

Before appeasement: Stresa Conference and the failure of the  
common security in Europe as reported by the Manchester  
Guardian and Neuer Vorwärts in 1935

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<p>The research of my thesis has been focused on the 1935 diplomatic conference at Stresa, in Northern Italy and observe how this meeting between the representatives of the United Kingdom, France and Italy shaped the diplomatic relations in interwar Europe. The goal of this meeting was to formulate a common policy against Germany in reaction to the founding of the German air force. This action, which reneged on the 1919 treaty of Versailles caused great worry in Europe. The aim of my research has been to examine developments that rose from this and examine what measures the tripartite powers adopted in opposition to the German aims of territorial expansion and confrontation with the neighbouring powers, mainly Lithuania and Poland in these early stages.</p> <p>The paramount view presented in the context of these developments is, that in 1935 the Tripartite powers of the United Kingdom, France and Italy were much more willing to concretely challenge German aggression than after 1935 when the policy of appeasement replaced this willingness to both challenge and curtail German influence in concord with different associated powers.</p> <p>As a method of research, I have examined multiple newspaper sources on the matter through qualitative analysis and further built my argument on the previously conducted research. As a method of research, I have employed methods of discourse analysis with the theory of social agency of the reporters in this. In addition, my choice of sources, The Manchester Guardian and the exiled German social-democratic newspaper, Neuer Vorwärts are chosen as the main sources in this.</p> <p>In lieu of these sources, reflected with the previous research on the matter, I present an argument. In light of the research I have conducted, the tripartite powers and their attempts to maintain a policy of common action against Germany were one of the most concrete ways in which German expansionism was challenged before the world war and that it was its failure that gave way to appeasement.</p> <p>I have presented the developments as they occurred, reflecting the early hopes of the success of the pact towards the foundational disagreements that had begun to tear the pact apart mere months after its formation. Accompanying this are presented the last attempts by the British and the French governments to reform this anti-German pact. From my research, it can be seen that the slide to appeasement was not sudden or found some unwillingness to challenge German plans for hegemony in Europe. Instead, the appeasement is presented as arising from the failure of the tripartite powers to uphold their policy of collaboration against Germany.</p> <p>From my thesis, it can be interpreted that interwar Europe was not simply following the rise of the Nazi regime with bated breath, but actively sought to contain and even challenge the spread of Nazi influence in the European continent. Shift to appeasement is also present in the form of the Anglo-German naval agreement, in which Germany's right to rearm was officially recognised by one of the tripartite powers, the United Kingdom.</p>	
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# 1.Introduction

*"Could we get from Stresa a decision to proceed? That made Stresa so critical. If we failed we were once again in the jungle. The most important and satisfactory result of the Stresa conference is that the three nations of Britain, France, and Italy have declared their solidarity and their union in abandoning no declaration which they have made and in continuing the work to which they had already set their hands. They have stood steady under the strain, and that having been secured, we can look forward with returning hope to the future.<sup>1</sup>"*

This citation is an excerpt from the speech given through a public broadcast by the Labour premier Ramsay MacDonald in the immediate aftermath of the Stresa conference, where he had represented the British interests in formulating a common policy against the German course of gradual rearmament as the new National Socialist government embarked on the policy that increasingly disregarded the provisions of the 1919 Versailles Treaty. In the excerpt, the balancing of the British policy of post-war non-intervention in continental affairs and the commitment to maintain the current status quo in continental Europe is evident. The excerpt is a part of a wider article published in the Manchester Guardian, reporting on the speech given by PM MacDonald after his return from Stresa. In a way, the maintenance of the status quo in Europe was perceived as protecting the British policy of insular isolation from European commitments.

Even from this short statement provided to the wider public on the lines of his earlier statement to the House of Commons, a divide is present in the spirit of the declaration. The declaration which ostensibly had obliged the British foreign policy to align with the French and the Italian ones in, what the Manchester Guardian calls a situation which the powers "Find themselves in complete agreement in opposing by all practicable means any unilateral repudiation of treaties

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<sup>1</sup>THE PREMIER ON STRESA: Broadcast Assurance. *The Manchester Guardian* 18.4.1935, 12.

which may endanger the peace of Europe". Concrete steps that were taken to see that the policy described in the broadcast was to be adopted by these three declarants of Stresa<sup>2</sup>. This lack of concrete commitment is viewed as reflective of the wider British sentiment that is presented as permeating the entire concept of the common policy which was aimed for the unity of action against the current German government by the tripartite declarants, the United Kingdom, France and Italy. Based on the continuous examination of the sources, scepticism of the British public and the desperate attempt of the government to create a policy of containment is discerned from the developments reported by the Manchester Guardian.

The means of selective qualitative analysis of the available newspaper sources is meant to quantifiably re-create a collage of the concrete developments from the point of view of a contemporary, separating the events from the historic hindsight and focus on the matters as they were as they transpired. Along this specialized aspect, the sheer quantity of the available material for research furthermore helps in formulating the chain of events that are to be examined in the thesis, creating a continuous way of examining and dissecting the events and their repercussions on the events that are being presented in the thesis.

Furthermore, in this qualitative path, the analysis of political discourse that the available newspaper sources are tied together with the previous historical research on the matter, thus forming a comprehensive framework for the analysis that is to be conducted through the research into the newspapers. The language of politics, as exemplified in the work by Ihalainen, Nuolijärvi & Saarinen postulates that all political language in end is a political deed, this can be presented as a part of the analysis presented in the thesis while acknowledging the multi-faceted side of this claim itself<sup>3</sup>. Despite the multiple levels in which political language and discourse can be presented and examined in, focus on the policy of the language in the context of the thesis

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<sup>2</sup>OUTCOME OF THE STRESA CONFERENCE: Locarno Obligations Reaffirmed GERMANY INVITED TO SPECIAL MEETING ON AUSTRIA Declaration on Treaty Violations. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 9.

<sup>3</sup>Ihalainen, Pasi, Nuolijärvi, Pirkko & Saarinen Taina: *Kamppailua tilasta ja vallasta. kieli kielikoulutuspolitiikan historiallisesti kierrätetyt diskurssit*. Vastapaino 2019.

and the political developments it presents.

### **1.1 The events leading to Stresa conference and the relations between the tripartite powers of the United Kingdom, Italy and France**

The main inciting event that led to the three powers of Britain, France and Italy coming together in the northern Italian town of Stresa to negotiate on forming a common policy against a resurgent Germany. The starting point was the announcement by the German state that an air force had been founded and that the conscription would be reintroduced in an attempt to expand the German armed forces<sup>4</sup>. Both of these actions violated the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and considerably affected the relations between the German state and the three powers<sup>5</sup>. This policy facilitated the rapprochement between the three powers that acted as guarantors to the peace of Versailles and the implementation of the policies stipulated in its articles<sup>6</sup>.

The most concrete example is the improving relations of Britain and France towards Italy. Having fought in the First World War on the side of the Entente, the relations between Italy and its wartime allies had grown relatively cold ever since the treaties of St. Germain and Trianon, which allocated the majority of territories promised to Italy in the 1915 treaty of London to the emerging state of Yugoslavia<sup>7</sup>. This, combined with the French policy of supporting the Balkan states emerging from the collapsing Austro-Hungarian Empire further decreased relations between the two states.<sup>8</sup> Mussolini's rise to power after the 1922 march on Rome further cooled

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<sup>4</sup>Williamson, Murray & Millet, Alan Reed: *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. Harvard University Press 2001, 22.

<sup>5</sup>Germany's repudiation of Versailles *Treaty*. *The Advocate* 26.3.1935, 1.

<sup>6</sup>Tucker, Spencer C. & Roberts, Priscilla: *The Encyclopedia of World War I: A Political, Social, and Military History*. ABC-CLIO 2005, 429.

<sup>7</sup>Albrecht-Carrie, Rene. 1939. *The Present Significance of the Treaty of London of 1915*. Published in: *Political Science Quarterly*, Academy of Political Science, 365-374.

<sup>8</sup>Gilchrist, Stanley 1995, *The Cordon Sanitair - Is It Useful? Is it Practical?* Published in: Norton, John & Turner, Robert 1995, *Readings on International Law from the Naval War College Review, 1978-1994*. Naval War College Publishing, 131-145.

the relations with the fascist plans to reannex the regions of Savoy and Nice, which had been relinquished to France in the 1860 Treaty of Turin back to Italy.<sup>9</sup>

The Anglo-Italian relations were comparatively warmer, despite the non-implementation of the 1915 Treaty of London. The British government had accommodated multiple Italian requests on the revision of the border between Italian Libya and the British influenced Egypt-Sudan<sup>10</sup>. These negotiations took place in 1925 and 1934, granting previously unallocated territory to Italy<sup>11</sup>.

Despite these underlying tensions, Italy found itself on the course of rapprochement with its old allies as Hitler's new government in Germany began to exert its influence in the German-speaking territories outside of German national borders<sup>12</sup>. Having come into possession of the majority German-speaking territory of South Tyrol in 1919, the Italian government began to react<sup>13</sup>. Strengthening their position in the South Tyrol with a campaign of Italianization and presenting themselves as the protector of the fledgeling Austrian state which in itself had fallen into the Italian sphere of influence after the short Austrian civil war of 1934 and the self-liquidation of the Austrian parliament<sup>14</sup>.

The United Kingdom and by extension the rest of the British Empire had emerged from the Great war and the following economic downturn of the 1920s weakened<sup>15</sup>. While having expanded to its widest geographical extent, the Empire which Britain possessed could not be viewed as the same unassailable force that it had perceived itself in the past<sup>16</sup>. This, combined with the general British apprehensiveness to commit the United Kingdom as a force in continental Europe in turn

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<sup>9</sup>Rodogno, David: *Fascism's European Empire: Italian Occupation During the Second World War*. Cambridge University Press 2006, 72.

<sup>10</sup> Brownline, Ian & Burns, Ian: *African Boundaries: A Legal and Diplomatic Encyclopaedia*. C. Hurst & Co. Publishers 1979, 133-140.

<sup>11</sup> Brownline & Burns 1979, 133-140.

<sup>12</sup> Morgan, Philip: *Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945*. Routledge 2003, 72.

<sup>13</sup> Moos, Carlo: *Habsburg Post Mortem: Betrachtungen zum Weiterleben der Habsburgermonarchie*. Böhlau 2016, 22-27.

<sup>14</sup> Gehl, Jurgen: *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss, 1931-1938*. Praeger Publishing 1979, 112-113.

<sup>15</sup> Dormois, Jean-Pierre: *The French economy in the twentieth century*. Cambridge University Press 1997, 180-195.

<sup>16</sup> Bronstein, James & Harris, Andrew: *EMPIRE, STATE AND SOCIETY*. Britain since 1830. Wiley-Blackwell. 2012, 179-190.

drove it to strengthen its traditional alliance with France, while also accommodating Italian colonial claims in Africa to foster continuing good relations between the two states<sup>17</sup>. The main course of the British foreign policy position formed to a role where its position was shown as being the arbiter of the European political scene as one of the principal guarantors of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles while also promoting the policy of disarmament through treaties limiting naval armaments<sup>18</sup>.

Contrasting to Italy and Britain, France had maintained its role as the active premier power in the European continent ever since the cessation of hostilities after the First World War<sup>19</sup>. French foreign policy had actively focused on promoting alliances and granting support to the newly independent countries in Central and Eastern Europe that had gained their independence during the collapse of the dynastic empires of Russia and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in a policy of Cordon Sanitaire, where the loss of Russia to a communist revolution had deprived France of its traditional continental ally in a plan to pressure Germany with the potential two-front war in the case of a military confrontation<sup>20</sup>. Yet it is discernible that the tremendous losses suffered in the First World War combined with the sharp economic downturn and crises shaking the French political establishment during the course of the 1930s had left France weakened, divided and unwilling to act alone without the backing of its old allies in the European continental affairs<sup>21</sup>. The French government was unwilling to risk another international loss of face after the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923.

This was the diplomatic background that had led to these tripartite powers coming together in the April of 1935 in Stresa to form a common policy towards Germany. Diverging goals, different

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<sup>17</sup> Burr & Collins 2006, 111-112.

<sup>18</sup> Webster, Andrew: *From Versailles to Geneva: The many forms of interwar disarmament*. Published in *Journal of Strategic Studies*. 2006, 225-246.

ANGLO-GERMAN NAVAL MEETING NOT YET FIXED, *The Manchester Guardian* 01.05.1935, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Marquand, David: *Ramsay MacDonald*. Metro Books 1977, 716.

<sup>20</sup> Spielvogel, Jackson: *Western Civilization: Volume II: Since 1500*. Wadsworth Publishing 2005. 750-751.

FRANCE'S NEW AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA. *The Manchester Guardian* 12.4. 1935, 6.

FRANCO-SOVIET PACT Difficulties Overcome. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.5. 1935, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Jackson, Peter: France and the problems of security and international disarmament after the first world war. *Journal of Strategic Studies* 2005, 27.

FRENCH HOPES FROM AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA. *The Manchester Guardian* 11.4. 1935, 12.



political systems and varying amounts of tension remaining in the background as the negotiations took place. From the beginning, it is clear that Italian expectations towards the conference are reserved and contrast the Franco-British attempts to build a network of collective security on continental Europe. This development is concurrently taking place through the British negotiations with the Soviet Union and through the French ally of Czechoslovakia<sup>22</sup>. From this, it can be interpreted that the British viewed themselves as the pivot on which the policy of containment towards Germany would be built upon. A cordial go-between between the ideologically opposed nations such as the Soviet Union and Fascist Italy. In this, the foreign policy of France has aligned itself with the British, attempting to extend the collective security system to its East European allies and states that had been enjoying French support through the interwar period to varying degrees.

Yet despite these developments, the leadup to the tripartite conference shows itself as an unorganised attempt where two of the three powers conducted their policies semi-independently while striving for the same goal. Italy, by comparison, maintained a wary distance from these developments and chose to adopt a wait-and-see position. Italian position predating the conference warned against a policy of “exaggerated optimism” while itself repudiating the policy of disarmament and detente that had reigned in the political landscape of interwar Europe<sup>23</sup>. While at the same time, the front presents itself as a concrete answer to Germany’s break from the interwar European order, presenting action and not appeasement.

The collective trauma of the world war borne by the European powers in the aftermath of the First World War, the memory of “war to end all wars” still affecting the political and diplomatic developments in the continent cannot be discounted<sup>24</sup>. The events leading to the Stresa conference and an attempt to form a united front against the perceived German threat to the reigning status quo in Europe presents itself as a multifaceted chain of events. A display of pragmatic diplomacy that pitted the democratic powers of Europe into an alliance with the

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<sup>22</sup> MR. EDEN ON LAST STAGE PRAGUE TALKS TODAY. *The Manchester Guardian* 4.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>23</sup> MUSSOLINI ON STRESA CONFERENCE *The Manchester Guardian* 3.4. 1935, 12.

<sup>24</sup> Lynch, Cecelia: *Beyond Appeasement: Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics*. Cornell University Press 1999, 61.

premier fascist power, while at the same time reaching out towards the Soviet Union for a potential alliance. This is an attempt to build what I would present as the most concrete attempt to counter the German aggression while introducing political pragmatism in allying with dictatorships on part of the premier European democracies. The failure of this policy presents itself as one of the main causes leading to the later policy of appeasement and the failure of the tripartite powers to work together in containing the threats to peace in Europe.

Yet during the developments, my thesis will examine, the events that followed the formation and later the failure of the Stresa conference are all in the distant future and shall be discounted in favour of creating a comprehensive image of the events as they were perceived and reported through the available sources. Further reflecting through the geopolitical events and the discourse between the diplomatic developments between the powers representing democratic forms of government and the dictatorships in a world where the prevalence of the latter had become the norm and the position of democracies was anything but certain. In the context of the turmoil of the early 21st century, the perceived failure of democracy to live up to its ideal by accommodating the rising dictatorships and failing to contain the rising political radicalism is as current as ever.

## **1.2 Methods, research questions and sources**

In this thesis, the main focus shall be on the events surrounding the 1935 conference at Stresa and how they were reported in the British public discourse through the social-liberal Manchester Guardian newspaper and the official publication of the German Social Democratic party, Neuer Vorwärts operating from exile in Prague. The main question that my thesis examines is how did these reportages present these developments, how they were presented as changes to the interwar status quo, how was the threat of war perceived and how the policy of confrontation is pushed aside in favour of appeasement policy that would take hold in Europe.

The research has been conducted through the premises laid out by John Richardson's *Analyzing Newspaper: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* and Norman Fairclough in *Analyzing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. In this, examining the discourse of the newspapers in question through methods introduced in these books. As stated by Richardson, journalism is shaped by an agenda that is often flirting with propaganda. In this, the choice of explicitly left-wing newspapers as a source should be kept in mind in the context of criticism towards these sources<sup>25</sup>.

Furthermore, the theory of social agency in the texts, as introduced by Fairclough can be discerned from all the examined texts in the terms of semantics and terminology is explicitly tied in the political nature of the sources, especially when creating connections with the political nature of the news and the affiliation of the papers reporting on them<sup>26</sup>. Above all, emphasizing critical interpretation of the sources.

Furthermore, parallel to the examination of the lines between the democratic powers, their collective pragmatism and dealings with the European dictatorships I shall attempt to present the concurring developments of the collective European security and how this path of action was presented in the sources. In this, the examination of the available contemporary newspapers in the context of the developing events, leading from the policy of collective security and the preservation of the European status quo to the policy of appeasement which rose as a political force almost immediately after the failure of the Stresa Pact to materialize as a concrete course of action. Through this, I will furthermore examine the extent to which the tripartite powers depicted themselves as allies despite the mounting tensions and differences in their political regimes and the potentially contradictory geopolitical ambitions.

In the previous historical research, the events of the Stresa conference and the leadup to is presented in broadly three categories. In the first category, the Stresa conference is simplistically viewed as one more failed attempt to contain the Nazi regime and prevent the outbreak of

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<sup>25</sup>Richardson, John :*An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. Red Globe Press 2007, 7-10.

