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The Saber-Rattler's Four-Power Peace Pact



"No Imbecile Optimism"

But the four-Power pact can bring peace to Europe,
declares Premier Mussolini.

ONCE FEARED AS A FIREBRAND who might set all Europe aflame, Premier Mussolini now soothes the world with an olive branch—the four-Power pact.

The saber that he used to rattle while the Continent nervously pondered just what he was going to do is laid away as the "iron man" of Rome proudly thumbs the document he persuaded three other great Powers to indorse.

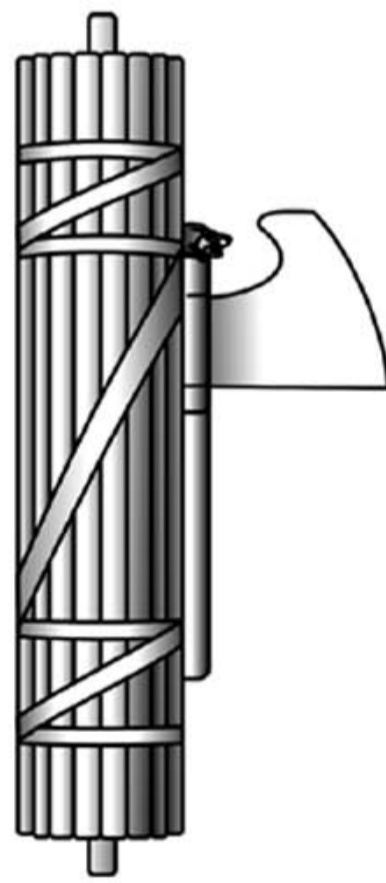
With ten years of rigid dictatorship behind him, this powerfully-built, massive-jawed man, with the great velvety dark eyes, now looks ahead to ten years of European peace. He fought for it, and it is promised him by the initialing of the new treaty.

"The war chapter is closed," said Il Duce, addressing an enthusiastic session of the Italian Senate soon after the ambassadors of Great Britain, France, and Germany had initialed the pact. "It is not a united front against any one," he added, and then:

"It needs collaboration, especially from the United States, without whose cooperation recovery and peace are impossible."

ALTHO warning against "imbecile optimism," he declared that the pact, if ratified, would be a firm basis for the settlement of questions between Italy and France.

Committing the four great Powers of Western Europe to ten years of cooperation in the interests of peace, the treaty was framed after two months of diplomatic jockeying in which the draft was rewritten time and again. "Strictly speaking," says the Rome correspondent of the Associated Press, "it presents little that is new." He gives us this analysis:



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"The principal point is the collaboration of the four Powers concerned in it. This already was provided in the 1925 Locarno pact. The present pact, however, extends the collaboration provided for at Locarno and embraces economic collaboration.

"The new treaty restates and embodies, and thus reinvigorates, the Kellogg Pact, the League of Nations Covenant, the Locarno Pact, and last December's agreement pledging to Germany arms equality.

"The question of revision of treaties is approached carefully, but the provisions made are almost nullified by reference in the same breath to Articles 10 and 16 of the League Covenant safeguarding present frontiers and providing action against aggressors.

"The chief value of the Mussolini pact is (1) it induces collaboration in Europe and (2) it pledges disarmament regardless of what the world disarmament conference does."

While the treaty still had to be ratified by the various parliaments involved, the first reaction to the ceremony at Rome appeared favorable. But here and there a sore spot is found.

Poland, for instance, might resign from the League of Nations, we read. It "rejects the pact just as it did two months ago when the first parleys began at Rome," says the Warsaw correspondent of the *New York Times*. As he explains:

"The directorate of four Powers would certainly try to become a super-League of Nations and would cause trouble in Europe, it is felt. The four Powers concerned are warned here not to interfere with Polish-German relations, as Poland will not approve any decision taken without her and against her."

In London, *The Daily Herald* strikes the pessimistic note that the pact is evidence that "the Powers are already assuming that the Disarmament Conference [at Geneva] will fail."

The important thing about the agreement to the *London Daily Telegraph* is that it "looks toward the appeasement of Franco-Italian rivalries."

Paris press opinion is divided, altho the French Government was deeply gratified by the action at Rome. Editorial comment cabled to *THE LITERARY DIGEST* shows the *Soir* calling the pact "a double-edged knife in so far that it can be used by England and Italy to the prejudice of France," while the *Journal des Débats* considers it "a dangerous example of French goodwill to the point of weakness and blindness."

"It weakens the League, nurtures imperialistic perils," according to the *Quotidien*, and the *Ordre* finds France, by the terms of the treaty, "joining a Euro-federation whose capital is Berlin."

But other Paris papers disagree with these views. "The pact augurs the end of the Franco-Italian rift," asserts the *Journal*, and the *Republique* calls it "a triumph for Daladier, Paul-Boncour, Herriot, and world peace." The *Petit Journal* is impressed by the fact that "Mussolini caused the name of France to be thrice cheered in the Roman Senate."

Berlin shows a generally favorable reaction. While the *Vossische Zeitung* warns that "we must wait and see whether the conclusion of the pact will result in a lessening in the tension of the political atmosphere," the *Voelkischer-Beobachter* says wholeheartedly that "the four-Power pact is probably the most important treaty of the last fourteen years." As it appears to the *Tageblatt*:

"The pact does not fulfil all of Germany's original hopes but it is noteworthy that for the first time an international treaty specifically mentions Article 19 of the League Covenant, offering the possibility of revision of the Treaty of Versailles."

As might be expected, the Italian press is enthusiastic about the treaty. "Peace which seemed to escape us is now a reality," declares the *Rome Messaggero*. "The civilized world owes the victory to Mussolini." "War ended yesterday," adds the *Popolo di Italia*, and the *Mattino* agrees by saying that "the peoples of the world feel that the specter of war weighing on the destinies of Europe has vanished." "The pact ends rancor and suspicions," says the *Gazetta del Popolo*, "replacing them with collaboration."

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Turning to American comment, we find the *Philadelphia Inquirer* hailing the pact as "a long step toward peace." It adds that "there is every reason to believe that, when the Disarmament Conference meets again, substantial progress to an agreement for definite reductions can be made."



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