policy of these small new-comers to the international system was very much influenced by Poland and no real change was to be expected here until a reassessment occurred in Warsaw.

Soviet-Finnish relations received more limelight in this period in that Finland was more aggressively hostile to the USSR. Throughout 1930 a very tense state of affairs existed between these two states, frequent frontier and other incidents occurring. The Finnish press was especially active in its attacks on the Soviet collectivisation programme.⁴⁰ The Soviet Government expressed its concern at the activities of Finnish citizens who were systematically violating the Soviet-Finnish frontier and which the Finnish Government seemed reluctant to control.⁴¹ During 1931 this tension increased rather than decreased. The Finnish Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

not only have not taken any measures to curb the high-handedness of the Finnish soldiers in their anti-Soviet frenzy, but, on the contrary, encourage and develop this provocative witches' sabbath...It is clear that the influence of extra Finnish forces, relying on the adventurists in the Finnish general headquarters, are attempting to hasten the attraction of Finland to an anti-Soviet adventure and to shatter the peace in eastern Europe...The Finnish soldiers in fact imprudently direct Finland's policy in relation to the Soviet Union and continue to test the peace-lovingness and self control of the Soviet country.⁴²

Such articles permeated the Soviet press in May 1931. On May 13, Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in Finland, made a resolute protest against demonstrations by fascist students outside the Soviet embassy.⁴³ A few days later, Krestinsky

38. Izvestia editorial, May 11, 1931.

39. Pravda, May 11, 1931.

40. For example, quote in Izvestia April 26, 1931.

41. See, for example, Note of the Soviet Ambassador in Finland, Maisky to the Finnish Foreign Minister, July 16, 1930. A.V. Sabanin, Neshdunarodnaya Politika dogovory, deklaratsii i diplomaticheskaya perepiska, Volume 3 (Moscow 1932) pps. 232-233

42. Izvestia May 7, 1931.

43. J.M. Maisky Head of NKD press department, 1922; Soviet Councillor in Britain, 1925-1927; Japan, 1927-1929; Ambassador in Finland, 1929-1932; Britain, 1932-1943; Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, 1943-1946. Izvestia, May 15, 1931.

addressed a note to the Finnish Charge d'Affaires in Moscow complaining that "despite frequent warnings by representatives of the Soviet Government both in Helsinki and Moscow, the campaign of enmity and hatred against the Soviet Union in Finland which began last summer is continuing and growing stronger." The note went on to criticise the tacit agreement and encouragement of the Finnish Government in the hostile acts directed against the Soviet Embassy in Helsinki.^{44.} The following day a note from the Narkomindel to the Finnish Mission in the USSR complained of the fortification of certain Finnish islands which, according to the Russians, violated the 1920 Soviet-Finnish peace treaty,^{45.} a charge which the Finns denied.^{46.}

The relationship of these small states to Poland and each other is illustrated by the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs' comment to Litvinov during a meeting at Geneva. The former stated that his Government was interested in a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union if Poland had or would in the future propose such a pact to the USSR. Litvinov replied that "we, as always, were ready to sign a pact with Finland independently of Poland and the Baltic states."^{47.} Following up this conversation, the Finnish foreign minister told the Soviet Ambassador in Helsinki that Finland would be prepared to conclude a non-aggression pact with the USSR separately from the other Baltic states but that such pacts must be concluded by the Soviet Government with the other border states also, a step which, according to the Finn, these states were prepared to take. To emphasise this point, any pact signed by Finland must include a provision that the Finnish-Soviet pact would become invalid in the event of the abrogation of the pacts between the USSR and the Baltic states. Maisky replied that such a condition was impossible. In any case, in his report to the NKD he

44. Note from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Finnish Charge d'Affaires in the USSR, Vesterlund, May 17, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps.

45. Note from the NKD to the Finnish Mission in the USSR, May 18, 1931. Ibid., p. 344.

46. Reply of the Finnish Mission, May 21, 1931. Ibid., p. 796 Note 112.

47. Telegram from the Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, concerning his meeting with the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs in Geneva, May 19, 1931. Ibid., p. 798. Note 123.

considered that the paramount factor at the present time was the improvement of relations with Finland in general as a preliminary to any non-aggression pact negotiations. Maisky, in this conversation, gained the impression that the Foreign Minister had discussed this theme with representatives of the other border states whilst in Geneva.⁴⁸ It was this very joint action by its western border states which Russia wanted to break down in order that strictly bilateral non-aggression pacts could be concluded, since it was in such joint co-operation by these states that Russia saw the danger to it.

These diplomatic probings did not terminate the press war between both states.⁴⁹ A note of caution may perhaps be added that to a degree such hostile press campaigns in the Soviet Union catered for the internal readership and sought to create an impression of external danger against which unity and vigilance at home were essential. Nevertheless, they remain clear evidence of the bad relations existing between Finland and the USSR.

Soviet relations with Rumania were the least amicable of all this group, largely owing to the Bessarabian dispute. Together with Poland, it was seen as the major staging point for a western imperialist intervention against the USSR.⁵⁰ Even in this case, however, as with Poland, the spring of 1931 witnessed a cautious diplomatic probing of the situation by both Governments, though the absence of diplomatic relations compelled the delicate talks to be held between the respective members of the Rumanian and Soviet diplomatic delegations in London. On March 20, a British journalist acted as the link in bringing the Soviet Counsellor and the Rumanian Counsellor in London together. Bogomolov, the Russian, informed his Rumanian counterpart that he understood that the Rumanian Government desired to send a representative to Moscow for negotiations on all unsettled questions. He was prepared to forward Moscow any

48. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Finland, Maisky, and the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ire-Koskinen, June 1, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p.363.

49. For example, Izvestiia, June 24, 1931; Pravda, June 28, 1931; Izvestiia, August 13, 1931.

50. See, for example, a long article on the Rumanian economy and its plans for intervention, Izvestiia, June 11, 1931.

proposals from the Rumanian Government. Chiotori, the Rumanian, said that he wanted to visit Moscow as a delegate of his government, ostensibly to settle some secondary question, such as the position of the archives of the former Rumanian Embassy in St. Petersburg. Simultaneously he would be authorised to negotiate on all questions. A Soviet agreement to this proposal would allow the Rumanian Government to put this into effect. Bogomolov agreed to report the contents of the talk to Moscow.^{51.}

Litvinov's comments were not encouraging. He objected to the need for the Soviet Government to agree on the proposal prior to its acceptance by Rumania since this would provide the possibility of labelling the talks as undertaken on Soviet initiative. Neither did the idea of masking the real reason for the visit by a secondary one appeal to him. Chiotori must visit Moscow completely officially with official proposals from the Rumanian Government.^{52.}

Bogomolov informed Chiotori that "we shall not object if officially it is announced in the press that (Chiotori) is coming to us for negotiations on the question of the archives, but we shall give a visa only if he has official authorisation from the Rumanian Government to negotiate on all questions".^{53.} Chiotori agreed to inform his government of this proposal, which presumably was rejected since this theme was not again resumed.^{54.}

The major reason for this failure was the previous ^doption of rigid positions by both governments. It is likely that the Rumanian Government had some knowledge, at least, of the Polish-Soviet contacts and was anxious not to be left in the cold by future developments. The lack of progress between

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51. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Counsellor of the Embassy in Britain, Bogomolov and counsellor of the Rumanian Mission in Britain, Chiotori, March 20, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 208. Deputy Representative of the Far Eastern Republic with the RSFSR Government, 1922; Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Britain, 1925-1926; Ambassador in Poland, 1927-1929; Counsellor of Soviet Embassy in Britain, 1929; Ambassador in China, 1933-1937. Executed, 1938.
52. Letter from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Counsellor of the Soviet Embassy in Britain, Bogomolov, April 6, 1931. Ibid., pps. 232-233.
53. Note of a conversation between the Counsellor of the Soviet Embassy in Britain, Chiotori, April 23, 1931. Ibid., pps. 272-273.
54. See DVP Vol. 14, p. 792. Note 96.

Warsaw and Moscow by the early summer of 1931 did not encourage the Rumanian Government to retreat from its stance on the Bessarabian issue. An official representation to Moscow on this subject would imply that this region was not a completely integral part of Rumanian territory, an implication which Bucharest refused to concede. Conversely, only such an official act would satisfy the Russian contention that Bessarabia's fate was by no means beyond legal doubt. Despite a Soviet desire to negotiate non-aggression pacts it was not prepared to concede ground on this affair in the same way as it stood firm on its refusal to negotiate multilateral pacts with Poland and the Baltic states. This is not too surprising: if the Soviet Government had adopted this position in its far-weaker diplomatic situation of the 1920's, it was unlikely to be more yielding at a time when the balance of power seemed to be gradually swinging in its favour. This is by no means the last word on the Bessarabian issue; it will be encountered further in later pages when it will become a central issue in the whole series of Soviet non-aggression pact negotiations.

At this point, a few words may usefully be inserted on the remaining Baltic states, Lithuania. Reference has been made in the first chapter to the absence of a common frontier with the USSR and thus it was not strictly one of Russia's western neighbours. Also, unlike the other Baltic states it was involved in territorial disputes with both Poland and Germany; accordingly it tended to seek support in the international system from the other great power of eastern Europe, Russia. During the inter-war period Soviet-Lithuanian relations were cordial, a state of affairs encouraged, it has been suggested, by the absence in the latter country of any movement of importance advocating either communism or incorporation into the USSR.⁵⁵ Here was the one positive achievement in eastern Europe for Soviet diplomacy's attempts at securing non-aggression pacts in the twenties. On May 6, 1931 the Soviet-Lithuanian non-aggression pact of 1926 was prolonged for five years, thereafter being automatically extended each year unless one of the parties gave notice six months before hand of its desire to open negotiations for a further form of political

⁵⁵G. W. Keeton and R. Schlesinger, Russia and her Western Neighbours (London 1942), p.44.

relations between both states.⁵⁶ Izvestia devoted an editorial to the importance of Lithuanian friendship on the Russian western frontier and the failure of the western powers to entice it into an anti-Soviet front:

At a moment when the danger of new military shocks in Europe and the threat of an armed attack on the USSR are looming larger and larger, the Soviet Union and Lithuania have demonstrated by the signing of the protocol their interest in the preservation of peace.⁵⁷

The danger to the USSR in Europe was not enlarged upon; non-aggression pact negotiations were beginning with France, negotiations for the renewal of the Berlin treaty with Germany and even with Poland; something seemed to be in the air. But Soviet propagandists were not to be side-tracked by the achievements of their fellow diplomats.

3. Towards negotiations.

The summer of 1931 introduced important changes into the Soviet-Polish relationship which were to have significant consequences for the fortunes of a whole series of non-aggression pacts. Polish distrust of its ally, France, was not ameliorated by the Austro-German customs union affair and Izvestia noted, not without satisfaction, that "Polish leading ~~articles~~ circles do not thoroughly trust France and are greatly alarmed by Briand's policy".⁵⁸ Poland's position became yet more problematical with the onset of Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact negotiations and the renewal of the Berlin treaty, both of which were known to Warsaw. Commenting on the former, a Polish paper considered that Polish foreign policy must learn as quickly as possible from the regrouping of France, adding that Poland had neither a trade treaty nor a non-aggression pact with the USSR.⁵⁹ On the latter the "Gazeta Warszawska" in a leading article reacted almost hysterically:

The treaty of Berlin undoubtedly represents a serious danger for Poland. It is clear that Germany will try to use this treaty so as to achieve a constant, close collaboration with Russia on questions

56. Protocol for the prolongation of the Soviet-Lithuanian pact of mutual non-aggression and neutrality, May 6, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 318-319.

57. Izvestia, May 7, 1931.

58. Ibid., May 11, 1931.

59. Quoted in Ibid., June 22, 1931.

which concern Poland in an effort to resurrect the Bismarckian^c tradition. Therefore Poland must attentively follow the manoeuvres of the Berlin diplomacy and must counter German policy by its own policy in relation to Russia. The fact that we are involved in a struggle with communism at home must not change the wide perspectives of our relations with Russia which independently of the system which exists in Russia represents for Poland immense political and economic value.^{60.}

This article, if in an extreme form, represents a definite view shared in leading circles that Poland must at least consider the possibilities of a re-orientation in foreign policy. Of course, the motivating factor was more deep-rooted than this leading article would suggest. Soviet-German relations had been close and based in part, at least, on a common anti-Polish policy, since 1922. The renewal of the Berlin treaty merely demonstrated a German desire and a Soviet readiness to acquiesce in this long-standing policy. The more basic reason for Poland's apprehension was to be found in the international system itself, which threatened to expose Poland's weak position by its inner rumblings of power shifts. If France was becoming a less reliable ally against an increasingly unstable and extreme Germany and at the same time was abandoning its long-held policy of total hostility towards the Soviet Union, could Poland afford to stand aside and trust to its old policy.^{61.}

During May a breakthrough in Soviet-Polish economic relations had occurred with the visit of a Polish industrialists' delegation to the USSR.^{62.} On the political front, contacts seem to have lagged during the early summer but on August 4 Patek held an interesting conversation with Karakhan. He began by stating that economic relations between the two countries were developing satisfactorily. Then he passed on to political matters, promising that before his departure for Warsaw in the near future he would give Karakhan a proposal

60. Quoted in Inventia, July 4, 1931.

61. The Counsellor of the Polish legation told Sir Esmond Ovey in June that during the last month there had been a considerable detente in Polish-Soviet relations. The British Ambassador in the USSR, Ovey, to the Foreign Office, June 8, 1931, Public Record Office, F.O. N4209/2627/55.

62. Report of the Polish Minister in Moscow, Patek, to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zaleski, May 18, 1931. Sov-Pol Docs, pps. 482-484.

for a non-aggression pact. The Polish diplomat claimed that since 1926 he had been conducting negotiations with Stomonyakov, a high official of the Narkomindel on this theme, which although failing to produce a signed pact, had in practice provided good results, the proof of which lay in the absence of aggression by either side during this period. At this juncture, Karakhan expressed the Soviet view that no such negotiations had taken place since the summer of 1927 and if this topic had been broached in passing with Stomonyakov this could not be classified as negotiations.^{63.}

When asked if the Polish Government in these supposed conversations had moved towards the Soviet position, Patek replied that there remained four points of disagreement: the question of the western border states, that is, the Soviet demand for strictly bilateral agreements with all these states; the question of Rumania; the question of the League of Nations and Poland's obligations to that organisation and the question of good offices and arbitration, referring to the Soviet preference for conciliation. Only on the third point would Patek concede that a common settlement could be found, to which Karakhan replied that from this it appeared evident that the Polish Government did not intend to take any new steps nor make any new proposals. In particular, he criticised the Polish attitude towards the Baltic states, asserting that it raised serious doubts as to Poland's sincerity. Patek replied that he had on many occasions striven to secure a change of positions in Warsaw on this question but the answers he received compelled him to think that Poland had given promises to these states on the subject.^{64.} Karakhan thought that such a promise was hardly a genuine obstacle which could not be overcome when considering such an important matter as a non-aggression pact between Poland and the USSR. Patek, however, seemed convinced that Poland would not abandon this position. Karakhan's final conclusion in his note of this conversation was that

63. Izvestiia denied French rumours that the Soviet Government was conducting non-aggression pact negotiations with Poland. Izvestiia, July 27, 1931.

64. Presumably the promise was that Poland would stand firm against the Russian demand that each of these states should negotiate an individual non-aggression pact.

"evidently this new Polish proposal was only made in the possibility of shouting to all the world that Poland has made a new proposal for a pact to the Soviet Government."⁶⁵.

The promised meeting between these two diplomats before Patek's departure for Warsaw took place on August 23. Patek laid great emphasis on a non-aggression pact and handed the Soviet Deputy Commissar a review of the negotiations thus far, summarising the earlier proposals but presenting no new ones. The latter again confirmed that, having especially acquainted himself with the situation as regards pact negotiations, Patek's information advanced at their previous meeting was incorrect and that these negotiations had indeed ended in 1927. Once again, Patek claimed that Antonov-Ovseenko and Zaleski had held such negotiations⁶⁶. which Karakhan denied. Patek expressed the hope that on his return from holiday the business could be pushed forward,⁶⁷ to which Karakhan noted pessimistically that "it is impossible to move the business forward since he (Patek) has not given me anything new but only stated that to which we could not agree."⁶⁸.

The project pact, based on the old series of negotiations, which Patek handed Karakhan at this meeting did not in fact mark any progress, retaining the four major points of dispute. The first two articles, the basic ones, stated that both contracting parties rejected war as an instrument of national policy in their mutual relations⁶⁹ and undertook to abstain from any aggressive actions or attacks on the other. Such actions would include any act of force which

65. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Karakhan, and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, August 4, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 441-444.

66. See conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, January 29, 1931, see above, p. 111.

67. According to this Soviet report of the conversation Patek's expressed hope was not quite a proposal that formal negotiations should begin as Scott states from Patek's statement in the French Journal des Debats, August 28, 1931. Scott, Alliance against Hitler, pps. 15-16. I would be inclined to follow the Soviet version, at least as far as the Russian understanding of the talk is concerned. It may be that Patek genuinely believed that he had formally proposed that negotiations should begin.

68. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Karakhan and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, August 23, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 484-486.

69. Based on the Kellogg Pact.

violated the integrity and inviolability of the territory or political independence of the other contracting party even if carried out without the declaration of war. If one of the parties, despite its peaceful conduct, was subjected to attack by a third state or group of states, the other party undertook not to render help or support to the attacking side during the conflict.

The controversial issues arose in relation to the later articles. The third article emphasised that the above obligations could not in any event restrict or modify the rights and obligations which arose for Poland from its participation in the League of Nations as well as Polish obligations arising from its defensive pacts concluded in connection with the League Covenant. Article four concerned the settlement of all disputes by peaceful means but left open the question of arbitration versus conciliation. This implies a Polish willingness to compromise at least on this point by eventually accepting the Soviet preference for the latter. The major obstacles to agreement arose in the fifth and sixth articles of the Polish project:

Both contracting parties agree that the other governments which signed the Moscow Protocol of February 9, 1928 ⁷⁰, will be invited to conclude analogous treaties with the USSR.

(The pact) will enter into force thirty days after the ratification by the ministries of foreign affairs (of Poland and the USSR) that analogous treaties between the USSR on the one side and Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Rumania on the other, have been ratified.

The Soviet Government was adamant that the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact must be a strictly bilateral and isolated event, having no bearing on Soviet relations with third states. Polish insistence on these articles threatened any negotiations with a similar fate to those of the twenties. The pact, according to this project, was to be concluded for three years, to be prolonged for a further two years if not denounced three months before the expiry of the first period. ⁷¹.

The Soviet Government was anxious to repudiate all rumours of non-aggression pact negotiations with Poland during the summer of 1931. The very precise

70. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Persia, Rumania and Turkey signed.

71. Project non-aggression pact handed by the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Karakhan, August 23, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 487-488.

definition of "negotiations" used by the Russians led to disagreement with Poland as to whether such negotiations had in fact taken place. The reason for this Soviet attitude was simple: Soviet diplomacy was already persuading the German Government that it had nothing to fear from the non-aggression pact negotiations in progress in Paris. If the Germans believed that a further series of negotiations was being held in Warsaw, this Russian task would be greatly complicated and the risk of German alienation much too high, at least while such dialogues as were being held with Poland, whether "negotiations" or otherwise, were so unproductive.

Towards the end of August a Tass report officially denied an article in the "Chicago Tribune", stating that "no negotiations between Moscow and Warsaw were being conducted for a pact of non-aggression." The Paris negotiations did not in any way affect the relations of either party with third states and in this number was included Poland.⁷² Despite this Soviet denial, the French news agency "Havas" on August 26 stated that Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact negotiations had been underway since October 1930 when the latter received a Soviet proposal. The report continued that only this knowledge of Soviet-Polish negotiations induced the French Government to accept for examination a Soviet pact proposal.⁷³ This statement was false as regards both the Soviet negotiations with Poland and France⁷⁴, and on August 28 it was officially denied by Tass.⁷⁵

During August such rumours abounded. On August 25 the Polish press announced that "as a result of the exchange of views between the Polish and Soviet Governments on the question of a non-aggression pact which occurred in 1926, the Polish minister in Moscow, M. Patek, handed a Polish project for a

72. Izvestia, August 23, 1931.

73. Quoted in Sov-Pol Docs, p. 497.

74. See above and chapters 2 and 3.

75. Izvestia, August 28, 1931.

non-aggression pact to the Narkomindel on August 23."⁷⁶ Two days later, Tass officially answered this opinion.

The new document now presented by M.Patek...(on August 23) repeats the same conditions, and adds one more which has not heretofore figured in the negotiations...(It) is not a step forward in Polish-Soviet negotiations but a step backward. Moreover M.Patek in delivering the document, made no proposal for the resumption of negotiations and himself described the document merely as a summary of the negotiations of 1926-1927.⁷⁷

This, in fact, correctly stated the position as revealed in Karakhan's note of his conversation with Patek. In order to add emphasis, Litvinov himself delivered a statement in Berlin to representatives of the foreign press concerning rumours in the press that the Soviet and Polish Governments were beginning, conducting or resuming negotiations on the conclusion of a non-aggression pact: "no negotiations have been nor are being conducted...because the Polish Government has given no occasion to think that it has changed its relation to the Soviet proposals "since 1927. He then went on to speak of Soviet foreign policy aims:

The Soviet Government continues to regard as desirable the conclusion of non-aggression pacts with all countries with which it is in direct contact and it has made corresponding proposals to all these countries in its time.⁷⁸

Litvinov had arrived in Berlin that day to discuss with Curtius the Soviet negotiations in Paris and Warsaw.⁷⁹ The need to placate Germany was now becoming vital; the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact had been initialled on August 10 and the constant rumours of Soviet-Polish negotiations could not be ignored. What would be the German response? The previous chapter made reference to Poland as the major concern of German foreign policy. Of course, unanimity within Germany on the danger of ^{improved} ~~imposed~~ Soviet-Polish relations did not exist. Dirksen, for example, had written in January that "even if the Russians do intend to resume negotiations with the aim of concluding a non-aggression pact,...this is no basis for us to see in this a danger to Germany

76. Izvestia, August 27, 1931.

77. Tass Statement, August 27, 1931. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol. 2, p.505.

78. Statement by the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to representatives of the foreign press, August 28, 1931. DVP Vol.14, pps. 499-501.

79. Izvestia, August 28, 1931.

or to see it as a rejection of the previous line of Russian policy towards us." The German Ambassador considered that the Russians were being very open towards him and that a press attack on the conclusion of a neutrality pact with Poland would create the suspicion that German policy aimed at creating a military collision between the two Slav states,^{80.} though even Dirksen saw some political danger, at least in the future, since a Soviet-Polish treaty might act as a bridge" by which the Russians could withdraw to another political combination should they feel constrained to sever the bonds which linked them with Germany."^{81.}

The Soviet press carefully selected reports from its German counterpart which spoke favourably of Soviet-Polish relations. Thus *Investia* commented that "in authoritative Berlin establishments the complete loyalty of the Soviet position in relation to Germany is emphasised in connection with the Paris negotiations for a Franco-Soviet pact and the Polish proposal handed to the Narkomindel" and quoted the official organ of the German Foreign Ministry, the "Deutsche Diplomatisch-Politische Korrespondenz":

In accordance with the spirit of our treaties with the USSR, we are constantly and honestly informed of all aspirations for a pact. In particular, it is possible only to welcome the normalisation of Franco-Soviet relations. An agreement between Moscow and Warsaw, in so far as it would promote the calming of the world economic situation, would also have such advantages from the point of view of our own vital interests in that our positive interest on this question would prevail, taking into account the continuing friendly relations between Berlin and Moscow.^{82.}

Despite these reassuring statements, many Germans, including sections of the Foreign Ministry, held a genuine fear of any improvement in Soviet-Polish relations; for such people the avoidance of this eventuality had been the major, if not the sole, *raison d'être* for the continuance of the Berlin treaty. Polish-German hatred remained very real, recently further inflamed by frontier incidents and electoral results in both states. Dirksen, in his memoirs, recounts that the German foreign office was "deeply alarmed" at the news of Soviet-Polish negotiations and summoned him to Berlin several times in order to

80. Report of the German Ambassador in Moscow, Dirksen, to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 27, 1931. *Sov-Pol Docs*, p.481.

81. H. Von Dirksen, *Moscow, Tokyo, London*. (London 1951), p.116.

82. Quoted in *Investia*, August 29, 1931.

explain the intentions of the Soviet Government and to exhort him to exert the utmost pressure on the Narkomindel.⁸³ Polish fears were intensified by the January 1931 decision of the League of Nations Council to convene a disarmament conference in February 1932 at which Germany threatened to insist on equality of armaments against a weakened French opposition.⁸⁴

Regardless of German apprehension and possible repercussions on the ^{Rapallo} ~~Rapallo~~ course, the Soviet Union by August 1931 seems to have determined on a non-aggression pact with Poland so long as Polish intransigence regarding the Baltic states was modified. The Russians were not prepared to chance a final sacrifice of German links unless they secured their main terms from Poland but if this could be achieved then Soviet diplomacy would forge ahead on its new Warsaw course. Litvinov, in September 1931, informed Massigli, the French expert at the fourth session of the Commission on European Union in Geneva, in reply to the latter's ~~reply~~ remark about French interest in the improvement of Soviet-Polish relations, that "the Soviet Government always has been prepared to conclude a non-aggression pact with Poland on the same basis as that with France and that the affair lies with Warsaw, not with us."⁸⁵

The international situation was definitely beginning to readjust. Of course, Comintern statements continued to label all capitalist states with the most heinous crimes as, for example, an article on interventionary preparations:

The group of small capitalist countries bordering on the USSR on the western frontier and forming part of the so-called Little Entente or of the Baltic bloc which Poland is busily knocking together, is engaged in feverish preparation for intervention.⁸⁶

Yet, in fact, Russia's relations with the outside world were beginning to take a turn for the better. Reporting on the fourth session of the

83. Dirksen, Moscow Tokyo London, pps. 115-116.

84. Korbel, Poland between East and West, p.264.

85. Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the French Representative at the Disarmament Conference, Massigli, September 1931, DVP Vol.14, p.817
Note 195.

86. Rudolph, "Western Neighbours of the USSR Are Preparing for Intervention," International Press Correspondence, Vol.11, No.47, September 3, 1931, p.868.

Commission on the study of the European Union in September, Litvinov was able to state that France had made some attacks on the USSR but in general was friendly. He noted "in general a further reduction of foreign hostility towards us."⁸⁷ During the same month the Foreign Minister of that hitherto most anti-Soviet state, Rumania, was quoted as saying that although security could only be the result of general mutual confidence, he admitted that non-aggression pacts have some value and that Rumania was ready as before to conclude such pacts with all countries without any exceptions.⁸⁸ In these international adjustments no state could afford to be left out in the cold.

4. A Far Eastern Digression.

Signs of a relaxation of the Russian diplomatic position in the west were abruptly overcast by an event which occurred on a remote railway line on September 18, 1931, when an explosion near Mukden proved to be the signal for a Japanese occupation of Manchuria. It is not the intention of this thesis, which deals with the cautious re-orientation of Soviet foreign policy and the part which the series of European non-aggression pacts played in it, to examine the Soviet reaction to the Japanese action in detail. Soviet diplomatic activity, however, cannot be appreciated unless it is constantly recalled that the decision-makers in Moscow were faced with a tremendously long far eastern frontier which posed enormous security problems, especially after the Japanese occupation of Manchuria.

The decision to negotiate non-aggression pacts with France and the western border states had been taken long before this Japanese action; indeed, the Franco-Soviet pact had already been initialled and tentative talks with Poland begun before September. Yet even before that date, Moscow's desire to consolidate its position in the west was by no means divorced from eastern considerations. Russia, as much as Germany, was plagued with the nightmare of a war on two fronts. The real, rather than potential, threat which Japan posed for the

87. Telegram from the Chairman of the Soviet Delegation to the Commission on European Union, Litvinov, to the NKD, September 6, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 516-517.

88. Quoted in Izvestiia, September 11, 1931.

USSR by the end of 1931, enhanced the connection between east and west and gave further impetus to the negotiations in the latter. As Shtein, a high-ranking member of the Narkomindel, admitted to Dirksen, events in Manchuria had been instrumental in the Soviet Government's decision to hasten a rapprochement with Poland,⁸⁹ though not the cause, since this had been slowly developing throughout 1931. It was that much more essential to secure the western frontier when Soviet troops in the east faced advancing Japanese forces.

This desire to conclude pacts in the west was not reduced by the fact that in the early months following the Manchurian incident the major Soviet target was not Japan itself but the western imperialist powers and their tool, the League of Nations. *Izvestia*, only three days after the Mukden incident, suggested that the Japanese move was well prepared by an agreement with other imperialist states. Particularly poisonous venom was aimed at the League of Nations, that "Geneva talking-shop."⁹⁰ At the bottom of this imperialist activity was the desire to obtain a new division of the world.⁹¹ It was thought that imperialist contradictions, especially in the Far East, would inevitably be deepened by this incident and this in turn would encourage the western imperialist powers to direct Japanese attention northwards towards the Soviet border and away from China proper where Japanese competition would not be welcomed; the seizure of Manchuria would be the point of departure for a

89. Memorandum by the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, to the German Foreign Ministry, January 6, 1932. German Archives, quoted in Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, p. 243. The Soviet Government was probably anxious to use the Manchurian events as an excuse for its Polish rapprochement when dealing with the German Government. B. Y. Shtein; from 1920, head of the trade and political section, assistant head of the economic law dept., head of the dept. of Poland and the Baltic countries, head of the central European Dept., then head of the dept. of international affairs, in the NKD. Soviet Minister in Finland, 1932-1934; Ambassador in Italy, 1935-1939; Counsellor, NKD, 1945-1952.

90. *Izvestia*, September 21, 1931. See also, for example, an article entitled "League of Nations openly supports Japanese intervention in Manchuria," *Ibid.*, September 28, 1931.

91. *Pravda*, November 5, 1931.

world anti-Soviet adventure.⁹² Japan, however, was far from being guaranteed against a situation in which its imperialist enemies would support the Chinese movement directed against it when it entered Manchuria and this ought to warn Japan against creating a tense situation with regard to the USSR, "the only country which really pursued a policy of peace."⁹³

The Russians can be excused for suspecting that the west would not be reluctant to see Japanese activity directed northwards, especially given the Soviet ideological analysis of imperialism. The League powers and the United States had reacted to the Manchurian incident somewhat half-heartedly; they were in the throes of a world economic crisis which was sapping their strength and certainly not conducive to collective security operations in the Far East when their vital interests were not at stake.⁹⁴ Soviet distrust of France was especially strong since the latter had refused to sign its initialled non-aggression pact with the USSR. The French press was accused of openly supporting Japan and the French Government of encouraging Japan's anti-Soviet plans.⁹⁵ Soviet suspicion was not confined to France alone and, amongst others, Poland also was accused of exploiting Japan's invasion of Manchuria for its anti-Soviet objectives. According to Pravda, immediately after the Japanese action in September Pilsudski left for Rumania in order to define more precisely with the Rumanian general staff the plans for a joint attack against the USSR.⁹⁶ The Soviet press also noted an article in the Polish paper "Kurier Poranni" which complained that the Polish Embassy in Tokyo was too weak and needed to be strengthened since "in the near future events will take place which will have enormous importance for the whole world and will closely concern us." In the present situation, the article noted, Polish-Japanese friendship should be

92. Terentev, "Borba imperialistov za Manchzhuriu" in Mif, Iolk and Voitinsky, Okkupatsiia Manchzhuriu, p.69. Quoted in J.Hodorawis, "Soviet Reaction to the Manchurian Incident 1931-1932", Certificate essay, Russian Institute, Columbia University, 1958, p. 30.

93. Izvestiia, November 22, 1931.

94. The Japanese move had been timed to coincide with the economic depression which it was hoped would nullify any western desire to intervene.

95. Ibid., November 17, November 24, 1931. Pravda, November 29, 1931. Franco-Soviet hostility was to grow more bitter in the spring of 1932. See chapter 5.

96. Ibid., December 5, 1931.

fundamentally strengthened and deepened.^{97.} The Soviet Government could have harboured few doubts as to the common link between Poland and Japan.

The Soviet reaction to the Japanese action itself was one of alarm. Any belligerent move close to its frontier was a security threat. The Soviet Government could not but be worried by the seriousness of the events in Mukden and the threat they posed both to the frontier and to the Chinese Eastern Railway, a line which was jointly owned by Russia and China and ran through Manchuria.^{98.} Soviet policy from the outset vigorously opposed Japanese actions in Manchuria in verbal and written communications but avoided any moves which might provoke an actual conflict. As Litvinov said, "we are doing nothing which would complicate the situation." The Commissar assured the Japanese Ambassador that his government wanted to preserve good relations with Japan.^{99.} Yet as it became clear to Japan that the Russians would not effectively resist its operations, it modified its initially restrained policy in Northern Manchuria and became bolder.

At a time when the Soviet Government was about to enter into intensive negotiations with the states on its western border for the conclusion of non-aggression pacts, its attention was chiefly concentrated thousands of miles away in the east. Molotov, in his report to the Central Executive Committee at the end of December recognised Manchuria as being the most important question for Soviet foreign policy.^{100.}

It must be noted that in the east as well as in the west the Soviet Government attempted to negotiate a non-aggression pact at the end of 1931. Not-

97. Quoted in Izvestia, November 28, 1931.

98. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, and the British Charge d'Affaires in the USSR, Strang, September 24, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 537-538.

99. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Japanese Ambassador in the USSR, Hirota, October 2, 1931. Ibid., p. 560. Hata has stated that during the earlier period of the Manchurian incident certain elements in the Soviet Government wanted to make a sortie into Northern Manchuria but they were reportedly overruled by others, including Stalin and Molotov. I. Hata, Reality and Illusion. The Hidden Crisis Between Japan and the USSR, 1932-1934. Occasional papers of the East Asian Institute, Columbia University (New York 1967), p. 4. See also J. Erickson, The Soviet High Command (London 1962), p. 336.

100. Molotov's report to the CEC, December 22, 1931. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol. 2, p. 519.

withstanding the refusal of Japan to conclude such a pact in the twenties, at this very critical time in their relations, the Soviets once again proposed such a pact in December. The offer was made by Litvinov to the newly-appointed Japanese Foreign Minister who had called in Moscow en route from Paris to Tokyo to take up his post. Litvinov himself noted that the Japanese Minister was clearly caught unprepared by the proposal. The Commissar made the point that Japan was the only Soviet neighbour with which it had no non-aggression pact nor was negotiating such a pact. He considered it necessary to fill this gap, especially at a time when the future of Soviet-Japanese relations was the object of speculation in western Europe and America.¹⁰¹ The Japanese response to this proposal was not encouraging and in fact no reply was given to Moscow for almost a year despite frequent Soviet reference to the subject in conversation with Japanese diplomats. Only on December 13, 1932 did the Japanese Government reject it on the grounds that conditions were still not ripe for such a pact, the settlement of possible causes of disputes such as local agreements to avert difficulties which arose from the contiguity of Japanese and Soviet forces being desirable as a preliminary.¹⁰² The Soviet reaction to this was somewhat barbed. *Izvestiia* commented that "the Japanese Government apparently considers the conclusion of non-aggression pacts appropriate only between those governments which have no questions at issue between them, but with the present economic and political inter-dependence of states such a situation hardly exists and is scarcely possible, particularly as between states which are more or less close neighbours."¹⁰³ The reasons for the Japanese refusal were probably a desire to secure a more favourable fishing treaty and more extensive coal, oil and timber concessions in North Sakhalin and the resistance of some Japanese military leaders who were beginning to advocate

101. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Japanese Foreign Minister, Iosidzava, December 31, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 746-747.

102. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Japan, Troyanovsky, to the NKD, December 13, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, (Moscow 1969), p. 683. A.A. Troyanovsky, Soviet Ambassador in Japan, 1927-1933; Ambassador in the USA, 1933-1938.

103. Izvestiia, January 17, 1933.

expansion.^{104.}

Bearing in mind this Soviet pre-occupation with its far eastern frontier, attention must now be returned to the negotiations of late 1931 in Europe; perhaps the USSR would have greater success with these pact negotiations.

