NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

ADDRESSES IN COMMEMORATION OF THE EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BIRTH OF ARISTIDE BRIAND
honorary alumnus and farseeing champion
of European federation and international peace

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Commemoration of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Birth of Aristide Briand

New York University held exercises commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the birth of Aristide Briand in the Auditorium of the Gould Memorial Library at University Heights on Saturday, March 28, 1942.

The exercises opened with the singing of the National Anthem by the Freshman Glee Club, conducted by Mr. Willard H. van Woert.

After the opening address by the Chairman, Dean Marshall S. Brown, and the reading of the messages, M. Alexis Léger, Briand’s closest friend and collaborator, spoke in French about the personality of this eminent statesman. A translation in English is given below.

After Professor Alfred M. Greenfield had played on the organ “Petite Pastorale” by Ravel, and “The Old Year Hath Passed Away” and “Jesu Joy of Man’s Desiring” by Bach, Count Coudenhove-Kalergi spoke in English about the initiative of Briand in the light of the coming reconstruction of Europe.

M. Louis Marlio, speaking also in English, discussed Briand’s principles in the internal policy of France; while Dr. Leland Rex Robinson’s speech dealt with Briand’s relations to America.

The exercises closed with the Marseillaise, sung by the Freshman Glee Club.
OPENING ADDRESS

MILLAR S. BROWN
Dean Emeritus of the Faculties, New York University

New York University is proud and happy to share in the tribute that is being paid today to the memory of one of the world's great leaders who was also an honorary alumnus of this University. I bring to our guests in the audience and to the distinguished speakers on the platform the hearty welcome of New York University and only regret, as he does, that Chancellor Chase is unable to be here and preside at this gathering.

It is eminently fitting that this memorial service in honor of France's great statesman, Aristide Briand, should be held on this campus and in this building, where twenty years ago New York University, by the hand of the late Chancellor Brown, conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

M. Briand, more clearly than any other European statesman, realized that the Treaty of Versailles would prove to be, not an enduring peace, but only a truce, unless it could be implemented by further and more perfect international cooperation and by more effective international organization. Peace like freedom is never won once for all, by a single agreement, compact, or treaty. It is the achievement and reward of unremitting and never-ending effort. That effort needs the stimulation and support of wise and adequate organization and of an international will for peace.

This auditorium is the chapel of an institution which has always emphasized the importance of religion as a factor in education and it is surely a fitting place to call attention to a fundamental truth, pertinent to our thoughts here today, which was announced in heralding the birth of the founder of the Christian religion, and that was that Peace on Earth was proclaimed but promised only to men of good will.

We have been taught that in time of peace we must prepare for war if war is to be successfully waged and in time of war we must prepare for peace if peace is to be enduring. Hence this University is glad to be the forum of a series of addresses that, in honoring the memory of the famous advocate of international good will and of international organization to preserve peace, endeavor as he did to discover and promote the necessary and effective means by which peace may be maintained.
ARISTIDE BRIAND

ALEXIS LÉGER

Former Secretary-General of the French Foreign Office

By this we can measure the greatness and force of a human personality, that long after death it continues to exercise its power on the minds of the living.

What manner of man is this who, from the depths of death, with the same human warmth, continues to exercise his living presence on us? What manner of man is this who, after having roused so many passions in his own country, remains abroad one of the clearest spokesmen of his country and his people?

An exceptional man indeed: marked for a democracy with the finest qualities of human wisdom; invested, for international society, with all the moral authority of the great animators... This man, though great among the men of his time and one of the chosen few, remained devoid of all vanity, inaccessible to all temptation to personal power, and was always able to give back to his human milieu all that he had borrowed from it.

I was with Aristide Briand at Washington, London, Locarno, Brussels, The Hague, Madrid, Berlin, at all the great world sessions of Geneva. And everywhere in foreign lands I saw rising toward him the unanimous response of minds and hearts, eager to decipher on this face the clearest human promises, and in that great French voice seeking the echoing chord of a thousand consciences dispersed over the earth.

Never have I so well understood the universality of that French vocation which in its fidelity to itself finds its truest collective expression. And no one more than Briand was aware of that natural vocation of France to harmonize the relations among peoples: a vocation which might be called spiritual, and which must be restored to her one day, under penalty of invalidating all the constructive work of the Allied Librators.

It was necessary to have all the complexity of a psychology as sensitive and as nuancée as that of Briand, if only to represent worthily this French universality.

A broad feeling for humanity, together with the secret individualism of all creators; an equal sense of solitude and of the crowd; a mixture of reverie and of action, where the audacity of the dream responds always to the test of good sense; a promptness in enterprise and riposte which was equaled only by his nonchalance in exploiting success; a determination in struggle which was equaled only by his personal detachment... His mind was possessed of all the intuitive riches of imagination passed through the filter of reason; all the finest impulses of his heart were subordinated to the perfect taste of moderation; a natural discernment and a correctness of tone which always permitted him to indulge freely in improvisations... To summarize, all the inner aristocracy of a lofty tree, with its strong roots nourished by the people.

Such, essentially, was Briand, a man of France and a curious man, in the service of peace.

He did not need duplicity to conquer, nor violence. He hated, equally, stupidity and cowardice, doltishness and vulgarity.

As he hunted with the lightest of arms, as he fished with the finest of lines, as he drove into the winds of the sea the frailest of sails, he brought to the management of men the refinements of an artist, drawn from an intimate knowledge of the most secret depths of human nature. He loved in all things, even in action, delicacy and tact of mind. “Do not proceed so heavily,” he said one day to his German interlocutor, “you are wielding sledge-hammer blows on the delicate brain of the small-winged creature, the Dove of Locarno.”

In tribune of the Chamber, having all of the secret arms of power at his disposal, he felt that he had to forbid himself the use of them. A Chief of Government, he thought, ought not to oppose the most brutal arms of his adversary with more than a capped foil. And in this fine fencing, it seemed that sometimes there was something like a play of mind over matter.

