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THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

OF THE FRENCH DIPLOMATIC ARCHIVES

This description of the organization and administration of the French Diplomatic Archives is based upon information supplied by the Director, M. Jean Laloy, and his staff of the Archives Diplomatiques at the request of the writer on behalf of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

Organization of Files (Fonds)¹

The French Diplomatic Archives were organized during the 17th Century, particularly during the reign of Louis XIV, when the direction of French diplomacy was gradually being centralized under a single Secretariat of State for Foreign Affairs. Documents dating from the period before the 17th Century in the Archives are extremely rare. The historian will have to search for such material either in the National Archives or in the Department of Manuscripts of the National Library both of which contain an important number of collections of very ancient documents.

Upon the establishment of the National Archives during the French Revolution the records of most French government agencies were deposited there. The Archives Diplomatiques, however, like those of the Ministries of War and Navy, retained its administrative autonomy. Its records have been preserved at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the care of the Archives Service, which is responsible not only for records of the Foreign Office (Central Administration) but also those of embassies and consultates overseas.

The Foreign Office (Central Administration) archives are divided among the following principal files (fonds):

(1) The "Political Correspondence" files (after 1901 designated as "Political and Commercial Correspondence" files) consist primarily of telegrams and despatches to and from the Ministry and overseas posts. They also contain reports and notes drafted in the departments (services), some at the request of the Minister himself. This is the file series essential for understanding French foreign policy.

¹The basic unit of the French and other European archives corresponding to the generic English term "Files" is "le fonds" (masculine, singular). Literally translated it means "fund". Major divisions and subdivisions in the French Diplomatic Archives are also designated as "fonds", i.e. "le Fonds Autriche" or "le fonds Belgique" under the general "fonds" entitled "Correspondence Politique et Commerciale".

Until 1897 these files were classified by country and chronologically, and a particular document might refer to several subjects. Beginning in 1897 classification by country continued, but classification by subject matter was substituted for the chronological file to assist searchers in locating documents more efficiently.

(2) The "Memoranda and Documents" files supplement the preceding series and include documents, such as reports, memoranda, and occasionally letters, not filed under "Political Correspondence." These files stop in 1897 and afterwards were filed under "Political Correspondence."

(3) The "Consular and Commercial Correspondence" files begin in 1793. Files for the period before then, when consulates reported to the Minister of the Navy, were deposited in the National Archives where they can be consulted with the permission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The series from 1793 on stops again in 1901, after which such correspondence was filed under "Political and Commercial Correspondence."

Certain consulates, it should be noted, came to deal with strictly political questions. Documents after 1901 in such cases will be found at the end of the country files, after the regular "Political and Commercial Correspondence" under the title "Political Correspondence with Consuls".

(4) The "Commercial Negotiations" files, which also stop in 1901, contain documents relating to important commercial negotiations which go beyond the body of regular correspondence with overseas posts.

(5) "Miscellaneous Matters" existed as a separate file series only during the 19th century and complemented the "Memoranda and Documents" files referred to above.

(6) "Private Papers". These documents were not originally part of the Ministry's diplomatic files. They were deposited in the Archives as the result of gifts or recovered after death and in most instances have come from former diplomats and statesmen. Essentially they are organized as private correspondence. Their value, of course, is uneven, but they provide an important source for historians of international relations by throwing additional light on questions dealt with in official correspondence. Many of them are written in a freer style than the latter permits.

Private papers, designated by name, are opened for research gradually as their security classification permits. Announcement of those whose papers may be consulted is made from time to time in special orders by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

(7) "Personnel" files. This series, not to be confused with the preceding, consists solely of personnel files from the Personnel Directorate of the Ministry. They are naturally of less interest to historians than private papers. Some provide information which should not be neglected on the personality of diplomats, and they permit precise documentation of the careers of diplomatic personnel.

While these files are open for consultation prior to 1870, files since then are not in principle open to the public. The Ministry reserves the right on special occasions to permit communication of summary information on the careers of diplomatic personnel.

(8) "Comptroller" files. These files make it possible to follow the trend of those diplomatic events bearing on the Ministry's budget and financial planning.

Administrative Regulations Governing Research

The Archives prior to May 31, 1918 are actually open to the public (with the exception of Private Papers and Personnel Files subject to special regulations described above). The so-called rule of 30 years could not be applied until now because of the destruction of Foreign Office (Central Administration) archives which occurred during the last war. Reconstitution and reconstruction of the archives has progressed gradually so that files for the period from June 1918 through 1929 will be opened early in 1973.