5. Paris, Moscow and Warsaw.

The initialling of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact on August 10 marked the completion of the first stage of the negotiations but still fell far short of their final conclusion. The next stage, the signature, was urgently desired by the Soviets in order to translate a political-diplomatic gain into a tangible achievement. Throughout August and September conversations continued in Paris on this theme. On September 23, during one of the regular meetings which were held between Dovgalevsky and Berthelot the Soviet Ambassador demanded a clarification of the position prior to Berthelot's visit to Berlin which would create a temporary break in the meetings. During this conversation the French official dropped a bombshell on Dovgalevsky when he stated that Briand considered the conclusion of a Franco-Soviet pact must follow or accompany the conclusion of a Polish-Soviet pact:

I expressed amazement at this new demand and resolutely opposed the establishment of any dependence or connection between these two acts, having made the reservation that the Soviet Government, as it has said many times before, is prepared to conclude a pact with the Poles.^{105.}

Dovgalevsky's amazement may well have been genuine since the Russians had steadfastly opposed any such connection. Yet they had been given sufficient warning in the past months of this French attitude. The "Bulletin du ^{et} Jour" of "Le Temps", often inspired by the Quai d'Orsay, had stated in August that "it is quite clear that such a pact of non-aggression (the Franco-Soviet pact) can only be concluded...within the framework of the obligations which link France

104. See, for example, conversation of Troyanovsky with the Japanese Foreign Minister. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Japan, Troyanovsky, to the NKD, February 29, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.149.

105. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, September 23, 1931. DVP Vol.14, pps.535-536.

to Poland and to Rumania."¹⁰⁶. Dovgalevsky himself had heard at the end of May that Briand was delaying work on the pact because the French Government wanted to include Poland in a multilateral agreement with the USSR.¹⁰⁷

At any rate, Berthelot adopted a conciliatory attitude in so far as he promised that the French Government would propose to the Poles that they cease forwarding unacceptable proposals to the Soviet Government and agree approximately to the text of the Franco-Soviet pact.¹⁰⁸ Dovgalevsky replied that the eventual withdrawal of the unacceptable Polish proposals and an agreement to that text would of course eliminate the obstacles to the conclusion of a Soviet-Polish pact and that his government would be the first to welcome such a change of mood in Warsaw but that this did not signify Soviet agreement to the connecting of the Franco-Soviet and Polish-Soviet pacts.¹⁰⁹

This delay in signing was not at all to the liking of the Soviet Government. On October 1, Litvinov telegraphed Dovgalevsky, urging him to see Berthelot as soon as possible in order to ask him directly "whether and when the French Government intends to sign the pact of non-aggression." The initialling of the pact and yet its non signature had created a "completely unusual situation" since the signature normally followed the initialling after several days or at least a short period of time and certainly not with a delay of several months.¹¹⁰ Dovgalevsky carried out these instructions on October 5 when Berthelot once again stated that it was desirable for a Soviet-Polish pact to be concluded before the signature of the Franco-Soviet pact. The French diplomat added that both Briand and himself had impressed on Zaleski the desirability of the conclusion of a Polish-Soviet pact with a similar wording to

106. *Le Temps*, August 28, 1931. Quoted in Scott, *Alliance against Hitler*, p.15.

107. See above, pps. 84-85. Also reputedly Berthelot had stressed this condition to Dovgalevsky at the time when the pact was initialled. See above p.96.

108. As a compromise, Berthelot also spoke of the French signature of the pact before the completion of the Polish-Soviet negotiations if the French Government was convinced of their favourable completion in the near future. See telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, October 9, 1931. *DVP Vol.14*, p.566.

109. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, September 23, 1931. *Ibid.*, p.536.

110. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, October 1, 1931. *Ibid.*, p.552.

that in the Franco-Soviet pact, to which Zaleski had replied that this wording seemed acceptable. Dovgalevsky also reported that Franco-Soviet discussions on a conciliation procedure were to start that week.^{111.}

The question of the relationship between the Soviet negotiations with France and Poland might usefully be mentioned at this juncture. The latter two states were closely linked and must have exchanged information on their respective discussions and negotiations with the USSR,^{112.} yet it does seem unlikely that Soviet-Polish negotiations on the theme of a non-aggression pact began because of French pressure. It is also clear that at least some influential circles, at a very early stage in the negotiations with Russia already opposed the signature of the non-aggression pact before a similar step had been taken by Poland and that this was made the official reason for the delay in signature by the French on September 23. Nevertheless, the Polish decision to begin probes in Moscow's direction concerning the possibility of a pact appears to have been an independent one, prompted by the deterioration of relations with Germany and France.^{113.} Soviet willingness to accept any genuine Polish decision to abandon its position of 1926-1927 and open fresh negotiations was prompted by a desire to strengthen the western frontier, utilise any such reversal of attitude within Poland and counteract its deteriorating relations with Germany. Soviet-Polish diplomatic probings began some time before the Franco-Soviet negotiations had achieved any results. Undoubtedly the refusal of the French to sign the non-aggression pact before the conclusion of a Soviet-Polish pact gave added weight to the arguments in favour of such a pact expounded in Moscow, as did the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, but a definite resolution to follow this course had been taken before these new factors could exert their

111. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, October 6, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 562-563.

112. At any rate on August 28, Zaleski, after visiting the Quai d'Orsay, stated that Poland fully approved the French action and had similar goals. Bulletin du Jour, Le Temps, August 30, 1931. Quoted in Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p. 15.

113. In 1932 Berthelot told Dovgalevsky that Poland had not objected to the signing of the Franco-Soviet pact before the preliminary conclusion of a Polish-Soviet pact but that the French Government had insisted on having its own way. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, February 18, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 120-121.

influence. In fact, Soviet policy may well be understood better if seen as a utilisation of French pressure on Poland to facilitate the signature of a Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact rather than as an attempt to negotiate such a pact with Poland as a reaction to French blackmail in order to secure a signature in Paris. This was in fact Dovgalevsky's advice:

It will follow to utilise French pressure on Poland in order to obtain a pact with the latter; this on its own would be a good thing as well as depriving the French of this occasion to ~~deprive~~ delay the signing of the pact with us.^{114.}

The crucial fact remains, however, that from the middle of September Soviet negotiations with Paris and Warsaw were closely linked. Berthelot's assertion to Dovgalevsky on October 5 that Zaleski had found the wording of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact "acceptable" for a Polish pact with the USSR raised Soviet hopes for a rapid termination of both sets of negotiations. On October 14, Litvinov saw the Polish Charge d'Affaires in Moscow and handed him a supplement in which it was stated that according to Berthelot's remarks Zaleski approved a text for a Soviet-Polish pact and therefore "it can be thought that all obstacles to the signing of a non-aggression pact with Poland to which the Soviet Government has aspired for a long time will be eliminated if the Polish Government officially confirms M. Berthelot's statement." The Polish diplomat was asked to consult Warsaw as to whether the Polish Government was in fact prepared to sign such a pact.^{115.}

On the same day, Litvinov also telegraphed Dovgalevsky, proposing that he see Berthelot and secure confirmation that the Polish Government had finally agreed to sign a pact with the USSR on the basis of the French text.^{116.} It appears from the text of this telegram that the Russians were anxious to use French pressure on Poland to hasten the signature of a Soviet-Polish pact. Dovgalevsky was instructed to explain to Berthelot that this same question had also been submitted to the Poles through Zelezinski, their Charge d'Affaires in

114. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, October 6, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 564.

115. Supplement handed by the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Polish Charge d'Affaires in the USSR, Zelezinsky, October 14, 1931. Ibid., p. 571.

116. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, October 14, 1931. Ibid., p. 572.

Moscow, but "that in view of the interest shown by the French Government and in the interest of a quick settlement of the question, you are turning for assistance to Berthelot."¹¹⁷.

In his reply a few days later, Berthelot was very frank with Dovgalevsky. The French Charge d'Affaires in Warsaw had spoken both with Patek, in Zaleski's absence,¹¹⁸ and with a member of the Polish Foreign Ministry. From the report, Berthelot gained the impression that the Poles were inclined to drag out the pact negotiations and that it was necessary to exert pressure on them, instructions for which he promised to send immediately to the French Embassy in Warsaw. In addition, that Embassy would impress on the Poles the fact that the Franco-Soviet pact was independent of the Polish-Soviet pact. Patek had told the French Charge d'Affaires that he must see Pilsudski before his return to Moscow but that the pact negotiations would probably begin with the confirmation by the Polish Government of its old counter-proposals.¹¹⁹

The new angles which Soviet foreign policy was pursuing in Paris and Warsaw were highlighted by Molotov in his report to the memorial meeting of the Moscow Soviet on the fourteenth anniversary of the October revolution. He noted Zaleski's report that the Polish Government was ready to sign a non-aggression pact with the USSR¹²⁰ and only hoped "that these words do not remain just words." Because France had only initialled but not signed the non-aggression pact with Russia,

for the time being we cannot help being sceptical.

In any event our hope is that a non-aggression pact between the USSR and Poland, like the pact of non-aggression between the USSR and France, will be realised in the very near future.¹²¹

117. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, October 14, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 572.

118. The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs was ill at the time.

119. That is, those handed to the Soviet Government on August 23, 1931. See above. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, October 19, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 581.

120. Probably referring to Zaleski's October 30 report to the Sejm Commission on Foreign Affairs in which he stated that the Polish Government was ready to sign a non-aggression pact with the USSR since it considered this to be a further step forward on the path towards the strengthening of peace. See Izvestia, November 3, 1931.

121. Report of Molotov's speech on November 6, 1931. Ibid., November 12, 1931.

The official Polish "Gazeta Polska", noting Molotov's speech, wrote that it created the impression that the Soviet position on the non-aggression pact question had changed in a positive direction from the negative position at the end of August and to this extent Molotov's words were greeted favourably. If a Soviet desire to preserve peaceful relations with Poland really existed, "there is no obstacle to the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Poland and the USSR." If the USSR ^{really} attached significance to such a pact, "the road for the Soviet Government...is open."¹²² Izvestia commented that the Soviet position on this question had been unchanged since 1926 and that it was not the Soviet Government which was holding up the proceedings.¹²³

Molotov's hope was not to be fulfilled, however, despite continued efforts by Soviet diplomacy to urge France and Poland on the path towards signature. Dovgalevsky expressed Soviet dissatisfaction at the delay in signature by France because of the unexpected ^{French} desire to co-ordinate their future steps with those of Soviet-Polish relations to both Berthelot ¹²⁴ and Briand.¹²⁵

Russian optimism regarding the eventual signature of the non-aggression pact by France was not encouraged by Litvinov's conversation with Patek on November 14. Patek had promised that on his return to Moscow he would answer the Commission's ^{or} proposal made to the Polish Charge d'Affaires on October 14.¹²⁶ He now proceeded to cast a dark shadow on previous Polish statements to the effect that Poland found acceptable for its own non-aggression pact with the USSR the text of the Franco-Soviet pact. Patek claimed that although this text had been read to Zaleski in Warsaw by the French Ambassador the Poles had never actually received a copy. It was true that Zaleski had told Berthelot that he found nothing in the Franco-Soviet pact which contradicted Poland's interests, but "this was not quite the same as saying that Poland would sign a non-

122. Gazeta Polska, November 14, 1931. Quoted in Izvestia, November 16, 1931.

123. Ibid.

124. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, November 13, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 825. Note 233.

125. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, November 14, 1931. Ibid., p. 653.

126. See above, p. 136.

aggression pact on the French model." Patek denied that Berthelot and Zaleski had discussed a Soviet-Polish pact and claimed that the former had confirmed to the Polish Charge d'Affaires in Paris that the Soviet belief that Zaleski would actually sign a pact with the USSR on the same wording as the Franco-Soviet pact was based upon a misunderstanding. Litvinov refused to accept this explanation and further demanded an answer to his proposal of October 14. Patek then replied that his government did not consider the Soviet-French pact as suitable for Poland; much of it was superfluous to Polish interests and much that was especially interesting was missing.¹²⁷ Therefore, Patek proposed to return^{to} the 1926 project pact with the additions made in conversation with Karakhan on August 23, which, he claimed, differed from the 1926 Soviet project pact only by its mentioning of the Kellogg Pact and the Moscow Protocol. Litvinov expressed agreement at the return to the old project, only noting that in the past this project had provoked Polish disagreement which five years of sporadic negotiating had failed to remove. Patek explained that the conclusion of the Riga peace treaty, the Kellogg Pact and the Moscow Protocol sufficiently safeguarded peace between the two states and he did not see a special need for a fourth pact which would cover the same ground but nevertheless, would consider a non-aggression pact useful, especially if it included new points.

Patek then raised the spectre of the Polish allies and associates which hitherto had bedevilled Soviet-Polish negotiations. He stated that the Polish Government was interested in the Soviet Union concluding pacts with all the countries from Finland down to Rumania. His government was not so much interested in the form of such pacts as in their actual signature, this being meant as a re-assurance that Poland did not desire to impose a protectorate over

127. Budurowycz, probably correctly, thinks that the main stumbling block was Article 5 of the Franco-Soviet pact which dealt with the abstinence from propaganda and the creation or supply of military organisations aimed at the other party. He considers this provision unacceptable to Poland which wanted to prevent Soviet interference in its internal affairs and was reluctant to end the activities of emigre groups such as the Ukrainian Government-in-exile. Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p.11. footnote 30.

then.^{128.} Litvinov was not reassured, however, and replied with the standard comment that negotiations with Poland on the subject of Soviet relations with third countries were unacceptable and especially so was their mentioning in a Soviet-Polish document:

(I)f the Baltic countries will not sign a pact I can see no reason why Poland should not sign a pact tomorrow. I am convinced that on the following day all the Baltic countries would follow Poland's example.

He stressed that the Soviets had always been ready to sign non-aggression pacts with the Baltic states and the guilt for their non-realisation lay with the latter. The Commissar ended by saying that if the Poles accepted conciliation procedure instead of arbitration, as France had done, and made no more of the League of Nations than had France, two obstacles to the signature of a pact would be removed.^{129.}

The following day, Patek once again spoke to Litvinov on the importance of the Russians mentioning a non-aggression pact to the Baltic states, to which he gave great significance.^{130.} His "strictly secret" report on these two conversations sent to Zaleski is of some interest. He noted Litvinov's statement that Russia was prepared to inform the Baltic states that its ¹⁹²⁶ ~~1922~~ proposal remained in force and was ready to begin pact negotiations with these states immediately if they so desired. Patek interestingly admitted that he was uninformed on Polish-Baltic relations at the present time and therefore did not know whether the Russians should be encouraged to make such an approach but "it seems to me that if we could assure the Soviets that such an approach would have positive results, that is, those states would answer such a call by appearing at a conference on the question of a non-aggression pact, then Litvinov would decide to take the first step." He also thought Poland must decide

128. On November 12, in conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko, Patek had denied that a Soviet-Rumanian non-aggression pact would necessitate concessions on Bessarabia; he said that the Bessarabian question could remain on one side as it had in the Litvinov protocol. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 643-644.

129. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, November 14, 1931. Ibid., pps. 647-650.

130. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, November 15, 1931. Ibid., p. 657.

whether it wanted Rumania to sign a non-aggression pact with the USSR and if so, whether it would be able to influence Bucharest to take the initiative in such a move.

As concerns the Baltics and Rumania, it would be better not to display our participation and mediation in the conducting of this business since the Soviets support the point of view that the USSR wants to conduct negotiations directly with each of these states...The USSR cannot officially recognise Polish mediation or, as it was said before, "protectorate," in relation to these states and therefore Poland cannot take on any official responsibilities in relation to these states.¹³¹.

It was such a Polish propensity to interfere in these relations which the Russians suspected and so strongly opposed.

Despite considerable obstacles to the conclusion of a Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact and therefore to the signing of the Franco-Soviet pact, progress was being made and was seen to be made, especially by the interested on-lookers in Berlin. Only a few months had elapsed since the continuance of Soviet-German friendship had been defined by Berlin in terms of a shared anti-Polish attitude. Despite some reassuring statements, the German Government was undoubtedly agitated by the new direction of Soviet Foreign Policy. Dirksen was recalled to Berlin several times in order to explain the Soviet Government's intentions.¹³² He told Krestinsky and Voroshilov that "in the interests of German-Soviet relations, the non-conclusion of the Polish-Soviet treaty was the only possible and desirable course."¹³³ Yet how could Germany enforce such a demand? The rupturing of German-Soviet relations, the only way, was a step which Berlin was reluctant to take. Therefore Germany adopted a more tenable position and sought to safeguard its interests as much as possible by seeking to obtain a promise that the USSR would not guarantee the Polish frontier. Dirksen spoke with Krestinsky on November 10 concerning Germany's position on the Soviet negotiations. He formally withdrew Germany's objections to a simple non-aggression pact containing only a prohibition on aggressive wars but added that

131. Report of the Polish Minister in Moscow, Patek, to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zaleski, November 16, 1931. Sov-Pol Docs, pps. 506-507.

132. Dirksen, Moscow, Tokyo, London, pps. 115-116.

133. Memorandum by Dirksen, November 12, 1931. German Archives. Quoted in Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, p. 243.

a "direct or indirect guarantee of Polish territory" would violate German interests and endanger the bases of the Berlin treaty.¹³⁴ Krestinsky, in reply, promised that a Soviet-Polish non-aggression treaty would not alter German-Soviet relations either in form or content.¹³⁵ In conversation with Litvinov on November 16, Dirksen again stressed this point. He told the Commissar that the German Government, from the view-point of general peace, could not oppose a Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact but all the same this could not but exert an influence on German society. It was common knowledge that the negotiations with Poland had been resumed under French pressure and the fear had arisen in Germany that this pressure would restrict the USSR's manoeuvrability. More specifically, Dirksen expressed German concern at the possibility of "territorial integrity" being mentioned in the pact. In fact Germany could not understand why a supplementary pact to the Kellogg Pact was necessary.

Litvinov rejected the opinion that a non-aggression pact was irrelevant in view of the Kellogg Pact since the multilateral character of the latter restricted its usefulness as contrasted with a bilateral agreement. It was an opinion which the Polish Government did hold but which the Soviets steadfastly rejected. As concerned Polish territorial integrity, Litvinov assured Dirksen that Russia had spoken only of its non-violation by forceful acts but had not recognised the legality and justice of its frontiers. Further, he acquainted the German Ambassador with the present state of Polish-Soviet negotiations.¹³⁶ This answer could have satisfied neither Dirksen nor his government.

If the German Government was becoming apprehensive about the new trends in Soviet foreign policy, the Russian Government was not entirely complacent

134. Memorandum by Dirksen, November 10, 1931. German Archives, Quoted in Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, p.244.

135. Ibid., p.246.

136. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, November 16, 1931. DVP Vol.14, p.658. Dirksen some years later did recognise Litvinov's amenability, stating that "he loyally kept me informed about the course of the negotiations and even showed me the drafts of the clauses under consideration. I was thus able to raise objections and to suggest counter-proposals which, to some extent, were accepted." Dirksen, Moscow Tokyo London, p.116.

about German internal developments. Soviet complaints continued to be lodged concerning articles in the German press^{137.} and serious attention was paid to the increasing influence of the National Socialist Party within the Weimar Republic.^{138.}

A further cause for Soviet concern was provided by the visit of the French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to Berlin in September. This close contact was provoked by Germany's desperate economic situation which seemed to require the suspension of reparation payments if the position was to be controlled. These Franco-German negotiations were alarming to the Soviet Union, however, despite their ostensible economic nature. The Russians, being persuaded that a common front between two such antagonistic capitalist states could only be cemented on the basis of a common anti-Soviet policy, naturally saw in these conversations deeper motives and potential results. This apprehension was increased by the continued refusal of France to sign its negotiated non-aggression pact and the deterioration in relations with Germany, especially as concerned the Soviet-Polish talks. *Izvestiia* thought that the French visit "represents a link in the development of highly far-reaching tendencies in international relations which demand great attention."^{139.} In November *Izvestiia* quoted an article from the organ of the German Centre Party, "Germania", which pointed out that Franco-German collaboration must be directed against the Soviet Union.^{140.}

There was some justification for this Russian view insofar as France would agree to economic and financial accommodations only at the price of political agreements which amounted to the abandonment by Germany of its revisionist plans. Scott even suggests that France proposed secretly a non-aggression pact

137. For example, the telegram from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, October 23, 1931. *DVP Vol. 14*, p. 589.

138. See for example *Izvestiia*, editorial, October 14, 1931; December 8, 1931.

139. *Ibid.*, September 28, 1931.

140. *Ibid.*, November 5, 1931.

with Germany.^{141.} The Soviet Government was aware of these French designs. Izvestiia printed an article on this subject in December which reported that France demanded from Germany an undertaking not to take any steps connected with the revision of the Versailles treaty and recognised the inviolability of the Polish-German frontier, so insisting on Germany's entry into the French system.^{142.} Khinchuk asked Bruning, the German Chancellor, about Franco-German relations to which the latter replied that he could categorically confirm that in the economic negotiations which were being conducted there would be "no scorpions directed at third powers."^{143.}

Undoubtedly one of the French objectives was to disrupt Russo-German relations and a successful Franco-German rapprochement could well have isolated the Soviet Union at the very time when it seemed to be strengthening its international position. The failure of these talks between France and Germany, however, removed any such danger to the Soviet Union but the talks did for a time postpone Paris's interest in its initial^{led} non-aggression pact with Russia.

Soviet-German economic relations rose to the diplomatic surface in the autumn with regard to the recurring problem of expanding Soviet exports to Germany which alone "will create a strong base for our payments to Germany", as Khinchuk informed Bruning^{144.} and later the former German Foreign Minister, Curtius, who replied that Bruning continued, as before, the orientation in support of Soviet-German relations and resolutely stood for the expansion of credits.^{145.} On November 14, Soviet-German economic negotiations began^{146.} with

141. Scott, Alliance against Hitler, p.25. According to Mourin, Laval did propose financial aid to Germany on the condition, among other things, that the latter renounce all new economic rapprochements with Russia, hoping that this would cut or reduce existing ties between Moscow and Berlin. M. Mourin, Les relations Franco-Sovietiques 1917-1967 (Paris 1967), p.171.

142. Izvestiia, December 17, 1931.

143. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, November 3, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p.637.

144. Ibid., pps. 636-637.

145. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk and the former German Foreign Minister, Curtius, November 9, 1931. Ibid., p.641.

146. Izvestiia, November 16, 1931.

the aim of creating a stronger basis for and the possibility of a further development of mutual economic relations. In fact, the major object was an expansion of Soviet exports to Germany to counter the considerable growth in German exports to the USSR.¹⁴⁷ The talks ended on December 22 with the signing of a protocol which, according to Pravda, served the aim of eliminating difficulties which had arisen because of the economic crisis in all markets and therefore in Soviet-German trade: "the course of the negotiations...gives occasion to expect that the desired aim of the negotiations will be achieved."¹⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that Khinchuk considered that Germany's developing political interest in the USSR in connection with the Franco-Soviet and Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact negotiations had created a favourable climate for such economic negotiations.¹⁴⁹ Soviet-German relations primarily would hinge on developments in Warsaw and Paris.

To return to the Soviet-Polish negotiations, it will be recalled that on November 14, Patek had denied that the Polish Government or Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been shown the text of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact, but from its reading to Zaleski the Polish Government could not accept it as the basis for a Soviet-Polish pact and preferred a return to the Soviet project of 1926 with certain amendments made by Patek in conversation with Krestinsky. When Dovgalevsky informed Berthelot of Patek's conversation with Litvinov the French official again confirmed that Polish representatives had seen the text and termed Patek's statement on this point a flagrant lie. He was less perturbed by the Polish rejection of the Franco-Soviet wording as a basis for negotiations, however, saying that if the Poles preferred to return to the old Soviet proposal no-one could forbid it. Berthelot sought to impress upon the Soviet Ambassador the fact that France was doing all in its power to spur on the Poles in the negotiations and read him a report of a conversation between the French

147. Protocol of the Plenary meeting of the Soviet and German economic delegations, December 22, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 728-730.

148. Pravda, December 24, 1931.

149. Report of the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the NKD, April 7, 1932. DVP Vol. 14, p. 750.

Ambassador in Warsaw and Zaleski in which the former insisted on the rapid introduction of negotiations and the rejection of counter-proposals which were unacceptable to the Soviet Government. According to French sources, Pilaudski was supposed to have instructed Patek to hasten the negotiations and withdraw the unacceptable proposals. Dovgalevsky replied that the motive behind the use of the Soviet-French pact's wording was a desire to speed up proceedings and by returning to the old project the Poles had demonstrated that they were not interested in the rapid termination of negotiations.^{150.}

As he had promised on November 17, Berthelot saw Zaleski three days later before once again speaking with Dovgalevsky. The French diplomat also saw the Polish Charge d'Affaires in Paris who confirmed that he had received the text of the Franco-Soviet pact from Berthelot which he had forwarded to the Polish Foreign Ministry and to Patek personally. Berthelot expressed considerable dissatisfaction to Dovgalevsky that the Polish-Soviet negotiations should be conducted on the Polish side by Patek who clearly was hostile to the conclusion of a pact but that he hoped by pressure to compel him to change his line. On the crucial question of the Polish attitude towards the inclusion of the other border states in the negotiations with the USSR, however, Berthelot refused to reply when Dovgalevsky suggested that France should try to persuade the Poles to drop this condition.^{151.}

It would appear that Patek's duplicity in this affair was motivated by his Government's reluctance to accept the Franco-Soviet text as a basis for negotiations and perhaps by his own inclinations rather than as an excuse to postpone the opening of formal negotiations, since Tass announced on November 21 that Litvinov had proposed to Patek the resumption of negotiations for the conclusion of a non-aggression pact on the basis of the 1926 draft.^{152.} These negotiations officially began on November 23, Litvinov and Stomonyakov representing the USSR,

150. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, November 17, 1931. DVP Vol. 11, pps. 660-661.

151. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, November 20, 1931. Ibid., pps. 666-667.

152. Izvestia, November 22, 1931.

Patek the Polish Government.¹⁵³ It may be, however, that the Polish refused to accept the French wording was in part prompted by a desire to prolong these negotiations in order that there should be time to involve the other border states.¹⁵⁴

6. Negotiations underway.

The introduction of official Polish-Soviet negotiations, as in the case of the earlier negotiations with France, did not signify that diplomatic activity was drawing to a close, but rather its intensification. These negotiations were to be dominated on the Polish side by an insistence that the Soviet Union begin simultaneous negotiations with Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Rumania and on the Soviet side by a desire to placate Germany by limiting its commitments to Poland.

Polish intransigence surfaced only one week after the commencement of the negotiations when Patek insisted on the simultaneous conclusion of a Soviet-Rumania non-aggression pact to which Litvinov replied that if Rumania made such a proposal then the Soviet Government would examine it favourably but that it could not conduct negotiations with Poland about third countries. This information was telegraphed to the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey with instructions to notify the Turkish Foreign Minister.¹⁵⁵ On contacting the latter, Surits was informed that the previous day the Rumanian Minister had visited the Foreign Minister and requested advice as to how best to advance the question of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR and where to begin negotiations. Surits instructed the Turkish Foreign Minister to tell the Rumanian representative that he should make an official proposal concerning non-

153. DVP Vol.14, p. 831, note 255.

154. According to Beck, the negotiations were slowed down by Poland at the beginning to allow the Baltic states to keep in line and make use of the precedents established in the Soviet-Polish negotiations. Beck, Final Report, p.9.

155. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, December 1, 1931. DVP Vol.14, p.830, Note 250. In the absence of Soviet-Rumanian diplomatic relations negotiations were initially conducted through the respective embassies in Ankara.

aggression pact negotiations to him.^{156.}

The Soviet Ambassador drew some interesting conclusions from this sequence of events. Since the Poles were hardly likely to welcome direct and independent negotiations in Bucharest without Polish involvement, it was improbable that the action of the local Rumanian Minister in Turkey was undertaken on Polish advice even though it coincided in time with the conversation between Litvinov and Patek and the former's rejection of Polish mediation. Therefore Surits posited that the action was an independent step of the Rumanian Government though prompted, of course, by the Soviet pact negotiations with Poland and possibly by a distrust of Poland.^{157.} These comments seem at least a probable explanation of the events which appear to have been intended seriously since the Rumanian Minister in Warsaw also made an official proposal to the Soviet Ambassador for the conclusion of a non-aggression pact. The Russians naturally preferred the negotiations to be conducted in a place less susceptible to Polish influence than Warsaw and chose Ankara for this purpose, Surits being ordered to see the Rumanian Minister as quickly as possible and obtain from him any proposal which he might make.^{158.} The meeting took place the following day and on December 7 Litvinov telegraphed Surits that the Soviet Government accepted the Rumanian proposal for negotiations and authorised him to conduct them in Ankara, of which the Rumanian Minister was informed on December 8.^{159.} The seemingly intractable problem of Soviet-Rumanian relations was thus surmounted relatively easily or so it appeared. Agreement was reached that non-aggression pact negotiations should begin, the only obstacle being the venue, Rumania rejecting first Ankara and then Moscow, itself suggesting Warsaw.^{160.} A compromise agreement was eventually reached on December 26 when Riga was accepted as

156. Telegram from the ~~Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov~~, Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, December 2, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 688.

157. Ibid.

158. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, December 5, 1931. Ibid., p. 830, Note 251.

159. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, December 7, 1931. Ibid.

160. Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, to the NKD, December 12, 1931. Ibid.

the centre in which the negotiations should be conducted.^{161.}

These Polish and Rumanian developments were quickly followed by activity on the part of the Estonian Government which through its diplomatic representative in Moscow expressed its readiness to resume the non-aggression pact negotiations with the Soviet Government which were interrupted in 1927. Litvinov agreed, suggesting Moscow as the venue.^{162.} Initially the Estonian Government suggested that the negotiations be based on the Polish pact but on being informed that as yet no such pact existed it was then agreed that the 1926-1927 negotiations should provide the starting point or, if preferable, the Franco-Soviet pact, "but independently of one or another basis we are ready to start negotiations at any date, or even now," as Litvinov said. The Estonian Minister in Moscow replied that he was not authorised to begin negotiations immediately.^{163.}

On December 23 the head of the eastern department of the Latvian Foreign Ministry in a private conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, Svidersky, said that in the very near future he was thinking of beginning negotiations with the USSR on the basis of the 1927 treaty^{164.} and that he would prefer the negotiations to be conducted in Riga but would not object to Moscow. Svidersky replied that the Soviet Union would welcome any sincere steps directed at the strengthening of peace. In his telegram to the Narkomindel he noted that no mention was made in the conversation of either Estonia or Poland.^{165.} *Izvestia* carried an article on December 27, however, reporting that the Estonian and Latvian Governments had been conducting negotiations and informed Latvian political circles considered agreement had been reached that the Soviet-Latvian non-aggression

161. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, to the NKD, December 26, 1931. *DVP Vol. 14*, p. 739. According to Berthelot he had advised the Rumanians not to insist on Warsaw but to be guided by Litvinov's statement on the Soviet readiness to conduct negotiations directly with Rumania in Moscow, following the precedent of the Moscow protocol negotiations. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, December 18, 1931. *Ibid.*, p. 713. If this is so, the Rumanians did not heed Berthelot's words.

162. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Estonian Minister in the USSR, Selyamaa, December 8, 1931. *Ibid.*, p. 698.

163. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Estonian Minister in the USSR, Selyamaa, December 14, 1931. *Ibid.*, p. 710.

164. See above, p. 14.

165. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Latvia, Svidersky, to the NKD, December 23, 1931. *Ibid.*, p. 737. Ambassador in Latvia, 1929-1932.

pact text of 1927 would serve as the basis for both countries' future negotiations with the USSR.¹⁶⁶ Two days later the Latvian Minister in Moscow officially proposed to resume negotiations on this basis which Litvinov welcomed and expressed readiness to begin them in Moscow on any day to which the Latvian did not object.¹⁶⁷ The Soviet Government would not favour a simultaneous signing of the two pacts with these Baltic states, however, ostensibly on the ground that this would create difficulties and delays, in fact because of its long-standing hostility to such an intimate linking of two independent pacts.¹⁶⁸

The fifth Soviet western border state, Finland, proposed to resume non-aggression pact negotiations which had been interrupted in 1927 on December 19 and hoped that they would get under way and be brought to a successful conclusion quickly.¹⁶⁹ An indication of the changed international situation, especially in this region of eastern Europe, is the fact that after the elapse of five years since such negotiations were last conducted between Finland and the USSR, a period interspersed with violent press and diplomatic outbursts, this Finnish proposal was delivered to the Soviet Ambassador in Helsinki during a conversation which lasted no more than fifteen minutes. The Finnish Charge d'Affaires in Moscow handed the Narkomindel a statement indicating Finland's readiness to negotiate a non-aggression pact with the USSR "in continuation and on the basis of the 1926-1927 negotiations, taking into account the results and achievements of the negotiations between the USSR and France and the USSR and Poland." The Soviet Government expressed a readiness to resume them,¹⁷⁰ repeated on December 22 in Helsinki by Maisky to the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Soviet Union accepted Helsinki as the venue and noted with pleasure the fact that the Finnish project pact, based on the French and Polish texts with the USSR as well

166. Izvestia, December 27, 1931.

167. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Latvian Minister in the USSR, Seskls, December 29, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, p. 743.

168. See the telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Latvia, Svidersky, to the NKD, December 30, 1931. Ibid., p. 746.

169. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Finland, Maisky and the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ire-Koskinen, December 19, 1931. Ibid., pps. 714-715.

170. Note of a conversation between a member of the NKD, Stomonyakov and the Finnish Charge d'Affaires in the USSR, December 19, 1931. Ibid., p. 718.

as the 1926-1927 negotiations excluded two disputed points from the latter negotiations, namely, the League of Nations and arbitration. To Maisky's question as to whether the Finnish Government appreciated that the non-aggression pact must be a completely independent treaty between the two countries, the Foreign Minister replied in the affirmative but added that he hoped the Soviet Union would also conclude pacts with the other border states. Maisky formed the opinion that the Finn had not fully abandoned the idea of establishing some kind of link between the Baltic and Polish pacts and perhaps even that of Rumania.^{171.}

Meanwhile the Polish-Soviet negotiations, the only set actually under way by the end of 1931, were proceeding "normally" according to the Polish Foreign Minister's statement in the Sejm Commission on foreign affairs.^{172.} At the first four meetings in November and ^rearly December individual articles of the Soviet and Polish projects were examined and at the fifth meeting on December 21 it was agreed to publish the text of an agreed project pact.^{173.} The preamble spoke of the desire to preserve peaceful relations and to develop and supplement the Kellogg Pact and the Moscow Protocol. Both contracting parties, rejecting war as an instrument of national policy in their mutual relations, were bound to refrain from any aggressive actions or attacks both individually and jointly with other powers against each other. By actions were meant any acts of force which violated the integrity and inviolability of the territory or political independence of the other contracting party even if without a declaration of war. (Article 1) This basic article remained identical to that handed by Patek to Karakhan on August 23, based on the 1926-1927 negotiations. The second article by which an attack on one of the parties by a third power must not be directly or indirectly helped and supported during the conflict by the other party also followed the August project. Article 3 had been modified during the

171. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Finland, Maisky and the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ire-Koskinen, December 22, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 735-736.

172. Quoted in Pravda, December 19, 1931.

173. DVP Vol. 14, p.832, Note 255.

course of the negotiations. The August text dealt with Poland's rights and obligations arising from its participation in the League of Nations and defensive pacts concluded in connection with the League Covenant. This was objectionable to the Soviet Union and the December text merely stated that articles 1 and 2 would not restrict the international rights and obligations which issued from agreements concluded before the treaty's entry into force in so far as these agreements were not aggressive. Article 4 dealt with conciliation procedure as a means of peaceful settlement of disputes incapable of solution by diplomatic means, Poland giving way to the Soviet preference for conciliation rather than arbitration. The December protocol, like the August project, imposed an identical duration of three years for the pact with automatic renewal for two years if not denounced six months before its expiry.

