

*reviews*

Lukáš Novotný, Roman Kodet: *Velká Británie a konference v Locarnu. Příspěvek ke studiu kolektivní bezpečnosti ve 20. letech 20. století*, Plzeň: Západočeská univerzita v Plzni 2013, 248 pages.

It is a question, to what extent some of the politicians during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 realized that the treaties with the defeated states would not guarantee the long-term stability. And also the development of the League of Nations did not help to tighten international security, because one of its weakness was the fact that Soviet Russia, the United States of America and Germany were not the members of this organization. One of the most important problems of the League of Nations was that it did not have the sufficient forceful means to prevent armed conflicts, which should have appeared in the near future. These facts as well as the dramatic events in many European countries caused many tensions in the international relations and the atmosphere of instability in the post-war period. It was the logical thing that the means and alternatives to reduce these problems were searched by the architects of the Versailles system. This was undoubtedly the beginning of the idea of collective security. The signature of the 'Rhineland Pact' in 1925 is interpreted as the important turning point in the attempts to provide collective security in Europe.

The key factor that influenced considerably the situation after the World War I was the foreign policy of Great Britain, on which the authors focused their attention. The structure of the book is well balanced, the text itself is divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter, the authors evaluate the reaction of the British policy and the British public opinion as well to the post-war situation, the origins of the League of Nations and the questions of the collective security. The second chapter is focused on the collective security in general and on the question of this problem in the first half of 1920s. In my point of view, the most important part of the book are the chapters 3–5, where the authors present and assess the main results of their research and they also present a lot of new, remarkable conclusions, for instance that the

'Rhineland Pact' was "*a key turn in the British policy*". The authors also claim that the pact only guaranteed the status quo of the Western borders of Germany, because "*the fate of the Central and Eastern European states did not play an important role in the London's policy and its engagement east of the Rhine was out of the question from the immediate beginning*". The following chapter 6 deals with the stance of the British Dominions towards the Locarno treaties. This question brings whole new perspectives on this to this day almost unresearched question. The last chapter focuses on the reaction of the Czechoslovak press to the preparation and course of the conference of Locarno.

The work is undoubtedly of a high quality and also the stylistics is on the great level. One of the most remarkable contributions is the application of the wide range of archival sources. It must be appreciated that the work is based on the archival research including not only the diaries, letters and contemporary works, but also the unpublished sources, which were researched mainly in the National Archives in London. With regard to the literature, the authors did not omit any of the considerable works, which had researched the Conference in Locarno and its consequences. The reviewed book is a considerable contribution to the exploration of the international relations in the inter-war era. The Novotný and Kodet's book will undoubtedly catch the attention not only of the historical scientists, but also the wider public interested in history.

Aleš Skřivan, Sr.

