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From diplomacy to culture : a historiography of the Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894

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FROM DIPLOMACY TO CULTURE:
A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE
FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE, 1890-1894

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Jeffrey S. Hardin

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ABSTRACT

FROM DIPLOMACY TO CULTURE: A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE, 1890-1894

by Jeffrey S. Hardin

The fall of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck from office in 1890 gave the first real diplomatic impetus to an alliance between France and Russia. This thesis examines all major histories of this Franco-Russian Alliance published in or translated into the English or French languages. It criticizes each historian's methodology, standpoint and conclusions in its contention that the historiography of the subject remains limited by tools and scholarly traditions of the past.

Analysis of the collective works on the subject has drawn attention to diplomatic, biographical and economic aspects of the Alliance, but a cultural history which accounts for French public opinion, government campaigns, poems, songs, and civic celebrations in support of military union between the two countries has never been published. In the true spirit of historical research, this thesis is meant as a suggestion for new and more complete work based on a collection and examination of Alliance material.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Research for this thesis has spanned the past three years through coursework, private efforts and consultation with a number of professors and professionals at San Jose State University and elsewhere. Originally, I stumbled across the Franco-Russian Alliance during a Writing 100W course taught by Irma Eichhorn, where my chapter on Conybeare was born. During my undergraduate years, Professor Eichhorn examined my work in several classes more critically than anyone before or since, and her tireless efforts on my intellectual behalf helped hone my research techniques as a graduate student. Older versions of other chapters were supervised by Billie Jensen, whom I must thank for her encouragement and consistent patience. In its present form and depth, Professor Goldman was kind enough to offer his expertise on European affairs at the end of the nineteenth century. A large portion of my knowledge of France in general came from Mary Pickering, who introduced me to the culture of the 1890s, directed my studies of contemporary literature and provided challenges to and much advice on the thesis itself.

In addition, this work has benefited from assistance on French translations by Professor Dominique van Hooff and Charles D'Aragnac. The curators of the Hoover Institute and reference librarians at Stanford University's Green and Auxiliary libraries proved invaluable for their help in gathering and sorting through an incredible amount of French materials; collectively, these three buildings house the majority of Alliance documentation in the western United States.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1890s, the system of agreements and alliances which had been the fabric of Europe's balance of power since 1871 came to an end. Before 1890, Germany had extended a web of connective diplomatic threads to the capitals of most European states. In one form or another, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Russia, England, Bulgaria and Rumania had all become attached by these tangled bonds. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, only France remained alone, curtailed in foreign policy by defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, somber in the domestic rebuilding of its shattered army and commerce, and ever-watchful for a weakness in the binds that reflected its diplomatic isolation. With the fall of Otto von Bismarck from his position as German Chancellor and the non-renewal of the Reinsurance Treaty between Germany and Russia (1887-1890), 1890 marked a crucial turning point for European nations, a period in which new alignments would be forged as a direct result of those two events. Like 1789, which symbolized the beginning of the end of French continental dominance, 1890 became the dawn of a new age in Europe, the beginning of the end of the dominance of another Great Power. The Franco-Russian Alliance (1890-1894) initiated the dissolution of German political hegemony.

After 1890, republican France and autocratic Russia concluded a defensive treaty against potential aggression by the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. French technology and finance complemented Russian geographical size and overwhelming manpower. Most importantly, these complementary powers surrounded

Germany on the east and west. To Germany's south, Austria-Hungary lay in commercial weakness, and the divisive tensions of its multi-ethnic forces illustrated the precarious control of the aged Habsburg Monarchy over volatile dominions. To the north of Germany, oceans crested along the banks of the North and Baltic Seas, but would they bring friendly vessels or determined foes? With the Anglo-French agreements in 1904 and the Anglo-Russian agreements in 1907, a pre-WWI alignment thwarted Germany's naval and colonial potential as well.

The stage had been set for the Great War, a struggle in which all of Europe's Great Powers sacrificed millions of lives. Most historians would agree with this simplified, straight-forward story. Historically, however, scholars have debated the origins, and particularly the guilt of European peoples and statesmen for the mass destruction and human tragedy with intellectual vigor, unleashed passion and circumspect reflection. Naturally, the positions taken on this debate depended upon the individual historian, his or her personal views, access to records, culture and methodology.

Since the crucial point did take place in 1890, scholars have examined this period, some more successfully than others, with a critical eye toward justifying or condemning acts and actors in the field of leadership at the end of the nineteenth century. Since the Franco-Russian Alliance revolutionized European international relations, it became the subject of scholars concerned with the question: why did a repressive, relatively backward autocracy ally with a politically chaotic, culturally refined republic? The task of this study, beyond providing a record of the context and content of this alliance, is to

analyze not only what the Alliance's historians have written, but what their motives were as well.

Far from an exercise in rhetoric, it is my firm belief that history can never be either objective or absolute. Underneath the surface of documents and facts lies interpretation: below a schema of approach lies the historian, a person who considers the nature of others and their times. A scholar can neither possess nor present every piece of correspondence behind action. He or she *chooses* which information is relevant, consciously or subconsciously proceeding from an agenda. Which people will he or she consider and why? How do time, place and experience affect scholarly work? What motives underline a historical approach? These questions define the central purpose of this historiography of the Franco-Russian Alliance, a study of its histories as the portrayals of its history.

Beyond a criticism of all major Alliance works published in or translated into English or French, this thesis is a measure of the limitations of previous approaches to the topic as a whole. It is said that every generation has and must have its own history of every event, and historians like everyone else remain, after all, bound by the context of their own lives. The historiographical advent of cultural history in the recent decade has challenged prior conceptions and even misconceptions about historical causes, time and social change. Is it any wonder that, given new and more effective methods, the final historical product must necessarily transform and advance over time as well?

Twenty years ago, it would have been inconceivable for a diplomatic alliance to be presented through a strictly cultural lens, a treatment which would account for literary theory, popular beliefs and values, gender differentiation, language and anthropology. While the main thrust of this work stands separately as a specific historiography, it is ultimately meant as a way of launching an entirely different form of diplomatic analysis: simply put, the histories discussed in the following chapters collectively form the foundation of study for a more cultural structure. The conclusion of this thesis is merely an introduction to a larger whole which accounts for threads and trends naturally overlooked -- because undreamed of -- by scholars between 1890 and 1990. My suggestion here is that the techniques of scholarship, not the quality of its entrepreneurs, must progress.

CHAPTER 1

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE'S SOURCES AND HISTORIANS

The most important diplomatic primary source used by Franco-Russian Alliance historians is the French *Documents Diplomatiques*, a series of collected foreign office documents which mainly records the interaction of French diplomats with each other and with their international counterparts between 1871 and 1914.¹ While these are only the official documents catalogued by France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they clearly illustrate conflicts between leading policy-makers on both the substance and technique of diplomatic action. In the years before 1890, the reader is made fully aware of France's desperation to break out of isolation and the effect of its methodical, political reconstruction on the conduct of diplomats during the 1880s; Bismarck's restraining effect on French confidence is also evident.²

Between 1890 and 1894, one sees a plan unfold in the French diplomatic sphere, one which initiated and pursued an alliance with Russia. The exchange of ideas between military officers, Foreign Ministers and far-flung ambassadors is preserved (on the whole) in addition to the original text and revisions of the alliance's military and political

¹ France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Commission de Publication des Documents Relatifs aux Origins de la Guerre de 1914. *Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1871-1914* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale), 1re série., tomes 7-11 (1890-1894). This massive collection of documents remains untranslated into English.

² Ibid., vols. 1-6.

treaties.³ French fears of the strengthening of the Triple Alliance, and particularly its relationship as symbolized by the Helgoland Treaty,⁴ served as pressing motives for an early and favorable conclusion of the alliance. Naturally, the documents cannot readily portray the Russian motives for concluding an agreement, but they do provide the opinions and theories as to what these were by French diplomats.

It is also important to remember that the Franco-Russian Alliance was a secret treaty; the text, if not the *entente cordiale*, remained unknown to the French public until after the end of World War I, when the documents were published. It is reasonable to assume that French public opinion, after prolonged years of French warfare punctuated by devastating battles like Verdun, metamorphosized in its assessment of Russian friendship, notably after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from the Eastern Front.⁵ Interestingly, historians' use of these Foreign Ministry documents actually determined their approach to the scholarship of the alliance itself. Some scholars relied heavily on this record on the basis that France contributed most heavily to the origins of World War I. Others drew extensively from German, English and Austrian foreign office documents, searching for the spot on which to place diplomatic blame. Some historians drew little from diplomatic

³ Ibid., vol. 9, 643-44. Document 444, the original proposal of the French and Russian military generals for an alliance text, is reproduced in Appendix A. (in both the original French and a translation by this author).

⁴ The Helgoland Agreement of 1890 symbolized an Anglo-German affinity, and accordingly caused discomfort to the leaders of France and Russia; Germany received a large rock in the North Sea and conceded to English colonial expansion in Eastern Africa.

⁵ Leon Trotsky's Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918) ended Russian involvement in the war, based upon Vladimir Lenin's April Theses of "peace, land and bread," leaving only the struggle in the Western Front to be continued by ex-Russia's ex-allies.

correspondence at all, favoring memoirs, newspaper accounts and family papers. As will be seen, scholarly use of sources, and the French Foreign Ministry records in particular, is a valid starting point to consider the motives of their approach.⁶

This paper has also made extensive use of the *Statesman's Yearbook*⁷ to obtain accurate information on certain components of Franco-Russian populations, industrial and railroad production, as well as general financial records. These books, published annually, are mainly collections of primary source statistics obtained from economic agencies in most of the world's nations; their original data in such areas as national revenue, birth and mortality rates, industrial production and population, shows the progress, decline and status of nations' resources. In other words, if a statesman or group expresses fears or confidence in regard to aspects of national strengths and weaknesses, accurate figures can be consulted to verify these opinions, at least to some extent.⁸

In terms of railroad production, a subset of industry and finance which will be subsequently discussed in this paper as key elements in Franco-Russian relations, two additional sources corroborate and expand upon figures obtained from the *Statesman's Yearbook*. The first is Edward Ames' publication, "A Century of Railroad Construction,

⁶ Another set of records used by historians of the Franco-Russian Alliance is media reports. Three contemporary newspapers consulted in this paper, when necessary to confirm or invalidate nineteenth-century reporting referred to by scholars, are the *London Spectator*, the *London Times* and the Paris *Le Moniteur Universel*, (1890-1894).

⁷ J. Scott Keltie, ed., *Statesman's Yearbook* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1898-1902).

⁸ Surprisingly, no Franco-Russian Alliance historian has ever made a direct use of this important source. Instead, scholars obtained some of the same information "piece-meal" from the economic agencies themselves.

1837-1936" in Russia.⁹ This article is the first study in English of Russian railroad construction figures based on the compilations of T.S. Khachaturov, L.Y. Volfson, V.I. Ledovski and N.A. Shilnikov; Ames' principle table, for length of railroad line completed in Russia each year (1838-1937), is an exact reproduction of the Russian sources.¹⁰ The second is Alexander Gerschenkron's "The Rate of Industrial Growth in Russia Since 1885."¹¹ Using the exact tables of N.D. Kondratieff's original data on railroad construction for each year (1885-1913),¹² Dr. Gerschenkron analyzes production figures in terms of the domestic influences of Ivan Vyshnegradsky and Serge Witte, Russian Ministers of Finance during the period.

Despite the use of primary sources and original economic statistical evaluation, this paper remains a historiography; its essential sources are the works of historians of the Franco-Russian Alliance. Their words, *and choices of words*, their sources, *and choices of sources*, their texts, and *subtexts*¹³ are the backbone of this historiography.

⁹ Edward Ames, "A Century of Railroad Production, 1837-1936," *American Slavic and East European Review* 6 (December 1947): 57-74.

¹⁰ The Russian sources are Khachaturov's *Razmeshchenie Transporta* (Moscow, 1939) and *Puti Razvitiya Transporta SSR* (Moscow, 1941), and Volfson, Ledovski and Shilnikov's *Ekonomike Transporta* (Moscow 1941). All of the railroad statistics used in this paper correspond to development between 1890 and 1900.

¹¹ Alexander Gerschenkron, "The Rate of Industrial Growth in Russia since 1885," *Journal of Economic History* 7 (June 1947): 147-51.

¹² According to Gerschenkron, Kondratieff's data was published under the Russian State auspices of the Economic Bulletin of the Business Cycle Research Institute in *Ekonomicheskii bulletin*, 5 (1926): 12-20. See *Gerschenkron*, 145 for a discussion of the statistics obtained from this source.

¹³ One of the most provoking examples of a "subtext" variation is Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou* (1975), a report on a Middle Ages, French town whose inhabitants were all

William Leonard Langer (1896-1977), an American historian who received his B.A. at Harvard in the bloody year of 1915, became a renowned scholar with a remarkable career. After finishing his doctoral work at Harvard in 1923, he taught at Clark University for four years; his first published work, *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894*¹⁴ became a classical model of diplomatic history. Langer continued teaching with a professorship at Harvard (1927-64). A few of his subsequent, celebrated works include *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890* (1931), *The Diplomacy of Imperialism* (1935) and the *Encyclopedia of World History* (1940, 1972). Unquestionably, he was a great contributor to the field of history.

But what is a *diplomatic* history, and is it a useful approach to the study of European *fin de siècle* relations? The purpose of a diplomatic history is straightforward: the historian focuses on state capitals, the highest state representatives, state documents and state agendas. Its stories are the tales of diplomatic action and reaction. For Langer and his *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894*, the central, almost omnipotent figure is Otto von Bismarck, creator of Germany as Nation and Chancellor of its Reich. His evidence, therefore, relies heavily upon Bismarck's memoirs, the correspondence of other diplomats as they pertain to Bismarck and Germany's Foreign Ministry documents of the

convicted of heresy. In this work, only italics separate evidence (quotations of records) from Ladurie's analysis. The author supplements what is not said in the record in an eloquent weave of testimony and critique. This technique of writing a history is valuable in that it forces the reader to question Ladurie's thinking about his thinking. A method of inquiry heavily emphasized in this paper, the work is also an example of the cultural technique of linguistic analysis and presentation.

¹⁴ William Langer, *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1929; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1967). Actually, this book originated in Langer's doctoral thesis, "The European Alliances During the Chancellorship of Caprivi," (Harvard, 1923).

period. According to the historian, Bismarck's 1880s objectives were to maintain peace for Germany, to isolate the defeated France, to maintain Austria as its most solid ally and to "deflect pressure on the center" by embroiling European powers in peripheral areas such as the Dardanelles, Egypt, Central Africa and East Asia.¹⁵ Russia was to be retained as an ally, and this major aspect of Bismarckian foreign policy was consummated by a defensive Reinsurance Treaty between the two nations.

But in 1890, Germany's new Kaiser, Wilhelm II, effectively dismissed Bismarck from office and from the tangled scene of foreign affairs. What would Bismarck's successor do with these entanglements? This is the central question posed by Langer; his discussion of Germany's "New Course,"¹⁶ a policy led by the cohort of General George Leo von Caprivi, the subsequent German Chancellor, and his entourage which included Freidrich von Holstein (Foreign Office Undersecretary) and Baron Adolf Hermann Marschall (Foreign Minister), indicated that its leaders not only directed the diplomacy of Germany, but also directed the course of European affairs in general. Because the Germans "cast a substantial treaty with Russia into the discard for the Platonic friendship of England,"¹⁷ all of Europe hung in the balance of Anglo-German relations. Since that "friendship" never achieved fruition, the New Course inevitably foreshadowed a Triple Entente.

¹⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹⁶ The simplest explanation of the New Course is Germany's courtship of England as an ally at the expense of agreements with Russia.

¹⁷ Langer, 66.

As a diplomatic history, Langer's work updated the previous standard set by Ernest Daudet (1837-1921) in his *Histoire Diplomatique de l'Alliance Franco-Russe, 1873-1893*.¹⁸ Of this work, the American scholar wrote, "one of the earliest and still one of the best books on the subject. The author is apt to be sensational and uncritical, but was in a position to know a good deal of what was going on. His book has distinct source value."¹⁹ Actually, Daudet was more of a journalist than a historian; though he wrote several biographical histories which sensationalized European leaders such as William II, his bread-and-butter really came from his positions as editor of the *Journal Officiel* and the *Petit Moniteur*. Indeed, he came from one of France's foremost literary families: his brother Alphonse (1840-1897), novelist, satirist and editor, was the one-time secretary to the Duke of Marmy; his nephew Léon (1867-1942), a journalist with *Figaro*, *Gaulois* and *Soleil* among other newspapers, is probably best remembered as the co-founder (with Charles Maurras) of L'Action Français in 1907.

Despite a vast social network of familial and political connections, or what he termed "*une ancienne fréquentation des coulisses de la diplomatie*," Daudet's work remained submerged in circles of hearsay and partialities.²⁰ His contemporary audience had to take him at his word in regard to his access to information: while "*beaucoup de faits restent encore ignorés*," there are many of which he was reportedly aware -- but

¹⁸ Ernest Daudet, *Histoire Diplomatique de l'Alliance Franco-Russe, 1873-1893*, 2d ed., ed. Paul Ollendorff (Paris: 1894).

¹⁹ Langer, 426.

²⁰ Daudet, ii, "an ancient frequenting of diplomacy behind-the-scenes."

naturally, “*il ne serait patriotique de divulguer dès à présent.*”²¹ His standpoint on the alliance as both progressive and necessary probably reflected the opinions of most French politicians during the 1880s and 1890s.

Like Ernest Daudet, Élie de Cyon (1843-1912) was a journalist with international connections; unlike the French-born intellectual, however, Cyon wrote from an elevated position within the alliance movement itself. As its premier historian, he had a unique role in that he personally knew, dined, corresponded and worked with several important men and women who built the alliance from its foundations to its conclusion in 1894. Born in St. Petersburg, Cyon became a neurosurgeon and a professor at the St. Petersburg Academy of Medicine. After seven years at the academy, in 1877, he emigrated to Paris, and from then on, he spent time in both capitals, primarily dedicating his life to a union between France and Russia.

His work, *Histoire de l'Entente Franco-Russe, 1886-1894*, benefited from his journalistic connections to publishers and officials in Russia as well as the salons of Paris.²² A connective thread between the two nations, Cyon worked tirelessly toward the alliance's culmination published in his book. Unfortunately from the historical vantage of accuracy, this text stands among the most biased on the subject. Yet it is precisely this bias which is most valuable to further research on the subject: more than other sources in many ways, his leads to a plethora of names and covert actions away from the floors of France's legislative body and its diplomats. One need not grant Cyon a full measure of

²¹ Ibid., i, “many facts are still unknown,” “it would not be patriotic to divulge them at present.”

²² Élie de Cyon, *Histoire de l'Entente Franco-Russe, 1886-1894: Documents et Souvenirs*, 3d ed. (Paris: Librairie A. Charles, 1895).

credibility; accounting for his perspective while uncovering his connections and methods proves invaluable.

Distanced from the internecine disasters of World War I, Langer's approach emphasizes neither nationalism nor social movements, while the works of Daudet and Cyon sparkle with pre-WWI naïveté. Georges Michon's *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1891-1917*,²³ the first comprehensive study of relations between France and Russia from the first steps toward the alliance and its dramatic dissolution, is a social history, saturated with the nationalist feelings of citizens in post-revolutionary France. Little is known about Michon himself from secondary sources, but the emotional pleas and warnings of his book confirm several points. His love of the French people and their concepts of “*liberté, égalité, fraternité*” symbolized the driving force behind his scholarship, and his lamentation of France's tragic human loss in a few miles of trenches compelled him to remonstrate against the blind officials of a sacrosanct republic.

In this case, the historian's sources are of particular significance. Using the French *Documents Diplomatiques*, Michon creates a tale of social dilemma and unfocused purpose, punctuated, as the didactic story unfolds, by the French Foreign Ministry documents in exact order of date. The author's intention seems to be to supplement the spectacle of drama with an array of hand-picked documentation. Moreover, it is Michon himself who points out that he is the first academician to address the misguided intent and dramatic effect of the Franco-Russian Alliance: he chides scholarly reluctance to evaluate the alliance, the “Ark of the Covenant . . . left without a

²³ Georges Michon, *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1891-1917*, trans. Norman Thomas (1927; reprint, New York: Macmillan Co., 1929).

single eulogist" on which it was a "sacrilege to lay hands."²⁴ Yet, Georges Michon is no eulogist: although he wrote about an alliance that had surely met a miserable death, his meaning is that no decent Frenchman could *possibly* narrate a praise of the alliance. From this standpoint, his eloquent attacks pose a paradox to history. If the French felt rage and a national will to burst the bonds of isolation, and Russia was suddenly left to the winds by Caprivi's New Course, then why shouldn't France and Russia have sought each other out to obtain a measure of security?

No historiography of the Franco-Russian Alliance could be worthwhile without the perspective of German nationalism. Since no English translation of the alliance from a German historian exists, this writer has sought out several historians from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who studied the origins of nationalism and their effect upon Germany's international relations, as well as the results of the peculiar manifestation of Germany as Nation.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), eminent philosopher, historian and university professor, should be recognized as the father of German nationalism. His academic career is formidable and includes the study of theology (Tubingen, 1788-93), services as a tutor of philosophy (Berne, Frankfurt am Main, 1793-1801), and successive professorships at Jena (1801-06), Nuremberg (1808-16), Heidelberg (1816-18) and Berlin (1818-31). Hegel lived through the Prussian defeats by Napoleon and dedicated himself to the creation of a greater-Prussian state.

²⁴ Ibid., 5.