<sup>26</sup>Fairclough, Norman :*Analyzing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. Routledge 2003, 22-27.

another European conflict. In this context, the Stresa conference and its events are perceived as a part of a wider study of international diplomacy in a historical context. For the sake of simplicity, this shall be referred to as the traditional diplomatic point of view. Examples of this are the publications traditionally focusing on the studies of international relations such as William Philpott's and Alexander Marting's *The Anglo-French Defence Relations Between the Wars*, Gathorne-Hardy's *British Foreign Policy in the Inter-war Years*, Robert Boyce's *French Foreign and Defence Policy, 1918-1940: The Decline and Fall of a Great Power* and Derek Aldcroft's *Europe's Third World: the European Periphery in the Interwar Years*.<sup>27</sup> This course of study can also be stated to include the general histories focusing on the development of the diplomatic relations between the three signatories of the Stresa pact, and how the stances of the powers are viewed as fluctuating between the geopolitical changes that preceded and followed the signing of the pact. In this the examples between the French internal struggles between the "Italophile" foreign ministry and the previous "Italophobe" premier that had preceded the ruling Laval government in France, which in itself was one of the main architects of the Stresa pact. Coinciding with these developments, the declining influence of the League of Nations that, despite the attempts to include it in the negotiations that were planned to follow the formation of the pact proved to be moribund <sup>28</sup>.

In the context of the future appeasement, The failures of collective security, are discerned as connected in the events that followed the failure of the pact itself. The appeasement in itself is presented in the earlier research as the policy that the British government viewed as being conducted from the position of strength and on British terms, as Martin Gilbert presents this in his book *The Roots of Appeasement*<sup>29</sup>. In this theory, the policy of appeasement is presented as

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<sup>27</sup>Philpott, William. Alexander, Marting: *Anglo-French Defence Relations Between the Wars*. Palgrave Macmillan 2002.

Gathorne-Hardy, Geoffrey: *British Foreign Policy in the Inter-War Years*. Longmans 1958.

Boyce, Robert: *French Foreign and Defence Policy, 1918-1940: The Decline and Fall of a Great Power*. Routledge 1998.

Aldcroft, Derek: *Europe's Third World: The European Periphery in the Interwar Years*. Routledge 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Boyce 1998, 158.

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT EUROPEAN CONFERENCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 6.4. 1935, 13.

STRESA AS PREPARATIONS FOR LEAGUE COUNCIL. *The Manchester Guardian* 6.4. 1935, 17.

Situation in Europe. *The Manchester Guardian* 9.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>29</sup>Gilbert, Martin: *The Roots of Appeasement*. Rosettabooks 1966.

another form of existing policy that the British had conducted towards continental Europe since 1918<sup>30</sup>. It is the morality of such war that Gilbert questions from the point of view of the British general population<sup>31</sup>.

Paul Kennedy's *The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy 1865-1939* similarly formulates the events, presenting Britain's policy as "Peace as National Interest" in the context of its relationship with Europe and the appeasement as a long-lasting method of diplomacy in the British foreign policy. Yet I would argue, that the drastic shift from an active policy of alliances to appeasement deserves some further introspection. The policy guiding the British situation in 1935 can best be exemplified as stated by Kennedy:

*"The almost-simultaneous rise of threats from Japan, Italy and Germany - and all this at a time when the United States was in an isolationist mood, many of the dominions desirous of following suit, Russia an unpredictable and possibly malevolent factor, and France ridden by an unattractive mixture of obstinacy and fear - created an impossible gulf between Britain's global obligations and her capacity to fulfil them."<sup>32</sup>*

As an additional subset of this research, the diplomatic relations between the individual countries involved in the pact. For example the *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century: Rivalry and Cooperation* and by Alan Sharp and Glyn Stone on Anglo-French relations during the time period, Emphasizing the precarious balance of cooperation with the backdrop of the foundational differences in the geopolitical interests as two great powers, one world-power and one the continental power of Europe<sup>33</sup>. These differing interests present themselves as the backdrop of the situation where these two powers found themselves at Stresa. As stated in the previously mentioned source: *"According to Kitching, French leaders, notably Andre Tardie, Edouard*

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<sup>30</sup>Gilbert, 1966, 19-20.

<sup>31</sup>Gilbert 1966, 3.

<sup>32</sup>Kennedy, Paul: *The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy 1865-1939*. Cambridge University Press. 1976, 205.

<sup>33</sup>Stone, Glyn & Sharp, Alan: *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century. Rivalry and Cooperation*. Routledge 1999.

*Herriot and Joseph Paul-Boncour, but not Louis Barthou, saw a firm commitment from Britain as the answer to France's chronic insecurity but Britain consistently refused to recognise her legitimate fear of the threat posed by Germany before and after Adolf Hitler's advent to power in January 1933. 'Her [Britain's] distrust of the French and her pro-German bias ensure her sympathies consistently lay in the wrong quarter'.*<sup>34</sup>

Along these, the *Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918-1940*<sup>35</sup> focusing on the diplomatic developments of the Fascist Italian state during the interwar period. The works focusing on the history of the diplomatic relations between Italy with France and Britain can also be examined in works such as *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe: Foreign Policy and Security Challenge* that postulated that Italy was: “*bent on domination in the Danubian-Balkan region and was pitted against the Little Entente for that reason, assuming that the latter was an instrument of French policy set up to thwart her ambitions. The Central Department official, John Troutbeck, interpreted the whole Adriatic controversy as a manifestation of Italy's desire to turn that sea into an Italian lake for strategic purposes so that she could eliminate any need to guard against a future Yugoslave fleet and thus "have all her naval forces available on the other side for use against France"*.”<sup>36</sup>

This course of research shall be described as bipartite diplomatic research and be employed to further support examinations made from sources, creating a framework in which to present theories based on these sources.

The third category of the earlier research is the works focusing solely on one of the previously mentioned powers of the Stresa pact and their respective foreign policy developments in Europe during the time period leading up to and surrounding the formation of the pact in 1935. These include the seminal work of Roy Douglas, *World Crisis and British Decline, 1929-56*<sup>37</sup> focusing

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<sup>34</sup> Stone & Sharp 1999, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Burgwyn, James 1997: *Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918-1940*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

<sup>36</sup> Bakic, Dragan: *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe: Foreign Policy and Security Challenge*. Bloomsbury 2017, 66.

<sup>37</sup>Douglas, Roy: *World Crisis and British Decline, 1929-56*. Palgrave Macmillan 1986.

on the policies of the British government during the time period, focusing especially on the politics that guided the British government towards the settlement in the Stresa Conference.

From the previously conducted historical studies, it is evident that the attention of the Stresa conference and the events preceding, concurring and following it have received attention mainly through the macro-level lens of historical study. The main focus of these previously described studies should be viewed in the wider chronology of the interwar period international relations and how these events in the interwar period are presented in the context of the lead-up to the Second World War.

From these available materials, it is evident that the Stresa conference has been studied previously in the contexts of diplomatic history and the European geopolitics of the interwar period. The events themselves and the political anxieties connected to it, along with the developments surrounding it have been left in the shadow of the more dramatic historical events that both preceded and followed the events leading up to the said attempt to form a European framework of collective security with the backing of the tripartite powers of Britain, France and Italy with the shadow of war looming above these developments.

The tradition of examining the events in the framework of the wider political developments has presented an opportunity for a more focused examination and dissection of the events and how they were presented in the sources as the events were unfolding and the geopolitical developments were taking place. In this context, the previous research on the Stresa conference can be used to create a framework in the research and be used to reflect how the contemporary accounts differ from the presentation of the same events in the wider context.

In this, the main focus shall continue to be the discourse on dictatorships, democracies, perceptions of nationalism and the threat of German expansion in continental Europe along with the revision of national borders that come with displays of such acts of irredentism.

### 1.3 Sources

Primary sources in my thesis are the British leftist liberal-leaning newspaper, The Manchester Guardian and the Neuer Vorwärts, the official newspaper of the exiled German Social Democratic party operating in Prague during the events of 1935<sup>38</sup>. The available material in the digitized databank of *ProQuest* and in the archives of the German-language *Friedrich Ebert Foundation* library. The availability of both English and German-language material is abundant. From these sources, it is evident that the developments of the conference and the diplomacy conducted around it were receiving large amounts of press coverage from both the Manchester Guardian and Neuer Vorwärts. I have proceeded to choose the articles that solely relate to the leadup and the events of the conference, electing to set aside the wider European discourse on the developing diplomatic situation in the context of tensening relations and the threat of war, unless these reportages explicitly connect to the course of tripartite security espoused by the powers that participated in the Stresa Conference.

In the context of the sources and the available material, the paramount reason for the Manchester Guardian and the Neuer Vorwärts being chosen is the fact that both of these publications possess certain left-wing credentials in the wider political arena. In the course of the research, the focus on the two left-leaning newspapers that I have previously introduced is based on both the availability of these sources, along with the interest to see if there was existing solidarity between the left-wing of the political spectrum in the context of these events taking place in Europe.

It is also important to acknowledge the obvious existing differences between the two newspapers and their political orientations. In general, the interwar left-wing movements should not be viewed as some monolithic force striving towards the same goals that reached across national and party lines. The Manchester Guardian for example should be viewed through its publication

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<sup>38</sup> Edinger, Lewis: *German Exile Politics: The Social Democratic Executive Committee in the Nazi Era.*, University of California Press 1956, 56.



history as having been closely aligned to the policies espoused by the centre-left British Liberal Party, which in itself had entered a steep decline in 1918 which it would never truly recover from<sup>39</sup>. Despite this alignment and their shared values, the Manchester Guardian possessed a great deal of autonomy operating as a mostly independent, albeit center-left aligned publication. In its essence, this political course of the newspaper can be viewed as aligning to an extent with the wider policies of the British National Government of 1935, headed by the Labour Party under the premiership of Ramsay MacDonald. Yet due to its independence from the guidance or heavy-handed influence of any one political party, the cooperation of the Manchester Guardian with the government policies, which I have managed to interpret from the available material should be viewed as the paper operating on its own terms when it comes to interacting with the policies put forth by the government in the news reports that were published.

Besides the news and reportages on the events by the correspondents who often were present on the scene, the Manchester Guardian also employed a robust policy of publishing letters to the editor, through which the public consensus on the matters reported on by the newspaper can be viewed through the interaction of the audience to which the paper was directed towards<sup>40</sup>. By the mid-1930s, the Manchester Guardian was a newspaper with a robust and loyal audience that is composed of the wider reaches of society, considering how letters to the editor from the liberal/labour members of parliament were published relating to the developing situation in Europe during the time of the negotiations on collective action in Stresa<sup>41</sup>.

Apart from the editorial and news content, it is useful to examine the letters to the editor section of The Manchester Guardian as well. They are used together with the news and reportages on the events to create a more comprehensive and thorough image of the events as they unfolded. Through this, a view towards the events built on newspaper sources can be created. Focusing on

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<sup>39</sup> Bronstein & Harris 2012, 169.

<sup>40</sup> LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: THE CAUSES OF WAR Tribe-Worship in Western Europe. *The Manchester Guardian* 10.4. 1935, 18

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Economic Causes of War. *The Manchester Guardian* 11.4. 1935, 18.

<sup>41</sup> NEW ANXIETY IN BERLIN. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.4. 1935, 9.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: ECONOMIC CAUSES OF WAR *The Manchester Guardian* 5.4. 1935, 20.

the evolution of the unfolding events and what views they produced in the eyes of the British public following these developments.

Unlike the Manchester Guardian, *Neuer Vorwärts* was a publication operating outside the bounds of what can be expected from a traditional press publication. The Nazi seizure of power in 1933 and the banning of the parties opposed to the regime had forced the Social Democratic Party of Germany to relocate its activities outside the German borders<sup>42</sup>. Yet the party organization and the long-lasting continuation of the party apparatus itself can be postulated as the reasons why the Social Democratic Party managed to maintain their cohesion and the existing institutions in exile. Two years after their exile, the Social Democratic Party had not only managed to form an organization of SOPADE but also maintain the required comprehension and drive to organize one of the few displays of public opposition to the Nazi regime<sup>43</sup>.

Due to these reasons, the SOPADE had been able to resume the publication of the original party organ, *Vorwärts* in Prague under the name of the *Neuer Vorwärts* in 1933<sup>44</sup>. The material has been made available since the resumption of the SOPADE activities in Prague. From the examination of the available material, it is evident that the *Neuer Vorwärts*, likely due to their more direct connection with the party they represented, was much more open to interpreting the events taking place through a more radical point of view. Naturally, the forced exile of the party functionaries can be said to have led to a degree of radicalisation amongst the ranks, furthermore sharpening the views of the *Neuer Vorwärts* towards the current developments in Europe. In all, the early tone of the *Neuer Vorwärts* can be viewed as explicitly more hostile towards the perceived accommodating attitude that the European democracies are perceived to maintain towards the inclusion of dictatorial regimes in their new system of collective security and its continental extent<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Edinger, 56.

<sup>43</sup> Europa - Eine Hitler - Despotie! *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.5. 1935, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Horn, Gerd-Rainer: *European Socialists Respond to Fascism Ideology, Activism and Contingency in the 1930s*. Oxford University Press 1996, 64.

<sup>45</sup> From Moscow to Warsaw. *The Manchester Guardian* 2.4. 1935, 10.

OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENCE. Stalin and Collective Security. *The Manchester Guardian* 2.4.1935, 10.

Yet, the position of the SOPADE and the Neuer Vorwärts being organized in exile is a limiting factor, and from the available material. It is clear that the Neuer Vorwärts did not have the same opportunity of operating in an open society that the Manchester Guardian did. But unlike their British counterparts, the Neuer Vorwärts offers a point of view of a politically committed newspaper due to its position as an official party publication firmly linked in the events taking place in Europe. Due to the political radicalization of the German Social Democrats, the articles and the editorial letters published on the pages of the Neuer Vorwärts are much more clear with the opinions of their writers, every article reading like a short excerpt from the wide opposition platform of the SOPADE exiles. Furthermore, the voice of the exile leadership is presented concretely in this material, which in themselves are comparable to the British members of parliament voicing their opinions in the editorial letters published in the Manchester Guardian. Though not fully comparable to the British MPs, names such as Otto Wels and Paul Hertz and Erich Ollenhauer appear in the pages of the Neuer Vorwärts, show the continuing position of the pre-exile SPD leadership in the ranks of the SOPADE<sup>46</sup>.

Having now established the use of press material as the primary source concerning the events of the 1935 Stresa conference, alongside with the inner party reports published by the SOPADE with the regular publication of the Neuer Vorwärts and specified them as the primary focus in my thesis. This choice is present building upon the availability of the newspapers on the events, the lack of the archived German-language opposition press in the time period outside the publications of the exile organizations like SOPADE. This, in a combination with the available British sources, serves to create a historical collage of a world filled with levels of anxiety concerning the general European situation and the cooling of relations between the tripartite powers and Germany seemingly bent on building its continental hegemony through its renegeing of the last aspects of 1919 treaty of Versailles which still bound the German policy<sup>47</sup>.

The sources and the conversation on the pages of the previously mentioned publications will be used to create an image of an ongoing crisis and how the authors of these sources perceived the

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<sup>46</sup>Für Weltfrieden, Altrustung und Sicherheit! *Neuer Vorwärts* 19.5. 1935, 4.

<sup>47</sup>Slavicek, Louise: *The Treaty of Versailles*. Infobase Publishing 2010, 59.

general mood leading up to the events of the Stresa Conference. In this I shall employ the practice of qualitative analysis, meaning that I will examine the chronology of the events through multiple sources, news, letters to the editor and the general publications on the events themselves. Supported by the earlier research on the development of international relations, The thesis shall examine the previously mentioned developments of the European continental affairs towards the looming threat of war through the views presented in the sources.

## 2. The anxiety of war and the hopes of peace in Europe

According to received historical understanding, the chronology of interwar Europe from 1933 onward has been viewed as a constant increase in tensions leading forward on an inevitable course towards the looming global conflict<sup>48</sup>. A wider examination of the active international relations and the reportages presents a position in contemporary view, that despite the existing anxieties, the political situation of Europe was not seen as grimly by the contemporaries as the general historic discourse may imply. Despite this, the material printed by the Manchester Guardian and the *Neuer Vorwärts* presents the threats posed by the German rearmament as early as the March of 1935, a month before the events would culminate in the Stresa conference, followed by additional coverage in early April<sup>49</sup>.

From this news, a certain type of war tension is interpretable. In the following chapter, I will present a view gathered from the articles published in the pages of the Manchester Guardian. Showing the reasons, the buildup, the diplomatic discourse, the public discourse and how the events leading up to the planned organization for European collective security that the negotiations at Stresa attempted to produce. In this, the policy of containment instead of appeasement has been raised in reply to German territorial ambitions.

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<sup>48</sup>Imperial War Museum. How Europe Went to War In 1939: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/how-europe-went-to-war-in-1939> (28.3.2021).

<sup>49</sup>Steigende rüstig - gedrosselter konsum Das Gesetz der nationalsozialistischen Kriegswirtschaft. *Neuer Vorwärts* 17.3. 1935, 4.

The Mission to Berlin. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 8.

GERMANY'S FIRST CONSCRIPTS BEGIN JOINING UP TO-DAY. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.4. 1935, 12.

## 2.1 The beginning of the escalation - Return of conscription

The reigning political atmosphere in Europe during the immediate period predating the meeting of the representatives of the tripartite powers of Britain, France and Italy in Stresa can best be described as a time of increasing anxieties in European affairs. This is exemplified in the article published in Manchester Guardian on the 25th of March, 1935. Only a month after the German government had publicly acknowledged the foundation of the German Air Force and the reintroduction of the conscription in the German armed forces earlier in March, repudiating the sections of the 1919 treaty of Versailles which had forbidden this and set the limit of the German armed forces at 100 000 men<sup>50</sup>. In the context of my thesis, I have chosen this as the beginning of a chain of events leading from the German policy of rearmament to a general return to arms in a world, which had been increasingly dominated by the general policy of global disarmament.

*“Look at the sequence of events already reported on the heels of the German return to conscription - Italy calls up the entire 1911 class of conscripts, Austria is said to be earnestly thinking about returning to compulsory military service and even the United States - which is supposed to be pursued a policy of splendid isolation from corrupt European influences - is mentioned as being about to increase its army by 40 percent.”<sup>51</sup>*

The sentiment displayed in the article was viewed as capturing the public mood that would continue to rear its head and linger on the background of the articles published on the European situation since March 1935. A new mood had been set and in the following weeks and months, the news of the collective security and the threat of war would loom large over the British public discourse displayed through the pages of the Manchester Guardian<sup>52</sup>. Despite the growing

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<sup>50</sup>Darman, Peter: *World War II A Day-By-Day History*. Barnes & Noble 2007, 10.

<sup>51</sup>MISCELLANY Follow My Leader. *The Manchester Guardian* 25.03. 1935, 7.

<sup>52</sup> NAZI ILLUSIONS ABOUT BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS GERMANY *The Manchester Guardian* 26.03. 1935, 12.