The necessary reorganization of the files for the period from 1929-1945, before they can be opened for research, has now begun. By 1976 it may be possible to apply normally the so-called rule of 30 years.²

Permission for research should be requested in advance and addressed to M. Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres, (marked for the attention of the Archives Service) 37, Quai d'Orsay, Paris VIIeme. Tel. 734.41-70. All foreign

²Dr. William Franklin, Chief of the Historical Division of the Department of State, advises that those interested in French diplomacy before World War II should consult the "Introduction Generale" to the first volume published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the new Documents Diplomatiques Francais: Second Series (1936-1939), Volume I (January 1-March 31, 1936), Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963, pp. vii-xiv. This section discusses the several occasions when portions of the archives, particularly those relating to the origins of World War II, were destroyed by fire or simply removed. It also describes the monumental task undertaken to reconstitute the missing or destroyed files from embassy files, those of other agencies, and from private papers. It is possible to open the files for the period from 1918-1929 first because they have survived relatively intact.

researchers, students or otherwise, must present letters of recommendation supporting their requests for research.

The Archives are open every day, except Saturday, from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. On Saturdays they are open from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Beginning this year the Archives will be open even during the month of August. Closing for fifteen days solely for administrative purposes is foreseen beginning in 1973 and will probably occur in the second half of May or early June.

Finding aids, such as numerical inventories, summary inventories and the like, either typewritten or printed, are available for consultation by researchers.

The International Society of Microfilms (La Societe Internationale du Microfilm), 9, Rue du Commandant Riviere, Paris, VIIIeme; tel. 359.16-31, guarantees microfilm reproduction with enlargement on paper. Cost: negative microfilm - 63 centimes per frame + 2 francs 50 centimes for adjusting each volume; negative microfilm + positive - 63 centimes + 13 centimes per frame + 2 francs 50 centimes for adjusting each volume. Requests for microfilm reproduction addressed to the Archives Service are forwarded, after approval, to the Microfilm Society. Photo-copies of continuous series are in principle forbidden.

Researchers may not use typewriters.

The Archives and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are easily located - opposite the Gare des Invalides where busses for Orly airfield arrive and depart. Nearby subway stations are Invalides, served by the "Balard-Charenton" and "Porte de Vanves-Invalides" lines. This station is immediately beside the Ministry. Five minutes from the ministry is another station, the Chambre des Deputes, served by the "Porte de la Chapelle-Mairie d'Issy" line.

The Gare des Invalides includes a bus station, "Gare des Invalides," lines 63 and 83, as well as a railroad station serving the line from Versailles.

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AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC HISTORY SESSIONS

AT LOS ANGELES (AUGUST 26 - 28, 1971)

AND HOUSTON (NOVEMBER 17 - 20, 1971)

The Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association held its annual meeting on the campus of the University of Southern California, August 26 - 28, 1971. On Saturday morning, August 28, a joint session, attended by approximately 40 persons, was held with the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. The program was:

RELIGION, LABOR, AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT

Chairman: Roger Bjerk, Fresno State College

"The Social Gospel and the Peace Movement, 1900 - 1918"

C. Roland Marchand, University of California, Davis

"Samuel Gompers, Peace and Pan-Americanism"

William George Whittaker, Gonzaga University

Commentators: Mark T. Gilderhus, Colorado State University
Lloyd E. Ambrosius, University of Nebraska

Professor Roland Marchand opened the session with his paper describing and analyzing the role of the "Social Gospel" in the peace movement between 1900 and 1918. He noted that the peace movement of these years had many components and the Social Gospel advocates were just one group among many. They reached their apogee of influence by 1912 and were fading as a recognizable group by the time America entered the World War in 1917.

Between 1911 and 1915, as world tensions rose and then the Great War commenced in Europe, the Social Gospel writers continued to devote their literature and interest to domestic problems. Leaders like Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch, and Francis Peabody were slow to tie America's problems to those of Europe. Despite the new interest by Elihu Root, Andrew Carnegie and Nicholas Murray Butler in the causes of war, the earlier Social Gospelers maintained a rigid focus on the problems of labor, slums, and exploitation of women and children. Briefly, in 1911 and 1914, a Commission on Peace and Arbitration was established within the Federal

Council of Churches that attracted followers of Rauschenbusch as well as Root; but as President Wilson began to move into the "Readiness Campaign," the Social Gospellers left the leadership of the Federal Council of Churches.