His major work, *Lectures of the Philosophy of History*,²⁵ is a collection of ideas which had the widest and deepest impact on generations of German statesmen. Its first "lecture" illustrated the contrasts and existence of two powerful forces: gravity was the ultimate centripetal force which attracted all matter toward a center, while spirit, or *Volksgeist*, was continually pushed outward from the ultimate centrifugal force, (for Hegel), of freedom.²⁶ Thus, matter and spirit are exact opposites, moved by forces beyond their control. Moreover, "Universal History . . . is the exhibition of Spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially."²⁷ A physicist would readily note that an object resting on a table has a potential force; without the table's support, the object would fall toward the earth at 9.8m/sec^2 . Hegel argues that the Spirit of mankind would be propelled outward and forward unless restrictions on freedom prevented it from doing so. For Hegel, these restrictions could be removed by the sacred self-consciousness made possible by the State, "the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth."²⁸ Most importantly, "the capital Spirit of a People is a *determinate* and particular Spirit . . .,"²⁹ implying that a particular nation may be better than others, and a particular people may be better than their counterparts across the dotted line of a map. This line of

²⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1833; reprint, London: George Bell and Sons, 1890).

²⁶ Ibid., 18. *Volksgeist* means "spirit of peoples."

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 41.

²⁹ Ibid., 55.

profound, if highly discriminatory, reasoning has every relevance to the Franco-Russian Alliance.

Heinrich von Treitschke (1834-96) was a historian by second nature: foremost, he distinguished himself as a political activist. It is true that he taught history at prominent universities in Leipzig, Freiburg, Heidelberg, and Kiel, but his real passion remained the realm of political debate. As a member of the Reichstag, he represented the National Liberal Party until Bismarck succeeded in the unification of the nation and the confirmation of its creation by 1871. After that, he increasingly supported an ardent, even self-righteous brand of nationalism which affected subsequent generations of politicians and "learned" military officers. His major work, *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*,³⁰ traced the history of German states between 1800 and the 1840s, before Germany became a unified nation. Even so, Treitschke wrote his particular history from the more modern standpoint of Bismarckian unification as his own brand of an embedded nationalism.

This political activist-historian firmly disagreed with Hegel's dialectical model.³¹ For him, "Hegel's great works enshrined a tragical contradiction,"³² in that the applications of the dialectic could be mere academic verbiage, totally unrelated to the problems of nationalism in Germany with which the author was concerned.³³ Some

³⁰ Heinrich von Treitschke, *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, with a Foreword and selection by Gordon A. Craig (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1975).

³¹ This model will be discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter.

³² Treitschke, 249.

³³ Karl Marx's communist "application" of the progress of history and its conclusion in a classless, stateless society is never mentioned in Treitschke, yet the author

modern historians have noted the progress of Treitschke's work from liberal to conservative, from tolerant to rigid,³⁴ but toward the end of the author's volumes, "German Nationalism" assumed the premise and preponderance of cultural, spiritual and racial superiority in a comparison to any other group, class or type of people.³⁵ The "secure instinct of unassailable national pride, permeating flesh and blood,"³⁶ in addition to Treitschke's wide audience of military and high civil officials during the 1880s and 1890s contributed to a super-confidence by Germans in their stock which actually encouraged a link between the "inferior" peoples of France, and Russia -- nations whose statesmen were also familiar with the intent of this outspoken, revered politician and scholar.

The institution which, after victory in the Napoleonic Wars (1813-15), symbolized the highest, *purest* elements of this German culture was undoubtedly the Prussian Army. Successful in battles against Austria (1864), Denmark (1866) and France (1870-71), this group became a temple of high-priests for German nationalism and a loathed and feared chimera for the military and political establishments of other nations, specifically France and Russia. Gordon Alexander Craig's successful study, *The Politics of the Prussian*

may well have referred to variations of socialist theory made possible by interpretations of Hegel's dialectic. In any case, a "stateless" society is the tragedy to which he doubtlessly referred.

³⁴ Gordon Craig's introduction to Treitschke's text shows a clear illustration of the process.

³⁵ Naturally, this included a strong bias against German Jews.

³⁶ Treitschke, 312.

Army, 1640-1945),³⁷ traces, among numerous other points, the rise of nationalism within the German military sphere. Born in 1913 in Scotland, Craig became a U.S. citizen at the age of twelve and continued the rest of his education in America. He earned a B.A. (1936), M.A. (1939) and Ph.D. (1941) at Princeton University. A few of his awards include a Rhodes Scholarship (1936-38), the Henry Baxter Adams Prize for *The Politics of the Prussian Army* (1956) and the presidency of the American Historical Association (1981). His professorships have included positions at Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Columbia and the Free University of Berlin. Although this fractional note cannot substantiate the depth of his career, Gordon Craig is a reputable scholar of the highest caliber.

During the 1890s, according to Craig, the Prussian (German) Army was in the process of metamorphosis; "the Wilhelmine era was characterized by the progressive usurpation of the authority and functions of the professional diplomats."³⁸ Ranking officers, such as Count Alfred von Schleiffen,³⁹ took control of diplomatic negotiation after Bismarck's fall from office in 1890. For Craig, this exposed the fundamental weakness of German foreign policy. Ultimately, since military considerations alone dictated political action, Germany accepted diplomatic risks.⁴⁰ The superior combination

³⁷ Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955).

³⁸ Ibid., xvii.

³⁹ Schleiffen became Chief of Staff for Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1892.

⁴⁰ Craig, 282. Craig emphasizes Schleiffen's "blindness to political realities" in particular.

of nations which had defeated Germany by 1918 was a result of these non-political considerations.

Another important angle on the subject of German nationalism is Anglo-German relations during the early 1890s. The German pursuit of England as an ally in this period had a cause-and-effect relationship with the Franco-Russian Alliance; the New Course, as Langer noted, demanded solicitation of English friendship at the expense of the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, facilitating⁴¹ agreements between France and Russia, yet the fruition of that entente necessitated that the Germans actually obtain what they sought or risk conflict with the United Kingdom in a future war. Raymond Sontag, Professor of European History at Princeton and an author of diplomatic studies, in his book, *Germany and England: Background of Conflict, 1848-1894*,⁴² views the differences between young Germany and old England as a matter of maturity.

Although "Germany and England were coming to be regarded as natural allies, united by a common fear of French and Russian aggression,"⁴³ their polar definitions of nationalism underlined irreconcilable differences. For the island empire, liberalism, "that other English religion,"⁴⁴ dominated a nationalism that had existed for enough centuries not to be re-emphasized in every waking moment. For the powerhouse continental state,

⁴¹ Whether or not this solicitation directly caused the Franco-Russian Alliance, or merely suggested a possibility to the leaders of those nations, is a historiographical debate reviewed in later chapters. William Langer insists on the latter conclusion.

⁴² Raymond J. Sontag, *Germany and England: Background of Conflict, 1848-1894* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1938).

⁴³ Ibid., 226.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 115.

nationalism superimposed itself on all forms of individuality.⁴⁵ To Sontag, the key component of friction remained the contrast of freedom and order.⁴⁶

More modern studies, with the perspective of a century of a German nationalist development that included the Third Reich (1933-45), Germany's division and recent reunification, have emphasized internal, institutional weaknesses and the powerful dominance of its neighbors as reasons for Germany's foreign policy decisions. David Halsam Childs, who received his Ph.D. (1962) from the London School of Economics and Political Science, author of several works on modern Germany, has noted the institutional problems of Germany's main legislative body, the Reichstag. One of the subsections of his book, *Germany in the Twentieth Century*,⁴⁷ titled "Universal suffrage but unrepresentative government," pointed out that, although Reichstag members were elected freely, the legislation that they reviewed could only be presented by the Kaiser's ministers.⁴⁸ David Patrick Calleo, another modern expert on Germany with degrees from and a professorship at Yale University, analyzed German history as the epic saga of a "problem." As the director of the European Studies Program at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (1968-present), a research fellow at Oxford (1966-67) and a Fulbright lecturer in Germany, Calleo has established himself as an eminent scholar. One of his works, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World*,

⁴⁵ Ibid., viii.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁷ David Childs, *Germany in the Twentieth Century*, 3d ed. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991).

⁴⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

⁴⁹ *1870 to the Present*, traces the origins, progress and defeat of German nationalism; his arguments are both straightforward and decisive.

His opening words set a lucid, logical pace: "to a remarkable extent, world history from the 1860s to after the Second World War has been dominated by the German Problem. What is, or was, that problem?"⁵⁰ Indeed, Calleo raised the somber issue of whether or not there was a German problem. Perhaps, Germany's rapid and late rise to nationhood, in conjunction with the strength and success of its army, was too startling for the comfort of its well-established neighbors. The author is quick to note that "throughout most of modern history, Germans were more often victims than aggressors."⁵¹ Of course, Calleo ultimately acknowledged the German problem of expansionist nationalism, but his thesis contained the centrist element of human nature as a whole. "Perhaps the proper conclusion is not so much that civilization was uniquely weak in Germany, but that it is fragile everywhere."⁵²

Collectively, these German history scholars approach the situation of Berlin's leadership in the 1890s from several perspectives. Although, with the partial exception of Sontag, none of these historians wrote a monograph about the Franco-Russian Alliance during the period, their blend of philosophical, institutional and political studies suffice

⁴⁹ David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World Order, 1870 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁵¹ Ibid., 4. This point refers, most likely, to the Thirty Years War and the Napoleonic periods and not to such events as the fifth-century sack of Rome.

⁵² Ibid., 6.

for an examination of the role of Germany during the earliest years of the agreements between France and Russia.

On the Russian side, George Frost Kennan, who received a B.A. from Princeton University (1925),⁵³ is a prolific author whose background has been that of a U.S. Foreign Service official. His career took him to Geneva, Hamburg, Talinn (Estonia), Berlin, Riga, Vienna, Prague, Lisbon, London and Moscow under the auspices of various titles which included secretary and consul. His most decorated positions were as the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union (1952) and to Yugoslavia (1961-63). His teaching career consisted of professorships at the University of Chicago, Princeton, Oxford and Harvard. In 1975, he founded the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies in Washington D.C. Other honors included a Pulitzer Prize in history (1957) and the Albert Einstein Peace Prize (1981). From this brief sample of his achievements, Kennan's expertise in the field of modern Russia remains uneclipsed by contemporary historians and political scientists.

His monograph, *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia and the Coming of the First World War*,⁵⁴ is largely a biographical history of the alliances' creators. Those who search for Bismarck will be loath to find instead probing studies of Alexandre Ribot, France's Foreign Minister of the period, Charles Freycinet, Premier of France and Minister of War, Tsar Alexander III and Nikolai Karlovich Giers, longtime Foreign Minister of Russia, General Nikolai Nikolayevich Obruchev and General Raoul le Mouton de Boisdeffre, fill

⁵³ His numerous doctoral degrees have been honorary.

⁵⁴ George F. Kennan, *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia and the Coming of the First World War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

the pages of *Fateful Alliance* as architects of a new European order. Step by step, Kennan traces the progress and setbacks of Franco-Russian agreement with liberal use of the French Foreign Ministry documents and some translations. His explanation of nationalism applies to all modern nations. "*Its* symbols require the highest reverence; *its* causes deserve the highest sacrifice; *its* interests are sacrosanct. The symbols, causes, and interests of its international rivals are, by contrast, unworthy, disreputable, expendable."⁵⁵ In all of this, a measure of individual control in foreign policy and international affairs seemed lost, reminiscent of the struggle of super-powers during the Cold War.

Finally, a number of alternative explanations are available (or should be) which test models and new approaches to the study of the Franco-Russian Alliance.⁵⁶ One of

⁵⁵ Ibid., 257.

⁵⁶ This author has never found a Marxist monograph or a detailed and specific consideration of the Franco-Russian Alliance. Perhaps Vladimir Lenin's work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917), would be the most orthodox place to start. This book considers the generation of European alliances as a by-product of imperial competition toward the end of the twentieth century. This could be fairly described as the final, apocalyptic class of exploitative, capitalist nations, according to Lenin. In addition, a trio of Western studies on Russia may add light to various interpretations of the alliance. William L. Blackwell's book, *The Industrialization of Russia: An Historical Perspective* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Co., 1970), provides an excellent review of Russian economic needs during the period. Readers will find the additional information on Vishnegradski useful. Jerome Blum's classic, *Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) shows the progress of the mind of the peasants and the dynamics of their institutions over centuries. After Serf Emancipation was put into effect by Alexander II in 1861, Blum observes an increasing, if rather evolutionary, awareness by the serfs of their independence; this was tantamount to the genesis of at least some political interest from some peasants by 1890. Blum's final chapters offer an interesting contrast to the inherently social history of Michon which presupposes an absolute unawareness by Russia's lower-classes of other nations. Finally, James Billington's *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (1966; New York: Vintage Books, 1970), which has nothing to do with the Franco-Russian Alliance *per se*, is a

the most dynamic approaches among these is John Conybeare's article, "A Portfolio Diversification Model of Alliances: The Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, 1879-1914,"⁵⁷ a study of the alliance patterns from the economic, statistical standpoint of a business portfolio. Without the necessary burden of historical context, the author proceeds to evaluate alliance combinations based on the profitability of risk and return. From data in the *Statesman's Yearbook*, Conybeare uses indices of manpower, birthrate and industrial production to assess the value of the Franco-Russian and other alliances. His statistically-based conclusion, that the Franco-Russian combination was highly favorable for those nations and should have been prohibited by Germany, (since it had a weaker combination with Austria) at all cost, supports Langer's view that Germany's 1890s New Course was a mistake. Yet, this is in startling opposition to Michon, who

harbinger of a unique and untested type of history. This work introduces cultural symbolism, the artistic symbols which underline political institutions by imagery. The axe, icon, bell and cannon, some of the first recognizable Russian symbols, mark the beginning of the use of images to draw together public action by all classes. Billington's work weaves these images and shows their effect upon Russian thought from the pre-Muscovite era through the Soviet Union. The equivalent of this author's cultural symbolism approach remains without a counterpart for French history. Moreover, if such a counterpart were created, a blend of imagery could be compared to further study the architects of the Franco-Russian Alliance. This prospective study might question what images Alexander III had in his mind as he stood at attention, hat off, listening to the *Marseillaise* during the French fleet's visit to Kronstadt in 1891. What images did the French crew members have of mighty Russia? What scenes ran through the minds of the Russian peasants, cheering, wide-eyed and internationally inexperienced, as they stood by the docks, following the progress of their French visitors?

⁵⁷ John Conybeare, "A Portfolio Diversification Model of Alliances: The Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, 1879-1914," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36 (March 1992): 53-85.

maintained that the alliance between France and Russia was only profitable for the Russians, who received financial support without having to conclude World War I.⁵⁸

Together, these primary sources and histories represent work of the most thorough scholarship available from Western studies of the Franco-Russian Alliance and its context.⁵⁹ In some degree, this historiographical paper extracts and evaluates the key elements from all of these aforementioned works. Eclectic historiography and historical criticism are the two motives of analysis, in the following pages, which seek to validate and question each scholar on his own terms and in comparison with the others. As a point of continuous scholarship, however, study of the alliance remains partial. It could be improved significantly through examination of cultural symbolism and the uses of language among other methods to uncover how the French people perceived ties with their occidental diplomatic counterpart.

⁵⁸ Michon, 333.

⁵⁹ Regrettably, this writer has found few Russian studies on the subject. Pre-Revolution historians, such as Vassily Kliuchevsky, died before the alliance became publicized by Lenin, and Soviet State censorship prohibited original works by Soviet scholars.

CHAPTER 2

WILLIAM LANGER'S DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

For William Langer, the origins of the Franco-Russian Alliance stemmed from the diplomatic position of European nations during the 1880s. Generally speaking, he did not concern himself with the morality of diplomats who guided their nations toward World War I; his analysis considered the worth of diplomats based on their impact on the sphere of negotiation. Thus, social causes remained non-existent in his work, including the forces of nationalism. Economic interaction played a secondary role, and political forces had impact only through their influence upon leading diplomats. Public opinion, likewise, became important if it affected the process of agreement between statesmen. Because of its decidedly limited approach, Langer, in *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894*, never actually formulated an opinion as to whether or not the alliance was good or bad as a whole for the peoples of the nations involved. In this light, his assertion that the German New Course of 1890 led to the loss of German diplomatic power became his conclusion in and of itself. Only by the hypothetical syllogism that loss of power leads to desperation, and desperation leads to war, can one extend the author's thesis.

Langer started his work with an overall view of the status of the European balance of power during the 1880s, after German unification, which he termed the Bismarckian System. England, a world power quite unlike any of the European continental nations, was concerned with the integrity of three major fronts, the Near East (Balkans), the Middle East and the Far East (Afghanistan through China). On these fronts, she faced the

menace of the vastly populated Russia. Thus, England's interests in protecting important areas such as the Mediterranean, (particularly Egypt's Suez Canal), and India engendered a degree of animosity between England and Russia. France, left isolated by defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), sought allies and pursued internal economic and military development. Italy, newly formed as a nation, sought the continental alliance of Germany and a maritime alliance with England.⁶⁰ Austria, internally weak and at odds with Russia over the Balkan states, usually sought the same alliances as Italy.⁶¹ Between 1887 and 1890, Germany and Russia remained defensively bound (and economically conciliatory) by the Reinsurance Treaty through which Germany expressed no objection to Russian passage through the Dardanelles.⁶²

Behind virtually all of those contingencies, which have been substantially simplified, loomed the indomitable Otto von Bismarck, who, for Langer, was "the greatest political genius of modern times"⁶³ The author never paused to entertain ideas that Bismarck's tenacious grasp of alliances might gradually loosen because while the German Chancellor held office, he contended, Berlin continued to be the focal point

⁶⁰Langer, 7.

⁶¹Ibid., 8.

⁶²The Reinsurance Treaty expired on 18 June 1890. An adequate summary of the basic chronology of various stages of the Franco-Russian Alliance may be found in *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History* (1979).

⁶³Langer, 3.

of diplomatic affairs. When a young, Russophobic Kaiser assumed the throne in March of 1890, he had neither the tolerance nor the patience to continue the rather complicated business of the Bismarckian system. In that same month, the advisors of Wilhelm II, including the new Chancellor Caprivi and his assistants, Holstein and Marschall, considered the problem of Germany's Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, a pillar of Bismarckian policy which they worked to overturn.

Their swift conclusion, embodied in the Bershem Memorandum,⁶⁴ pointed out that the Russian treaty was incompatible with Germany's Triple Alliance. (particularly in regard to the support of Austrian expansion in the Balkans), dangerous in that Russia could divulge the (secret) agreement to the Austrians, untenable in that it actually encouraged the Russians to press forward through the Dardanelles and dubious because Bismarck was the only diplomat capable of holding all nations in balance.⁶⁵ Langer noted that the reasoning of this memorandum was "tenable and sound."⁶⁶ and hypothesized a direct link between the fall of the Chancellor and non-renewal of the treaty. "If the treaty in its existing form was worth renewing it should have been worth Bismarck's retention in power."⁶⁷ Moreover, the author evaluated the decisions forced upon Caprivi by his erratic

⁶⁴Ibid., 59. The memorandum was signed and issued to Wilhelm II on 25 March 1890.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., 64.

⁶⁷Ibid.

Kaiser. "It is hardly just to blame Caprivi and his subordinates for deciding against the treaty after Bismarck's dismissal. The real blunder lay in the dismissal of Bismarck, in putting off the pilot who alone was able to sail the ship."⁶⁸ Accordingly, Caprivi's objections were legitimate. "The objection was not to the treaty as such, but to any secret treaty."⁶⁹ For Langer, the blame belonged to Wilhelm II and his entourage of Anglophiles. Moreover, the historian pointed out that the loss of both Bismarck and the treaty at the same time was a disaster. The writers of the Bershem Memorandum "were concerned entirely with a consideration of the possible dangers of renewing the treaty. They forgot to take into account the possible dangers of not renewing it."⁷⁰ The dangers were, of course, the difficulties for Germany in the event of a two-front war under the auspices of a Franco-Russian Alliance.

But was the non-renewal of the Reinsurance Treaty enough to propel France and Russia toward each other? Langer noted that the French diplomats seemed eager to secure agreements in the face of continued isolation, but to the Russians, "the French

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., 66. Langer's point is somewhat misguided; the key clauses of the Triple Alliance embodied a secret treaty to which Caprivi and his associates had no objection. It would be more clear to say that Caprivi had an objection to secret treaties which were in conflict with each other, and he concluded that the Russian treaty was expendable. English newspapers (*Times*, 21 March 1890, *Spectator*, 22 March 1890) questioned the "possible effects" of Bismarck's fall on Europe's peace.

⁷⁰Ibid., 67.

government was regarded as revolutionary, atheistic and corrupt"⁷¹ Afterall, according to Langer, caustic fronts with England were more significant to Russia than its less volatile, (Bershem Memorandum or not), relations with Germany.⁷² "In the last count, the one irreconcilable enemy of Russia was England."⁷³ Langer maintained that one of the principle reasons for the Reinsurance Treaty's non-renewal was Germany's disdain of its obligation to support Russian plans for expansion toward the Mediterranean. The historian concluded that the Dardanelles region "was almost as important for Russia as existence itself."⁷⁴ This point, however, has been seriously contested by other historians and even by the Russian statesmen themselves. After disappointing, and certainly costly, defeats during the Crimean War (1854-55) and The Russo-Turkish War (1878-79), the Russians had modified their classical, expansionist policy of attack through Constantinople. This is clear in the official notes of Alexandre Ribot, the French Foreign Minister, dated 21 November 1891, in which he recalled a recent meeting with Nikolai Giers, the Foreign Minister of Russia. "*M. de Giers a expliqué que la politique de la Russie en Orient ne visait que le maintien du statu quo.*"⁷⁵

⁷¹Ibid., 10.

⁷²Ibid., 82.

⁷³Ibid., 87.

⁷⁴Ibid., 82.

⁷⁵France, Vol. 9, 111. Document 76 of the *Documents Diplomatiques* shows Ribot's memory of a conversation with Giers and his views on the Russian minister's stated position. "Mr. de Giers had explained that the political policy of Russia in the Orient (Dardanelles) was to aim toward maintenance of the status quo."