PEACE OR WAR. *The Manchester Guardian* 30.3. 1935, 15.

underlying tension in the public discourse, another parallel development presented forming in the same public discourse. In general, it is evident that two different lines of action are available for interpretation from the available material. Anxiety towards the mounting tensions in Europe and more indirect hope of maintenance of the status quo in Britain's relations towards the continental powers. This is exemplified in an article from March 26th, reporting on the visit of the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs Sir John Simon and a member of the parliament, Anthony Eden to Berlin.<sup>53</sup>

From the article, this previously introduced course of relying on two newspapers as sources can further be interpreted. The British aim to contain Germany with both cordial relations and the continuing buildup of its web of collective security through the "exploratory" visit to Berlin<sup>54</sup>. As reported in the article, Eden was to continue from Berlin on visits to Moscow, Warsaw and Prague<sup>55</sup>. Furthermore, the article evoked the animated estimation of the British government on German plans of territorial expansion in the east, loosely gathered into what the article refers to as the "Rosenberg plan" that guides the contemporary German foreign policy towards expansionism and forcing the neighbouring states thus to prepare for it<sup>56</sup>. The article continues to elaborate on the British reply to the German implementation of conscription with a protest that "equality" in the matter of armaments has been granted to Germany in principle" but that "equality" can become "inequality" with remarkable ease" When discussing the policy of the British government towards the German rearmament along with the German refusal to reimplement armament limiting provisions in this program and return to the League of Nations<sup>57</sup>. Emphasis on the matter is, that the British have only made overtures of allowing this equality while in truth wishing to keep the acceptance of German rearmament on a level of principle instead of concrete acceptance.<sup>58</sup>. Furthermore, the British delegation headed by Sir John Simon

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<sup>53</sup>The Mission to Berlin. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 8.

FIRST DAY OF THE BERLIN DISCUSSIONS. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 9.

<sup>54</sup>SIR JOHN SIMON Statement in Commons on Berlin Visit. *The Manchester Guardian* 29.3. 1935, 16.

<sup>55</sup>MR. EDEN'S FULL DAY IN WARSAW. *The Manchester Guardian* 3.4. 1935, 9.

<sup>56</sup>The Mission to Berlin. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 8.

MR. EDEN ON LAST STAGE PRAGUE TALKS TODAY. *The Manchester Guardian* 4.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>57</sup>STRESA AS PREPARATIONS FOR LEAGUE COUNCIL. *The Manchester Guardian* 06.04. 1935, 17.

<sup>58</sup>The Mission to Berlin. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 8.

had delivered a warning that the continuous German policy of rearmament may lead to a similar situation that had prevailed in Europe before the outbreak of WWII. Europe divided into a web of competing alliances in a constant arms race with one another and closed to the system of collective security in Europe that Britain can already be seen as espousing<sup>59</sup>.

The visit of Sir John Simon and Anthony Eden to Berlin, coupled with an article in the foreign section in the same publication only further illustrates the British willingness to act as the arbiter of the European collective security. In this, reporting how concurrently with the Berlin meeting, The British, French and the Italian representatives had made a declaration of “Unity of purpose” in all their actions<sup>60</sup>. Furthermore, an article in the same section of the publication underlines the Italian commitment to this policy while furthermore exemplifying the anxieties of a looming threat of war gripping Europe. Italian boasted of calling up the reserves and expanding the war industries so that Italy would soon have 8 million men under arms in the near future, while the French formed a high war council to prepare for potential escalation<sup>61</sup>.

From these rather immediate reactions to the German expansion of its armed forces and breaches of the 1919 treaty of Versailles, it is evident that despite the surge of pacifist sentiment in interwar Europe following WWI, the guarantors of the treaty of Versailles were by far not complacent in their actions towards these breaches as are seen from the newspapers. Furthermore, the immediate action and the condemnation of the Germans present a curiously composed front towards these breaches in previous treaty obligations and the general perceived aggression while also with strong wording condemning the expectations of the Nazi regime

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<sup>59</sup>The Mission to Berlin. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 8.

From Warsaw to Prague. *The Manchester Guardian* 5.4. 1935, 10.

<sup>60</sup>OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENCE The Commons and the Berlin Visit *The Manchester Guardian* 25.3. 1935, 8.

STRESA AS PREPARATIONS FOR LEAGUE COUNCIL. *The Manchester Guardian* 6.4. 1935, 17.

<sup>61</sup>MEETING OF THE FRENCH HIGH WAR COUNCIL. *The Manchester Guardian* 6.4.1935, 17.

towards the British<sup>62</sup>.

From the very beginning, the traditional view depicted in popular history, where Abyssinian appeasement and the Anglo-German naval treaties present the beginning of containment against Hitler is challenged. As an example of this, The previous British reactions to German rearmament have been displayed as ineffective, seemingly wavering on appeasement in 1933-1935 while refusing any concrete intervention. As an example of this, Frank McDonough's *Neville Chamberlain, Appeasement and the British Road to War* can be quoted:

*"In June 1935, the emphasis in British policy shifted back to appeasement. On 21 June the Anglo-German naval agreement was signed. It limited the German navy to 35 per cent of the British royal navy's ship strength and to 45 per cent of its submarine strength."<sup>63</sup>*

*"The Anglo-German naval agreement made plain that the British government had no objection to German rearmament provided it was kept within some arms limitation framework."<sup>64</sup>*

Britain was far from accommodating towards the German policy as is often depicted. This is the view that the Manchester Guardian is eager to present in the public discourse. This assertion should be viewed through the paper's support to MacDonald's government through the traditional lib-lab co-operation, which had drawn the declining Liberal Party to a closer relationship with the Labour Party during the interwar period in the context of multiple coalition governments and participated in MacDonald led National Government<sup>65</sup>. Though this cooperation had suffered in the previous years over a split in the Liberal Party and disagreements

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<sup>62</sup> NAZI ILLUSIONS ABOUT BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS GERMANY *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935. 12.

GERMAN DISAPPOINTMENT WITH MR. EDEN'S SPEECH "Subject to Special Influences" *The Manchester Guardian* 18.05. 1935, 17.

van Capelle & van de Bovenkamp: *Hitler's Henchmen: A sinister clique*. Gallery Book 2004, 158-160.

<sup>63</sup>McDonough, Frank., *Neville Chamberlain, Appeasement, and the British Road to War*. Manchester UP. 1998, 24.

<sup>64</sup>McDonough 1998, 24.

<sup>65</sup>Hyde, Montgomery: *Baldwin: The Unexpected Prime Minister*. Hamish-McGibbon 1973, 345.



continued to add tension to this partnership, yet the publication is presented as supportive to the government course<sup>66</sup>.

The view continues to prevail throughout the same publication. Maintaining a hard line towards the disruptions to peace in Europe and the British relations towards Germany. This hard-line can be best exemplified in an article admonishing the German attitude towards Britain. The German attempts to foster good relations and even an alliance with what the German sources have described as their “natural ally” and claim that the potential German realignment of their eastern border will by no means affect their existing relationship with Britain<sup>67</sup>. The British source was eager to flatly decline this and insist on the matter of the Eastern Security, for the first time including the maintenance of the Austrian independence to this European security policy under increasing German interests<sup>68</sup>. The matter of the Austrian security was viewed as a fulfilment of the previously reported “unity of action” espoused by the British, French and Italian government, considering the Italian interest to maintain the status quo in Austria and support the current Austrian regime as a buffer.

The reportages of the day should be viewed as setting the preliminary position of the British towards the development of the events in the aftermath of the German repudiation of the limitations set on its armed forces. The British policy of diplomatic cordiality, cooperation between the French and the Italians lay the foundation for the policy reported on by the Manchester Guardian from here on. From the newspaper discourse, it is evident that from the 26th of March onward, Europe had settled into a new political norm that would dominate both the headlines and the foreign policies of the continent. A German policy of rearmament, which had caused a chain of rearming among the powers that had seen their armed forces limited by the

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<sup>66</sup>NO ALLIANCE BETWEEN LIBERALS AND THE LABOUR PARTY. *The Manchester Guardian* 12.4. 1935, 14.

<sup>67</sup>NAZI ILLUSIONS ABOUT BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS GERMANY *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 12.

Neuer Illusionen? *Neuer Vorwärts* 12.5. 1935, 6.

Hitler's Speech. *The Manchester Guardian* 22.5. 1935, 8.

<sup>68</sup>CONSEQUENCES OF THE GERMAN REARMAMENT Austrian Nazis Waiting for Next Move. *The Manchester Guardian* 27.3. 1935, 14. The Vienna Trials. *The Manchester Guardian* 3.4. 1935, 8.

post World War I peace treaties<sup>69</sup>.

The publication is evidently building on this foundation with the reportages from the 27th of March while reporting on the trials of the local Nazis in the Lithuanian city of Klaipeda, seceded to Lithuania from Germany in the aftermath of the First World War in 1923 (known as Memel in German)<sup>70</sup>. Accused of terrorist activities, the local Nazis had been brought to trial and the Manchester Guardian seized on the news to publicize the German eagerness for eastward expansion, relating to the previous news on the Berlin negotiations and the British policy to maintain the status quo in Eastern Europe<sup>71</sup>. While displaying some sympathy to what the publication described in the Wilsonian terms as the “right of self-determination” of the people, the views presented also presses that the relinquishment of the territory in itself was a part of the treaty of Versailles and that the maintenance of the status quo is needed in the current political situation is emphasized eagerly in this British attempt to continue maintaining the status quo in the German sphere. The main threat presented to the public was the Pan-Germanic, racial and national thinking that is presented as a force that would swallow the smaller states of Eastern Europe.

This seemingly detached article on the internal matters of Lithuania is interpreted in the context of the thesis as tying together with the official report from the Anglo-German Berlin talks. Despite the British Foreign office releasing a statement from the talks having taken place in the “frankliest and friendliest” terms, the report continues to specify that no concrete changes or pacts had been made and that the German policy towards the security of Eastern Europe remains uncommitted to the preservation of the current borders and the independence of Austria<sup>72</sup>. The German representatives prefer citing their mission to act as to “defend the West against the communism of a future aggressive and strong Russia”.<sup>73</sup> A policy which in itself is presented in

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<sup>69</sup>Hakim, Joy: *A History of Us: War, Peace and all that Jazz*. Oxford University Press 1995, 100-110.  
Europäischer Friede. *Neuer Vorwärts* 31.3, 1935, 6.

<sup>70</sup>The Memel Trial. *The Manchester Guardian* 27.3. 1935, 10.

<sup>71</sup>The Mission to Berlin. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 8.

<sup>72</sup>CLOSE OF THE BERLIN CONVERSATIONS. *The Manchester Guardian* 27.3. 1935, 11.

<sup>73</sup>CLOSE OF THE BERLIN CONVERSATIONS. *The Manchester Guardian* 27.03 1935, 11.

falling in line with the general Nazi hostility to communism, which was perceived as an existential threat in the context of the Nazi political thought as formulated by Hitler and the party ideologues.

Having established the current political climate displayed on the pages of the Manchester Guardian, a wider examination of the status of the German eastern border, paramountly with Poland should be raised and examined. The main reason committing for Britain to this Eastern-Pact are presented stemming from the 1925 treaty of Locarno which had, among many of its clauses recognised the German borders in the west while leaving the eastern borders open for potential revision. This had led to damaging the Franco-Polish relations which had formed the cornerstone of the reigning network of alliances in Europe<sup>74</sup>. This policy is now seen as returning to haunt the collective security of Europe, leaving Germany the right to act in its attempt to present itself as willing to intervene in the east due to the perceived threat of communism presented by the Soviet Union. Yet the treaty binding Germany had been made with the then democratic government, not the current one bent on territorial expansion to an extent that it was known currently in the pages of the British publications<sup>75</sup>.

British efforts to mend this weakness and to compel Germany to maintain its current eastern border are presented in the context of increasing efforts of the British to include not only Poland but also the Soviet Union in the system of collective security that is being established with the earlier tripartite declaration. Thus, on March 27 a report shows that Anthony Eden, Lord Privy Seal and the League Affairs minister had left Berlin and headed towards Moscow for still unspecified talks that were to be conducted between the British and the Soviet Governments on the matters of the eastern European security as a part of wider British diplomatic campaign<sup>76</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup>Wandycz, Stefan: *France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from the Paris Peace Conference to Locarno*. ACLS Humanities 2008, 65.

Jacobson, Jon: *Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925-1929*. Princeton University Press 1972, 3.

<sup>75</sup>Kolb, Erhard: *Weimar Republic*. Psychology Press 1984, 64.

<sup>76</sup>MR EDEN FOR MOSCOW. *The Manchester Guardian* 27.3 1935, 11.

From Moscow to Warsaw. *The Manchester Guardian* 2.4 1935, 10.

From Warsaw to Prague. *The Mancehster Guardian* 5.4 1935, 10-11.

Towards the end of March, the British policy towards Germany had remained cordial but increasingly unwilling to compensate on the policy of the East European security pact. In the public discourse, an increasing disdain for Nazi policy are viewed as accompanying this sentiment<sup>77</sup>.

## **2.2 Hitler führt zum Krieg - German exiles and the policy of opportunistic collaboration**

As can be expected, with the reinstatement of conscription and the expansion of the armed forces was followed closely by the exiles of SOPADE and publicized in the *Neuer Vorwärts* in the sharpest of terms. Dedicating almost the whole paper published on the 24th of March to the current events surrounding these dissected sources. Naturally, due to its position as an exiled and committed newspaper of a political party, the reportages issued by the editors of the *Neuer Vorwärts* focus on a much narrower margin of events than the *Manchester Guardian*, focusing mainly on the internal matters taking place in Germany and their repercussions to the European balance of power.

On its front page, *Neuer Vorwärts* issued a declaration condemning the reintroduction of conscription in an unfree state as a legalized slavery, reflecting the commendation of the Nazi government by the representatives of the SOPADE<sup>78</sup>. Unlike their British counterparts in the *Manchester Guardian*, who pressed for a hard line against the German policies both in their territorial ambitions and in the matter of the repudiating of the provisions of the 1919 Versailles treaty, the SOPADE condemn any policy of the current German government and entertained no illusions of reconciliation or maintenance of peace in Europe, leaving no avenue for any collaboration between the Nazis and the democratic states of Europe<sup>79</sup>.

Another notable difference between the reportages of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Neuer*

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<sup>77</sup>Letters to the Editor: Aims of the National Socialist Party. *The Manchester Guardian* 13.4 1935, 17.

<sup>78</sup>Hitler führt zum Krieg "Wehrpflicht ohne Freiheit is Sklaverei!" *Neuer Vorwärts* 24.3 1935, 1.

<sup>79</sup>Die Mörder Europas. Wer Wagt, sie anklagen. *Neuer Vorwärts* 31.3 1935, 1.

Vorwärts was that despite their situation, the representatives of SOPADE can still rely on internal sources and contacts within the German borders. Representing views of the members of the general German populace through their correspondence. Whereas the British view, shown in the policy of cordiality and a seemingly unbending commitment to the status quo of eastern Europe, the Neuer Vorwärts had settled into a policy of unbending resistance to the current German government, attempting to differentiate the Nazi regime as despotic elements while presenting the German people as captives of the regime, presenting the developing situation both in Germany and abroad as a part of the wider struggle of European democracies against the Nazi government that SOPADE often characterized as “despotic” and “tyrannical”<sup>80</sup>. The slide towards a more radical left furthermore has led the Neuer Vorwärts to condemn in sharp turns the alliance of the certain religious representatives with the Nazi government and in turn, they attempted to co-op the anti-Nazi members of the Church to support them<sup>81</sup>. From these details, it can be stated that the Neuer Vorwärts did not possess an explicit goal in its policy, save for the resistance to the reigning status quo in German policies, echoing the words of the Karl Höltermann in 1932 when he decreed the mission of the anti-Nazi movement in Germany as the “Attack on the whole line! We must be part of the general offensive”<sup>82</sup>.

Despite this course of wide opposition, a certain common policy with the British is discerned from the SOPADE publications towards the situation on the German eastern border and its potential revisions in the near future. Whereas the British sources cite the general situation of Europe in the context of Anglo-Soviet and Anglo-Polish relations, briefly mentioning the political developments in the Free City of Danzig, which had operated as a semi-independent city-state under the auspices and supervision of the League of Nations<sup>83</sup>. A goal to the Nazis pan-German plans from the very beginning, the Neuer Vorwärts raised the matter of the free city and its position in their issue from March 24th, 1935. An excerpt from the article reads:

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<sup>80</sup>Der neu Adel. *Neuer Vorwärts* 5.5. 1935, 6.

Europa - Eine Hitler - Despotie! *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.5. 1935, 1

<sup>81</sup>"Dem Tier ward macht Gegeben..." Ein katholischer anti-nazisitcher Hirtenbrief von besonderer Schärfe. *Neuer Vorwärts* 17.3. 1935, 6.

<sup>82</sup>Blessing, Werner: *Die Weimarer Republik: Das Ende der Demokratie 1929-1933*. Bavarian State Center for Political Education 1995, 205.

<sup>83</sup>Kaczorowska, Alina: *Public International Law*. Routledge 2010, 199.

*“Die Nazis wollen die Demokratische Verfassung der freien Stadt Danzig und die Grundlagen derselben, die Pariser Konvention un den Vertrag von Versailles Soweit er auf Danzig Bezug nimmt, er hutten und dem Rate des Völkerbundes hinweise, dass das Danziger Volk einen Hilerischen Staat an der Weichsel haben will. “<sup>84</sup>*

Furthermore, the banned and exiled SPD still possessed seats in the Danziger Volkstag and were clinging to political representation and relevance in their struggle against the Danzig Nazi Party that had claimed a majority in the Volkstag<sup>85</sup>. The struggle between German democracy and the Nazi despotism was on the forefront in the free city with the approaching elections, where the SOPADE voices fears that this development too will be disturbed by the Nazi presence and their efforts to undermine the existing democratic structure of the state while struggling themselves against the perceived repression in both home and abroad<sup>86</sup>. The Neuer Vorwärts reports on the developing situation paint a bleak picture, painting the Free City of Danzig and its position as “unredeemed” German soil as a point of contention in the east and a threat to the maintenance of the status quo in Eastern Europe<sup>87</sup>. Furthermore, this point of view seems to be generally shared across the line in both English and German language sources<sup>88</sup>.