Certain points of disagreement still existed between the two sides yet overall this was a solid achievement in a relatively short space of time. The Soviet Union insisted on the inclusion in article 3 of the phrase, "each of the contracting parties is bound not to take part in any agreements which are clearly hostile to the other party and also which contradict formally or substantially the present pact," to which Patek reserved his opinion. The Russians also desired that a supplementary protocol should be signed by which both Governments undertook to ratify the pact as quickly as possible, Patek again reserving his opinion.¹⁷⁴ The fundamental difference between the project of August and that of December was the absence in the latter of the former's fifth article; "both contracting parties agree that the other governments which signed the Moscow Protocol of February 9, 1928, will be invited to conclude analogous treaties with the USSR."¹⁷⁵ This article had been the major stumbling block to an agreement, representing the Polish desire for a connection between the Soviet non-aggression pacts with its western border states and the Russian opposition to such a connection. The Polish concession on this point made agreement possible

174. Protocol of the Soviet-Polish negotiations on the conclusion of a non-aggression pact, December 21, 1931. DVP Vol. 14, pps. 719-721.

175. Ibid., p. 488.

and, on the other hand, the willingness of these other states now to negotiate similar pacts and a Soviet readiness to follow suit, allowed Poland to make such a concession. Nevertheless it was a considerable adjustment of Polish foreign policy and one which underlines the increased desire in Warsaw to secure a non-aggression pact with its eastern neighbour, a desire which was absent in 1926.

On the crucial question of Germany's relations to the Soviet-Polish negotiations, this protocol was not of an encouraging nature. It was true that a Polish attack on Germany would leave Russia a free-hand, though not a German attack on Poland.¹⁷⁶ The major German objection, however, was to the indirect guaranteeing of Polish territory by the USSR. This protocol stated that any act of force which violated the integrity and inviolability of Polish territory would be interpreted as an act of aggression and this was seen in Berlin as indirectly guaranteeing or at least legitimising the Polish-German frontier; "the persistence with which the Poles cling to Clause Two, Article One is the best evidence that they do not regard it as something self-evident, but that they are using it to pursue far-reaching goals."¹⁷⁷ The Germans warned Russia that the publication of this clause risked creating such a reaction in Germany as to make further collaboration psychologically impossible.¹⁷⁸

This German response was produced despite energetic efforts on the part of Soviet diplomacy to dispel all fears. Perhaps the most remarkable example is Stalin's interview to the German author, Emil Ludwig, a most unusual occurrence at that time:

I know that a certain dissatisfaction and alarm is noticeable among certain German statesmen, who fear that the Soviet Union, in its negotiations, or in any treaty that may be concluded with Poland, may take some step that would imply that the Soviet Union gives its sanction to,

176. The Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Paris, Rosenberg, even told the German Ambassador that in case of such a German attack on Poland the Soviet Union need not remain neutral since only the Soviet Government could "decide about the existence of an attack and it would itself interpret the meaning of this highly dubious and unclear term." Ambassador Hoesch's report, January 5, 1932. German Archives. Quoted in Korbel, Poland Between East and West, p. 271, footnote 16.

177. Meyer to Dirksen, December 9, 1931. German Archives. Quoted in Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, p. 245.

178. Ibid.

or guarantees, the possessions and frontiers of Poland. In my opinion such fears are groundless. We have always declared our willingness to conclude pacts of non-aggression with any government...We have openly declared our desire to sign a pact of non-aggression with Poland...As soon as the Poles declared their willingness to start negotiations with us regarding a pact of non-aggression, we naturally consented and began negotiations.

What, from the point of view of the Germans is the most dangerous thing that might happen? A change of attitude towards the Germans for the worse? But there is no foundation for that. We, like the Poles, must declare in the pact that we shall not resort to force, or aggression, in order to change the frontiers of Poland bordering the USSR, or to violate their independence...Without that, a pact would be out of the question...Does that mean recognition of the Versailles system? It does not. Does it mean guaranteeing frontiers? It does not...Our friendly relations with Germany will remain what they have been hitherto.¹⁷⁹

Soviet diplomatic activity seems to have had some success in mollifying German opinion, at least to the extent that much press comment was reasonable in tone, postponing a final opinion until the precise terms of the pact were known. Thus the German "Ost Express" agency reported that "Germany never laid claim to an economic or political monopoly on the Soviet Union and will not create any kind of obstacle to a peaceful policy in eastern Europe,"¹⁸⁰ and the "Kolnische Zeitung", close to the German Foreign Ministry, considered German fears unfounded and rejected the idea that the Soviet Government intended to abandon the tested line of Soviet-German friendship reinforced by the renewal of the Berlin treaty.¹⁸¹ The official German Foreign Office paper, "Deutsche Diplomatisch-Politische Korrespondenz", gave a positive evaluation of the proposed Soviet non-aggression pacts with its neighbours which were "unconditionally welcomed as are any other efforts which promote the strengthening of general peace"; that is, of course, so long as they were not directed against Germany. Final judgement must be reserved until after an acquaintance - ship with the texts of the pacts.¹⁸² Nevertheless, the fact of an imminent Polish-Soviet pact remained to plague the Wilhemstrasse.

The opening weeks of 1932 witnessed the beginning of non-aggression pact negotiations between the Soviet Union and Finland, January 5;¹⁸³ Rumania,

179. Interview by Stalin to Emil Ludwig, December 13, 1931. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol. 2, p. 518.

180. Quoted in Izvestia, January 2, 1932.

181. Quoted Ibid., January 4, 1932.

182. Quoted Ibid., January 6, 1932.

183. Ibid.

January 6;^{184.} Latvia, January 7^{185.} and Estonia, somewhat later, on January 20.^{186.} The negotiations in Helsinki were the first to reach a successful conclusion and on January 21, a little more than two weeks after their initiation, a Soviet-Finnish pact of non-aggression was signed.^{187.}

Since this model was closely followed in the other pacts, its main provisions will be outlined. In the first article, the contracting parties guaranteed the inviolability of the frontiers which existed between the USSR and Finland and undertook to refrain from any attack one on the other. By an attack was defined any forceful act which violated the integrity and inviolability of the territory or the political independence of the other party, even if without any declaration of war. The second article contained the neutrality clause and the right of either party to denounce the pact if the other party undertook aggression against a third power. Each party undertook not to participate in any treaties, agreements or conventions which were clearly hostile to the other party or which contradicted formally or in essence the present pact (article 3). The above pledges could not in any event violate the international rights and obligations of either party ensuing from previous agreements in so far as they did not contain elements of aggression (article 4). The pact provided for a conciliation commission and was to remain in force for three years, to be automatically prolonged for a further two years if not denounced within six months of its expiry by one of the contracting parties. Both states, in a supplementary protocol, undertook to ratify the pact as quickly as possible.^{188.}

Izvestia, commenting on the newly-signed pact, stressed the Soviet

184. Izvestia, January 8, 1932.

185. Ibid.

186. Joffe, Vneshnyaya politika SSSR, p.308.

187. Economic as well as political considerations motivated this small Russian neighbour. The British Minister in Finland considered that the Finnish signature was due to pressure exercised on the ~~following~~ Foreign Minister by commercial and particularly by agricultural interests which hoped to find an outlet in Russia for some of the Finnish exports recently excluded from Germany. The British Minister in Finland, Sperling, to the Foreign Office March 31, 1932, Public Record Office, F.O.N2115/25/63.

188. Soviet-Finnish Pact of Non-Aggression and the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts, January 21, 1932. DVP Vol.15, pps.45-48.

struggle for the preservation of peace in the face of the worsening economic crisis which many imperialist circles saw as being circumvented only by means of war. This recent pact, concluded with a state which in recent times had figured large in provocative anti-Soviet acts, gave reason to hope that "the leading circles of Finland have really experienced a change of heart and now recognise how senseless it is to exacerbate relations with the USSR." The article ended with a call for vigilance on the part of Soviet workers and peasants, however, in view of the limited significance of all peace treaties.^{189.}

The Soviet press, despite its nation's diplomatic successes, continued to concentrate on the disastrous capitalist economic crisis and the threats which this held for the Soviet state, seeking to fulfil the First Five Year Plan. An *Izvestia* editorial in the new year spoke of the capitalist world's energetic and persistent search for a way out of the crisis at the expense of the Soviet Union and its increasing preparations for intervention.^{190.} The series of non-aggression pacts being negotiated by the Narkomindel did not inhibit contributors to journals such as *International Press Correspondence* from launching frenzied attacks against western imperialism;

The danger of a war against the Soviet Union is increasing every day. At present this danger is most threatening in the Far East. At the same time, however, eager preparations for attack are also being made in the West, in the East European countries, the Vassal states of France. To let loose war against the Soviet Union in the Far East and then to drive forward the attack on the European frontiers of the Soviet Union, that is the plan of the imperialists, especially of French imperialism.^{191.}

The Finnish Government, for its part, considered the pact of great significance as proving to the Soviet Union that "Finland, like the other western neighbours of the USSR, has not the slightest intention of violating the peace in eastern Europe."^{192.}

The rapid signature of this non-aggression pact did not signify the complete abandonment by this small Baltic state of its other neighbours. The

189. *Izvestia*, January 24, 1932.

190. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1932.

191. M, "The War Provocations of the Imperialists in the Far East." *Impreccor*, Vol. 12, N. 2, January 14, 1932, p. 24.

192. Speech of the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs to the local press. Quoted in *Izvestia*, January 26, 1932.

Soviets had succeeded in establishing bilateral negotiations with the border states, despite objections not only from Poland, but from all these states, yet this was not a complete victory for Russia. Finland, for example, ostensibly on the ground that peace in eastern Europe could not be safeguarded by the Finnish-Soviet pact alone, made it clear that it would only ratify the pact following the conclusion of similar pacts between the USSR and its other western neighbours.^{193.}

These other negotiations proceeded at a slightly more sedate pace than those in Helsinki. The Riga negotiations between representatives of the Soviet and Latvian Governments centred on the Soviet project pact of 1927, Latvia's counter-project containing differences but not of an insuperable character.^{194.} Soviet negotiations with both Latvia and Estonia advanced slowly, in Litvinov's opinion, a result of their marking time, waiting for the results of the Polish-Soviet negotiations. He considered that the conclusion of the latter would probably lead to the same result in the case of the two small Baltic states.^{195.}

It will be recalled that the negotiations with Poland had proceeded normally in November and December 1931, a joint protocol having been agreed upon which left only one or two points in dispute. They were resumed in January on Patek's return from Warsaw. The Polish Minister remained adamant that his Government would not agree to the addition in article 3 of the undertaking by both parties "not to take part in any agreements which are clearly hostile to the other party and also which contradict formally or substantially the present pact", but was prepared to undertake in a protocol of signature the ratification and the exchange of ratification instruments "in the shortest possible period" without actually determining the length of this period.^{196.} Litvinov insisted that this must be fixed precisely and repeated the Soviet Government's

193. Izvestia, January 26, 1932.

194. Ibid., January 14, 1932.

195. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, January 18, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 37.

196. The Rumanian Foreign Minister gained the impression from Pilsudski at the beginning of January that the latter was not enthusiastic about the planned pact. He had talked with irony of "all these useless, valueless, transitory pacts." Laroche, La Pologne de Pilsudski, p. 106.

determination that the above addition to article 3 must be included. He asked rhetorically how it was possible to speak of peaceful relations if one party consciously retained for itself the right of participation in hostile agreements against the other party. Further, the Soviet Government was reluctant to omit this clause for fear that it would thereby establish a dangerous precedent for future pacts. Despite Litvinov's eloquence, Patek stood firm, stating that his Government objected to the clause on the grounds that it would permit outside interference in its relations with third states. Litvinov formed the impression at this meeting that Patek might agree to transfer this obnoxious phrase to a special protocol supplementary to the pact.^{197.}

This disputed clause was central to the Soviet concept of a non-aggression pact, its insertion acting as an impediment to Polish foreign policy in any attempt to negotiate anti-Soviet agreements or alliances which the Russians so feared.^{198.} For Moscow it was essential on practical grounds rather than being a theoretical debating issue. As Litvinov said, a non-aggression pact had in essence three obligations; non-aggression, neutrality and non-participation in hostile agreements. In his opinion Poland had reduced the neutrality point to nothing; if it rejected non participation this merely left non-aggression which was already provided for in the Kellogg Pact.^{199.} This is an interesting comment on the Soviet appreciation of the non-aggression pact instrument and suggests that a simple non-aggression pledge was not the only or perhaps in some cases even the main objective. This explains the wrangling which continued in the negotiation of the various Soviet pacts after agreement had been reached on the first article. The Franco-Soviet pact contained the important clauses on propaganda, military organisations and economic aggression, absent in the Polish pact where instead this article 3 assumed paramount importance. It is to be assumed that these contents of the French pact were totally unacceptable to the

197. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, January 13, 1932. DVP Vol.15. pps.23-25.

198. Though not included in the Franco-Soviet pact.

199. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, January 18, 1932. Ibid., p.37.

Polish side, a fact which the Soviet Government appreciated at a very early date in its plans for a pact with that state and therefore did not push in the actual negotiations.

The Polish negotiations took a turn for the worse on January 19 when Litvinov once again met Patek. The latter explained that Warsaw had agreed long ago to withdraw its fifth article concerning the simultaneous ratification of all the border state pacts on condition that the Soviet Union in turn withdrew its third article on non-participation in hostile agreements. Since Moscow insisted on the latter, Warsaw must return to this fifth article.²⁰⁰ This of course had been the major obstacle on the path of a non-aggression pact between the states and the very reason for the barrenness of the mid-twenties' negotiations. Unless at least one government was prepared to compromise, these new negotiations would meet a similar fate. Litvinov replied that the rejection of article 5 was a pre-condition~~ni~~ of these negotiations and that its elimination would destroy all that had been so far agreed. Patek asked whether the Russians would agree that the third article should mention only an undertaking not to conclude agreements which contradicted the present pact, a compromise which Litvinov initially refused to accept, but after persistence on the part of the Polish Minister, he agreed to inform the Soviet Government of the new proposal. Litvinov now raised the issue as to whether Poland would sign or merely initial the pact if the text was agreed upon which led Patek to enquire as to whether the Russians would accept his wording of the article if he promised to sign. Litvinov repeated that he could only put this new suggestion to his Government.²⁰¹

The penultimate stage of these negotiations took place a few days later when the two diplomats once again met. The Finnish pact having been mean-time signed, Litvinov said that the Finns had been somewhat more compliant than Patek and had accepted the very article which had been the object of such disagreement with Poland. After further proposal and counter-proposal agreement

200. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, January 19, 1932. DVP Vol. 15.

p. 38.

201. Ibid., pps. 38-39.

was finally reached on the text. Beck, the Polish Deputy Foreign Minister, reports in his book that after all the essential questions had been agreed upon he instructed the Polish delegates "to cut short the talks even at the expense of abandoning some trifling point of law or some detail of wording"²⁰². Patek refused to sign the pact, however, "mumbling" several words about obligations to Rumania, but finally said that Zaleski, who had more authority, could sign the pact in Geneva where Litvinov would also be present at the Disarmament Conference.²⁰³

The long road of Soviet-Polish relations by January 25 had at last reached the point of initialling, though not signing, a non-aggression pact.²⁰⁴ It broadly followed the December 21 protocol. The compromise agreement on article 3 now read that "each of the contracting parties undertook not to take part in any agreements openly hostile to the other party from the point of view of aggression," a diluted version of the Soviet demand which called for the words "and also which contradict formally or substantially the present pact" in place of the inserted "from the point of view of aggression."²⁰⁵ The required compromise had been made by both states in the interest of agreement. A protocol was added which stated that the denunciation of the pact or its expiry would not affect any obligations resulting from the Kellogg Pact.²⁰⁶ Soviet-Polish relations had now arrived at the position of Soviet-French relations. In a press statement the following day Litvinov discussed these Soviet non-aggression pacts:

The contents of the pacts proposed by the Soviet Government are very simple and consist in undertaking obligations not to enter upon aggressive action and to eliminate so far as possible causes which might lead to infringement of the peaceful relations existing between

202. Beck, Final Report, p.10. Zaleski told the British Ambassador in early January that the pact had been agreed upon but for four quite unimportant points on which he was quite prepared, if necessary, to give way. The British Ambassador in Poland, Erskine, to the Foreign Office, January 5, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N140/25/63.

203. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, January 23, 1932. HEX DVP Vol.15, pps. 51-52.

204. DVP Vol.14, p.832, N.255.

205. This third article of the December protocol became article 4 in the actual pact.

206. Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact, initialled January 25, 1932. DVP Vol.15, pps.436-439.

the government concluding such treaties. If, in negotiating such pacts, the contracting parties are really animated by the desire to strengthen peaceful relations and pursue no indirect aims, then it is possible to complete the negotiations very rapidly.²⁰⁷

Unfortunately the pact remained unsigned, Patek's reference to Zaleski's signature in Geneva proving to be so much hot air. The reason for this mere initialling was not hard to discover. The official "Gazeta Polska", whilst welcoming it as "a favourable step forward in the direction of fulfilling the presently conducted peace policy in eastern Europe," explained that "the activation of the pact is linked with the conclusion of analogous pacts by all the states with frontiers on the Soviet western border."²⁰⁸ Zaleski also greeted the pact as "a step forward on the path towards the pacification of eastern Europe" and again emphasised that its ratification would depend on the signature of the other pacts being negotiated.²⁰⁹

The Polish paper "Kurjer Warszawski" well illustrates its country's position:

It would be pointless to conceal the fact that we are sincerely gratified...It is, for the moment, of no interest to us what considerations prompted the Moscow government to this step. As far as Poland is concerned, the essence of the whole issue consists in the fact that Moscow desires peace on its western frontier. Is it compelled by economic reasons to seek an agreement with France, or is it simply safeguarding its position in Europe because of its preoccupation with the Far East? Has it some plans to submit to the disarmament conference at Geneva, or is it afraid that the advance of Hitlerism might jeopardise the fruits of Rapallo? One can indulge in the most diversified speculations concerning this vast topic, but the fact remains the same: Soviet policy in Europe desires peace. Since Poland, too, wants peace and must wage a policy of peace, since she has no aggressive designs against Soviet Russia, the non-aggression pact recently initialled has all the features of a really valuable agreement.²¹⁰

207. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol 2, p.522.

208. Quoted in Pravda, January 27, 1932.

209. Quoted in Izvestia, January 28, 1932. Zaleski told the British Ambassador that these Soviet non-aggression pacts had a certain moral value going further and being more definite than the Kellogg Pact. But he did add that neither Poland nor Russia believed in the good faith of the other and he was quite certain that if circumstances should arise in which the Soviet Government thought that aggression would serve the aim of world revolution it would not hesitate to attack Poland, pact or no pact. The British Ambassador in Poland, Erskine, to the Foreign Office, January 5, 1932. Public Record Office, F.O. NL40/25/63.

210. Kurjer Warszawski, January 27, 1932. Quoted in Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p.14.

The Soviet reaction was less enthusiastic, especially since the pacts still remained unsigned yet nevertheless it was a worthwhile achievement. Now the Polish pact depended on the fate of the Rumanian, Latvian and Estonian pacts and the French and Finnish pacts on the Polish one. The two Baltic states provided little trouble after Poland's accommodation. The Soviet-Latvian non-aggression pact was signed on February 5 ^{211.} and after a little more difficulty the Soviet-Estonian pact was eventually signed on May 4. ^{212.} Both closely followed the Soviet-Finnish version, the former two both containing explicit undertakings not to take part in any agreements aimed at economic or financial boycott of the other party. There is an interesting omission in these two pacts of the obligation to remain neutral in case of an armed attack by a third power on the other contracting party and the right to denounce the pact if the other launches an aggressive move against the third power. The reason was that this eventuality was covered in the Soviet-Latvian peace treaty of August 11, 1920 and the Soviet-Estonian peace treaty of February 2, 1920. *Izvestia* greeted the Latvian pact as "another step in the peaceful policy of the Soviet Government." Yet it was not overwhelmingly enthusiastic:

(T)he treaty serves as one of the factors in favour of a true strengthening of security which, as is known, is a "matter of concern" to the group of states which is included in the system of French influence and which displays particular resistance to actual disarmament.

It should be noted that the Soviet-Latvian treaty was the result of fairly lengthy negotiations between the governments of the USSR and Latvia and that it was necessary to overcome many difficulties before the treaty was signed.

Izvestia claimed that the Latvian Government was subject "to very serious pressure on the part of certain foreign forces" which attempted to delay and

211. Soviet-Latvian non-aggression pact, February 5, 1932. *DVP Vol. 15*, pps. 83-86.

212. Soviet-Estonian non-aggression pact, May 4, 1932. *Ibid.*, pps. 296-298.

Litvinov told the British Ambassador in Moscow that the Estonian negotiations were delayed because of the Estonian argument that its existing treaty with the USSR sufficiently covered the neutrality article, thereby rendering it unnecessary in the non-aggression pact. The British Ambassador in Moscow, Ovey, to the Foreign Office, March 28, 1932. *DBFP Vol. 7*, p. 237.

prevent if possible the conclusion of the treaty.²¹³ On the other hand, the British representative in Latvia heard through Estonian Government channels that the Soviet Government had induced the Latvian Government to sign a treaty without Estonia by offering favourable terms for the renewal of the Soviet-Latvian commercial agreement which expired in the following November.²¹⁴

The course of the Soviet non-aggression pact negotiations with France, Poland, Finland, Latvia and Estonia had not proved easy; much hard bargaining was required before Moscow could see its security policy at least partially completed with the initialling or signature of these treaties. The Soviet-Rumanian negotiations at Riga were to surpass all these previous examples in their length and obduracy. It is unlikely that this came as any profound shock to the Soviet Government since its Bessarabian dispute with Rumania placed an obstacle on the path of successful completion which the other negotiations, despite all their pitfalls, never had to encounter.

Stomonyakov, the Soviet negotiator in Riga, first exchanged project pacts with the Rumanian representative on January 6, the latter's project being based on the original Polish scheme together with Patek's amendments.²¹⁵ Its only difference, a significant one, was in the first article of the Polish text defining an act of aggression as any act of force which violated the integrity and inviolability of the territory, to which was added "which at the present time is situated under the sovereignty of the other contracting party."²¹⁶ This referred to Bessarabia which the USSR refused to recognise as being a legal part of Rumania. Throughout the whole series of negotiations the Soviets were determined to deny Rumania any direct or tacit recognition of this absorption

213. Izvestia, February 9, 1932. No reference was made in the Soviet press to the Soviet-Estonian pact other than a brief mentioning of the signature.

214. It seems probable that Latvia, like the other Baltic states, was at least strongly influenced by economic factors in these negotiations, being very dependent on the Russian market. British Minister in Latvia, Knatchbull-Hugessen, to the Foreign Office, March 2, 1932. Public Record Office, FO NL549/25/63.

215. Project handed to Karakhan by Patek, August 23, 1931. See above pps. 122-123. Telegram from the Soviet representative at the negotiations with Rumania, Stomonyakov, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, January 6, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 14.

216. Ibid., p. 720, N. 3.

of what they considered to be Russian territory. The Rumanian Government was equally determined explicitly to include Bessarabia in the terms of the pact, both to secure an implied recognition and also because it was the most probable objective of future Soviet aggressive actions against that state.²¹⁷ The initial Soviet project included in its preamble the phrase "the establishment of such relations inflicts no blow at the territorial conflict which exists between the contracting parties over Bessarabia and is not settled by the present pact."²¹⁸ This disagreement was to bedevil and ultimately wreck the negotiations despite all attempts by the two involved parties as well as interested third powers to reconcile the positions.

The following day Rumania made its position perfectly clear by issuing two final statements: it did not desire to achieve recognition of the Bessarabian annexation in these negotiations but it could not sign a pact in which this question would be openly declared either directly or indirectly.²¹⁹ Litvinov stated that "we shall avoid any formulation under which it would be possible to interpret even the most remote recognition of the annexation of Bessarabia."²²⁰ On January 10 Litvinov instructed Stomonyakov to stand firmly on this position and not be frightened by Rumanian threats of a break in the negotiations.²²¹ Against this background the Rumanian Foreign Minister's press statement on January 9 whilst visiting Warsaw though guarded, was optimistic:

I am reluctant to make any premature statements about the fate of these negotiations: taking into account the interest which the USSR is manifesting in the conclusion of a series of pacts of non-aggression with individual states and the contact established in Riga, it is possible that concrete results will be produced.²²²

Despite almost daily meetings no progress in the negotiations was registered

217. A further motive of at least some Rumanian politicians was the improbability of the negotiations succeeding if Rumania insisted on Soviet recognition of its sovereignty in Bessarabia. See chapter 5.

218. DVP Vol.15, p.720, Note 3.

219. Telegram from the Soviet Representative at the negotiations with Rumania, Stomonyakov, to the NKD, January 7, 1932. Ibid., p.15.

220. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Representative at the negotiations with Rumania, Stomonyakov, January 7, 1932. Ibid.

221. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Representative at the Rumanian negotiations, Stomonyakov, January 10, 1932. Ibid., pps.18-19.

222. Quoted in Izvestia, January 14, 1932.

and the likelihood of a Soviet compromise was remote. Litvinov once again told Stomonyakov that the Soviet Government would not make any concessions and added that "Rumania needs the pact more than us." The Russians considered that Rumania would obtain solid advantages from any non-aggression pact even if it did mention Bessarabia. They believed that their readiness to negotiate a bilateral pact, despite Rumania's illegal occupation of Bessarabia, a great concession and one which could not be further extended by a Soviet agreement to refrain from mentioning even that the question remained a disputed one, especially since that territory would continue to remain a part of Rumania even after the conclusion of such a pact.^{223.}

This dispute raged interminably throughout January and can be followed particularly well in the Soviet documents. Suffice to say that the Russians showed no sign of giving ground on their fundamental position but did nevertheless appear to have exercised a certain diplomatic flexibility within it. They proposed the following text for the second paragraph of the first article which was proving so difficult: "by an action which contradicts the undertakings etc. will be considered any attempt by one party to settle by forceful means territorial or other disputes which exist between the parties." The Soviet Government was prepared to undertake the non-incursion into Bessarabia but without the recognition of present Rumania's frontiers, integrity and sovereignty.^{224.} This proposal the Rumanian representative in Riga rejected.^{225.} The ironic aspect was that agreement on all the articles of the pact excepting the second paragraph of the first article was reached by January 20.^{226.}

Stomonyakov reported widely-spread rumours in Riga that Rumania had broken

223. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Representative at the Rumanian negotiations, Stomonyakov, January 12, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 21.

224. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Representative at the Rumanian negotiations, Stomonyakov, January 19, 1932. Ibid., p. 726, Note 26.

225. Telegram from the Soviet Representative at the Rumanian negotiations, Stomonyakov, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, January 20, 1932. Ibid., p. 43.

226. Letter from the Soviet Representative at the Rumanian negotiations, Stomonyakov, to the Rumanian delegate, Sturdza, January 20, 1932. Ibid., pps. 44-45.

off the negotiations and was warned by the Finnish Minister in Riga on January 23 that a break would occur.²²⁷ It seems probable that this did indeed happen on or shortly after that date. It is interesting to note that this break, which must have been known in Warsaw, did not prevent the initialling of the Polish-Soviet pact on January 25.²²⁸ According to Scott, it was agreed that Soviet-Rumanian contact should be resumed either directly at the disarmament talks in Geneva or through friendly mediation.²²⁹ Perhaps the basic problem in these negotiations which were to drag on throughout 1932 was that neither side earnestly desired agreement and certainly not strongly enough to compromise. For the USSR, a Rumanian pact was advantageous mainly because it would complete its series of pacts and remove any excuse for further delay by those states which had already negotiated pacts rather than for its intrinsic value. The Rumanian Government was persuaded against its will by France and Poland to negotiate a separate pact with the USSR. The Rumanian Foreign Minister disliked and distrusted the Soviets and had seriously considered refusing to comply with the wishes of the French and Polish Governments to negotiate but had finally decided that such a refusal would place Rumania in an invidious position of isolation.²³⁰ In these circumstances it is not too surprising that an easy success did not grace the negotiations.

This failure did not greatly detract from the undoubted successes which had accrued to Soviet foreign policy in the winter and spring of 1931-1932. Now that non-aggression pacts had been initialled or signed between the USSR on the one hand and Poland, Finland, Latvia and Estonia on the other, it might be thought that the delay in Paris as regards the initialled Franco-Soviet pact

227. Telegram from the Soviet Representative at the Rumanian negotiations, Stomonyakov, to the NKD, January 23, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 52-53.

228. Patek in conversation with Litvinov on January 23 privately offered to mediate between the USSR and Rumania, an offer which the latter rejected on the grounds that direct contact had been established. Ibid., p. 52.

229. Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p. 33.

230. The British Minister in Rumania, Palairot, to the Foreign Office, January 6, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N267/25/63. A little earlier, Palairot had reported his impression that Rumania had been persuaded to negotiate bilaterally with the USSR by the French Government. The British Minister in Rumania, Palairot, to the Foreign Office, December 23, 1931. Ibid., FO N8227/6122/38.

was now unnecessary. This was indeed the prevalent view in Moscow. The Russians continuously expressed dissatisfaction at the Paris results and sought to forge ahead with the negotiations in order that a signed and ratified pact might be safely lodged in the Narkomindel files. On January 18 Dovgalevsky was instructed to "demand" from Berthelot and Laval an explanation as to the fate of the pact, specifically, whether France was prepared to sign it given the fairly advanced stage of the Soviet-Polish negotiations.²³¹ Dovgalevsky carried out his chief's instructions and met Berthelot on January 25. The latter complained of Laval's irresoluteness under pressure from the "right" which was attempting to convince him of the undesirability of concluding the Franco-Soviet pact. Further, Laval was dissatisfied by the state of the trade negotiations and doubted the expediency of concluding a political pact in isolation from the regulation of trade relations. Dovgalevsky retorted that the stagnation in the trade negotiations was the fault of the French. Berthelot finally stated that the non-aggression pact would be signed, he hoped, when the pacts with Poland and Rumania were signed. Given the stage of the Rumanian negotiations, on which both the Polish and the French pacts now depended, this was not good news for Moscow. The most he could promise was to speak with the Rumanian Foreign Minister on the desirability of a non-aggression pact with the USSR.²³² A few days later Laval himself assured Dovgalevsky of the serious contribution which the pacts between the USSR, France and the western border states would make to European peace but again emphasised that the conclusion of a Rumanian as well as a Polish pact with the Soviet Union must be a condition of French signature.²³³

The Russians naturally were angered by this new French condition which had been introduced and considered that the French Government's position hindered the signature of the Polish-Soviet pact and, in Kestinsky's words, "raises

231. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, January 18, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 37. Laval, French Premier and Foreign Minister, January 14-February 16, 1932. Succeeded in both posts by Tardieu.

232. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, January 25, 1932. Ibid., pps. 55-57.

233. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, January 29, 1932. Ibid., pps. 68-69.

doubts as to the sincerity of its desires for a rapid, positive completion of the negotiations with us."²³⁴. Doubts concerning French sincerity ~~assisted~~ persisted despite Berthelot's offer to instruct the French delegation at Geneva to help, if necessary, in arranging a meeting between Litvinov and the Rumanian Foreign Minister.²³⁵

The consequences for Soviet foreign policy as a result of these last six months' activities were far-reaching if still somewhat hanging in the air. From the early days of its existence the communist regime in Moscow had been compelled to rely upon its political, economic and military links with Weimar Germany in order to reap some measure of security for its vulnerable state, threatened by the great imperialist powers with France and its east European "minions" in the vanguard. This Soviet partnership with Germany was cemented by the common distrust, even hatred, which both shared of France and Poland. As late as summer 1931 the German Government had renewed this partnership mainly on the basis of the continued animosity towards the Polish state. Yet by the spring of 1932 the Soviet Union had initialled pacts of non-aggression with France and Poland as well as having signed pacts with several of their "satellites". The European balance of power was in a state of flux. True, the Soviet position was far from representing a new alignment with these states, haggling being still very much to the fore-front in Warsaw and Paris, not to mention Bucharest. Nonetheless, the most superficial observer could not but perceive a profound change in Russia's international situation. If its dependence on the French alliance system was as yet by no means a completed fact, its growing divergence from Germany could not be denied, a divergence which ran against the grain of ten years fruitful co-operation. The Soviet state had not inadvertently drifted away from Berlin, furthermore; although it had endeavoured by diplomatic activity to calm German fears which were multiplying as a result of Moscow's new foreign ventures, the fact remains that the Soviet Union had

234. Telegram from the Deputy Commissar, for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, February 2, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 76.

235. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, February 1, 1932. Ibid., p. 74.

taken a positive decision to negotiate these non-aggression pacts in the full knowledge of their almost certain consequences for Soviet-German relations.

Officially Germany accepted the initialling of the Soviet-Polish pact with some optimism. For example, the "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" thought that "the text of the pact is evidence that Poland's hopes to deprive the Rapallo pact of meaning have not been fulfilled" and the "Berliner Tageblatt" thought that the pact signified a victory for the Soviet view over the Franco-Polish one in that there was no guarantee of the Polish frontier.²³⁶ It was emphasised that the Soviet Government had retained its freedom of action in the event of a Polish attack on Germany. It was true that under Soviet pressure the Polish pact was significantly different from those with Estonia and Finland in that it only bound the two states to refrain from any aggressive action against or from invading the territory of the other party whereas the latter two pacts contained explicit guarantees of the inviolability of the existing frontiers.²³⁷ As Dyck comments, however, this German response was little more than a rationalisation of the events.²³⁸ No amount of self-congratulation in Germany could alter the facts of Russia's new position, one which was beginning to range it with the Versailles powers. Hitherto Germany and Soviet Russia the two outcasts from the new Europe re-built in 1919, had vehemently attacked this iniquitous treaty and the results which flowed from it. Now the Soviet Union could hardly maintain this attitude and indeed showed little sign of doing so. As Kochan has remarked, Stalin in his interview with Ludwig in December 1931 stated only that Russia was not recognising the Versailles system; a few months before any such statement would have contained an explicit opposition to it.²³⁹ It remained to be seen what the future would unfold.

236. Quoted in Izvestia, January 28, 1932.

237. The Soviet-Latvian pact contained a slightly milder undertaking to refrain from any acts of violence directed against the territorial integrity and inviolability or political independence of the other party, without actually using the phrase, "existing frontiers."

238. Dyck, Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, p.248.

239. Kochan, Russia and the Weimar Republic, p.159. Stalin's interview, above pps.153-154.

Chapter 5: The Bessarabian Impasse.

1. The attempt to breach the impasse.

The Soviet Government in the spring of 1932 could note with satisfaction its diplomatic successes of the preceeding months; non-aggression pacts initialed with Poland and France, similar pacts signed with Estonia, Finland and Latvia. Yet this satisfaction was marred by the realisation that in an international situation still fraught with perils for Soviet Russia, with the continued Japanese threat in the east and the growth of extremism and instability in Germany, this new diplomatic sortie had not yet reached its logical conclusion. These non-aggression pacts still had not been ratified. The apparent cause of this state of affairs was the failure of Soviet diplomacy to conclude a pact with one state, a state with which it had a common, but disputed border, Rumania. The break down of the Riga non-aggression pact negotiations with that country had not only left this Bessarabian frontier exposed but had provided an argument by which the other western border states and France resisted their ratification of the negotiated pacts.