Ribot also recalled Giers' exact words in regard to Russia's official position on the subject of the Dardanelles:

*On se figure, m'a-t-il dit, que nous convoitons Constantinople. Nous pensons, au contraire, que rien ne serait plus fâcheux pour la Russie que de déplacer son centre de gravité. Que deviendraient nos provinces du Nord et Saint-Petersbourg? Nous désirons que les Turcs restent préposés à la garde des Détroits. Si les Autrichiens ou les Grecs devaient s'installer à Constantinople, ce serait autre chose; nous ne demandons pas plus que ce qui nous a été concédé par le Sultan pour le passage de nos transports. Notre situation est devenue plus forte depuis qu'on nous ait décidés à marcher d'accord.*⁷⁶

This clear statement of purpose, paraphrased by Ribot and stated by Russia's highest ranking diplomatic official of the age, contradicts Langer's assessment that the Straits were a vital part of the Tsar's foreign policy in 1890.⁷⁷

In addition to the lapse of the Reinsurance Treaty, Langer points to a number of events which facilitated a closer relationship between France and Russia. The Russian

⁷⁶Ibid. "One may think, he said to me, that we covet Constantinople. We think, on the contrary, that nothing would be more troublesome for Russia than to displace its center of gravity. What would become of our northern provinces and St. Petersburg? We desire that the Turks remain in charge of guarding the Straits. If the Austrians or the Greeks were to become established at Constantinople, that would be another thing; we do not demand more than that which has been conceded by the Sultan for the passage of our transport ships. Our position has become a lot stronger since it is common knowledge that we are getting along with this."

⁷⁷George Kennan, *The Fateful Alliance*, 390, in his discussion of the issues notes that any contemporary diplomatic or modern historical view which equated the Dardanelles region as a major goal of Russian activity in 1890 would be "a seriously erroneous view of Russian policy." He has neither quoted his source nor mentioned a conflict with Langer on this point.

Army's annual maneuvers at Narva (17-22 August 1890), for example, attended by Tsar Alexander III, Minister Giers and Chancellor Caprivi, became a small, political arena in which diplomatic exchange represented a continued tension between Russia and Germany.⁷⁸ Langer drew two main points from conversations at the maneuvers: Giers' effort to obtain even an exchange of friendship notes failed, and the Tsar declared publicly that he would never ally with a republic (i.e. France).⁷⁹ Yet, this contradicts the historian's earlier point that the Narva exchanges "had no political result so far as Russo-German relations were concerned."⁸⁰ Rather, no positive results occurred for Giers, who left in the despair of rejection. As for the Tsar's declaration, this seems to be at least somewhat negated by the presence of General Boisdeffre, the future architect of the Franco-Russian Alliance's text, at the maneuvers. Langer maintained that Boisdeffre's invitation was "nothing more than an exchange of courtesies marking a greater cordiality."⁸¹ Why, then, would the Tsar of Russia invite a leading French general, (unprecedented in Russian history), to army maneuvers only to announce publicly that Russia was too good, (pure, solid, respectable), to ally with a republic such as France? Even in the text of Langer, this makes no sense.⁸²

⁷⁸Langer, 102-3.

⁷⁹Ibid., 105.

⁸⁰Ibid., 103.

⁸¹Ibid., 121.

⁸²Kennan, as will be examined in a later chapter, points to the Tsar's alternate plan in inviting Boisdeffre. It is true that Alexander III had serious doubts about any political

Another issue analyzed by the historian, the difficult role of Italy during the 1890s, represented a decisive focal point for the progress of European alliances. On the whole, this originated from Franco-Italian rivalry in commercial trade and colonial activity.⁸³ The main evidence of this rivalry, in retrospect, was an economic clash. Langer noted, for example, that Italian exports to France declined by 40% between 1887 and 1889;⁸⁴ moreover, Italy had discontinued a favorable commercial treaty with France as early as 1886.⁸⁵ France, already consumed in a fierce (and somewhat inferior) competition for trade and colonial dominance with England, had little tolerance for another opposing commercial power. Yet, the Mediterranean Agreements of the 1880s, (à la Bismarck), linked Italy and England in a defensive and friendly arrangement. Langer observed that the "Roman Question" of influence over the Papacy became an object of contention between France and Italy,⁸⁶ but this question also implied an Italian policy of nationalist expansion toward a Mediterranean empire. In some of his best and most original analysis, he concluded that Franco-Italian rivalry, (fueled by the English and the Germans), pressed France to search for an ally who could impact Mediterranean

agreement with France, but with the refusal of Germany to come to any terms, (the key point in Russo-German relations witnessed at Narva), it is equally true that the Tsar entertained some thoughts of Franco-Russian friendship.

⁸³Langer, 113-17.

⁸⁴Ibid., 117.

⁸⁵Ibid., 115.

⁸⁶Ibid., 114.

affairs; the threat of the possibility of a Russian breakthrough in the Dardanelles metamorphosized and polarized the Triple Alliance, in this case represented by the interests of its weakest partner, Italy, and Franco-Russian negotiators. For its part, Italy contented itself with severe economic difficulties and continued military preparations on both land and sea.⁸⁷

Langer argued logically that the greatest popular fear, for the leadership of France and Russia, became the issue of whether or not England would ally with the Triple Alliance.⁸⁸ With the Mediterranean Agreements in place and a New Course policy in Germany which was directed toward Anglo-German alliance, Langer concluded that such Franco-Russian fears were entirely reasonable.⁸⁹ The historian correctly pointed out that Sir James Fergusen, a reputable undersecretary in England's foreign office (1886-91), stated the official English position to Parliament and said that England wanted to preserve the status quo in the Mediterranean region and had no intention of joining the Triple Alliance.⁹⁰ Almost paradoxically, France and Russia, "having no reliable information as to the real state of affairs . . . were thrown back upon conjecture, and under the circumstances it is quite comprehensible that they pictured the situation as blacker than it

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., 170.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid., 171.

actually was."⁹¹ As has already been expressed, it was Germany, having committed itself fully to the New Course and its all-or-nothing espousal of British friendship, which would have the blackest situation in the event of a failure to reach a definitive alignment with England.

England, vulnerable against Russia on several fronts, maintained a policy of civility toward France, while Germany, burdened by the lingering antagonisms that resulted from its possession of Alsace and Lorraine, had no legitimate conflict with Russia on a strategical level: Langer reasoned that this split dichotomy kept England and Germany from resolving a binding agreement.⁹² "An actual accord was impossible so long as this fundamental divergence of interest continued, and it was on this rock that Bismarck's advances had been wrecked, just as were the hopes of the German statesmen in 1891."⁹³ The key difference between Bismarck and these later statesmen was that the Iron Chancellor kept a range of alternative options available, most importantly through the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia.

Nevertheless, Langer's thesis held that "the particular circumstances attending the renewal of the Triple Alliance, then, proved the decisive factor in the consummation of the Franco-Russian Entente."⁹⁴ The circumstances of French and Russian perceptions of

⁹¹Ibid., 175.

⁹²Ibid., 174.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid., 182.

a possible alliance.⁹⁵ and not any internal factors, gave impetus to the alliance between autocracy and republic. "Only the events of May, June and July 1891, brought matters to a head and placed the Tsar before the two alternatives: isolation in the face of a hostile alliance or an agreement with France."⁹⁶ Yet, the Franco-Russian Alliance was not officially adopted by these nations until 4 January 1894; if the choice before the Tsar was as simple as Langer described, then why did it take him almost three more years to conclude this agreement?

Langer refers to the French naval visit to Kronstadt in 1891 as a "political orgy."⁹⁷ If this was so, then why is it that "the two powers shook hands in passing, but did not set out on a promenade arm in arm"?⁹⁸ The historian's answer is not exactly satisfactory, but he does cite several reasons for a delay in Franco-Russian negotiation, all of which stem from the Russian need of German political and economic support.⁹⁹ The late 1880's tariff war between Russia and Germany, the general result of the Russian desire to tax industrial products and the German goal to monopolize domestic grain prices, had

⁹⁵The English fleet's visit to Fiume, attended by Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph (25 June 1891) and the Kaiser's state visit to London (4-13 July 1891) did nothing to subdue these fears.

⁹⁶Langer, 183.

⁹⁷Ibid., 184.

⁹⁸Ibid., 194.

⁹⁹Ibid., 230-34.

become far more costly to Russia, which underwent a serious famine (1890-91), than Germany. Accordingly, the Russians feared provocation of any type and maintained that England, (not Germany), was the major strategical enemy. In addition, Russia's foreign policy would have remained awkward in the face of both German and Austrian pressure in the Balkans. Although it is not stated by Langer, his apparent assumption was that the Tsar disdained a rapid resolution of alliance with France due to his reconsideration of Germany as a better friend than foe.¹⁰⁰ Again, this subject seems at odds with the historian's earlier assurance that the Tsar faced an unavoidable and immediate choice between isolation and alliance. Langer also reaffirmed the dichotomy in the relationships between France and England and Russia and Germany, (strategic allies), and the potential of Franco-Russian and Anglo-German agreements, since at least one nation in these latter combinations was friendly toward one counterpart and hostile toward the other. "The French could no more afford to go to war with the English than the Russians could afford to go to war with the Germans,"¹⁰¹ and this seemed to contribute to the stagnation of Franco-Russian Alliance negotiations.

For the years between 1891 and 1894, the historian's analysis de-emphasized the isolated disputation over terms of the alliance and drew attention to affairs which had an impact over the collective body of European diplomats. Beginning in 1892, for example,

¹⁰⁰Michon considers the Tsar's reasoning to be a matter of coaxing the French into additional loans while Kennan probes psychological inconsistencies in the Tsar himself.

¹⁰¹Langer, 241.

the "Panama Affair"¹⁰² became more and more publicized: this interrupted French cabinet affairs and sent shock waves through the world press. "The republican form of government, which had never met with any sympathy from the Tsar, was now entirely discredited."¹⁰³ Such a sweeping assessment, however, did not take into account that the Tsar had somehow managed to "re-credit" the French to the extent that he signed an official, if secret, alliance with that nation less than two years later. Langer's argument that "the Tsar was really after . . . an agreement with Germany such as had existed before 1890, or else a new Russo-Austro-German Entente"¹⁰⁴ is consistent but controversial. Perhaps, after the lapse of the Reinsurance Treaty and the inability of Giers to obtain even a note of friendship from the Kaiser, Tsar Alexander recognized the futility of hopes for a Russo-German accord and reoriented his foreign policy accordingly.

The conclusion of this work is the culmination of paradoxical events. The Tsar, who had been officially prolonging the conclusion of the alliance on the grounds that he wanted to do so in a time of absolute peace, found it "quite impossible . . . to resist longer the demands of the French that the military convention should finally be ratified."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰²French (and European) political leaders received monetary compensation for their efforts to promote failing companies which had invested in a project to build a canal across the Isthmus of Panama. Eventually, leading ministers and ambassadors were linked to the affair.

¹⁰³Langer, 270.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 285.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 353.

Thus a state of tranquillity, not war, led to the agreement of an alliance? Shortly after the conclusion of the Franco-Russian Alliance, the Russians, under the persistence of Russia's Minister of Finance, Sergei Witte (1892-1903), and the Germans reached a Tariff Treaty (10 February 1894).¹⁰⁶ Thus, Russo-German economic relations improved after the Franco-Russian Alliance? The next month, the Germans ceded territory in Africa, which led to the base of the Nile River, to France in the Kamerun Treaty of 15 March 1894.¹⁰⁷ Somehow, relations between France and Germany also improved after the alliance was signed? "The Kaiser and his advisors had definitely embarked upon a policy designed to take the life out of the Franco-Russian Entente by depriving it of every opportunity to express itself in action."¹⁰⁸ By 1894, the German policy of persistently pursuing English friendship had ended.¹⁰⁹

Ultimately, Langer concluded that the Franco-Russian Alliance was a damaging prospect and reality for the French. He noted that the French lost billions of francs in loans to Russia during the 1890s, that Russia would have defended France if it were attacked (even without an alliance text), that France was likely to bear the first German attack in the event of war, and that France aided an "odious Russian autocracy."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 384.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 383-84.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 391.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 397-98.

Finally, "when the Franco-Russian Alliance did finally function, it was in a conflict between Russia and Austria-Hungary."¹¹¹

The analysis in *The Franco-Russian Alliance* is particularly insightful in its steady grip of diplomatic events between 1890 and 1894; without the pillar of Bismarck's stability and balanced program, European, as well as German diplomacy succumbed to confusion, awkward and undisciplined planning, and unsubstantiated fears. In its avoidance of many economic, social and psychological issues which contributed to the Franco-Russian Alliance, however, Langer's efforts remain purposefully limited; worse, some of points lack even the context of these important areas.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 407.

CHAPTER 3

DAUDET AND THE DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF FRANCE

Like Langer, Ernest Daudet concerned himself with the intrigues, rumors and policies of diplomats. In terms of methodology, his sources remained uncited in most cases, and his evidence and documentation were rarely divulged to his readers. The contribution of his *Histoire Diplomatique* to the historiography of the Franco-Russian Alliance stems primarily from his close proximity to events and sometimes to decision-makers in elite diplomatic circles. Langer's distance from the alliance in time, culture, language and geography largely reflects his more distanced, comprehensive analysis. Daudet wrote from a tradition steeped in nationalist and anti-German rhetoric, and he became clearly conscious of his work as part of a national literature designed to train as much as to inform future generations. His goal was "*tracer la voie aux futurs historiens de l'alliance franco-russe*," and he drew attention to the fact that the alliance was important enough to be examined by later national, diplomatic specialists.¹¹² After years of international ostracism and at the conclusion of alliance negotiations, there "*. . . a été rétabli l'équilibre européen qui est devenue, en même temps que le gage de notre*

¹¹²Daudet, ii, "to trace the course of the Franco-Russian Alliance for future historians."

sécurité, la plus solide garantie de la paix du monde."¹¹³ Daudet's pro-alliance standpoint was clear, popular and designed as an explanation to French citizens of the importance of France's new diplomatic status by 1893, the date of his work's publication.

To establish precedents of Franco-Russian cooperation, he first outlined contact between the two nations throughout history, drawing upon the accounts of the earliest official French visitors to Russia, Peter the Great's famous sojourns in France, the views of Catherine the Great and even finance during the Revolution of 1789.¹¹⁴ His real work began in 1873 with France's domestic economic resurgence and perpetual diplomatic isolation. In early chapters, he examined Katkov's connection to Alexander II and his Francophile intent in the *Gazette de Moscou*, as well as his link to Cyon. With the Tsar entrenched in Bismarck's diplomatic web -- or noose, from the French perspective -- and the French diplomatic leaders fumbling miserably and missing opportunities to pursue closer negotiation with the Russians, Daudet concluded that France had no real chance to break free from the German international grip.¹¹⁵ The French Republic, with its tradition for scandal and violence toward traditional monarchy, engendered little sympathy from a

¹¹³Ibid., iv, " . . . the European equilibrium had been reestablished which had become, at the same time as the token of our security, the most solid guaranty of world peace."

¹¹⁴Ibid., see 4-12.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 38, 130, 178. See also 142-43, 184-87 for Daudet's examples of the French failures to negotiate with Russian leaders.

Russian autocrat who identified with the political systems of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Several causes brought about a dramatic change in Russia's international alliance orientation by the late-1880s and early-1890s, and Ernest Daudet had a distinctly philosophical explanation for this. "*Pour être durable, une alliance entre deux grands peuples ne doit pas reposer uniquement sur des sentiments; il faut aussi qu'elle ait pour base des intérêts.*"¹¹⁶ Split between the private and public spheres, sentiment and interest must intersect. This was the miraculous case of the two nations by 1893, for "*s'il est vrai que . . . dans le courant des affaires privées, on ne fait rien pour rien, c'est encore plus vrai dans les affaires publiques.*"¹¹⁷ First and foremost then, to create a real and powerful alliance, France and Russia must forge amicable personal relations between some of their leaders and representatives.

Happily, according to the historian, this occurred around 1886 with the strong personal and professional ties created by Russia's foreign minister Giers and France's new ambassador in St. Petersburg, Paul de Laboulaye. In 1893, Giers was seen in most French circles as a staunch antagonist of a Russian alliance with the Republic. As discussed earlier, William Langer's analysis proves the French suspicions correct. Not so

¹¹⁶Ibid., 246, "To be durable, an alliance between two great peoples must not rest solely on sentiment; it is also necessary that it have interests at its base."

¹¹⁷Ibid., "if it is true that . . . in the current of private affairs, one can make nothing at all, this is still more true in public affairs."

in Daudet, however: “*en France, on n'a pas toujours apprécié avec assez de justice le rôle de M. de Giers, en tant que défenseur des intérêts de notre pays.*”¹¹⁸ The Russian Foreign Minister, who had not been consulted by his German and Austrian counterparts during Balkans negotiations, apparently had had a change of heart by 1886 and convinced the Tsar to return the Russian ambassador Mohreinheim to Paris and reestablish more regularized diplomatic communications.¹¹⁹

On the French side, after numerous political scandals, it had become more important than ever to appoint a French ambassador acceptable to the Tsar himself. Freycinet found his man in Laboulaye whose main task was to restore diplomatic cordiality. Without a source citation, Daudet provided the verbatim briefing between Freycinet and Laboulaye and his initial meeting with the Tsar in St. Petersburg, who noted that they endured the same European enemies, yet he remained reluctant to commit to a republic in seemingly constant political disorder. Meanwhile, Laboulaye pleaded France's long and respectable European history and the problems presented by the Triple Alliance.¹²⁰ Alexander was impressed, and the French thereafter used this favorable diplomat to buffer rivalries between the Russians and the British, who had concluded

¹¹⁸Ibid., 192, “in France, one has not always appreciated with enough justice the role of Giers, in as much as [he was the] defender of our country's interests.”

¹¹⁹Ibid., 191, 193.

¹²⁰Ibid., 196-99.

limited agreements with the Austrians and Italians in the Balkan and Mediterranean theaters.¹²¹

On a personal level, the matter of convincing the Tsar of the need of a French alliance was becoming more and more an issue of whom he distrusted the most. After 1886, “*l’Allemagne et l’Autriche, à l’exclusion de la Russie, s’unissaient plus ouvertement et d’une manière plus étroite.*”¹²² Given the closer relationships between Germany and Russia’s Great-Power neighbors, the Tsar began to turn further away from Bismarck’s diplomatic network. “*L’Empereur venait enfin de se rendre compte du péril que créaient pour lui la duplicité de l’Allemagne et l’hostilité de l’Autriche, l’accession de l’Italie à leurs accords et le mauvais vouloir de l’Angleterre.*”¹²³ By then, the decades of diplomatic debacle with the French became more pardonable, and “*la gravité des circonstances lui avait fait sacrifier ses précédents griefs [avec les français] aux intérêts de son empire.*”¹²⁴ Here was the most important microcosm set forth in Daudet for the intersection of personal and public spheres: the Tsar had grown personally distasteful of

¹²¹Ibid., 202-3.

¹²²Ibid., 189, “Germany and Austria, to the exclusion of Russia, united themselves more openly and in a more rigorous manner.”

¹²³Ibid., 193, “The Emperor had finally come to realize the peril that was created for him by the duplicity of Germany and the hostility of Austria, the accession of Italy to their accords and the bad wishes of England.”

¹²⁴Ibid., “the gravity of the circumstances had made him sacrifice these preceding frustrations [with the French] to the interests of his empire.”

Otto von Bismarck and increasingly worried for the more public domain of his Empire's dwindling international connections.

In a rare documented citation, the historian uncovered and presented points from the "Bulgarian documents" of 1887. In these, he found a letter from Austrian Archduke Ferdinand to Bulgarian leaders encouraging them to rebel violently against the oppression of the Russians, that if they should act, Bismarck would explicitly offer assistance. This document, to which the Russian leader was privy, and the growing solidarity of the Triple Alliance caused more ire than any qualms the Tsar had about French liberalism. "*Les preuves non équivoques de la duplicité de M. de Bismarck*" forced the Tsar to his own reorientation in diplomatic thought, and it was at this time that his famous annotation appeared in the margins of a Giers diplomatic report: "*ne pas laisser diminuer la France.*"¹²⁵ This was the final turning point in the Tsar's thoughts about Germany and France, according to Daudet, though he offered no explanation of why he signed the Reinsurance Treaty with Bismarck in 1887.

In the public sphere of national feeling, the proximity of Russia to France drew closer during a series of French conversion loans starting in the late-1880s, (loans and investments which continued right up to World War I). "*Jusqu'à ce jour, lorsque la Russie avait eu à contracter des emprunts [français], elle s'était adressée à ces groupes internationaux de banquiers, aussi puissants par eux-mêmes que par la solidarité qu'ils*

¹²⁵Ibid., 224, 244, "The unequivocal proofs of Bismarck's duplicity," "do not let France go down."

ont créée entre eux, et qui, durant longtemps, ont tenu les finances européens dans leurs mains."¹²⁶ Through these banking syndicates, the French designed a plan to redirect Russia's credit base from Berlin to Paris; since the French carried loans at lower interest rates than the Germans, their propaganda could effectively combine magnanimity with distinct leverage.¹²⁷ The Rothschild group, the Banque de Paris, the Crédit Lyonnais and the Crédit Foncier -- all negotiated with Russia's enterprising economic minister Vishnegradski to promote "*une chaîne indissoluble*" between the two nations.¹²⁸ Perhaps more importantly, much of the syndicates' funding came from the individual investments of the French. According to Daudet, the success of the banking operations

¹²⁶Ibid., 247, "until that day, when Russia had had to contract for the [French] loans, it addressed itself to these international banking groups, powerful in themselves through the solidarity that they had created between them and which, for a long time, had held European finance in their hands." Not surprisingly, this provocative statement tends to fit closely with Vladimir Lenin's conspiratorial theory of a small group of international capitalists controlling the finance and politics of Europe; if the Soviet Union backed out of the Franco-Russian Alliance and Triple Entente, perhaps it was because its leaders had read accounts of historians like Ernest Daudet. Later, Daudet took note that this international group consisted of Jews in Berlin, Paris and London who took pains to keep the Russian colossus in a backward fiscal state, another point taken to heart by the communists in 1917, (see p. 270).

¹²⁷Ibid., 248-49, 253. These conversion loans had average rates of interest of four and five per cent.

¹²⁸Ibid., 259-64, 279, "an indissoluble chain."

“ . . . manifestaient aussi, par des actes visibles et tangibles, l’ardent désir du peuple français de se lier au peuple russe par la communauté des intérêts.”¹²⁹ Such loans, the historian assured his readers, were only a small part of a larger picture: French feelings for the Russians in general had a solid foundation in national sentiment by the 1890s.