Having, placed itself in the same camp with the British when it came to the German territorial revision in eastern Europe, the Neuer Vorwärts next faced a challenge of aligning itself in the context of the Anglo-German Berlin talks<sup>89</sup>. As previously mentioned, the entire policy of the Neuer Vorwärts was the comprehensive resistance to the Nazi state apparatus. Due to this, while reporting on the visit of Sir John Simon and Anthony Eden to Berlin, the Neuer Vorwärts acknowledges the seeming success of the talks and the continuing negotiations headed by The

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<sup>84</sup>Alarm in Danzig Vor nationalsozialistischen Kraftproben im Osten. *Neuer Vorwärts* 24.3. 1935, 3.

<sup>85</sup>The Voting in Danzig. *The New York Times*. 26.5. 1935, 21.

<sup>86</sup>Saarwahlen in Danzig. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 3.

DANZIG SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 13.

<sup>87</sup>Alarm in Danzig Vor nationalsozialistischen Kraftproben im Osten. *Neuer Vorwärts* 24.3. 1935, 3.

The Danzig Elections. *The Manchester Guardian* 6.4. 1935, 12.

NAZI CAMPAIGN IN DANZIG. *The Manchester Guardian* 5.4. 1935, 14.

<sup>88</sup>A Nazi Setback. *The Manchester Guardian*. *The Manchester Guardian* 9.4. 1935, 10.

GERMAN REACTIONS TO DANZIG POLL. *The Manchester Guardian* 9.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>89</sup>Der feine Besuch Sir John Simon fährt nach Berlin. *Neuer Vorwärts* 3.3. 1935, 2.

League of Nations that are stated to follow after the conclusion of the Berlin talks<sup>90</sup>. Yet the faith that the Neuer Vorwärts places on these talks is practically nonexistent, maintaining SOPADE's anti-Nazi views on the situation of the Hitler-regime in Germany as a destabilizing force throughout Europe<sup>91</sup>. Unlike the British sources, which acknowledge the existence of the Nazi regime as problematic to the European geopolitical development, the Neuer Vorwärts presents the end of the Nazi regime as the only viable course to maintain peace in Europe<sup>92</sup>. The only alternative to this is, according to the Neuer Vorwärts is the continuous threat of war will persist despite the extent or scope of the negotiations, citing this as the part of "German militarism" that has been brought back to power with the Nazi regime.<sup>93</sup> From this, the main differentiating factor between the point of view presented in the British sources and the German exile sources rises. The British, at this point are viewed as more willing to simply isolate expansionist Germany with a ring of allied states than take direct actions towards the Nazi regime, a direct action that the Neuer Vorwärts continuously advocates for.

This advocating, which in the newspapers appears as an indirect call to action from the tripartite powers, sets the main course of the reportages of the Neuer Vorwärts in the following issues. Trapped in their state of exile and unable to exert any practical actions by themselves. The alignment with the tripartite powers and their relationship to the SOPADE and their views is a complex one since it can be postulated when acknowledging the previous relations with the SPD led German governments before the Nazi seizure of power and exile of the SPD to Prague where they operated in 1935.

From the writings, it thus emerges, that the exiles of SOPADE did not throw themselves unconditionally in the camp of the tripartite powers, attempting to no doubt both present their views as independently from the powers as possible to maintain an air of independent legitimacy

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<sup>90</sup>Der feine Besuch Sir John Simon fährt nach Berlin. *Neuer Vorwärts* 3.3. 1935, 2.

<sup>91</sup>Die Strafe als Fundament der Diktatur. *Neuer Vorwärts* 3.3. 1935, 4.

<sup>92</sup>Europäischer Friede. *Neuer Vorwärts* 31.3. 1935, 3.

Der geist der preußischen Militarismus. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 5.

<sup>93</sup>Betrieb und Kaserne. Die Militarisierung der Arbeiterschaft. *Neuer Vorwärts* 10. 3. 1935, 8.

Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 2-4.

in their policies and attempts to win over the German public. It is obvious, that even in exile the SOPADE was readying itself for what they perceived as the inevitable fall of the Nazi regime and were prepared to step in to fill the power vacuum. Knowing this, the policy of SOPADE can best be described as a selective collaboration that combines with a policy of undermining the perceived existing political legitimacy of the Nazi regime.

The implementation of this policy is presented in the *Neuer Vorwärts* published on 31st of March under the title of *Was nicht im Hitler-aufruf steht. Wollte Frankreich 1933 marschieren?*<sup>94</sup>. In the article itself, the SOPADE is presented as condemning the current course of the policies taken by the tripartite powers towards Germany, while also at the same time accusing the Nazi leadership of attempting to curry favour with the British government and accusing them of fantastical courses in foreign policy<sup>95</sup>. While also reporting on the French plans to march against Germany in 1933 and how these had elicited a reaction from the Nazi government<sup>96</sup>. The news of the Nazi attempts at rapprochement with the British seems to refer to the same development that the *Manchester Guardian* publicized earlier<sup>97</sup>. Most interestingly, the *Neuer Vorwärts* continues to refer to writings and publishings of a Polish revolutionary, Karl Radek<sup>98</sup>. Radek had collaborated with the German Communist Party, which had been opposed to SPD during the German revolutions and later during the rise of the Nazis to power in the early 1930s<sup>99</sup>. Furthermore, the already existing divide between the Nazi regime and the Soviet Union is viewed as growing due to the Franco-Soviet rapprochement and the inclusion of the Soviet Union in the designs of the collective security system in an attempt to stave off the German expansionism in continental Europe, with this taking a form of a propaganda campaign<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup>Was nicht im Hitler-Aufruf steht Wollte Frankreich 1933 marschieren? *Neuer Vorwärts* 31.3. 1935, 3.

<sup>95</sup>Kleine Illusionen! Die Dauergahr für den Frieden bleibt bestehen. *Neuer Vorwärts* 28.4. 1935, 1.  
Neue Illusionen? *Neuer Vorwärts* 12.5. 1935, 2.

<sup>96</sup>Kleine Illusionen! Die Dauergahr für den Frieden bleibt bestehen. *Neuer Vorwärts* 28.4. 1935, 1.

<sup>97</sup>NAZI ILLUSIONS ABOUT BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS GERMANY *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 12.

<sup>98</sup>Was nicht im Hitler-Aufruf steht Wollte Frankreich 1933 marschieren? *Neuer Vorwärts* 31.3. 1935, 3.

<sup>99</sup>Fischer, Ruth: *Stalin and German Communism: A Study in the Origins of the State*. Routledge 1948, 200-202.

<sup>100</sup>Deutsch-russischer Pressekrieg. *Neuer Vorwärts* 17. 3. 1935, 2.



Having established SOPADE's policy of selective collaboration with the tripartite powers, I postulate that this policy has been partially expanded to include the German communists and by extension, their Soviet backers in Moscow. Their trust in citing the works of Radek seems to imply this plan to form an ever-widening coalition in the context of the anti-Nazi resistance and selective collaborationism, considering the existing Nazi-Soviet hostilities<sup>101</sup>.

Furthermore, while aligning itself politically in the anti-Nazi camp, the wider geopolitical tensions that had manifested in the pages of their British counterpart were not outside the notice of the *Neuer Vorwärts*. The paper had skirted these events in the context of their reportages on the policies of the Nazi regime, but in their reportage published on the 10th of March, the *Neuer Vorwärts* presents a more comprehensive view towards the threat of war in Europe and in the wider world<sup>102</sup>. An article describing these developments expresses the threat of war looming over Europe ever since 1933, marking the rise of the Austro-Fascist Dolfuss government in Austria as another step towards the shattering of the piece in Europe, equating the rise of fascist governments to this development<sup>103</sup>.

Another point that the article raises is the situation in the formerly French-occupied territory of Saar Basin that had been returned to German control in the early March of 1935 after a referendum and the approval of the council of the League of Nations<sup>104</sup>. From the article, this is interpreted as an equivalent of Nazi interests in eastern Europe and in the Free City of Danzig. From this, the developments are seen as an attempt to exemplify that the previous treaties that had set the German borders with Belgium and France were potentially open for revision just like the borders in the east while also criticizing France for backing down on the Saar question<sup>105</sup>. In the wider context, *Neuer Vorwärts* reports the geopolitical situation in Europe sliding inevitably towards another world war in much sharper terms than their counterparts in the Manchester

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<sup>101</sup>Einheitsfronts dämmerung in Frankreich. *Neuer Vorwärts* 17.3. 1935, 2.

<sup>102</sup>Ein Anschlag gegen den Frieden Deutsch-polnische Eroberungsziele. *Neuer Vorwärts* 10.3. 1935, 2.  
Alles für den Krieg! *Neuer Vorwärts* 10.3. 1935, 3.

<sup>103</sup>"Volksgemeinschaft" und der Saar. *Neuer Vorwärts* 31.3. 1935, 4.

<sup>104</sup>Russel, Frank: *The Saar Battleground and Pawn*. Stanford University Press 1951, 96.

<sup>105</sup>"Volksgemeinschaft" und der Saar. *Neuer Vorwärts* 31.3. 1935, 4.

Guardian. Policies of selective collaboration and the confrontation between the Nazi regime are thus the staples of the SOPADE policies in the Neuer Vorwärts.

Acknowledging these previously presented matters, and examining the conclusion of the reportages of the Neuer Vorwärts in the month predating the tripartite conference, it is evident that the articles of the Neuer Vorwärts published on the 7th of April have been the culmination of the previously examined policies displayed by SOAPDE through the Neuer Vorwärts<sup>106</sup>. In addition to previous policies of selective collaboration with the powers, another political course should be added. On the eve of the conference where the tripartite powers are meant to gather, Germany under Hitler is presented as a diplomatically isolated state and the overtures the Nazi diplomats had made are presented as failures with neither the Italians nor the British willing to entertain the Nazi offers of either an alliance or show willingness to condone the Nazi policy of readjusting the 1920 borders of Germany<sup>107</sup>.

In no uncertain terms, the Neuer Vorwärts lays this blame on the policies of the Nazi government and the personally at Hitler<sup>108</sup>. In the view that the Neuer Vorwärts presents, not only has the Nazi foreign policy failed, but Hitler himself has failed. From the sources, it can almost be inferred that the Nazi regime has created conditions that mean it can't sustain itself. The tripartite powers have reaped the rewards of the French policy of cordon sanitaire by aligning Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania in their system of collective security<sup>109</sup>. The Anglo-Soviet Moscow meeting between Eden, Litvinov and Stalin have also been presented as successes, displaying the inclusion of the Soviet Union in the security pact as a de facto matter<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>106</sup>Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 2.

Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 1.

<sup>107</sup>NAZI ILLUSIONS ABOUT BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS GERMANY *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 12.

WHY POLAND MAY NOW ACCEPT THE EASTERN PACT. *The Manchester Guardian* 2.4. 1935, 11.

SECURITY IN EUROPE. *The Manchester Guardian* 3.4. 1935, 12.

<sup>108</sup>Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 2.

<sup>109</sup>POLAND'S PLEASURE AT MR. EDEN'S VISIT. *The Manchester Guardian* 28.3. 1935, 12.

A RUMANIAN VISIT TO MOSCOW. *The Manchester Guardian* 30.3. 1935, 12.

COMPLETE ACCORD BETWEEN BRITAIN AND RUSSIA. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.4. 1935, 9.

NEW ANXIETY IN BERLIN *The Manchester Guardian* 1.4. 1935, 9.

<sup>110</sup>Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 2.

Despite also presenting the events of Danzig as signs of Nazi willingness for continuous territorial expansion that had not been halted by the German diplomatic isolation, it is evident that in the immediate period before the official promulgation of the tripartite powers in Stresa, the public mood in the exile press had taken a sharp turn in favour of the powers<sup>111</sup>. The failure of the Nazi policy is viewed palpably, with the paper continuing to warn that the system of Nazi rule itself is a threat to global peace and stability<sup>112</sup>. The language of the *Neuer Vorwärts* has sharpened and its views have grown clearer due to the action of the tripartite powers and the assumption.

The message that the current political situation is the prelude to a concrete formation and finalization of de jure network of European military alliances that would all but assure diplomatic, military and political isolation of the Nazi regime while at the same time providing the potential to resist the attempts of the Nazi regime to challenge the current European status quo by the Force of arms. Along with this, the promise to impose united action if the situation would continue to devolve towards an armed confrontation between the Nazi regime, three powers and their associated powers. An event, through which the exiles of SOPADE could be viewed as returning to power in Germany and the ultimate goal of the exiles through which all the policies executed in their publications should be viewed in the larger scheme of the events in the context of the organizational goals of the SOPADE.

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<sup>111</sup>NAZIS FAIL IN THEIR AIM AT DANZIG. *The Manchester Guardian* 8.4. 1935, 9.

<sup>112</sup>Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 1.

### 2.3 The mood on the eve of the conference and the failures of the pacts

The prevailing idea in both the British and the German newspapers was a belief of political and diplomatic isolation of the Nazi regime on the eve of the Stresa Conference. The newspaper sources describe the tripartite powers and their associates as the ones that have seized the momentum and have pressed on with their plans<sup>113</sup>. The wider mood in Europe reflected that of anxious anticipation at the eve of the conference, as are discerned from the newspaper sources<sup>114</sup>. The spectre of wider conflict loomed heavy over the continent with a seeming hope that the Stresa talks would formulate a concrete policy through which these perceived de-facto alliances would further be strengthened through a common agreement. French policy at the eve of the conference in turn is mainly depicted as playing for time. It can be postulated that the French government is attempting to placate the German concerns while playing for time when it comes to formulating the concrete agreement between the three powers<sup>115</sup>.

From these developments, I present a prevailing pattern of increased political and diplomatic pragmatism that can be detected from the policies conducted by the democratic powers of Europe, namely France and Britain. This is well reflected by the reportages of the Manchester Guardian, which refrains from condemning the political systems of the perceived British allies in Italy and the Soviet Union. Despite the previously tense diplomatic relations between the two states, along with the hardly compatible political ideologies represented by the British democratic establishment exemplified in the Manchester Guardian's brand of left-wing social liberalism<sup>116</sup>. A similar development of rapprochement towards the Soviet line is seen in the

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<sup>113</sup> Die Mörder Europas. Wer Wagt, sie anklagen. *Neuer Vorwärts* 31.3.1935, 1.

<sup>114</sup>CIVILIANS TO BE "COMMANDEERED" FOR AIR DEFENCE SERVICE. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3.1935, 12.

Hitler führt zum Krieg "Wehrpflicht ohne Freiheit is Sklaverei!". *Neuer Vorwärts* 24.3.1935, 1.

<sup>115</sup>FRENCH POLICY FOR STRESA. *The Manchester Guardian* 8.4.1935, 12.

BRITISH POLICY AT STRESA TO-MORROW. *The Manchester Guardian*. 10.4.1935, 9.

EVE OF STRESA CONFERENCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 11.4.1935, 12.

<sup>116</sup>The Guardian 1935.

Neuer Vorwärts and in their previously explored publishing of a commentary by the Soviet-backed Karl Radek.

From the examination of the newspapers, it is evident that the collaboration between the political actors viewing themselves as the champions of democratic liberties and the said media groups with democratic credentials did not view, or at least display any conflicts of interests between the two different systems and even if they did, such misgivings were not voiced in the sources. In all, such condemnation was reserved exclusively to the Nazi regime and the excess conducted by the German government<sup>117</sup>. This development, in the case of Italian diplomatic relations with France and Britain, can perhaps best be viewed through the lens of Mussolini's enigmatic nature through his meshing of foreign and domestic policies that the democratic statesmen of France and Britain found difficult to comprehend<sup>118</sup>. Yet, despite or rather because of this, and due to his intervention to support Austrian independence in the past, Mussolini was viewed by the democracies as a leader who would stand up to Hitler if the tensions would escalate any further<sup>119</sup>. Despite his previous blustering and willingness to challenge the territorial integrity of France or her Northern-African possessions<sup>120</sup>.

When compared to the historical discourse and the view that has been presented from the era in the prevailing historiography, the policy of appeasement, with varying intensity is seen as the primary course of the European powers from 1933 onward<sup>121</sup>. Combined with the interwar pacifism and the collective trauma left by the Great War, the attempts at containing German expansionism and the reactions to the breaches of the 1919 treaty of Versailles contributed to a discourse of passive acceptance of the breaches and general unwillingness from the tripartite powers to act as the guarantors to the treaty<sup>122</sup>.

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<sup>117</sup>The Danzig Elections. *The Manchester Guardian* 6.4. 1935, 17.

NAZI CAMPAIGN IN DANZIG. *The Mancehster Guardian* 5.4. 1935, 14.

Lüge und herrsche! *Neuer Vorwärts* 24.3, 3.

<sup>118</sup>Bosworth, Richard: *Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship, 1915-1945*. Penguin Books 2007, 44.

<sup>119</sup>ITALY AND REVISION. *The Manchester Guardian* 08.04. 1935, 12.

<sup>120</sup>Gooch, John: *Mussolini and His Generals: The Armed Forces and Fascist Foreign Policy, 1922-1940*. Cambridge University Press 2007, 92.

<sup>121</sup>McDonough 1998, 154.

<sup>122</sup>Atkinson, *The Treaty of Versailles and its Consequences* 2002.

Even if the subsequent historical developments proved the taken by the tripartite powers and their allies as ineffective, reactions presented in the contemporary discourse did not view them as such. The examined press discourse of the tripartite powers presents the view of an increasing cooperation and a state of readiness to pursue this common course against the Nazi regime, eschewing any appeasement in this context.

Despite the united course of action presented in both newspaper sources, the course of the events had begun to slowly turn against the tripartite powers and the system of collective security in Europe. This took place before it had even truly been finalized with an agreement at Stresa. In the wider context of the events, the spirit of interwar disarmament and the memory of the Great War still haunted the public consciousness in Europe<sup>123</sup>. There was no true willingness in either Britain or in France to truly stoke the embers of war<sup>124</sup>. The dissenting voices, such as the Manchester Guardian and the Neuer Vorwärts were, despite their convictions to their causes in opposing what is generally perceived as Nazi tyranny a minority in the wider political discourse with dissenting voices in their own ranks<sup>125</sup>.

Furthermore, the failure to comprehensively and fully align the Soviet Union and Poland in the wider network of European security, save for the tentative and moribund Franco-Soviet alliance that had yet to be fully implemented in May of 1935<sup>126</sup>. The French alliances with Poland and Czechoslovakia and the French mediated alliance between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union can furthermore be seen as an attempt to strengthen this collective system that the Franco-British cooperation had been building ever since the first signs of the German process of rearmament in Europe<sup>127</sup>.

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<sup>123</sup>Lynch 1999, 25-30.

<sup>124</sup>Lynch 1999, 85.