In these Riga negotiations agreement had been reached between the Soviet and Rumanian Governments on all the articles of the proposed non-aggression pact save for that concerning the limits of Rumanian sovereignty, the Soviet Government refusing to recognise either openly or tacitly the Rumanian occupation of Bessarabia. Although this impasse seemed insurmountable, given the opposite and steadfast positions occupied by both parties, the idea of future negotiations certainly was not abandoned with the departure of the respective representatives from the Latvian capital at the end of January, 1932. Throughout the spring and summer attempts were made to continue the negotiations with the assistance of Polish and French mediation, though the endeavours of the mediators were not of a constant nature.^{1.}

Certainly by the middle of February, Dovgalevsky in Paris was discussing

1. Joffe, Vneshnaya politika Sovetskogo Souza, p.314.

the Rumanian negotiations with representatives of the French Foreign Ministry whilst simultaneously maintaining the Soviet position that the Franco-Soviet pact was unconnected with those negotiations. As Dovgalevsky recalled, "for the tenth time I emphasised that if I touched on the theme of the Soviet-Rumanian pact several times in conversation with Berthelot, this is not at all because I see any connection between the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations and the Franco-Soviet pact, but only in view of the great interest which Berthelot shows in the conclusion of a pact between the USSR and Rumania and also because the adoption of such a pact corresponds to the peaceful policy line of my Government". At this meeting with Berthelot, in fact, Dovgalevsky emphasised that if the French Government genuinely desired the rapid conclusion of the Soviet-Polish and Soviet-Rumanian pacts, it would be well-advised to sign the Franco-Soviet pact immediately. Side-stepping this advice, Berthelot informed the Soviet Ambassador that the French representative at the Geneva Disarmament Conference, Massigli, had spoken with Ghika, the Rumanian Foreign Minister, who expressed a readiness to meet Litvinov only if the initiative came from the latter. Since the Soviet Government considered Rumania responsible for the Riga negotiations' breakdown, it was not prepared to accept this condition, Dovgalevsky, indeed, interpreting Ghika's statement as indicating the absence of a sincere desire on Rumania's part to hold a further meeting.² From the Soviet side there was no indication of a willingness to compromise on the thorny issue of Bessarabia. In an interview given by Litvinov to a Polish paper, the Commissar reiterated his Government's conditions:

We find it possible and are prepared to sign such a pact which would not be interpreted as our rejection of Bessarabia, which would remain a disputed territorial question with both sides openly preserving their positions and which would include the obligation of non-aggression... The broken-off negotiations can always be resumed from the Rumanian side if it wants a treaty in which it will clearly be stated that the disputed territorial question will not be affected by the pact either directly or indirectly.³

That the Rumanian Government was likely to accept this condition, which

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2. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, February 18, 1932. DVP Vol.15, pps. 120-121.
 3. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to a member of the Collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov, March 7, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.172.

it had rejected in the Riga talks, seemed to be, at the least, a matter of some conjecture, even supposing that Franco-Polish pressure were to be exerted in this direction. In March Ghika informed the British Minister in Bucharest that no progress as regards a Rumanian-Soviet non-aggression pact had been made either at Geneva or elsewhere and that both France and Poland had withdrawn their pressure for such a pact on Rumania.⁴ In a similar vein, Litvinov expressed the opinion that the pact negotiations with Rumania were practically dead, placing little hope in Tardieu's promise, given at Geneva, that the French premier would again raise the question with the Rumanian Government.⁵

Despite such pessimistic assessments by the foreign ministers of the two involved countries, the question of a Soviet-Rumanian pact of non-aggression was not abandoned. In April the French Government expressed its desire to promote the successful conclusion of such a pact and proposed that it help Russia in searching for a formula more acceptable to the Rumanian Government, thus removing the last obstacle to the signing of the Franco-Soviet pact.⁶ Poland also remained crucially involved in the affair, "United Press" reporting from Warsaw at the beginning of May and re-printed in the Soviet press, forthcoming negotiations between the USSR on the one side, Rumania and Poland on the other, adding that Patek had been ordered to return immediately to Moscow where he must act as a mediator between Rumania and the USSR.⁷ The Soviet Government was ready to accept Polish mediation if the Rumanians followed suit and the scene was set for new negotiations.⁸ The Polish Foreign Minister gave Litvinov a number of proposals which he hoped the Soviet Government would consider, presumably intending likewise to inform the Rumanian Government. He proposed that the impasse over the recognition of the Bessarabian territory should be

4. The British Minister in Rumania, Palairot, to the Foreign Office, March 16, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N1832/25/63. See below.

5. The British Ambassador in Russia, Ovey, to the Foreign Office, March 28, 1932. DBFP 7, p.237.

6. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, April 19, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.256.

7. Izvestia, May 4, 1932.

8. Telegram from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, May 23, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.329.

surmounted by replacing in the first article of the Rumanian project pact the words, "under the sovereignty" (pod suverenitetoy), by the words, "under the authority", (pod vlastu) and in the introductory paragraph to mention that disputed questions between both sides remain on one side, the signature of the pact not damaging the position of either country on such disputed questions. This proposal did not satisfy Litvinov who still objected to the Rumanian first article. It is interesting to note that according to Zaleski, the Poles by no means approved of Rumania's position although they were to maintain their mediatory efforts for a further two months before unilaterally ~~trying~~ signing the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact regardless of Rumanian susceptibilities.

To this end, Zaleski, considered making an attempt to arrange a meeting at Geneva between Litvinov and Titulescu, the Rumanian representative at the Disarmament Conference, but on after-thought rejected this, considering Titulescu's difficult personality,⁹ favouring as a preliminary an approach through the new Rumanian Minister in Warsaw who was highly favourable to the conclusion of a pact, with the aim of formally resuming Soviet-Rumanian negotiations at Geneva around June 15. Litvinov agreed with this proposal, stating that he intended taking a short holiday but that if the Rumanians were prepared to start negotiations immediately then he would cancel his holiday and remain in Geneva, but that in any event he would be there on June 15. Zaleski believed that the Rumanian King and Foreign Minister were now more favourably inclined towards the conclusion of a pact than previously and that Pilsudski had threatened Rumania with a unilateral signature of the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact in the event of further procrastination.¹⁰

Litvinov presumably was able to take this holiday since the British Minister in Bucharest reported on June 21, following a conversation with the Rumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, that although the Polish Government was

9. Titulescu's anti-Soviet inclinations became decisive in November. See below, p. 215.

10. Litvinov remarked that the actual signing of the pact would be a better means of pressure than a threat. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, and the Polish Foreign Minister, Zaleski, May 24, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 330-331.

trying to find a formula for a pact satisfactory both to the Soviet and Rumanian Governments, the latter were not in communication with each other.^{11.} By June 23, however, Zaleski was able to inform Litvinov at Geneva that the Rumanian Government was ready to resume negotiations and as a preliminary, Zaleski gave both the Soviet Commissar and Titulescu his project pact which the latter had already approved. Litvinov characterised it as being almost an exact copy of the Polish-Soviet pact, its only difference being that in the first article it included Zaleski's formula of May 24. He agreed to study the project but pointed out the unacceptability of the first article and the absence of any mention of disputed questions, Rumanian persistence on the latter effectually ruling out success.^{12.}

The Soviet Government officially gave its support to these private comments of Litvinov, instructing him to reject this formula though at the same time authorising him to accept Titulescu's proposal that pact negotiations should be resumed. Further, he was warned to take measures in order to ensure that the consequent delay in the conclusion of a pact with Rumania should not cause a delay in the signature of the pact with Poland.^{13.} Throughout the long negotiations with the Bucharest Government, the Soviets were much more concerned about the hold-up in Warsaw and Paris than about the lack of success in the actual negotiations in hand. A pact with Rumania would not be scorned, of course, but the Russian Government, whilst evincing its willingness to negotiate, showed little desire to compromise, an attitude equally matched by Rumania. It probably understood that both France and Poland, given a sufficient threat to their security, would not let Rumanian obdurance prevent their signature of the initialled pacts with the USSR. Whilst the smoothing of the internal path towards signature in Paris and Warsaw by a demonstration of willingness to negotiate was a course Soviet diplomacy could and did pursue this was in

11. The British Minister in Rumania, Palairat, to the Foreign Office, June 21, 1932. Public Record Office FO N3859/25/63.

12. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, June 23, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 380.

13. Telegram from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, June 28, 1932. Ibid., p. 392.

fact only a side-show as compared with the major aim of realising the French and Polish pacts. Acting on his government's instructions, Litvinov informed Zaleski that his formula was unacceptable, advising that if the Polish Government really desired a positive termination of the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations, then it should rapidly sign its pact with the USSR, "after which the Rumanian Government will become more reasonable."¹⁴.

In the changing international situation, Poland was becoming increasingly reluctant to maintain its policy of supporting Rumania by postponing its own signature of the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, for reasons which will be examined below. A Soviet-Rumanian pact seemed no closer now than in January. Zaleski, reflecting this changing mood, promised Litvinov that he would telegraph the Russian proposal vis-a-vis a Polish signature to Pilsudski and forward his answer in the next few days. This answer was given to Litvinov on July 5; Poland was ready to sign.¹⁵.

This Polish decision did not, however, completely remove the Bessarabian obstacle from Soviet-Polish relations since Zaleski warned that the pact would not be ratified until a Soviet pact with Rumania had been concluded and, of course, France continued to resist any pressure to follow Poland's lead. The Soviet-Rumanian pact saga continued to drag out its monotonous story; indeed, this Polish step seemed, as if to confirm Soviet predictions, to instill a new life, almost vigour, to it. When Litvinov met Zaleski on July 5 he handed the Pole his latest Soviet-Rumanian project pact. The preamble and first article were the contentious ones. The preamble stated that "the conclusion of the present pact will not damage the position of either party in territorial and other disputes which exist between them and that these disputes remain to one side and in no degree will be affected by the present pact." The first article, after binding each party to abstain from aggressive acts, defined such an act

14. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov to the NKD, June 30, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 393.

15. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov to the NKD, July 5, 1932. Ibid., p. 396.

as "any act of force directed against the integrity and inviolability of the territory or political independence of the other contracting party and also any attempt to settle by force territorial or other disputes between both contracting parties." The remaining articles concerned neutrality, hostile organisations on the territory of either party directed against the other party and an undertaking that no future obligations accepted by either party would contradict the present pact which was to last for three years, to be prolonged automatically for two years if not denounced six months before its expiry.¹⁶ The inclusion of the preamble did not elicit an optimistic reaction from the Polish Minister who noted that it would hardly be acceptable to Rumania. In reply Litvinov confirmed that reference to the Bessarabian dispute was the basic Soviet demand and that it was impossible to agree on any recognition of the Rumanian right to that territory; he had made the maximum possible attempt to meet the Rumanian side. Zaleski promised to discuss this project with Titulescu.¹⁷

Until this stage, Poland had played the leading role as mediator in the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations and France a minor role, largely as a result of Tardieu's premiership, lasting from February until June. When Herriot succeeded to this office France gradually became involved again in the erstwhile negotiations, especially in view of the imminent Polish signature of its pact. On July 10 Massigli, one of the French representatives at the Geneva disarmament talks, met Litvinov on Herriot's behalf and at Titulescu's request. He said that it had been Herriot's intention to meet the Commissar personally but he had been delayed by the reparations negotiations in Lausanne. According to Massigli, Herriot was very concerned about the fate of the Franco-Soviet pact but affirmed once again that Soviet disagreements with Rumania stood in the way of a favourable settlement. He, Massigli, had been instructed to elucidate the chances of their elimination which had not been increased by the most recent Soviet project, which, predictably, Titulescu rejected on two points, namely,

16. Soviet project for a Soviet-Rumanian non-aggression pact, July 5, 1932.

DVP Vol. 15, pps. 397-399.

17. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 5, 1932. Ibid., pps. 396-397.

reference in the preamble and the first article to territorial disputes.^{18.}

A further project, this time proposed by Poland, was unacceptable to the Soviet Union^{19.} as was yet another proposal, this time emanating from Rumania, though handed to Litvinov at Geneva by a French mediator in the absence of direct Soviet-Rumanian contacts. On this last occasion Litvinov did use the opportunity to remind the Frenchman that the negotiations with Poland and Rumania began in connection with the Franco-Soviet pact whose fate at this moment, however, was obscure in Moscow. Despite the great desire in Russia to progress further with the French pact, the bait of a promised answer on that pact by Herriot in the near future would not induce Litvinov to agree that reference in any Soviet-Rumanian pact to disputed questions could be eliminated, his only concession being that "the Soviet-French pact undoubtedly will increase for us the value of the Rumanian pact."^{20.}

This stage in ^{the} history of the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations was concluded with the receipt by Litvinov of another Polish-inspired project in which that part of the opening preamble, so objectionable to Rumania, was omitted, in other respects it being similar to the Soviet project.^{21.} It was to prove unacceptable to the Soviet Government but of this later. The fate of the Rumanian pact and its very significance in Soviet eyes obviously did not hinge on Rumania and Russia alone. France and Poland were intimately involved in the complex wranglings and it is ^{on} ~~to~~ these countries that attention must now be concentrated.

2. The Tardieu-Herriot Governments.

The ostensible reason for the delay in the signature of their respective

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- 18. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 10, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 404-405.
 - 19. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 14, 1932. Ibid., pps. 405-406.
 - 20. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 16, 1932. Ibid., pps. 410-411.
 - 21. New project for a Soviet-Rumanian pact handed by Shetsel to Litvinov, July 22, 1932. Ibid., p. 785, Note 206.

pacts with the Soviet Union given by both the French and Polish Governments was the absence of a signed Soviet-Rumanian pact. In accordance with this reasoning the Tardieu Government which had accepted power in France on February 21, 1932 should have made every attempt to persuade the Bucharest Government to adopt a conciliatory policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union in order that France's initialled pact might quickly be signed. Indeed, such a policy could well have been expected from an anti-German and avowed supporter of the Versailles system such as Monsieur André Tardieu. There was yet another side to the conservative French Premier's character, however; he was strongly anti-Soviet, had opposed the non-aggression pact with the USSR in Laval's last government and any co-operation with communist Russia was to him anathema.^{22.}

Rumania, as a member of the Little Entente, was allied with France. It might seem sound policy that the latter state should seek to minimise its chance of involvement as a result of trouble on the unstable Soviet-Rumanian frontier, a policy which could only be furthered by the signature between the latter two states of a non-aggression pact.^{23.} If France refused to sign its pact until Rumania had done likewise, this might act as a kind of blackmail against the Soviet Government to reach an accommodation with Bucharest, given its earnest wish to sign the Franco-Soviet pact. There was a second side, however, to this affair. Some politically powerful forces within France favoured the signature of the Franco-Soviet pact, forces which Tardieu could not simply answer by a blank refusal to comply. What better excuse could such a man as Tardieu have for postponing this signature than the plea of loyalty to France's small ally which would be isolated if it alone had no pact with the USSR. He could with ease invoke the blackmail argument as enunciated above in order to justify the soundness of his delaying tactics. Knowing the immense problems which had to be surmounted before Rumania would join Soviet Russia in a non-aggression pact and

22. Grigorev and Olenov, Borba SSSR za mir i bezopasnost v Evrope 1925-1933, p. 126.

23. Although France was not committed to defend the Rumanian frontier with Russia by the Franco-Rumanian treaty of 1926 it was indirectly bound by its alliance with Poland. Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, Vol. 1, p.22.

the lack of enthusiasm in Rumanian ruling circles for such a pact, Tardieu merely had to insist on this pre-condition in order to shelve indefinitely the Franco-Soviet pact.^{24.}

French involvement in the Rumanian-Soviet pact negotiations during the spring and summer has already been examined above and it is significant that French mediation was of a very secondary importance to that of Poland during Tardieu's Government. Only with the appointment of Herriot to the Premiership on June 4 did the French Government, stimulated by Poland's growing desire to sign its non-aggression pact with the USSR, once more actively become engaged in assisting a Soviet-Rumanian agreement.

During Tardieu's spell of office Franco-Soviet relations languished, The Soviet Government was under few illusions as to its French counterpart's attitude towards the initialled pact. In the middle of February, three days before the new French Government was formed, Berthelot had answered Dovgalevsky's assertion that the immediate signing of the Franco-Soviet pact was the only path which would lead to the rapid conclusion of the Soviet-Polish and Soviet-Rumanian pacts, by stating that he himself was beginning to incline towards this opinion but that everything depended on the new cabinet.^{25.} Shortly after Tardieu's appointment Zaleski had informed Litvinov of the improbability of the new French Government signing the Franco-Soviet pact since in the previous Laval cabinet Tardieu had opposed this measure. Litvinov himself suspected that Tardieu might encourage Rumania to refrain from reaching agreement with Russia.^{26.} The following month he wrote that after a conversation with the

24. Mourin, Les relations Franco-Sovietiques, 1917-1967, p.172. Zaleski told the British Ambassador in Warsaw that Tardieu actively opposed the signing of a Rumanian-Soviet pact. British Ambassador in Poland, Erskine, to the Foreign Office, August 22, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N5101/25/63.

25. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, February 18, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.120. According to the Rumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, even Berthelot, seemingly a consistent supporter of good relations with the USSR, had no illusions about the real value of a Franco-Soviet pact and was satisfied with the merely initialled pact. British Minister in Rumania, Palairret, to the Foreign Office, March 16, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N1832/25/63.

26. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, February 26, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.141.

French Premier he gained the impression that "improved relations with the USSR do not at all enter into his immediate calculations and tasks." Although Tardieu spoke of his readiness to promote the elimination of the Rumanian obstacle and to assist in the working out of a suitable formula to cover disputed Soviet-Rumanian questions, Litvinov saw in this merely an attempt by Tardieu to portray himself as Briand's successor, pursuing a peace policy in readiness for the approaching French elections in which it would be impossible to gain a majority operating exclusively on rightist parties.²⁷ Again in April, Litvinov suspected Tardieu's involvement in the Rumanian issue as being "only a manoeuvre from Tardieu's side so as to protect himself at Geneva and especially at the time of the pre-election campaign in France against reproaches of consciously wrecking 'the business of the ^{pacification} ~~pacification~~ of eastern Europe' begun by Briand".²⁸

Franco-Soviet dislike and distrust was not entirely due to Tardieu's Premiership, however; other factors intruded on to the scene which strengthened and affirmed this personal antagonism. On May 6 the President of the French Republic, Doumer, was assassinated by Gorgulov, a Russian emigre. Whilst Gorgulov was a self-declared Russian national fascist who committed the crime "in order to compel France to make war on the Soviets,"²⁹ it created the most extreme reaction in both France and the Soviet Union. An editorial in "Le Temps," with which Tardieu was closely connected, stated:

There are certain governments that imagine they can bring the Soviets into their own design against other powers, without any danger to themselves. Instead, they are in reality serving the Soviet power and contributing to the development of its influence in the world.³⁰

The Soviet press responded violently to such French press comment, a typical Soviet headline being "Tardieu inspires campaign against USSR."³¹

Russia resented Tardieu's plans for economic reconstruction in the Danube

27. Letter from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, Soviet Charge d'Affaires in France, Rozenberg, March 29, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 213-214.

28. Letter from a member of the Collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov, to the Soviet Minister in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko, April 22, 1932. Ibid., pps. 273-274.

29. Quoted in Joffe, Vnshnyaya politika Sovetskogo Souza, p. 234.

30. Le Temps, May 9, 1932. Quoted in Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p. 37.

31. Pravda, May 12, 1932.

basin in which its participation was not solicited and which was therefore seen as being a means of creating an anti-Soviet bloc in south-eastern Europe.^{32.}

A third source of friction was the continued Soviet opposition to French disarmament plans at Geneva. The basic French theme remained constant; that a system of security must be organised before any substantial reduction of French armaments could take place. On February 5, Tardieu, then French Minister of War and leader of the French delegation at the Disarmament Conference, presented the French plan at Geneva. In essence, he proposed that an international force be created under the control of the League of Nations, that air forces be placed at the League's disposal, that compulsory arbitration be introduced and ~~the~~ a definition of "aggressor" be decided upon.^{33.} This plan caused a sensation at Geneva and was resisted not only by Germany, but by the Americans and the British, among others. Litvinov's speech on February 11 reiterated the usual Soviet theme that security could only be obtained by total disarmament. In particular the Commissar criticised the proposal to create an international force:

First and foremost it must be stated that, from the point of view of the reduction of armaments, the French proposals scarcely bring us nearer to our aim, in as much as they are preliminary conditions requiring to be accepted before any sort of reduction of armaments is to be made on the part of France.^{34.}

The Soviets were once again side by side with Germany against France. In addition, Litvinov used the Geneva forum on this occasion to castigate France, Poland and especially Rumania as regards the Soviet proposal of non-aggression pacts:^{35.}

When such a proposal is not immediately accepted but considered for years, and even after the first letter of the signature has been appended to it a period of meditation ensues, and the completion of the signature is postponed, there is naturally less feeling of confidence. But still more serious doubts of a peaceful spirit arise with regard to states which categorically reject proposals for the conclusion of a pact of non-aggression, either on some excuse or other, or without giving any excuse. ^{36.}

32. Pravda, May 4, 1932.

33. Survey of International Affairs for 1932, edited by A.J. Toynbee (London 1933 pps. 197-199.

34. The Soviet Union and the Path to Peace, (London 1936), p.60.

35. And Japan.

36. Ibid., pps. 64-65.

These Geneva debates were echoed, though in a more vicious fashion, in the Soviet and French press. On February 7, an article in Izvestia was headed, "France uses Geneva Conference to consolidate its hegemony in Europe"³⁷ and three days later an editorial castigated the capitalist world and revealed its lies concerning any genuine intention to disarm.³⁸ Radek used his pen to back Germany against the fiendish French:

Armed to the teeth, France watches with deep anxiety the growing hatred of disarmed Germany. It was forbidden to re-arm but a great people has tremendous powers of resistance which will appear when patience is exhausted.³⁹

Le Temps answered Litvinov's speech in a similar tone:

(The Soviets) need external peace in order to try to consolidate their power. But their bolshevik passion, their hatred of so-called capitalist civilisation, their revolutionary imperialism remained the same as before, and there is a grave danger for all nations that they may be taken in by certain appearances which Moscow tries to create.⁴⁰

Such hostility engendered at Geneva was unlikely to further the cause of political rapprochement between the two states, though there was to be a sharp Soviet change of policy as regards its Geneva stance whose significance can be judged in the light of the hitherto totally contradictory viewpoint of both countries on disarmament.

The fourth factor which prompted ~~this~~ distrust in Franco-Soviet relations was the increasingly strident French support for Japanese policy in Manchuria. As the Japanese threat grew with its occupation of northern Manchuria and the proclamation of a puppet government of Manchukuo on March 1, 1932, French policy began to be even more prominently pro-Japanese, especially as the United States was now becoming less willing to counterbalance Japanese actions. Throughout the spring of 1932 editorials in the semi-official Le Temps argued that the paramount Japanese political interest in Manchuria should be recognised as a desirable force and on May 13 a Franco-Japanese treaty of commerce was signed dealing with Indo-China.⁴¹ The Russians could only be alarmed at the policies of a

37. Izvestia, February 7, 1932.

38. Ibid., February 10, 1932.

39. Ibid.,

40. Le Temps, February 13, 1932. Quoted in Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p.40.

41. Ibid., p.42.

Tardieu Government which refused to sign the initialled non-aggression pact with the USSR and simultaneously evinced support for Japanese expansion on the Soviet border. Pravda had already noted at the end of January the complete contact between French and Japanese imperialism.⁴² In March an article in "Communist International" spoke of a Franco-Japanese alliance which had extended the French alliance system from Europe to the whole world and pursued the aim of "embracing the Soviet Union in a pincer-like attack from east and west."⁴³ "Bolshevik" considered Japanese imperialism the gendarme of the Versailles system in the east as French imperialism was in Europe.⁴⁴ Whilst Tardieu's pro-Japanese policy strengthened dislike in Moscow for a France under his rule, it must also have demonstrated, if such a demonstration was needed, yet a further advantage which a rapprochement with France and firstly the signature of the initialled non-aggression pact, would bring the USSR, that is, a reduction of its isolation in the Far East.

If Tardieu's tenure of the Premiership had scarcely been distinguished for Soviet-French relations, Herriot's succession to this position could justifiably be expected to breed new optimism in Moscow. Edouard Herriot, himself the leader of the Radicals, formed his Radical-Socialist Cabinet on June 4, 1932. In 1924 it had been a French Government led by Herriot which had recognised the Soviet Union though of late he had become somewhat disillusioned by Soviet propaganda activities.⁴⁵

Herriot differed from his predecessor not only by his more favourable attitude towards the USSR, however, but also by his less hysterical approach

42. Pravda, January 27, 1932.

43. "Peace is slipping into a World Imperialist War," Communist International Vol.9, N 4/5, March 15, 1932, p.109.

44. "Krizis Kapitalizma i opasnost voyny," Bolshevik N4, February 29, 1932, p.2.

45. Herriot complained to the Soviet Ambassador about the alliance of the French Communist Party with the USSR in the 1928 elections and emphasised that he had suffered in France because of his friendly relations with the USSR. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dvoglevsky, to the NKD, June 8, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.352. On the other hand, Litvinov recalled that Herriot was always personally friendly despite the Commissar's sharp attacks against French resolutions at the Disarmament Conference. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 24, 1932. Ibid., p.434.

towards Germany. There had been no slowing down in the growth of extremism in the latter country, indeed, during the winter of 1931-1932 Nazi and communist activity had grown. Hindenburg was compelled to fight two campaigns before he succeeded in the presidential elections in April, 1932. Hitler more than doubling the number of votes polled for his party in September 1930. Yet perhaps this very increasing danger posed by Germany, in conjunction with Herriot's radical view and France's own growing economic difficulties, inclined the new French Premier to make a further attempt at placating the reasonable elements within the Weimar Republic. In addition, the Brüning Government in Germany had fallen at the end of May and in June Hindenburg chose Franz von Papen as Chancellor. Papen had long advocated improved relations with France and identified himself with pro-French elements in Germany.^{46.}

The opportunity for these two new leaders to meet presented itself on June 16 when the Lausanne Conference convened to examine once again the thorny problem of German reparations. As the events of the following days showed, however, Papen intended to discuss considerably more than the reparations issue. In return for the cancellation of reparations and the recognition of Germany's right to equality in armaments, he offered Herriot a Customs Union and a Consultative Pact. Within this offer, Papen proposed a military understanding backed by contacts between the French and German general staffs:

We were ready for a customs union with France which could bring both countries great advantages, and in the field of security we could give no greater proof of our sincerity, in my opinion, than that we were thinking of an entente between the French and German Armies. This entente must have no aggressive tendency at all directed against anyone but would simply make possible an exchange of views and information between the General Staffs, and would bring a feeling of security about the present situation.^{47.}

French suspicion of these military proposals, nationalist opposition to them within Germany and British opposition sufficed to crush any likelihood of

46. A. Francois-Poncet, The Fateful Years: Memoirs of a French Ambassador in Berlin, 1931-1938 (London 1949), p.24.

47. Memorandum by Chancellor von Papen on a conversation with the French Premier Herriot, June 29, 1932. Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 Series C Vol.1. January 30-October 14, 1933 (London 1957), p.91, footnote 2. (Hereafter, German Docs)

a Franco-German accord. These events however did have an influence on the Soviet Union of a two-fold character; firstly, rumours of a military "alliance" which began to reach Russia later in the year naturally alarmed the Soviet Government which was the most obvious objective of any Franco-German military agreement and underlined its still insecure position;^{48.} secondly, Herriot's attention was centred on Lausanne rather than on the state of Franco-Soviet relations with his resulting imperviousness to Soviet pressure directed at gaining the French signature of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact.^{49.}

Despite Herriot's Lausanne sojourn during June and July some improvement did occur in Franco-Soviet relations. French diplomacy, following Tardieu's defeat, began to show more interest in assisting a Rumanian-Soviet agreement, partly stimulated by events in Warsaw.^{50.} Zaleski told Litvinov that according to his information the reason for Rumania's more reasonable attitude of late towards the pact negotiations was explained by Herriot's influence. The new French Premier had personally informed Zaleski of the desirability of concluding the series of non-aggression pacts with the Soviet Union.^{51.} Progress on the Franco-Soviet pact itself, however, did not materialise and the Soviet Government seemed in some doubt as to Herriot's attitude towards it, Litvinov several times during July attempting to clarify this point.^{52.} Whatever opinions Herriot and his Government did hold on the subject of the pact were significantly affected at the end of July by the unilateral action of the Polish Government in signing its non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union.

48. See below, pps.205-206.

49. Herriot told Dovgalevsky that he was only superficially acquainted with the Franco-Soviet pact history and asked him to postpone a detailed talk on the subject until after his return from Lausanne and Geneva. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, June 8, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.352.

50. See below.

51. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, June 23, 1932. Ibid., p.380.

52. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 10, 1932. Ibid., p.405. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 16, 1932. Ibid., p.411.

3. The Polish Signature.

When the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact had been initialled in January, 1932, the Polish Government had made its eventual signature of the pact conditional on the signature by all the other Soviet western frontier states of their analogous pacts with the USSR.⁵³ Since the Finnish and Latvian pacts were signed by early February and the Estonian pact a little later, at the beginning of May, the only obstacle still remaining was the deadlock in the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations.

The Polish Government, in its mediatory efforts to resolve this deadlock, in contrast to the Tardieu Government, exhibited an earnest desire to fulfil its established pre-condition in order that it might sign its own pact, a desire which increased as the spring and summer developed. Initially, the Narkomindel appears to have been sceptical of Poland's foreign policy aims, believing that Pilsudski "did not want and does not want a pact." It wrongly suspected that Poland had negotiated the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact only under French pressure and saw Pilsudski's influence behind Rumania's unwillingness to make concessions as regards its pact with Russia.⁵⁴ With this Polish intransigence in mind, Antonov-Ovseenko was instructed not to force the conclusion of the Polish pact but in conversations with leaders of Polish society and foreign diplomats to stress that the series of pacts had not been concluded because of the other states involved "and especially because of Poland's attitude."⁵⁵

In March Soviet-Polish relations were clouded by the attempted murder of the Counsellor of the German Embassy in Moscow, von Tvardovsky. The accused, according to the Soviet authorities, was a member of a terrorist group acting

53. See above, p.161.

54. The Soviet Government continued to suspect Poland of welcoming Japanese imperialist moves in Manchuria. According to Fischer, who was told by Radek, Stalin feared a simultaneous Japanese-Polish attack. L.Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War, Soviet Foreign Relations, 1917-1941 (New York 1969) p.222.

55. Letter from a member of the Collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov, to the Soviet Minister in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko, March 5, 1932. Sov-Pol Docs, p.529.

on behalf of "foreign citizens" with the aim of aggravating Soviet-German relations and thus promoting a worsening of Russia's international position.⁵⁶ An Izvestiia editorial claimed that "from the camp of the enemies of the USSR, who are trying by all means and any provocations to wreck our peaceful building, recently have been made new attempts to create complications between the USSR and foreign states," in a very pro-German article.⁵⁷ Poland was named as the instigator of this anti-Soviet terrorist act throughout the proceedings which culminated in April with the trial of the accused.⁵⁸

This outburst of anti-Polish xenophobia in Moscow was possibly staged in order to intimidate the Polish Government and thereby create stronger pressure in Warsaw for the signature of the Soviet-Polish pact, pressure which Moscow considered was lacking. At any rate, this does appear to have been the consequence.⁵⁹ The Narkomindel noted Poland's "meekness" in connection with the Tvardovsky affair and its general peace-lovingness in relation to the USSR in a letter to the Soviet Ambassador towards the end of April. It explained this meekness by Poland's difficult and complex internal and international positions at that time, suggesting that "Poland has grown quiet, pricked up its ears and is waiting for the development of events," especially in relation to the forthcoming German and French elections. Only when the international situation became clarified would Poland again conduct an active policy in relation to the USSR, the direction of this policy depending on the international situation which took shape. This perceptive document then analysed Polish policy as for the time being keeping all options open, neither aggravating relations with the USSR nor making a serious rapprochement, but being ready to conduct talks on secondary themes and even to conclude technical agreements such as the recent frontier agreement of April 10. The Russians had in fact already agreed, in

56. Izvestiia, March 8, 1932. Tass Report.

57. Izvestiia, March 8, 1932.

58. Tass Report, March 11, 1932. DVP Vol.15, pps. 176-177. Dirksen states that he did not believe the truth of the Soviet assertion that the attempt was contrived by Poland in the hope of embroiling the Soviet Union in a conflict with Germany. Dirksen, Moscow Tokyo London, p.109.

59. Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p.15.

answer to an unofficial Polish probe, to conclude a series of technical agreements independently of the development of the pact negotiations. For their part, the Russians attempted to avoid the further aggravation of relations with Poland and did not expect any new developments as regards the non-aggression pact before the results of the French elections, the victory of the radicals and socialists threatening a weakening of Polish-French ties and a consequent impetus towards a Polish signature of its pact with the USSR.^{60.}

Poland was indeed very concerned about events in Germany and France. Tension on the Polish-German frontier continued to increase and by June the situation was serious, especially in Danzig. The German National-Socialist party's strength continued to grow and its views on Poland were not difficult to comprehend. Polish-French relations also were deteriorating, a move accelerated by Polish dissatisfaction at France's Danubian plans, undertaken without any consultation with Warsaw and contrary to Polish interests. This deterioration was so marked that in May the Soviet Government informed its Ambassador in Warsaw "to take into account the probability of the Polish activation in the near future of negotiations concerning the Polish-Soviet and Rumanian-Soviet pacts."^{61.} Laroche, the French Ambassador in Warsaw, noted the malaise in Franco-Polish relations and in May drew his government's attention to it, reporting Polish fears concerning a Franco-German rapprochement and its effect on France's assessment of Polish international significance. Polish fears were further accentuated by certain articles in the French press favourable to the revision of the Polish-German frontier.^{62.}

Polish anxiety about possible isolation and the consequent need for more solid relations with the USSR certainly seems to have increased during May. Polish mediation in the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations became more active and Pilsudski repeatedly threatened Rumania with a Polish unilateral signature of its pact in the event of further Rumanian procrastination.^{63.}

59. Buduronycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p.15.

60. Letter from a Member of the Collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov, to the Soviet Minister in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko, April 22, 1932. DVP Vol.15, pps.272-273.

61. Letter from a Member of the Collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov, to the Soviet Minister in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko, May 7, 1932. Ibid., p.307.

62. Laroche, La Pologne de Pilsudski, p.109.

63. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Foreign Minister, Zaleski, May 24, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.330.

Zaleski told the British representative in the Baltic that his government had notified the Latvian, Estonian and Finnish Governments that it proposed to wait until June 15, after which date it would ratify the Soviet non-aggression pact without waiting longer for an agreement between the Soviet Union and Rumania.^{64.} This Polish impatience and anxiety was increased by events in June. Herriot's success in the French elections reduced the already failing Polish faith in French support against a resurgent Germany, a faith which the Herriot-Papen talks at Lausanne only further diminished. Yet still the Polish Government shrank from signing its Soviet pact and instead made further attempts to achieve success in the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations. This was apparently a result of French pressure on Poland to maintain solidarity with France and Rumania. Budurowycz states that while the Rumanian Government assured Poland that it had no objections to the conclusion of a Soviet-Polish pact, at the same time it attempted to gain French support in delaying the Polish signature.^{65.} The British Minister in Bucharest reported that after discussions with the French and Rumanian Governments the Polish Government decided to postpone further the ratification of its pact with the USSR.^{66.} Yet it was clear that the Poles would not delay much longer, especially in the face of the Latvian ratification of its pact on June 21^{67.} and Finnish ratification on July 7,^{68.} moves which threatened Poland's role as leader of the Baltic group unless it followed suit. On June 30, Zaleski promised Litvinov that he would telegraph the latter's proposal for the immediate signature of the Soviet-Polish pact to Warsaw^{69.} an affirmative reply being given to the Commissar five days later.^{70.} At this stage, however, further delay occurred compelling Litvinov

64. British Representative in Latvia, Knatchbull-Hugessen, to the Foreign Office, May 30, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N3420/25/63. Presumably he meant sign and not ratify.

65. Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p.16.

66. British Minister in Rumania, Palairat, to the Foreign Office, June 21, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N3859/25/63. Again, the report must mean signature and not ratification.

67. The USSR ratified on July 11 and ratification instruments were exchanged in Moscow on July 28, 1932.

68. The USSR ratified on July 11 and ratification instruments were exchanged in Moscow on August 9, 1932.

69. Telegram from Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, June 30, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.393.