These militant anti-war and anti-preparedness types grouped themselves beneath the umbrella of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Here there was room for pacifists and conscientious objectors. These Social Gospellers now saw the need for a total reconstruction of society that would end national tensions derived from poverty and international tensions traceable to nationalistic greed. During the war the Fellowship of Reconciliation stood in strong contrast to the Federal Council of Churches on the subject of supporting the war effort.

Professor Lloyd Ambrosius' criticism was brief and gentle. He praised the work done by Marchand in bringing social history and diplomatic history together. He did believe that a slightly warped view might have resulted by identifying the Social Gospellers too closely with the radical pacifist wing of the peace movement, thus making the dichotomy too distinct between them and Taft-Root League to Enforce Peace followers. Each group shared many values such as a belief in progress, the idea that the kingdom of Heaven could be achieved on earth, the rule of law, and the acceptance of the premise that the United States stood for moral programs. Professor Marchand did make a final clarifying statement. In contrast with other peace movement groups, the Social Gospellers took the radical position that peace should come immediately and not through the agency of some future League to Enforce Peace.

Professor William George Whittaker of Gonzaga University presented the second paper, "Samuel Gompers, Peace, and Pan-Americanism." Based on the Gompers Collection of manuscripts, the paper focussed on the years 1898 till Gompers' death in 1924. Whittaker traced out the strong parallel between Gompers' interest in hemispheric peace as a means of promoting trade unionism in North and South America. Though disliking war, he supported the Spanish-American War as a means of freeing the Cubans. When imperial gains accrued to America, he then became an ardent anti-imperialist. In public speeches and publications, between 1899 and 1914, Gompers pressed his so-called "Tremont Doctrine" -- laborers of all countries should refuse to fight one another because improvement lay only through peace.

Despite international labor resolutions supporting his "Tremont Doctrine," Gompers found the spirit of nationalism too strong once World War I began in 1914. He quickly recognized that he was too far ahead of his times. As in 1898, once America entered the war, Gompers and the AF of L pledged their loyalty to the cause. In 1916 he did foreshadow future plans by urging Mexican and American laborers

to refuse to follow their leaders into a senseless Mexican-American conflict. Between 1919 and 1924 he worked closely with American and Mexican labor leaders to convince their governments that peace was the natural order of affairs between their governments. In November 1924 he moved the AF of L national convention to Mexico City to demonstrate the solidarity of interests, particularly in the area of peace, between Mexican and American laborers.

Professor Mark Gilderhus was forthright but restrained in his criticism. He believed Whittaker's focus was a bit narrow and perhaps ignored the Gompers' contribution to the development of "informal empire." Bringing Latin American workers into the same mold as the AF of L was not the best way of promoting Latin American independence and did help reduce competition with American labor. Gilderhus wondered why Gompers had not promoted the development of a strong cigar makers union in Cuba. Whittaker noted that not only was Gompers a very complicated person, difficult to reduce to a 20 minute paper, he was also no ideologue. His anti-imperialism was more pragmatic than socialist in content.

Gerald E. Wheeler
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During November 17 - 20, 1971, the Southern Historical Association met in the Rice Hotel of Houston, Texas for its annual convention. On Friday, November 19, a joint session was held with the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations and the following program was presented:

THE ARMED FORCES AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY
SINCE 1898

Chairman: Frank E. Vandiver, Rice University

"The Navy"

Harold D. Langley, The Smithsonian Institution

"The Army"

Russell F. Weigley, Temple University

Commentator: Richard D. Challener, Princeton University

Professor Harold Langley's central thesis was that naval officers should not be regarded as the prophets and beneficiaries of American imperialism but rather as "reluctant imperialists." Soon after 1898 they realized that Congress

and the public would never give them sufficient naval strength to protect the new commitments that the United States had assumed. Hence they interpreted American foreign policy in terms of an ever growing discrepancy between national commitments and available naval power. Naval officers began to re-assess those commitments, often suggested that they should be reduced, and began a search to discover methods whereby the paltry naval strength provided by Congress could best be employed. The greater portion of Langley's paper, which was based upon a detailed examination of articles in the navy's professional journal, the Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute, chronicled that search. Langley found a consistent theme: the attempt by naval officers to grapple with the unresolved problem of the gap between American overseas commitments and existing naval strength. Thus some officers suggested that the Monroe Doctrine should be limited because America did not have the tools to enforce it, other suggested that the fleet be moved to the Pacific since a two-ocean navy was an impossibility, and, after the Washington Conference of 1921-22, many promoted island-hopping techniques to compensate for arms limitations.

