

ANGLO-SOVIET RELATIONS 1917-1924
A study in the politics of diplomacy

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Stephen White B.A. (Mod.)

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Summary

The thesis discusses Anglo-Soviet relations - considered as a political inter-action - between the years 1917, when the fall of Tsardom made necessary the re-consideration of British relations with the Russian government, and 1924, when the Soviet government was recognized de jure by the British government. It devotes particular attention to the influence of radical unrest in British colonies in Asia upon relations between the two countries' governments, as well as to the development of trade and the relations between business and government with regard to Russian policy, and to the labour movement.

Chapter One considers the reaction of the British government and of the labour movement to the February and October revolutions, and the beginning of Allied intervention in Russia, the British role in which forms the substance of Chapter Two. Chapter Three surveys labour opinion and policy in regard to Soviet Russia until 1921, and labour's influence upon government policy. Chapter Four discusses the negotiations which led to the 1921 Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement, an agreement which was closely related to the Cabinet's desire to restrain radical propaganda in British possessions in Asia, as Chapter Five attempts to make clear. Chapter Six considers early Soviet foreign policy, especially on the national and colonial question. The conferences at Genoa and the Hague in 1922 are discussed in Chapter Seven. Chapter Eight considers the policy of the Conservatives towards the Soviet government in 1922-3, and the growing disenchantment of business opinion with that policy throughout the latter part of 1923 is noted in Chapter Nine. Labour's policy towards Soviet Russia, and the factors contributing to the first Labour government's extension of diplomatic recognition to the Soviet government, are discussed in Chapter Ten.

The thesis is based upon unpublished Cabinet and Foreign Office records, private papers, national and local organizational archives, government publications, reports and policy publications of bodies, contemporary pamphlets, newspapers and journals, memoirs, and modern journal and monograph publications.

Introduction

It became apparent at an early stage in the preparation of the present study that an adequate discussion of 'Anglo-Soviet relations 1917-1924' would require rather more than an account of the exchange of diplomatic communications between the two governments. The treatment which follows is, accordingly, both broader and narrower than its title might suggest.

It has been my intention to provide at least an outline account of the development of relations between the two countries in the period under review against which the overall argument can be examined. At the same time a number of events, which appeared to be of particular significance, have been given detailed consideration: notably the Leeds Convention (1917), the Baku Congress (1920), the Council of Action (1920) and the Urquhart negotiations with the Soviet government (1921-2).

More generally, I have attempted to relate the course of British-Soviet relations to three broad themes: British imperial rule in Asia and the radical anti-colonial movement; foreign trade and business interests; and the politics of the labour movement in regard to Soviet Russia. To integrate these themes coherently within the overall argument has been a difficult task, but a necessary one: for to discuss British-Soviet relations other than in this context would seriously misunderstand the nature of what was throughout a pre-eminently political confrontation. This, then, is a study not (other than formally) of the relationship between states, but of that between classes.

To a great extent the conceptual framework of any author must stand prior to any study he completes, and it is too often unacknowledged. It should be made clear, therefore, that the premises of the account which follows are marxist. The corpus of classical marxism has - with the possible exception of Marx's writings on the Eastern Question - surprisingly little to offer the student of international relations. I believe the authority of Engels may, however, be invoked in defence of an analysis which often treats the (however limited and class-specific) currency of political party debate in its own terms, positing the relative autonomy of these 'superstructural' factors, without insisting upon a constant reference to specific economic interests. Writing in a celebrated

letter to Bloch in September 1890, Engels pointed out that neither he nor Marx had ever asserted that the economic element was more than the "ultimately determining element in history", and that to attempt to regard it as the "only determining factor" was to reduce the materialist conception of history to a "meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase". Judicial forms, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views, the "traditions which haunt human minds", "also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form" (Marx and Engels: Selected Correspondence p498).

It would be going too far, however, to accept the terms of those academic studies which permit statements such as (to take a recent, and otherwise admirable monograph) "Russia asked Britain to probe the matter", or "Italy seemed in imminent danger of collapse" (Rothwell (1971) p125,p144). 'Britain', of course, could make no such request: this could be done only by the British government, a body whose social composition and assumptions should be at each point identified, and related to British political life and to the often, or even normally opposed interests of other sections of the population. I have tried throughout to avoid a discussion in such terms, even for the sake of brevity.

To attempt to relate, and even explain policies and attitudes by reference to their changing economic and sociological context is, I am aware, to offend against A.J.P. Taylor's dictum that 'things happen because they happen': and I am content that this should be so. It is a curious but nonetheless persistent fact that the reluctance to use such organising descriptions of the economic relations between countries as 'imperialism' is more often found in those countries which have benefitted - often very considerably - from the operation of those relations than in those which have been less fortunate. England in this connection is no exception. The English, one might say, have a lot to be empirical about.