<sup>125</sup>Ceadel, Martin: *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945*, Oxford University Press 1980, 810-815.

<sup>126</sup>POLAND'S PLEASURE AT MR. EDEN'S VISIT. *The Manchester Guardian* 28.3. 1935, 12.

MR. EDEN ON LAST STAGE PRAGUE TALKS TODAY. *The Manchester Guardian* 4.4. 1935, 11.

FRANCO-SOVIET PACT. *The Manchester Guardian* 3.5. 1935, 11.

<sup>127</sup>MR. EDEN'S VISIT TO PRAGUE. *The Manchester Guardian* 5.4. 1935, 14.

POSSIBLE GERMAN REPLY TO THE LEAGUE. *The Manchester Guardian* 20.4. 1935, 11.

BRITISH POLICY TO BE STATED AFRESH. *The Manchester Guardian* 2.5. 1935, 12.

In a way, this is presented as a weakness endemic to the entire structure that the newspaper sources dubbed as the “Eastern pact” and “System of European security”<sup>128</sup>. The matter that the sources mentioned only in vaguest of terms, citing these agreements as de facto commitments to the European security pact that already existed in practice and would only require de jure ratification to come in effect<sup>129</sup>. When examined through earlier research on international politics and the terms of the said treaties of mutual assistance and alliances, It can be stated that the picture of diplomatically and isolated Germany, through a one publicized in the sources was not truly as isolated as it was presented, displaying some wishful thinking on the part of the newspapers<sup>130</sup>.

The treaties that had seemingly aligned the states of the Little Entente, Poland and the Soviet Union to isolate Germany. Despite this, the treaties that had seemingly created a united front had instead formed a disparate collection of states and interests, each bound to the system of collective security in Europe through their own separate treaties. In this, their commitment to these treaties ranging widely from collective defensive pacts, such as the *Franco-Czechoslovakian treaty of Alliance and Friendship*, to collective formations of smaller states such as the Little Entente.

Some of these pacts were nothing more than vague agreements that would act simply as gestures of friendship and support, such as the *Franco-Soviet alliance* that the collective system would continue to invoke as a threat of a two-front war against Germany<sup>131</sup>. When examining the German reactions to the pact, ranging from protest to evoking the League of Nations, this is viewed as a working strategy of the German government in the immediate aftermath of the three-power rapprochement<sup>132</sup>.

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<sup>128</sup>FRANCE GRATIFIED AT SUCCESS OF THE MOSCOW TALKS. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.4. 1935, 12.

<sup>129</sup>FRANCE'S NEW AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA. *The Manchester Guardian* 12.4. 1935, 6.

GERMAN COMMENT ON FRANCO RUSSIAN AGREEMENT. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.5. 1935, 6.

<sup>130</sup>NEW ANXIETY IN BERLIN. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.4. 1935, 9.

<sup>131</sup>POLAND'S AFTERTHOUGHTS ON MR. EDEN'S VISIT. *The Manchester Guardian* 5.4, 1935, 14.

HERR HESS ON "PIQUANCY" OF MR EDEN'S MOSCOW VISIT. *The Manchester Guardian* 6.4. 1935, 17.  
STOP-PRESS NEWS. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.6. 1935, 5.

<sup>132</sup>GERMANY'S DESIRE FOR A REFORMED LEAGUE. *The Manchester Guardian* 11.4. 1935, 12.

POSSIBLE GERMAN REPLY TO THE LEAGUE *The Manchester Guardian* 20.4. 1935, 11.

From material, analysed here, it is possible to state that despite the willingness to portray the upcoming talks at Stresa as a final seal on what would eventually lead to being a network of collective security to prevent war in Europe. Yet, this alliance and the pacts that had been leading up to it were already disparate and confusing, cracking at the seams beneath the weight of the incompatible geopolitical goals, historical rivalries and the political interests of the states. These differences were indeed brushed aside when presented with the system of collective security. A system that is viewed as expanding on a theoretical level during the era surrounding the Stresa Conference. In this, a position of strength is presented that would render any further appeasement obsolete.

### 3. The talks at Stresa and the reportages concerning them

In the context of the system of collective security in Europe, it is clear that the tripartite powers and their allies possessed the advantage as it was described in the newspapers. The effects of the Nazi electoral campaign for Danzig Volkstag had been publicized, claiming that despite their victory the Danzig Nazis failed in claiming the majority that would allow any meaningful amendments in the Danzig constitution<sup>133</sup>. Along with this, the seeming successes of the Franco-Russian talks were further publicized in the pages of the Manchester Guardian, further placing assurances that the Soviet Union is included in the previously introduced policy of encirclement, even with the vaguest of the terms and despite not participating in the future talks at Stresa<sup>134</sup>. Despite some misgivings that are possible to be gleaned from the pages of the newspapers, it is evident that the first perceptions of Stresa talks were viewed through a lens of positive development in the context of the wider European security pact and containment of Germany.

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<sup>133</sup>Saarwahlen in Danzig. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 3.

The Danzig Elections. *The Manchester Guardian* 6.4. 1935, 12.

<sup>134</sup>FRANCE'S NEW AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA. *The Manchester Guardian* 12.4. 1935, 6.  
FRANCO-SOVIET PACT Difficulties Overcome. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.5. 1935, 6.



In this chapter, the focus is on the conference itself and its immediate aftermath with the events that took place within the confines of the inter-allied meetings. In addition, the events that are perceived as reactions of the tripartite powers, their aligned states and Nazi Germany towards these developments are also examined, while acknowledging the events affecting it that took place during the preceding months. In addition to how they were affected and how they were perceived in the newspapers. First examining the views of the Manchester Guardian through their reportages from Stresa, presented by their correspondents present on the location as the talks took place, moving on to accounts of the Neuer Vorwärts later in the chapter.

### **3.1 Goals of the powers at Stresa according to the Manchester Guardian**

During the lead up to the meeting at Stresa, and during the period that the security system along with its eastern pact was being planned to be implemented, the tripartite powers lacked any one comprehensive goal besides their opposition to the German rearmament and geopolitical realignment of the European balance of power in favour of the Nazi government. Only united by this, the powers were scrambling for comprehensive policies during the months leading up to the meeting<sup>135</sup>. France and Italy demanded stronger action in Europe. This can be stated as stemming from opposing the British demand for limitation of numbers in German rearmament and to the potential inclusion of Germany in a pact that would demarcate her eastern borders and normalize her relations with her neighbours. This policy which Germany had declined to abide by in the earlier Berlin talks between the British and the German diplomatic representatives, a position which the Nazi government continued to maintain<sup>136</sup>. Furthermore, in the days preceding the conference, the British plans and policies seemed to lack a comprehensive course, with the

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<sup>135</sup>M. LAVAL ON THE AIMS OF FRENCH DIPLOMACY. *The Manchester Guardian* 27.3. 1935, 14.  
BRITISH POLICY AT STRESA TO-MORROW. *The Manchester Guardian* 10.4. 1935, 9.  
FRANCO-RUSSIAN PACT. *The Manchester Guardian* 10.4. 1935, 9.  
EVE OF STRESA CONFERENCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 11.4. 1935, 12.

<sup>136</sup>SIR JOHN SIMONS REPORTS TO THE CABINET No Helpful Proposals by Hitler. *The Manchester Guardian* 28.3. 1935, 9.  
GERMAN VIEWS ON SECURITY. *The Manchester Guardian* 4.4. 1935, 6.  
NAZIS FAIL IN THEIR AIM AT DANZIG. *The Manchester Guardian* 8.4. 1935, 9.  
HOPE YET NOT ABANDONED OF GERMAN CO-OPERATION. *The Manchester Guardian* 12.4. 1935, 11.

government unable to decide on the action and commitments that Britain would be ready to take up in the event of a conflict in the European continent. Indecision, that the British government attempted to mask with their declaration to uphold all the previous pacts, such as Locarno is viewed as undermining the purpose of the conference and its goal of collective European security before it had even begun<sup>137</sup>.

In addition, The Manchester Guardian seems to have softened their previously strongly-worded reporting on the matters, shifting to a more neutral view in their reportages from the tripartite conference and on the challenges the three powers faced due to their disparate goals with the British policy of isolation on the continental European affairs rearing its head while the situation itself was viewed as demanding comprehensive and unity of action by the powers<sup>138</sup>. I would present this development as the result of the previously examined willingness to avoid both war and any excessive continental commitments by the British with the “Peace as National Interest”.

These foundational disagreements and the seemingly continuously changing political aims of the tripartite powers, as presented in the newspapers present a difficulty in the formation of common policies. Coupled with the vagueness in the terms of additional military agreements with the associated powers have created a political environment in which the formation of common policies even at the conference appear as a difficulty. Mussolini is reported as wanting a concrete agreement on a military alliance first and foremost while France, as the premier continental power, presents its policies through the framework of the League of Nations and its mandates on prevention of hostilities. In this, Britain’s policy appears as the deciding factor in the formation of the concrete agreement on a common policy<sup>139</sup>. The newspapers claim that this seeming hesitation on Britain’s part is attempted to be seized by the Nazi sources, citing it as a failure to form a united front or a new “Triple alliance”, reflecting the willingness of the Nazi government

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<sup>137</sup>A Nazi Setback. *The Manchester Guardian*. 9.4.1935, 10.

BRITISH POLICY AT STRESA TO-MORROW. *The Manchester Guardian* 10.4. 1935, 9.

<sup>138</sup>SECURITY IN EUROPE. *The Manchester Guardian* 03.04. 1935, 12.

BRITISH POLICY AT STRESA TO-MORROW. *The Manchester Guardian* 10.4. 1935, 9.

PREMIERS OF THREE POWERS AT STRES. *The Manchester Guardian* 11.4, 1935, 9.

<sup>139</sup>HOPE YET NOT ABANDONED OF GERMAN CO-OPERATION. *The Manchester Guardian* 12.4. 1935, 11.  
TO-DAY'S LEAGUE COUNCIL MEETING. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 13.

and their diplomatic corps to align Britain or at least isolate her from any continental alliances like during the last wider European conflict, an idea that the Manchester Guardian had already dismissed as an unfeasible policy, citing both the conflicting goals of the British government and the general British unwillingness to align themselves with a regime that had been displayed as irridentist and anti-democratic in its foundation<sup>140</sup>.

Albeit the British hesitation is possible to be discerned from the articles displaying the French course actions in Europe and the seeming British unwillingness to commit to any other diplomatic action than the protection of the German western borders as they were set in the 1925 Treaty of Locarno<sup>141</sup>. It can be said that these divisions were not as drastic as the Nazi press describes them as and that the tripartite powers still held the formation of a common policy on The European situation as their ultimate goal during the talks<sup>142</sup>.

These were the first news that had reached the correspondents of the Manchester Guardian while the French, Italian and British premiers and their diplomatic staffs had arrived at Stresa<sup>143</sup>. Conflicting plans, goals and interests faced with a backdrop of anti-war movements both in Britain and in wider Europe. Coupled with interwar pacifism and the lingering trauma of the previous war contrasting with an urge to maintain the European status quo through the upholding of the 1919 Versailles treaty which stipulated the disarmament and the limitations set on the German armed forces and expansion of the armed forces through the reintroduction of conscription<sup>144</sup>.

The formulation of a common policy on a large scale would indeed prove to be a difficult task with these disparate goals, but news of such disparities were often pushed to the background and

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<sup>140</sup>Craig, Gordon: *The Diplomats, 1919-1939*. Princeton University Press 1966, 422.

<sup>141</sup>NO CUT-AND-DRIED FRENCH POLICY AT STRESA. *The Manchester Guardian* 11.4. 1935, 12.

HOPE YET NOT ABANDONED OF GERMAN CO-OPERATION. *The Manchester Guardian* 12.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>142</sup>Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 2.

Stresa. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 8.

THE PREMIER ON STRESA Three-Power Solidarity and No New Commitments "THE DOOR OPEN FOR GERMANY". *The Manchester Guardian* 18.4. 1935, 3.

<sup>143</sup>Situation in Europe. *The Manchester Guardian* 9.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>144</sup>GERMANY'S FIRST CONSCRIPTS BEGIN JOINING UP TO-DAY. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.4. 1935, 12.

veiled in the publications. For example, The Manchester Guardian reports these disagreements in an offhand manner in their reportages and further focuses on the shared goal of the three powers at Stresa, emphasizing the readiness of the tripartite powers to take action if needed. This policy continues to present the unwillingness to concede ground to Germany in these negotiations, displaying unwillingness to any apparent appeasement.

The alignment of these three powers and adjusting their disparate goals into a workable common policy became the paramount object at the Stresa meeting. Working against the backdrop of the disparities, and against the increasing anti-war spirit at home, evident in the letters to the editor condemning the future European wars as symptoms of capitalism gone rampant and as wild tribalism that continued to divide Europe as the primary causes of the looming war<sup>145</sup>. In this, a contrast between the position of the Manchester Guardian and the member of the British public writing their letters to the editor are seen<sup>146</sup>.

*"The Socialist argument is rather that military power is indispensable to any unequal society and that an owning class must control for its own ends, abroad and at home the armed power of the State. Given a multiplicity of competing national capitalist units, each possessed of military power, the inevitable result is first the "armed peace" and eventually war."<sup>147</sup>*

This confusion in both the British camp and among other tripartite powers of the pact is viewed as clearing as the negotiations took place. For the first time, the issue of Austria, the Austrian independence and the general rearmament were raised as the focal point in the discussions<sup>148</sup>. Additionally, the German attempts at exerting influence in Austria was raised, as was the inclusion of the fourth power in the official declaration of the pact, where that power would be

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<sup>145</sup>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: THE CAUSES OF WAR Tribe-Worship in Western Europe. *The Manchester Guardian* 10.4. 1935, 18.

<sup>146</sup>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: ECONOMIC CAUSES OF WAR. *The Manchester Guardian* 12.4. 1935, 20.  
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: THE NAZIS IN THE SAAR. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 16.

<sup>147</sup>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: ECONOMIC CAUSES OF WAR Do 'Nations' Desire Wealth? *The Manchester Guardian* 4.6.1935, 20.

<sup>148</sup>PREPARING FOR THE NEXT EUROPEAN CONFERENCE. *The Manchester Guardian*. 6.4. 1935, 13.  
FRENCH POLICY FOR STRESA. *The Manchester Guardian* 8.4. 1936, 12.

Germany, Poland or the Soviet Union was left generally ambiguous<sup>149</sup>. As of the political situation and the position of Austria in the context of its own internal political instability due to the 1934 Austrian civil war and the attempted Nazi coup, but these had always been presented as a separate matter from the German territorial ambitions in Europe<sup>150</sup>. It is presumed that these matters of Austria were raised due to Italy's interests in maintaining the independence of their Austrian allies. The Austrian government had drifted closer towards the Italian sphere of influence since the self-elimination of the Austrian parliament and the seizure of power by the Austro-Fascist authorities, binding the maintenance of Austrian independence as one of the more tangible goals of the conference which seemingly received tentative support from the British representatives as presented in the newspapers<sup>151</sup>. Furthermore, the inclusion of Germany in some form of the pact, or realigning the German policies away from territorial expansionism, focusing on the League of Nations and including Germany in a pact that would politically bind her to refrain from any hostile action was raised<sup>152</sup>.

This process is evidently hastened by the seeming redirection of the foreign policy goals of the Nazi government, as the Manchester Guardian reports on the 13th of April. The German representatives had accepted the modified Eastern pact with their neighbours as the basis of the future conduct of diplomacy<sup>153</sup>. The Nazi government had indeed felt the pressure of the alignment of the tripartite powers and their allies against them in their attempt at diplomatic isolation. Furthermore, the Franco-Soviet talks and the Italian plan to keep a notable number of men under arms as a further assurance of the willingness of the tripartite powers to act in unison. Three hesitant guarantors acting against Germany's attempts to repudiate the last vestments of the 1919 treaty of Versailles. This perceived pressure from the tripartite powers and their associates are presented in the newspapers as part of the Nazi government's reaction to the

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<sup>149</sup>POSSIBLE GERMAN REPLY TO THE LEAGUE. *The Manchester Guardian* 20.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>150</sup>Memel Three-Power Protest to Lithuania. *The Manchester Guardian* 2.4. 1935, 6.

THE PREMIER ON STRESA Three-Power Solidarity and No New Commitments "THE DOOR OPEN FOR GERMANY". *The Manchester Guardian* 18.4. 1935, 3.

<sup>151</sup>STRESA & DECISIONS ON AUSTRIAN INDEPENDENCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 16.4. 1935, 14.  
Burgwyn 1997. 104.

<sup>152</sup>STRESA AS PREPARATIONS FOR LEAGUE COUNCIL. *The Manchester Guardian* 6.4. 1935, 17.

<sup>153</sup>A SUDDEN CHANGE AT STRESA CONFERENCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 13.4. 1935, 11.

events of the conference. Amidst the inter-allied meetings, a communique had been issued by the tripartite powers, pressing a non-aggression pact to Germany, which the foreign minister von Neurath had accepted the modified non-aggression pact and de-facto inclusion of Germany in the Security pact<sup>154</sup>.

This could be viewed as Germany bowing to the pressure and accepting the normalization of its relationship with its eastern neighbours, though it can also be stated the acceptance of this pact has left Germany in an undefined position in relation to the actual meanings of the agreement<sup>155</sup>. Furthermore, the German government refused to include a non-aggression pact with Lithuania in this modified agreement on the eastern pact, citing the current territorial and political dispute on part of Memel as the cause, rendering the agreement slightly stillborn from its inception.<sup>156</sup> But in this, it seems that the tripartite powers in Stresa have gained somewhat of a diplomatic victory in the majority of Eastern European matters towards the Nazi government and their territorial ambitions. From the continuation of the article, it is interpreted that the German accession to the Eastern pact was viewed as the first steps to more comprehensive disarmament, or at least inclusion of Germany to further pacts that would bind Germany diplomatically into a policy of non-aggression and to the general policy of maintenance of the European status quo in the long run<sup>157</sup>. The focus of the conference and the agreements that had followed can thus be perceived as shifting from the direct policy of isolation to an attempt to bring the Nazi government into the agreements and through this check its influence in the European political scene.

The previously mentioned position of Austria, as a de-facto Italian client state was further solidified, even if the Nazi government refused to accept a concrete policy of non-interference in the Austrian internal affairs despite Mussolini's stringent demands to this<sup>158</sup>. This is viewed as

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<sup>154</sup>STRESA AGREEMENT EXAMINED. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 12.