Langley also suggested that naval officers worried about the navy's role in national policy, were disturbed by the lack of a clear mission and purpose, and regretted the absence of a clear conception of war and any pattern of cohesive strategic thought.

Professor Weigley argued that the army had almost no role in American foreign policy in the twentieth century and was, in fact, "the stepchild of national policy." Army officers, he noted, envied the navy for having a clear mission in foreign policy as the chosen defender of the new empire. The army, therefore, suffered from a great malaise. Its leaders, who longed for the achievement of Emory Upton's grandiose dream of a national military policy, were disillusioned by the realization that it was not to be fulfilled. But the deeper cause of their malaise was their feeling that the army had become irrelevant to the national purpose once the Indian wars had drawn to a close. After 1898 neither colonial duty nor the Philippine mission provided any solution, for the army realized that the Philippines were indefensible. In the 1920s and 30s mobilization planning provided no sense of purpose, for it took place in a vacuum and at a time when the nation was thoroughly committed to keeping out of the kind of war that army planners envisioned. Military writers constantly bewailed the absence of a national doctrine of war and a coherent national security policy. Yet the army's strategic planning could never get down to specifics and, until World War II, consisted merely of piling abstraction upon abstraction. Weigley argued that nothing could have changed this unfortunate situation since national policy in general and foreign policy in particular provided no strategic role for the ground forces. But the inevitable consequence for the army was decade after decade of malaise. The army,

to be sure, did have a brief moment at center stage during World War II and, even more briefly, after Korea when the doctrine of limited war provided a coherent mission. But as limited war led to the tragedy of Vietnam, the army once more has fallen back into its customary position as the "stepchild of national policy."

In his critique, Professor Richard Challener noted the ironic contrast between Weigley's view of an army that envied the navy and Langley's arguments about the doubts, hesitations and "reluctance" of naval officers. But certainly in the first two decades of this century the navy was by no means reluctant to assume the role of policeman in Asia and, especially, in Latin America. Moreover, certain aspects of the navy's plans for war with Japan suggest that naval officers were not always pessimistic but even wildly optimistic about the prospect of crushing the Japanese fleet in its home waters.

Both papers emphasized what military officers thought about their role in American life--that is, they dealt with the image that the services had of their plight. But how close was image to reality? Both papers overlook the arguments developed in such studies as Samuel Huntington's, The Soldier and the State---the argument that military men are usually afflicted with a deep sense of pessimism, which often makes them feel unappreciated and tempts them to think in terms of an enemy's capacities rather than his actual intentions, to emphasize the worst possible contingency that can arise, and to fix upon the gap, real or presumed, between resources and commitments. The malaise of the American army was by no means a uniquely American phenomenon; it had its parallel in the experiences of European armies, and was perhaps endemic in all peacetime armies.

Both Weigley and Langley commented at length about the inability of the military services to come to grips with issues of foreign and national policy. But the discussion has to be placed in a considerably broader frame of reference. They might well have devoted attention to the deficiencies in military education, to the American tradition of the separation of the civil and the military, and to various self-imposed limits that kept army and navy officers from seeking a foreign policy role before the second world war.

Challener believed there are dangers in basing too many generalizations about the navy's attitude on articles in the Naval Institute Proceedings. It is a semi-official, professional journal, and contributors frequently write with their own future careers in mind. Nor does it provide a complete picture of the navy's thinking; for example, Langley's assertion that naval officers failed to develop any strategic theories based on an assessment of American foreign policy is contradicted by a number of General Board papers written before 1914.

At the conclusion of his paper, Professor Weigley suggested that a consequence of the army's isolation from foreign policy and its devotion to abstract strategic thought was its concentration in World War II on the defeat of the enemy on the battlefield and its commitment to victory at the earliest possible date. But, to the extent that this is true, weren't other factors--such as professionalism--equally responsible? And isn't the interpretation of the army as wedded to military goals somewhat exaggerated? The American army was thoroughly tuned to Franklin Roosevelt's political objectives and by no means committed solely to non-political outlooks. Indeed, the debate over wartime strategy should not be phrased so much in terms of military versus political objectives but rather in terms of competing military strategies for similar political goals.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S BASKET:

1. From Professor Paul Holbo:

A copy of Paul Holbo's paper, "A View of The New Empire," which was read at the New Orleans meeting of the OAH, may be obtained by writing to:

Professor Paul S. Holbo
College of Liberal Arts
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403

2. From the Director of Naval History:

Vice Admiral Edwin B. Hooper, USN (Ret.), Director of Naval History, passes along these two announcements:

a) The Naval History Division recently prepared an annotated checklist of unpublished Naval Histories located in one segment of the Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library (Record Group 45, U.S. National Archives). Most of the histories described in this 21-page checklist relate to the activities of U.S. Naval Commands during the World War I period, but some additional topics during the 1911-1927 period also are covered.