For Daudet, this decade formed the climax of a trend toward allegiance. General Boisdeffre courted the (unnamed) Russian generals sent to Paris in 1890 even as the French manufactured and sold their latest munitions to their eastern partners. Carnot, Freycinet and Ribot formed an unassailable cabinet which relentlessly pursued every opportunity to improve relations with the Tsar, while at home, on 29 May 1890, the prefect of police in Paris led the capture of dissident Russian nihilists to gain further national favor with the Tsar. The historian observed no horror at the fact that the liberal French had betrayed their liberal Russian immigrants to their ultra-conservative leader; rather, this became an acceptable compromise toward a larger goal.¹³⁰

France’s trusted “point-man” in St. Petersburg, Ambassador Laboulaye, succeeded once again in a diplomatic *coup de grâce*; this time, the Tsar accepted his proposal to allow a French fleet to visit Cronstadt on maneuvers in 1891.¹³¹ At the opening

¹²⁹Ibid., 258, “ . . . manifested also, in visible and tangible acts, the ardent desire of the French people to bind themselves with the Russian people in the community of interests.”

¹³⁰Ibid., 287-92.

¹³¹Ibid., 301.

ceremonies, the Tsar, hat in hand, sang the *Marseillaise* and later offered a toast to French President Sadi Carnot. For Daudet, Cronstadt was “ . . . *comme le premier tableau d'un épisode magique dont la visite de l'escadre russe en France devait fournir le second.*”¹³²

The plan was thus to have a Russian fleet visit France, an event which did occur in 1893. While “*l'enthousiasme des populations russes*” seemed to parallel the joy of its leader, one must wonder again how the historian measured the feelings of Russian commoners in Cronstadt and how he assessed their ideas about France and the coming alliance.¹³³ This cultural element, despite one or two implications, remains neglected in Daudet's analysis.

The conclusions he drew from the French fleet visit are also somewhat suspect. “*En Allemagne, en Italie, en Autriche, la visite de Cronstadt fut considérée comme un gage de paix.*” he contends, but this hardly seems the case.¹³⁴ In Germany, with the fall of Bismarck, the Foreign Ministry continually attempted to improve relations with England while fueling Austro-Russian conflict in the Balkans; for Italy, Russia never seemed a direct menace, though by treaty, the Italians were bound to support their Central European allies in the event of war: in Austria-Hungary, disputes over the status of spheres of influence and protectorships over Balkan states continued to even greater

¹³²Ibid., 313, “ . . . like the first scene of a magical episode in which the visit of the Russian squadron came to furnish the second.”

¹³³Ibid., 312, “the enthusiasm of the Russian population.”

¹³⁴Ibid., 313, “In Germany, in Italy, in Austria, the visit of Cronstadt came to be considered a token of peace.”

heights. Perhaps Daudet simply did not know that leaders of the Triple Alliance looked closer toward war in view of their surrounding enemies, but for a historian with his connections and savvy, it seems much more likely that this was a propagandized attempt to reassure the French people that a Franco-Russian alliance would assure a lasting peace on the Continent.

Toward the end of his work, Daudet recalled Giers' visit to France after Cronstadt as a closure to and cementing of alliance negotiations. After an entire career dedicated to conciliation toward Germany and antagonism toward France, the Foreign Minister apparently had decided upon a new and wiser path. As will be seen through George Kennan's evidence, nothing could be further from the truth. Giers, in fact, was ordered to France directly by the Tsar to encourage the opinion reflected in Daudet; it would seem that Alexander was successful on that account.

Ernest Daudet's conclusions underline several weaknesses in his methodology. Granted, the 1890s was a different age in terms of scholarly technique, but even so, he failed to cite the vast majority of his sources. Occasionally, as in the case of Ferdinand's letter and the Tsar's margin notation, his facts proved accurate. In contrast, several of his contentions have been proven inaccurate by subsequent historians. This makes it particularly difficult for an Alliance scholar to uncover the shades of truth in Daudet's record; without the consultation of several outside sources, the task would be entirely impossible. For all of his inconsistencies and nationalistic stance, however, this historian is one of the few who ever implied a cultural aspect to the alliance, one with "magical

moments” such as those in Cronstadt in 1891 and Toulon in 1893, ones which illustrated some opaque popular link between the French and the Russian peoples. Historiography has yet to produce such a work which comes to terms with this magic.

CHAPTER 4

ÉLIE DE CYON'S CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Before and during the negotiations for the Franco-Russian Alliance, Russian-born Élie de Cyon served as one of his country's most important unofficial attachés to France. The connections he forged brought him personal access to the highest leaders of France, and like Ernest Daudet, he encountered politicians and social elites. His *Histoire* catalogued these behind-the-scenes negotiations in Paris and Moscow. As a national, contemporary history, Cyon's book is comparable in standpoint to Daudet's. At the same time, however, the work suffered from his operations within the Alliance movement.

In Russia, his most important contact was his political mentor and sometime advisor to Tsar Alexander III, Mikhail Katkov.¹³⁵ The idea to unite France and Russia on the Russian side was first taken up by these two, a struggle “... *pour laquelle nous avons beaucoup sacrifié et beaucoup souffert.*”¹³⁶ Through his newspapers, the *Gazette de Moscou* and the *Messenger Russe*, Katkov, “*le grand patriote*” challenged the rigid, Germanophile foreign policy of Giers.¹³⁷ Through “*efforts héroïques*” and “*luttres*

¹³⁵As if to emphasize the closeness of their personal and political relationships, Katkov remained the central Russian figure in Cyon's work. A detailed, full-page portrait of Katkov appears on the first page of the 1895, original edition of the *Histoire*. The author dedicated the book to the memory of Tsar Alexander III, who died in 1894.

¹³⁶Cyon, iv. “. . . for which we have sacrificed greatly and suffered greatly.”

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 57.

homériques.” Katkov seemingly convinced the Tsar first that Russia would, in 1886, reorient its foreign policy away from Bismarck’s Germany and toward national, political mobility through an alliance with France.¹³⁸ It seems unlikely, however, that Katkov had such influence over Alexander III or authority at his court; rather, the Tsar closely followed the counsel of his Foreign Minister Giers until 1890.¹³⁹ Yet the journalist Katkov, in Cyon’s recollection of a meeting with the Tsar, “*avec sa merveilleuse lucidité et cette puissance de persuasion*,” told the Tsar that to abstain from fighting on the side of France in the event of another Franco-Prussian war would be tantamount to destroying France and losing any semblance of a grip on international equilibrium: Russia would be left alone to face its traditional enemies and an even more powerful Bismarckian Germany.¹⁴⁰

Cyon attempted to convince his readers that he and Katkov were the ostracized vanguard of efforts to bring Bismarckian diplomacy down. In August 1886, for example, the two collaborated to bring public light on Bismarck’s efforts to promote a war with France by building up seventy to eighty thousand troops along the Alsace-Lorraine border.¹⁴¹ Throughout these efforts, according to the historian, Cyon bore the brunt of the

¹³⁸Ibid., 66, 129. “heroic efforts,” “Homeric struggles.”

¹³⁹George F. Kennan. *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia and the Coming of the First World War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 36, 45. Langer, 102-105.

¹⁴⁰Cyon, 195. “with his marvelous lucidity and that power of persuasion.”

¹⁴¹Ibid., 162-63.

indignation of pro-Germans in both Russia and France, again a sign of the political bonding between the two men. Moreover, Cyon claimed that he remained Katkov's only late-in-life, intimate friend; the two spent as much time together in friendship as they did combating the *Dreikaiserbund*, the machinations of Bismarck and the promotion through Katkov's journals of a Franco-Russian alliance.¹⁴²

When Élie de Cyon emigrated to France in 1877, his contact with Katkov became naturally less frequent: he spent the majority of his time in Paris. Once there, he quickly became involved in the highest French political circles, largely through the salon of Juliette Adam (1836-1936). According to her earliest memoirs, *The Romance of My Childhood and Youth*, she learned at a young age from her father the reverie and obligations of a dutiful Republican.¹⁴³ In her early adulthood, she began a series of

¹⁴²Ibid., 126, 201.

¹⁴³Juliette Adam, *The Romance of My Childhood and Youth*, trans. Helen Stanberg (London: Wilham Heinemann, 1903), 273-77. The old notions of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* were passed on to her by her father, Jean Lamber, along with much of the Revolutionary rhetoric. In him she found a rational humanitarian, a citizen who was an early harbinger of mainstream values of the Third Republic (1870-1940). He longed for "an epoch when [his] country [would] at last be delivered from the church." "Christ, who had brought with Him the republican formulas of equality and fraternity," set the precedent that a man's greatest right was his right to work. He said that "Socialist-Republican principles endow every man, every citizen, with a dogma of pride which assures his moral value," and he expressed that sense of pride frankly to his daughter. The new Germany was not yet formed by 1847, the year in which these conversations between father and daughter took place, and it was neither his nor France's enemy. The values of the French Revolution dominated his philosophical thought in an age when reflection of those very terms suggested French superiority. "No one can now hinder me from forming your understanding on the same pattern as my own." With these words and the lasting impression they formed, the old values of 1789-93 were passed from father to child. His

nationalistic and patriotic works dedicated to the glorious advancement of France.¹⁴⁴

Most importantly, she learned early on that the greatest enemy of France was the Iron Chancellor.¹⁴⁵ Through the social dynamics of her salon, she broke whatever vestiges of a decent image Bismarck may have had in Parisian circles during the 1860s.¹⁴⁶

daughter's "heart melted at these words," and she carried at least some of this "understanding" in her later views on politics during the Third Republic. No scholar has yet fully explored Adam's role in the Franco-Russian Alliance or the formation of her thoughts on Republicanism and the destiny of France.

¹⁴⁴Juliette Adam, *My Literary Life* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1904), 52-56. Part of "the opposition" party during the Crimean War (1854-56), she and her circle of friends revelled against fighting a conflict in which English political motives, supplemented by a ridiculous army, undermined French interest in the region. Part of the opposition party again, Adam and her clique stood fast against the imperial rule of Napoleon III, particularly during the French plebiscite of 1857 in which this group refused to swear an oath of allegiance to this latest Bonaparte. "The small circle of philosophers, writers, and poets in which I lived were in despair at the state of moral decay . . ." she recorded. These words modestly foreshadowed the role she would assume in French politics behind-the-scenes and a sense of what "Republican" meant to its idealists.

For a study of the political and military context of the tragedies of the British army during the Crimean War, see Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., 1953; reprint, New York: Time Inc., 1962), chapter 12. Gordon Wright observed that "French interests in the Near East offered no adequate justification for war with Russia," *France*, 196.

¹⁴⁵Adam, *Literary*, 60-62. More than anything else in public life, -- and Republicanism was more a public classification than a private one, -- the ideal Republican hated Otto von Bismarck. In *My Literary Life*, Juliette Adam recalled a dinner conversation in 1860 during which she heard about Bismarck for the first time. According to Alexandre Weill, who was present at the party and who knew Bismarck at "Frankfort," (Frankfurt am Main, presumably), he was a man of "extraordinary violence, speaking of sabre-cutting politics, of absolute authority, of the gallows," a man who wanted German unification to service the ego of Prussia. Bismarck's most nefarious statement, reportedly, was that "before France, which is Revolution incarnate, destroys herself with her own revolutions, she will, perhaps, have to do with Germany," -- not Prussia, but *Germany*. Adam and her friends in attendance at that dinner were shocked -- like good Republicans ought to have been -- by his brutality and audacity; that first impression grew to

While Juliette Adam's memoirs may have suffered from a certain affectation, several of her public and private actions examined from other sources confirm her growing leadership in the movement toward alliance with Russia.¹⁴⁷ Among these, her

chimerical proportions during the following years in Adam's memoirs, years in which Denmark (1864) and Austria (1866) fell easily before Prussia's military might.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 530, 538-39. "Politically correct" in her Republican views in 1904 -- the year of publication of *My Literary Life*, a time when the Franco-Russian Alliance was secure, when Bismarck was safely dead, when the Third Republic was at its zenith -- Juliette Adam could safely "predict" the 1860s and 1870s political courses of France and Germany from the perspective of hindsight. "Yes, the revenge of Jena has been prepared in Prussia for the last forty-five years," one of Adam's associates remarked, doubtlessly much to the hushed recognition of the group at another dinner party. Bismarck, that "dangerous," "terrifying" man would bring ruin to the destiny of France. Adam reproduced an 1860s letter in her 1904 book in which she personally defied Bismarck: "I am ready to drink your Rhine from my glass. I defy you to drink from my Seine . . . Is not France still and always 'La Grande France?'" If Germany was to "drink" from the Seine, à la Sedan, then France would be certain to claim its revenge; by 1904, that claim, so dominant in the origins of World War I, was not far on the horizon. See, for example, James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War*, 2d ed. (New York: Longman, Inc., 1992), 46-47; Wright, *France*, 305-06; J. P. T. Bury, *France: 1814-1940* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), 235-36. For views of German statesmen who favored reconciliation on the Alsace-Lorraine problem, see the sections on Otto Baumgarten and Max Weber in Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics, 1890-1920*, trans. Michael S. Steinberg (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1959; reprint, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 6, 249-50.

¹⁴⁷As implied in this discussion of Adam's principal memoirs, the advantages of editorial hindsight make a good, clean record of events -- perhaps *too* convincing. One must remain aware in reading Adam's work, that the image of the true Republican was set in place by society well after 1870, not before. In 1904, one could, in France, safely and even popularly damn the Crimean War, the plebiscites of Napoleon III's Second Empire and the machinations of Otto von Bismarck. The problem with Juliette Adam's memoirs is the problem with all memoirs published decades after the events they claim to record; it is more difficult to separate fact from self-glorification, real apprehensions at the time from those out of which an author publishes at a later date. Based on memoirs alone, how well can one believe that near-perfect Third Republican account?

marriage may have played an important role. Before war broke out in 1870, Juliette married Edmond Adam who was Prefect of Police in Paris, a man with a personally as well as a professionally vested interest in the defense of France's capital against the onslaught of the new German armies. For more definitive evidence of Adam's clearly established, simultaneously anti-German and pro-Russian views, however, one must turn to her publications during the 1870s and 1880s. In 1878, she founded a major monthly journal called *La Nouvelle Revue*. Under the Russian alias of Comte Paul Vasili, Adam wrote monthly articles on foreign affairs in this journal called "*Lettres sur la Politique Extérieure*"; during the 1880s, *politique extérieure* meant, more than any other person, event or treaty, Otto von Bismarck and his abuses of power in Germany.¹⁴⁸

By contrast, Juliette Adam continuously reemphasized to her salon and literary audiences the glories of Russia. As early as 1883, she wrote, "*nous avons pleine confiance dans la sagesse de notre future alliée.*"¹⁴⁹ It seems startling that she made this statement a mere two years after Russia had joined the *Dreikaiserbund* and four years

¹⁴⁸Compte Paul Vasili [Juliette Adam], "*Lettres sur la Politique Extérieure.*" *La Nouvelle Revue* 25 (September 1883): 201, (October 1883): 417-18; Juliette Adam, *La Société de Berlin: Augment de Lettres Inédites* (Paris: Nouvelle Revue, 1884). In these articles, Adam challenged Bismarck's patterns of alliances, his grip over the Prussian army and his disastrous treatment of the German liberal parties in the Bundesrat and Reichstag. Max Weber believed that Bismarck's oppression of liberalism and empowered legislature gave militarists the upper-hand after 1890; they lead Germany into the abyss of World War I, Mommsen, *Weber*, 85-87.

¹⁴⁹Vasili [Adam], "*Politique.*" October 1883: 420. "we have full confidence in the wisdom of our future ally."

prior to the Reinsurance Treaty between Russia and Germany. Yet, Adam's faith in Russia was so desperate that she justified the nation's moral worth by its supposedly humanitarian domestic politics. In 1861, Tsar Alexander II had emancipated the serfs in Russia.¹⁵⁰ In 1864, he enacted a decree for the provision of a *zemstvo*-system.¹⁵¹ Juliette Adam tried to sell these "humanitarian" acts of the Tsar as the harbinger of Russia's liberal modernization.¹⁵²

The interests of Juliette Adam and those of the leading government officials who frequented her salon and formed part of her circle of *intimes* coincided in other ways during the 1870s and 1880s. In 1876, Adam and her husband, along with others, co-founded a newspaper called *Le Petit Parisien*. This became France's widest circulating

¹⁵⁰The Russian historian Vassili Osipovich Kluchevsky showed that serf emancipation was no act of humanity: "during the last few decades before the emancipation of our serf population that population began to come to an end -- fully one-half of rural Russia began to die out. Hence abolition of serf-right ceased to be a question merely of equity or of humanity, and became a question of necessity outright." Vassili Kluchevsky, *A History of Russia*, trans. C. J. Hogarth, vol. 5 (1902; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), 202-03. For a more focused discussion of the inequity of the serf's new status, see Blum, 618-20. For an analysis of the effect of serf-emancipation and the further retardation of Russian industrialization, see Blackwell, 24-26.

¹⁵¹The *zemstvo*-system was a system of local government in which the Russian gentry, and to a much lesser extent the peasantry, was given some representation as a lesser-partner of national government. Before 1905, the *zemstvo* was virtually powerless in terms of peasant political enfranchisement.

¹⁵²Vasili [Adam], "*Politique*," October 1993: 421. In actuality, the *zemstvo* was dominated by the nobility as a tool for peasant oppression. These local governments could never tax efficiently, had little influence over police and developed no real autonomy. See Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 374-80.

daily until the end of the Third Republic. Francine Amaury's work, *Histoire du Plus Grand Quotidien de la IIIe République: Le Petit Parisien, 1876-1944*, analyzed the background of the newspaper's creation and the cooperation involved in disseminating the republican need for a Franco-Russian alliance to the largest possible audience, for the greatest possible support.¹⁵³

Edmond and Juliette Adam had several supporters in this new venture. According to Amaury, some of that assistance came from Léon Gambetta, member of the National Assembly (1876), president of the Chamber of Deputies (1879-81) and Premier of France (1881-82). Despite his opposition to Gambetta in political matters, Adolphe Thiers, President of France (1871-73), also favored the Adams' plans. Charles de Freycinet, Foreign Secretary and Premier during the early 1890s, wrote in his memoirs that Adam's salon and her ideas for republican unity through a Parisian daily newspaper had served to reunite the empire.¹⁵⁴ Gambetta, Thiers, Freycinet -- Juliette Adam had a powerful circle indeed.

¹⁵³Francine Amaury, *Histoire du Plus Grand Quotidien de la IIIe République: Le Petit Parisien, 1876-1944*, vol. 2, "Le Petit Parisien": *Instrument de Propagande au Service du Régime* (Paris: Press Universitaires, 1972). This source is much more valuable vis-à-vis Franco-Russian relations than René Livois' *Histoire de la Presse Française*, vol. 2, *de 1881 à Nos Jours* (Paris: Le Temps de la Presse, 1965), 354-56, which offers scant and erroneous analysis.

¹⁵⁴Amaury, 680-81. Amaury presented a lengthy passage from Freycinet's memoirs about Adam's nationally invaluable salon but neglected to cite any page numbers. For more information on Charles de Freycinet, who was Premier when the Franco-Russian Alliance was finally signed in 1894, see Kennan's biographical study,

In 1877, when Élie de Cyon emigrated to Paris, he was quickly introduced into Adam's salon and circle, most probably due to his strong pro-alliance views and his connections to Russian journals and the Tsar's court through Mikhail Katkov. In his history, Cyon recorded his close cooperation with Adam, exposing part of the network of her salon, circle and control over publications. The earliest example mentioned about Adam's influence on Franco-Russian relations occurred in 1876. During that year, the Russians began building up their forces along their southwestern borders for an attack on the Dardanelles region to secure a naval route to the Mediterranean Sea. Russia's Chancellor, Prince Alexander Gorchakov (1798-1883), a pro-German diplomat, was in Lausanne for a visit. Léon Gambetta, desperate to find a way out of Bismarck's isolation of France, wanted to meet with the Chancellor to begin a Franco-Russian dialogue about international affairs. Juliette Adam, through an intermediary, (a Russian princess who frequented her salon), convinced Gorchakov to see Gambetta for the first time. Although that meeting was a failure according to Cyon, it was also evidence for Adam's powerful role in politics behind-the-scenes which at least set a precedent for Franco-Russian negotiations.¹⁵⁵

Fateful, 17-24. Adam was somewhat neglected by Kennan, probably due to her backstage efforts.

¹⁵⁵Cyon, 29-31. Only after the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78) and the Treaty of San Stefano (1878) did Gorchakov see the err of his ways and turn against Bismarck's duplicity.

Before Cyon took over the editorship of *Le Petit Parisien* in 1866, Adam published many of his articles in her journal.¹⁵⁶ These articles, which underlined the anti-German views of Katkov and the Russian need for an alliance with France, represented exactly the type of material that Adam wanted to publish. Beyond exposing the French public to a well-connected Russian's (Cyon's) Francophile writing, Juliette Adam and Élie de Cyon also collaborated politically. For example, Cyon wanted a particular candidate to fill the post of French Ambassador to Russia in St. Petersburg, one "General Gaillard." In a letter to Adam, Cyon wrote, "*j'espère que vous l'avez communiquée à M. Freycinet.*"¹⁵⁷ The fact that Cyon asked Adam for this political favor provides additional evidence that she had a working relationship with Charles de Freycinet, a leader of France who was dedicated to a Franco-Russian Alliance, and that Cyon had some access to this relationship.

In his *l'Histoire de l'Entente Franco-Russe*, Élie de Cyon provided other evidence of his relationships with several key political figures in both France and Russia. One of his (and Katkov's) greatest political enemies in Russia, for example, was Foreign Minister Nikolai de Giers, "*. . . l'humble instrument des ambitions prussiennes.*"¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶For Cyon's assumption of editorial duties, see *Histoire*, 163-64; for extracts of his articles in Adam's journal, see 154-56, 420.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 171. "I hope that you have communicated [my desire for Gaillard to become the ambassador] to M. Freycinet." The letter was dated 21 October 1886.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, viii. ". . . the humble instrument of Prussian ambitions."