<sup>155</sup>A SUDDEN CHANGE AT STRESA CONFERENCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 13.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>156</sup>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. THE MEMEL PROBLEM. GREAT POWERS AND DISARMAMENT. *The Manchester Guardian* 30.3. 1935, 09.

STRESA AGREEMENT EXAMINED. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935. 12

Newman, William: *The Balance of Power in the Interwar Years, 1919-1939*. Random House Publishing 1968, 90.

<sup>157</sup>Webster 2006, 243.

<sup>158</sup>STRESA AGREEMENT EXAMINED. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 12.

resulting in a more open collaboration between France and Italy in a policy which France committed to tepidly supporting Italian intervention in Austria in the case of attempted Nazi takeover of the government or the seizure of Austrian territory<sup>159</sup>. A policy of negotiation and the implied forces seemed to have gained more eminence in the communication towards the German government. Yet a change in course is perceived, Contrasted to the previous policy of hostility and calls to comprehensive action that had dominated the pages of the Manchester Guardian during the month leading up to the Stresa Conference. It can be argued, that in this disparity of plans and action between the tripartite powers lies the beginning of the policy of appeasement that would dictate the policy of France and Britain towards the Nazi government in the coming years.

This development is evident in the reply given by von Neurath, where Germany showed a willingness to accommodate the demands of the tripartite powers in context of its eastern policy:

*"To-day a reply was received from Baron von Neurath that Germany would agree to enter a non-aggression pact in the East on condition that it was kept completely distinct from the mutual assistance pacts concluded by some of the other signatories."<sup>160</sup>*

This new course by Germany contrasted sharply with the previous confrontational attitudes displayed by the Nazi government, displaying the willingness to act according to previously established diplomatic means. The German willingness to use these diplomatic means began to dull the edge of the need for firm action in the name of collective security. Furthermore, reporting on the conclusion of the Stresa talks the Manchester Guardian emphasises that despite being a “modest” agreement, the result of the talks is presented as a clear success in the context of European collective security. The tripartite powers described as “co-operating in each branch of European policy” and “continuing the method of negotiation with Germany”<sup>161</sup>.

Based on the examined newspapers, I argue that in the public perception the unity of acting

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<sup>159</sup>A SUDDEN CHANGE AT STRESA CONFERENCE *The Manchester Guardian* 13.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>160</sup>A SUDDEN CHANGE AT STRESA CONFERENCE *The Manchester Guardian* 13.4. 1935, 11.

<sup>161</sup>Stresa. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 08.

amongst the Tripartite powers at Stresa had been restored. Despite these positive developments, it is also abundantly clear from the newspapers that the German agreements at non-aggression were not taken at face value, no doubt to their rather limited implementation and the fact that in the end, Germany had only accepted a “modified eastern pact”. This raised more issues with its implementation<sup>162</sup>. This is viewed as leaving all the powers involved in a strange state of limbo in the aftermath of the congress. Progress had been achieved, but the tangibility of this common final declaration of the Stresa pact, as it came to be known and its effects on the European situation remained vague as the hush fell over the continent.

In the end, the months leading up to the Stresa conference, with its formation of different alliances and the sheer act of the tripartite powers coming together and displaying a willingness to cooperate in the context of the maintenance of the European peace and status quo. This is stated as having affected the general spirit of the post-Stresa policies that would continue to take place in Europe. The lasting impact of Stresa is stated to be the illusion of cooperation and alliance that would act in the context of European affairs if need be, especially in the light of the British-Italian declaration to reaffirm and quarantine the points of the earlier 1925 Locarno treaties in the context of French territorial integrity and continuous demilitarization of the Franco-German border<sup>163</sup>. Besides, the position of Austria and the maintenance of the Austrian independence from Germany rose as another paramount point that came out from the Stresa negotiations, showing perhaps a concrete willingness to act in European matters<sup>164</sup>. In this context, three outcomes are presented as results of the conference in British sources. The maintenance of the points of Locarno treaties, namely guaranteeing the French borders, the maintenance of the Austrian independence and the potential inclusion of Germany in the eastern European pact<sup>165</sup>.

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<sup>162</sup>A SUDDEN CHANGE AT STRESA CONFERENCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 13.4. 1935, 11.  
STRESA AGREEMENT EXAMINED. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.5. 1935, 12.

<sup>163</sup>OUTCOME OF THE STRESA CONFERENCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 09.  
DEMILITARIZED RHINELAND ZONE. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 09.

<sup>164</sup>A SUDDEN CHANGE AT STRESA CONFERENCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 13.4. 1935, 11.  
*Final declaration*, 1935.

<sup>165</sup>GERMAN VIEWS ON SECURITY. *The Manchester Guardian* 04.04. 1935, 06.  
Stresa. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.04. 1935, 08.



### 3.2 The German opposition to the powers and their pact

*Die brutale Machtpolitik der Hitler-systems hat ze einer moralischen Verurteilung Deutschlands geführt. Der Völkerbundsrat hat einstimmig die von den drei Locarnomächten vorgelegte Resolution angenommen. Diese Resolution ist ein furchtbares Dokument. Sie schleudert Beschuldigung auf Beschuldigung gegen die Regierung des Dritten Reiches, sie endet mit der Bekundung des Entschlusses gegen weitere Vergrasbruche und Angriffe mit Sanktionen vorzugehen. Sie zeigt die Regierung des Dritten Reichs als den von allen mit Misstrauen beobachteten voraussichtlichen Angreifer im nächsten Weltkrieg<sup>166</sup>.*

Neuer Vorwärts, 21st of April, 1935

As the tripartite powers and their associated states were formulating their policies in a united front against the Nazi government and their plans to repudiate the clauses of the 1919 Versailles treaty, SOPADE and the Neuer Vorwärts continued their policy of selective collaborationism with the tripartite powers in the context of the European political situation. Paramount to this was the condemnation of the Nazi regime in all of its political activities, be these activities domestic or foreign. Foundation to the SOPADE's policy towards the developments in the events can best be interpreted in the communiqués and reports published in the notebook like publications, labelled as "Deutschland Berichte" that were distributed amongst the ranks of the exiled party members.

This policy of indirect collaboration is discerned in both a report published on the 12th of April and a newspaper published on the 7th of April<sup>167</sup>. In this article, the previously examined and dissected view of the German diplomatic isolation is displayed by Neuer Vorwärts in an article reading:

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<sup>166</sup>Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.04. 1935, 01

<sup>167</sup>Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 07.04. 1935, 02

*“Es ist nicht bekannt, wie weit Hitler aggressive kriegerische Methoden hat erkennen lassen. Mit Notwendigkeit aber musste er den Willen zur militärischen Hegemonie Deutschland in Europa offenbaren. Bei Mussolini ist er damit auf den fest Entschluss gestossen, den italienischen Faschismus nicht zum Werkzeug und Vasallen des Hitlersystems werden zu lassen, bei Sir John Simon auf die Erkenntnis, dass das Hitlersystem nicht zum Glied eines ruhenden Gleichgewichtszustandes gemacht werden kann.”<sup>168</sup>”*

This emphasis on the political and seemingly military isolation of Germany under the Nazi regime is displayed strongly in the wake of the Stresa meeting. The articles convey this message through its pages with an air of optimism and hopefulness, that the current political situation in Germany itself could be subject to change through the political pressure placed upon the current regime by the intervention of the three Stresa powers<sup>169</sup>. This facilitation of the change in the regime, which the SOPADE hopes that would restore Social Democrats, or at least a democratic regime to power in Germany, replacing the current status quo. On these concrete plans, the ideologues of SOPADE remain silent. In the aftermath of Stresa, the failure of the German state and their “rebellion” against the European order is condemned through their publications in the same number of the *Neuer Vorwärts* on the 21st of April, 1935<sup>170</sup>. This condemnation is repeated in even harsher terms in the paper published on the 28th of April, only further cementing the policy of the SOPADE in their conduct towards the Stresa powers and the Nazi regime<sup>171</sup>.

In its approach to the Nazi regime and the diplomatic-military isolation Germany had been forced to, the *Neuer Vorwärts* draws connections to the German situation in the times of the previous global conflict. This making comparison between the Nazi regime and the previous Imperial regime that had been dissolved in the German revolutions of 1918<sup>172</sup>. Militarism, despotism, capitalism and the willingness to wage wars of conquest are depicted as continuous

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<sup>168</sup>Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 02.

<sup>169</sup>Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 1.

<sup>170</sup>Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 1-2.

<sup>171</sup>Kleine Illusionen! Die Dauergahr für den Frieden bleibt bestehen. *Neuer Vorwärts* 28.4. 1935, 1.

<sup>172</sup>Europäischer Friede. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 6.

threats in European policies, and even as threats to the continuation of peace in Europe, making any thought of appeasement useless. In this, the German people are depicted as the ones bearing the brunt of these militant and despotic policies with the SOPADE as the saviours of the isolated, oppressed Germany and her people in their hour of need. The tone of the *Neuer Vorwärts* has grown increasingly radical and increasingly belligerent towards the National Socialist Regime, which they perceived had made its last foreign policy blunders, having succeeded to bring together the three western powers in unison, the Nazi plans of aligning Britain and Italy as their allies are also described as political blunders and failures<sup>173</sup>. This policy of presenting the Nazi government and their policies in poor light is especially on the matter of Mussolini and the Italian characters as an undeniably fascist state. Mussolini's sharp turn against Germany and the Italian inclusion in the anti-Nazi camp of the Stresa powers is seized as evident proof of even the most openly fascist and a "hero of the National Socialist cause" turning into one of the central figures of this anti-German block that had been formed thanks to Hitler and his foreign policy failures<sup>174</sup>.

The continuous failure of policies and international isolation, the assured imminent fall of the regime, antagonization of the potentially friendly power in Italy and thus turning an ideologically similar power against them. The image of constant failure of the Nazi system and the failures of the Nazi leadership are used by *Neuer Vorwärts* as potent propaganda, while at the same time not fully condoning the acts of the three powers at Stresa, maintaining a respectful distance from the powers themselves in an attempt to no doubt come across as the legitimately German authority in this, acting as an independent force in its actions towards the current Nazi regime. This drive to maintain the independent character of the German exiles of the SOPADE is seen as a prominent quality that the *Neuer Vorwärts* attempted to maintain in its presentation.

The policy of aligning the current regime with the old opponents of the Social Democratic Party in the past is viewed as forming a continuum that the *Neuer Vorwärts* attempts to create in its

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<sup>173</sup>Die Strafe als Fundament der Diktatur. *Neuer Vorwärts* 3.3, 1935, 4.

Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 2.

Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.05.1935, 1-2.

Hitlers geistiger Nährvater. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 5.

<sup>174</sup>Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 2.

emphasis of opposition and the continuation of the struggle between what the Neuer Vorwärts terms as “Despotism” and “democracy”. In this context, the National Socialist regime and its partisans are viewed only as the newest form of this long last despotism in Germany, echoing the previous regime of the German Kaisers and its undeniably militant and Prussian character<sup>175</sup>. These views on this phantom of Prussianism although present earlier are only emphasized in the weeks and months after the Stresa conference and as the conflict looming in Europe is being increasingly styled as a struggle between this despotism and that of European democracy<sup>176</sup>. In this context of displaying the SOPADE’s democratic, leftist credentials and willingness to abide by them, emphasis is placed on the German people itself and their position in an undemocratic state<sup>177</sup>.

From this, the Neuer Vorwärts claims that now, as in 1914 the German people does not want war, but are still forced to participate in it by these “despots” in the control of the German government, equating the old government of the Kaisers to the Nazis<sup>178</sup>. This depiction of the German populace being manipulated and goaded by the old and new war parties who are behind the escalation and the threat of war should be viewed in the context of the SOPADE’s political position. From this arises the occasional collaboration with the western powers and the powers of the Stresa pact that it is viewed as practising from the very beginning, while still trying to maintain their credentials as the representatives of the German general populace. Maintaining a policy of separation between this general populace and the new Nazi elite, a view further supported by the British sources on the events currently taking place in continental Europe<sup>179</sup>.

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<sup>175</sup>Der geist der preußischen Militarismus. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 5.

Ludendorff und Berthold Jacob. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 6.

Krieg und Profit Die Illusionen eines Militärs. *Neuer Vorwärts* 12.5. 1935, 3.

<sup>176</sup>Hitler führt zum Krieg "Wehrpflicht ohne Freiheit is Sklaverei!" *Neuer Vorwärts* 24.3. 1935, 1-2.

<sup>177</sup>Streiflichter aus dem Dritten Reich. *Neuer Vorwärts* 14.4. 1935, 2.

Der Musterstaat des "Dritten Reiches". *Neuer Vorwärts* 28.4. 1935, 5.

Gedrückte Stimmung im Dritten Reich Grenzen des deutschen Mordpatriotismus. *Neuer Vorwärts* 5.5. 1935, 4.

<sup>178</sup>Europa gegen Hitlerdeutschland. Die Folgen der Hasard-Politik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 7.4. 1935, 2.

Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 1.

<sup>179</sup>MEMEL NAZIS Four Sentenced to Death End of Mass Trials. *The Manchester Guardian* 27.3. 1935, 11.

GERMAN REFUGEES AT STRASBOURG. *The Manchester Guardian* 4.4. 1935, 20.

Betrieb und Kaserne. Die Militarisierung der Arbeiterschaft. *Neuer Vorwärts* 10.3.1935, 8.

Der neu Adel. *Neuer Vorwärts* 5.5. 1935, 6.

This combination of warmongering, Nazi-despotism, the legacy of the old Prussian order with its militant junkers and the ineptitude of Nazi foreign policy, combined with the SOPADE's own policy of selective co-operation with the Stresa powers continues to form the main political course of the German exiles and their loyalists. Further strengthening this point of view on the events, even after the Stresa Pact and the seeming isolation of the Nazi regime, the *Neuer Vorwärts* continues to publicize the Nazi foreign policy in the east. In this, the main focus of attention was the ongoing territorial disputes with Poland over the previously German territories that had been rewarded to Poland in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, along with the dispute with Lithuania over the Memel region, with its substantive German population and a history of Nazi sponsored ethnic unrest amongst this German-speaking population<sup>180</sup>. Still, in the immediate aftermath of the formation of the Stresa pact, the reportages from the *Neuer Vorwärts* remain optimistic about the developments in the European geopolitical situation, confident in the seeming isolation of the Nazi regime by the three Stresa powers<sup>181</sup>.

This policy is viewed through the *Neuer Vorwärts* continuing to promote the image of Nazi Germany as a surrounded dictatorial regime, an immoral regime that has been trapped due to their own territorial ambitions and warmongering policies that threaten the peace in Europe and the world<sup>182</sup>. Another quality of this depiction of isolation and an aspect of the selective collaboration with the tripartite powers of the Stresa pact, which had only displayed as grown in its intensity with the allied declaration of the common course of action and united diplomatic policy at Stresa.

Furthermore, the policy of publicizing the Nazi irridentism and its policies in the context of the vaguely defined eastern pact continues to form of the core of the SOPADE views on this unresolved matter that is viewed as one of the underlying forces in creating a need for a formalized policy in the first place. The aforementioned disputes with Poland and Lithuania are

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<sup>180</sup>Braune Ritualmordhese gegen Litauen. *Neuer Vorwärts* 14.4. 1935, 4.

Daz Danziger Schandsystem Zum Verbot der "Volksstimme". *Neuer Vorwärts* 28.4. 1935, 2.

<sup>181</sup>Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 1-2.

<sup>182</sup>Streiflichter aus dem Dritten Reich. *Neuer Vorwärts* 14.4. 1935, 2.

Gedrückte Stimmung im Dritten Reich Grenzen des deutschen Mordpatriotismus. *Neuer Vorwärts* 5.5. 1935, 4.

presented as continuing in the case of the Free City of Danzig and its disputed elections earlier in the year<sup>183</sup>. These recent elections in the semi-autonomous city under the de jure mandate of the League of Nations had shaken the balance of power noticeably with Nazis gaining more seats in the Danzig Volkstag while failing to gain an absolute majority, which in turn was presented as yet another concrete threat to the maintenance of the European status quo and peace in the east<sup>184</sup>. Even with the formulation of the common policy, and the seeming united front against the Nazi aggression, the lack of concrete assurances combined with the well known German aims of territorial expansion and irredentist policies continued to form the nucleus of the views presented by the *Neuer Vorwärts* towards the question of the European peace and its continued maintenance<sup>185</sup>.

Through this, the aforementioned view on the German people and their role is further strengthened as the article on the position of Danzig focuses on the Nazi irredentism in the context of Saarland, Memel, Danzig, Sudetenland and eventually Austria, her independence now quarantined by the Stresa powers in their final declaration<sup>186</sup>.

In this too, the SOPADE is interpreted as reaffirming their position to serve as the legitimate voice of democratic representation for the misguided German people, who under the Nazi “Hitler-German plebeian system” have been forced to serve as the conduits of democratic legitimacy in an anti-democratic order in the eyes of the European community<sup>187</sup>. The steps to remedy this problem of legitimacy and diplomatic isolation can also be interpreted from the available material in which the SOPADE continues to invoke the spirit of the League of Nations in its dealings with the current National Socialist regime, Germany and their own positions on the matters presented. The regime in Germany had withdrawn from the League of Nations in 1933 in preparation for their plans to repudiate the 1919 treaty of Versailles and the covenant of

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<sup>183</sup>Daz Danziger Schandsystem Zum Verbot der "Volksstimme". *Neuer Vorwärts* 28.4. 1935, 2.

<sup>184</sup>Alles für den Krieg! *Neuer Vorwärts* 10.3. 1935, 3.

Hitler in Danzig geschlagen. *Neuer Vorwärts* 14.4. 1935, 1.

<sup>185</sup>Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 1-2.

<sup>186</sup>*The Final Declaration*, 1935.

<sup>187</sup>Der Imperialist der neuen Sachlichkeit. *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.5. 1935, 2.

the League of Nations itself. The *Neuer Vorwärts*, in their publications consistently presses the position of the League in international diplomacy and as a part of the current geopolitical order. In this, it is said that the return and inclusion in the geopolitical stage as one of the equals with the rest of the powers in the European continental diplomatic scene.