70. Telegram from Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 5, 1932. Ibid., p.396.

to ask Zaleski why Patek had not signed the pact in Moscow "despite the instructions which he had received, about which Zaleski had told me." The Polish Foreign Minister replied that he did not know the reason for the delay.^{71.} Presumably it was a last attempt by France to prevent Poland's action. Finally on July 25, after the last attempt at mediation in the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations had failed and despite a last minute appeal by the Rumanian Government to Pilsudski,^{72.} the Soviet-Polish pact of non-aggression was signed in Moscow by Patek and Krestinsky⁷³ though the Polish Government affirmed that it would not be ratified until^a Soviet-Rumanian pact had been concluded.^{74.}

Pravda greeted this event as "a serious success for the peaceful policy of the USSR" in a fairly subdued editorial; for Izvestia it was "a step forward in the mutual relations of both countries,"^{75.} whilst in Poland it was generally regarded as an important contribution to a relaxation of European tension.^{76.} Zaleski was careful to minimise the extent to which Poland could be accused of adopting a radical and dangerous course in signing a non-aggression pact with communist Russia by describing it as a development of the Kellogg Pact, an adaptation related to the specific and regional conditions of eastern Europe. He was also quick to assuage French and Rumanian anger at Poland's unilateral act by stressing that the Polish-Rumanian alliance, far from being harmed, would be reinforced by this fresh instrument whose sole object was to render normal Polish-Soviet relations.^{77.} Such verbal gymnastics could not negate the fact that Poland had been forced by grave security considerations to breach the

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71. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 14, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p.406.
72. Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p.16. Beck states that finally Poland was forced to ask Bucharest "yes or no" whether it intended to conclude a pact with the USSR. The Rumanian reply was in the negative but raised no objections to the Polish conclusion of its pact with the Soviet Union. Beck, Final Report, p.9.
73. Text in DVP Vol.15, pps. 436-439. Identical text to that initialled, see above, pps.150-151, 160.
74. Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p.57.
75. Pravda, July 30, 1932. Izvestia, July 30, 1932.
76. For Polish press comment see Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, pps.18-19.
77. Interview given to Chicago Daily News. Reported by British Representative in Poland, Vereker, to the Foreign Office, August 3, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N4648/25/63.

united front which it had, albeit unwillingly, maintained with France and Rumania. The growing threat from Germany could not be ignored. A Soviet willingness to sign the initialled pact in a situation of growing danger on Poland's western frontier, could not be spurned any longer. Diplomatic promises seldom long outlive a change in the international environment when such a change renders them obsolete. Although Poland had promised Rumania it would not take this step until the Bucharest Government had itself joined Russia in a similar pact it had retreated from this position; now it was ratification which would await the conclusion of a Soviet-Rumanian pact. Soviet diplomacy had never concealed its aspiration to the signature of its initialled pact with Poland but it could do little other than remind that state of this desire while it waited for events beyond its control, especially in the realm of Polish-German and Polish-French relations, to mature. This was a passive Soviet policy which paid dividends.

Latvia's ratification of its non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union was influenced, as the British representative reported, by the approaching commercial negotiations with the USSR which were to begin in August, Latvia being especially dependent on the Soviet economy. According to this report the Polish Government did attempt to delay ratification in order to gain time for an agreement between Rumania and the USSR but the Latvian Foreign Minister was anxious to finalise the pact.⁷⁸ Soviet-Finnish relations continued to improve following the January signature of the non-aggression pact and trade negotiations began in the spring, again underlining the importance of economic factors in the political decisions of these small Baltic states.⁷⁹ Despite Soviet economic pressure, the fact that these two small states, hitherto rather dependent on Poland in the foreign policy sphere, ratified their pacts before Poland had even signed its pact is symptomatic of the new international environment which was beginning to emerge. Under the impetus of growing European instability each state was increasingly looking to its own immediate security interests

78. The British Representative in Latvia, Knatchbull-Hugessen, to the Foreign Office, June 28, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N3966/25/63.

79. Izvestiia, April 15, 1932.

rather than its traditional alignment. The situation of the Baltic states at the best of times was a precarious one, wedged between Poland and the Soviet Union, hardly viable economically, defenceless unless on good relations with at least one of these great neighbours. Historical and ideological barriers had handicapped these small states in their relations with Russia and hence they were forced to seek Poland's assistance in the 1920's. Yet such Polish support would have been of little use against a determined Soviet onslaught. By the 1930's these states had realised that non-aggression pacts with the USSR offered the best, if even then all too flimsy, guarantee of their independence; by resisting any longer Soviet calls for such pacts they not only implied their pursuit of aggressive imperialist aims subordinated to Poland and France but deprived themselves of economic assets which good relations with Russia would bring. By 1932 the Baltic states preferred to pay the price of Polish danger rather than reject Soviet overtures in their direction.

4. Towards a French signature.

By the end of July the French Government's policy in relation to the Soviet Union was beginning to re-shape. Pressure for its signature of the non-aggression pact with the USSR was increasing as relations with Germany once again deteriorated following the desultory Papen-Herriot talks at Lausanne and the signature of the Soviet-Polish pact. Herriot himself seems to have been steadily moving towards the position already reached by Poland, that in the circumstances a rapprochement with Soviet Russia was essential for his country's security. Yet this did not signify that all opposition to such a policy had collapsed. Within France there could always be organised a powerful resistance against any rapprochement with the "Bolsheviks" and such influential opponents could marshal certain facts to their aid. Many Frenchmen demanded loyalty to their ally, Rumania; any pact with Russia before the Bucharest Government had negotiated a similar pact would seem to be betrayal. Herriot, however, was becoming increasingly disillusioned by the stubborn Rumanian resistance to French,

Polish and Soviet pressure. In conversation with Dovgalevsky he spoke "very disapprovingly" of the Rumanians and several times repeated angrily, "oh, I know how difficult it is to talk with these people."⁸⁰ The French Premier was prepared to treat Rumania sharply but nevertheless could not ignore the political opposition to this policy within France. The Soviet Government for its part steadfastly refused to acknowledge any connection between its Rumanian negotiations and the initialled French pact. In its opinion the signature of the Soviet-Polish pact had removed the final obstacle to a French signature since, as Dovgalevsky told Herriot, neither Berthelot nor Briand at any time had established any connection between the French and Rumanian pacts, but only with the Polish one.⁸¹

A second factor mitigating against the French signature was the failure of the economic negotiations in 1931 on the question of loans and credits which weakened the position of the supporters of a rapprochement with Russia. The desire to achieve an economic agreement had been a powerful motive in beginning the political negotiations in early 1931. If an economic settlement advantageous to French industry could be secured then the signature of the non-aggression pact would be that much easier for the French Government. With this end in view, Herriot suggested the resumption of trade negotiations and eventually the simultaneous signature of a trade agreement, an agreement on orders and the non-aggression pact. The Soviets, however, resolutely opposed this

80. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, July 26, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 440. Herriot also told Dovgalevsky a few days later that he had been very sharp with Titulescu in answer to the latter's tearful plea that France should not sign its pact with the USSR before Rumania took such a step. He promised the Soviet Ambassador that he would attempt to exert pressure on Rumania. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, August 2, 1932. Ibid., p. 449.

81. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, July 26, 1932. Ibid., p. 440. Initially the French had not even made any reference to the signature of the Polish pact as a pre-condition for their signature, this only being communicated to the Russians in September 1931. See above, pps. 133-134. They had only referred to the necessity for a Rumanian pact in January 1932. See above, pps. 167-168.

as they had in 1931.⁸² They had no objection to the economic negotiations being activated once again but were as anxious as the French to reach agreement, fearing only that they would be ^{arduous} ~~ardous~~, a justifiable conclusion when their history was considered. The Soviet position was clear; any linking of political and economic issues would merely delay the signature of the non-aggression pact.⁸³

The immediate effect of the Polish signature on French opinion would appear to have been a negative one rather than it providing an example to be imitated by France. A certain amount of resentment was expressed at Poland's high-handed policy and the semi-official "Bulletin du Jour" of Le Temps warned;

France, as far as she is concerned, has constantly subordinated any pact of non-aggression with the Soviets to the guarantee of the security of Poland and Rumania...It is known that the Franco-Russian pact is still in the state of a project having been the object of preliminary discussions but not yet having been submitted to the scrutiny of the Governments and, therefore, in no way binding their responsibility.⁸⁴

In fact a large section of the French press mounted a furious attack on Polish policy.⁸⁵

It was in this situation that Herriot spoke to Litvinov on several occasions in July about resuming negotiations. The Commissar was quite prepared to sign the pact but resisted Herriot's insinuation that the initialled text might require amendment.⁸⁶ The French Premier was anxious to gain time in order to assess the internal French political climate and therefore excused any decision until he had acquainted himself with the details of the pact's history.⁸⁷

In early August Herriot placed the question of the Franco-Soviet pact negotiations, trade relations and the pact negotiations between the Soviet Union and its western border states before his cabinet which unanimously instructed him and the Minister of Trade to resume negotiations and to conclude

82. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, July 26, 1932. DVP Vol.15, pps.440-441.

83. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 24, 1932, Ibid., p.434.

84. Le Temps, July 27, 1932. Quoted in Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p.58.

85. In his autobiography Beck recounts how the French press called him "a traitor to Europe." Beck, Final Report, p.19.

86. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, July 24, 1932. DVP Vol.15, pps. 433-434.

87. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, July 26, 1932. Ibid., p.440.

both the economic and political agreements. This instruction was somewhat offset in Soviet eyes by the cabinet's expression of the desirability of concluding a Soviet-Rumanian pact without which not only parliament but even the foreign affairs commission would not give their approval to the Franco-Soviet pact. It was decided that trade negotiations should be resumed in the middle of September after the French summer holidays and the Foreign Ministry was instructed to give its opinion as to whether any changes should be made to the text of the initialled pact, an act in which Herriot asked for a Soviet expert to participate. The French leader promised that when final agreement had been reached on the text, he would report to the council of ministers after which it could be signed. Meanwhile he would try to help in achieving a Rumanian-Soviet agreement.^{88.}

Herriot's personal responsibility for this progress in Franco-Soviet relations should not be under-estimated; within the country as a whole opposition remained strong. Dovgalevsky was told by Léger, a high official in the French Foreign Ministry, that initially the present French cabinet doubted the expediency of continuing the previous year's negotiations but under Herriot's prompting resolved to resume them and conclude the agreements. Yet despite the cabinet's sincere wish to sign the pact immediately it was compelled to delay until a Soviet-Rumanian pact had been concluded. Léger said that if such a pact were signed or if the Rumanians adopted an irreconcilable position, then the French Government would be able to sign.^{89.} He obviously did not consider that Rumania had yet reached such a deadlock position. The fate of the Franco-Soviet pact therefore still depended on the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations as well as on a final agreement as regards the final text. The situation was gradually changing, however, since the French Government now was more anxious to see a Soviet-Rumanian pact concluded instead of using the latter as a useful excuse for delay. Agreement on the text of the Franco-Soviet pact was soon achieved.

88. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, August 6, 1932. DVP Vol.15, pps.451-452.

89. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, August 10, 1932. Ibid., pps.462-463.

Dovgalevsky was authorised to inform Herriot that in the event of his agreement to the signature there would be no obstacle to his proposed new amendments.^{90.} A supplementary telegram makes it clear that the Soviet Government was anxious to deprive France of an excuse for further delay on this issue even if it meant making some concessions on the text.^{91.}

As regards the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations, France now joined Poland in a combined attempt to settle the outstanding Bessarabian problem. The Rumanian Government itself seemed somewhat better disposed to this attempt than to previous ones. Its Premier, Vaida-Voivod, stated that as long ago as 1928 his country had expressed a desire to conclude a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union and had in fact signed the Litvinov protocol in the following year which, according to Stimson's recent statement, had the character and significance of a genuine non-aggression pact. Voivod emphasised that Rumania was prepared to sign a pact with the USSR but that it demanded that its interests be taken into account.^{92.}

The French Government now proposed a new formula for a Rumanian agreement, hoping to succeed where all previous attempts had failed. Léger proposed to Dovgalevsky the following compromise: any mention of disputes and territory situated under the sovereignty or authority of either party to be eliminated from the pact; a concluding protocol to be added stating that "the present pact cannot serve any other aims, namely, the settlement of disputed questions which exist between both countries at the time of the signature of the pact;" at the signing, the Russians were to make a declaration in a strong form on the Bessarabian question. Dovgalevsky agreed to put these proposals before his Government.^{93.}

Litvinov did not object to the transference of reference to Soviet-

90. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, August 20, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.481.

91. Supplementary telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, August 20, 1932. Ibid., p.791, Note 231.

92. Pravda, August 20, 1932.

93. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, August 10, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.463.

Rumanian conflicts from the actual pact to a concluding protocol and therefore accepted this proposal as a basis for agreement and on August 20, Dovgalevsky was authorised to meet Titulescu in order to secure a final agreement,⁹⁴ though if possible the phrase "which disputes the present pact does not affect" was to be added to the concluding protocol of the French proposal.⁹⁵ Despite this apparent progress, in a letter to Litvinov, Dovgalevsky summed up his recent meetings with Herriot and Léger and concluded that "at the present stage of the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations an immediate signing of the Franco-Soviet pact cannot be counted upon." He deduced from the fact that the two Frenchmen attempted repeatedly to get rid of him on holiday that they did not expect the negotiations to move forward before the end of the holiday period, that is the end of September.⁹⁶

A few days later, on August 24, Herriot informed Dovgalevsky that he and his Government were determined to sign the pact and then immediately to ratify it since he was an enemy of half-measures. Therefore he must first prepare the ground for ratification after which he would agree on final texts for the pact and the conciliation convention, secure the council of ministers' approval, sign the non-aggression pact and introduce it into parliament for confirmation, all of which he hoped to have completed before his meeting with Litvinov at Geneva on September 20. Herriot repeatedly stressed that he was an enemy of delay, that his decision was firm and that Dovgalevsky must not look for any premeditated delay. Although the French Premier had no intention of subordinating the Franco-Soviet pact to a Soviet-Rumanian pact he had to make an attempt to help in the conclusion of the latter and was confident of success in eliminating their differences in order that the French pact should be signed before the Geneva meeting.⁹⁷

94. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, August 20, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 481.

95. Léger rejected this formula on August 23, 1932. *Ibid.*, p. 791, Note 231.

96. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, August 20, 1932. *Ibid.*, p. 483.

97. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, August 24, 1932. *Ibid.*, pps. 488-489.

193.
While this was not a completely honest account of Herriot's intentions, as events were to prove, it did mark a very significant change in French policy. By the end of August the French Government had reached the conclusion that it must sign shortly its non-aggression pact even if Rumania remained obdurate. Scott dates this change of mood somewhat later, by the end of September and quotes Léger as confidentially stating at the end of August that "the French Government had no intention of signing (the Franco-Soviet pact)... until the Soviet-Rumanian pact had been signed."⁹⁸ Herriot's revelation to Dovgalevsky on August 24 does seem more reliable, however, and is corroborated by several other documents. On August 30, Léger and Dovgalevsky agreed on a concluding formula for the Soviet-Rumanian treaty, reading:

The present pact, which contains the undertaking for each party to abstain from any aggression against the other, will be interpreted as that no disputed question, territorial or other, which exists between the two parties can restrict the mentioned undertaking and cannot serve as a motive for either contracting parties or give them the freedom to complete acts which contradict the undertaking of aggression as established in the present pact. It is also to be understood that this pact cannot serve for any other aim and specifically it cannot be interpreted as a settlement of the noted disputed questions which exist between the two parties at the time of the signing of the present pact which questions are not affected by its conclusion.⁹⁹

This agreement between Paris and Moscow was an important point since a Rumanian rejection of this proposal might well provide the French Government with the chance to brand Rumania before the French public as adopting an irreconcilable line and so allow it to sign the Franco-Soviet pact.

In an important document sent by Herriot to Puaux, the French Minister in Bucharest, on September 1, the latter was instructed to acquaint the Rumanian Government with the current French position. This report emphasised the French Government's loyalty to Rumania throughout its lengthy and arduous negotiations with the Soviet Union, noting French pressure exerted on the Polish Government, firstly to delay its signature and then its ratification of the Soviet-Polish pact, in order to guarantee the Rumanian negotiations sufficient

98. Conversation of Léger with the Counsellor of the U.S. Embassy, August 27, 1932. Quoted in Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p.58.

99. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, August 30, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.499.

time. This action, however, had encountered growing impatience on the part of the Polish Government. Despite the Polish signature and the political advantage which an immediate signature of the Franco-Soviet pact would present, the French Government had throughout impressed on the Russian negotiators that although the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet pact had never been officially subordinated to a Rumanian-Soviet pact, it would in fact be suspended while negotiations for the latter were paralysed by unreasonable requirements which could not be imputed to Rumania alone. This French position could not be maintained indefinitely, however, and implied that the Rumanian Government must justify the confidence which the French Government had placed in it and must begin negotiations with the USSR as quickly as possible and certainly not later than September 20. Furthermore, it must renounce all conditions which the Soviet Government could not reasonably be expected to accept, that is, all formulae which tended to sanctify, directly or indirectly, the Soviet recognition of the Bessarabian annexation. The French Government wanted any Soviet-Rumanian pact to benefit both parties and not merely one of them. In such a case, Herriot would do his best to secure Soviet agreement. He concluded by stressing the importance which the French Government attached to the prompt conclusion of the Franco-Soviet pact and the impossibility of adjourning this beyond a reasonable delay and in any case beyond any checkmate or adjournment of the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations for which the Soviet Government could not be held responsible. The French Government could be forced, like the Polish Government, to sign its pact whilst trying to refrain from its ratification for as long as possible to assist the Rumanian negotiations.^{100.}

On September 4 a French politician interested in Soviet affairs, de Monze, told the Soviet Charge d'Affaires that "Rumania cannot now stop the signing of the Soviet-French pact and that the signing is now a question of the day."^{101.}

100. The French Foreign Minister, Herriot, to the French Minister in Rumania, Puaux, September 1, 1932. French Docs. Vol. 1, pps. 245-247. Here Herriot did contradict his statement of August 24 to Dovgalevsky in that he now spoke of delaying ratification even after the signature of the Franco-Soviet pact. See above, p. 197.

101. Telegram from the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in France, Rozenberg, to the NKD, September 4, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 505. M. I. Rozenberg was later to become Soviet Ambassador in Spain, 1936-1937.

By the end of August the French Government was anxious to sign its initialled pact with the Soviet Union and to this end was exerting a hitherto unknown pressure on Bucharest to obtain a reasonable response to its mediatory efforts in the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations. Unless such a response was forthcoming a unilateral French signature, if not ratification, now seemed a real and imminent possibility. What had prompted this urgency? Several factors, one by one, were assembling in France which finally pushed its Government to the brink of signature. Herriot's replacement of Tardieu had removed one strong obstacle to a Franco-Soviet rapprochement but at first the new radical Premier made little more than gestures towards Moscow. Internal opposition to any such rapprochement was powerful and in any case Herriot for a time held the slim possibility of securing a reduction of the German threat, especially when von Papen became Chancellor, thus reducing the urgent French need for an ally in the east. The failure of this attempt in addition to the partial defection of Poland from France's side by its signature of the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact increased the pressure for signature on the French Government. The possibility of a more favourable Soviet response to the envisaged economic negotiations in the event of France signing the political pact also helped to win support for a new policy within France. Yet the most significant factor was Germany. If France required a stronger diplomatic position on the European continent it was because of the German threat. If any factor could induce French opinion to sanction a rapprochement with communist Russia it was a resurgence of Germany.

5. The threat from Germany.

Germany's failure to achieve the right of equality in armaments at the July talks with France in Lausanne exposed Papen's Government to criticism within Germany, especially from the nationalists. At Geneva, Nadolny, the German chief representative at the Disarmament Conference, had expressed his country's attitude towards disarmament:

201.
The German Government is prepared to continue its collaboration in the work of the Disarmament Conference so as to contribute to the greatest possible extent to the efforts made with a view to a really decisive step towards general disarmament...Nevertheless its collaboration is only possible if the subsequent work of the Conference is based on a clear and definite recognition of the equality of rights between nations...

(T)he German Government must point out at once that it cannot undertake to continue its collaboration if a satisfactory solution on this point, which for Germany is a decisive one, is not reached by the time the Conference resumes its work.¹⁰².

A few days later General von Schleicher, German Minister of Defence, whose influence in the cabinet was thought to be very strong, issued the first broadside in a new campaign for equality of rights in armaments organised by the Papen Government. In a broadcast on July 26 Schleicher, in a considerably more provocative declaration than Nadjolny's, contrasted a disarmed Germany with France and claimed the German right to equal treatment. He expressed Germany's desire to re-organise the Reichswehr, a desire which was received in France with considerable anxiety.¹⁰³ An aide-memoire setting out these claims was handed to the French Government on August 29 and produced an unfavourable impression on the latter. Finally, in September, on the refusal of France to accept equality of rights, the German Government notified the Bureau of the Disarmament Conference that its delegation would not attend the meeting on September 20.

Within Germany extremism continued to prosper in the face of economic collapse. In the general election of July 31 the Nazis and Communists both increased their votes significantly and an outbreak of political terror by the Nazi stalwarts ensued. The rabid speeches of the extreme right, the glorification of military virtues and the gradual disintegration of German society did not fail to influence the French Government's policy formulation. In particular, a Stahlhelm rally held by 150,000 men on September 2-4 in Berlin had a profound effect on French opinion. Herriot told some American diplomats that any state which could produce such a demonstration of disciplined men only lacked the arms to make them a menace to Europe. France at that moment was more disturbed with reference to Germany's activity and state of opinion than for many years

102. Survey of International Affairs for 1932, pps. 255-256.

103. Ibid., pps. 258-259.

and he thought these fears justified.^{104.} Le Temps wrote of "this offensive return of the elements responsible for the catastrophe of 1914, this slipping of an entire people into the worst nationalistic passions, these are signs that no-one can mistake," a line which was echoed by many other French papers.^{105.} ^{de} Monze told the Soviet Charge that "a rapprochement with us must occur under the influence of the common German threat to both countries."^{106.}

The French motivation for a rapprochement with the Soviet Union was not merely to strengthen actively its diplomatic position against Germany but to weaken Soviet-German relations and especially military collaboration of which it was aware and tended at times to exaggerate.^{107.} Léger told the British Charge d'Affaires in Paris that the French Government's policy was in favour of the conclusion of non-aggression pacts by the USSR and saw a certain advantage in them, especially in that they would attenuate the potential menace of a Russo-German combination arising from open or secret engagements and this was doubtless the reason for German opposition to their conclusion.^{108.} The belligerent attitude of the German Government and the violence within Germany continued to exert pressure on the French Government throughout September and maintained it on its course towards agreement with the USSR.

France was not the only state to be alarmed by German developments. In Poland the events of the summer created perhaps even more anxiety which the

104. Conversation between the French Premier, Herriot and a group of American diplomats, September 9, 1932. Quoted in Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p. 62.

105. Le Temps, September 5, 1932. Quoted Ibid.,

106. Telegram from the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in France, Rozenberg, to the NKD, September 4, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 505.

107. The French Minister of the Interior wrote to Herriot about the presence of Tukhachevsky, head of the Red Army General Staff, in Germany at Reichswehr manoeuvres, stating that one of the Russian's objectives was to re-assure the German command of the Soviets' continued policy of Soviet-German military collaboration despite the non-aggression pact signed with Poland. Tukhachevsky's presence proved that Moscow had not renounced its co-ordination of military action with that of Germany in the eventuality of an armed conflict in Europe. The French Minister of the Interior, Chautemps, to the French Premier, Herriot, September 28, 1932. French Docs. Vol. 1, p. 395. Somewhat later, the French Ambassador in Germany reported on another visit in early October by Tukhachevsky to Germany. The French Ambassador, Francois-Poncet, to the French Foreign Minister, Herriot, October 25, 1932. Ibid., p. 585.

108. British Charge d'Affaires in France, Campbell, to Simon at the Foreign Office, September 27, 1932. DBFP Vol. 7, pps. 244-245.

signature of the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact at the end of July only partially allayed.

The Soviet Union itself was no more reassured by the instability and revisionism which were so obviously developing apace in what was to be Weimar Germany's last year. The damage wrought to Soviet-German relations by the pacts negotiated by the Soviet Union with its western border states and especially Poland at the beginning of 1932 had dealt a blow from which they never recovered. It was becoming apparent that the Soviet leadership was seeking re-insurance against the increasingly unbalanced German foreign policy which none but a wildly reckless gambler could now rely upon.

The occasion of the tenth anniversary of Rapallo in April 1932 provided the improbable setting for one of the interminable wrangles which now punctuated relations between the two states. Brüning, the German Chancellor, invited Litvinov to a celebration luncheon to commemorate the occasion but declined to make any speech or issue any written statement so as not to attract too much attention at a time when it was intended to place before the Reichstag the ratification of the Protocol extending the Berlin treaty and also in view of relations with third countries, as Bulow informed Shtein.¹⁰⁹ Despite this snub, Litvinov attended the luncheon and then in an interview with the German press, whilst mentioning the advantages which Rapallo had brought both states, added that it illustrated that other states could have settled claims with the USSR by similar means, it serving as an example to other states.¹¹⁰ *Izvestiia*, commenting on the anniversary, saw the primary importance of the Rapallo treaty as a model of how relations should be established between two countries having opposing social-political systems but with common economic and foreign policy interests. This statement must have provided food for thought in the German Foreign Ministry; were Poland and France such countries as could effectively follow this model? Whilst *Izvestiia*'s article thought it possible to say with

109. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, April 14, 1932. *DVP Vol. 15*, p. 239.

110. Litvinov to the Foreign press, April 16, 1932. Quoted in *Izvestiia*, April 17, 1932.

confidence that Soviet-German relations would be consolidated and would continue to develop on the basis of the Rapallo principles, it nevertheless mentioned that the Rapallo policy had recently run up against "serious difficulties from some groups in Germany." Rapallo was seen, not as a turning point in Soviet-German relations specifically but as "a turning point in the relations between the Soviet Republic and the capitalist countries."¹¹¹. Thus both Litvinov's speech and this *Izvestia* article dwelt on the example Rapallo provided to other capitalist states of a profitable collaboration with the USSR: so much had the "spirit of Rapallo" waned. *Pravda* merely stressed the advantages which Germany had reaped from its eastern orientation and its failures to obtain concessions from France, the moral here for Germany being evident.¹¹²

Of course relations between the two states did not suddenly collapse. Especially in the military and economic spheres collaboration continued. In early May banking agreements were signed¹¹³. and on June 15 a credit agreement¹¹⁴ which the organ of the Soviet trade agency in Germany described as opening "a new phase in the development of Soviet-German relations."¹¹⁵

Bruning's resignation as Chancellor in June 1932 and the accession to power of Franz von Papen, however, was a fateful blow to these relations. Soviet concern with Bruning's government had been largely centred on its uncertain life expectancy and the fears induced by the unknown as regards the make-up of the government which would supersede it. These fears, for Moscow, were now fully justified. Papen had long been associated with anti-Soviet aims. *Izvestia* quoted several German papers which echoed this view.¹¹⁶ The Soviet Government adopted a position of caution, hoping that Papen's Government would not long survive, yet would its successor be any more acceptable? With the continued refusal of Poland and France to sign their initial^{ed} pacts with the

111. *Izvestia*, April 16, 1932.

112. *Pravda*, April 16, 1932.

113. Text in *DVP Vol.15*, pps.293-296.

114. Text, extracts in Degras, *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol.2*, pps. 533-534.

115. Quoted in *Izvestia*, June 24, 1932.

116. *Ibid.*, June 3, 1932.

USSR it could not afford to adopt too exacting an attitude towards the new government. On June 25 Khinchuk reported that "up until now the Papen Government has not taken any steps nor made any official statements which provide evidence that in relation to the USSR it occupies a more hostile position than the Brüning Government."¹¹⁷ Rumours of just such a step, however, soon began to reach Soviet ears. Papen's meeting with Herriot at the reparations conference in June has already been referred to above. The German suggestion of a military accord with France could leave few in doubt as to its objective and certainly none in Moscow. In fact, according to Herriot's notes, Papen alluded to an "accord directed against communism, in fact against Russia."¹¹⁸ Although this proposal did not materialise nevertheless rumours did begin to reach Moscow, especially in the autumn and in any case the mere fact of a meeting between the French and German leaders, given Papen's pro-western orientation, could not but alarm the Soviet Government. Khinchuk, during a conversation with Schleicher, only two days after his dispatch to Krestinsky, told the former that "now, besides him there were no responsible members of the cabinet." He noted that in it were persons of a well-known western orientation, including the Chancellor. Schleicher replied by assuring the Soviet Ambassador of the ~~highly~~ extremely friendly relations between the Reichswehr and the USSR and energetically stated that the whole cabinet desired to preserve friendly relations with it. The Soviet Government, he continued, must not disturb itself with the so-called western orientation of von Papen. The negotiations which were being conducted with the French had as their basis the liquidation of reparations payments that would enhance the financial and economic situation of Germany and thus give it a greater possibility of collaboration with the USSR.¹¹⁹

In discussion with Neurath, the German Foreign Minister, some weeks later Khinchuk was once again assured that as regards the reparations talks there was

117. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, June 25, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 387.

118. E. Herriot, Jadis Vol. 2 (Paris 1952), p. 322.

119. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk and the German Minister of War, Schleicher, June 27, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 390.

no front against the Soviet Union. Khinchuk then asked directly whether there was any talk at Lausanne of a front or campaign against the USSR to which Neurath replied in the negative, emphasising that the whole German cabinet supported the continuation and development of friendly relations with the USSR.^{120.}

All these assurances did not convince the Soviet Government that Papen had not offered the French an anti-Soviet alliance.^{121.} The yearly account of the Soviet Embassy in Germany for 1932 sums up the anxiety felt in the Narkomindel:

(T)here is no doubt that he (Papen) has made, especially at Lausanne and in connection with it, direct attempts in the Rechberg spirit^{122.} to achieve an agreement with France, the price of which would be the creation of a military alliance including in it Poland for a "struggle with Bolshevism." Thus never before has the idea of a "crusade" against the USSR taken on such seriousness as in the epoch of Papen's cabinet, so that it cannot but influence Soviet-German relations.^{123.}

Such fears of isolation added yet further fuel to the Soviet desire to see its non-aggression pacts with France and its western neighbours signed and ratified. Certainly little reliance could be placed on the continued friendship of a Germany under its present government and might not its successor be a Nazi one?

An arena of collaboration for many years now experienced the first clashes between the Rapallo partners which was to become increasingly serious^u during the following months. The Soviet and German delegations at both the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament and the Disarmament Conference itself had always voted together in opposition to the "victor powers" and the hated Versailles system. This collaboration had been firm despite the somewhat different motivating factors, Germany desiring the right to equality of armaments with its conquerors of 1918 whether by their disarmament or the renunciation of the

120. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk and the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Neurath, July 15, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 409.

121. In October Herriot informed the Soviets of Papen's attempts to conclude a Franco-German military alliance against the USSR. Telegram from the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in France, Rozenberg, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs Litvinov, October 17, 1932. *Ibid.*, p. 578.

122. Rechberg was a German industrialist who propagandised the idea of a Franco-German military alliance.

123. Yearly Account of the Soviet Embassy in Germany for 1932. *Ibid.*, p. 780, Note 188.

Versailles disarmament clauses, whilst the Soviet Union urged disarmament as both a means of increasing its security and a useful propaganda weapon. It was in the early summer of 1932 that this collaboration began to crumble. The first clash between the two delegations occurred in April.¹²⁴ In May Litvinov, when asked by an official of the German Foreign Ministry whether he was collaborating with the German delegation replied "that I had not noted any collaboration or even attempt at collaboration, that the German delegation sometimes enters against us and that the relations between the two delegations differs sharply from the relations which were established between myself and Count Bernstorff at the Preparatory Commission:" the following day Litvinov gave the same reply to a similar question from Dirksen.¹²⁵

The reason for this divergence was two-fold. Within Germany the clamour for the removal of the iniquitous disarmament clauses of the Versailles treaty was growing and the German Government could not, even had it wished, ignore it. The German delegation at Geneva became more strident in its demands for equal treatment and placed less emphasis on the disarmament of other great powers to bring them down to the German level. It was this very disarmament which the Russians desired, a desire which was not weakened by the growing extremism within Germany. As the German demands became more vociferous, Soviet willingness to support them was reduced. A second consideration was that continued Soviet support for these expanding German claims would only alienate further the Versailles powers, especially Poland and France. At a time when the Russians were trying to conclude non-aggression pacts with these states and when relations with Germany were deteriorating, was it wise or possible for the Soviet Union to support unequivocally a German demand which would increase its military strength. The Soviet Government appears to have been both frightened of the new German foreign policy approach of which its disarmament plans at Geneva

124. Kochan, Russia and the Weimar Republic, p.163.

125. Letter from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to Members of the Collegium of the NKD, May 3, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.768, Note 142. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, May 4, 1932. Ibid., p.298.

were a part and slowly realising the additional bonus which a less enthusiastic support for Germany would reap in relations with France and Poland. In early March Dovgalevsky had reported on Tardieu's transparent hint which could be understood as meaning that the latter's further disposition on the pact question would depend on the behaviour of the Soviet delegation at Geneva.^{126.}

In July Benes submitted a resolution to the Disarmament Conference which attempted to express the view-point made during the last two weeks. Although Germany and the Soviet Union alone voted against it, their reasons were indicative of the growing estrangement, not only at Geneva, but in general. The German delegation's major point was that it would continue to collaborate in the conference's work only if the equality of rights between states was definitely recognised. The Soviet delegation, however, voted against the resolution because it was not sufficiently stringent in its disarmament terms.^{127.} The stage had not yet been reached when the Soviets would support French-sponsored proposals. An *Izvestia* editorial summed up the five and a half years of work at Geneva as having accomplished nothing and accused French imperialism, in particular, of a refusal to agree on any limitation of armaments. Yet it did add that Germany, in view of it being the least armed of all the imperialist states, had insisted on parity in the event of no agreement being reached on an arms limitation, contrasting even this approach with that of the Soviet Union, which alone presented a clear and exact disarmament programme.^{128.}

Soviet concern at political developments within Germany continued unabated.^{129.} Increasingly strained relations were accompanied by minor irritants such as the Soviet complaint about police violation of its consulate's extraterritoriality at Stettin, a similar occurrence at Königsberg¹³⁰ and disen-

126. Report by the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, of a conversation with the French Premier, Tardieu, March 4, 1932. *DVP Vol.15*, p.161.

127. *Survey of International Affairs* for 1932, pps.254-255.

128. *Izvestia*, July 26, 1932.

129. For example, during July and August *Izvestia* was full of articles on this theme.

130. Note from the Soviet Embassy in Germany to the German Foreign Ministry, August 12, 1932. *DVP Vol.15*, pps.464-465. Note from the Soviet Embassy in Germany to the German Foreign Ministry, August 13, 1932. *Ibid.*, pps.471-472.

ament as concerns the adverse trade balance.^{131.} Attempts by officials of the German Foreign Ministry to reassure the Narkomindel had little effect.^{132.} It was noteworthy that Izvestia, in its editorial comment following the signature of the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact, wrote that "the Soviet Union gave proof of its peaceful policy, concluding the Rapallo treaty with Germany which became the model for relations between the USSR and other powers."^{133.} Poland had been the major link in the chain which joined Germany to Soviet Russia since the early 1920's; now the Soviet Union compared its new Polish pacts with Rapallo. It is in this environment that the continued Soviet negotiations with France, Poland and Rumania must be seen since it was in large part to counter the growing threat which Germany posed that the Soviets were anxious to consolidate their diplomatic penetrations into the group of status quo powers. Neither Germany nor the Soviet Union had illusions about the possible outcome of these negotiations for their future relations. The Soviet Ambassador in Turkey reported that someone close to the Poles had informed him that after the signature of the Soviet-Polish pact, Germany had increased its intrigues in Rumania against the latter's proposed pact with the USSR, thus hoping to block the new Soviet foreign policy orientation, information which he thought to be genuine rather than a Polish intrigue.^{134.} Nevertheless, the Soviet Government was determined to press ahead.