According to Cyon, "*comme presque tous les fonctionnaires de son école, M. de Giers estimait que la Russie est une nation barbare.*"¹⁵⁹ Hence, Giers had given up on Russia's potential for vast technical, territorial and humanitarian progress, and he had been willing to settle for the precarious hegemony doled out by the Iron Chancellor. Personally honorable, professionally misguided and hopelessly rustic, Giers was not in touch with Russia's allegedly pro-French populous.¹⁶⁰

The Foreign Minister, moreover, used his position to thwart the alliance at every turn. His Germanophile stance, according to Cyon, set the tone downward throughout the Russian foreign diplomatic corps, including the Russian Ambassador to France at Paris (1884-98), Baron Arthur de Mohrenheim.¹⁶¹ Giers did not attend the festivities during the French fleet's visit to Cronstadt in 1891 or the Russian fleet's visit to Toulon in 1893, despite the fact that all of his subordinates were in attendance *en masse*. To the frustrated Cyon, Giers "*. . . avait fait tout ce qui était humainement possible pour maintenir l'ancienne union entre les cours de Pétersbourg et de Berlin.*"¹⁶² To dissuade the Tsar

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 65. "like most of the functionaries of his school, Giers estimated that Russia is a barbaric nation."

¹⁶⁰Ibid. No sources exist which corroborate Cyon's dubious claim about Russia's Francophile popular opinion during the 1880s. It is doubtful that Russian peasants met any French people, and most of them probably were too illiterate to read the scattered papers of Katkov and his allies.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 137.

¹⁶²Ibid., 48. ". . . who had done everything that was humanly possible to maintain the ancient union between the courts of [St.] Petersburg and Berlin." Langer, 184, 230-34.

from building closer relations with French diplomats, the Foreign Minister reportedly went as far as to suggest that French officials were actually harboring Russian nihilists in Paris.¹⁶³

In France, beyond Adam's circle, Cyon was able to meet with several leading politicians in his own right. Among these, perhaps the most enigmatic was General Georges Boulanger. In 1889, on a platform of right-wing nationalism, Boulanger was swept briefly into office. A political outsider, he threw the pro-alliance leaders off balance with his rigid militarism and calls for foreign policy reversals toward breaking diplomatic relations with belligerents, including Russia. Cyon recalled the general's invitation to meet him at home for lunch along with certain members of his cabinet including Freycinet.¹⁶⁴ Cyon believed that his own reconciliation to the ideas of the righists would mark "*le sacrifice de [son] indépendance intellectuelle.*"¹⁶⁵ According to his perception of events, Boulanger was able to misguide French public opinion as a leader interested only in benefits for France without compensation to her allies. The general would not exchange, for example, support for Russian interests in the Balkans for

argued that the Russian need for German industrial products for exchanges of grain preempted the Franco-Russian "political orgy."

¹⁶³Ibid., 295. Bury, 184. Actually, as a service to the Tsar, the French turned over the leading Parisian nihilists to Russian authorities in 1890.

¹⁶⁴Cyon, 308.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 390. "the sacrifice of [his] intellectual independence."

Russian support on the Alsace-Lorraine issue, and his political ascendancy forced Cyon to call for “*un homme capable d'assumer la responsabilité d'une alliance effective.*”¹⁶⁶

Cyon, with his ready hand always apparently on the pulse of French public opinion, viewed Boulanger as an aberration, someone who would be quickly swallowed up as soon as the masses became better organized and more rational. “*Heureusement, en France comme ailleurs, les querelles et les luttes qui divisent les politiciens de profession, ne pénètrent guère les couches profondes de la nation; l'écume qui s'agite à la surface des flots masque plutôt la véritable grandeur de la mer.*”¹⁶⁷ When Boulanger committed suicide in late 1889, Cyon rejoiced that since the general was only a passing champion of public opinion, Boulangism would die with him. “*Le coup de pistolet au cimetière d'Ixelles fut la conclusion fatale d'une existence irrémédiablement brisée. Le général qui aimait passionnément la France lui rendit en disparaissant un dernier service.*”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 389. “a man capable of assuming the responsibility of an effective alliance.”

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 390. “Fortunately, in France as elsewhere, the quarrels and struggles which divide the professional politicians hardly penetrate the profound layers of the nation; the foam which swirls on the surface of the waves rather masks the true grandeur of the sea.”

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 394. “The sound of the pistol at the cemetery of Ixelles marked the fatal conclusion of an irremediably broken existence. The general who passionately loved France rendered himself in dying a final service.”

Although Élie de Cyon may have given Boulanger and his importance as a precedent for effective right-wing politics in France short shrift, unlike the other historians of the Franco-Russian Alliance, he actually met with the general, discussed foreign relations with him and tested out his opinions. In view of his connections in Russia through Katkov, in France through Adam and on his own, it is clear that Cyon holds a unique place among Alliance historians, inherent in the fact that he was immersed in the foundations of the Alliance itself as well as within the context of European politics and public opinion during the 1880s and 1890s. By contrast, his close proximity to people and events also impacted the accuracy of his history. In his annotated bibliography on the Franco-Russian Alliance, William Langer addressed Cyon's work:

Cyon, Élie de. *Histoire de l'Entente Franco-Russe, 1886-1894. Documents et Souvenirs*. Third Edition. Paris, 1895. Written by one of the most active proponents of the Franco-Russian Alliance. Cyon was a Russian naturalized in France, a collaborator of Katkov and one of the owners of the *Nouvelle Revue*. His account is vainglorious and distorted by very strong prejudices, but the writer was in a position to know a good deal and his account must be taken into consideration.¹⁶⁹

In many cases, Langer's perception of Cyon's "distortion" is quite accurate; through his contacts in France and Russia alone, one finds ample evidence of "prejudice" toward the two nations most thwarted by the plots and diplomatic mastery of Otto von Bismarck.

In the foreword of his *Histoire*, Cyon boldly listed the duties of a worthy historian to his audience, "*une entière indépendance dans le passé comme dans le présent et une*

¹⁶⁹Langer, 425.

ferme détermination de dire la vérité sans ambages."¹⁷⁰ "*Une seule obligation est imposée à l'historien: celle d'étayer par des documents incontestables toute assertion de quelque importance.*"¹⁷¹ A historian, then, should be a fighter, willing to tell the world the objective truth, unmolested by bias and unhampered by fear of reprobation from his highest enemies. In modern times, historians can only muse at what this perfected, objective truth might be, where one could balance opposing views and evidence without any kind of personal value judgment.

Objectivity, for Cyon as for any historian, was a matter of standpoint, a frame of reference despite his most vehement protests to the contrary. He remained confident, for example, that "*une alliance avec la Russie permettrait à la France de retrouver sa complète sécurité.*"¹⁷² precisely the consoling words French Republicans wanted to hear in 1895, a time when Germany's diplomacy and armed forces seemed at their zenith. Of course, before the Alliance could continue effectively, the French would have to drop any radical, humanitarian notions about the villainy of Russia's demagogic autocracy and recognize the civilized traditions of Russia, along the lines prescribed by him and Juliette Adam in their journals and newspapers, particularly *La Nouvelle Revue* and *Le Petit*

¹⁷⁰Cyon, iii. "an entire independence in the past as in the present and a firm determination to tell the truth straight out."

¹⁷¹Ibid., iv. "A sole obligation is imposed on the historian: that of supporting by incontestable documents every assertion of some importance."

¹⁷²Ibid., 33. "an alliance with Russia would allow France to regain her complete security."

Parisien.¹⁷³ The French public, as with all popular opinion in Europe, had to be inculcated with proper views of events, particularly by the leading proponents of the Alliance. “*L’opinion publique dans tous les pays est simpliste: elle se forme sur les apparences, sur la connaissance superficielle des faits.*”¹⁷⁴ Under Cyon’s expert tutelage, especially in Russian affairs, the French public would begin its understanding of European realities.

Nowhere was this more clear than on the issue of the Tsar, his humanity, his generosity and his constant desire for an alliance due to the enmity between Germany and both Russia and France. As early as 1870, Cyon assured his readers, the Tsar and leading members of his court felt a profound disappointment over the French cause at the battle of Sedan.¹⁷⁵ In 1884, Alexander III personally refused to insert Clause A of Article 1 in the *Dreikaiserbund* agreement because it allowed Germany a free hand in France.¹⁷⁶ Generally speaking, the Tsar had allowed himself to drift into the mere formalities of cooperation with Germany and Austria-Hungary because he was infinitely more concerned with domestic issues such as burgeoning Pan-Slavism, anarchist movements

¹⁷³Ibid., 36.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 389. “Public opinion in all countries is simplistic; it forms itself by appearances, on the superficial knowledge of facts.”

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 25.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., xiii., 60. In this case, Cyon’s testimony seems factual, as readers will find from the treaty’s text presented in his work.

and the activities of the worthless nihilists.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, the Tsar was forced to retract his magnanimity toward France due to its frequent domestic embroilments, first because of Boulanger and then the great Panama scandal. “*De toutes les intrigues machinées par les ennemis d'une alliance franco-russe, aucune n'a réussi à impressionner aussi défavorablement le tsar que cet épisode des scandales de Panama.*”¹⁷⁸ Taken as a whole, however, Cyon's contentions appear to be largely a matter of propaganda. As late as 1887, the Russians privately signed a defensive agreement, the Reinsurance Treaty, renewable every three years. In 1890, despite massive efforts by the Russian foreign ministry, Germany under Wilhelm II decided not to renew; hence, Russia was virtually forced to search for an ally in view of British, German and Austro-Hungarian hostility.

Élie de Cyon held all anti-Alliance forces in contempt, but his understanding of Austria's international position during the 1880s and 1890s seems particularly one-sided. Ever since the Austrian Empire decided not to uphold its arrangements with Russia to assist in the Crimean War, Austrians were widely viewed as back-stabbers beneath

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 51.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 457. “Of all the intrigues machinated by the enemies of a Franco-Russian alliance, none succeeded in impressing the Tsar as unfavorably as that episode of the Panama scandals.” Cyon seems to have been correct here as well. French and other European political leaders, including Mohrenheim, received monetary compensation for their efforts to promote failing companies which had invested in a project to build a canal across the Isthmus of Panama. Eventually, high-ranking French ministers and ambassadors were implicated in the affair, much to the Tsar's revulsion. See Langer, 270.

contempt.¹⁷⁹ The “*notoirement reptiliens*” press organs of Vienna and Pest (later Budapest) demeaned pro-Alliance figures often, doubly so after the 1879 Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary was made public in 1888.¹⁸⁰ While Russia viewed Austria as hostile and tried to promote better relations with Germany, Bismarck had used Austria as a tool to thwart Russian interests in southeastern Europe: “*du côté russe, sacrifice des intérêts du pays aux liens de famille; du côté prussien, subordination des affections familiales au bien de la patrie.*”¹⁸¹ Creating friction between the two opponents, Bismarck could then become the benevolent arbiter, secretly promoting the interests of his new Germany.¹⁸² Beyond that, Bismarck cultivated personal friendships with the leading Habsburg statesmen, Gyula Andrassy, Foreign Minister of Austria (1871-79) and Kálmán Tisza, Prime Minister of Hungary (1875-90).¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹For a useful discussion of the precarious Austrian position between England and France, and Russia, see A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918: a History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary* (1948; reprint, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 91-92. Taylor noted that “unable to opt for either east or west, Austria remained thereafter in a state of suspended animation, waiting for extinction Russia ascribed her defeat to the Austrian threat to join the allies; the allies believed that Russia would have withdrawn without war if Austria had joined them at the beginning.”

¹⁸⁰Cyon, 29, 42-43.

¹⁸¹*Ibid.*, 43. “on the Russian side, sacrifice of the interests of the country to the bonds of the family; on the Prussian side, subordination of familial affections to the betterment of the Fatherland.”

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, 292. Taylor, 152-53, 191-94, found no evidence of personal friendship between Bismarck and Andrassy and indicated their sharp disagreements in political

Immersed within the context of his times, one cannot but suspect the legitimacy of Cyon's claims about Austria, yet his motive remains clear. Regardless of Austrian internal problems, including the ascendance of Hungary and a host of other minorities as well as friction over the status of the Balkans, a lingering sense of betrayal dating to 1853 gave the historian sufficient cause to wax indignant at the sensitized French public. Given his animosity toward Austria-Hungary as Bismarck's tool, it is hardly surprising that the historian would fan the flames of popular and political French hatred of the Iron Chancellor himself.

For Cyon, the history of the Franco-Russian Alliance was "*l'histoire de la décadence et de la chute du prince de Bismarck . . .*" whose "*passions haineuses*" and "*appétits de domination étaient devenue un véritable péril national.*"¹⁸⁴ In this case, the historian's arguments virtually paralleled the articles of Adam. Through the tactics of international and domestic division, "*la diplomatie machiavélique.*" Bismarck succeeded in dominating the foreign policy of France until about 1885, (when Cyon's efforts began in earnest, naturally).¹⁸⁵ The Chancellor held so much power, so effectively in fact that

affairs, particularly in the Balkans and Turkey. In addition, Tisza seemed to be more dedicated to the Dual Power system of hegemony within the Austrian empire and less interested in the more international arena of Bismarckian plans. In his study of Hungarian politics before the turn of the twentieth century, John Lukacs never linked Tisza to Bismarck either politically or personally. John Lukacs, *Budapest 1900: a Historical Portrait of a City and its Culture* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 117-18, 126.

¹⁸⁴Cyon, ix. "the history of the decadence and fall of Prince Bismarck," "heinous passions," "appetites for domination had become a true national peril."

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 32, 63. "Machiavellian diplomacy."

he could quash popular support in Germany for a war against Russia, retaining Russia as a hapless tool rather than a formal military enemy -- until 1890. For the new Kaiser, war with Russia was only a matter of time: where Bismarck's goals had been to block Russia from Constantinople and promote Austrian influence as a counter-weight to the Slavic Balkans, Wilhelm II's goal was to wipe all of Russia from the map of Europe.¹⁸⁶ Since war with France remained "*une regrettable nécessité politique*," "*le nouveau cours*" would have to account for a war on two fronts.¹⁸⁷ In this case, Cyon's explanation -- written in 1894 -- accurately foreshadowed the future current of German foreign policy.

Fortunately, Élie de Cyon's contacts included a range of people who were not politicians. In terms of Russian and European finance, for example, the historian had relationships with both Ivan Vishnegradski (1887-1892) and Serge Witte (1892-1903), successive Russian ministers of finance. Searching for a cause for the delay of Alliance negotiations during the 1880s, for example, Cyon chided the French public, warning that "*l'Allemagne était pour le moment le seul pays à l'étranger où le Trésor russe trouvait les appuis nécessaires à son crédit*."¹⁸⁸ Aside from the fiscal opportunism inherent in the historian's statement, one begins to perceive his close proximity to the Russian financial community. In fact, Cyon was personally privy to Vishnegradski's telegrams, he

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 187-90.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 191, 426. "a regrettable political necessity," "the new course."

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 127. "Germany was for the moment the only foreign country where the Russian Treasurer found the support necessary for his credit."

collaborated with him in negotiations with the French House of Rothschild, and he debated fiscal policy with both Vishnegradski and Witte on issues such as the Russo-German Tariff wars between 1886 and 1894, always preferring a hard-line approach to the badly needed importation of German industrial products.¹⁸⁹

Culturally, the historian's duties involved disseminating pro-Russian opinion among the French public. As mentioned earlier, Cyon and Adam played leading roles in promoting popular festivities through articles in newspapers, journals and pamphlets, particularly during the Russian fleet's visit to Toulon in 1893.¹⁹⁰ With the exception of Generals Boisdeffre and Obruchev, he seems to have had connections to the leading military officials in both France and Russia.¹⁹¹ It is within the realm of politics, however, that he had the greatest ability to find and reproduce information, both public and private.

Among the most notable of Cyon's weaknesses as a historian was his personal bias, precisely the scholarly element he professed to have purged himself of before writing his *Histoire*. Given his thorough acumen and access to foreign ministry documents in Russia, one wonders at his purposeful alterations of fact, purpose and timing which were really only a means to an end. The absence of information about the

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 285, 298, 432, 464, 471.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 461-63.

¹⁹¹Ibid., 35, 169, 425, 433. Even so, Cyon's omission of the importance of the personal friendship between Boisdeffre and Obruchev is striking. These men actually drafted the preliminary military convention treaty between the two nations in 1892, and Boisdeffre was the highest French functionary in attendance at Cronstadt (1891).

Reinsurance Treaty of 1887, in particular, weakens his credibility historiographically.

Yet with a clear audience in mind, he serves as a balance to the anti-Russian diatribes of the later historian Georges Michon.

In terms of historical value, however, Élie de Cyon's work is vital to the understanding of the behind-the-scenes movements of social leaders and journalists in both nations. Like Mikhail Katkov, he was willing to distort facts in order to breach the diplomatic hold of Bismarck, and like Juliette Adam, he gave only a one-sided view of diplomacy to the French public. Modern historians would probably find Cyon's deception and distortions unforgivable -- unless they wanted a more enlightened understanding of informal efforts to achieve a final victory over the nemesis that was Germany after 1870. With a jaded eye and a guarded conscience, students of the Franco-Russian Alliance and the causes of the Great War will discern in his work the vestiges of a scholar's life spent in the alteration of Europe's balance of power.

CHAPTER 5

GEORGES MICHON AND FRANCE AFTER 1918

By the end of the Great War, it was no longer quite so patriotic to applaud the progress of the Russians, embrace their culture or draw investments for its industry from the French population: Russia was now the Soviet Union, all debts had been revoked, and most importantly, the Russians had withdrawn from the entire Eastern Front, leaving the continental stalemate on French soil. Writing from the perspective of hindsight, Georges Michon displayed nationalist views which marked a polar contrast to those published on the alliance during the 1890s. Langer briefly described the value of Michon's work as "the only systematic treatment of the history of the alliance as a whole. The view point is radical and the author is distinctly hostile to the alliance, but the book is scholarly and valuable as a study of the evolution of French public opinion."¹⁹² Who was this Georges Michon, and what may the reader gather from Langer's summation of his work? Can a history be both "radical" and "scholarly" at the same time? Moreover, can a radical treatment of public opinion in France possibly be systematic?

Michon's energetic work, *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1891-1917*, answered all of these questions in its social analysis of the tragic misperceptions which led to the alliance between autocracy and republic in the years between 1891 and 1894. Michon's preface was foreboding, and it set the pace for his subsequent evaluations. "Let us try to throw a little light upon this pact, which nearly cost France her very life."¹⁹³ The

¹⁹² Langer, 433.

¹⁹³ Michon, 5.

historian stated his mission to enlighten the post-WWI French public about the treacheries of its 1890s leadership in its unwise concessions to a Russian colossus steeped in abuses of humanity.

In his version, the alliance stemmed equally from Russian and French weakness. A group of "friends for an alliance" lobbied their governments and stirred up public opinion toward closer Franco-Russian relations in the late 1880s. For Michon, Katkov, the Russian journalist and editor of the Francophile newspaper, *Moskovskaya Vedomosti*, in conjunction with Élie de Cyon, his French associate who opposed secular education, political rights for the lower classes and a parliamentary form of representation, and Juliette Adam, founder of the popular Parisian journal, *Nouvelle Revue*, shaped a public phobia of Germany and its Iron Chancellor in particular.¹⁹⁴ According to the historian, this literary publication conglomerate found a willing and powerful partner in Vishnegradski, Russia's Minister of Finance. The minister, whose overall economy and imperial fund reserves had suffered as a result of the tariff war with Germany, struck a deal with Cyon which symbolized Franco-Russian relations henceforth. "The Finance Minister had concurred [with the idea of accepting loans from French bankers], but on condition that de Cyon not only took all the risks but bore the initial expenses of the press campaign."¹⁹⁵ Financially, "Russia had been driven by dire

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 18.

necessity into the arms of France," which coincided with the French desire to ease the burden of its diplomatic isolation.¹⁹⁶

The brutal warnings, to which the historian constantly referred in his analysis, were inherent in the contrast between two types of man, autocrat and republican: one remained steeped in the blood of backward, feudal oppression and fiscal desperation, while the other gazed at the world about him with rational, enlightened eyes. In his description of a contemporary article by a celebrated writer, Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, Michon wrote that "France and Russia stood at opposite poles in the modern world, personifying in the eyes of the peoples of all nations two utterly incompatible principles."¹⁹⁷ Leroy-Beaulieu's words, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (15 February 1888), confirmed the point: "there are some cases . . . in which it is difficult to combine friendship with sincerity."¹⁹⁸ Somehow, almost inexplicably according to Michon, France's public and leadership ignored these differences and jumped headlong into an alliance. The Tsar could actually afford to wait, confident in his view that Germany would not commit itself to war over the Russian intimations toward France.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., George Kennan adamantly opposed Michon's view of the Russian "dire necessity," maintaining that the Tsar's main character component, indifference, prevented him from negotiations based solely on financial compensation.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 21.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. Leroy-Beaulieu, in this particular passage, referred to the conflict of France's traditional friendship toward and Russia's traditional oppression of Poland.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 37. This is not entirely accurate; in view of the continuation of the tariff struggles, the lapse of the Reinsurance Treaty and the Tsar's personal animosity toward Kaiser Wilhelm II, it seems unlikely that a savvy leader, such as Alexander III, would neglect to bear German threats in mind. In any case, his early-1890s foreign policy included a defensive alliance against potentially hostile nations such as Germany.

The main shock, for Michon, was that French diplomats failed to provide certain safety precautions in the final treaty of 1894. The author pointed to Alexandre Ribot, the French Foreign Minister, one of the diplomatic proponents of France's participation in the alliance, who proposed the inclusion of a time limit clause in the text of the treaty itself, the equivalent of the limiting clause in the text of the Triple Alliance Treaty. Ribot's cited point, that "'by this means we shall emphasize in the plainest possible way the *defensive character* of our *rapprochement* with Russia,'" was later dropped from the treaty by subsequent diplomats.²⁰⁰ Although the "founding fathers" of the alliance, such as Ribot, had had the presence of mind to include a few advantageous provisions in the treaty's text, the trend of oblivious diplomacy, which started during the early 1890s, grew until any possible advantages for France were thrown out in favor of the most binding agreements possible with Russia.²⁰¹

In 1892, when the military portion of the Franco-Russian Alliance was written, Michon noted that "the decisive influence of the French financial backing of Russia, which was at the bottom of the military convention . . . ,"²⁰² remained the only means to

²⁰⁰
Ibid., 45.