Yet with the time's passing over the next two months after the talks at Stresa had taken place and the final declaration of the powers had been ratified, this positive and encouraging view of the *Neuer Vorwärts* continues to shift into a sharper direction as the lack of commitment by the powers for a true military alliance in continental Europe were seemingly made increasingly evident. The *Neuer Vorwärts* was not blind to these developments, as are not the forces behind the publication in the SOPADE. Yet the exiles had committed themselves to anti-Nazi policies from the very beginning of their operations and continue to maintain their policies, even if the changing political situation in Europe was progressively turning away from the possibility of military intervention by the Stresa Power as the shift towards appeasement can be presented as rising. The *Neuer Vorwärts* continues to follow these developments, albeit with a much more pessimistic tone after the alignments with the associated states, which had previously been publicised as the next steps in the European system in isolating the Nazi regime were collapsing<sup>188</sup>. Increasingly towards June of 1935, the rapprochement of the Nazi regime and Mussolini's regime with Italy rear its head and the Nazi influence is seen spreading through southern Europe and across the Balkan nations with their own policies of rearmament and militarization of their key industries<sup>189</sup>. The views of the isolated system and the seemingly imminent fall of the illegitimate regime, desperately struggling for support is viewed as changing with times passing and the seeming failure of the pact and its guarantors to act on the continuing rearmament and the continuously rising tensions in the areas subject to the Nazi plans of territorial expansion<sup>190</sup>.

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<sup>188</sup>Weltruteil gegen Hitler Das System isoliert - Sammlung der Gegenkräfte. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 1.

<sup>189</sup>GERMAN AIR FORCE B.B.C Statement on Its Strength. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.4 1935, 12.  
Göring als Waffenhändler. *Neuer Vorwärts* 9.6. 1935, 1-2.

<sup>190</sup>Die Katastrophe von Danzig. *Neuer Vorwärts* 16.06. 1935, 01.

## 4. The dissolving front and its effects on Europe

The development of the rapprochement between the United Kingdom, France and Italy that had led to the Stresa conference in answer to the threat of German rearmament, along with the news relating to the meeting and its declaration can perhaps best be compared into a rock let loose from a sling. As the powers of Europe raised condemnations against the Nazi policies of rearmament and rebuilding of the German air force which were viewed as hostile policies<sup>191</sup>. The reaction which followed, even with its problems and misgivings were presented as the apex of the diplomatic talks as reported by both the British and the German newspapers.

In the chronological timeline, the next chapter will focus on the decline of these diplomatic relations of the Stresa powers and how they were presented. Could the pact and its goals themselves be viewed as something worth salvaging and to what extent the pact was viewed as moribund, giving way to the policy of appeasement as the unity formed by the pact was being torn apart by the differing goals of its guarantors.

### 4.1 The Manchester Guardian and the change in British attitudes.

In the immediate aftermath of the formation of the Stresa Pact, the Manchester Guardian, as stated in the previous chapters, had presented the developments as positive. The main focus was on emphasizing that the German threat had essentially been “de-clawed” by the inclusion of the German regime in a modified eastern pact through its network of non-aggression pacts with the neighbouring states, reduced to merely issue ineffective protests as the alliances were formed<sup>192</sup>.

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<sup>191</sup>DANUBIAN PACT DEADLOCKED Italy and Germany NO SIGNS OF A RECONCILIATION. *The Manchester Guardian* 4.4. 1935, 4.

GERMAN VIEWS ON SECURITY. *The Manchester Guardian* 4.4. 1935, 6.

OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENCE German Air Expansion. *The Manchester Guardian* 4.4. 1935, 10.

Fischer, Klaus: *Nazi Germany: A New History*, Bloomsbury Publishing. 1995. 408.

<sup>192</sup>TERMS OF THE FRENCH NOTE. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 13.



Yet despite this, it is seen that the pact itself continued to lack a comprehensive course of direction in its inter-allied policy, thus suffering debilitating failures in the immediate months after its formal declaration. This development can also be seen in the context of the diplomatic relations between the powers of the Stresa pact and the relatively minor powers that can be described as aligned states in the context of the plan to diplomatically isolate Germany<sup>193</sup>.

Still, the Manchester Guardian and by extension, the British public cannot be viewed as accepting these German claims of goodwill at face value. This is evident in the article of the Manchester Guardian published on the 26th of March, where the German overtures for peace and non-aggression have been received with the utmost scepticism by the British press. Even if acknowledging that the Nazi regime is somewhat of a chained beast when bound by its treaties of non-aggression that the eastern pact had forced upon her by the communique issued to the powers at Stresa during the negotiations<sup>194</sup>. Yet, even if the British policy had been steadily slipping away from direct military intervention in the European continent, save for the guaranteeing the previous treaty obligations, it is obvious that the British public opinion remained steadfastly opposed to the Nazi foreign policy and aggression in Europe<sup>195</sup>.

In the aftermath of the Stresa conference, the divergence between the policies of the tripartite powers can be observed. This applies to each power formulating their own policies after the conference. This can be presented in the following way. The reconciliatory British attitudes and their willingness to act through binding diplomatic resolutions despite the formation of the common policy of action and thus paving the way to the future appeasement, the French willingness to preserve its mandates and status quo in Europe through the framework of the League of Nations and the Italian willingness to seemingly advocate for more direct action

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GERMANY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS AN EASTERN PACT. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.5. 1935, 12.

<sup>193</sup>A RUMANIAN VISIT TO MOSCOW. *The Manchester Guardian* 28.3. 1935, 12.

ANOTHER WAR WARNING BY ITALY. *The Manchester Guardian* 30.3. 1935, 18

<sup>194</sup>NAZI ILLUSIONS ABOUT BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS GERMANY *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 12.

GERMAN VIEWS ON SECURITY. *The Manchester Guardian* 4.4. 1935, 06.

TERMS OF THE FRENCH NOTE. *The Manchester Guardian* 15.4. 1935, 13.

<sup>195</sup>SIR JOHN SIMONS REPORTS TO THE CABINET No Helpful Proposals by Hitler. *The Manchester Guardian* 28.03. 1935, 09.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: AN OPEN EASTERN PACT. *The Manchester Guardian* 3.4. 1935, 18.

Letters to the Editor: Aims of the National Socialist Party. *The Manchester Guardian* 13.4. 1935, 17.

through its governmental structures and dependence on the militant characteristic of Italian fascism, combined with Mussolini's interest to maintain the Italian hegemony in Austria<sup>196</sup>.

This spirit of the Stresa pact is viewed as expanding to cover all of the three powers in these early stages as a more vigorous campaign of opposition to Nazi policies was pursued. In this context, the French note on the expansion of the German air force, the Italian quarantine to continue work in preserving the independence of Austria and provide support for the French aligned states in Central Europe and the in the Balkans (the so-called powers of the "Little Entente" which had been formed to oppose any form of Hungarian irredentism) while the British plan to expand the Royal Air Force and the Italian air force expansion meant to match any German rearmament plans should be viewed as motivated by the course of the common policy adopted at Stresa<sup>197</sup>. Through this, the common policy is presented as becoming a concrete actor in the context of European day to day politics, at least for the time being.

Yet this common ground that the three Stresa powers have pursued in the early days is presented as crumbling almost immediately after the actions of the powers were framed in the context of a treaty that was supposed to bind them. The French military agreement with the Soviet Union is viewed as stillborn when its details were revealed to the world, rendering the comprehensive military assistance provided by the Soviet Union in the European continental affairs as nothing more than a simple gesture of goodwill at the most. The same political direction followed the French mediated Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement, the associated states of the Stresa powers were beginning to slip away as time passed and the weaknesses of the pact were beginning to be revealed in earnest, along with the rising German influence in the Balkans.<sup>198</sup>. The noose around Germany was starting to slip.

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<sup>196</sup>DANUBIAN PACT DEADLOCKED Italy and Germany NO SIGNS OF A RECONCILIATION. *The Manchester Guardian* 19.6. 1935, 6.

<sup>197</sup> BIGGER ITALIAN AIR FORCE. *The Manchester Guardian* 28.3. 1935, 9.

Wings over Europe. *The Manchester Guardian* 8.4. 1935, 8.

BRITISH POLICY TO BE STATED AFRESH *The Manchester Guardian* 2.5. 1935, 9.

*The Final Declaration*, 1935.

<sup>198</sup>Wright, Gordon: *The Rise of Modern Europe: The Ordeal of Total War, 1939–1945*. Waveland Press 1968. 12.

The members of the pact, through their differentiating goals, were all pulling their seemingly united policy of action in different directions and following their own national interests instead of following the plans of action laid out in the final declaration of the Stresa Conference<sup>199</sup>. This effect itself is not ignored by the newspaper sources, through the breaches in the pact itself are curtly brushed aside. Despite the growing rifts between the powers as the drift from the common policy towards Germany, or rather its illusion remains.

Rather paradoxically, The role of Italy, as the second continental power of the Pact is both emphasized and presented as one of the main reasons for the disintegration of the alliance itself. Italy's main diplomatic interests, which was viewed as being the maintenance of the Austrian independence and thus their position as a de facto Italian puppet state in the south of Germany. This development is interpreted through the Manchester Guardian through its reports on the general diplomatic situation in Europe on account of German protests against the speech by the British envoy Anthony Eden, which the German government claims is meant to furthermore disarm Germany and deny her the right of defence against the Soviet Union<sup>200</sup>. In this the official German government sources explicitly separate Britain and the Soviet Union from one another, echoing the earlier pro-British statements issued by the German governmental organs<sup>201</sup>. Through this, it is seen that the German government was, if not anticipating then at least displaying hopes that Britain would not commit to anything more concrete than what the previous treaties compel her to<sup>202</sup>. Yet the consensus in the reports of the Manchester Guardian is that the front would continue to maintain its policies, as displayed in the newspapers in the case of Franco-German relations and how France seems unwilling to press complex diplomatic matters on the European stage without first consulting her Stresa pact counterparts, urging to maintain the policy of not breaching the Stresa front<sup>203</sup>.

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<sup>199</sup>*The Final Declaration*, 1935.

<sup>200</sup>GERMAN DISAPPOINTMENT WITH MR. EDEN'S SPEECH "Subject to Special Influences" *The Manchester Guardian* 18.5. 1935, 17.

<sup>201</sup>Der Imperialist der neuen Sachlichkeit. *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.5. 1935, 2.

<sup>202</sup>Eine Menschenfalle für englische Gäste. *Neuer Vorwärts* 21.4. 1935, 1-2.

<sup>203</sup>LAVAL'S VIEWS ON NAZIS. *The Manchester Guardian* 20.5. 1935, 13.

*“It is reported that General Goring probably asked M. Laval to stop in Berlin on his way to Paris, or failing that, to come to Berlin in the near future. M. Laval is understood to have declined the first alternative - both for practical reasons and also because this sudden visit to Berlin, would form, as it were, part of his Moscow trip, would have shocked both Russia and the Little Entente. Nor did he wish to take such a step without some previous consultation with Britain and Italy, for otherwise his visit would have inevitably have been interpreted as a breach in the Stresa front.”*<sup>204</sup>

Thus it can be stated that the pact had quickly devolved into a diplomatic arrangement rather than an actual agreement on true military assistance as it was interpreted previously. In this context, the increase of Italian influence on the pact is a relatively dramatic development, especially when the maintenance of the Austrian independence is concerned. In this, it had tied all the other powers of the Stresa front to support it, even refusing German overtures of reconciliation on the point of maintaining the Austrian position as a *de jure* independent state and as a *de facto* Italian protectorate and a buffer state between northern Italy and resurgent Germany<sup>205</sup>. This interesting case of temporary Italian prominence can best be described as the proverbial tail wagging the dog. Even France, the premier continental power is viewed as being on the move in this, rushing to emphasize the French agreement in the policy of the maintenance of both the Austrian independence and the status quo in the Balkans in general<sup>206</sup>. In this, the post-Stresa policy of France towards its supposed colleagues in the pact is presented as a policy of reestablishment of control or at least her position as *primus inter pares* amongst the powers of the Stresa pact.

As the continuation of the growing tensions between the powers of the Stresa Front, the Italian policy of continuing to conduct its own independent policy in the framework of fulfilling her territorial ambitions in eastern Africa<sup>207</sup>. I posit that the Italian position, which had turned into a

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<sup>204</sup>LAVAL'S VIEWS ON NAZIS. *The Manchester Guardian* 20.5. 1935, 13.

<sup>205</sup>ITALY STILL UNCOMPROMISING AT GENEVA *The Manchester Guardian* 23.5. 1935, 11.

<sup>206</sup>FRANCE'S COMMITMENTS IN AUSTRIA. *The Manchester Guardian* 24.4. 1935, 3.

<sup>207</sup>Mallet, Robert: *Mussolini in Ethiopia, 1919-1935: The Origins of Fascist Italy's African War*. Oxford University Press 2015, 211.

crux and focus of the pact in the post-Stresa Europe had gained new momentum from its diplomatic dealings with France and the United Kingdom, viewing this through the previously stated geopolitical interests of the individual powers acting as the guarantors of the Stresa pact. The contemporary evidence is both the previously analyzed Italian sabre-rattling, as well as the Italian territorial ambitions in the Horn of Africa. These internal tensions within the pact continue to prove that the system of collective security, quarantined by the three powers is unworkable. Furthermore de-legitimizing the policy of containment, presenting appeasement as an alternative.

It seems that the Italian government interpreted its involvement in the policy of united action in Europe as an acquaintance of the French and the British governments to support the Italian plans for colonial expansion. This confrontation between the Italians and the native Abyssinian government can be observed as having brewed in the background throughout the months leading up to the Stresa conference and during the negotiations themselves<sup>208</sup>. The Italian blustering sabre-rattling and the sheer willingness to escalate the tensions with Abyssinia has been brought before the League of Nations council in an attempt to de-escalate and arbitrate on the situation<sup>209</sup>. In this, the weakness of the Stresa system is laid bare along with the wider system of the supposed collective security<sup>210</sup>. The whole foundation of the collective system is placed in question as its capability to uphold the system that it was promising.

#### **4.2 Neuer Vorwärts and the dissolving pact**

As the British press possessed a view depicting the Stresa pact slowly but surely pulling into different directions with the powers of the pact acting increasingly independently with their

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<sup>208</sup>ITALIAN OFFICERS CLAIM Defeated 400 Abyssinians. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 9  
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR "ABYSSINIA'S APPEAL TO THE LEAGUE" Great Britain and the Italian Demands. *The Manchester Guardian* 28.3. 1935, 18.

ABYSSINIA AND ITALY. *The Manchester Guardian* 30.3. 1935, 13

<sup>209</sup>The League and Italy. *The Manchester Guardian* 20.5. 1935, 8

<sup>210</sup>COLLECTIVE SECURITY. *The Manchester Guardian* 21.5. 1935, 20

foreign affairs. This view, in its main points, is a matter that the exiles of SOPADE shared through the Neuer Vorwärts and their publications on the slowly disintegrating pact. The main differentiation factor, that set the Neuer Vorwärts aside from their British counterpart was still the limitations of functioning in exile and somewhat illegally<sup>211</sup>.

Lack of steady publication and the sheer inability to mobilize the same resources and the correspondents that the Manchester Guardian employed are interpreted as hampering the efforts of the Neuer Vorwärts. Despite this, the German exiles are relatively well informed about the events despite their disadvantageous position. In this position where the Neuer Vorwärts had settled, the illusions of Stresa were shattered by the cold reality and thus reacted to the changing geopolitical situation accordingly. From this, the early perspectives of the pro-Stresa pact views and the accommodating stances taken by the Neuer Vorwärts makes a sudden change towards the April, May and June of 1935 as the powers of the Stresa pact slowly but surely exercise their own political and diplomatic methods in dealing with the National Socialist government, instead of the united front policy that they had vowed to maintain in the final declaration of the pact<sup>212</sup>. Mussolini is condemned despite his participation in the anti-Nazi front.

*“Mussolini, aber, der andre Diktator in Europe, spielt Ganz offensichtlich mit dem Gedanken, die Festigung der Kräfteverhältnisse nach Stresa und nach dem Abschluss der Fränzösischen-rissischen und fränzösischen-tschechoslowakishcen pakt te wider aufzulösen.”*<sup>213</sup>

In this, the Italian participation in the pact became a primary focus of contention. The Neuer Vorwärts had refrained from presenting itself in opposition with the Italian fascist government and mainly treated it with neutral terms in the context of forming an anti-Nazi alliance. It can be said that despite the leftist ideological credentials of the SOPADE and the Neuer Vorwärts, cool political pragmatism trumped this ideological divide from the beginning. But as the Neuer Vorwärts witnesses the slowly dissipating of the Stresa pact, it became clear that this shift in the

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<sup>211</sup>Kitson, Alison: *Germany, 1858–1990: Hope, Terror, and Revival*. Oxford University Press 2001, 153-155.

<sup>212</sup>The Final Declaration 1935.

ANGLO-GERMAN NAVAL MEETING NOT YET FIXED. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.5. 1935, 11.

<sup>213</sup>Kriegsgefahr - Dauerzustand! Die Diktatoren zerrütten den Frieden. *Neuer Vorwärts* 02.6. 1935, 1.

European balance of power reignited the SOPADE's hostility to any form of right-wing dictatorship, as the focus of the *Neuer Vorwärts* realigned to discredit both the Italian fascist government and the perceived rapprochement with Nazi Germany<sup>214</sup>.

Along with this, the powers along the Danube, such as Hungary and Bulgaria were also perceived as a threat to peace with their rearmament programs, notably taking their influences from the German rearmament program that had sparked the entire chain of events that in itself had concluded with the formation of the Stresa pact<sup>215</sup>. Furthermore, the Balkan balance of powder that the *Neuer Vorwärts* describes as yet another powder keg in Europe waiting to ignite is postulated as a part of the wider European game of alliances, considering the strong French support to multiple Balkan powers through the policy of granting its political support to Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia within the framework of the previously mentioned "Little Entente" military alliance<sup>216</sup>. The British and the French positions on the pact were rather abruptly brushed aside as the main focus on the interpretation of the Stresa pact as an anti-Nazi front to Europe divided between the democracies and dictatorships as the seeming threat of war continued to loom and escalate over the European political field<sup>217</sup>.

The SOPADE and the *Neuer Vorwärts* in its rather sudden policy change from its support to the pact to the condemnation of the powers for their perceived failures in European politics to restrain and contain the German government<sup>218</sup>. The publication of the news on the general European situation was described as turning increasingly inwards, towards the areas where the German Social Democrats and their party organizations still held sway and could garner at least some popular support in German politics<sup>219</sup>. This is seen in the continuous reportages on the situation in the Free City of Danzig concerning the recent elections where the Nazis had made

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<sup>214</sup>Kriegsgefahr - Dauerzustand! Die Diktatoren zerrütten den Frieden. *Neuer Vorwärts* 2.6. 1935, 1.

<sup>215</sup>FUTURE REARMING OF HUNGARY. *The Manchester Guardian* 26.3. 1935, 12.