6. France signs and Poland ratifies.

The French Government, having decided that it must sign the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact in the near future, made a last intense effort, together with Poland, in the autumn of 1932 to achieve a simultaneous

131. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk and the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry, Bulow, August 25, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 491-494.

132. For example, Bulow's conversation with Khinchuk in which he said that Papen had no intention of changing the Rapallo policy. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk and the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry, Bulow, August 17, 1932. Ibid., p. 476.

133. Izvestia, July 30, 1932.

134. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey, Surits, to the NKD, August 27, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 496.

conclusion of a Soviet-Rumanian pact.¹³⁵ Poland's mediatory role during August had been somewhat overshadowed by France but on September 13 Patek informed Litvinov that he had spoken in Warsaw to Zaleski and Cadere, the Rumanian Minister in Poland. On the basis of this talk he proposed once again his good offices, suggesting yet another formula for a concluding protocol:

The High Contracting Parties agree that the present pact cannot in any event be interpreted as restricting or cancelling the undertakings ensuing from the treaty signed in Paris on August 26, 1928. It has no other aim besides non-aggression and cannot be interpreted for other aims, not damaging the position of either party in disputes between themselves.

Patek also handed Litvinov a new project for the pact as a whole, a move which the latter characterised as "two steps backwards":

After nine months of negotiations and disputes, almost all on one point, when it seemed that all the remaining points had been agreed upon, a new basis for negotiations is proposed to us...This confirms¹³⁶ our doubts as to the sincerity and seriousness of Rumania's intentions.

This proposal, which the Rumanians termed a large concession, was also agreeable to the French Government but not to the Russians. Rozenberg informed Leger that it was the same proposal as Litvinov had already rejected and it was no more acceptable now than before since it contained no direct reference to the existence of territorial disputes.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, Litvinov agreed to meet Cadere whilst en route for Geneva on condition that the latter received authorisation from his government to return to the previous basis of negotiations.¹³⁸ This meeting did take place and agreement was reached that negotiations should be

135. Estonia ratified its pact on August 3, the USSR following suit two days later and ratification instruments were exchanged in Tallin on August 18, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 298. This left only the French, Polish and Rumanian pacts uncompleted.

136. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, September 13, 1932. Ibid., pps. 526-527. The project agreed between French and Soviet Representatives at the end of August (See above, p. 198) for a Soviet-Rumanian pact had been rejected by Rumania, presumably because it referred to territorial disputes between the two states.

137. A Polish proposal handed to Litvinov on July 22, 1932. Ibid., pps. 785-786, Note 206. Telegram from the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in France, Rozenberg, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, September 13, 1932. Ibid., p. 529. Litvinov told the French Ambassador that Patek's new formula would be acceptable if the words "territorial and others which exist between them" were inserted. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the French Ambassador in France, Dejean, September 14, 1932. Ibid., p. 532.

138. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Patek, September 14, 1932. Ibid., p. 530.

continued in Geneva, Litvinov arguing that they could only be conducted on the old basis.^{139.}

These talks began in Geneva, according to Scott, around September 25 and made some progress.^{140.} Both the French and Polish Governments were now exerting strong pressure on Rumania to adopt a reasonable position¹⁴¹ yet agreement still eluded the negotiators. After a few meetings agreement was reached on the entire pact with the exception of one point, reference to existing disputes, on which, however, disagreement was much narrower than in previous negotiations.^{142.} A significant break through occurred on October 3 at a time when it seemed that deadlock had been reached. Cadere proposed the following formula for a concluding protocol:

The parties have agreed that the pact only has the aim of safeguarding the existing peace by a mutual understanding of non-aggression and cannot be interpreted for any other aims, nor to decide before hand present and future disputes between them.

Litvinov considered this formula acceptable and asked for the Soviet Government's consent to reach agreement on it if and it was a big "if" Cadere could obtain the support of his own Government for his proposal, for which purpose he intended to return to Bucharest on October 5.^{143.} The following day Karakhan informed Litvinov that the Soviet Government considered Cadere's formula acceptable and instructed him to sign the treaty,^{144.} but on the same day Cadere

139. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, September 17, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 539-540.

140. Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p. 65.

141. Herriot instructed his Minister in Bucharest to impress very strongly on the Rumanian Government the political interest which the French Government continued to attach to any interference in the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet pact. French support would be dependent on Rumania being reasonable. The French Foreign Minister, Herriot, to the French Minister in Rumania, Puaux, September 18, 1932. French Docs. Vol. 1, pps. 345-346.

142. Press statement by Litvinov, Izvestia, October 16, 1932. Quoted in Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol. 2, p. 545.

143. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to Stalin, October 3, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 554-555. Full text of the Soviet-Rumanian pact agreed upon by Litvinov and Cadere, Ibid., pps. 555-557.

144. Telegram from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Karakhan, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, October 4, 1932. Ibid., p. 558. This formula represented a certain Soviet concession since although it referred to present disputes rather more decisively than did Patek's proposal (See above, 210) which the Russians rejected, it did not specifically refer to "territorial" disputes, a condition which the Russians had hitherto demanded.

informed the Commissar that his Government would not accept the proposal.^{145.}

Unfortunately for the negotiators, at this stage Rumanian internal political events made certain that this limited breakthrough would have no chance of success, at least for the time being. On September 28, Titulescu, one of Rumania's leading political figures, resigned from his post as Ambassador to Britain and delegate to the League of Nations in which latter post he had been involved in the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations. Titulescu had steadfastly opposed ^{the} Vaida-Voivod Government's attempts, weak as they had been, to conclude the pact; his appointment as Foreign Minister on October 10 sealed the fate of the non-aggression pact and the erstwhile negotiations were terminated in early October without success. Whilst Titulescu stated that he was "a resolute supporter of the policy of rapprochement between the USSR and Rumania" and that negotiations would again be resumed on October 17, he also said that significant changes must be made in the text as agreed upon so far.^{146.} The present Rumanian Government fell and the appointment of its successor, with Titulescu retaining his post, was seen as a victory for the opponents of a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union.

France had been anxious for some time to sign its initialed pact with the USSR. This break of Soviet-Rumanian negotiations and the accession of an anti-Soviet Government in Bucharest reduced the chances of their successful conclusion almost to nil. France now must either abandon Rumania, as it had threatened, or delay indefinitely the signature of its pact. On October 17 Herriot informed Rozenberg that he would definitely sign the pact,¹⁴⁷ a move simplified by Titulescu's statement to Herriot that he was favourable to the

145. Herriot's report to the French Commission on Foreign Affairs, October 19, 1932. Quoted in Izvestia, October 21, 1932.

146. Titulescu's statement published in "Republique". Quoted Ibid., October 16, 1932.

147. Telegram from the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in France, Rozenberg, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, October 17, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 578.

signature of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact.¹⁴⁸ Poland was even more exasperated by Rumania's diplomatic manoeuvres and the pressure within that country for the ratification of its Soviet pact, regardless of Rumanian or French actions, was reaching an irresistible level. *Izvestiia*, on October 20, quoted extracts from the Polish press which were urging the signature of a Soviet-Rumanian pact. An article in "Slovo Polskie" criticised Titulescu's policy and added that "we are also convinced that our Government in the interest of peace will propose the ratification of the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact at the session of the Sejm which is soon to be convoked."¹⁴⁹ At the end of October, Zaleski, in an interview given to the French press said that recently Polish-Soviet relations had undergone a favourable evolution, of which the signed pact was a symptom.¹⁵⁰ Several days later he was replaced as Polish Foreign Minister by his deputy, Josef Beck, who informed the Soviet Minister on November 14 that Polish policy remained the same as before, his Government attaching great significance to the development of good-neighbourly relations with the USSR and especially the conclusion of the non-aggression pact. He stated that Patek would be instructed immediately to begin negotiations for a conciliation convention.¹⁵¹

The firm resolve of the Polish Government to complete its diplomatic rapprochement with the USSR was given practical application when it informed the Rumanian Government that it would not mediate any further between Rumania and the Soviet Union and apparently also said that it had undertaken to put the question of the Polish-Soviet pact's ratification before the present

148. Titulescu's statement published in "Republique". Quoted in *Izvestiia*, October 16, 1932. Telegram from the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in France, Rozenberg, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, October 17, 1932. *DVP Vol. 15*, p. 580. Titulescu's statement was probably inspired by a desire to minimise the extent to which France had abandoned Rumania by giving his approval to the by now unavoidable French signature. In addition, since he was so firmly opposed to a non-aggression pact with the USSR, he probably hoped that once France had signed, the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations would be allowed to fade into the background.

149. "Slovo Polskie". Quoted in *Izvestiia*, October 22, 1932.

150. Quoted *Ibid.*, October 30, 1932.

151. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Minister in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko and the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Beck, November 14, 1932. *DVP Vol. 15*, pps. 608-609.

session of the Sejm.^{152.} This Polish refusal to mediate was occasioned by yet another attempt on the part of Rumania to re-open negotiations with the USSR. Titulescu had informed the French Minister in Bucharest of his readiness to resume them in Geneva on November 2 on a text which, as Dovgalevsky told Berthelot, was completely unacceptable to the Soviets.^{153.} Titulescu's motive for taking this step could hardly have been a genuine desire to achieve a last minute agreement. His new text would never gain Soviet support and in fact Zaleski told the British Ambassador that Titulescu had recently informed Herriot that he had no intention of concluding a Rumanian-Soviet pact but would continue negotiations until the opportunity arose to place the onus of rupture on the Soviet Government.^{154.} If this is correct nevertheless it did not deter Herriot from offering French mediation once more. On November 4 Berthelot told Rozenberg of the French Government's desire to see the Rumanian-Soviet negotiations resumed.^{155.} The reason for Herriot's patience was most probably that given to Dovgalevsky by Berthelot; although the Franco-Soviet pact had supporters in France it also had strong opponents and therefore the Premier wanted to escape their attacks, an objective which a Soviet-Rumanian pact would assist.^{156.} The French Government was by now determined on signing but a last attempt had to be made to secure a Rumanian pact. Even if this attempt failed, Herriot could claim to the French electorate that he had done all in his power to secure a successful outcome. The Soviet Government in reply stated that it was ready to give the Rumanian Government the opportunity to sign the pact which had been agreed upon by Litvinov and Cadere in early October, this offer remaining open for four months and confirmed its adherence

152. Extracts from the Rumanian press. Quoted in Izvestia, November 2, 1932. Austrian Telegraph Agency. Quoted Ibid., November 3, 1932.

153. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, October 27, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 591-592. Rumanian Telegraph Agency, November 1, 1932. Quoted in Izvestia, November 3, 1932.

154. British Ambassador in Poland, Erskine, to the Foreign Office, October 31, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N6313/25/63.

155. Telegram from the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in France, Rozenberg, to the NKD November 4, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 600.

156. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, October 27, 1932. Ibid., p. 592.

to the policy of refraining from the use of violence in the settlement of disputed questions.^{157.}

On November 21 Herriot instructed his Minister in Bucharest in an "extremely urgent" communication to warn Titulescu immediately that he would make a last approach to Dovgalevsky.^{158.} Despite these desperate French efforts, however, no agreement between Moscow and Bucharest was achieved. Two days later Titulescu announced in the Rumanian parliament that the Soviet-Rumanian negotiations had been broken off and would not be resumed by Rumania since it was the Soviet Government which had interrupted them. Rumania had to reject the Soviet proposal, he said, which defined the Bessarabian problem as a disputed question, Its acceptance would signify that Rumania would open the door to the aspirations of other neighbouring countries directed at the revision of existing international treaties. Only if the Soviet Government invited Rumania to enter into negotiations could they be resumed.^{159.} On the same day a Convention on Conciliation Procedure was signed between the USSR and Poland which Beck greeted "with great satisfaction."^{160.} Events were now moving rapidly. On the evening of November 25 the French Council of Ministers approved the text of the non-aggression pact and the Convention on Conciliation Procedure and agreed that trade negotiations should begin once again.^{161.} In Warsaw the Polish President ratified the Soviet-Polish Pact of Non-Aggression and Conciliation Convention on November 27, it being simultaneously ratified in Moscow.^{162.} Finally, the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact was signed by Herriot and

157. Communication from the Soviet Embassy in Paris to the French President, November 9, 1932. French Docs Vol.1. p.681.

158. Herriot, the French Foreign Minister, to Puaux, the French Minister in Rumania, November 21, 1932. Documents Diplomatiques francais 1932-1939, 1st.Series, Volume 2, 15 November 1932-17 March 1933 (Paris 1966), p.31.

159. Izvestia, November 30, 1932.

160. Interview with Tass, November 26, 1932. Ibid., November 27, 1932. Text of Polish-Soviet Conciliation Convention, DVP Vol.15, pps.622-625.

161. Izvestia, November 27, 1932. The trade negotiations immediately ran into difficulties and Krestinsky said he did not expect their quick end but thought it best to remain silent on the difficulties in order to assist their passage in France. Letter from Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, November 29, 1932. DVP Vol.15, p.644.

162. Badurowycz, Polish-Soviet relations, p.23. Ratification instruments were exchanged on December 23, 1932.

Dovgalevsky in Paris on November 29.¹⁶³ Its text was very similar to that initialled in August 1931, the major difference being the addition of an article recognising that the undertakings of the pact could not affect rights and obligations which resulted from previously concluded agreements.

Izvestiia enthusiastically greeted the ratification of the Polish pact, describing it as successfully completing "the struggle of many years which the Soviet Government has conducted for the strengthening of the guarantee of peace in the relations between the USSR and the largest of its neighbours in the west."¹⁶⁴ The "Gazeta Polska" was equally warm in its comments, believing that while general pacts for general peace may be little more than bits of paper, there was no place for scepticism as regards agreements between individual states which arose from real political conditions existing on a definite territory and especially as regards treaties which regulated neighbourly relations. It regretted Rumania's failure to obtain a pact ^{but} ~~that~~ emphasised that the Polish defensive alliance obligations towards Rumania would remain in force.¹⁶⁵ Beck privately evaluated the pact as serving a distinctly useful purpose even though he realised that the Soviet Government would only adhere to it so long as it suited it to do so. He said that while he was disappointed at the failure of the Rumanian-Soviet negotiations, at least they had not been without some value in that Litvinov had given a written assurance to Poland that the USSR would observe its obligations under the Kellogg Pact and would not attempt to ^{solve} ~~save~~ the Bessarabian question by force. He added that clause 4 of the Soviet-Polish pact safeguarded the Polish-Rumanian alliance.¹⁶⁶

The Soviet response to the French pact was more subdued. Although

163. Text in DVP Vol. 15, pps. 637-640.

164. Izvestiia, November 28, 1932.

165. Gazeta Polska. Quoted Ibid., November 30, 1932.

166. British Ambassador in Poland, Erskine, to Simon, December 7, 1932. DBFP Vol. 7, pps. 284-285. Clause 4 stated that the obligations of the present pact could not alter the international rights and obligations which arose for each party from agreements concluded before the present pact was introduced into force, in so far as these agreements did not contain any aggressive elements.

Dovgalevsky on the occasion of the actual signature expressed confidence that it would "promote the strengthening of general peace, establish closer and inspire more confident relations between France and the USSR" and spoke of the "great political and moral significance" which the Soviet Union gave it,¹⁶⁷. *Izvestia* was not quite so fulsome in praise. Its editorial on the pact recalled the French struggle against the Soviet Union and noted that it could not erase those alliances which France had created after the war. Whilst welcoming the clause relating to economic non-aggression and the banning of hostile organisations and recognising that the implementation of the pact's obligations would unquestionably improve the relations between the French Republic and the USSR,¹⁶⁸ it observed that the right and nationalist French press showed that influential French circles gave a hostile reception to its signature.¹⁶⁹ The French press's response was indeed mixed. As *Izvestia* had noted, the conservative and nationalist sections, whilst alarmed at the growth of German nationalism, were not convinced that a pact with Russia was the answer; the socialists were not over-enthusiastic whilst the radicals greeted it warmly.¹⁷⁰

The most pessimistic Soviet-inspired assessments on the new pacts came, perhaps understandably, from the journals of the Comintern. "Communist International" reminded its readers that they had been concluded with countries until recently the most aggressive towards the Soviet Union and warned that the danger of an anti-Soviet intervention had not been reduced in the least.¹⁷⁰ "Imprecoor", commenting on the Franco-Soviet pact, called it "a new great victory of the peaceful policy of the Soviet Government", whilst warning that "no class-conscious proletarian, however, will have any illusions as to what such public undertakings on the part of the capitalist governments mean." It then gave its own interesting analysis of French motives and the significance of the pact:

167. Speech by the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, November 29, 1932. *DVP Vol. 15*, p. 643.

168. *Izvestia*, November 30, 1932.

169. Scott, *Alliance Against Hitler*, p. 70.

170. "A new Victory of the Peaceful Policy of the USSR-A new success of the World Proletariat," *Communist International*, Vol. 9, N. 20, December 1, 1932. pps. 701, 710.

If French imperialism undertakes, even if only in words, to cease its criminal machinations and is compelled to adopt a fresh mask in order to hide its interventionist countenance, this means that the class forces standing behind it have been thrown into confusion by the blows of the world economic crisis. It means that the capitalist powers are hopelessly entangled in a net of imperialist antagonisms and complications. It means that the League of Nations is more and more displaying its impotency to conceal effectively the imperialist war preparations and to clear away the obstacles preventing the formation of the anti-Soviet united front. It means that capitalism, weakened by its crises and by its inner antagonisms, by the sharpening of the class struggle, is obliged to resort to new means in order to pursue its imperialist aims.^{171.}

The other state closely involved in these November events was Germany. The official "Deutsche Diplomatisch-Politische Korrespondenz" adopted, as on past occasions, an optimistic tone, calling the Franco-Soviet pact a "remarkable political success for the Soviet Union" and emphasised that it in no way violated Soviet-German relations:

Germany has neither an economic nor a political monopoly on relations between the Soviet Union and the states which surround it. Therefore a more active participation of the USSR in the concert of powers, Germany can only welcome...To expect that the conclusion of the pact will lead¹⁷² to a change of Soviet policy in relation to Germany would be incorrect.

Other German papers, however, were not so complacent. The "Kolnische Zeitung" agreed that "in general Germany has no ground for special anxiety because of the conclusion of a pact with France" but added that "all the same Germany must follow with some attention Franco-Soviet relations in order to counteract possible attempts by France to damage German interests." The "Frankfurter Zeitung" saw the pact as a balancing by the Soviet Union of its relations with east and west in the same way as the German balancing policy epitomised by the treaty of Berlin.^{173.} The "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" in a leading article noted with sorrow that compared with the Brockdorff-Rantzau~~er~~ era a change had occurred in Soviet relations towards Versailles and blamed this on German policy which had let slip the chances for a closer development of both economic and political relations with Russia.^{174.}

In the last year non-aggression pacts had been signed and ratified with

171. L.F. Boross, "The Importance of the Non-Aggression Pact Between France and the Soviet Union," International Press Correspondence, Vol. 12, N. 55, December 8, 1932, ~~December 8~~ p. 1178.

172. Quoted in Izvestia, November 30, 1932.

173. Quoted Ibid.

174. Quoted Ibid., December 2, 1932.

219.

Poland, Finland, Estonia and Latvia and the long-standing initialled French pact had been signed if not yet ratified. The small Baltic states were compelled by political and economic factors to treat their large eastern neighbour with respect, yet their ratification of the non-aggression pacts with the Soviet Union was indicative of a growing Soviet international prestige as well as the deepening European insecurity. By 1932 these small states found it wiser to conclude pacts which the USSR had long desired despite the consequent risk of the latter's economic and political penetration rather than remain at odds with the communist state.¹⁷⁵ Poland's signature and ratification of its pact was of even greater significance as an indication of the changing balance in European power politics. Not only had these two inveterate enemies concluded a pact but the former had been compelled to do so against France's opposition rather than with its encouragement. In August Herriot told the Polish Ambassador in France that it was very important for France to preserve a united front with the other interested states so as not to give the Soviets a trump card in the diplomatic game and said that he was anxious that Poland should not ratify the Soviet-Polish pact until Rumania had signed a similar pact. In reply the Pole succinctly pointed out that his country's position was different from that of France:

I added that if the pact with the Soviets had a considerable theoretical significance for France, in relation to Poland, which has a frontier of more than 1,000 kilometres, the situation is completely different and whether the pact will be concluded or not can have a serious influence on the further state of our relations with Russia.¹⁷⁶

The growing threat from Germany made an agreement with either Germany itself or Russia imperative for Poland even if France held back and Rumania made no progress in its relations with the USSR. Poland had throughout its negotiations with the Soviet Union insisted that it would not ratify its pact until the other

175. For example, Hugessen reported that he was inclined to think that the Estonian Government attached some importance to the pact and that for the time being it gave it a feeling of security. The British Minister in Latvia, Knatchbull-Hugessen, to the Foreign Office, June 22, 1932. Public Record Office, FO N4010/25/63.

176. Report of the Polish Ambassador in Paris to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, August 13, 1932. Sov-Pol Docs, pps. 537-538.

border states had also taken this step. This condition was fulfilled by November 1932 with the exception of Rumania. Poland's desire to see its new venture with Russia set on course was proven by its genuine endeavour to obtain a Soviet-Rumanian pact and ultimately its refusal to allow even this failure to prevent either its own signature or ratification. Its security considerations were too pressing to allow any call for loyalty towards its weaker ally to delay more than briefly its rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Even France's persuasion had failed to obtain anything more than a very temporary Polish postponement of its plans.^{177.}

France had itself been a more reluctant actor in this particular scene. Of course, psychologically Herriot was more favourable to a rapprochement with the Soviet Union than had been his predecessor and the French Government did expect certain tangible gains from the signature of the pact. A note from the Foreign Ministry summed them up as follows. Firstly, the pact would remove the grounds for Soviet propaganda against France which represented it both at the Disarmament Conference and inside Russia as organising a military or economic bloc against the USSR. Secondly, the Moscow Government would be prevented from adopting serious measures prejudicial to the French economy. Thirdly, it would serve as a counter-balance to the Soviet-German treaty of 1926. It could not but help to dissipate the German illusion concerning the revision of the Versailles treaty with Soviet help and would ease Poland's position.^{178.} Yet despite these attributes the report stated that the pact's consequences must not be exaggerated. The French Foreign Ministry saw it as being for Russia a

177. Herriot noted that the French attempt to delay Polish ratification on Rumania's behalf had encountered growing impatience on the part of the Polish Government which for internal and external reasons did not seem able to suspend the activation of its pact much longer. The French Foreign Minister, Herriot, to the French Minister in Rumania, Puaux, September 1, 1932. French Docs Vol. 1. p. 245.

178. Leger told the British Charge in Paris that the Franco-Soviet pact did have a certain psychological value, especially in the sense that it would attenuate the menace of a Russo-German combination. The British Charge d' Affairs in France, Campbell, to Simon, September 27, 1932. DBFP Vol. 7. p. 245. It could well be that the French also hoped to weaken Soviet-German collaboration at Geneva which was already beginning to crumble.

means of preserving its freedom of neutrality between France and Germany and not a re-alignment of alliances.^{179.} France was not so exposed to aggression as was Poland and though advantages would accrue to it from the conclusion of a pact there was a margin for debate as to their exact nature. Given the more democratic governmental system in France, inevitably there was much less unanimity on the desirability of a pact with the USSR than had been the case in Poland. Only after Herriot had made every effort to secure a Rumanian-Soviet agreement and in circumstances of mounting German nationalism and the Polish signature could he face his opponents with a signed pact.^{180.}

How did the Soviet decision-makers perceive the international situation at the close of 1932? Naturally they welcomed the series of ratified and signed non-aggression pacts. Only the French ratification remained outstanding since the chief significance of a pact with Rumania was its removal of any excuse for delay on the part of France and Poland rather than its own intrinsic worth.^{181.} During the summer of 1932 Soviet diplomacy had been compelled to pursue a somewhat passive policy as regards its non-aggression pacts since their further progress could only be achieved by the actions of the other partners, not the Soviet Union. It was prepared to sign and ratify those pacts when the other countries involved gave their agreement. Yet by its promptings and because the international situation had swung in its favour, its foreign policy position was now considerably stronger than twelve months before. Of course, there was a debit side to these proceedings but one which the Soviet Government was prepared to take. Krestinsky noted that the new pacts could not but call forth anxiety in German political circles whose effect was uncertain. He expressed

179. Note of the Department for the President of the Council, November 23, 1932. French Docs Vol.2, pps.55-57.

180. The French Ambassador in London, in conversation with Sir John Simon on September 28, said that the Polish Government had urged the French Government to complete its negotiations as soon as possible and that Herriot's Government was being increasingly pressurised from the Left to take this step. Sir John Simon to Lord Tyrrel, British Ambassador in France, October 6, 1932. DBFP Vol.7, p.248.

181. Litvinov told the British Ambassador that a pact was of more interest to Rumania than to Russia. The British Ambassador in the USSR, Overy, Ovey, to Simon, March 28, 1932. Ibid., p.237.

confidence that the signature of the Franco-Soviet pact would now compel the German Government to begin seriously to consider the rapid ratification of the Extension protocol of the Berlin treaty.¹⁸² On the other hand these pacts might further alienate German opinion and deter the German Government from pursuing a pro-Soviet course in foreign policy. In any case, Russia itself was far from being complacent about Germany and its future. The Soviet Government attempted to keep all channels open by greeting the new pacts enthusiastically whilst denying that they indicated any new foreign policy orientation, in particular away from Germany. Denying the rumours which had appeared in the "international bourgeois press" regarding such a new orientation, Izvestiia in an editorial devoted to the Polish ratification categorically stated:

Soviet foreign policy was never based on any other "orientation" than an orientation on its own forces, an orientation on the increased striving of the popular masses for peace. We offered our hand, proposing a policy of peace to all states and if one has given a friendly answer before another, it is only possible to speak of their re-orientation. The Soviet Union has no need to change its policy. We want to live in peace and to collaborate with all states on the basis of mutual advantages, regardless of their existing systems and to fight only against those who fight against us, who are preparing war against us.¹⁸³

Pravda adopted a similar line, stating that "if anyone has changed its orientation it is not us but other capitalist countries which have been compelled to take into account the growing position of our country."¹⁸⁴ This viewpoint was expressed yet more specifically on the occasion of the signature of the Franco-Soviet pact:

(W)e welcome the fact that the majority of German papers rebuff tendencies which attempt to represent this pact as a step which will separate the Soviet Union from the German people. In the same way as the signing by Germany at Locarno of a similar pact did not alienate those interests on which friendly relations between the German people and the Soviet Union had developed, so the policy of rapprochement between the Soviet Union and France should not damage these interests.¹⁸⁵

Not only the Soviet papers but Soviet diplomats also denied any anti-German orientation in the recent diplomatic events.¹⁸⁶ These denials held an element

182. Letter from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, December 1, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 660.

183. Izvestiia, November 28, 1932.

184. Pravda, November 30, 1932.

185. Izvestiia, November 30, 1932.

186. Note of a conversation between Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and Italian Ambassador in the USSR, December 1, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 653. See also conversation between Stomonyakov and Lithuanian Minister, October 4, 1932. Ibid., p. 560.

of truth, at least from a subjective angle. Soviet diplomacy most probably did not specifically attribute any anti-German motives to its new pacts and continued to desire improved relations with all states though it certainly was not blind to any opportunity afforded it to play off one capitalist state against another if to its own advantage. But objectively these pacts could not but harm the old Soviet-German relationship which had so withered in the last few years, a conclusion which could not have escaped the Soviet Government. Whilst the ratification of a non-aggression pact with Poland and the signature of a similar pact with France might compel Germany to court Soviet favour for a time (and even this was by no means certain), as Germany's signature of the Locarno treaty had produced the Berlin treaty, nevertheless the Soviet Government should remember that the former treaty had in fact sown the seeds of Soviet-German distrust; Germany had not succeeded in balancing between east and west. The series of non-aggression pacts which Russia was so avidly constructing with countries which feared Germany's resurgent nationalism, in the long term could only severely weaken the still-existing Soviet-German ties.¹⁸⁷ As Germany adopted a more and more extreme position and its enemies reacted in kind, the Soviet Union would increasingly find it difficult to maintain its desired seat on the diplomatic fence.

187. It should not be forgotten that the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, the Berlin treaty, had expired in June 1931 and the Extension protocol had not yet been ratified by the Reichstag; thus at a time when the Soviet Union was concluding pacts with other states, Germany technically had no such pact, a fact which created considerable suspicion in Moscow.

Chapter 6: The New Course.

1. Rapallo under Hitler.

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor of Germany, though only three Nazis held government posts. In the March elections the Nationalist Socialist party polled 43.9 per cent of the votes and on March 23 Hitler pushed an enabling bill through the Reichstag which gave the Government power to issue decrees independently of the Reichstag or the President. Within a very short time Hitler had established his dictatorship over every aspect of German life.

The advent of Hitler to power in Germany cannot fully explain the deterioration of Soviet-German relations; indeed, the preceding chapters have sought to recount the stages of Rapallo's decay which, by the end of 1932, had reached an advanced level. Furthermore, the Nazi victory did not produce an immediate change in these relations. Yet within a few months of assuming his highest office, Hitler's influence on world politics had drastically altered not only Soviet relations with the Third Reich but Soviet foreign policy as a whole.

Hitler had made no secret of his foreign policy goals in *Mein Kampf*, a book which many western statesmen ignored even after its author's rise to international infamy but which Russian decision-makers had read with little disinterest.¹ He intended to extend German power towards the east. Russia and its vassal border states were to provide the lebensraum for this new Germany. His accession to power did not alter his views as expressed in the 1920's. In February 1933 he said to a group of high-ranking officers:

How should political power be used, once it has been won? Not yet possible to say. Perhaps the winning of new export possibilities, perhaps - and, indeed preferably - conquest of new living space in the east and ruthless Germanisation of the latter.²

1. G.Hilger and A.G.Meyer, *The Incompatible Allies*, (New York 1953), p.252.
2. Hitler to a group of officers, February 3, 1933. Notes by Lt.Gen.Liebmann. Quoted in Scott, *Alliance Against Hitler*, p.80.

The Russian Government had been warned of the dangers posed by Hitler if he ever assumed power not only by his writings but by its own diplomats. Khinchuk on several occasions during 1932 warned his Government in a very restrained tone, almost as if the news would be unwelcome, of these dangers. In one letter he noted a strong tendency of the Nazis to steal into power and thought that sooner or later they could succeed in this. Whilst he cautiously admitted that his opinion, based as it was on probings and journalists' opinions, in the absence of direct relations with the Nazis, could be incorrect, he noted:

But it is impossible to ignore Hitler's interview given to foreign journalists. In this interview and in countless other statements, Hitler has definitely stated his task of struggle with the USSR. Germany is not Italy and Hitler is not Mussolini. I note this, not with the intention of creating panic, but only to highlight the task of a deeper study and probing of the local fascist movement so as to have the possibility of correctly taking into account all the real factors in Germany.³

Again, several months later, Khinchuk reported that although the Nazis did not express their general political line in relation to the USSR, they were making sharper and sharper attacks on the present German trade policy in relation to the USSR.⁴ In November he warned that "it is absolutely clear that with the National-Socialists at the head of the cabinet, fascist terror against the communist party will begin which will drive it under ground."⁵ The tone of these letters suggests that his Government may not have treated the growing Nazi party with sufficient seriousness despite the ample warnings of its probable policies in the event of it gaining power. Certainly the Comintern's analysis of events within Germany welcomed the growth of counter-revolutionary forces since "the unfolding of the revolutionary upsurge and the ripening of the revolutionary crisis cannot develop in any other way."⁶ Not only its

3. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, April 28, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, pps. 287-288. Not known to which interview he was referring.

4. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, June 25, 1932. Ibid., pps. 387-389.

5. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, November 20, 1932. Ibid., p. 621.

6. Speech by Gusev to the Twelfth Plenum of ECCI, September 8, 1932. Eudin and Slusser, Soviet Foreign Policy Vol. 2, p. 474.

analysis but its actual policies which had as their objective the defeat of the German Socialist party rather than the Nazi party seem strange when contrasted with the opinion of Russia's chief diplomatic representative in Germany.⁷ The first few months of 1933 were sufficient to convince the most unperceptive onlooker in Moscow that Nazi policy warranted close attention.

Russia had greeted "with relief and faint hope" the collapse of Papen's Government and Schleicher's appointment as Chancellor in December 1932, especially since the new Government promised that steps would be taken immediately to ratify the protocol for the Extension of the Berlin treaty.⁸ On December 19 Litvinov assured the German Foreign Minister, von Neurath, that the Soviet Union considered the good relations with Germany to be the basic factor in its foreign policy.⁹ A mere week before Hitler became Chancellor, Molotov, in his report to the Central Executive Committee said:

Germany occupies a special place in our foreign relations. Of all the countries maintaining diplomatic relations with us, we have had and now have the strongest economic connections with Germany. That is no accident. It arises from the interests of the two countries.¹⁰

On January 25, an *Izvestia* editorial entitled "Soviet Foreign Policy", referring to Soviet-German relations merely stated that the situation "remained stable",

This stable situation was shaken by the events in Berlin at the end of January culminating in Schleicher's replacement as Chancellor by Hitler. Dirksen reported to Balow on January 31 that "the retirement of Schleicher, in whom they had much confidence here respecting his attitude toward Russia, and the summoning of the Hitler-Papen Cabinet has caused great uneasiness here." Papen was still distrusted and the National-Socialist party considered

7. The contrast in 1932 and early 1933 between Soviet Foreign Policy considerations and Comintern policy is fascinating but outside the scope of this thesis. For a brief survey see chapter 1.

8. Dyck, *Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia*, p.254. Hope was generated because of Schleicher's connections with the Reichswehr, hitherto a pro-Soviet force in Germany.

9. German Archives. Quoted in Korbel, *Poland Between East and West*, p.277.

10. Molotov's report to the Central Executive Committee, January 23, 1933. Quoted in *Izvestia*, January 24, 1933.

to be strongly anti-Soviet.¹¹ This Soviet anxiety was carefully controlled as regards the mass media. For example, *Izvestia's* article on Hitler's first steps merely reported the formation of his government and ^{the} a response to it in third countries.¹² Dirksen in his memoirs states that the Soviet press during the first few months of Hitler's rule refrained from all diatribe. Yet the former German Ambassador also recalls that "the anxiety and scepticism which was felt in the inner circle, however, became apparent in all my conversations with leading Soviet politicians...(who) were extremely sceptical of Hitler's intentions."¹³ Molotov, addressing a conference of collective farm workers in February, issued a warning which was not very subtly directed at Germany:

We know that our country is surrounded by hostile bourgeois states which dream of the early downfall of the Soviet Government...that does not worry us...But the position in capitalist countries is getting worse so rapidly that any kind of adventurists who force their way into power are liable to unleash new wars and a new intervention against the Soviet Union.¹⁴

The German Foreign Office was anxious to dispel these Soviet fears, considering them to be groundless.¹⁵ Neurath instructed Dirksen to enter into a discussion with the Soviet authorities on the general situation in order to clarify the Russian attitude, though "naturally this must not be done in such a way as to give the impression that we are anxiously pursuing the Russians."¹⁶ Acting on those instructions, Dirksen met Krestinsky at the end of February. This interview clearly reveals that the further deterioration in Soviet-German relations consequent on Hitler's accession to power was not generated only by Soviet distrust of the Nazis but also by German anxiety about the course of Soviet foreign policy. The German Ambassador assured the Russian that the new political line of the Soviet Government, which was expressed in the conclusion

11. The German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, to the State Secretary, Bulow, January 31, 1933. *German Docs*, p.14. Papen was Vice-Chancellor in the new Government.

12. *Izvestia*, February 1, 1933.

13. Dirksen, *Moscow Tokyo London*, p.119.

14. Speech by Molotov to a conference of collective farm workers, *Izvestia*, February 21, 1933.

15. The German Foreign Ministry officials were perhaps less perceptive than their Russian counterparts. Bulow wrote that he thought the Russians were over-estimating the importance of the German change of government and that when the National-Socialists had responsibility they would change their policies. State Secretary, Bulow, to the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, February 6, 1933. *German Docs*, p.21.