Thus, everything with Briand had, above all, a psychological quality.
And such truly was his eloquence, enemy of all rhetoric. "The best address," he asserted, "is that of which nothing remains, once the result has been achieved; that is to say, once political accord has been attained." And so completely invisible was his technique at all times that one was able to say of him what was said of a French orator of the July Monarchy: "Nobody speaks better than he the language of everybody." No one knew better how to use the resources of the subconscious, without ever losing control of them; and to keep himself more sensitive to his unpredictable audience, he abstained from any preparation. He was told of the case of one of his great contemporaries who prepared in advance two different versions of all his addresses. "Why take so much trouble," he observed. "It is always a third address that one must deliver."

His indulgence was extreme, to the point of allowing his enemies to abuse it. Did there enter into it, as some people have said, some secret contempt of human nature? The fatalism of Briand seems to me to exclude contempt, and his native good humor led him to find amusement in the stupidity of men. He wanted only to save his freedom of mind from the servitude of any reaction against others. . . . Or if there was disdain, with what sovereign courtesy it was concealed!

The last day of his governmental life was also the day on which, in all simplicity, Briand carried his great serenity to its loftiest point. One of the politicians who, seven months before, had participated most perfidiously in the conspiracy against his presidential election, openly forced his way into his office. He wanted to receive from him the assurance that he had never misunderstood his role. "My dear friend," Briand said sweetly, "when one has reached my age and the end of a long public life, one no longer attaches, believe me, any sort of meaning to political parties. One no longer knows how to sort men except in two great groups: the swine and the non-swine. . . ." And after having kept his uneasy listener in suspense for a moment: "Moreover, I have observed," continued Briand innocently, "that intelligent men, when it happens that they were born swine, always know how to range themselves among the non-swine in time. . . . And you cannot doubt, mon cher, that I consider you one of our most intelligent men."

The next day Briand took the road to Cocherel alone. No one ever heard a word of bitterness from his mouth.

In addition to his integrity and disinterestedness, his innate respect for the individual human being, and his horror of all iniquity, the qualities in Briand most notable for the conduct of a great democracy seemed to me to have been the following: an independence of judgment and decision which kept him above all demagogy; a conception of the state, of the authority of government, which set a natural limit to his spirit of conciliation.

His view was that a democracy, more than any other form of government, requires the exercise of authority. He felt that public opinion must be led, not followed, by those to whom it had delegated the responsibility of the national interest; and that it is entitled, under the final sanction of events, to reproach its delegates for having wrongly ceded to it. The French people themselves, contrary to appearances, seemed to him to have been won over to the need for an authoritative democracy, provided that they were guaranteed against the thing which they hated above all else: the risk of personal power.

Briand had hoped for a revision of the French constitution which would establish a better equilibrium between the responsibilities of the executive power and those of the legislative power. But he did not ever confuse the moral reality of authority with the external display of its affirmation. He hated all despotism and, despising the abuse of the police practice, he did not need to turn back to ancient history to recall the social decomposition to which any state condemns itself when founded on unwarranted spying of the citizenry. With so high a conception as that he had conceived of the government of France, Briand was able to work, first, toward the achievement of internal peace. Was not this the best preparation for his greater task—international peace?
Not less exceptional, for the conduct of a broad international policy, were the essential qualities of Briand: a creative imagination supported by a fine sense of experimentation; a sense of daring in enterprise always linked with a profound understanding of the peoples of the world.

It was the human nobility of Briand’s realism to have known that, in the play of the mysterious forces of this world, moral realities do not count less than physical realities. Thanks to his very early social training, he never thought of people in abstract terms. He knew, better than any of his time, that men are led more by imagination than by reason. He knew also that a great people cannot live without an “act of faith,” and that to this very feeling must be given a sustenance worthy of its reasons for existence.

But this man who was considered by some a “collector of dreams” proceeded prudently and always in step with his natural empiricism. He did not launch his great anticipations except as living suggestions, to orient the mind of the peoples and prepare for his designs the bed of the river whose course he was to determine. Never losing his grip upon the present, he kept one foot in the past, always soliciting the future.

Such was the circumspection of Briand, the creator. And one knows the patience of the man to whom was attributed this quip: that, in the formation of all of his governments, the most important portfolio was always reserved for Time.

In addition to all these gifts, he had the outstanding and essential attribute of the statesman and the diplomat: a sure sense of the possible.

In the pursuit of his policy of peace, Briand realized the possibilities of his time to their fullest extent.

As a point of departure and of support, what did he find?

He found peace treaties not of his making, whose errors he could not even denounce; a system of French security which had sacrificed in vain territorial guarantees for the political guaranty of a promise of Anglo-American solidarity; a League of Nations stripped of executive power and which did not even understand its American pro-

moter; a Great Britain kept by her extra-European preoccupations from any direct association with France; a Central Europe fragmented into small states, with little chance of survival, and difficult to bring together.

The directives of Briand were simple, as are always those of any great policy.

First, to assure, particularly to France, every possible element of immediate security, in default of which she would be unable to undertake any collective enterprise.

Second, under cover of that immediate security, and in proportion to its development, to search for the larger frame of a European peace, itself the foundation of world peace; to seek, for that purpose, the durable guaranties of a Franco-German rapprochement, indispensable to the solid foundation of the European edifice upon its four main pillars: France, Great Britain, Italy, and Germany; to prepare, in addition, the final establishment of an organic statute for a European Union.

Third, to attempt beyond Europe the effective extension of a solidarity against war.

Fourth, in case of immediate dangers, to defer these larger enterprises and to turn every effort solely to the gathering, in time, all the forces necessary for the preventive exercise of collective authority.

