

Questia Database Project Sophie Dönszelmann

Account of events that occurred

Author's opinion

1. Genoa Conference, 1922

Snippet

"Though styled an international economic conference, Genoa was primarily a political gathering designed to reshape the postwar order, mitigate national antagonisms, reduce economic barriers, and create a durable peace. In the end, it unquestionably contributed not only to reestablishing contacts between nations but also toward sharpening differences."

"For Germany and Russia, the two outcast nations, Genoa embodied both progress and danger. Since neither could concede anything that could be represented as gains for the Allied side, the most prudent course was a negative one. The Rapallo treaty undercut Lloyd George's design for a collective agreement and, even more, for an agreement conditional on German and Russian submission to the West's commercial and political designs."

"Was there a chance Genoa could have succeeded? Probably not. The Genoa Conference demonstrated the limits of a daring diplomatic enterprise: a collective effort to revise the peace and strengthen the European order."

Generalization:

The Genoa Conference created an environment to attempt to reestablish European peace, and to stabilize the economy. However, Fink states his opinion that the conference, although its initial intentions were commendable, was a daring risk that did not pay off, as it was doomed to be unsuccessful. It did not result in fixing the damages caused by the war but instead heightened the conflicts between Germany and Russia and the victorious allies.

Reference: The Genoe Conference: European Diplomacy, 1921-1922. C. Fink. University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA. p. 303, 305, 307 (respectively)

2. Locarno Treaties, 1925

Snippet

"In its simplest, most uncomplicated form, Locarno was a contractual arrangement whereby Great Britain and Italy guaranteed the Rhine frontier between Germany and Belgium and between Germany and France. Germany, Belgium and France also undertook never to resort to war. The demilitarisation of the Rhineland enforced by Versailles was confirmed and Germany freely renounced any claims to Alsace-Lorraine. The whole was to enter into force on Germany's adherence to the League. At the same time Germany signed arbitration treaties with Czechoslovakia and Poland in which both parties undertook to settle any conflicts that might arise by peaceful means. Furthermore, France signed treaties of mutual aid with her allies Poland and Czechoslovakia. These French treaties and Germany's treaties with her smaller Eastern neighbours were both independent of the Rhineland Pact proper."

"When, however, the implications of the Locarno Treaty are examined, this simple picture is obscured by divergent interpretations. Broadly speaking, two predominate. These are the German and the Anglo-Russian. The German viewpoint is simplicity itself. Stresemann could put it in one sentence: 'Our policy regarding the security offer was undoubtedly correct; it secured the Rhineland against a French policy of persecution, split the Entente and opened new prospects for the East.'² Germany in fact, had secured the assurance of British support should the French again occupy the Ruhr and had succeeded in sealing off Eastern Europe from Western Europe. 'Moreover, all the questions that lie so close to German hearts, as for instance, War Guilt, General Disarmament, Danzig, the Saar, etc., are matters for the League of Nations and a skilful speaker at a plenary session of the League may make them very disagreeable for the Entente. France, indeed, is not very enthusiastic at the idea of Germany's entering the League, while England is anxious for it, in order to counteract France's hitherto predominant influence in that body'"

"A secondary effect of the (Locarno) Pact', writes Lord D'Abernon, 'will be to relieve Germany of the danger of being driven into the arms of Russia."

Generalization

The general aim of the Locarno Pact in 1925, was to maintain peace and respect boundaries of European states, while also easing Germany into the League of Nations and preventing them from strong relationships with Russia which could lead to a threatening communist alliance. Kochan agrees with the German perspective on the treaty, in that it was simple and should be followed by all European nations, although he still considers the implications of Germany's induction into the League of Nations.

Reference:

Russia and the Weimar Republic. L. Kochan. Bowes & Bowes. Cambridge, England. 1954. p. 97-98

3. Dawes Plan, 1924

Snippet

"The reparation problem was summed up by British economists in three major doctrines, all of them supporting the idea of cancellation of the reparation debt. The first of them was the doctrine of British interest. It was to England's advantage, so it ran, that the reparation debt be not paid. This idea rested on the assumption that the debt payments would be made by Germany in goods. In the opinion of the economists, this would constitute a serious menace to British industries. Moreover, as they saw it, the internal debt about which the British taxpayer protested and for which he wanted partial relief from Germany was not a real national burden. The war, they said, had really been paid for out of current production, and the national debt was a "mere matter of internal distribution."

"Coming from the mouths of men of science, this third doctrine was an amazing pronouncement. But it was an indispensable third in the cancellationist trilogy. England's interest, as the economists defined it, was thus securely buttressed, not only by the economic law, but by the moral law as well."