16. The German Foreign Minister, Neurath, to the Embassy in the USSR, February 22, 1933. *Ibid.*, p.72.

of a series of non-aggression pacts, met with general understanding and sympathy from the German Government which had taken all measures in order to ensure that the German press and public opinion would calmly accept these pacts. Further, the German Government considered that the conclusion of pacts with France and Poland in no way changed the old relations between the USSR and Germany. In the last few weeks, however, it had shown some doubt as to whether or not Soviet foreign policy had a new orientation in the sense of being directed towards France. Such doubt was occasioned by Litvinov's speeches at the Disarmament Conference, Herriot's press campaign, the press report on the plan for the exchange of military attaches between France and the USSR and reports on the arrival in France of a Soviet commission for military purchases.^{17.} Whilst the German Foreign Ministry realised that the initiative for the rapprochement came predominantly from the French side and appreciated the natural reaction of the USSR not to reject friendly actions from that side, nevertheless, it did appear that the initiative also came from the Soviet side. Dirksen then pointed out, in reassurance to the Soviet Government, that the German Government's struggle with communism within Germany could go hand in hand with the preservation of good foreign policy relations with the USSR as in the case of Turkish and Italian relations with the USSR. Further, the Soviet Government should consider the fact that collaboration, especially economic, between Russia and Germany had continued in the last few months as before. Lastly, leading members of the German Government had repeatedly stated to responsible Soviet representatives that the German Government's policy in relation to the USSR would be completely maintained and continued. All these factors, according to Dirksen, must reduce Soviet anxiety about its relations with Germany. As concerned the Extension protocol of the Berlin treaty, which still awaited ratification, the delay could be explained fully by the fact that during the last one and a half years the Reichstag had been completely unworkable.^{18.}

17. See below.

18. Dirksen again makes this point in his memoirs, stating that the Russians were incapable of grasping that the delay was simply due to deficiencies in the German constitutional apparatus. Dirksen, Moscow, Tokyo London, p.122.

Dirksen was able to report that Hitler, in conversation with Neurath, had stated that a sharp line must be drawn between internal measures taken against communism in Germany and policy in relation to the Soviet Union; the Chancellor did not want to introduce any changes in the foreign policy and in the economic-political relations with the USSR. In reply to these statements Krestinsky stated that the Soviet Union did not want to introduce nor was introducing any changes in its policy towards Germany but it could not but be anxious about the proposals which von Papen had made to Herriot concerning a military alliance during 1932, proposals which were widely reported in the press. In such a situation, private statements of friendship made by members of the German Government to members of the Soviet Government which remained unknown to Soviet, German and world opinion, were not sufficient. Of such a nature was Hitler's statement made to Neurath and reported just now by Dirksen. This conversation was terminated by mutual complaints about press attacks on their respective countries.^{19.}

Such was the state of the Rapallo partnership. Neither country any longer trusted the other though each still tried to convince its partner that it, at least, remained loyal to the old spirit of collaboration. In Germany the new Nazi leaders had scant sympathy for the Soviet Union; only short-term political necessity would prompt them to collaborate with the communists in the east, as happened in 1939. The German Foreign Office officials and diplomats in the main still saw considerable value in continuing collaboration with Russia for the old reasons, a means of balancing between east and west, of extracting concessions from the latter. But the Nazis had other methods in mind for gaining such concessions. Even these officials were becoming disillusioned at the apparent movement of Russia towards a Franco-Polish alignment. From the Soviet side, little trust could be placed in the new German leadership and what trust did exist was soon dissipated by the latter's

19. Note of a conversation between the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky and the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, February 27, 1933. DVP Vol. 16 (Moscow 1970), pps. 117-121. Abbreviated version in the Ambassador in the Soviet Union to the German Foreign Ministry, February 28, 1933. German Docs, p. 87.

policies. Certainly no-one in Moscow was likely to slow down, let alone reverse, the new course of non-aggression pacts whilst Hitler remained Chancellor.

In conversation with Litvinov on March 1 Neurath repeated the assurance that German-Soviet relations remained unchanged and also referred to the recently concluded agreement on credits as proof of the German Government's friendliness.²⁰ It was true that economic negotiations undertaken between October 1932 and January 1933 had, after considerable difficulty,²¹ reached agreement on January 17 when the German Government made available credits, supplemented on February 25 by a second agreement on further credits.²² Yet the results of these negotiations were overshadowed by the growing acrimonious dispute between the two countries concerning press attacks and German anti-communist actions. Litvinov had spoken of the measures taken against communists in Berlin during his conversation with Neurath which, the Commissar said, had created considerable alarm in the Russian press and in Moscow. Khinchuk, who was also present, then mentioned the measures taken against Soviet institutions in Berlin and against members of the Russian trade delegation. Neurath replied that in the light of the Reichstag fire revelations, the police should regard foreign members of the Communist party with suspicion. He hoped that the Russian Government would not find itself obliged to change its attitude as a result of such measures. Neurath noted Litvinov's confirmation of this "but it was evident from the way he expressed himself that he was uneasy about the steps taken by the German Government against German communism."²³

The Soviet uneasiness continued to grow throughout the next few months,

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20. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, Neurath, March 1, 1933. DVP Vol. 16 p. 135. Also German Docs pps. 92-93.
21. See letter from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, December 2, 1932. DVP Vol. 15, p. 662. Memorandum of the Soviet Embassy in Germany to the German Chancellor, Schleicher, December 21, 1932. Ibid., p. 690.
22. Concluding protocol of the Soviet-German negotiations, January 17, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 31-35. Protocol of the concluding session on credit negotiations, February 25, 1933. Ibid., pps. 112-114.
23. Memorandum by the German Foreign Minister, Neurath, March 1, 1933. German Docs, pps. 92-93.

Soviet officials continually complaining about attacks on their citizens. Such incidents were bound to occur between countries with such widely diverging ideologies but that they were the subject of such extensive diplomatic exchanges was a clear sign of the tense relations which existed between them. As early as February 25, Krestinsky was instructing the Embassy in Berlin to draw the German Foreign Ministry's attention to the systematic persecution of the Soviet Government which was being conducted in the Nazi official paper, which could not but provoke a response in the Soviet press.²⁴ Such a response was produced not only by the German press but by speeches of the Nazi leaders which frequently expressed extremely hostile sentiments towards the Soviet Union. On March 2, Hitler himself launched an attack on that country's internal policies in the Berlin sportpalast which evoked a sharp and resolute statement from Khinchuk, Neurath weakly attempting to justify the speech as being presented not by Hitler as Chancellor but simply as a party member.²⁵

Such incidents increasingly plagued Soviet-German relations. The Soviet press, always a sound indicator of official Government views, now dwelt at length on the hostile attitude of the new German Government towards the Soviet state²⁶ which provoked a German ban on the importation of Pravda and Izvestia into Germany for a time, this in turn eliciting a further Soviet diplomatic protest.²⁷ Radek contributed an article to Izvestia entitled, "Where is

24. Telegram from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, February 25, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, p. 116.

25. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the NKD, March 3, 1933. Ibid., p. 140. Speech reported in Izvestia, March 4, 1933. This was followed on March 7 by an official Soviet protest to Neurath at which the latter again assured Khinchuk of Hitler's intention to maintain the previous policy towards the USSR. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the NKD, March 7, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 149-150.

26. For example, Pravda, March 13, 1933, contained a front page article on Rosenberg's latest anti-Soviet speech.

27. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Germany, Aleksandrovsky and the Head of the Fourth Department of the German Foreign Ministry, Meyer, March 20, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 177-178. S. S. Aleksandrovsky, Head of the Central European Dept. of the NKD, 1924-1925; Soviet Minister in Lithuania, 1925-1927; Minister in Finland, 1927-1929; NKD Representative at the Ukrainian Soviet Government, 1929-1931; Counsellor at the Embassy in Germany, 1931-1933; Minister in Czechoslovakia, 1933-1939.

Germany going?" In it he discussed the Brest-Litovsk treaty on its fifteenth anniversary although noting that Soviet society unwillingly returned to the Brest theme, considering it "pointless to recall old wrongs when talking of the first great power with which the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations, relations which for many years have developed favourably and have passed not just one test." Nevertheless, this year such memories suggested themselves "for at the head of the German republic are found people who in their official organ recently wrote that 'Versailles is finished but Brest-Litovsk will live.'" Radek then recalled the eastern policy of *Mein Kampf* and ended by saying that "in the sphere of relations between two countries such a situation where a hostile foreign policy programme of one state remained unanswered by the other is impossible."²⁸ Press attacks were not the only growing source of contention between the two states. Khinchuk complained to Bulow about German interference in the operations of the Soviet oil agency, Derop and this was not an isolated complaint but only one instance of numerous Soviet protests.²⁹

In this worsening situation the German Foreign Ministry and especially its Ambassador in Moscow attempted to repair the damage which the Nazi victory in Germany was inflicting on relations between the two states but the task was an uphill one. The Extension protocol still had not been ratified despite German repeated promises that this would occur and Hitler had not yet even received the Soviet Ambassador. In the present situation, as Krestinsky told Dirksen, "at length", the Soviet public was very uneasy about the future attitude of the Reich Government towards the USSR.³⁰ This type of Soviet response to German policy seemed to have some effect in Berlin for on March 23 Hitler, in a speech to the Reichstag, adopted a more conciliatory line:

28. Izvestia March 22, 1933. See also Pravda, March 20, 1933, for a long article attacking Hitler's Germany.

29. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk to the NKD, March 16, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, p. 171. See also, for example, telegram from the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Germany, Aleksandrovsky, to the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, March 20, 1933. Ibid., p. 175.

30. German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, to the German Foreign Ministry, March 20, 1933. German Docs, pps. 189-190.

Toward the Soviet Union the Reich Government intends to cultivate friendly relations, advantageous to both parties. It is precisely the Government of the national revolution that finds itself in a position to pursue such a positive policy toward Soviet Russia. The fight on communism in Germany is our internal affair, in which we shall never tolerate interference from the outside. Political relations with other powers with which we are linked by important interests in common are not affected thereby.³¹.

This speech did not produce quite the salutary effect in Moscow that had been expected in Berlin. An editorial in *Izvestia* did welcome any German policy which would establish and strengthen good-neighbourly relations with the USSR but in general it was fairly hostile and sarcastic towards Germany, harping on the theme of its interference with Soviet economic organisations in that country and especially Derop. It took care, however, to deny any hostility on Russia's part:

The Soviet Union does not take sides in the struggle between capitalist powers, it stands for the equality of all peoples, big and small and therefore it can in equal measure desire normal relations with them all. Hostile relations between the USSR and other powers can arise only as a result of the hostile policy of these powers towards the USSR...In the absence of such actions (from the German side) German-Soviet relations will have a character which will answer the interests of both sides.³².

Such an absence of hostile actions was not to be forthcoming. In the following day's issue, the paper carried a report of a police search at the Soviet General Consulate in Hamburg and commented that this sort of behaviour threw significant light on the real meaning of Hitler's speech and his desire for a positive policy towards the USSR.³³ Litvinov himself took up this theme of German molestation with Dirksen, interpreting the campaign against Soviet institutions and especially Derop as being fully organised, directed from a single centre and not merely local, isolated phenomena. He left the German in no doubt as to the "extreme seriousness" with which the Soviet Government treated these events, shaking as they did its confidence in the assurances given by Hitler, Neurath and Dirksen as to the German Government's desire to preserve friendly relations with the USSR and casting doubt not only on mutual economic but also political relations:

31. Quoted in *German Docs*, footnote 5, p.190.

32. *Izvestia*, March 28, 1933.

33. *Ibid.*, March 29, 1933. Further articles on the harass harassment of Derop appeared on March 30 and April 2.

(W)e really were alarmed at the coming to power in Germany of people, the political creed of which could not inspire us with optimism as concerns the fate of our mutual relations. Naturally we had waited for official comments and statements from the head of the new government. This comment, however, had taken place in a situation of anti-Soviet actions by the German authorities.

Litvinov's harangue certainly had a profound effect on Dirksen, who considered that it reflected the great agitation which had seized the Soviet Government and public. He feared that the persistence of incidents against Soviet citizens and economic organisations in Germany was giving rise to fears that the trends within Germany opposed to good relations with Russia were gaining the upper hand:

It is my conviction that a serious crisis has been reached in our mutual relations. If it should not be possible to eliminate it, the Soviet Government will, with its characteristic restlessness, draw its conclusions for the entire area of our mutual relations and reverse its economic and military policies also. The economic consequences of such a reversal by our largest customer and debtor are obvious. Reversals may also be expected in foreign and military policy in view of the present attitude of France and Poland. After mature consideration, I consider it urgently necessary to report to Your Excellency personally at once concerning the situation that has arisen here and the results that might ensue.³⁴

Dirksen's great anxiety is further underlined in a letter written on the following day to the German State Secretary which described the "very serious crisis" which had developed in the past few days:

You know that I am not in the habit of getting into a panic, and that I have in general judged the situation in the Soviet Union correctly. You will therefore believe me when I say that the situation is very serious and that I consider a trip to Berlin for the purpose of reporting urgently necessary.

He was certain that if a settlement was not reached then "we must expect a conflict with the Soviet Government, the consequences of which will be very severe in a political and economic respect."³⁵

34. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, April 3, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 210-215. German Ambassador in the USSR to the German Foreign Ministry, April 4, 1933. German Docs, pps. 241-242. It is noteworthy that the day after this meeting Krestinsky urged on Khinchuk the necessity for action against the outrages of storm-troopers and police against Soviet citizens and institutions which had reached a crescendo. Letter from the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Krestinsky, to the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, April 4, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, p. 216.

35. Ambassador Dirksen to State Secretary Bulow, April 4, 1933. German Docs, pps. 246-247.

The German Foreign Ministry's reaction to its Ambassador's report was conciliatory. Dirksen was instructed to inform the Soviet Government that the Reich Government was now in a position to ratify the Extension protocol, that it undertook to examine all cases in which Soviet citizens had been molested and that it would ensure that Soviet business organisations in Germany were permitted to work without interference. On the other hand, it asserted that the Soviet Government was not without blame for the present disturbance in relations and told Dirksen to mention Soviet radio propaganda and the communist activities of Derop employees, 85 per cent of whom belonged to the Communist party. It maintained that Soviet business organisations must sever all connections of any kind with the KPD.³⁶

This conciliatory tone was an admission, at least on the part of the permanent Foreign Office officials, that Germany's policy of alienating Russia at a time when it had other friends emerging on the international scene, was dangerous. Soviet fears must be calmed for Germany still had need of a friend in the east and who could this be but the USSR.³⁷ Extracts from the minutes of the Conference of Ministers shows the important place which Russia still occupied in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' plans. Neurath stated that Germany's position in the east was particularly exposed and defence against Poland was possible only if Russian support was assured:

We cannot do without Russia's cover for our rear with respect to Poland. Russia has become the largest buyer of German industrial products...The fight against communism in Germany does not, as Italy's example shows, need in the long run to affect adversely our relations with Russia.

36. The German Foreign Ministry to the Embassy in the USSR, April 5, 1933. German Docs, pps. 252-253. Whilst Litvinov welcomed the German assurances, he maintained that Soviet organisations had held aloof from all communist activities and that they could not control the private activities of their employees. Dirksen gained the impression that Soviet anger was subsiding but this would continue only if further molestation did not occur. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the German Ambassador, April 8, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 221-222. See also Dirksen's report to his Foreign Ministry, German Docs, pps. 271-272.

37. These officials were not radical nor unscrupulous enough to think of Hitler's way out of this dilemma, a temporary entente with Poland. They were to learn in 1934.

He also noted that "at the present moment it is uncertain whether this can be counted on."³⁸ The increasingly strident demands of the nationalist parties within Germany for a revision of the Versailles treaty had adversely affected Soviet-German relations even before Hitler became Chancellor, especially in view of the former's growing rapprochement with France and Poland. This rapprochement especially with France, was accelerated by the Nazi victory, fed by both countries' fears of Hitler's foreign policy objectives. The Soviet Government had less reason to accept German provocative policies directed at it now that its international position was becoming stronger, in the same way as Germany had been less prepared to accept increasingly revolutionary propaganda from Russia in the late twenties. In addition, growing Soviet economic trade with other countries, for example the United States, was reducing Germany's economic value. It was inevitable that Moscow should distrust a Germany led by the author of *Mein Kampf*. When this distrust was more than justified by the new German Government's anti-Soviet policies, the likelihood of further collaboration was further reduced. Though the German Foreign Ministry might see Germany's security as being threatened by the isolation which Hitler's aggressive, at least verbally, policy was producing, its influence on Hitler was not overwhelming. German foreign policy in the era of the Third Reich would not always follow the course recommended by that Ministry. Unless the German Government ended its internal anti-Soviet policies and so long as it fostered Franco-Soviet relations, then all its diplomats' efforts would be in vain. Dirksen himself noted that he was afraid the impending exchange of ratification instruments would prove politically ineffective unless police incidents ceased.³⁹

Economic relations which had strongly united the two states since the early twenties were now foundering. In April, Khinchuk and the Soviet trade representative in Germany, Veytser, saw Bulow, demanded an immediate return to normal activity for Dexop and complained that in the last few months Soviet

38. Extracts from the minutes of the Conference of Ministers, April 7, 1933. German Docs, pps. 256, 259.

39. Ambassador Dirksen to the German Foreign Ministry, April 14, 1933. Ibid., p. 290.

exports had fallen "catastrophically." The German agreed that it was necessary to change the situation quickly in the interests of both countries and that measures were being taken to normalise Derop's situation.⁴⁰ Khinchuk expressed Soviet disappointment at the recent credit agreement which had been expected to signify a German readiness to help Russia expand its exports to the 1932 level in order to reduce the passivity of the Soviet trade balance whereas in fact a worsening had occurred.⁴¹

It was in this situation that the German Chancellor received the Soviet Ambassador for the first time. Khinchuk used the opportunity in order to underline that "the confidence of my Government in the future of our mutual relations has of late often been subjected to great stress owing to the actions of the official and non-official Government organs all over Germany in regard to the interests of the USSR." He then outlined a number of measures which the Soviet Government thought necessary so as to maintain previous relations. Firstly, the protocol for the Extension of the Berlin treaty should be ratified at once. Secondly, the domestic re-organisation of Germany should not affect the foreign policy needs of the two states. Thirdly, the German press should be provided with information designed to inform its readership of the views expressed by the Reich Government toward the USSR. Fourthly, methods for creating a balance of trade should be studied jointly once more and Derop should be given the opportunity to operate freely. In reply, Hitler stated that he thoroughly shared the opinion that no change must occur in the friendly relations between both countries and that independently of the differences in world outlook mutual interests of a long-term character linked them in both the economic and political spheres, each having common difficulties and enemies. The Soviets,

40. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the NKD, April 19, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, p. 829, Note 105. Memorandum by the State Secretary, Bulow, April 19, 1933. German Docs, pps. 304-305.

41. Note of a conversation between the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, and the German State Secretary, Bulow, April 22, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 256-259. Khinchuk also told Neurath that "the internal political and economic measures of the German Government...strongly threaten our trade work about which we have repeatedly stated." Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, Khinchuk, to the NKD, April 26, 1933. Ibid., p. 266.

for example, must worry about their western frontier, Germany about its eastern frontier. Neither state should interfere in the ^{internal} ~~international~~ affairs of the other. Hitler also instructed Neurath to deal with the Derop affair and trade relations in general.^{42.}

As Hitler had promised at this meeting, on May 5 the Extension protocol was finally ratified by Germany. Although this had long been a Soviet demand, its response was far from rapturous and must have sharply disillusioned any German who considered that this long-delayed move would make up for the diplomatic events of the last few years which had witnessed the growing estrangement of Germany and the USSR, let alone any hopes that it would block the Soviet rapprochement with France and Poland.^{43.} Izvestia recognised that the Rapallo and Berlin treaties had "served to strengthen the economic and political relations of Germany and the Soviet Union" but then added that "they have not hindered either side from striving to strengthen its relations with other powers." The editorial, dispelling the last German hopes, then frankly stated that these treaties with Germany had not prevented the Soviet Government from concluding non-aggression pacts with France and Poland, "the best possible proof that the Rapallo policy was not directed against these powers." At one time Germany had been Soviet Russia's only important friend in international society. During the last few years Russia's international position had been strengthened but the signature of non-aggression pacts with other states had still evoked Soviet assurances that relations with Germany were not thereby adversely affected. Now, in 1933, a Soviet-German treaty produced a Soviet assurance to France and Poland that it was in no way directed against them. The editorial commented on tendencies within Germany which favoured a deal with France at Russia's expense but triumphantly noted that Franco-Soviet relations had been

42. Report of the Soviet Ambassador in Germany, April 28, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 271-274. Memorandum by the German Foreign Minister, April 28, 1933. German Docs, pps. 355-358. The Soviet version gives a fuller account of Hitler's speech.

43. Dirksen reports that although "the supporters of Russo-German understanding, such as Krestinsky, were frankly delighted", Litvinov himself "could not suppress his moroseness and incredulity." Dirksen, Moscow Tokyo London, p. 122.

strengthened to such an extent that the idea of a military alliance directed against the USSR found no response from the French Government. The editorial ended on a warning note:

Whilst welcoming the extension of the Berlin treaty, Soviet public opinion is fully aware that the treaty will have that significance which is given to it by the concrete actions of both parties which concluded it...Friendly attitudes will evoke a friendly response, hostile actions will call forth the appropriate rebuff.⁴⁴

Such was the Soviet comment on the treaty which once again activated the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, initially signed in 1926 and the first of the important Soviet pacts, hitherto a model for all others. The Soviet Union now had other pacts with countries which were becoming increasingly more reliable than Germany.

Dirksen, at least, quickly shed any fallacious belief he might have entertained that this ratification would repair the damage of the last few years. In a despatch sent to Berlin on the same day as the ratification he recalled Krestinsky's recent comment that it would take months before the old relations were restored. He reported that "a certain aloofness from the foreign political aims and basic ideas heretofore pursued jointly with Germany is beginning to appear in the press and public here." Versailles was no longer opposed without reservations and the view that the revision meant war was beginning to be accepted. Soviet relations with France and Poland had improved markedly and were having their effect on Soviet-German relations. The common policy pursued in disarmament questions had been so much reversed that Izvestia's correspondent, according to this report, had completely falsified the German delegation's attitude on the question of the definition of "aggressor." As regards the hitherto highly important military collaboration, Dirksen now reported that "the adverse and tricky attitude on various questions of military policy is to be regarded as an extremely significant further touch."⁴⁵

The Soviet reaction to the new Nazi leadership in Germany has so far been treated in isolation but the full ramifications for the Soviet foreign policy

44. Izvestia, May 6, 1933.

45. German Ambassador, Dirksen, to the Foreign Ministry, May 5, 1933.
German Docs, pp. 388-389.

as a whole can only be seen in the context of the general European reaction to these events. Before Hitler entered the Chancellorship, resurgent German nationalism had convinced France and Poland of the necessity for reinsurance and directed their attention, even if somewhat reluctantly, towards Russia. The same motive produced a positive response from the USSR. It is not surprising that the emergence of the most extreme nationalist party's leader as German Chancellor in January 1933 induced these states to travel further on the already chosen course.

2. Polish-Soviet relations under the Nazi threat.

If Mein Kampf's message had been ill-received in Moscow, it certainly was no more welcome in Warsaw. Any German Government which opposed the Versailles territorial settlement was a threat to Poland but a Nazi one was the most repugnant. Even before Hitler's political elevation Soviet-Polish relations, following the ratification of the non-aggression pact in November 1932, had further improved, partly as a response, on the Polish side, to a desire for better economic relations but largely as a result of Poland's growing fears concerning Germany. After January 1933, tension increased on the Polish-German frontier and this at a time when Poland was becoming more uncertain as to its French ally's reliability. It was essential to secure at least one frontier. In Germany a virulent nationalist and avowed anti-Slav had become Chancellor; with the Soviet Union a non-aggression pact had just been ratified and greeted warmly in Moscow. Poland's choice seemed obvious. During a Sejm debate in January most of the Polish deputies agreed that the pacification of Poland's eastern frontier was the best possible answer to the potential German danger in the west. ⁴⁶ Beck outlined Poland's policy towards the USSR as being the strict application of the principles embodied in the non-aggression pact and the lasting improvement of relations between the two states whilst simultaneously maintaining a wariness as concerns Russia's political schemes which

⁴⁶. Budurowicz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p.26.

⁴⁷. Beck, Final Report, p.33.

could complicate Poland's situation.⁴⁷ Poland was anxious to consolidate its newly-improved relations with Russia but its distrust cultivated over centuries could not be assuaged by one treaty.

The Soviet Government also expressed a readiness to reciprocate, based on the German and Japanese threats though again, its trust of the not-too-long since christened "vanguard of imperialist anti-Soviet intervention" was not absolute.⁴⁸ Litvinov expressed the hope to Lukasiewicz, the new Polish Minister in Moscow, that the rapprochement between their countries would be further advanced and that the USSR would take a firm line for the further strengthening of relations with Poland.⁴⁹ Of course, the Soviets were careful not to exaggerate their own difficulties with Germany. Litvinov, in a later conversation with the Polish Minister, hastily assured him that relations with Germany were unchanged despite the newspaper polemic, though he did concede that his Government could not ignore the well-known positions and frames of mind of certain of that country's new leaders. He refused to admit any deterioration of relations with Germany, merely stating that they would "in no way hinder our further rapprochement with France and Poland." The USSR was trying to remove "those small splinters" which had remained for so long in Soviet-Polish relations so as to make possible an unimpeded realisation of the intentions which lay at the basis

47. Beck, Final Report, p.33.

48. Dirksen reported that Polish support for the Soviet Government was of vital importance in a period of growing Soviet-Japanese tension. Ambassador Dirksen to the German Foreign Ministry, May 5, 1933. German Docs, p.388. Although he presumably sought to minimise the anti-German content of the Polish-Soviet rapprochement, his observation was correct. Despite the resumption of diplomatic relations between the USSR and China on December 12, 1932, by the end of that year the Soviet position in the Far East had and specifically its relations with Japan showed few signs of improving. In early 1933, in an attempt to reduce friction, the Soviet Government decided to negotiate the sale of the CBR to Japan, but this was to prove a complex task, only being concluded in March 1935.

49. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Lukasiewicz, January 29, 1933. DVP Vol.16, p.67. Patek completed his term as Polish Minister in Moscow on December 15, 1932 to take up his appointment as Polish Ambassador in the United States.

of the non-aggression pact.⁵⁰ A certain improvement did indeed occur in Soviet-Polish relations in the spring of 1933. In March a Soviet art exhibition was held in Warsaw and in April Miedziński, editor of the "Gazeta Polska" and a prominent Polish figure, visited Moscow with Pilsudski's blessing for informal talks with the Soviet leadership.⁵¹

Despite this relaxation of tension, however, the extent of any detente must be measured cautiously. Mutual distrust still remained; the two countries had been inveterate enemies since Poland had gained its independence from the shattered Russian empire and had attacked the fledgling Soviet state in 1920. Both countries seemed more intent on parading their superficial rapprochement before the German Government than on developing a genuine friendship which perhaps was impossible for the rival neighbours, in spite of the German threat. Their non-aggression pact had real significance in that it strengthened their bargaining power with third states and to an extent increased their security. Yet future events in the thirties were to demonstrate its basic shallowness. During 1933, however, both Governments were anxious to stress their improved relations. The Russians, whilst recognising Poland's increased desire for a rapprochement in the face of Hitler's triumph in Germany and the offensive of the revisionist elements in Europe, discerned in addition a Polish desire to exaggerate before the outside world the improvement of Polish-Soviet relations, even encouraging rumours concerning the formation of a united front against Hitler. They were quite prepared to accede to this Polish deception since "it does not contradict our interests and can provide a highly useful influence on ~~the~~

50. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the Polish Minister in the USSR, Lukasiewicz, March 23, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 182-183. It is interesting to note Litvinov's prognosis of future German-Polish relations. He thought that Hitler would probably seek victories in the direction of Danzig or Austria and posited that Poland probably would not oppose an anschluss because this would attract German attention away from the east. Ibid.

51. Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p. 27.

the German Government's policy."⁵². To this end, the Soviet Government attempted to accommodate Polish proposals when possible on all current questions and not only to strengthen relations with that country but to parade this improvement before the world.⁵³.

This admission throws interesting light on the intentions of the Soviet Government. Its basic foreign policy goal was the passive one of increasing its security in the face of a hostile environment, hostile not only because of the ideological prism through which the actions of the capitalist states were perceived in Moscow, but imminently so in the form of the Japanese threat in the east and the potential German threat in the west. To achieve security it sought to keep all diplomatic doors open rather than forming "conventional" alliances. Whilst it encouraged Poland's exaggeration of the Polish-Soviet rapprochement as a means of demonstrating to its potential enemies the strengthened Soviet diplomatic position it also hoped in this way to produce a response in Germany. If Berlin saw Poland and Russia drawing closer together, might it not be more anxious once more to court Soviet favour? Whilst the German Foreign Ministry personnel may have reacted in this way, as was mentioned above Hitler did not necessarily draw the same conclusions. In fact, as hindsight reveals, he favoured initially an agreement with Poland rather than Russia. Poland's leader also was not beyond playing such a two-sided game. As a part of his pro-Soviet policy, Pilsudski received the Soviet Ambassador in a private audience on May 1. Stomonyakov saw this as being evidence of Poland's desire to show to the world its new friendship with Russia but Budurowicz finds it significant

52. Letter from a member of the Collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov, to the Soviet Minister in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko, April 4, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 218-219. The Russians only refused to support Polish rumours concerning any special arrangement between the USSR and Poland over the Baltic states and directed against Germany since this would further Polish aspirations with regard to a Polish-Baltic bloc. Ibid., p. 219.

53. Letter from a Member of the Collegium of the NKD, Stomonyakov, to the Soviet Minister in Poland, Antonov-Ovseenko, April 19, 1933. Ibid., pps. 252-253. In this letter Stomonyakov noted the probability that the Poles would exaggerate the significance of an intended visit to Warsaw by a Soviet economic delegation (which arrived in Warsaw on May 1) which, of course, the Russians must not hinder, "its effect in Germany being especially useful".

that this reception occurred on the eve of the Polish Minister's interview with Hitler and thinks it probable that this friendly gesture towards Russia was calculated to impress Berlin rather than Moscow.^{54.}

Whatever the motives behind these subtle diplomatic manoeuvres, however, it remains true that Soviet-Polish relations were improving. The increasingly aggravated Polish-German relations, whilst they might have prompted a long-shot by Warsaw to reverse their direction by hints directed at Berlin, certainly also stimulated the rapprochement with Moscow which the latter encouraged. Even if the Soviet Government was using this rapprochement in part to pressure Germany back into the Rapallo partnership, this in itself is evidence of both a better Soviet relationship with Poland and a much worsened one with Germany. According to the German Ambassador in Moscow, worsening relations with Germany had prompted some Polish "private individuals" to approach Antonov-Ovscenko so as to find out the Soviet attitude in the event of a Polish-German war.^{55.} The German Minister in Warsaw thought that everything indicated a Polish resolution to exploit actively the opportunities resulting from any deterioration in Soviet-German relations.^{56.} Dirksen noted Radek's proposed trip to that part of Poland received from Germany at Versailles, the importance of which lay "not only in ~~fact~~ the fact that a man of Radek's literary stature inclines to the Polish thesis, but rather indirectly in the fact that the political world might and would have to infer from these circumstances a complete devaluation of the political relations between Germany and the Soviet Union."^{57.} Poland had always been the litmus test of Soviet-German relations. The very *raison d'etre* of Germany's eastern policy had been an overwhelming desire to prepare for the return of its territories seized by Poland under the

54. Budurowycz, Polish-Soviet Relations, p.28, footnote 9. Hitler mentioned to Wisocki, the Polish Minister, at this interview on May 2 their countries' common danger from the Soviet Union and pointed out their community of interests. S. Mackiewicz, Colonel Beck and His Policy (London 1944), p.17.

55. Ambassador Dirksen to the German Foreign Ministry, APRIL 29, 1933. German Docs, p.364.

56. The German Minister in Poland to the German Foreign Ministry, March 8, 1933. Ibid., p.127.

57. Ambassador Dirksen to Director Meyer, May 2, 1933. Ibid., p.373.

Versailles treaty by securing a neutral, if not an allied, Russia. That Moscow was now linked to Warsaw by a non-aggression pact whilst its relations with Berlin were becoming unrecognisable even when compared with the days of Bruning's Chancellorship was a clear pointer to the changing diplomatic map of the European continent and within it, Russia's own still-germinating new foreign policy.

3. The Franco-Soviet pact is ratified.

France, the most powerful of the European continental states after the peace settlement in 1918, naturally was not a mere observer of these diplomatic re-shufflings which were in the process of crystallisation. More hesitantly than Poland and against greater internal opposition, the French Government had faced the reality of Germany's resurgent clamour by signing its negotiated non-aggression pact with the USSR in November 1932. It still refused to take the final plunge of ratification, however, postponing such a course until a similar agreement had been concluded between Russia and Rumania. The elevation of the Nazi leader to the highest position in Germany had no less an effect in Paris than it did in Warsaw or Moscow. The sedate pace of the Franco-Soviet rapprochement now was stimulated by an external injection whose effect, especially on the hitherto ambivalent French society, was significant. Paul-Boncour, the new French Foreign Minister,⁵⁸ has stated that the task was now clear; to fortify existing alliances and to seek new ones. To this end, it appeared necessary to conclude an alliance with Russia so that Poland and Rumania would not feel themselves menaced from the rear if they united with France in a concerted action.⁵⁹

The first move in any further Franco-Soviet rapprochement was the ratification of the non-aggression pact. Steps in this direction were already underway

58. In the Daladier Government, appointed January 31, 1933.

59. J. Paul-Boncour, Entre deux guerres; Souvenirs sur la 11^e Republique, Vol. 2, Les Lendemains de la victoire (New York 1946), p. 361. It is interesting to note that at a time of great internal upheavals in the USSR many eminent French leaders placed more importance on the assurance of Soviet neutrality in any future war with Germany than on actual Soviet military help, the Soviet armed forces being rated fairly poorly.

before the collapse of the Schleicher Government. On January 17, Pierre Cot,
Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
 the then French ~~Foreign Minister~~, promised Dovgalevsky to press the question
Paul-
 of ratification at the parliamentary commission on foreign affairs. Boncour
 had also made the same promise and hoped that it could take place the follow-
 ing week if the commission did not oppose the method of ratification by pres-
 idential decree; otherwise he would introduce a bill into parliament to achieve
 this end.⁶⁰ A presidential decree had the advantage of speed whilst ratifica-
 tion by parliament had the advantage of greater political significance. In
 fact, ratification did not occur as quickly as *Paul-* Boncour had hoped but on February
 6 he informed Litvinov in Geneva that the cabinet as well as the Palace of
 Deputies had decided to propose this step and that it could be expected at the
 end of the week.⁶¹ Herriot, now president of the chamber's commission on
 foreign affairs, expressed to that body the great significance which he gave
 to the rapprochement of French and Soviet democracy for the struggle with
 fascism, adding that obstacles should not be put in the way of ratification
 by presidential decree although he would prefer it by parliamentary means. He
 also announced the forthcoming exchange of military attaches, an act of some
 significance.⁶²

On February 11 the French President ratified the Franco-Soviet non-
 aggression pact, the Soviet Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee
 following suit three days later and ratification instruments were exchanged
 on February 15, 1933. Considering the long drawn out negotiations which had
 begun in the spring of 1931 the ratification once decided upon was completed
 relatively quickly; the international situation had changed in the last two
 years. Izvestiia greeted this act as the completion of a whole episode in the
 development of Franco-Soviet relations and of great significance.⁶³ Pravda

60. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD,
 January 19, 1933. *DVP Vol. 16*, p. 39.

61. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD,
 February 6, 1933. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

62. Telegram from the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in France, Rozenberg, to the NKD,
 February 9, 1933. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

63. Izvestiia, February 18, 1933.

noted that worsening relations with Germany and the United States had compelled France to evaluate the role and significance of the great and powerful USSR in international relations.^{64.}

Like Poland, under the pressure of a revisionist Germany, France had abandoned its ally Rumania and gone ahead with the activation of its pact with Russia, the old French ally, against Germany. The very fact that the pact had eventually been ratified after so much delay was a vital indication of the changes which were taking place in the European balance of power. Of course, the Soviet Union had long expressed its desire to maintain good relations with all states, but no government understood better than the one in Moscow the impossibility of fulfilling this aim, given the contradictions which it so vividly perceived amongst the capitalist states. The basic split between the status quo supporters of the Versailles system and its revisionist opponents allowed no room for a third state wishing to maintain amicable relations with both groups. France and Germany epitomised these two European camps. The Soviet Union, if reluctantly, had to choose between them. In its early history such a choice had been obviated by France's overt hostility. Germany, weak itself, was only too anxious to secure diplomatic support from the despised communist government. But the changes within Germany compelled France to reconsider its hostility towards the USSR whilst at the same time weakening the Soviet-German ties and therefore leaving Russia more amenable to this new French attitude. The Soviet leaders realised that any approach towards France and Poland would be distrusted in Germany but their concern at the future course of the Rapallo partnership rather than the fallacious desire to be on good terms with all states, compelled them to encourage and cultivate the growing readiness of the status quo powers to court the hitherto outcast great power of Eastern Europe. This is to simplify Soviet policy slightly; as was mentioned above, the Russians maintained the hope that improved relations with Poland and France might tempt Germany back to its old policy of close collaboration with the USSR, but this hope could not have been a dominant one,

64. Pravda, February 18, 1933.

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it offering only a fairly remote chance of success. The Soviet Government was not so short-sighted as to abandon deliberately its options on Germany in so far as these could be retained at the same time as a new series of non-aggression pacts were concluded. But that these pacts were required as insurance against the potential threat from the Third Reich on its western frontier and the real Japanese threat in the east there could be no doubt. German susceptibilities were not allowed to prejudice Russian diplomatic efforts in Warsaw and Paris. The German Ambassador himself understood the dominant role which his country had played in the recent events. He noted the reciprocal effect of German-French and German-Soviet relations which had already so influenced the course of Franco-Soviet pact negotiations and which now had apparently also had a decisive effect on the recent ratification, it occurring "at a moment of increased tension in German-French relations and growing instability in German-Soviet relations." Dirksen considered that his analysis made in November 1928 still applied, that is, French economic and political concessions would tempt the Soviet Government but only if it were no longer sure of Germany since collaboration with Germany was the most logical and coveted combination for the USSR. He thought that recently the trend within Russia had been swinging unmistakably towards France and that further developments would be decisively influenced by the Soviet judgement of Germany's future attitude. Dirksen ended his report by stressing the vital importance for Germany of its immediate ratification of the Extension protocol, though he added that its value would have been greater had it occurred before the French pact's ratification.⁶⁵ As was noted above, by the time Germany played its ratification card the diplomatic game was too far advanced; it is possible that Hitler never placed much reliance on it anyway.

The German Ambassador again took up this theme in conversation with Litvinov some weeks later. He pointed out that the German Government had always understood the Soviet pact policy even though the open rapprochement with France and

65. The German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, to the German Foreign Ministry, February 20, 1933. German Docs, pps. 62-65.

Poland had caused a strain in relations, but recently doubts had arisen about Soviet intentions since it seemed as though the Soviet Union wanted to re-orientate its foreign policy in the direction of a closer rapprochement with France. Germany had always assumed that the initiative for the Franco-Soviet rapprochement had come largely from the French side but it was now apparent that "the initiative came in a large measure also from the Soviet side".⁶⁶ In reply, Litvinov, whilst assuring Dirksen that his apparent support of France at the Disarmament Conference was by no means as real as the French press had claimed, did not conceal his Government's anxieties in regard to the continuance of Germany's policy towards Russia, which, he said, were "very grave and well-founded." Dirksen summarised the Commissar's concluding statements as follows:

The Soviet Government had no desire to change its foreign policy and especially its relations to Germany. But it considered a German-French alliance as contrary to its interests and would seek to prevent it. But while the Soviet Government had sought to prevent a German-French alliance in the past by bringing influence to bear on the German side, it would now endeavour to attain the same objective through closer relations with France.

Litvinov, in reply to further probing, stated that "the Soviet Government would never enter into any alliance with France and in any way confirm the Treaty of Versailles; it would merely seek to develop its relations with France." Dirksen summarised his observations with the comment, "the development of Soviet-French relations will be correlated with that of German-Soviet relations; the greater the cooling toward Germany, the greater the disposition to cordiality toward France."⁶⁷

4. A new Soviet foreign policy orientation.

Though the Soviets vehemently denied that their foreign policy had undergone any new orientation, it is difficult to support this contention. Germany was no longer Russia's major supporter in international society but increasingly

66. A similar statement was made by Dirksen to Krestinsky on February 27. See above, pps. 227-228.

67. Ambassador Dirksen to the German Foreign Ministry, March 11, 1933. German Docs, pps. 141-145.

its enemy. France and Poland, the most recalcitrant of the imperialist powers, were signatories of non-aggression pacts with the USSR directed largely against the threat of German aggression. In most spheres of international relations the Soviet position was undergoing a re-assessment. Throughout the Preparatory Disarmament Commission and the actual Disarmament Conference the Soviet delegation had steadfastly opposed all French schemes for disarmament and especially the recent concept of an international force under the control of the League of Nations. The basic French contention that security must precede disarmament had received no support from Moscow. This remained the case although in 1932 the first signs of a weakening of Soviet-German collaboration at Geneva could be discerned.⁶⁸

A new French plan was put before the assembled delegates in 1933 which again envisaged an international force providing the security in which disarmament alone could be undertaken. On February 6, Litvinov, on behalf of the Soviet delegation, presented his views on this project. The French scheme, he said, meant once again putting the question of disarmament into the background and in fact was no advancement on the position reached five years previously. The Soviet delegation had always been convinced and remained so, that the best, if not the only, guarantee of security for all states was total disarmament or at least the maximum possible in the shortest time. After these preliminaries, however, his speech then strikingly departed from its predictable course:

But apparently there is no escape from this problem (of security), if only because it has been raised by a great and powerful state whose representatives have declared that until it is solved they cannot undertake any obligations whatsoever with regard to the reduction of armaments. If, therefore, we want to advance and not just to go round and round we shall have to consider with all seriousness the French proposals and make up our minds whether there is any possibility of reaching an international agreement based upon these and other proposals which may be made on security by other delegations, proceeding subsequently to questions of disarmament, or whether such an agreement will prove impossible.

Litvinov also suggested a definition of "aggressor" which, he insisted, was "not meant to compete with or be a substitute for the French proposals but is their logical extension."⁶⁹

68. See above, pps. 206-208.

69. Speech of the Chairman of the Soviet Delegation, Litvinov, February 6, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, pps. 73-83.

This Soviet statement represented a dramatic change from the earlier pro-German to a pro-French stance and was recognised as such. Whilst the French delegate, Paul-Boncour, thanked Litvinov for his speech,⁷⁰ the German response was far from enthusiastic. Neurath, for example, noted the unusually friendly reception which Litvinov's Geneva statements had received in the French press and considered that they reflected more far-reaching political intentions than the subject of disarmament.⁷¹ Litvinov himself could have held few illusions as to the probable German response to his speech and indeed, he noted that Nadolny, the German delegate, had expressed satisfaction which "hardly was sincere."⁷² Such a change of tactics by the Soviet Union could not have been undertaken purely on technical grounds and undoubtedly had political aims, most probably a demonstration to the French Government of Soviet support on the eve of the French ratification of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact.⁷³ Yet Litvinov valiently attempted to keep all his irons in the fire. In conversation with the German Foreign Minister, he assured him that his Government occupied the same position as the German Government on the majority of disarmament questions. He excused his speech by claiming that it was better to discuss and eventually reject the French security plan so as to advance matters rather than to argue for months with France, expressing surprise that the German tactics were apparently aimed at prolonging the conference's work when Germany ought to be interested in the most rapid exposure of the French position. Litvinov, perhaps somewhat stretching von Neurath's gullibility, would only admit that "of course, because of the changed relations with France, the tone of my speeches was more courteous and friendly than in the Preparatory

70. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, February 6, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, p. 84.

71. German Foreign Minister Neurath to the Embassy in the USSR, February 22, 1933. German Docs, p. 71.

72. Telegram from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the NKD, February 6, 1933. DVP Vol. 16, p. 84.

73. As Scott points out, it is unlikely that the speech was a reaction to Hitler, it being made so shortly after the latter's appointment as Chancellor, but it was still a definite pro-French move. Scott, Alliance Against Hitler, p. 108, footnote 27.

Commission."⁷⁴ There could be little doubt that this significant Soviet shift of emphasis as regards the question of disarmament was both a cause and a consequence of the new orientation which Russian foreign policy was experiencing. At the end of April, Pravda carried a headline which would have seemed astounding only a few months earlier; "Isolation of German delegation."⁷⁵

In May Litvinov further developed this new Soviet policy by suggesting that the Disarmament Conference be transformed into a permanent and regularly assembling conference of peace which would work out and perfect measures for strengthening security and should afford aid "whether such be moral, economic, financial or otherwise" to threatened states. More surprisingly, Litvinov's comments on the League of Nations, hitherto the detested instrument of world imperialism, were almost unrecognisable. His proposed conference was to continue as an organ of the League with which it would maintain the closest contact. The Soviet Government was prepared to make its contribution to measures aimed at safeguarding universal peace^{*} and the co-operation of the Soviet Government in an international cause, or with any international organisation, brought with it the tremendous moral force of an increasingly powerful state of 170 millions."⁷⁶

This more favourable response to the League of Nations and international co-operation in general was accompanied by an equally startling change as regard^s the Soviet attitude towards the Versailles settlement and the question of the status quo versus revisionism as a whole. The Soviet Government had steadfastly criticised the Versailles treaty and sided with the defeated powers, especially Germany, against the victors who had imposed this invidious instrument as a means of furthering their imperialist plans. In the twenties such a Soviet policy had been advantageous both as regards improving relations with the Weimar Republic and as a propaganda weapon. Any revision had seemed

74. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov and the German Foreign Minister, Neurath, March 1, 1933. DVF Vol. 16, pps. 134-135.

75. Pravda, April 30, 1933.

76. Litvinov to the Disarmament Conference, May 29, 1933. Quoted in D.I. Buzinkai, "Soviet-League Relations, 1919-1939: A Survey and Analysis". New York University, Ph.D. thesis, 1964, pps. 144-145.

unlikely and in any case no threat to the USSR whereas the opportunity this policy afforded for irritating the contradictions between the capitalist powers, of which the split between victors and vanquished was the most obvious, could not be missed. In recent months, under the strain of deteriorating relations with Germany and the past negotiations with France and Poland, the two major protagonists of the Versailles treaty, the Soviet line had somewhat mellowed and whilst Versailles was not praised as such, the call for its revision became somewhat muted. The succession of a National-Socialist Government to power in Germany, as well as the continued improvement of relations with France and Poland, cast doubt on the wisdom of Russia maintaining any policy of support for treaty revision now that it seemed a much more real possibility. Was it wise to support revision when Germany, the major beneficiary, had as its leader a man who had published extreme claims for territorial seizures in eastern Europe? A more rational policy might well be to join the ranks of the status quo powers. After all, the Soviet Union itself had no immediate expansionary aims; it would be lunacy to support Hitler's schemes in the face of French opposition when this success could mean disaster for Russia. The reversal of policy which this new appreciation of the changed international situation demanded caused little trouble for the Government in Moscow, experienced in the art of contradicting yesterday's statements by today's. That the Soviet Government was becoming more sensitive to the instability and war danger resulting from any treaty revision was given tangible expression by an editorial in *Izvestia*. It reflected in a new Soviet concern at the growing demand for the revision of the Versailles treaty and a realisation that Japanese aggression in Manchuria threatened the Washington treaty.⁷⁷ The real volte face, however, was left to Karl Radok's pen. Whilst he willingly conceded that the Versailles peace could not provide a basis for the development of peoples nor even for the development of capitalism, he argued that the peace which would replace Versailles as a result of a victory by another imperialist coalition would be "a world-wide prison, shackling the suffering popular masses." Revision was

77. *Izvestia*, March 30, 1933.

simply another name for a new world war and therefore it was not surprising that one of the basic demands of the revisionists was the demand for the right to those arms which the Versailles treaty denied them; "the mere fact that the revision of the treaty is bound up with the victory of fascism shows how little this revision could be considered in the national interests of the masses of the nations designated by the fascists as inferior." Whilst the international proletariat continued to be an enemy of Versailles, it opposed its revision by those imperialist powers which aspired to re-divide the world amid the conflagration of a new imperialist war. If this was not a sufficiently clear statement of the Soviet Government's response to the new Germany, Radek became even more explicit:

This programme of seeking the revision of the Versailles treaty on the path of re-establishing the still-worse Brest peace is the foreign policy programme of German fascism... (But) the times of Brest have long since past and any attempt to "revise" the Versailles treaty at the expense of the USSR would call into question the very existence of those capitalist powers which tried to realise such a programme.⁷⁸

A second article by Radek some months later repeated this view:

The Versailles treaty cannot be a basis for good relations between peoples, but the peace which would be foisted upon humanity by victorious fascist vikings would undoubtedly be still worse than the situation which exists at present.⁷⁹

This new policy inevitably further weakened relations with Germany and strengthened them with France and Poland.⁸⁰ Dirksen had ended his depressing report on the ratification of the Extension protocol with a plea for continued Soviet-German collaboration since although the USSR, in the throes of collectivisation and industrialisation, was not a powerful factor at present, its importance for Germany had always laid and would continue to lay in its potential strength; "even to-day, therefore, for Germany the same reasons which in 1922 led to the conclusion of the Rapallo Treaty, and in 1926 to the conclusion of the Berlin Treaty, are alive and operative."⁸¹ On May 14, he admitted,

78. *Pravda*, May 10, 1933.

79. *Izvestia*, August 9, 1933.

80. Dirksen called Radek's article of May 10 "a malicious article very unfavourable to Germany and her demands for revision." The Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, to the Foreign Ministry, May 14, 1933. *German Docs*, p.419.

81. Ambassador Dirksen to the Foreign Ministry, May 5, 1933. *Ibid.*, p.389.

with regret, that the Soviet press had not responded to the positive position of the entire German press toward the Soviet Union on the occasion of the extension of the Berlin treaty and noted the "danger of a real, fundamental, far-reaching estrangement as a result of this attitude of the Soviet Government." In conversation with Krestinsky he had commented on the Soviet attitude towards the Versailles treaty and disarmament, both of which were unfavourable towards Germany; even military relations, hitherto intact despite previous political crises, now seemed to be suffering from "a not entirely friendly reserve on the Soviet side."⁸²

Soviet-German military relations had indeed maintained their co-operative character throughout the twenties and early thirties despite the fluctuations in political relations.⁸³ For the Germans, Russia continued to provide a testing ground for men and materials, for the Russians the Reichswehr's more modern and efficient methods proved an invaluable source of information. Yet the Soviet-non-aggression pacts in Europe, especially the Polish one, could not but exert a negative influence on this collaboration; nor could the advent of the Nazi Government in Germany. By May 1933, the German military attache in Russia, Colonel Hartmann, was reporting that although there was a serious and sincere willingness to deepen military co-operation on the part of the highest-placed Russians, this line could only be followed if the general political disturbances were liquidated. In the past military collaboration had often contributed greatly to the smoothing over of political unevenness elsewhere; in his opinion this was no longer the case.⁸⁴ On June 5, Dirksen doubted whether the Soviet Government wanted to continue military collaboration.⁸⁵ By the end of June

82. The German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, to the German Foreign Ministry, May 14, 1933. German Docs. pps. 418-420.

83. Brickson says that in 1931 "the military collaboration drove ahead steadily through the troubled political and diplomatic waters." Brickson, The Soviet High Command, p. 333. See also G.H. Stein, "Russo-German Military Collaboration: The Last Phase, 1933," Political Science Quarterly N.1, March 1962, pps. 54-71.

84. The German Military Attache in the USSR to the Reichswehr Ministry, May 16, 1933. German Docs. p. 467.

85. The German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen to the German Foreign Minister, Neurath, June 5, 1933. Ibid., p. 520.

the formerly "excellent" military relations, already deteriorating, had now "proceeded further toward dissolution", when the Russians released themselves still more plainly from the previous form of their joint military co-operation.⁸⁶ Military collaboration ceased in the summer of 1933. On August 24 the German Charge d'Affaires in Moscow confirmed that "the chapter of (military) co-operation on the basis of strong mutual confidence must be regarded as closed."⁸⁷

The Soviet Government could hardly maintain military collaboration with a country which increasingly appeared in the role of a potential aggressor. The rumours which reached Moscow concerning the Papen-Herriot talks of June 1932 in which the former offered France a military entente could hardly have reassured the Soviets as to the wisdom of supplying Germany with military information. Further, although military relations had functioned normally during bouts of political depression they could not withstand the prolonged crisis which appeared in 1933. On the German side, Hitler's readiness to flout the Versailles restrictions on armaments reduced the need for secret training grounds and construction sites in Russia.

Had Soviet foreign policy undergone a re-orientation? Despite the conclusion of non-aggression pacts with the western border states in France, the sharp deterioration of relations with Germany and the termination of its long-standing military collaboration, the new Soviet position vis-a-vis the Versailles treaty and disarmament, a certain caution must be exercised in categorising this foreign policy. Undoubtedly the pacts with France and Poland in particular were of great significance for Russian foreign policy when taken together with the ending of the Rapallo partnership. Yet this should not be interpreted as representing a complete transference of allegiance by the Soviet Government. Although relations with both France and Poland had greatly improved and Soviet-Polish relations were never better than in 1933, distrust still existed. Military attaches had been exchanged between France and the USSR in

86. The German Military Attache in the USSR to the German Foreign Ministry, June 28, 1933. German Docs, p.609.

87. Memorandum by the German Charge d'Affaires in the USSR, August 24, 1933. Ibid., p.768.

April and May; French and Polish officers began to arrive in Russia on the heels of the departing Reichswehr officers. Erickson has pointed out, however, that France did not extend its military interest so far as to consider Russia a potential military ally in any future war, being more interested in ending Soviet-German military collaboration which so threatened Poland.⁸⁸ Whilst political relations with France were progressing, the economic negotiations to which both sides attached considerable importance, with persistence resisted any settlement. No agreement could be reached on French government-backed credits without which Soviet orders could not be placed.⁸⁹ Another sphere of Franco-Soviet, as well as German-Soviet, disagreement in the summer of 1933 was provided by the Four Power Pact proposal, from which the USSR was to be excluded and therefore which it suspected of being at least passively anti-Soviet.

Soviet Russia's highly significant accomplishments on its western frontier and in Paris were offset by a natural concern at the direction in which future diplomatic relations would develop.⁹⁰ Litvinov expressed this Soviet apprehension whilst discussing the Four Power Pact with Dejean. The latter had assured Litvinov that French participation in this pact would be a guarantee against any possible anti-Soviet decisions, to which the Commissar retorted that "the Soviet-French rapprochement which is projected is an expression of the policy of the parties which at present are in power in France and that it is impossible to guarantee the continuation of this policy in the event of the rightist parties coming to power."⁹¹ In Soviet eyes this instability which was inherent in the western democratic system was a great handicap to any deep collaboration. Despite the very real deterioration in Soviet-German relations the Soviet Government did not abandon Nazi Germany completely but sought to cling to the

88. Erickson, The Soviet High Command, p.365.

89. See, for example, telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, January 19, 1933. DVP Vol.16, p.40. Izvestiia, April 15, 1933. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France, Dovgalevsky, to the NKD, April 12, 1933. DVP Vol.16, pps.227-228.

90. Soviet fears as regards Polish policy was soon to be justified in the Polish rapprochement with Germany. The history of the late 1930's and the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939 may be seen in the context of continuing Franco-Soviet mutual distrust.

91. Note of a conversation between the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, and the French Ambassador in the USSR, Dejean, April 10, 1933. Ibid., pps.225-226.

shreds of the Rapallo policy in so far as Germany's ruler and its own French policy permitted. Krestinsky assured Dirksen that "the greater and more influential portion of the Soviet political public and the Soviet Government itself ...desired a continuation of the present positive policy with respect to Germany." Russia was still fighting the Versailles treaty and had not turned to France in place of Germany.⁹² On August 4, Molotov told Dirksen that further relations with Germany would depend exclusively on the position adopted by the latter.⁹³ Such assurances, however, were more indicative of Soviet reluctance to burn a single diplomatic bridge than of any meaningful collaboration. By the summer of 1933 Soviet-German relations were unrecognisable from those of the middle twenties.

In his speech to the Central Executive Committee on the previous year's foreign policy, Litvinov in December 1933 said, "if it is possible to speak of diplomatic eras, then we are now without doubt standing at the junction of two eras."⁹⁴ Soviet foreign policy, tentatively, only partially by its own inclinations, was entering on a new course which was to lead to membership of the League of Nations, a mutual assistance pact with France, the era of collective security and popular fronts. Any halting place in a historical study inevitably is to a greater or lesser degree arbitrary. The summer of 1933 did not witness the end of this Soviet foreign policy development. In the next few years it was to progress much further towards the west European states whilst its detente with Poland was to be shattered. The history of the non-aggression pact also was not quite completed with the ratification of the Franco-Soviet pact. In September 1933 such a pact was concluded with Italy and tentative talks took place in that year on the theme of a Soviet-Czech pact but with no results. Nevertheless, by early 1933 there could be no doubt that Soviet foreign policy had entered on a new course.

92. Ambassador Dirksen to the German Foreign Minister, Neurath, June 5, 1933. German Docs, p.522. Krestinsky himself was pro-German.

93. Note of a conversation between Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, and the German Ambassador in the USSR, Dirksen, August 4, 1933. DVP Vol.16, p.480.

94. The Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, to the CEC, December 29, 1933. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol.3, (London 1953)p.48.

Conclusion.

From its inception the Soviet state was faced with one overwhelmingly important foreign policy consideration, the vital need to bolster its security against foreign intervention. Security measures the absence of external threats to acquired values and whilst all states are concerned with security, nevertheless it is a value of which a state can have more or less and which it can desire to have in a greater or lesser degree, as Arnold Wolfers rightly argues.¹ It also has an objective and a subjective aspect. Objectively the new Russian state was under great threat and its security level very low. Initially the advancing German troops threatened; after the Brest-Litovsk peace allied intervention for a time became a reality, then Poland launched its armies eastward. The termination of fighting on Russian soil did not signify the abandonment of anti-Soviet sentiments in the capitalist world which surrounded the Soviet island; influential political and military leaders openly discussed the prospects of an anti-Soviet intervention. This history of intervention and ample evidence of continuing hostility in the outside world would have provided any leadership in Moscow with concern for the future of its state. When this leadership happened to function in an ideological environment in which all capitalist states were perceived as being its deadly enemies, restrained only by their contradictions from mounting a holocaust against the Bolshevik strong-hold, the subjective aspect of security, that is the absence of fear that its acquired values would be attacked, was inevitably even lower than the objective situation warranted.

If security was by necessity to be the major objective of Soviet foreign policy, it had a wide range of instruments by which to achieve it. Initially great hopes had been centred on international communism and its organisational personification, the Comintern. If world capitalism could be smashed by the actions of the world proletariat, aided by Soviet power, Russia then would

1. A. Wolfers, Discord and Collaboration (Baltimore 1962), p.150.

become merely one part of a socialist globe. States would no longer exist; consequently the concept of security along with foreign policy itself would be banished from all but the historians' vocabulary. Such illusions did not long persist, at least in the highest echelons of the Soviet Government and by the early twenties, following the Comintern's failures, it was realised that at least for the foreseeable future, the Soviet state would have to co-exist in an international system dominated by imperialist states. If Soviet Russia was to survive then diplomacy must be utilised, even by revolutionaries. Further, if the diplomatic game was to be played then at least some of its rules had to be observed. The Narkomindel quickly adjusted to the demands of traditional diplomacy. Genuine contradictions existed between the capitalist states which Marxist ideology was well equipped to detect and exploit; diplomatic bargaining soon reaped rich rewards to the weak state badly in need of friends.

Security being their over-riding concern, it was in this sphere that the Soviet diplomats produced an original addition to the traditional diplomatic tools. It was perceived that if the Soviet frontiers were to be given some protection against hostile incursions, if the great powers of the world were to be enticed from their anti-Soviet schemes, then some instrument must be employed to register and define these countries' relations with the USSR. The traditional method of giving tangible form to a diplomatic understanding was the alliance yet this carried connotations of aggression and capitalist conspiracy. Even within bourgeois societies the reaction against the First World War had included a certain distrust of the traditional alliance which was seen as having been a contributor to that shattering upheaval. The Bolsheviks were anxious to demonstrate their peace-lovingness by concluding treaties which would merely bind the signatories to non-aggression one against the other and to neutrality in the event of either being involved in a war with a third state. For this purpose the non-aggression pact was admirable; its very title was enough to demonstrate the Soviet rejection of war and its desire to live in

peace with all states. The Soviet state was too weak and beset by internal problems to consider external military adventures, certainly after its early failure in Poland and therefore had no need for alliances whereby the parties undertook to prepare for any aggressive designs. The major weakness of the non-aggression pact was the absence of any defensive commitment in case of an attack by third parties other than neutrality but it is unlikely that any worthwhile guarantee would have been given to the pariah communist states. In any case, the Soviet plan was to secure undertakings of non-aggression from all its neighbours thus overcoming this danger. Further, whilst the Soviet leaders were compelled to accept the validity of a capitalist state's signature to a diplomatic document without which relations with the outside world could not have been consolidated, its faith in such documents was limited and any agreement which promised more than simple non-aggression and neutrality was probably considered of minimal value. The non-aggression pact as developed by the USSR had two further characteristics. Firstly, its terms were extended beyond the narrow confines which its title suggested to include articles relating to propaganda, economic non-aggression, etc. as suited the interests of the particular states involved, making the pact of greater benefit to the signatories. Secondly, the Russians insisted that their pacts must be bilateral and not multilateral so as to avoid an over-involvement in the intrigues of capitalist states and to maximise their influence in any agreement which would have been diluted with the addition of third states.

From the middle twenties the non-aggression pact became a prominent factor in Soviet diplomacy but its early successes were limited. While it achieved its aims along the southern border and with one great power, Germany, itself an outcast from international society and to which Soviet friendship could offer special advantages, it failed to consolidate either its western or eastern frontier or to attract any other great power into such a pact. This was despite considerable Russian effort in this direction; the USSR was willing to negotiate non-aggression pacts with all states so long as the terms

were reasonable; it was the reluctance of the capitalist states to deal with Bolshevik Russia which proved the obstacle, a reluctance based on real ideological and historical fears of their giant neighbour.

The era of the Soviet non-aggression pact really emerged in the early 1930's. In the course of two years five such pacts were successfully negotiated, two of them with states of considerable stature in the international system, hitherto deadly enemies of the USSR, France and Poland. Furthermore, this series of pacts marked a more fundamental shift in the whole Soviet foreign policy orientation, in part a cause of the pacts, in part a consequence of them. Why did this change occur at this particular time? The reasons are various and related. At the end of the twenties the capitalist world was plunged into economic chaos by the world economic depression. The international climate darkened; new threats loomed against which the pervasive fear of Bolshevism now seemed less significant. The capitalist world had a great need for economic markets at a time when the Soviet Union, itself mounting a massive industrialisation and agricultural collectivisation, was able to provide such a market. The small Baltic states, especially, found it increasingly difficult to resist the economic reality of collaboration with their eastern neighbour. Even a state such as France faced growing internal pressure to improve economic relations with the USSR which had been artificially shattered by the "anti-dumping" campaign. A second factor which aided Russia was the "domino" effect; if one large state signed a pact with the USSR then the pressure on the other associated states to follow suit was increased. Even France became influenced by Poland's example once negotiations between the latter and the USSR overtook France's own negotiations. Yet the major factor which influenced both the pact series and the new Soviet foreign policy orientation was the changes which were now taking place within the great power of central Europe, the ogre of 1914, Germany. Despite its defeat³ in 1918, the victor powers, especially those situated on the European continent, ever watched with anxiety for any signs of its resurgence. The old order remained entrenched in the Weimar Republic and was now

joined by frightening new nationalist growths, exemplified by the National-Socialist party. The world economic crisis had a disastrous effect on the German economy, unemployment mushroomed and in its wake political extremism, both of the left and right. The danger of a German rectification of the Versailles peace settlement, never accepted even by the moderate political interests within the Republic, was now greatly increased. Poland and France, the two most obvious victims of an aggressive Germany, became more and more alarmed. How could this threat be met? The Soviet Union provided one answer, or partial answer. Poland's eastern border could only be safeguarded in case of a German attack by an agreement with Russia. In addition, Russia was Germany's major "friend" in the international system. Their military collaboration was an open secret, rumours of a military alliance even circulated. If France and Poland, and in their wake the Baltic states and Rumania signed pacts with Russia, Germany would be weakened. Economic advantages would also accrue from any political settlement. Lastly, Russia itself was desirous of achieving such pacts. The answer to the Versailles powers' predicament seems so obvious that it might be thought amazing that it was only seized upon in the early thirties. Only in this hour of danger, however, could the old enmities be discarded. Only in the face of a re-awakening Germany could the Bolsheviks be dealt with on the diplomatic level. In the 1920's negotiations had broken down between France, Poland the Baltics and the USSR. In this new international environment they were to succeed.

On the surface the Soviet decision to negotiate these new non-aggression pacts which it had long desired seems an obvious one. If more undertakings of non-aggression could be solicited then Soviet security was thereby enhanced. France and Poland were perceived in Moscow as the major protagonists of an anti-Soviet intervention; Rumania had a territorial dispute with Russia on their common border. The Soviet decision was not so simple, however, because the international environment was not favourable to this Soviet desire to maintain good relations with all states. Since 1918 it had been split into at least two camps,

the victors and the vanquished from the last war. The Soviet decision-makers least of all could have been unaware of this basic capitalist contradiction, nor that it was growing as extremism and calls for the revision of Versailles developed within Germany. Indeed the very opportunity which was afforded Russia to negotiate pacts with Poland, the Baltics and France was provided by the deepening of this split. For Germany the major political motivation behind the Rapallo partnership was its effect on Poland. A Russia friendly with Germany would have to be hostile towards Poland, thus preventing the latter from concentrating all its attention on its western frontier with Germany. If Russia now negotiated non-aggression pacts with Germany's main foes, what was the use of Rapallo. The Narkomindel well understood this basic contradiction in its policy once negotiations for the new pacts were begun, a contradiction which was not really assuaged by its endeavours to reassure Germany that its foreign policy remained as before. Despite such denials, a new alignment gradually emerged.

If Russia was given the opportunity to improve relations with France and Poland it was not prepared to reject it for the sake of German susceptibilities. The very forces in Germany which were alarming the political leaders in Paris and Warsaw also alarmed them in Moscow simply because all three perceived their interests as being best served by maintaining the status quo. In the past Moscow had denied this but then there seemed no danger of it being overthrown. The growth of political instability in the Weimar Republic, however, raised doubts amongst the Soviet leadership as to the course of future events. Could the USSR rely solely on a Germany whose future seemed at best uncertain and at worst leading towards a Nazi Government. The internal upheavals within Russia left it temporarily more exposed to external attack than before. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria raised a very real threat to the long Soviet eastern frontier and convinced the Soviet Government of the need to hasten its already-begun negotiations in the west. Whilst the attempt had to be made to placate Germany, in the final analysis, if a choice had to be made, the pacts with France and the western border states were given greater priority than German

susceptibilities. Russia might still have avoided a pro-western orientation had the professional German diplomats continued to control their country's foreign policy. If Russia was drawn towards the Versailles powers, Germany might have accepted the former's reduced commitment as inevitable once Russia was given the chance to play off France against Germany. Berlin's preferential position as regards Russia had only been secured because the latter had no other options available. Now Germany would have to accept the reality of the new situation. It was the advent of a Nazi Government which prevented any such solution. Ideological hostility was early cemented by Hitler's anti-Soviet policies within Germany. German revanchist aims lay in the east and ultimately threatened the existence of the Soviet state. The events of 1939 showed that a short term agreement could surmount this underlying clash of interests but in 1933 Hitler desired no such settlement. The logic of the situation forced Russia to turn increasingly toward the Versailles powers. By the summer of 1933 the Soviets were no longer attacking the Versailles treaty, no longer attacking French disarmament plans. Military collaboration with Hitler had ended and the Rapallo partnership dissolved. The roots of these changes had formed before Hitler ever became Chancellor; they were bred by the more positive advantages which France and its allies offered to Soviet security than did the disintegrating Weimar Republic; Hitler's accession to power merely brought matters to a head.

The question must finally be raised as to whether the Soviet quest for security had achieved anything by 1933. Five more non-aggression pacts had been negotiated and only the long Japanese-threatened far eastern frontier and the south-west Rumanian frontier remained uncloaked by such pacts. Yet the old Soviet-German partnership lay in ruins and in its stead existed a growing tension. One set of "friends" had been gained but an old one lost. The Soviet diplomatic standing in international society was greater than five years previously but its level of security probably no higher. In this it was not alone, however, for the thirties' era allowed few countries to look with confidence

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towards their security: if Soviet diplomacy by 1933 had merely maintained its country's security level then it could not be judged too harshly. For success in some conditions must be measured generously and in the changing international system of that era success might well be credited to those whose efforts staved off the approaching disaster.

Appendix: A Bibliographical Note.

The major source of documentation for this thesis was provided by the current series of volumes being published by the Soviet authorities, Dokumenti vneshney politiki, which contains much valuable and hitherto unpublished material. Whilst it is inevitable that factors other than historical relevance were involved in the selection of the documents published, nevertheless their actual contents have been compared with British, French and German sources where this was possible and have passed the test of authenticity. This source has been supported by other collections of Soviet documents, British, French, German and Polish documents and the Soviet press, itself at times an illuminating source of official government information in a state where the press is so closely controlled by the central authorities.

Reference has been made to numerous secondary sources which can be divided into two categories. Firstly, the general books on Soviet foreign policy usually dealing with a long time period. They treat the period 1930-1933 in a very cursory fashion either because of lack of material, space, an under-estimation of its importance in the general trend of inter-war Soviet foreign relations or a combination of these three. Emphasis is usually preserved for the more dramatic and better known period from 1933 until 1939. Examples are L.Fischer, "Russia's Road from Peace to War"; Ulan, "Expansion and Co-existence." The much greater availability of material, Soviet and other, which has relatively recently become available has rendered such books as Beloff's, "The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia", out of date.

A second category deals with a more limited time period in greater detail but concentrates on the Soviet Union's bilateral foreign relations with one other state and in doing so fails to present an integrated picture of Soviet foreign policy. A fault of this type of book for the Soviet specialist is that frequently it places more emphasis, both bibliographically and in content, on the second state involved rather than the Soviet Union, either because

of the greater paucity of Soviet material compared with that of many other states, the major sphere of interest of the writer or an unfamiliarity with the Russian language. Soviet-German relations, at least until the end of 1932, are quite well covered from the German side in such books as Dyck's "Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia", Kochan's "Russia and the Weimar Republic." Budurowycz's "Polish-Soviet Relations" is an excellent work but only deals with pre-1933 events in outline.

Soviet authors can be found in both categories, their work being of varying quality. Contemporary books of the period in general have proved disappointing, the Stalinist era not being the most productive one for Russian history. Of more recent works, Joffe's "Vneshnyaya politika SSSR" was the most interesting but his source material was usually either available at first hand or else, if archival, of little relevance, at least in this study.

Periodicals have not proved very illuminating, current Soviet journals especially containing little on this topic. Certain 1930s publications such as "Bolshevik" and the Comintern journals proved of some value. A few journals of this period such as ^{"Mirovoe Khoziaistvo i Mirovaya Politika"} ~~"Mirovogo Khoziaistva i Mirovoy Politiki"~~ and "Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn" have not been located but it is unlikely that they would have radically altered the conclusions reached.

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