So clearly were these policies followed that never, under the leadership of Briand, could the foreign policy of France be accused of the slightest equivocation. And so well did they correspond to the feeling of the French people that no Minister of Foreign Affairs since Briand has ever dared openly to free himself from them, equivocation becoming the refuge of his worst successors.

All know the principal projects of Briand: for the special security of France—the effort toward solidarity with Britain and the pledges made in Central and Eastern Europe; for collective security—the European policy of regional pacts, and the world policy of the Pact of Paris.

The attempt at a Franco-German rapprochement was the most courageous part of his work; it exacted of him the most subtle diplo-
matic craftsmanship, as well as the greatest public abnegation. It was followed, in all its consequences, in complete accord with the highest French military authorities and yet many tried to use them later to discredit Briand.

To be justified, this policy had to gain speed on events: it needed to be executed rapidly enough, broadly enough, and clearly enough to influence the orientation of the German people in time. But because of party struggles which paralyzed this policy in every direction, it was executed in slow motion, narrowly, and in confusion.

The men in France who, in time of peace, most violently opposed the offer of collaboration made by a victorious and strong France, in complete accord with the European community, to a republican and disarmed Germany, are the same who were, one day, to find acceptable an offer of collaboration, made in time of war, for the benefit of a Germanic order, by a totalitarian, imperialist, and "racist" Germany, to a France, subjected, oppressed, and isolated.

This structure of Locarno served its purpose for ten years as our only cornerstone in Europe. It was the only one which, by its precision and the strength of its mechanism compelled the respect of Hitler; the only one which he thought worth recognizing officially and on several occasions, until such time as he became aware of the moral weakening of those who benefited by it. The true responsibility for the Hitlerian avalanche rests, not at Munich, but at the London Conference of March 1936. Briand would never have abandoned, nor permitted to be abandoned, the application of the sanctions provided in the event of a violation of his Rhine Pact.

As for the policy of the European Union, it would have taken more than one man's lifetime to achieve it. And Briand had not even time to develop, as he intended, this first organism called the "Commission for a European Union" over which he presided. The German elections of September 1930 were to impose more pressing duties on him.

He had too much clairvoyance ever to miss the precise moment when conciliation must give way to an exercise of authority. He had not hesitated, in March of 1921, for a mere question of reparations, to effect a military occupation of three Rhenish centers. The man of la main au collet would not have hesitated after 1932, when France and her former allies still had the power to do so, to oppose the Hitlerian program with all effective authority that might have diverted the German people from it in time. He would never have made the psychological blunder of practicing at an inopportune moment that policy which is known as "appeasement."

In March 1931, one year before his death, he had forced Germany to abandon the first project of Anschluss. During the war, he had been the man of Verdun and of Salonika. Before the war, he had fought for the three-year military service. At his last appearance at Geneva, when, before the Commission of a European Union he evoked the image of that famous pilgrim's staff, the terror of so many French political circles, he did not have in mind some campaign for a sentimental pacifism, but rather a most pressing diplomatic campaign to gather together, against the rebirth of German imperialism, all the active forces of international authority. And even after his freedom from office, if he had still lived, he would have consecrated his remaining strength to the task of rousing the peoples of all nations.

An old man, charged with humanity, having largely sown the future, he would have preached immediate action. You would have seen him, sublime Crusader, take his inspiration from all these menaced men to whom he had taught the first words of a language of Europe. And perhaps his great moving voice would have made itself heard, before the storm, as far as this American world.

The agony of Briand! ... Who can sound the depths of this drama?

I saw only the reflection of it in that small room where we were three to watch over him.

The winter wind that blew that night seemed to sing to men of the limits of human effort. A great anguish seemed to rouse the soul of the old, winded fighter. ... And three times he spoke in delirium. ... Europe haunted that agony, Europe haunted that closed room, less as a word than as a vision: a painful, agonizing vision that once again called the dying man to urgent action. ... And then a
great peace finally restored him to himself. And amidst an evocation of the sea, of sails, and the first sea breezes, the old Celt delivered up his soul, the soul of a solitary man.

The following day, I was in my office at the Quai d’Orsay. The distant voice of a poor man had succeeded in reaching me despite my instructions to my telephoneists: it was an old sailor from the Norman coast, with whom I had made arrangements for the care of Briand’s little sailboat. “Monsieur,” said the voice, “shall I fly the flag at half mast?” And as emotion delayed my reply, “Monsieur,” the voice continued, “It’s true that it’s a very small boat, the smallest on the coast, and M. Briand wasn’t one for show. But it’s also a great disaster, and we, in the country, feel that, without M. Briand, we shall have to face great misfortunes.”

I said, “Fly your flag at half mast. . . . Yes, this is a very great sorrow. And M. Briand is leaving us for a long time. But he will come back to us . . . .”

The obsequies for Briand were moving and singular, at times turbulent. The people of France claimed him as their very own. The peoples of Europe recognized the greatness of their loss. And more than one simple heart in the world was instinctively conscious of all that this human presence had signified among us.

It is the fate of the best men that they are never completely relieved of their mission. The apostle of the “Federal European Union” does not belong to the past, he belongs to the future, of which one day the present will be made.

And is it not an involuntary tribute to his thought that a German parody should have been offered to France, under the name of the “New Order” and, in one of those inversions of values conforming with the purest Nietzschean doctrine, the transposition, Germanic style, of the old project inscribed in the French Memorandum of May 1930?

Three days before his death, Briand suddenly asked me: “Have you any doubts about the European policy we had in mind?” “No, and you?” “I doubt it so little,” he said to me, “that I only fear that it may one day be taken up again by hands less disinterested than those of France.” And a little later, he added, with a smiling gravity, “How stupid they are, eh! our so-called nationalists, not to have understood in time that my collective policy really furthered the moral role which has been the traditional one of France in Europe: *Gesta Dei per Francos!”* (I believe this was the only time that Briand ever made use of a quotation.)

