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George W. Liebmann. *Diplomacy between the Wars: Five Diplomats and the Shaping of the Modern World.* London: I. B. Tauris, 2008. xvi + 269 pp. $89.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-84511-637-8.

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As the title of this work clearly states, George W. Liebmann examines the influence and contributions that five diplomats had on international affairs in the early twentieth century. Liebmann's subjects are American Lewis Einstein, Sir Horace Rumbold of the United Kingdom, the German Count Johan Bernstorff, Count Carlo Sforza of Italy, and Isment Inonu of Turkey. The heart of Liebmann's argument is that the way these men practiced their craft allowed them to be more effective and influential than current diplomats. Furthermore, he contends, if political leaders and others in government had accepted more of these men's ideas, most often presented in reports to their governments or in books, the intensity of international relations and conflicts in the twentieth century would have been reduced significantly and war possibly would have been averted.

This book cannot be considered a biography of these men. Liebmann does describe some childhood and young adult experiences, but his focus is on the diplomat careers of these men. Even here, the author often stresses a particular part of their careers rather than their entire careers. For example, Liebmann focuses significantly on Sforza's exile from fascist Italy but only nominally discusses his earlier service from 1896 to 1921. In addition, Liebmann only briefly mentions family, marital, financial, or other aspects of the lives of these diplomats. Such limitations are understandable for this work, yet the author could have offered more insight into the actions and writings of these men by flushing out other aspects of their lives.

Liebmann's writing relies too heavily on quotations from the five diplomats. The author acknowledges that he might include too much detail but the issue goes beyond one of detail. What is the point of all these quotations? One remarkable instance of both too much detail and a question of purpose can be found in the chapter on Sforza. Sforza wrote a book in 1930 called *Makers of Modern Europe.* In this book, Sforza described most of the major and many of the minor figures of European statecraft of the early twentieth century, such as Vladimir Lenin, Franz Joseph, Pius X, and Marshal Foch. It is unclear why Liebmann uses so many quotations from Sforza's book in *Diplomacy between the Wars.* Presumably, it is to demonstrate the extent of Sforza's knowledge but five pages of his statements is excessive.

Liebmann's quotation-based approach to his book causes him to sacrifice scholarly analysis. Analysis on these men and even their statements is badly needed. Whole paragraphs of quotations can be found on numerous pages that only include a few sentences of analysis. Again, the author acknowledges that he wants these men to essentially speak for themselves through their own words. Liebmann wants the words of these men to convince the reader of the merit of their ideas. Yet more analysis from the author on these ideas would have helped this work.

The most significant problem with this book is how Liebmann criticizes current diplomatic practice, particularly American, but does not elaborate on his criticism. Often Liebmann, through quotations and his analysis, describes the superiority of the ideas of one of these five diplomats and then makes a sharp criticism regarding diplomacy today. This writing style is particularly strong in the chapter about Einstein. For instance, Liebmann mentions that Einstein challenged the idea that democratic societies were more peaceful than those under an absolute ruler. Liebmann writes that this idea is "at variance with those in our time who glibly proclaim that there is an automatic association between democracy and peace" (p. 8). For Liebmann to make such a comment nearly demands further explanation but no more is given. In another paragraph, he notes that Einstein described how Germany had been dragged into World War I by the policies of Austria-Hungary. Liebmann writes that "alliances frequently breed intransigence in the policies of a weaker partner, a lesson which has pertinence in places

like Taiwan and Israel" (p. 12). Again, further explanation is needed for a statement that seemingly challenges, or at least warns against, America's alliance with these two nations. When Einstein described American foreign policy in 1919, he mentioned that America had not had a colonial experience or experienced class domination. Liebmann responds with: "this fact is still not faced by exponents of a 'forward-leaning' American policy" (p. 16). What fact is Liebmann criticizing: no colonial experience or no class domination? Furthermore, what is wrong with a policy that sounds reasonable and progressive? Liebmann's objection to today's American foreign policy may be sound and legitimate. As the book was published in 2008, it was presumably written during the international upheavals that preceded and followed the American-led 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and 2003 invasion of Iraq. Yet Liebmann's criticisms come off as snarky sound bites without any substance and also distract from the reading of a text already made difficult by its quotation-laden organization.

In some instances, Liebmann needed to provide more information about some of the events the five diplomats found themselves involved in or were writing about. For example, Rumbold, as ambassador to Poland, served in Poland when that country was fighting the Soviet Union over border issues between 1919 and 1921. Liebmann does not offer historical context about why the fighting occurred or, specifically, what each side was trying to get. Rumbold was also ambassador to Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s. Liebmann presents some background information on the various government officials involved in the power struggle for leadership in Germany but not enough. It is reasonable that Liebmann would expect readers to have a general understanding of key historical events, such as World War I and World War II, without giving any background. Yet, for events like those mentioned above and others, Armenian genocide and German sabotage in America prior to American entry in World War I, for example, more context and details should have been provided.

At several places in his study, Liebmann chooses not to explore certain important historical events. For example, he provides no information on how the Great Depression helped lead to a change in leadership in Germany or how it changed international diplomacy for all nations. Surely, one of the five diplomats wrote about the economic upheavals that the Great Depression brought, but the event is not even listed in the index. In addition, Liebmann offers no information regarding Einstein's thoughts about the Holocaust. As an American Jew, his thoughts regarding the Holocaust are surely worth reading and would, at least, have been interesting to this reader.

By training and trade, Liebmann is an attorney. He has published several books, mostly related to law. Thus, the author is not new to writing nor is he untrained. Yet, perhaps because of his different perspective, I found it difficult to understand his arguments or to understand where he was going in this book. Liebmann admits that he is cobbling together a narrative involving five men from different nations, including some who had met one another and others who had not. Though they lived at roughly the same time, their experiences, even diplomatic ones, were at times remarkably different. So, the author should be applauded for attempting a work that seeks to bring the diplomatic perspective of men who experienced two of the worst wars in human history to an audience in an uneasy world. Yet, in trying to bring the experiences of the diplomats in *Diplomacy between the Wars* to today's readers, Liebmann's message gets lost. The author's overuse of quotations and the lack of historical analysis of events at the beginning of the twentieth century and in current society weakens the book and makes it difficult to understand.

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