"It was a well-rounded case. Though there was scarcely one good solid economic fact to support it, and though its chief political conception of abandoning France in favour of Germany was laden with high explosive, the argument had an immense vogue. In the eyes of powerful sections of the English public and of the American and neutral world, France was effectively photographed as an unintelligent and grasping creditor. For France still insisted on getting reparations."

Generalization:

Auld expresses that although the three separate doctrines supporting the cancellation of German debt had the potential to be beneficial, for Britain the cancellation would cause more national debt and hurt the country's economy. Furthermore, the author believes that France was stubborn in its approach towards the possibility of debt cancellation, and thus was left behind in the negotiations. This results in an impression that the author believed the Dawes Plan was not workable.

Reference: The Dawes Plans and New Economics. G.P Auld. 1927. Double Day, Page and Company . Garden City, New York. p. 41, 42.

4. Washington Conference 1921

Snippet

“The aims of the conference were twofold: first, to bring about a limitation of armaments on the part of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers; and, second, to solve Pacific and Far Eastern problems by a concerted effort on the part of nine nations, including the United States, the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Belgium, China, the Netherlands, and Portugal. Thus, in reality, the Washington Conference was composed of two distinct conferences each with its special tasks.”

“On the Washington arms treaties we have already presented our view that, in spite of the general lamentation of naval experts of the various signatory powers, these agreements have already contributed toward a betterment of the world. On the post-conference armament development, and, in particular, the failure of the three-power naval conference at Geneva, we have stated that our position is one of optimism. The nations are being educated as to the fallacy of upholding their dignity by arming themselves to the teeth.”

“The Washington Conference ushered in an era of peace; it is for the nations to continue it. The peoples of all the nations bordering the Pacific are anxious to maintain peace, as is clearly attested by their organized international efforts to learn to cooperate in solving their problems, the most conspicuous example being the Institute of Pacific Relations.”

Generalization:

The Washington Conference aimed to control the powers' naval and military influences and resources, while also determining the position of power of the nine nations when it came to issues of the Pacific. Ichihashi believes that the conference was a beneficial one, that promoted peace while discouraging excessive or violent armament, all which led to a, “betterment of the world.”

Reference: The Washington Conference and after: A Historical Survey. Y. Ichihashi. Stanford University Press. Stanford, CA. 1928. p. vii, 348, 350

5. French Invasion of Ruhr, 1923

Snippet

"In the early days of 1923, the French Government, recognizing the continuing impotence of the German Government either to bring about the indispensable reform of the public finances of the Reich or to offer a satisfactory solution of the reparation problem, reached the definite conviction that German ill-will was unalterable and that no positive result could ever be obtained by the methods previously used...Hence, he decided to take the action long since provided for and outlined many times previously by the Allies. He took possession of the most important pledge within his reach, the industrial and mining territory of the Ruhr. And he announced plainly: (1) that the occupation of the Ruhr was only a means to obtain payment of reparations and that the territory would be evacuated when Germany had paid her debts; (2) that we should only relinquish our pledge by degrees in proportion as payment should be made us. On January 11, after official announcement by the Reparation Commission of Germany's failure to deliver wood (December 25) and to deliver coal (January 9) the Franco-Belgian troops entered the Ruhr."

"The conflict of the Ruhr has been a misfortune. If we think of what it has cost Europe during the months which have elapsed, in the absurd wastage of wealth, of power and of energy which it has involved, it is difficult to avoid a feeling of revolt. At the very time when European trade was gravely compromised by the fearful destruction resulting from the World War...a conflict broke out which completely paralyzed the productiveness of the principal industrial center of the Reich, disorganized its political administration and its means of transportation, reduced to idleness and unemployment its working classes, embarrassed French production, ruined totally German finances and clouded all European life with a terrible uncertainty."

"If the conflict in the Ruhr is a misfortune I believe it would be a further misfortune if it should be brought to an end only by a new decision imposed by force. In fact it is very doubtful whether a surrender by Germany or an enforced retreat by France would result in stable European conditions."

Generalization

In 1923, the French invaded the German Ruhr, and refused to withdraw until Germany had repaid all of their debts to France. Lichtenberger suggests that occupying Germany was a strategic error on the part of the French, as Germany's economy had been disrupted, thus preventing any possible generation of capital to repay the debt owed to the French, and making their reasons of entering Germany redundant.

Reference: The Ruhr Conflict: A Report. H. Lichtenberger. The Endowment. Washington. 1923. p. 1, 16