When, as liberated Frenchmen, we will have discharged our most sacred duties—and first of all a pilgrimage to all those walls stained with the blood of French hostages—the tomb of Briand will be a fit place for our Liberators to join us in meditating on a more just conception of a European order. I do not know what will have become of that tomb. But there will always be Cocheler and its small valley, its river, its miller, its plain country people, faithful, like Briand, to that which is French.

“Until my last breath!” he cried out, in a celebrated address. And see now how this cry survives him. It is not true that he has put down his pilgrim’s staff.

“Gathered unto his people,” as it is said in the Book of Exodus, of the great old men of the past, he awaits the hour to rise again among us: for France, for Europe, and for humanity.
BRIAND AND EUROPE

COUNT R. N. COUDENHOVE-KALERGI
President of the Pan Europa Union
Research Associate, New York University

American Friends and European Countrymen

We have assembled here to honor the memory of the great and generous statesman whose courageous initiative toward a united Europe attempted to save our continent and the world just before Hitler rose to power. But we also wish to profess, in the name of countless millions of tortured Europeans deprived of all means of free expression, that Briand’s bright vision of European federation no longer belongs to the past but to the future. For as certain as dawn follows night and spring follows winter, the day is approaching when Hitler, his war and his domination, will pass away like a nightmare, to be followed by years of peace and of reconstruction; when a new Europe will emerge from the ruins of war, free and federated in the spirit of its great prophet, Aristide Briand.

To have worked for years with him and with his brilliant friend and collaborator, Alexis Léger, for this union of Europe, remains one of the most precious experiences of my life. It was a fascinating experience, indeed, to watch how Briand’s generous spirit felt more and more attracted by the vision of a United Europe, till he gradually dropped his hesitations and boldly took the initiative toward its realization; how finally this great adventure overwhelmed him till he thrust his entire personality and all that he stood for into this last and greatest action of his life.

Briand was haunted by the vision of a second World War. Whoever looked into his amazing eyes could well believe he was gifted with some kind of second sight, with something like prophetic intuition. He seemed to have felt the threat of this approaching war, against which he was striving with all his might.

I met him for the first time in January 1926, when I passed through Paris on my way home to Vienna from a lecture tour in the United States. At that time Briand had reached the climax of his career with the triumph of Locarno. Together with his great partner Gustav Stresemann he was paving the way toward a general Franco-German understanding. Naturally the Pan-European idea appealed to him. He encouraged it and promised his moral support.

But only one year later, after the first Pan-European Congress in Vienna had convinced him of the strong and rising tide of a genuine European patriotism, did he publicly join the Pan-Européan Union by accepting its honorary presidency.

Two years later, after long and secret negotiations and meditations, he surprised the world by announcing that he would submit the problem of European federation to the next assembly of the League of Nations. And in September 1929 he pronounced from that world-wide tribune in Geneva, in one of the greatest speeches of his life, these decisive words:

"I believe that between nations, linked by geography like the nations of Europe, some kind of union ought to exist. They should at any moment have the means of contacting, deliberating, deciding in common, and of creating among themselves a link of solidarity that would enable them to face eventual difficulties. This is the link I should like to establish."

This message, launched by the leading statesman of France, seemed to open a new and brighter page of European history. From the fjords of Norway to the isles of the Mediterranean, Europeans of all tongues and parties hoped to see their continent transformed into a federation of free and equal nations—peaceful like Switzerland and prosperous like America.

In this decisive struggle for Europe’s future, Briand was backed by all those who were able to see beyond the day and beyond their national boundaries. Among the statesmen who hailed and backed Briand’s initiative most was a lonely member of the British Parliament, then without power, but gifted with boundless energy and farseeing vision: the man of providence who now is leading Europe’s gigantic battle against barbarism, Winston Churchill.
Impressed by this mighty and enthusiastic wave of public opinion, all governments of Europe accepted in principle Briand’s suggestion, and charged him to elaborate its details in the course of the following months.

This famous “Memorandum on European Union” was issued on May 17, 1930, the opening day of our Second Pan-European Congress in Berlin. But this very Memorandum provided Briand’s opponents the desired opportunity to strike at his initiative, without opposing it openly. Consequently, most of the European governments accepted the general principles of the Memorandum, but rejected its details, thus making any bold decision impossible. They seemed ready to accept the idea of European federation—but not ready to make any national sacrifices, inevitable for its realization. They all pretended to desire a European union—but only at the expense of their neighbors. They called Briand a dreamer because they could neither grasp nor desire the realization of his great and constructive vision. And they flattered themselves that they were realists, because they were opposing their narrow national interests to Briand’s broad-minded ideal.

In spite of the mighty wave of public opinion for Briand, his “realistic” opponents succeeded in breaking his initiative. The consequence of this failure was his fall as the leading statesman of France; and the consequence of this fall was his early death.

When I met him for the last time in Geneva, some months before he died, his career was already broken, but his courage and his faith in a future European union had remained unshaken. He discussed with me his intention of traveling, as Gandhi did in India, as a pilgrim of peace across Europe, preaching everywhere to the people of our continent the gospel of peace and of union. For only the leaders of Europe had misunderstood him—not its peoples. When he died in March 1932, his death was deplored by millions of Europeans who felt a profound gratitude toward the man who had ruined his health and his career to save Europe from disaster; who had sacrificed himself to save them.

Some months after Briand’s death Hitler rose to power, after hav-
In all ages ideas backed by arms and arms backed by ideas have transformed the world. Tomorrow the great idea of a free and united Europe, backed by the heroic arms of the United Nations, may become the dynamite to blow up the strongholds of Nazism and of its New Disorder. History is the severe and cruel teacher of humanity. What Briand planned for preventing the second World War may well be executed at its end to prevent a third one; but only after our poor generation had to experience for the second time that European peace cannot be maintained without European federation; that God has created our beautiful continent as a single country, while human ambitions have again and again split and dismembered it during centuries; that at last the time has come for our Old World to follow the successful and glorious example of America—the example of federation, of freedom within union.

