

Alena Feriancová, (Ne) nájdená bezpečnosť. Československo, Nemecko a úpravy medzinárodného systému v Európe 1922–1926

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Collective security after World War I or, more precisely, attempts on its establishment were among important phenomena of the interwar period. International historiography has therefore naturally paid due attention to this phenomenon, particularly with respect to the most significant players on this field – Great Britain, France, and Germany. Czech and Slovak specialist public have not systematically dealt with this issue (on the other hand, works by Radek Břach and Jindřich Dejmek need to be mentioned). The more we should welcome efforts of the Slovak historian Alena Feriancová, who made good use of her interest in resolving the complicated issue of collective security in the 1920's by writing a monograph that analyzes the security developments in Central Europe between 1922 and 1926, focusing in particular on the approach of two countries, Czechoslovakia and Germany.

The author proceeds chronologically in her book, beginning with a prologue, which can be understood as kind of an exposition chapter. Quite logically, she first addresses the Paris Peace Conference, which represented a critical moment in the 20th century history; she also introduces the two main objects of her interest, Czechoslovakia and Germany. She correctly notes that the peace terms were basically presented to Berlin in the form of an ultimatum or that the German foreign minister, Gustav Stresemann, was coming to London with limited instructions. Her analysis of the subsequent development is also well-founded. However, I have to demur at the fact that in the passage mentioning Karl Habsburg's restoration attempts, the author refers to over 50-year-old article by Věra Olivová without even mentioning Adrej Tóth's study (*Československá diplomacie a prvni restaurační pokus Karla Habsburského v Maďarsku*, Slovanský přehled 2002).

Alena Feriancová continues with a knowledgeable analysis of relations between France and Great Britain and French (vain) efforts to make an allied agreement with London, and maps German attempts on resolving the security question (chapter *Bezpečnosť v rokoch 1922–1923*). She correctly comes to the conclusion that the 1922 proposal by Reich Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno was bound to fail and that other propositions were forgotten in the context of events (the Ruhrland occupation). The following chapter, *Úsilie o konsolidáciu pomerov*, deals with elements that were supposed to contribute to calming the situation in Europe – the Dawes

Plan and a Draft Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes (the Geneva Protocol). The year 1924 and favourable political constellation in France and Great Britain allowed, for the first time since the end of the war, for effective cooperation of both countries. The author correctly points out the position of James Ramsay MacDonald and his government consisting in priority resolution of the reparations issue. After all, the first Labour Prime Minister already talked about the necessity of good relations with Paris at the second meeting of the cabinet, adding however that the security issue had to wait.

The chapter *Locarnský medzník* brings an analysis of events following the British rejection of the Geneva Protocol draft and ending after almost nine months of negotiations with the Locarno Conference. According to British politicians, the disappointment that prevailed upon London's negative attitude could only be compensated for by a more active approach to the issue of collective security. On the other hand, it should be noted that part of the British conservative cabinet of Stanley Baldwin hoped for the impossibility of aligning French wishes with German ideas. The author correctly interprets the German memorandum of 20th January 1925 as a new impulse for the stuck negotiations on European security. She also knowledgeably assesses the Czechoslovak-German aspect of the complicated negotiations, while not omitting positions of other countries. The Locarno Conference (October 1925) then brought about Germany's return among superpowers and the end of France's dominant role on the continent, in her opinion.

The last chapter, *Locarnský epilóg*, deals with the fulfilment of one part of Article 10 of the Rhineland Pact saying that the agreement would come into effect upon Germany joining the League of Nations. In this chapter, Alena Feriancová analyses in detail the complex issue that the German entry in the League of Nations eventually became. She points out unsuccessful negotiations of March 1926, when it was decided to postpone Germany's admission to September, providing time for finding a suitable compromise.

Alena Feriancová's book represents a successful attempt at analysing the complicated issue of collective security in the 1920's, namely of the development of security in Central Europe between 1922 and 1926. The author's opinions are grounded in the study of relevant specialized literature and particularly in extensive archival research, focusing mostly on the approach of two states, Czechoslovakia and Germany. As for her assessment of the British policy, as someone dealing with this issue from London's perspective, I have a different opinion on some events (e.g. page 41 and the question of Austen Chamberlain's reflections on the British-French pact), but I am aware that it is not humanly possible to cover this

topic comprehensively. In no case does this impair the quality of the presented monograph, which I can unreservedly recommend to readers.

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reviews