²⁰¹
In this case, Michon has not stated Ribot's actual intention with restraining the time limit of the Franco-Russian Alliance to match that of the Triple Alliance: on the contingency that the Triple Alliance should dissolve, Russia would still be left to deal with English antagonisms on multiple fronts, while France could wash its hands of the entire affair, having fulfilled the letter of the treaty. Appendix A is the exact text, (in both French and English), of the military draft proposal for terms of the Franco-Russian Alliance in 1892, document 444 in the French *Documents Diplomatiques*. The reader will note that clause six did specify the duration of the Franco-Russian Alliance to be that of the Triple Alliance.

²⁰²
Michon, 57.

bring alliance negotiations to a conclusion. Yet, for a six-month period between November and May 1893, negotiations did not proceed between France and Russia. "It almost seemed as if another *rapprochement* between Russia, Germany and Austria were taking shape."²⁰³ French loans, however, continued, and the historian never considered why, (since his central point is that financial motivation secured the Franco-Russian Alliance), monetary support did not seem enough to move the Tsar during this particular period.

Michon cited a number of reasons for the Tsar's final approval for the conclusion of the alliance in December 1893. First, he maintained, the damage of the Panama Crisis had subsided, easing the pressure on Russia's Ambassador to France, Baron Arthur Mohrenheim, who was seriously implicated in the affair. Continued tension in the Russo-German economic relationship, symbolized by the failure to establish a commercial treaty before 1894, Germany's Military Service Bill, which increased its army by some sixty-thousand men, and a fear of international isolation finally moved the Tsar to act.²⁰⁴ Surprisingly, none of Michon's cited reasons for the late-1893 closure of the alliance terms expressed anything about financial loans from France to Russia.

Yet the author emphasized such financial motivation as his thesis and the central reason for the error of the alliance. His unique description of the alliance, interspersed by references to chronologically ordered *Documents Diplomatiques* documents, demanded attention to fiscal considerations throughout his entire work. "Throughout the documents, too, no mention is made of the financial factor which, nevertheless, is the whole

²⁰³ Ibid., 58.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 59.

explanation of the abrupt changes of attitude on the part of the Russians and dominates the situation throughout, playing as it did an outstanding part in the minds of all those engaged in the negotiations."²⁰⁵ The Tsar, who was only interested in enlisting support against Austria and England, loathed the idea that he must support France in the event of Franco-German hostilities, but his hands were tied, again, by the overwhelming need of assistance to support his tottering regime.²⁰⁶

Although the "financial factor" remained a burden upon the taxes and economy of the French people, Michon returned to a purely popular aspect of the terms of the alliance. "The fundamental blemish of secrecy permanently prevented the French people from discussing the precise meaning of the agreement, from expressing doubts as to the interpretations . . . in short, from watching the clearly defined interests of the nation. They were obliged to follow blindly in the wake of the sacred oracles"²⁰⁷ In fact, the French constitution expressly prohibited secret treaties with other nations, and this was the point to which the author referred. Because early French leaders ignored the chosen constitution of the people, "all equality between the two parties to the contract disappeared, and they became patron and dependent."²⁰⁸ Russia became the oppressor and France the oppressed because at least the Tsar followed the rights of his rule; French diplomats of the alliance chose to violate the sacred principles embodied in France's constitution. The fruit, (the return of the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine), dangled

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 63.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 64.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 67-68.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 69.

before the eyes of the French public by its leaders, was poisoned, as future deaths and destruction by 1918 proved. Moreover, French loans during the period 1890-94, which amounted to just under 2.5 billion francs,²⁰⁹ not to mention the additional billions lost between 1895 and 1917, would never be repaid, thanks to the Soviet Union.

In the end, "the Soviet, which was the true representative of the masses, was bound to take the lead in the face of the impotence and lack of authority of the Duma"²¹⁰ which, in the past, had assumed the forefront of Tsarist oppression. "French egoism would fain have shut its eyes to these facts, have cried halt to the march of events at the point at which they threatened to neglect French interests . . . demanding the last sacrifice from everyone. But reality was more complex than that."²¹¹ Michon's most startling, reflective point was that the French financial contributions to the Tsarist regime facilitated the reality of oppression; material for the Tsar *prevented* social reform in Russia, the proposed goal of the enlightened, French, republican man.²¹² Contained within the sphere of a financial and social analysis, the historian's message underlined the paradoxical tragedy that French nationalism contributed heavily to that nation's own suffering during World War I and actually hastened Russia's inability to hold an Eastern Front.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 146.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 300.

²¹¹ Ibid., 303.

²¹² Ibid., 333.

CHAPTER 6

ELEMENTS OF GERMAN NATIONALISM

The irony of French nationalism, so aptly portrayed in the words of Georges Michon, had perhaps an even more self-destructive counterpart in Germany. After a unification by fire, which had gained for Prussia a substantially increased domain, two important industrial French provinces and the respect of all European nations toward its undefeated army, some Germans felt that they had a right to exercise their role as a great nation; beyond that, the decades after 1871 brought the manifestation of feelings by which many Germans had a *divine* right to assume their destiny as the greatest people on Earth. These feelings were fueled by philosophers, historians, politicians and military officers, and they carried the embryo of multiple and disastrous defeats at the hands of England, France, Russia and the United States.

One of the earliest and most noteworthy proponents of German nationalism was Georg Hegel. In his work, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel designed the philosophical base of this nationalism through the use of models such as the dialectic and base-superstructure theories. Hegel's concept of the State, that mechanism which brought actual from potential and order from chaos,²¹³ underlined its existence as the central point toward which all citizens must subordinate. Universally, a State is "well constituted and internally powerful when the private interests of its citizens is one with the common interest of the State, when the one finds its gratification and realization in the

²¹³ Hegel, 23.

other" ²¹⁴ Remarkably, this view is nearly identical to the delineation of unity in public and private spheres forwarded by Daudet. Physically, people and State were gratified by each other; spiritually, they were realized by each other. The mechanism of that simultaneous gratification and realization was self-awareness: the spirits of individual Germans recognized that they were part of a more important whole in harmony with the concept that the German State recognized that it was made of millions of essential parts.

Since "the Idea of something is its existence Ideally," ²¹⁵ the extension of the State became the ideal existence of a collective spirit. Moreover, this spirit was governed by the ebb and flow of a dialectic pattern. In this pattern, an original form of thought, expression or view, the thesis, eventually came into contact with a contrary body of thoughts, expressions or views, the antithesis. In the synthesis, a combination of both sets of views occurred between the opposite sides: this synthesis became a new thesis, and the process continued until it reached its ideal, universal, ultimate state of existence. ²¹⁶ In terms of historical progress, this process was fueled by celebrated conquerors.

Great conquerors, such as Caesar, Alexander and Napoleon, brought society forward because their powerful personal interests coincided closely with those of the states they led. Yet, men such as these are not mere examples to be studied aesthetically.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 25.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 18.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 27. It is important to keep in mind here that Karl Marx's variation of this dialectic was the progress of classes through history. Lenin's applications of this led directly to the Russian withdrawal from World War I and, of course, from the Franco-Russian Alliance.

"All great historical men, -- whose own particular aims involve those large issues which are the will of the World-Spirit . . . may be called Heroes" ²¹⁷ Heroes are worshipped and revered as the personification of legacy and pride: their names may be used as symbols, and their activities may be emulated. But who would this new "great man" be? Would he be a Chancellor, a Kaiser or a Führer perhaps? Would he aim, like previous great men, at the conquest of all of his neighbors? "So mighty a form must trample many an innocent flower -- crush to pieces many an object in its path." ²¹⁸ Could such innocent flowers be represented today by memorial fields throughout the north and west of France? Could such objects be the nations of Central Europe and Western Russia? Indeed, the link between Hegel and German history during the twentieth century is startlingly apparent.

Internally, Hegel argues that the State is the mirror image and the observable form of its institutions. Because "law is the objectivity of the spirit," ²¹⁹ rules and regulations present the real equivalent of the unseen forces of the State. The philosopher refers to "an essential union between the objective side -- the Idea, -- and the subjective side, -- the personality that conceives and wills it." ²²⁰ In other words, the Idea is the objective form within a superstructure which motivates the institutional base of the subjective Will: collective concepts of ideal law, morality, government and education reflect upon the

²¹⁷
Ibid., 31.

²¹⁸
Ibid., 34.

²¹⁹
Ibid., 41.

²²⁰
Ibid., 51.

institution of those ideas, namely, the juridical system, accepted religions, bureaucracy and schools. Through these institutions, an individual reflects his or her race.

Hegel's conclusions, that "the Universal subjugates the individuals . . ." ²²¹ and that "a nation is moral -- virtuous -- vigorous while it is engaged in realizing its grand objects, and defends its work . . ." ²²² helped to raise the collective self-esteem of German statesmen and citizens to unparalleled heights. Their self-confidence, patterned after the glory and brutality of conquerors, certified by a sacred and subservient relationship to the state's institutions and crucified by the outrage and vengeance of other powerful nations in unison, foreshadowed the fall of the German people.

That fall would only take place, however, after the passage of generations. In scholarship and politics, part of the pre-WWI generation in Germany was represented by the words and influence of Heinrich von Treitschke and his multi-volume *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*. Notably, the historian's work transformed abruptly during the mid-1860s: during the last years of Prussian dominance over minor German states, Treitschke disagreed with Hegel and the idea that nationalism should override individual freedom, but after Bismarck's successful unification of Germany, he scrapped those beliefs in favor of a message which magnified nationalism as a holy temple to be worshipped, whatever the individual price and loss of autonomy.

In his concern for the role of the German individual and his freedom, Treitschke declared Hegel's rhetoric and methodology to be "a fanciful product of the

²²¹ Ibid., 114.

²²² Ibid., 77.

imagination"²²³ that could have an almost infinite number of misguided interpretations. He predicted that Hegel's lasting influence would undermine values and his essentially democratic idea for government representation which responded to the people through a benevolent forum. For this historian, Hegel "regarded the state as the actualization of the moral ideal, as the realization of the ethical will, and at one blow he shattered the doctrine of natural rights"²²⁴ Hegel's proclamation of scientificity remained an "unbounded sophistic arrogance."²²⁵ and the needle of the dialectic compass, held in the hands of an erudite sophist, could be unnaturally pointed to any direction. As mentioned in this papers' introduction, with Bismarck's unification of the state, through an iron will and a degree of popular suppression when called for,²²⁶ Treitschke embraced the policies of authoritarianism as progress in the process of imperial rule.

This transformation in the historian's work coincided with his rise in influence among the military and diplomatic sectors of society, and the two points could not be easily separated. As his "student" audience augmented in numbers and honed a nationalist consciousness, he started upon an analytical path which espoused nationalism as omnipotent, beyond a need for rational, ethical or individual justification. He traced the impurity of the Jews, for example to the beginning of the nineteenth century; for him, their most insidious sins were their pollution of German language, poetry and culture.

²²³ Treitschke, 243.

²²⁴ Ibid., 244.

²²⁵ Ibid., 247.

²²⁶ Bismarck's wars against Austria, Denmark and France were conducted with both risk and some domestic opposition, particularly by the non-Prussian components of the new Germany.

"Cosmopolitanism and hatred of Christianity, bitter mockery and corruption of speech, utter indifference towards the greatness of national history -- everything in the movement was Jewish" ²²⁷ More importantly, Treitschke argued that if Jews could ever become a valuable, contributing part of a nation, they must be "Germanized." ²²⁸ Germanization or death developed into a racial philosophy, directed at all other nations and peoples, which embedded itself during the 1890s and lasted until sometime after the final defeat of the Third Reich.

Toward the end of his career, the historian came to accept the standpoint of the Hegelian form of nationalism. If "the historian and the philosopher, unlike the learned in any other sphere, [were] enabled by their science to comprehend man as a whole," ²²⁹ then it became the historian's didactic duty to ensure an awareness in the German people that enlightened them as to the (surreal) status of their nation; each Aryan was part of a Great Will that must never be questioned.

Throughout the early history of Germany, the army was the focus and the rod of that will. Gordon Craig's *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945*, considered that rod by measuring it with Western standards of democracy. He maintained that "the ideal aim of the healthy state is that its military establishment shall remain merely the executive will of the sovereign power." ²³⁰ Between 1807 and 1813, Prussia's army had been "the

²²⁷ Ibid., 287. The movement to which the historian referred was the attempt of immigrant Jews to establish communities and a place for themselves in the economic sector during the 1830s.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 312.

²³⁰ Craig, xix.

most effective and inveterate opponent of political change."²³¹ but by the 1890s, officers had usurped the domain of the diplomatic sphere and developed the army into a virtually autonomous German sub-state.²³²

Kaiser Wilhelm II facilitated this autonomy through his psychological connection to the army; he continually sought the advice of its leading members in regard to foreign policy and internal suppression, and he could not seem to help wearing a variety of German army uniforms on numerous public and private occasions. "The emperor was always more intimate with members of his suite than he was with responsible ministers of state."²³³ This applied even to the most obscure military attachés and the most crucial diplomats. According to Craig, these phenomena led to an "inflated concept of royal command" within the military, independence for both Reichstag and the army, and a bitter hatred of the constitution; democratic bodies suffered at the hands of an extreme, preferential system of imperial rule.²³⁴

In an attack on the diplomatic system established well before 1890 by Bismarck, Wilhelm II and Count Waldersee, the Kaiser's Chief of Staff (1888-1891), redirected the bulk of diplomatic correspondence away from ambassadors and ministers, into the hands of generals. This "Waldersee System" undermined the diplomatic process after the fall of

²³¹ Ibid., xv.

²³² Craig, 235, noted one important exception to this trend in the fact that middle-range officers, as of March 1890, were officially allowed opportunity to advance despite their middle-class, secular, educated background. Even so, the historian pointed out that no Jews or youths with "unorthodox" views were allowed rank regardless of their status.

²³³ Craig, 240.

²³⁴ Ibid., 239.

Bismarck, and it was not effectively challenged until 1894 by Chancellor Caprivi.²³⁵

Meanwhile, the generals, such as Moltke and Schleiffen, utilized their resources to prepare much more for war than for peace. This is acceptable as one explanation for the failure of Germany and Russia, natural allies according to Langer, to reach a lasting agreement for military or economic peace.

Craig described several abrasive elements in German foreign policy. An expansion of African imperialism, an explosive naval program and support of the Boers in their struggle for independence caused friction with England. Heightened, restrictive tariffs against Russian grain contributed to tense relations with Russia, and an attempt to garner exclusive rights through the Balkans and Turkey, under the guise of the Baghdad Railroad, created concern among all of the Mediterranean powers.²³⁶ "All of these policy innovations occurred during Schleiffen's term as Chief of Staff,"²³⁷ and they all symbolized misguided diplomatic technique as well as the New Course's transformation of German objectives.

As previously mentioned, this New Course placed the success of Germany's European position on the prospect of an alliance with England. Raymond Sontag, in

²³⁵ Ibid., 271-72. Although this is not Craig's direct point, the lack of unity in German diplomatic conduct during the 1890s, wavering back and forth between the agendas and offices of generals and ministers, weakened the continuity and quality of the conduct of affairs during the critical years of the formation of the Franco-Russian Alliance and the failure to convince England that it need a written agreement with Germany for purposes of defense. The New Course, beyond its problems with substance and strategy, failed, in part, because of the diplomatic methods with which it was handled.

²³⁶ Ibid., 281-82.

²³⁷ Ibid., 282.

Germany and England: 1848-1894, traced the feelings, misperceptions and misgivings between the peoples of the two most powerful nations in Europe, other than France and Russia. He argued that the future of Europe depended on four German men. "one a senile nonagenarian, one ailing, one an untried youngster, and one the statesman who had stood for Germany in the minds of Europeans through a quarter of a century" ²³⁸ Wilhelm I died in March 1888, Frederick I died in March 1890, and Wilhelm II came to the throne and dismissed Bismarck in October of that same year. Although the untried youngster aimed at the friendship of Britain, he had to contend with decades of impressions on both sides of the North Sea about opposing institutions, ideas and goals.

For Sontag, a free press, a parliament and ministerial accountability ensured a democratic control of power in England; in Germany, rival groups and imperial favor led to dominance. ²³⁹ He maintained that Bismarck's fall from power shaped English leaders' opinions about the Kaiser and his preferential policies. Hegel and Treitschke had left their indelible mark upon the feeling of German citizens for their nation. "Because Germans believed the state to be a living personality with a will shaped by the history of the nation, the statesman seemed relatively unimportant." ²⁴⁰ To the English, however, and to most European leadership, Germany's diplomatic conduct after 1890 seemed perplexing and dangerous.

In 1890, Germany dropped the Reinsurance Treaty on the premise that maintaining it would have violated its agreements with Austria-Hungary, and the New

²³⁸ Sontag, 227.

²³⁹ Ibid., 228-29.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 233.

Course marked "the substitution of honesty for trickery."²⁴¹ In this light, perhaps Sontag wrote cynically in his observation that the New Course was run by fools, but by 1894, Germany had lost its position as the strategic center of diplomatic action and agreement.²⁴² Ultimately, the Germans' obsession with their role of supreme nation alienated their British counterparts: this led to full encirclement by land and sea.

In the retrospect of a century, post-industrial historians have had the opportunity to consider the long-term effects of the massive force of German nationalism. David Childs pointed to institutional and social trends as the origins of Germany's downfall. German legislative representatives were elected by universal male suffrage. "On the face of it this made the German parliament the most democratic in 1871,"²⁴³ but the legislation itself was carefully filled by ministers of the Kaiser. Also, a "population drift" from conservative ruralism to radical urbanism, simultaneous with the unification of Germany because of Germany's late industrialization, gave the Kaiser's officers and bureaucrats a closer connection to the masses.²⁴⁴

When David Calleo wrote that "no despot is more powerful than a powerful people deprived of its newly won prosperity,"²⁴⁵ he referred to the precarious status of Germany after its unification. France, England, Russia and Austria had been established

²⁴¹ Ibid., 269.

²⁴² Ibid., 298.

²⁴³ Childs, 8.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Calleo, 208.

as nations for centuries, but Germany was untested. How would it flourish and excel?
 "Why, since the 1860s, [had] Germany been so often at war with its neighbors?"²⁴⁶

The historian argued that Germany was no more to blame than any of its neighbors for World War I. He criticized Bismarck's policy of *Mitteleuropa*, the alliance with Austria, as a long-term burden, but in the face of Russian, French and English adversity on land and sea, the Chancellor had relatively few feasible options.²⁴⁷ Yet "a policy that could only be sustained by the ceaseless exertions of shifty genius was unsound and very probably doomed to collapse."²⁴⁸ This was a defense, not necessarily of the New Course, but of a need to transcend the old one. Histories of Nineteenth-Century Europe found the Kaiser phenomenally flawed because his state lost the Great War.²⁴⁹

Fate and the human condition, not ill-advised choices, brought the Germans down. "Imperial Germany was too aggressive to be accepted peacefully and perhaps not aggressive enough to win security by the sword."²⁵⁰ Caught in a web of circumstances, most beyond German control and others part of an instinct to survive, the Aryans posed threats to the pre-existing balance of power and suffered under the weight of oppression and imperialism from all sides.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 1.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 5, 17.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 11.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 25.

These historians, in their definitions and analysis of German nationalism, probed the purpose of imperial institutions, challenged the New Course and appealed to humanity to address the deeper questions of Germany's collective guilt for World War I. Europeans reacted to this German arrogance, either perceived or real, and joined in its opposition. Their reactions were more clear than their motives, and German nationalism contributed mightily to the progress and closure of the Franco-Russian Alliance.

CHAPTER 7

GEORGE KENNAN'S BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

No historiographical essay would be complete without a careful look into the faces and lives of those who are the subjects of the history. George Kennan's biographical study, *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia and the Coming of the First World War*, accounts for the negotiators of the Franco-Russian Alliance. The historian considers the plight of the individual, surrounded by the philosophy behind nationalism, the intrigues of nineteenth-century society and the demands of position. General, minister and autocrat unite in Kennan's sober tale of the alliance, but the author is inevitably linked to the present. His concern for the Nuclear Age and its delicate problems extend to the work of nineteenth-century diplomats; they lacked the experience of massive, social warfare known by today's national leadership, and for this reason, Kennan forgives his set of leaders. Their mistakes offer the lesson of the need for peaceful resolution to modern audiences.

One of the most complex and elaborate characters in this history is Tsar Alexander III. The Tsar reacted sternly to the assassination of his "liberal" father in 1881 by instituting stricter forms of governmental control, keeping public and officials away from his person, and showing his vein of stubbornness in opposition to change. Kennan described him as a "retiring, unsociable sort of person, seldom visited by others, seldom seen in public, and when seen, always in uniform."²⁵¹ According to the historian, his principle trait was indifference. So far, the reader visualizes the Tsar as a physically

²⁵¹ Kennan, 5.

formal, mentally rigid and socially disinterested man who fought against new developments on every frontier. Why, then, did he decide to break with centuries of tradition and ally with a radical republic? Kennan argued that the intricacies of his personality, as much as the needs of his kingdom, contributed to his decisions: namely, he bore an early hatred for Austria, an increasing distaste for young Wilhelm II and a conciliatory outlook upon Turkey, one of Russia's historic enemies.²⁵² Tariff feuds at a time of famine, the loss of Bismarck as a reliable representative of Germany and the dawn of the New Course merely reinforced the Tsar's animosity toward his Western neighbors.