Often in the course of history early victories lead to final disaster, while the way to ultimate triumph is paved with defeats. So Briand’s failure to unite Europe may one day be transformed into his greatest glory. The seed he has spread through his courageous initiative begins to germinate under the snow of the war. At the future peace conference other statesmen will take up his ideas and turn them into the greatest accomplishment of our century. And when all his successful actions, from the Pact of Locarno to the Pact of Paris, will have passed away in the stream of time, his unsuccessful attempt of uniting Europe will be the source of his lasting fame.

Then the prophecy of his great countryman Victor Hugo, pronounced as early as 1849, will at last be fulfilled: “The day will come when bullets and shells will be replaced by votes, by general and popular elections, by the venerable arbitration of a great and sovereign Senate, that will be for Europe what the Parliament is now for England, the National Assembly for Germany and the Constituitive Assembly for France. The day will come when these two gigantic countries, the United States of America and the United States of Europe, will face and greet each other across the Ocean, exchanging their goods, their commerce, their industry, their art and their genius—

to civilize the planet, to fertilize deserts, to improve creation under the eye of the Creator; and to assure the greatest benefit for all by uniting these two infinite forces.”

The Brotherhood of Man and the Power of God!”
Ten years ago Aristide Briand, the apostle of peace, died.

Fortunately for him he has not been a witness to the frightful debacle into which the entire world has been precipitated by the wicked and demented will of one man who has made the spirit of evil incarnate during that decade.

Other speakers have stressed Briand's role in the task of establishing international peace. Although it is true that during the latter years of Briand's political activity, dating from the first World War, he was preeminently the great diplomat and instigator of a new world order, it would be amiss not to call attention to his considerable achievements within his native land.

I propose to point out at this time the extent to which the generous and constructive spirit of France was incarnate in his character and in his work.

Although his personality was very resolute in its general aspects, it nevertheless embraced all the contrasts and nuances of the French character.

First as the man of contrasts—this man who was exposed to every honor and adulation loved only the simple life. This orator, the greatest I have ever known, was taciturn. This leader of the people, whose every word enraptured the multitude, longed for privacy. This man, though an adherent of the left-wing party, was endowed with aristocratic subtlety. This democrat hated demagoguery. A disbeliever, he nevertheless respected religion. A philosopher by natural inclination, he could also be the man of action.

Briand was even more the man of nuances. He was clever without being ironical; conciliatory without being weak; indulgent, without blindness. Firm in his convictions, he was flexible in their application. He preferred convincing his fellowmen to giving them orders arbitrarily. He possessed none of the characteristics of a dictator, but was endowed with all the attributes of an incomparable leader.

Briand's entire domestic policy was based on the two following principles: he was a man of cooperation; he was a man of decision. I would like to illustrate these two aspects of his political activity by pointing out various acts which I myself witnessed.

My contemporaries remember the critical moral and political crisis which convulsed France at the beginning of this century. An innocent officer, Captain Dreyfus, was unjustly condemned by the military courts. All those who believed in justice and liberty rose to demand a new trial. In spite of the systematic opposition of the Government and the Army, the case was won and the cause of justice achieved. However, this admirable fight which was led by left-wing parties for the liberation of an innocent man went beyond its goal. The strong feelings which had been aroused degenerated into party disputes. A vindictive policy permeated the governmental departments. The spirit of partisanship replaced the spirit of justice. Religion was attacked and the devout were ostracized. The Army became subject to a regime of recrimination and proscription. France was on the verge of collapse and Germany watched the moral, political, and military disintegration of her hereditary enemy with un concealed pleasure.

At that time the voice of Briand, which was not as yet renowned, was raised to decry the evil and to call a halt. Reactionary tendencies cannot be attributed to Briand. He had left the Socialist Party, whose policy he considered narrow, but he preserved intact his social ideal, and until his death he remained a liberal.

In the famous Périgueux speech, Briand denounced, even in opposition to his own friends, the partisan policy which was menacing the very existence of France. "This has lasted long enough," he said. "France is on the verge of dying. The time has come for a large purifying stream to flow through the stagnant marshes." This speech had an extraordinary effect. Public opinion acclaimed and obeyed it. Within a few months the courageous words of Briand succeeded in reestablishing the political unity of the country and in reconstituting
free from any political interference the French Army which a few years later was to experience its greatest victories.

In the field of religion he accomplished similar achievements. The Dreyfus case resulted in the denunciation of the Concordat, the severing of diplomatic relations with the Vatican, the separation of Church and State, and in the confiscation of church property. It was Briand who presented the law of Separation to the Chamber of Deputies. It was on this occasion that he realized his first success when, as a young socialist deputy, he pleaded with all the force of his eloquence and his convictions in an attempt to transform the proscriptive and vindictive law into a law of mutual liberation and reciprocal respect. Throughout his entire political life he remained faithful to his ideal of religious freedom, convincing both the Church and the State that sincere and loyal collaboration could be established between a free state and a free church for the greater good of all. After the election of 1924 which brought a large majority of liberals into power, it was he who demanded and obtained, in spite of his friends who were in power, the reestablishment of the embassy at the Vatican in the interest of France’s foreign policy.

Aristide Briand, socialist by conviction and inclination, was a more zealous supporter than any other of bold reforms in order to avoid the class struggle. His policy was very flexible and he was adept in the choice of words necessary for appeasing labor disputes.

Even as Briand was able to conciliate conflicts of all sorts between classes or between parties, he also was able to prove himself forceful and even uncompromising when he considered that the public welfare was in danger.

Twice I have seen him cope with an unbridled Parliament and assert before the nation the principle of authority. At the time of the scandalous failure of the financier Rochette in which several members of Parliament were involved, public opinion was aroused, and Parliament demanded that the ministering of justice be transferred to a parliamentary committee endowed with all judiciary power. On this occasion Briand delivered the most brilliant speech of his career, declaring that neither the Government nor the legislative body was entitled to encroach on the rights of judiciary authority, this being the necessary guaranty of any democratic form of government.