<sup>216</sup>Spielvogel 2005, 751.

<sup>217</sup>French Army. *The Manchester Guardian* 1.4. 1935, 9.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT WATCH Begun in France. *The Manchester Guardian* 3.4. 1935, 9.

Das deutsche Millionenheer Stärker als die Armee Sowjetrusslands. *Neuer Vorwärts* 2.6. 1935, 1-2.

<sup>218</sup>Kriegsgefahr - Dauerzustand! Die Diktatoren zerrütten den Frieden. *Neuer Vorwärts* 2.6. 1935, 1-2.

<sup>219</sup>Hitler in Danzig geschlagen. *Neuer Vorwärts* 14.4. 1935, 1.

some notable gains in elections that were deemed controversial by the *Neuer Vorwärts*<sup>220</sup>.

In this, the *Neuer Vorwärts* can further be viewed as reverting back to their previous policy of focusing on the territorial ambitions espoused by the National Socialist regime in their plans of pan-Germanic territorial expansion and the multiple territorial disputes that the National Socialist government had with its immediate neighbours<sup>221</sup>. Heavily publicized German participation in what the newspapers refer to as the “Modified Eastern Pact” of non-aggression with these neighbouring state, the territorial questions themselves had been left unsolved and the powers of Europe placed very little trust in the Nazi promises of peace and the limiting of the rearmament programs through different air and armament limitation treaties as the tripartite powers either reconcile with Germany or begin adopting policies of appeasement<sup>222</sup>.

In this development, it can be argued that the policy conducted by the SOPADE through the publishing of *Neuer Vorwärts* had shifted from the indirect, selective collaboration with the powers of the now collapsing Stresa front. SOPADE had realigned with the policy of continuing to publicize and attack Nazi policies in the exile community, while also casting some blame on the powers themselves<sup>223</sup>. In this, I present an argument that the *Neuer Vorwärts* had no other realistic course of action. With the shift of policy from containment to appeasement, the course of action by SOPADE was increasingly limited as was their relevance in the European political field outside the increasingly marginalized German exile population and the German-speaking populations in Czechoslovakian regions and Danzig<sup>224</sup>.

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<sup>220</sup>Nicht erwünscht ist... *Neuer Vorwärts* 28.4. 1935, 3.

<sup>221</sup>GOERING AT ESSEN. *Neuer Vorwärts* 3.4. 1935, 4.

Der braune Betrug in Danzig. *Neuer Vorwärts* 19.5. 1935, 2.

<sup>222</sup>CONDITIONS OF PEACE: Sir H. Samuel's List NEW LIMITATION OF ARMS "Absolutely Essential": *The Manchester Guardian* 11.4. 1935, 10.

THE PREMIER ON STRESA Three-Power Solidarity and No New Commitments "THE DOOR OPEN FOR GERMANY". *The Manchester Guardian* 18.4. 1935, 3.

<sup>223</sup>Kampf den braunen Terror! Internationale Proteste gegen das Nazi-System. *Neuer Vorwärts* 2.6. 1935, 2.

Danzig vor dem Völkerbund Die vier Gesichter des Nazi-Greisler. *Neuer Vorwärts* 2.6. 1935, 2.

Spekulantenturm über der Wirtschaft Der Hintergrund der französischen Regierungskrise. *Neuer Vorwärts* 9.6. 1935, 4.

<sup>224</sup>Die deutschen Emigration in der Tschechoslowakei. *Neuer Vorwärts* 5.5. 1935, 3.



Though not stated, a certain air of resignation can be observed overtaking the political focus of the German exiles and their publications. The main points that were increasingly being promoted during these later months following the Stresa pact and its dissolution continuing to be the views on the Nazi Balkan policy, the German rearmament, the Nazi territorial ambitions and the certain type of warnings that the *Neuer Vorwärts* issued towards the neighbouring states of Germany<sup>225</sup>.

Yet this new change in the political course has also resurrected some of the more time tested and traditional means of the German social democrats in their political struggle, the agitation for strikes and labour unrest that had served as the means of the political actions as far as the 1918 German November revolution that had both toppled the Prussian military order they continued to rail against through 1935, and the Kapp Putsch of 1919 which threatened to undo the German democracy. Yet it can be stated that just as the pact, the German opposition's policies on it were increasingly pessimistic towards the moribund pact as it was increasingly perceived as in mid to late 1935.

## 5. The end of the front

Having examined the events surrounding the formation of the pact, the leftist democratic press view on the pact, the threats of war, the political turmoil and everything else that shaped the pact, it is prudent to examine the unravelling of the pact. In this, the pact's complete and final dissolution and the hopes that the pact had generated ended in a political failure. Most of all, it is important to keep in mind that there was neither a final article nor a declaration of the Stresa front, approved by all the three powers, save for the rather symbolic final declaration. Additionally, there was no official repudiation of the pact by any of the powers that had acted as its guarantors. Above all, the pact simply dissipated in the tumult of the world events that

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<sup>225</sup>Europa - Eine Hitler - Despotie! 26.5. *Neuer Vorwärts* 1935, 1.  
Der Imperialist der neuen Sachlichkeit. *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.5. 1935, 2.

followed. The British were reluctant to commit to continental affairs, The French were reaching out for their fairweather friends in the cordon sanitaire and the Little Entente, the Italians were willing to call for “strong action” while insisting on maintaining their power in their sphere of influence, namely in Austria that had been reduced to a de facto Italian protectorate by the Austrian Civil war and the attempted Nazi coup in 1934<sup>226</sup>.

Two months after the pact, these different political winds were pulling the unity of the Stresa front apart at its seams. But most importantly the Anglo-German naval agreement in June 1935 sunk any hopes for Stresa diplomacy. The Naval agreement, allowed in practice the German rearmament at sea, allowing Germany to breach the rearmament clauses of the 1919 treaty of Versailles<sup>227</sup>. An agreement, in which Britain had not consulted the other powers of the Front, breached the terms of the Stresa agreement and in a way, are postulated as beginning the policy of appeasement in earnest. With the shift to a that accommodated the German willingness to rearm, the balance of power in Europe can be viewed as shifting. The British “Peace as National Policy” once more taking foreground in the diplomatic context.

This agreement yet again proved the practical ineffectiveness of the Stresa pact and I’d argue it as proving that the policies issued in the pact were de facto abandoned under the year of its implementation as the writing was on the wall and the powers furthermore focused on their own national positions and interests. The inability to implement a system of collective security in Europe opening the door for the continuing German rearmament and appeasement. Furthermore, the last attempts to salvage the pact is presented in the formation of the abortive Hoare-Laval pact and the talks circulating around an attempt to keep Italy in the alliance and revive the anti-German front to an extent, especially with the waning interest by the Soviet Union to maintain its support for the Security system<sup>228</sup>.

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<sup>226</sup>Sachar, Howard: *The Assassination of Europe, 1918-1942: A Political History*. University of Toronto Press 2014, 211-214.

<sup>227</sup>Kershaw, Ian: *Hitler: 1889-1936: Hubris*. Penguin Publishing 1998, 558.

Maiolo, Joseph: *The Royal Navy and Nazi Germany, 1933-39*. Palgrave Macmillan 1998, 12.

Gilbert, Felix: *The Diplomats 1919-39*. Princeton University Press 1953, 57.

<sup>228</sup>ITALY STILL UNCOMPROMISING AT GENEVA. *The Manchester Guardian* 23.5. 1935, 11.  
Guarantees of Peace. *The Manchester Guardian* 10.6. 1935, 13.

The Hoare-Laval pact, negotiated towards the end of 1935 as the war between Mussolini's Italy and the Abyssinia seemed all but inevitable and finally began as the result of Abyssinian crisis<sup>229</sup>. The prospect of war had been raised throughout the year, as the Manchester Guardian continuously reported on the border clashes between the Italian colonial territories of Eritrea, Somalia and Abyssinia itself<sup>230</sup>. These had mainly been presented as separate from the Stresa talks in the British newspapers then, as the formation of the Stresa pact and the policy of common action against the rearming Germany was viewed as of paramount importance when compared to border skirmishes of Italy and Abbysinia far away from the European continent where the decisions were being made.

The Hoare-Laval pact, named so after the British foreign minister Samuel Hoare, who had replaced Sir John Simon, and the French foreign minister Pierre Laval, who had been one of the architects of the Stresa agreement, is presented as one of the last attempts to both salvage the Stresa front and maintain the primacy of the common action between the supposed anti-German front in Europe while also attempting to appease Italy<sup>231</sup>.

The proposed pact, which would have led to an arbitrated peace between Italy and Abyssinia would have divided the area in three. An independent Abyssinian state, areas to be ceded to Italy and the area of Italian economic and political influence<sup>232</sup>. Despite the official opposition of the British and the French governments towards the Italian war in Africa and the insistence that the political disputes between the two parties were to be arbitrated by the League of Nations, I'd argue that this proposed pact to appease the Italian imperial interests in Africa was in the end, an attempt to realign Italy with the then de facto dissolved Stresa pact and to return the anti-Nazi security pact to prominence in Europe<sup>233</sup>. Mussolini, though initially receptive to the idea later rejected the pact as its contents were leaked to British and French presses and the public outrage that viewed the United Kingdom and France as supporting the perceived imperialism of the

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<sup>229</sup>Barker, Arthur: *Rape of Ethiopia, 1936*. Ballantine Books 1971, 33.

<sup>230</sup>The Manchester Guardian 26.5. 1935, 9.

<sup>231</sup>Robertson, James: *The Hoare-Laval Plan* 1975, 433-437.

<sup>232</sup>Robertson 1975, 433.

<sup>233</sup>Robertson 1975, 435.

Italian Fascist state in Abyssinia led to the termination of the talks and the resignation of both the Foreign Minister Hoare and Prime Minister Pierre Laval from their government posts<sup>234</sup>. In practice, this ended the anti-German alliance for good.

## 6. Conclusions and reflection

To reiterate: The events reported in *The Manchester Guardian* and *Neuer Vorwärts* present a watershed in the interwar status quo. Beginnings of rearmament, dynamic diplomatic developments and the mobilization of both the diplomatic and the military of the European powers and their aligned states in an attempt to isolate expansionist Germany. Considering the failure to counter this can be presented directly leading to the policy of appeasement that came to the forefront of the European diplomatic field after 1935.

The main focus of the thesis has been dissecting and examining the views presented by two left-wing newspapers, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Neuer Vorwärts*. In this, I have presented and examined the views present in the reporting of the news before, during and after the conference at Stresa. The *Manchester Guardian*, operating in a setting where the freedom of the press was not constrained by legislation to the same extent as in Nazi Germany was thus able to both field reporters on the scene and also present their views to a reasonable extent without having to fear for censors. Due to its connections in both the failing Liberal Party and the Labour Party ostensibly heading the National government under MacDonald. In many cases, especially earlier in 1935 the *Manchester Guardian* was vehemently opposing the German rearmament policy while also at the same time softening their approach towards Germany as it seemed that the continuing escalation of the European tensions could be averted through the policy of collective security and the inclusion of Germany in the Eastern Non-aggression pact pursued by the tripartite powers of Stresa. The shadow of the looming threat of war is also present,

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<sup>234</sup>Macmillan, Harold: *Winds of Change*, 1914-1939. Macmillan Publishers 1966, 446.

continuously overshadowing the developments reported in the Manchester Guardian. In this, both the news reports themselves and the letters to the editor:

*“This tribe-worship is a low form of religion and a disastrous one: but it is a religion all the same, and that is its strength. Its votaries are, no doubt, exploited and led by the nose to some extent by people no intention at all of sacrificing themselves but are bent on selling munitions or acquiring oilfields; but this exploitation is. I fancy "epiphenomenon" - more ugly than important - which does not touch the heart of the evil with which we are wrestling.”*<sup>235</sup>

In this connection drawn in the letter to the editor, where the threat of war is equated with the capitalistic exploitation of politics to serve the interests of these parties which incited this tribe worship to serve their own interests. The focus of Neuer Vorwärts, in its reportages due to this confrontational attitude in itself focuses on the crimes of the Nazi regime already taking place in 1935, emphasizing the militant, anti-semitic and anti-working class policies of the Hitler’s regime along with its connections to the old Prussian order<sup>236</sup> In this, the German connections of the party are emphasized, as the Neuer Vorwärts is able to both refer and provide secondary sources from the other German-language newspapers from Germany itself. As an ideological opponent for the Neuer Vorwärts to conduct attacks against in an attempt to emphasise the previously mentioned division of the "ordinary" German people from the Nazi regime and to connect this regime with the historical opponents of the SPD and the democratic process in Germany. Displaying this originally people as victims of Nazi influence and propaganda<sup>237</sup>.

Additionally, despite having been banned and dissolved in Germany proper, the SPD continued to operate in the Free City of Danzig. This, coupled with the elections to the Danziger Volkstag in 1935 where the Nazi-SPD political rivalry was played out in the context of the traditional

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<sup>235</sup>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: THE CAUSES OF WAR Tribe-Worship in Western Europe. *The Manchester Guardian* 10.4.1935, 18.

<sup>236</sup>Der Musterstaat des “Dritten Reiches”. *Neuer Vorwärts* 28.04. 1935, 5.

Hierl in der Defensive. *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.5. 1935, 3.

Die "fliegende Nation". *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.5. 1935, 5.

Moses Hess, sozialistischer Apostel. *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.5. 1935, 6.

<sup>237</sup>Den Rundfunk. *Neuer Vorwärts* 14.4. 1935, 6.

politics, extending from general political restlessness to disputations in the previously mentioned elections, the results of which were vigorously covered by the *Neuer Vorwärts* as the elections had resulted in a de facto deadlock in the context of the Danziger politics<sup>238</sup>.

The previously anti-totalitarian social democrats formed a policy that I have termed as “selective collaboration” with these powers. Alternatively termed as indirect collaboration with the democratic powers of Europe<sup>239</sup>. This policy of collaboration did not extend to formalized pacts or agreements with the powers of the pact, considering how the SPD lacked any true political capital and it is possible to postulate that the SPD themselves were unwilling to truly put themselves at the disposal of the at powers, because of the general public opinion in Germany is viewed as predominantly opposed to any collaboration with the French and the British that could be perceived as too close for comfort, considering the history of diplomatic tensions and the reparations that the German government under SPD had to negotiate with the United Kingdom and France during the interwar period. This policy can also be said to have waned towards the end of the pact with the failure of the Hoare-Laval pact and Italy’s continuing slide towards Germany.

Paramount connection between the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Neuer Vorwärts* is, as can be expected. Their left-wing political views through which they viewed the developments in Europe. In addition to this, the *Neuer Vorwärts* continued to draw connections to the previous German governments that were perceived as undemocratic and pro-war by SOPADE. Presenting Hitler as the culmination of this development. He and his party are viewed as the heirs of the political repression begun in the era of the Kaisers, operating with the full backing of the capitalist elements of society. Furthermore, the Italian fascism and Soviet communism, both of which had been viewed as anathemas by the SPD in the interwar period, were increasingly being accommodated, if not by a direct endorsement then by the previously mentioned course of realpolitik. The *Neuer Vorwärts* went as far as to quote the German exiled communist, Karl

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<sup>238</sup>Die Katastrophe von Danzig. *Neuer Vorwärts* 16.6 1935, 1.

<sup>239</sup>Die Wahlen in der Tsechkosl. Republik. *Neuer Vorwärts* 26.5.1935, 2.

Radek on their pages<sup>240</sup>. Their treatment of the fascist power of Italy on the other hand is more dismissive, accepting Italy's participation in the Stresa pact as a fact while not drawing direct attention to it or placing it under increased scrutiny.

Furthermore, the failure of the Stresa Front and the appeasement following as the direct result of this failure present through the effects of the Hoare-Laval pact and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement which have been reported in the *Manchester Guardian*<sup>241</sup>. The appeasement in the Italian-Abyssinian question was the last desperate attempt to maintain the perceived unity of tripartite powers as the unity of action among the Stresa Front and their associated powers in the Little Entente and the Soviet Union was failing. I would present the argument, that in this failure of the Front to contain the German ambitions for territorial expansion lie the beginning of the policy of appeasement. The beginning of this appeasement is in the British change of policy that reneges the previous plan to continuously isolate the German threat, to force the National Socialist regime into a network of non-aggression pact further supervised by a military alliance threatening a two-front-war in the aggressor.

Instead of continuing to affirm these policies, the newspapers show a shift towards accommodating the current developing situation in the context of the rearmament and with the backdrop of the cooling diplomatic relations between the powers of the Stresa pact and their associated states. Exemplified in the Anglo-German Naval Agreement and the perceived tacit acceptance of the German air force development which had sparked the series of events that had led to the formation of the anti-German front in Stresa. With the seeming failure of collective security in Europe (with its seeming failure in East-Asia and Abyssinia raised as concrete examples of the shortcomings of the policy of collective security). Despite the attempts of the tripartite powers to present a united front against the expansionism displayed by the Nazi-government, the policy of common action ratified in Stresa failed to materialise concretely in the months that followed.

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<sup>240</sup>Was nicht im Hitler-Aufruf steht Wollte Frankreich 1933 marschieren? *Neuer Vorwärts* 31.3. 1935, 3.

<sup>241</sup>THE PREMIER'S DECLARATION ON GERMAN ARMS: Naval Talks Later This Month FURTHER AND ACCELERATED AIR EXPANSION Five-Power Limitation Pact Proposed. *The Manchester Guardian* 3.5.1935, 11.

Thus according to the analysis conducted through the Manchester Guardian and the Neuer Vorwärts in part of their articles concerning the degrading diplomatic situation in Europe, the failure of collective security and the inability of the tripartite powers to coordinate their actions towards Germany left continental Europe in a position where the collaboration with the Nazi regime through the policy of appeasement was viewed as the only sensible solution by the governments of Britain and France. Despite their prominent anti-Nazi sympathies, even the Manchester Guardian was moving to support this policy through their reports on the naval treaties and the willingness to seemingly tone down their anti-Nazi rhetoric on these matters. It is unlikely that the planned alliances, which would have included the Italian fascists, European democracies and the Soviet Union as anti-German participants would have prospered, but the lack of coordination, along with the disparate goals of the powers furthermore created an unworkable environment for cooperation and means to challenge the German territorial expansionism.

From this, the matter of research is left to open continuing the further development and the European slide from the containment of Nazism to its appeasement is left open. The timeframe of my thesis ending in a period where this change in policy occurred, opening a possibility to examine further escalation of the means in which the appeasement was conducted, leading to the Munich conference and Anschluss of Austria, which the Italians had tried to previously avoid.



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