The Tsar's Foreign Minister, Nikolai Giers, "the most seasoned and able statesman of his time in Europe, after Bismarck,"²⁵³ had passed the peak of his powers by 1890. A conservative, reserved and dignified man, Giers sought every opportunity to reestablish Russia's previously close relations with Germany and dissuade the Tsar from his odd disposition on foreign policy. The culmination of his career during the 1880s and 1890s, the waning years of his health and strength, were engaged in a reactionary, futile attempt to turn the clocks of diplomacy backward. In these efforts, he was opposed not only by the Tsar, but by Germany's New Course advocates, Wilhelm II and a group of French leaders who progressively infiltrated the confidence of Russia's military elite.

²⁵² Ibid., 8-9. The author credits early tutelage by Konstantin Pobedonostsev and marriage to Mariya Fyodorovna as the major reasons for the Tsar's atypical outlook. The tutor, a staunch Eastern Orthodox conservative, was revolted by Austrian Catholicism, and the Tsarina, of Danish royalty, still harbored anger at Denmark's defeat by Germany in 1866.

²⁵³ Ibid., 10.

"Fighting a losing battle"²⁵⁴ against the tide of diplomacy and the ravages of nationalism throughout Europe. Giers exhibited what Kennan called a "pathetic quality,"²⁵⁵ a groping, grasping standard which was doomed not only to failure, but to embarrassment. Mentally oriented in the past, Giers merely went through the motions of negotiation with French officials. His opposition to the Tsar was well-known, but his duty precluded any serious departure from the sovereign will.

General Nikolai Obruchev, a military orphan who was raised by Russian army officers, had a dream of an alliance with France. After he completed his education at various army schools, he became a professor of statistics at the Russia War Academy. In the mid-1850s, he created Russia's earliest military-scientific journal, the *Voyenny Sbornik*, and he hired an inconspicuous assistant named N. G. Chernyshevski.²⁵⁶ After Chernyshevski's revolutionary activities were exposed, Obruchev lost a measure of credibility in the eyes of his cohort, and he fled to Paris.²⁵⁷ Once there, he took a French wife, a symbol of his connection to French culture, history and position.²⁵⁸ Fortunately

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 36.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 45.

²⁵⁶ Nicholas Chernyshevski, a radical socialist and Nihilist, was one of the founders of Russia's populist movement during the 1850s and 1860s. His career as a revolutionary was remarkably distinguished and included widely read publications, imprisonment and exile to Siberia. His protests against repressive autocracy and his desire to instigate a class-based revolt were precisely the type of activities which infuriated the Tsar and many among his military entourage.

²⁵⁷ Kennan did not prove whether or not Obruchev knew of his assistant's illegal work.

²⁵⁸ Kennan, 15.

for his career. his connections to the highest military officials in Russia, such as Dmitri Milyutin, Alexander II's minister of War, had not been completely severed. In the early 1860s, he returned to Russia and resumed his work, as a staff officer during the Russo-Turkish War (1878-79) and as Alexander III's Chief of Staff from 1881 to 1894. For him, the Russian army was an "educational force -- a school of citizenship, a bridge for the overcoming of social barriers, a crucible for the wedding of a new national consciousness"²⁵⁹ that might make possible an alliance between Russia and France.

In France, a trio of architects consolidated their professional power and structured the initial agreements of the Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-94. Charles de Freycinet, Premier of France by 1890, began his career as an engineer at the *Ecole Polytechnique* in Paris. His esteemed work on railroad construction, sanitation, water supply and air pollution showed that he had a talent for resolving public problems and introduced him to a number of French public officials.²⁶⁰ "A thin, puny, but indestructible little man . . . a talented master of bureaucrats," Freycinet displayed an ability to manipulate a divisive parliament into agreement; in this regard, he became a centrist who standardized foreign policy, soothed representatives and focused the French polity.²⁶¹

The crucial position of Foreign Minister during the early-1890s was filled by the fiery, eloquent Alexandre Ribot, an attorney and judge who had been educated in the Greek and Roman classics, humanities and constitutional law. "He no doubt had that measure of self-esteem -- or even ambition, if one will -- without which no one rises (or

²⁵⁹
Ibid., 17.

²⁶⁰
Ibid., 23.

²⁶¹
Ibid., 24.

perhaps even should rise) to eminence under a democratic system"²⁶² Ribot's ambition transcended a need to increase his personal power: his goal was to break Bismarck's mastery of France's isolation. In the technique of diplomacy, he debated sharply with Freycinet as to the process of diplomatic negotiations; he stood in firm opposition to military agreements which had no attachment to political treaties.²⁶³ His primary concern was to combat the close-knit cooperation between the Triple Alliance's members and the vast armada of an island-empire whose treasury basked in eternal sunlight.²⁶⁴

Another key French figure, General Raoul le Mouton de Boisdeffre, strove to consolidate the 1880s improvements in the quality of the army's officers, defensive positions and equipment. As France's Ambassador to Russia in 1879, the general gained an appreciation of and an affinity toward Russia's military forces. "Tenacious yet tactful," Kennan noted that one of his most successful attributes was an "austere aloofness" that endeared him with many of the Tsar's attachés.²⁶⁵ Obruchev's wife helped the two generals to overcome linguistic barriers in their negotiations, and their personal and professional commitment to the alliance facilitated its consummation; the ambitions,

²⁶²
Ibid., 27.

²⁶³
Ibid., 53. Kennan argued that Ribot's efforts to achieve a political treaty changed the course of the early Franco-Russian Alliance. Without Ribot, leaders such as Freycinet, Boisdeffre, Alexander III and Obruchev would most likely have restricted their agreements to military defense without the additional bonds of diplomatic and economic partnership.

²⁶⁴
Ibid., 85.

²⁶⁵
Ibid., 12.

fears, hopes and disagreements of the leaders of Russia and France filtered into the exchange between two friends, Obruchev and Boisdeffre.

The historian's analysis of the alliance was more than the sum of the characters in the pages of his work. His philosophical point, in his search for the origins of the alliance and its contribution to the Great War, was to show the human faces behind the stacks of documentation and to illustrate those elements of human decision-making which lead to a catastrophic, human loss. Throughout his work, Kennan reminded his audience that the 1880s and 1890s marked a different type of transformation than that described by Langer, Michon and German nationalists. In previous conflicts, "the amount of force was made, if possible, commensurate to the purpose at hand -- no more, no less. When the immediate objective had been obtained, or had proven unobtainable, one desisted."²⁶⁶ Many Europeans during the period believed, or rather *knew*, that war was inevitable, and this uncomfortable outlook contributed to a greater need for an increased force that would make an enemy's defeat total.

Unlike Langer, Kennan emphasized the importance of the Narva Maneuvers in August 1890. For him, the attendance of General Boisdeffre symbolized the Tsar's willingness to entertain discussions on a possible alliance between Russia and France. In fact, Boisdeffre's initial point of simultaneous mobilization in the event of mobilization or attack by the Triple Alliance, marked the unofficial beginning of negotiations between the two nations.²⁶⁷ The historian cited several reasons for the Tsar's readiness to proceed

²⁶⁶
Ibid., 254.

²⁶⁷
Ibid., 50-51. A reference to this is found in the *Documents Diplomatiques*, document 165, vol. 8, 234-40. Langer seems to have overlooked this document entirely, and the German delegation at the maneuvers, which included Chancellor Caprivi.

with discussions in 1890, including the French government's arrest of a group of Russian revolutionaries who had discussed plots against the Tsar's life.²⁶⁸ The lapse of the Reinsurance Treaty weakened the Tsar's confidence in the unassailability of his forces. Also, the dual presence of Boisdeffre and Wilhelm II at Narva offered Alexander III a sharp contrast: the general's conversations and proposals seemed rational and honest, while the Kaiser's erratic and pretentious nature was a personal affront to the Tsar.²⁶⁹

In July 1891, a critical month for relations between France and Russia, several events occurred almost simultaneously which drew the two nations together. Discussions between Boisdeffre and Obruchev at Dorodogne had brought to the table French and Russian war aims, and the generals agreed to propose a military convention to organize and debate principle issues.²⁷⁰ Freycinet and Ribot, in Paris, agreed upon a draft which stated the political part of the prospective alliance's terms.²⁷¹ Publically, in plain view of all the ambassadors of Europe in Russia, a French fleet docked at Cronstadt, twenty-five

probably did not know of the secret negotiations between Boisdeffre and Obruchev at that time.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 32. The assassination of his father, his conservative upbringing under Pobedonostsev and his personal oppression of challenges to autocratic authority are some examples of why the Tsar would be particularly disposed to an extremely favorable view of the unprecedented action of the French government.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 68.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 91-96. One of the most important contentions was Russian offense in the event of a war with the Triple Alliance. Obruchev wanted Russia to defeat Austria-Hungary first while France held Germany in check. Boisdeffre insisted that the Russians field at least half of their army on Germany's Eastern Front. The generals' meeting took place between 15 and 16 July.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 97. The political proposal was completed on 23 July.

miles from St. Petersburg. The atmosphere of the celebrations was of minimal importance in comparison to the presence of the Tsar, who rarely attended public engagements. According to Kennan, the eyes of Europe watched as Alexander III removed his cap, listened to the *Marseillaise* and smiled broadly.²⁷² The reserved, oppressive autocrat had made an indelible statement to the governments of the Triple Alliance and the shocked peoples of the world; Russia and France were to become friends.

Boisdeffre and Obruchev persuaded their governments to accept the military draft of the Franco-Russian Alliance on 10 August 1892. France hoped for immediate attack on Germany by the Russians, and they saw this as the primary criterion for success in war. Once Germany had been defeated, the argument went, Austria-Hungary and Italy would have been easily overwhelmed.²⁷³ Russian views, saturated with a primary hatred of Austria-Hungary and the need to resolve a favorable situation in the Balkans for a Greater Slav domain, stressed the need to subdue Austria first, while the French delayed the German advance so that all of Russia's armies could encircle Germany.

Since "the Russian governmental mind [was] congenitally preoccupied primarily with appearances and only secondarily with facts," the Panama Scandal and reorganization of French public officers between 1893 and 1894 did not dissuade the Tsar from his pursuit of the alliance.²⁷⁴ When the Tsar sent a fleet of his own to Toulon in

²⁷²
Ibid.

²⁷³ Appendix A of this paper, the text of the original agreement, shows the final outcome of Franco-Russian debate. Michon neglected to note that the French achieved most of their objectives, namely the Russian agreement to attack Germany with at least fifty percent of its available forces, (see Provision 3).

²⁷⁴
Kennan, 210.

October 1893, this confirmed public suspicions that France and Russia were military allies.²⁷⁵ Kennan maintained, however, that these outward events and decisions were a direct result of the context of a new type of society and its influence upon the minds of European leadership.

The historian was apt to point out that the Franco-Russian Alliance, and its early implication of a world war, brought an end to both the Hohenzollern and Romanov dynasties.²⁷⁶ Had their leaders accurately weighed the potential ramifications of social war, they might not have followed such an apocalyptic course. Kennan found three major causes of diplomatic action which underrated the destructive possibilities of total war: nationalism provided the motive, the industrial revolution secured the means, and the rise of populations in Europe, particularly in Germany and Russia, contributed to labor specialization and a sense of invulnerability.²⁷⁷

Kennan also observed that the new nations, at the end of the nineteenth century, took on a separate life of their own through nationalism. Success went beyond a simple objective to gain a specified amount of territory. "The idea now was that you would defeat your opponent -- his armies and his people -- so decisively that his will would become crushed or insignificant; your will, correspondingly would become supreme. Total war, in other words, and total victory."²⁷⁸ This new idea, coupled with the vast powers of industrialization and population increase, foreshadowed oblivion.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 223.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 166.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 255-56.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 164.

Speaking from the perspective of the Nuclear Age, Kennan recognized that those early Franco-Russian Alliance leaders did not have enough experience to surmount nationalism in that they had no knowledge of the degree of destruction it would bring. They were not aware of "that essential community of fate that links, in reality, all great nations of the modern world and renders the destruction of any one of them the ultimate destruction, too, of the country that destroyed it."²⁷⁹ Through this point, Kennan illustrated that his own context, the Cold War and its end, had learned from the mistakes of late-nineteenth-century diplomats, their inability to harness their new-found power and avoid the tragedy of self-destruction inherent in victory or defeat.

²⁷⁹
Ibid., 257

CHAPTER 8

JOHN CONYBEARE'S SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

Historians have analyzed the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894 from diplomatic, political, and economic frames of reference. What Gordon Craig called the "diplomatic revolution" of the 1890s,²⁸⁰ William Langer ascribed to the removal of Bismarck from the arena of Europe's international negotiation.²⁸¹ John Conybeare's article, "A Portfolio Diversification Model of Alliances: The Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, 1879-1914,"²⁸² offered an original analysis that evaluated European alliances in terms of a portfolio: the process of alliance building was one of risk and return. Accordingly, each nation sought to decrease national risks, such as weakness in military strength, manpower, finance, and natural resources, while increasing return in the same areas. In this manner, combined national assets compensated for individual nations' deficits. Conybeare's analysis added the scientific method to a consideration of the causes of the Franco-Russian Alliance, but lacked perspective because it only a limited number of indices and neglected the use of historical context. A wider consideration of indices would have created a more detailed interpretation of multiple streams of data and a preferable standpoint in terms of historical context. Additional indices, such as railroad construction, mortality and birth rates would have added to this context. The results of

²⁸⁰ Gordon Craig, *Europe, 1815-1914*, 3d ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1989), 426.

²⁸¹ Langer, 75.

²⁸² A business portfolio is a list of positive and negative attributes in a collection of investments.

this chapter partially corroborate the theory of a portfolio. and measured data from multiple indices on risk and return, with the accepted measure of Langer's diplomatic interpretation.

The most notable international effects on Europe in 1890 stemmed from the dismissal of Otto von Bismarck from his office and tenure as Germany's Chancellor. Through him, Germany had achieved national unification, a complex and secure network of alliances, international influence, and domestic reforms. Langer noted that the cause for the lapse in the Reinsurance Treaty between Germany and Russia directly resulted from the decline of his influence.²⁸³ From that point, Russo-German interaction remained only a formal effigy to the testament of friendly relations: Caprivi, the subsequent German Chancellor, and the heads of his diplomatic departments viewed the treaty, with its secret clauses for military defense, as a potential and potent affront to Germany's relations with Austria and England. France, isolated from international alliances before 1890, scrambled for a rare opportunity to achieve diplomatic and military stability. Russia, faced with a network of potential enemies including England, Germany and Austria-Hungary, sought to retain its previously solid, strategical place within Europe's balance of power. A union between autocracy and republic was thought impossible by the statesmen of post-Bismarckian Germany and much of Europe; by 1894, the Franco-Russian Alliance made that view obsolete.

In part, the alliance developed from the ability of France and Russia to bolster respective deficiencies in manpower, population and economic development, a compatibility which was somewhat neglected by Langer's diplomatic approach.

²⁸³ Langer, 67.

Conybeare's thesis emphasized that nations should align in the method most profitable to their security, based on risk and return, and that this method could be scientifically measured.²⁸⁴ He used an analogy which compared investment portfolios in finance to a nation's search for allies. The market itself was limited to a system of nations including Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia.²⁸⁵ The market's index, called the "beta of unity," was the alliance of all powers, for which the average return of investments was one unit. The table, "Systematic and Country Components of Ally Risk, 1879-1814," showed that individual nations with a beta quantity greater than one unit had more risk, and those with less than one unit had lower risk.²⁸⁶ Portfolio dominance occurred when a country obtained the most profitable combination of risk, return, and assets. Risk, as defined by *Principles of Corporate Finance*, was composed by a variety of the potential developments of an investment.²⁸⁷ Return meant the value of expectation regarding profits from an investment.²⁸⁸ An asset was simply a collection of one or more resources.²⁸⁹ For Conybeare, these terms had military equivalents: risk was the variability

²⁸⁴ Conybeare, 54.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 68.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Richard Brealey and Stewart Myers, *Principles of Corporate Finance*, 2d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984), 140.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 150.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 10.

of fluctuation, (a measurable process), of an asset's potential benefit: return was the benefit or gain itself; assets were the claims on national resources.²⁹⁰

Conybeare measured all of these by an ally market line represented in a table of manpower for each nation; again, this was only one possible reference index. Diversification remained the critical component of portfolio analysis.²⁹¹ Conybeare cited three methods to improve risk-return combinations in alliances. Random diversification reduced risk because it decreased that portion of average risk inherent to the system: the more nations an ally had, based on manpower fluctuation, the greater the return on that additional manpower.²⁹² This calculation considered the reduction of unsystematic risk, (asset-unique to each nation rather than to a system of nations), which the author termed sufficient diversification.²⁹³ Optimal diversification, the highest possible achievement of alignment, comprised the near-perfect combination of nations willing to accept risk, (because of high manpower fluctuation), and those trying to avoid risk, (because of low manpower fluctuation).²⁹⁴

The major focus of this chapter is two-fold. First, by comparison to a theoretical portfolio schema, this writer determines which resources, based both on available data and applicability to political or economic motivations, fit a portfolio. Second, this paper

²⁹⁰ Conybeare, 56-57, 63.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 58.

²⁹² Ibid., 72.

²⁹³ Ibid., 73.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 79.

addresses the problem of whether or not such portfolio assets are relevant to a historical analysis of the Franco-Russian Alliance.

One of the most important economic motivations for Russia to join the alliance was to increase the number and length of its railroads; this would facilitate grain exportation, industrial production and internal transportation. Alexander Gerschenkron's article, "The Rate of Industrial Growth in Russia Since 1885," concluded that the protectionist domestic policies of Ivan Vishnegradski, Russian Minister of Finance (1887-1892) and Serge Witte, Minister of Finance (1892-1903), propelled industrialization.²⁹⁵ The decade of the 1890s, "the golden age of Russian industrialization in the pre-1914 period,"²⁹⁶ resulted from "Vishnegradski's dictum, 'Let us starve but export';"²⁹⁷ During the early years of the Alliance (1890-1894), industrial production rose an average of 2.42% per year and from 1895-1899 rose an average of 4.33% per year.²⁹⁸ In terms of railroad production, miles of completed track increased from 1,898 to 4,403 during the first period (1891-1895) and 4,403 to 10,035 during the second period (1896-1900), or a phenomenal increase of 231.98% and 227.91% respectively.²⁹⁹ Gerschenkron, however, neglected to address the issue of those railroad lines which were under construction.

²⁹⁵ Gerschenkron. 147-51.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 147.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 149.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 146. Figures compiled from Gerschenkron's "Pre-1914 Index of Industrial Production, 1885-1913." 1900 is the base year of 100%.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 148. These figures are compiled from Gerschenkron's "Increment in Railroad Mileage" index, shown in Appendix B of this thesis.

This data was partially supported by Edward Ames' article. "A Century of Russian Railroad Construction: 1837-1936."³⁰⁰ Ames' principle table. "LENGTH OF RAILROAD LINE COMPLETED IN RUSSIA, 1838-1937," maintained an increase from 3.923 miles during the first period to 10,027 miles during the second, or a rise of 138.26% and 255.62% respectively.³⁰¹ The slight discrepancy in these figures stemmed from two potential origins: first, Ames' original Russian sources. T.S. Khachaturov's *Razmeshchenie Transporta* (Moscow, 1939) and *Puti Razvitiya Transporta SSR* (Moscow, 1941), and *Ekonomike Transporta* (Moscow, 1941) by Volfson, Ledovski, and Shilnikov,³⁰² were different from Gerschenkron's which were uncited:³⁰³ second, as implied by his table. Ames acknowledged that his figures excluded railroad lines which were not completed during the period. Thus, Gerschenkron's data, which is slightly higher than Ames', might have included those lines under construction. In terms of "a functional characterization of the various lines" built, Ames determined military, export, facilitation of industrial centers, new territorial expansion, and passenger transportation as the critical motivations for the increase of railroad production.³⁰⁴ Like Gerschenkron,

³⁰⁰ Ames, 55-74.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 58. These figures are calculated from Ames' table, partially listed and modified in this paper's Appendix B.

³⁰² Ibid., 57.

³⁰³ Gerschenkron, 145. Only the railroad index is not cited by the author.

³⁰⁴ Ames, 63-64.

Ames concluded that grain export gave "considerable importance" and impetus for this rapid growth.³⁰⁵

A third set of data for railroad construction, recorded in the *Statesman's Yearbook* from a report by the Russian Ministry of Ways and Means, presented, (with the exception of Finland), the development of lines west of Moscow.³⁰⁶ Accordingly, the figures were substantially reduced in regard to Gerschenkron and Ames. The progress of this particular sector remained 3,716 miles from 1891-1895 and 5,975 miles from 1896-1900.³⁰⁷ Including the progress of two major eastern lines from 1896-1900, the Trans-Siberian (3,001 miles) and the Vladivostok-Transbaikalia (1,885 miles), total production during this second period was estimated at 10,871 miles.³⁰⁸ This total closely paralleled the studies of Gerschenkron (10,035 miles) and Ames (10,027 miles): its slightly higher number may have been the result of track built in China (as part of the Vladivostok-Transbaikalia Railroad) which was included by the Ministry of Ways and Means' computation. No effort was reported by the editor of the *Statesman's Yearbook* to analyze the causes of or discrepancies in these figures.

This author uses the table in Ames' article because it provides more detail. Specifically, Ames acknowledged that the figures he obtained did not consider development of track in progress. In addition, unlike Gerschenkron, his data analyzed mileage annually and not by five-year periods.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 65.

³⁰⁶ Keltie, (1902), 1023.

³⁰⁷ Ibid. Figures are calculated from the table.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 1023-24.

If the total number of railroad miles completed in Russia by 1899 was 30,860.³⁰⁹ the total number in France was 23,453.³¹⁰ In terms of portfolio theory, the deficient nation could have expected aid by a ratio of $(1/a)$, where (a) was the total number of allies.³¹¹ In the case of the Franco-Russian Alliance, (a) equaled two. Thus, France, (deficient in number of railroad miles by 1899), should have expected aid from Russia. Yet, in actuality, this expectation was quite the opposite. An explanation of this came, in part, from a ratio of the size of a nation and the length of its railroads. The meaning of the length of Russian and French tracks became more clear in view of their nations' sizes. In 1899, Russia comprised an area of 8,644,100 miles, and France comprised only 204,092 square miles.³¹² Thus, the ratio of national size to completed railroad mileage was 280.1:1 in Russia and only 8.7:1 in France: Russia had more than 280 square miles of land for one mile of railroad, and France had only 8.7 square miles of land per mile of railroad. With respect to development, Russia was clearly the more deficient nation.