I shall close by calling to mind another act which I witnessed. In 1910 a deep-seated unrest was developing in the laboring groups that threatened to disturb the functioning of public services. Suddenly a general strike of revolutionary character was called in the railroads, which endangered the welfare of the whole country. Briand did not hesitate. At the suggestion of M. Alexandre Millerand, Minister of Public Works, whose assistant I was, he issued an edict in the middle of the night extending the provisions of military mobilization to the railroad employees. The workers obeyed the mobilization order and the strike was halted. But the storm had not passed. The railroad workers constituted a large voting power. The deputies naturally became aroused. The tempest broke loose at the Palais Bourbon and the Chamber almost unanimously acclaimed the great socialist orator Jean Jaurès when he attacked the Government for having taken sides against the working class and for having used illegal means to break the strike. When Briand mounted the podium to reply to the combined attack of his enemies and his friends, it appeared as if the Government had fallen. Briand’s speech was that of a great statesman, of a leader conscientiously aware of his deep responsibility. He stated that the first duty of any government was to assure the welfare of the nation. Then addressing himself directly to Jaurès he spoke the famous sentence: “No, M. Jaurès, I have not used illegal means; but if it had been necessary to resort to illegal means in order to protect the whole social structure, I would have done so.” A half hour later the Government received a victorious majority.

If you were to ask me, in conclusion, to give Briand’s principal characteristic in the field of domestic policy, I would say that it is precisely that of a great statesman in a great democracy.

Aristide Briand personified this form of a free and strong democracy to which the United States is strongly attached and to which France herself, in spite of all appearances, has remained faithful. I do not ask for a better proof of this fact than this splendid creation.
of the Ecole Libre des Hautes Etudes which has united here in a common faith in the principles of a free democracy almost all the great French teachers and scholars who, regardless of race, political party, and religion, speak not only for themselves but also for the great majority of their brothers in France who are forbidden to express what they feel so deeply.

Aristide Briand knew all the splendors of democracy but he also knew what conditions a democracy must fulfill in order to escape complete paralysis and anarchy. He knew that democracy could endure only if it were based on intangible moral principles—respect for individual and collective rights, freedom of thought, speech, and press, religious freedom, the right to assemble, equality before the law, the right for all political parties to express their opinions through general elections and to be represented in legislative assemblies.

However, he also knew that there is no single liberty, but rather a series of liberties which can be exercised to advantage only in so far as they become mutually limited. The guarantee of legal rights should rest in an independent judiciary body. The respect for liberties and the maintenance of order require a strong government. Party competition, which is necessary for the expression of the national will, should not be allowed to degenerate into partisan disputes and should not be allowed to hinder the normal functioning of the government, established according to the popular will, by systematic obstruction of any nature. Finally, all rights and all liberties on which the principle of democracy rests are of value only in so far as they are subordinate to the principle of law and order necessary for the maintenance of the country’s independence and the protection of national unity.

Because he understood the fine balance to be maintained between the principle of liberty and the principle of authority, Briand shall remain one of the greatest among the great.

BRIAND AND AMERICA

LELAND REX ROBINSON

Vice-Chairman of the American Committee for a Free and United Europe
President of the American Committee for Christian Refugees
Trustee of the Institute of International Education

We are met at a most critical time in this first truly world war to honor a man of peace, Aristide Briand of France. It is not as a visionary that we honor him; nor are we paying tribute to the Republic he represented, whose gallant sacrifices proved so tragically in vain. Rather do we think of him as symbolizing for us in America those gifts of realism coupled with creativeness which are the pledge that the people of France in God’s good time shall resume their rightful leadership in Western civilization.

The tolerance, persistence, and imagination that carried Briand through triumph and trial appear to no better purpose than in his relations with the United States, our statesmen and our people. To these qualities of mind and heart were added an abiding faith in American institutions. This was a faith that spanned the years from Lafayette to the troubled thirties in loyalty to the tradition that France and the United States must work together for liberty, peace, and justice. When the darkness of those times passes, he will appear once more as our contemporary. In what he did, even more than in what he said, the wisdom of ancient Heraclitus comes to mind—that for mankind character is destiny.

Most Americans who think of Briand in connection with our own country first recall him at the Conference on Naval Disarmament in Washington in 1922. It was not for him an altogether happy experience. His frank disclosure of France’s technical difficulties in reducing smaller naval craft protecting her routes to Africa was taken by many as a mask for imperialism. We had lost the idealist in the realist, but this was our fault, not Briand’s. We would have done well to remember Condé’s maxim “qu’il fallait craindre les ennemis de loin, pour ne les plus craindre de près.”
If American public opinion misjudged Briand in 1921, it more than made amends between June 1927, when his first proposal was advanced for a pact between France and the United States renouncing war, and August 1928, when the Briand-Kellogg multilateral treaty (the Pact of Paris) came into force. What President Coolidge acknowledged as the most important act of his administration resulted from one sentence in a message of Briand to the American people. It was not addressed to the Government in Washington, nor did it evoke any formal reply from that quarter until an awakened public conscience in this country called for action. By this time all well-informed people knew that Briand’s offer was wholly sincere, a by-product of his Locarno and League of Nations statesmanship. Or perhaps we should think of it as a capstone for the edifice of peace he had been toiling to build.

During the months of waiting and of negotiation that followed his earlier offer Briand must often have phrased his thoughts as Ludwig quotes him: “If people could only throw off the incubus of historical memories when they are considering actual conditions! They are always talking with one side of the brain in the grave.” So it seemed indeed to those critics of Briand who found in the Pact of Paris only an expression of pious hopes! The text remained with minor changes the wording originally proposed by Briand; but the treaty appeared diluted to ineffectiveness as it evolved from his original proposal for a bilateral agreement to a multilateral instrument signed by more than sixty nations. In fact many among us once more misjudged Briand as in this broadening of the Pact he pleaded for renunciation of war, not in all circumstances, but when used as an instrument of aggression.

