

ON MARSHAL FOCH'S TRIP TO WARSAW AND PRAGUE IN THE SPRING OF 1923

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In the spring of 1923 the occupation of the Ruhr by France and Belgium seemed to offer the first occasion where the formal Franco-Polish and informal Franco-Czechoslovak alliance against Germany could have been applied. In these months of growing tension in the Ruhr, a high French military official paid visits to the capitals of the allies, Warsaw and Prague, which necessarily aroused the suspicion that weightier plans were being pursued than indicated by the official declarations. And indeed, Marshal Foch, a known advocate of French annexation of the Rhineland, discussed in Poland questions of a Polish-French military undertaking against Berlin, for which idea, however, he gained no support from Pilsudski. The triumphal facade of Foch's journey through Poland only concealed concrete conflicts and opposing interests that were more decisive for Polish-French relations of those years than any emotional affirmations of spiritual links. The atmosphere during Foch's visit to Prague was markedly cooler, but viewed in the longer term, he achieved a greater success there than in Warsaw, for the direct antecedents of the Franco-Czechoslovak friendship treaty of 1924 date from this visit.

Examination of the course and effects of Foch's journey throws into relief the problems of French security policy in East-Central Europe, stemming from a multiplicity of conflicts between France's allies and their respective neighbours and between each other.