With these adjustments, it seemed that Russia should have expected aid from France. According to portfolio theory, this expectation would have been due to the ratio's imbalance. Even so, railroads did not build themselves. A second step, which transcends the scope of this research paper, is necessary to translate railroad deficiency into increased production. One of the problems with a Conybearean analysis is its static consideration of resources; in other words, a direct application would have been to pull out a proportion

³⁰⁹ Ames, 58.

³¹⁰ Keltie, 586.

³¹¹ Conybeare, 61.

³¹² Keltie, (1898), 858, 471.

of French railroad, haul it over to Russia, and replace it so that the two nations would have had an equal ration of resources. In plain contrast, railroads were built, not transported as a finished product. The other necessary step was to *finance* the production of track.³¹³ Another significant problem with Conybeare's approach was the notion that common resources were expected, in theory, to be equally distributed between allies. For example, to increase Russia's railroad mileage to France's 8.7:1 ratio, it would have been necessary to construct some 993,575 miles of track in 1899, an inestimable expenditure far outreaching both nations' revenues combined.³¹⁴

Conybeare's article used the index of manpower as the specific measure of compatibility between nations. Russia, for example, had a "beta of unity" of 2.38, the highest risk rating because of its capability to produce the highest fluctuation in a standing army; simply, Russia could have, if necessary, conscripted millions of additional men based on its population.³¹⁵ France, by contrast, had a beta value of .68, lower than the average risk of potential allies in the market because of a reduced capacity to conscript additional men based on population.³¹⁶ Between 1888 and 1892, France should have presumed that this variability in beta-risk would have continued to grow. During the

³¹³ Readers interested in the financial investment aspect of the Alliance should consult the following studies: O. Crisp, "Some Problems of French Investment in Russian Joint-Stock Companies," in *Slavonic and East European Review* 35 (December 1956): 223-40, and "French Investment in Russian Joint-Stock Companies, 1894-1914," *Business History* 2 (June 1960): 75-90.

³¹⁴ Keltie (1898), 876, 478-79. Figures are compiled from the railroad and revenue tables.

³¹⁵ Conybeare, 68.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

period. Russia's population increased by roughly 5,399,500.³¹⁷ Between 1859 and 1896, a trend of population fluctuation had been observed in Russia's overall population increase from seventy-four million to 129,200,000.³¹⁸ By contrast, France's population had increased at a sluggish rate. According to the table, "Births, Deaths, and Marriages," in the *Statesman's Yearbook*, between 1892 and 1896, the "surplus of births over deaths" was only 102,760.³¹⁹ This marginal increase supported Conybeare's point that France had a lower risk based on lower manpower fluctuation. Moreover, the trends in both Russia and France tended to increase the polarity of their risk assessment. In other words, Russia and France became more compatible each year based on the index of manpower and growth of the related total population index.

In the case of Conybeare's manpower index, several factors obscured the validity of the portfolio theory. Once again, the author assessed manpower as a fixed element. He analyzed the size of the Russian and French armies in a period of peace, which excluded the basic principle that armies tend to increase substantially during a time of war, in this case World War I. True, Russia had more population to conscript, but the issue of conscription, an *unfixed* element of portfolio theory's risk and return, was not addressed by Conybeare. A second problem for the index was the issue of expected return. In a time of war, a nation which fought on its own territory should not have expected to use more elements of manpower than those of a standing army. In 1914, for

³¹⁷ Keltie (1898), 862. This total is based on a table provided by the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox church. Figures represent the number of births over deaths during the period but exclude those not recorded by the Church.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 859. Figures are compiled from the general census of 1897.

³¹⁹ Keltie (1898), 472.

example, Parisian taxi-drivers and citizens defended Paris as an *unfixed* element. In addition, Conybeare's application neglected to address the issue of time. When could forces of the other nation have been expected to have a direct impact on home-front operations? In 1914, Russia prevented Germany from engaging in a full assault on France. By 1918, however, the agreement at Brest-Litovsk ended the Eastern Front of World War I, an action which nullified the (1/a) expected rate of return.

Conybeare's theory of portfolio diversification, (the strength of low risk and high risk allies), concluded that Russia and France created a powerful alliance with valid expectations for victory in war by the maxim that "alliances that achieve superior combinations of risk and return should also experience a higher rate of war success."³²⁰ In World War I, France and Russia emerged at least partially victorious. Without the entrance of England and the United States, however, such a victory would have remained speculative.

In terms of historical outcome, only some of Conybeare's assertions were validated by portfolio theory; others neglected actual events. For example, the author's statement that "the large fall in the alliance efficiency premiums [of Germany] provides quantitative measures of the cost of the mistake [of the failure to renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia] with respect to both risk and return,"³²¹ (supported by Langer),³²² proceeded from the same logic which referred to Austria-Hungary as a low risk ally.³²³

³²⁰ Conybeare, 84.

³²¹ Conybeare, 79.

³²² Langer, 23.

³²³ Conybeare, 83.

Events in Sarajevo, 1914, symbolized by what historians have termed a "blank check" and "brinkmanship," negated the concept of a low-risk Austria.³²⁴ Conybeare conceded that "the idea that countries would ever randomly diversify alliances might seem absurd, especially to diplomatic historians, who seek particular and historically unique explanations for every alliance. However, previous research on 19th century alliances, has shown that 19th century alliance formation was random *over time*" ³²⁵ A historical analysis of alliances in nineteenth-century Europe, by contrast, must consider specific causes of events, motives of people and the process of international interaction. Conybeare's deterministic explanation of history adhered to a process of "natural selection" in alliances.³²⁶

The most significant problem in the relationship of portfolio theory to the historical analysis of alliances was what Conybeare called "taste factors," aspects of national conduct which were specific to each nation.³²⁷ Such factors included, for Conybeare, Britain's isolation and the "unfeasibility" of an alliance between France and Germany.³²⁸ The author actually misinterpreted several of these factors. For example, the status of Britain as "not a highly sought after ally"³²⁹ was directly opposed by Langer's

³²⁴ Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 151.

³²⁵ Conybeare, 72. Italics added.

³²⁶ Ibid., 65.

³²⁷ Ibid., 59-60.

³²⁸ Ibid., 60.

³²⁹ Ibid., 71.

assertion that the perceived need of Germany's leaders to seek Britain as an ally underlined the lapse of the Reinsurance Treaty and even the dismissal of Chancellor Bismarck.³³⁰ In effect, the "taste factors" which drew France and Russia together, such as the failure of Germany to continue the Reinsurance Treaty, were not random, but directly caused by the particular actions of European statesmen.

For the Franco-Russian Alliance, levels of industrialization, (as shown by railroad mileage and implied by the financial revenue and industrial technology which created internal transportation), and population, (including manpower, birth and mortality rates), illustrated a diverse and compatible union of nations. The historical context which drew these nations together transcended a natural, deterministic selection. Portfolio analysis, with its concepts of risk, return and diversification, remains more powerful as a metaphor of terminology than a didactic science of mathematical equations.

³³⁰ Langer, 66.

CHAPTER 9

THE ALLIANCE FROM DIPLOMACY TO CULTURE

A strictly diplomatic history of the Franco-Russian Alliance, if published today, would probably be redundant. Cyon, Daudet and Michon have provided sturdy analyses based largely on French documents and inside sources, and William Langer was the ultimate master of his art. He spent his most productive decades in research and writing about World War I alliances, especially that between France and Russia. A well-trained scholar who had decided to spend half a century on this diplomacy would still be hard pressed to improve upon the American's time-honored efforts and methods.

During the past twelve years, study of the alliance has also been approached from new and untested angles. Kennan's essentially biographical achievement will help significantly to bring its official proponents to life and introduce memoirs and stories valuable to uncovering their characters. On the other hand, his Nuclear Age/Cold War perspective became largely obsolete after 1989: the validity of his philosophical premises and conclusions are already generationally bound.

A number of minor economic studies of finance and economics during the alliance have been published, but these are basically limited to twentieth-century affairs and suggest little by the way of how the alliance itself came to be formed. The one study which does examine its origins, Conybeare's portfolio application, should keep the historian aware of a small number of potential factors that may have drawn leaders

together between 1890 and 1894, particularly industrial development, population and investment potential. Conybeare's conclusions warrant close investigation and a measure of skepticism due to the reduction of alliance formation to a mathematical formula.

By the 1990s, scholarship on the Franco-Russian Alliance had progressed from contemporary memoir and diplomacy to social, biographical and economic history -- but can nothing further be said about the public opinion of the French and its relevance to diplomatic conduct in alliance negotiations? In an older work from 1931, E. Malcolm Carroll assured his readers otherwise: in his *French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs, 1870-1914*, he contended that "there is abundant evidence that public opinion was a fairly constant factor in the conduct of foreign affairs."³³¹ This history professor acknowledged that "the history of international relations before 1914 requires a broader treatment than is possible with the traditional methods of diplomatic history," and in terms of the alliance, he seemed to acknowledge the relevance of the Adam-Cyon group as a reflection of *revanche*, the most popular pastime in nationalist French public opinion after 1871.³³² Most importantly, the French passion for revenge was encouraged, and not only by behind-the-scenes adherents. "It is not sufficient to say that [these passions] were the inevitable result of France's defeat in 1871 and of the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, for they would probably have been forgotten if specific efforts had not been made to give new life

³³¹E. Malcolm Carroll, *French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs, 1870-1914* (New York: The Century Company, 1931), 3.

³³²*Ibid.*, vii.

to them.”³³³ Such efforts included textbooks for children on French history, press campaigns, symbols (including pictures of the 1871 invaders), phrases and a profusion of “stereotypes.”

Carroll introduces his strongest evidence through the medium of French newspapers. With the founding of the *Petit Journal* (1867), *Petit Parisien* (1876), *Matin* (1883) and *Journal* (1889), even greater influence could be exerted from circles in Paris, and the public developed a “newspaper consciousness.”³³⁴ By the years just prior to the Great War, the Russians established a “press-fund,” spending money on their French editorial connections: meanwhile, the historian noted, French press leaders were promoted to diplomatic posts.³³⁵

In May of 1882, Paul Déroulède founded the Ligue des Patriotes, whose members included such notables as Sadi Carnot and Léon Gambetta. By 1886, this group began its heavy emphasis on the injustice of the status of Alsace-Lorraine, and its press organ, the *Drapeau* reached out to the nationalist chords in public feeling. Apparently, the group also wrote songs and books and held rifle practices as demonstrations in its “campaign of hatred.” In 1887, Déroulède resigned in protest against government inaction toward the

³³³Ibid., 5.

³³⁴Ibid., 8-10.

³³⁵Ibid., 11-13.

provinces, and two years later, the group was made illegal by the government.³³⁶ Beyond this more radically nationalist pro-alliance campaign, Carroll also noted the activities of Cyon, Adam and Katkov. Thwarted by Bismarck, divisions over newspaper control and political incertitude during the 1880s, he argued that this group had very little effect on the French public. Cyon, “like other professional manipulators of opinion, exaggerated the effectiveness of his work.”³³⁷

By 1890, the French had come to realize, more or less collectively, that an alliance with the Russians was necessary. “The contrast between their institutions was forgotten or explained away as of no significance.”³³⁸ After decades of international isolation, the French were eager to grab hold of their first major diplomatic opportunity. “It is no wonder,” Carroll concluded, “that Russia became immensely popular in France, in view of the prevailing ignorance of conditions in Russia and of the joy at finding a friend.”³³⁹ Interestingly, “explaining away” a deficiency implies a consciousness of its existence, while “ignorance of conditions” means the reverse.

This is just one example of Carroll’s cloak-and-dagger historical approach. His work is best in its implications that a cultural history of the alliance is possible, but

³³⁶Ibid., 110-44.

³³⁷Ibid., 138-39, 142.

³³⁸Ibid., 154.

³³⁹Ibid.

reasonable support for his assessment of the feelings of the French people for an alliance is largely missing. Statements like this one in regard to the Russian fleet visit to Toulon in 1893 -- "the popular imagination saw in the visit of the Russian naval officers to Paris a new part of solidarity between the two countries against Germany" -- offer encouragement for further study but cannot preempt it.

Works like James Billington's *The Icon and the Axe*, which demonstrates a methodology for the examination of cultural symbols, also suggest that even foreign policy has a popular, cultural counterpoint. Unfortunately, Billington never addressed the Franco-Russian Alliance from the Russian vantage. On the French side, Francine Amaury's study of *Le Petit Parisien* offers important clues about government-press collaboration toward promotion of an entente between the two nations, but even here, one finds no record of financial transactions or examples of symbolism, song and demonstration.

Collectively, these implications provide the spark for further research in a completely new historiographical genre. It should be possible to pursue a cultural study based on the sources and methods addressed in this thesis. In terms of time, while cultural elements may be traceable between the Franco-Prussian War and the fall of Bismarck, the critical moment is probably the visit of the Russian squadron at Toulon. Here, and for the first time, thousands of French people had the opportunity to see a large number of Russians who were *not* part of a Tsar's entourage or inner-political and dynastic circles. Seemingly, less socially elevated French men and women could have

had some class-based camaraderie with Russian naval crews and officers. While this group is truly a small category within the Russian population, it is infinitely greater than the minute case of a visiting dignitary or diplomat, personages to which the “average” Frenchman would have had little or no personal access. Among the Russians in France during the 1880s and 1890s, who among the French encountered them, what did they think and to whom did they express their thoughts?

To further uncover the nature of the Franco-Russian Alliance, one must follow up on all the suggestions harbored in its variegated histories. Chief among them would be a close examination of the French press, especially during the alliance negotiations between 1890 and 1894. *Le Petit Parisien* suggests itself as an invaluable primary source, if one can be persuaded by the record of Amaury. Among the other French daily and weekly papers, which found their way to Toulon, and what were their messages to the French in that province? Moreover, how many and what kinds of people attended the ceremony who lived in Paris?

Once these newspapers are found, what might be the content of their articles? These poems and pictures, prose and calls to action, what did they say precisely and with what linguistic tools did they say it? On the level of the less-than-noble citizen, how was this alliance propagandized, sold, delivered to the French people? If these newspapers were “motivated” by the French and Russian governments, what were their prices and what evidence can be found of their negotiations?

Among all nations, France is particularly well known for its nineteenth-century codification of education, from the early reform efforts of Napoleon to the state-based propaganda of Jules Ferry. How did textbooks change in their views of the Germans and the Russians between 1871 and 1894? Did their authors leave any record of their reasoning and intent? If such books did inculcate French children of the generation of 1894 in a pro-Russian orientation, what would be the lasting effects on their outlook by the time they came of age, sometime before 1914-1918?

In more elite circles, one must weigh the existing memoirs of French alliance leaders during the early-1890s for further hints as to their connections and intent, ones perhaps glossed over or discarded by previous historians. Another work which may be useful is Philip Deschamps' *Le Livre d'Or de l'Alliance Franco-Russe*, which is a record of all the toasts during the celebrations at Cronstadt and Toulon.³⁴⁰ Primary records of statesmen, generals and press leaders can illustrate the reciprocal cause-and-effect relationship between public opinion and public policy.

The limitations of the historiography of the Franco-Russian Alliance demonstrate not so much that its historians have conducted poor research with purposeful bias and misleading intent; on the contrary, some of the alliance histories are of the highest caliber. But if history is to truly make known the "magical moments" suggested by Daudet, its professionals must be conscious of new methodologies because nothing else and nothing

³⁴⁰Philip Deschamps, *Le Livre d'Or de l'Alliance Franco-Russe* (Paris, 1898).

less will suffice. One will never find such moments in the *Documents Diplomatiques*, in the endless barrage of correspondences between diplomats or through mathematical formulas. Rather, one must find the symbols and weigh them, criticize the poetry to discover its cultural anatomy, pore through the school texts for the elements of a specific category of nationalism and assess the newspapers. None of this exists in the portrayals by previous historians on the subject. To uncover them, one must travel beyond those pages which mirror the generational orientation on their creators, onward to the newspaper archives and text collections in Paris, the municipal records and even the docks at Toulon. Cultural history has left this generation with a legacy that demands magic from its historians, a call to action with swords of new metal, an odyssey of unparalleled discovery and enchantment on the road to ever-elusive Truth.

APPENDIX A:

DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENT 444 (French)

M. de Montebello, Ambassadeur de France à Saint-Petersbourg,
à M. Ribot, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères.

10 août 1892

Le général de Boisdeffre a vu aujourd'hui le général Obroutcheff, délégué par l'Empereur pour discuter le projet de convention.

Après une longue discussion, le texte suivant a été proposé:

"La France et la Russie étant animées d'un égal désir de conserver la paix et n'ayant d'autre but que de parer aux nécessités d'une guerre défensive provoquée par une attaque des forces de la Triple Alliance contre l'une ou l'autre d'entre elles, sont convenues des dispositions suivantes:

1. Si la France est attaquée par l'Allemagne ou par l'Italie soutenue par l'Allemagne, la Russie emploiera toutes ses forces disponibles pour attaquer l'Allemagne. Si la Russie est attaquée par l'Allemagne ou par l'Autriche soutenue par l'Allemagne, la France emploiera toutes ses forces disponibles pour combattre l'Allemagne;

2. Dans le cas où les forces de la Triple Alliance ou d'une des Puissances qui en font partie viendraient à se mobiliser, la France et la Russie, à la première annonce de l'événement et sans qu'il soit besoin d'un concert préalable, mobiliseront immédiatement et simultanément la totalité de leurs forces et les porteront le plus près possible de leurs frontières;

3. Les forces disponibles qui doivent être employées contre l'Allemagne seront, du côté de la France, de 1.300.000 hommes, du côté de la Russie, de 7 à 800.000 hommes.

Ces forces s'engageront à fond et en toute diligence, de manière que l'Allemagne ait à lutter à la fois à l'Est et à l'Ouest;

4. Les États-majors des armées des deux pays se concerteront en tout temps pour préparer et faciliter l'exécution des mesures prévues ci-dessus.

Ils se communiqueront, des le temps de paix, tous les renseignements relatifs aux armements de la Triple Alliance qui sont ou parviendraient à leur connaissance.

Les voies et moyens de correspondre en temps de guerre seront étudiés et prévus d'avance.

5. La France et la Russie ne concluront pas la paix séparément avec la Triple Alliance.
6. La présente convention aura la même durée que la Triple Alliance.
7. Toutes les clauses énumérées ci-dessus seront tenues rigoureusement secrètes."

Source: France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. Commission de Publication des Documents Relatifs aux Origines de la Guerre de 1914. *Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1871-1914* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale), 1re série., tome 9, 643-44.

DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENT 444 (English)

Mr. de Montebello, Ambassador of France at St. Petersburg
to Mr. Ribot, Minister of Foreign Affairs

10 August 1892

Today, General Boisdeffre saw General Obruchev, the delegate of the Emperor, to discuss the project of the convention.

After an extensive discussion, the following text had been proposed:

"France and Russia, being friends with an equal desire to preserve the peace and not having another purpose than to guard against the necessities of a defensive war provoked by an attack by the forces of the Triple Alliance or against one or the other between them, are agreed on the following dispositions:

1. If France is attacked by Germany, or by Italy supported by Germany, Russia will employ all of its available forces to fight Germany.

If Russia is attacked by Germany, or by Austria supported by Germany, France will employ all of its available forces to fight Germany.

2. In the case where the forces of the Triple Alliance or one of the Powers which belongs to it would mobilize, France and Russia, at the first announcement of the event and without the need of a preliminary meeting, will mobilize immediately and simultaneously the totality of their forces and will bring them as close as possible to their borders.

3. The available forces which must be used against Germany will be, for France, 1,300,000 men, and for Russia, between 700,000 and 800,00 men.

These forces will engage with all their might and speed so that Germany will have to fight in the East and West at the same time.

4. The headquarters of the armies of the two countries will communicate at all times to prepare and facilitate the execution of the measures stated above.

They will disclose, in time of peace, all the information relative to the armaments of the Triple Alliance which are, or would come to, their knowledge.

The channels and means to correspond in times of war will be studied and foreseen in advance.

5. France and Russia will not conclude a separate peace with the Triple Alliance.
6. The present convention has the same duration as the Triple Alliance.
7. All the clauses enumerated above will be kept rigorously secret."*

* The translation is by this author, with the liberal assistance of Dr. Dominique van Hooff, an expert on nineteenth-century French language and literature.

APPENDIX B:

RAILROAD PRODUCTION IN RUSSIA. 1886-1900

Table 1

Increment in Railroad Mileage

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Period	Mileage
1886-1890	1,898
1891-1895	4,403
1896-1900	10,035

Source: Alexander Gerschenkron, "The Rate of Industrial Growth in Russia Since 1885." *Journal of Economic History* 7 (June 1947): 148.

Table 2

Length of Railroad Line Completed in Russia, 1886-1900

Year	Kilometers	Miles
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1886	1,320	820.21
1887	.901	559.85
1888	1,184	735.70
1889	.498	309.44
1890	.663	411.97
1891	.126	78.29
1892	.475	295.15
1893	1,680	1,043.90
1894	2,126	1,321.03
1895	1,906	1,184.33
1896	2,488	1,545.97
1897	2,011	1,249.58
1898	3,002	1,865.35
1899	5,257	3,266.54
1900	3,379	2,099.61

This is a partial and modified reproduction of the "LENGTH OF RAILROAD LINE COMPLETED IN RUSSIA: 1838-1937." Edward Ames, "A Century of Railroad Production: 1837-1936," *American Slavic and East European Review* 6 (December 1947): 58. Mileage equivalents have been added, (1 km = .62137 mi), for purposes of comparison.

Table 3

Railroad Progress Table

Year	Total Miles
1891	18,114
1892	18,390
1893	19,432
1894	20,661
1895	21,830
1896	23,238
1897	24,155
1898	24,615
1899	26,680
1900	27,845

This is a partial representation of an untitled table. J. Scott Keltie, ed., *Statesman's Yearbook* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1902), 1023. Mileage does not include railways in Russian-controlled Finland or those east of Moscow.

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