We did not understand, isolationist and peace loving as we were, why France so willingly renounced war as an instrument of national policy vis-à-vis the United States but hesitated to make such unconditional commitments globally. We did not see that in Locarno and the League an equally peace-loving France had taken up her positive responsibilities in the growing community of nations, and that use of force might be called for in implementing these responsibilities.

We did not see that peace is not merely denial of force but its organization on the side of justice, security for the weak, orderly change.

But Briand realized all this. It had not been his intention to involve the United States by indirection in any of the obligations imposed by League of Nations membership or assumed by signatories of the Treaties of Locarno. However, when Secretary Kellogg, co-author of the Pact of Paris, urged its extension upon a multilateral basis, interpretations became necessary.

On Briand’s part, or the part of France, rather, there was offered among other reservations the clause that “none of the provisions of the new treaty is in opposition to the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations nor with those of the Locarno treaties or the treaties of neutrality.” On our part some assurance needed to be conveyed that the United States would not consider itself bound by the Pact to remain aloof or indifferent if aggressors broke loose, or to denounce a cosignatory resorting to force against such aggressors, as defined in Locarno or the League Covenant.

It is in the preamble of the Briand-Kellogg Pact, therefore, that we were to find its greatest significance in the wider orientation of American foreign policy. For here reference is made to the benefits that the treaty confers and the warning is sounded that these benefits will be denied to those powers violating their promise to renounce war as an instrument of national policy.

Thus it came about that our country for the first time, in its interpretation of the Briand-Kellogg Pact, gave a broad official hint that the moral influence of America would be thrown on the side of peace throughout the world. Thus it came about that Secretary Stimson in his note in January 1932 on the Manchurian issue not only invoked the Nine-Power Pact of 1922 but further declared that the United States “does not intend to recognize any situation, treaty, or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the Covenants and obligations of the Pact of Paris.”

Had we followed up with action rather than with words the full implications of Secretary Stimson’s policy, firmly grounded in the Pact of Paris as well as the Nine-Power Pact, we would not now be
having returned to us, with bloody compound interest, the scrap metal sent to Japan!

Something has been said of the power of public opinion in bringing this country to clearer recognition of its world-wide responsibilities. In the unobtrusive and often unconscious role that Briand played in this awakening of the American spirit, let it be repeated that his tolerance, persistence, and imagination finally won for him on this side the universal public approval which had earlier been so often denied him. In 1929 he stood revealed as the champion of the American way in his initiative taken for the organization of a United States of Europe. Now at last we could understand and applaud him to a man.

This is a memorable occasion. It brings together a number of those friends of Briand who give promise that his dream of a European federation shall not die. It is a pledge of American hope and faith that the despoiled nations of Europe may find their way of life in collaboration of free peoples rather than a united despotism of slave states.

In this conception Briand's career reached its culmination. First depression, then war on a world-wide scale, have now made it clear to us that the preservation of all that goes with American ideals and American standards of life depends upon building similar opportunities for others.

In the name of a goodly company of Americans I thank New York University for having organized this Commemoration of Aristide Briand, more than ever our contemporary and our friend. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Long live the influence of this statesman of eternal France!

Messages

The following messages were read by Dean Marshall S. Brown and Count Coudenhove-Kalergi.

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER
President of Columbia University

Other engagements for the afternoon of Saturday, March 28, make it impossible for me to be present in person at the formal commemoration here in New York of the eightieth birthday of M. Aristide Briand, outstanding statesman of the French Republic.

It was my privilege and good fortune to know M. Briand intimately and to work with him in close cooperation for years toward the establishment of those international relations and international policies which would open and pave the road toward world peace through permanent international cooperation. M. Briand had all the vision and the intellectual power that are characteristic of a great Frenchman. He was broad-minded enough to appreciate the service which his contemporary Dr. Stresemann was rendering to the German people. Unhappily, these two statesmen passed from earth before the work which they had jointly undertaken had moved far enough forward to shape national policies and international relationships in the way and for the ends which they both sought.

M. Briand's conception of the value of the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy, embodied in the Pact of Paris agreed upon by the governments of France and of the United States and of thirteen other governments on August 27, 1928, and adhered to by forty-eight additional governments during the six years following, was magnificent. It appealed quickly to the free peoples of the world and, indeed, was formally accepted by those that were not free or were about to lose such freedom as they had.

It was the complete contempt of these latter governments for their plighted faith which has plunged the world of today into the greatest
and most cruel disaster in all its history. At such a time it is surely becoming to hallow the memory of the great leader of his people and of human thought, who would have sacrificed everything to save the world from the calamity which now overwhelms it.

It was a pleasure and an honor when M. Briand visited Columbia University on November 24, 1921, to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causae*, in the appreciation of his great and distinguished service not only to his own people, but to the people of the whole world.

HARRY WOODBURN CHASE
Chancellor of New York University

Permit me to say in writing something of what I should have preferred to say in person, respecting the ceremonies on our campus March 28, marking the eightieth anniversary of Aristide Briand.

I admired M. Briand as a statesman and practical advocate of world fellowship. His life was singularly devoted to the creation of good will and tranquility in a world that, alas, was all too needy yet ill prepared for that sublime ministry. Yet his endeavors have left their indelible mark in the hearts of those who now pay tribute to the man and his idealism, and so in the continued endeavors of all who now labor valiantly the world over to hasten the dawn of a more enduring peace.

