dabei behilflich sein könnte, eine auf Frankreich orientierte Außenpolitik in den Grenzstaaten mit zu gestalten. Aus demselben Grund setzte man auch große Hoffnungen in die Grenzstaatenkonferenz im Januar 1925 in Helsinki. Von Finnland, Estland, Lettland und Polen wurden konkrete Ergebnisse erwartet, d.h. internationale Schiedsabkommen und Vereinbarungen über die Kooperation der Generalstäbe. Zum Teil haben sich diese Hoffnungen auch realisieren lassen.[24]

Allerdings beließ es Frankreich auch diesmal bei moralischer Unterstützung, es erweckte bestimmte Hoffnungen und spornte die Verhandlungspartner an. Mehr war allerdings im Grunde auch nicht nötig, da Finnland, Estland, Lettland und Polen das von Frankreich vorgeschlagene kollektive Sicherheitssystem und Schiedsverfahren bei der Abstimmung im Völkerbund unterstützten. Andererseits hat man in Frankreich die Situation in Osteuropa wohl nicht immer ganz verstanden und wohl auch die Mentalität der politischen Partner nicht so ganz einschätzen können. Die Franzosen scheinen zuweilen einfach erwartet zu haben, dass die Osteuropäer auf genau die Art und Weise ihre eigenen Interessen umsetzen würden, wie man es in Paris voraussetzte.[25]

SUMMARY

The Shift of the Emphasis in French Baltic Policy during the 1920's

In early spring 1918 the only sign of a possible resistance to German occupation and expansion in the vast area of the former Russian borderlands was the Estonian movement of independence. The French government was ready to recognize Estonian independence *de facto* in order to encourage the Estonians in their resistance to the German occupation. So the first *de facto* recognition was given to the Estonian Constituent Assembly on 1st of March 1918. When it was realized that the Constituent Assembly could not meet, a new recognition was given to the Estonian Diet on the 13th of May. On the 6th November the French government once more corrected the *de facto* recognition that concerned this time the Estonian Provisional Government.

France did not consent to *de jure* recognition until January 1921. By then the Soviet government seemed to be victorious in the Russian civil war

[24] Rundtelegramm von Laroche, 24.2.1925. AMAE Esthonie 5.

[25] Siehe näher Kalervo Hovi: Ranska ja Itä-Euroopan toiseus 1917–1927. [Frankreich und das osteuropäische „Andere"], in: Mielikuvien maanosat [Die Kontinente der Imagination]. Festschrift für Olavi K. Fält, hrsg. von Kari Alenius, Seija Jalagin, Markku Mäkivuoti, Sinikka Wunsch, Oulu 2006, S. 123-130.

and there was no actual possibility for a Russia led by White politicians whatsoever. Furthermore, France was building her alliance policy on the Polish pillar. A Franco-Polish political and military treaty was signed in February 1921, and the French government expected that Poland would extend the system of alliances by her own treaties.

At the end of 1920, however, Poland encountered difficulties with her northern neighbours, not only with Lithuania but also with Latvia. The biggest obstacles were Polish demands of exterritorial rights in Latvian harbours, above all in Liepaja, which fostered Latvian fears of Polish imperialism that had been showing itself in the Vilnius area a few months before. In the French perspective it was necessary that Poland would build her alliances with the Baltic countries through giving encouragement to the Latvians. So the French took the initiative to recognize Latvia on the 27th of January 1921 *de jure*. Basically because of the analogous international situation the recognition was extended to Estonia, too.

In 1922 the French government decided that it was time to settle the crucial differences between Poland and Lithuania. Thus Paris took the initiative to recognize Lithuania *de jure* in December 1922. It wanted to dispel Lithuanian misgivings about the Vilnius-case and continued her efforts until 1927 but in vain. However, Estonian and Latvian efforts in the same direction were approved, and a Polish-Latvian-Estonian-Finnish treaty on arbitration signed in 1925 was interpreted as fulfilment of the French policy.