Interested scholars may obtain copies of the checklist by writing the Director of Naval History, Building 220, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D. C. 20390.

b) The Operational Archives of the Naval History Division recently prepared a microfilm publication containing English translations of 40 monthly volumes of the war diary of the Operations Division, German Naval Staff (Seekriegsleitung), 1939-1945. Although these translations cover only certain periods of the war years and were originally for internal naval use, they have been of value to a number of students of World War II history. The publication consists of 16 35-millimeter reels which are available on inter-library loan or which may be purchased for a fee of \$8.00 per reel. Interested scholars and institutions can obtain a brief description of the translations, details on the exact months contained on each reel, and information on ordering procedures by writing to the Operational Archives, Building 210, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D. C. 20390.

In a related development, Vice Admiral Edwin B. Hooper, USN (Ret.), the Director of Naval History, has announced

the recent transfer from the Operational Archives to the U.S. National Archives of 2,275 reels of 35-millimeter microfilm reproducing original records of the German Navy for the 1922-1945 period. Included with this collection are the films of the original war diary of the Operations Division, German Naval Staff. The total group of microfilms was prepared by the U.S. Navy, in the immediate post-war period, from the captured German Naval archives that then were held in England.

3. From the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections:

An additional 2,092 collections of manuscript sources located in American repositories are reported to scholars in the just published eighth issue of the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, bringing to 25,145 the total collections described to date. Of the 758 repositories throughout the country who report their holdings in this serial publication, 35 make their first contributions in this year's (1969) volume.

The continuing series is designed to bring under bibliographic control manuscript collections on a wide variety of topics housed permanently in American repositories that are regularly open to scholars. Begun by the Library of Congress in 1959 with grants from the Council on Library Resources, Inc., and continued with funds appropriated by the U.S. Congress, the series has been found to be an invaluable aid by researchers seeking to locate manuscripts pertaining to their subject fields, as well as for librarians and archivists.

This year's volume contains a cumulative general index of about 107,500 citations for the collections described in the present and two preceding volumes. In addition to the mass of information on family history, business history, political and social history, etc., entries can be found under such diverse subjects as Silicon and Spectrohelioscopes, Conjuring and Computers. There are no limitations on the time, place of origin, or subject material in the collections reported. A repository index and an index of holders of reproductions whose originals have been reported elsewhere enable the researcher to organize his time and travel to best advantage.

The first volume of the series, covering entries prepared in 1959-61, appeared in 1962 from the press of J. W. Edwards, Inc., Ann Arbor, Mich., where it may be purchased for \$9.75. A second volume, 1962, accompanied by an index volume for the entries in the first two volumes, appeared in 1964 from the Shoe String Press, Hamden, Conn., which sells the second volume and the index at \$13.50 for both. The last five volumes, produced by

the Government Printing Office, are sold by the Library of Congress Card Division, Building No. 159, Navy Yard Annex, Washington, D.C. 20541. The third volume, 1963-64, is priced at \$10 a copy, the fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes are \$15, the seventh \$25, and the present volume \$50. The increased prices of the last two issues represent not only mounting manufacturing costs but the Library's effort to recover a larger part of the editorial costs.

Suggestions regarding the compilation of the catalog and inquiries about taking part in the program should be addressed to Mrs. Arline Custer, Editor of the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections in the Library's Descriptive Cataloging Division. Queries about the manuscript collections described in the catalog should be sent to the repositories holding the materials.

4. The Plight of "Foreign Relations"

All members are encouraged to read Professor William F. Sheppard's brief article, "The Plight of 'Foreign Relations': A Plea for Action," printed in the November 1971 issue of the AHA Newsletter (Vol. IX:5), pp. 22-27.

5. "Current Foreign Policy"

If you are not a subscriber, and wish to keep up with the State Department's current "policy line," the Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of Media Services, is willing to provide faculty with its monthly pamphlet Current Foreign Policy.

6. Federal Records Centers' Microfilm Holdings

SHAFR members should be aware that regional Federal Records Centers, such as those in Seattle, San Francisco, St. Louis, etc., carry many of the reels of microfilm listed in the 1968 List of National Archives Microfilm Publications. These reels may be consulted at the centers or borrowed on inter-library loan. Most of the Centers will be happy to supply researchers with a list of their microfilm holdings.

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