I am thankful that New York University was privileged twenty years ago, by the hand of my predecessor, Chancellor Brown, to welcome Premier Briand at this seat of learning with highest academic honors. We salute him again across the years, in the spirit of academic fellowship, with all the pride that a fostering institution can bestow on a revered son whose great influence for the common good will ever obey the ringing Gallic admonition *Marchons! Marchons!*

STEPHEN DUGGAN
Director of the Institute of International Education
Chairman of the American Committee for a Free and United Europe

I have already written you expressing regret at my inability to take part in the important meeting commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the birth of the great statesman Aristide Briand. Though we are in the midst of the most hideous conflict the world has ever known, it is a good time to refresh our memories with the fine achievements of that remarkable liberal whose distinguished activities in the field of international affairs were so stimulating to you in your work on the Pan-European movement. Just as during World War I we spoke of it as being a war to end war, so during this great horror we look forward to a lasting peace for which many scholars and publicists are already at work.

A regional federation, such as a United States of Europe, is to my way of thinking, very much to be desired. Europe has been the source of most of the wars of modern times which afflict not only the nations of that continent but, because of the interdependence of peoples today, afflict mankind throughout the world. When the Covenant of the League of Nations was hastily put together, peoples and statesmen were obsessed by the greatest spiritual force in existence at the time, nationalism. Today, nationalism is still a great force but the absolute sovereignty of the state is generally questioned. The opinion of mankind everywhere has veered to the belief that the objective of federation is the welfare of human beings, not the exaltation of the individual state. I am hopeful therefore for the success of your plan.

HALVDAN KOHT
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway

Today looking back at the life work of Briand, he appears as one of the last great Europeans, one of the last champions of a Europe united in free and peaceful cooperation. But his great idea cannot be dead, it will and must rise again; and Europe, even the whole world,
will finally unite in liberty and peace. It is the task of this generation to lift his banner and lead it to victory.

THOMAS MANN
Member of Honour of the Pan Europa Union

My heart and thoughts are with those today who are celebrating the eightieth anniversary of Aristide Briand. This magnificent statesman succumbed to the French nationalism, as his friend Stresemann succumbed to its German counterpart. If those two men had been free, at the time, to act in accordance with their convictions and advanced insight, the world would look different today. But perhaps it will be just this terrible crisis through which human society now has to pass that will enable it to take a greater stride forward than it would have been able to take in their time. Let us not forget that this period of suffering, however frightful it may be, contains great hopes which nobody would have dared to contemplate only a short time ago.

JAN MASARYK
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic

I regret deeply not being with you today to pay tribute to Aristide Briand. Best wishes for a successful meeting.

He began his career by helping labor in France to be free and then turned his great vision to freeing Europe from strife and war. To me he was, is, and is always going to be a symbol of international cooperation.

His sad spirit is with us today listening to the guns which he hated and to the Horst Wessel song by which Hitler replaced what Briand called European language.

After Locarno he said: “We spoke to each other as Europeans. It is a new language which we all will have to learn.”

I feel that we all owe it to the memory of this prophet-warrior for peace to take up his work where he left off. United, free Europe, free democratic France, and no more world wars—that is our grandiose task. But first we must crush Hitler, win the war, occupy Berlin, and only when that is accomplished can we proceed to make the world safe for human beings to live in.

MOMČILE NINČIĆ
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia
First Chairman of the Yugoslav Pan Europa Union

Occasion commemoration Briand’s eightieth birthday imposes upon us reflection that future of Europe lies in union of all European nations which would gradually realize itself and wherein the independent integrity of every nation great and small alike should find best guarantee and security to allow for their peaceful development. Cordial greetings.

KAAREL ROBERT PUSTA
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia
First Chairman of the Estonian Pan Europa Union

Unable meet ceremony I beg associate myself to you, M. Alexis Léger, and all the admirers of Aristide Briand gathering this afternoon to render homage to memory of great Frenchman, champion of European union. I hope 1930 European memorandum of Briand, Léger, adopted in its time by all European governments and reinforced today by Atlantic Charter, becomes basis for elaboration of statute for free and united Europe.

COUNT CARLO SFORZA
Former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy

I am sorry not to be able to be with you for the commemoration of Briand.

You ask me for a message to be read.

The times are so tragic that our duty to truth must be stronger
than old affections. My affection and admiration for Briand were warm indeed. But I still think today what I felt when he was alive: that Briand failed mainly because his formula "United States of Europe" meant to him—above all—the only way to save France from a disaster which he foresaw.

Briand was an ardently patriotic Frenchman—infinitely more intelligent and more patriotic than his chauvinistic enemies. But he did not feel the problem of a United Europe as a European problem; only as a way to save France. It was much—but not enough. And France felt it, France who, in my opinion, may be capable in certain moments to rise above a purely French conception.

Briand was a great French statesman, by far the best of all the lot. But when he took the "hermit's stick" he did so only for France's sake. That is why he forgot to take the soul of Peter the Hermit.

Peter relied on France's generosity, and he succeeded. Briand relied on France's self-interest, and he failed.

May I add that I told this ten times to Briand, who always answered me: "It is so difficult to move a few steps, and you ask me for a much longer travel."

Yes, even in this war, victory will be surer with great human ideas than with mere patriotic defenses.

EMMANUEL TSOUDEROS
President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece

I believe that the idea of a free, united, and peaceful Europe based upon the self-respect of peoples as the most popular principle of international life could not be better supported than by the example of Greece. The desperate resistance of that country, small in material strength but great in spirit, has proved indeed how vital is the need for liberty among peoples now as always. We may conclude that no international system after this war could meet the approval of public opinion if not securing the absolute national unity and independence of each people. International collaboration must depend on that condition.

SUMNER WELLES
Acting Secretary of State, United States of America

I am glad to take the occasion of the ceremony in commemoration of the eightieth birthday of Aristide Briand to send a word in honor of that statesman, who represented the true spirit of the people of France.

He will long be remembered as a great servant of mankind, because of his devotion to the ideal of a world at peace which animated him throughout the years of his public life.