The present study is unfortunately, but necessarily a somewhat extended one. A recapitulation of the overall argument may therefore be convenient

at this point. Chapter One (Britain and the Russian Revolution) considers the reaction of the government and of the labour movement to the February Revolution which overthrew Tsardom, and traces relations with the Provisional Government which succeeded it. The British government-sponsored missions to Russia are considered, and the Leeds Labour and Socialist Convention, which called for the establishment in Britain of workmen's and soldiers' councils on (apparently) the Russian model, is discussed in detail. The chapter concludes with an account of government and labour reactions to the October Revolution, and of the beginnings of Allied intervention in Russia.

Chapter Two (The Rise and Fall of Intervention) deals with the nature and course of Allied, and especially British intervention in Russia in 1918-20. Divisions within the Cabinet are found ultimately less important than a common desire that the Bolshevik regime should be overthrown. The Cabinet went to considerable lengths to bring about this object, through the provision of material assistance and military supplies and advisors, and even - liberal professions of non-interference notwithstanding - sanctioned offensive military operations against the Bolsheviks. British assistance, however, proved insufficient to secure the success of the Whites; and the Cabinet, accordingly, abandoned the policy. Yet intervention had been by no means an exceptional venture, as becomes apparent when the policy is placed within the context of the revolutionary crisis which embraced Europe at this time, and related to the Cabinet's support of the threatened bourgeois social order elsewhere in Europe.

Chapter Three (Labour and Soviet Russia 1917-1921) considers labour 'solidarity' with Soviet Russia and the influence which the working-class movement was able to bring to bear upon the government on this issue. Labour's claim to have secured the end of the policy of intervention is discussed, and an assessment is offered of the influence of the 'Hands off Russia' movement. Little evidence of pro-Soviet as distinct from anti-war opinion is found, and little willingness is evident to proceed beyond the adoption of resolutions in opposition to the government's policy, as the 'Hands off Russia' and other bodies urged. An apparent exception to this proposition, and the most notable

labour demonstration of this period, is considered in some detail. Rather than an example of militant labour solidarity which altered government policy towards Soviet Russia, the formation of the National and of local Councils of Action in 1920 is found not to have changed the government's policy - which had never envisaged the involvement of British troops - and to have represented ~~above~~ ^{essentially} ~~an~~ an affirmation of opposition to war in whatever circumstances and ~~of~~ ^a defence of the constitution, which the government was thought to have failed to respect.

Chapter Four (Agreement?) deals with the negotiations between the two governments from January 1920 until March 1921, when the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement was signed. The Cabinet's policy in the summer of 1920, when it appeared probable that Soviet forces would overthrow the existing Polish government and perhaps the Versailles settlement, is discussed. Differences of opinion existed within the Cabinet with regard to the conclusion of an agreement with the Soviet Russian government; but these were essentially differences, it is suggested, about how the Bolshevik regime might most effectively be undermined or at least induced to abandon its socialist character. The influence upon the government's policy of business circles and of an increasing unemployment problem is assessed.

Chapter Five (Imperial Crisis and Soviet Russia) deals with the threat which Soviet policy and Bolshevism generally were thought to present to the British Empire, at this time seriously embarrassed by a widespread, apparently inter-connected and radical anti-colonial movement. The Trade Agreement, considered in this perspective, was a settlement of a highly conditional character, the continued existence of which the British government made dependent upon the abandonment by the Soviet government of anti-imperialist propaganda and assistance to radical movements in the colonial world. A letter was handed to the Soviet representatives by Sir Robert Horne on the signature of the Agreement specifying the action which the Soviet government would be expected to take, under its terms, to curb colonial agitation. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the

note which was sent to the Soviet government later in the year which drew attention to apparent breaches of this understanding, and required a stricter observance of its terms.

The following Chapter Six (Soviet Russia and Revolution) examines the other side of this confrontation. It notes the increasing emphasis placed upon the colonial question by Bolshevik leaders from 1920 onwards, when the situation in Europe appeared to have become stabilised. The proceedings of the Second Congress of the Communist International, and of the Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East, are considered in some detail. The apparent failure of directly socialist policies in the East, prompted a reconsideration of communist policy, and concessions to the strength of religious and other traditions, even before the Trade Agreement had been signed and obligations contracted to restrict anti-imperialist agitation and propaganda. Some success was subsequently experienced in establishing diplomatic relations and developing trade with independent Asian states, but this might be at the expense, it appeared, of the communists and radicals of the East, who remained few in number and often subject to persecution at the hands of these same 'objectively progressive' governments. Colonial leaders generally welcomed the October Revolution and supported the Bolshevik government, but they rarely embraced, or even understood, its socialist character. India, central to the whole imperial edifice, was no exception. While the non-co-operation movement was often militant and enjoyed mass support, communism in India remained unequal to the attentions of British intelligence and, however serious a long-term threat, presented no immediate danger to imperial rule.

Chapter Seven (Conferences) returns to a European framework with a discussion of Lloyd George's attempt in 1922 to 'solve the Russian problem' through multilateral negotiations at the Genoa and Hague Conferences. The introduction of the New Economic Policy in Russia, ending state control of small-scale industry and domestic trade, prompted the belief abroad that the failure of communism had at last been admitted by the Soviet leaders (an admission which had been confidently, but increasingly impatiently forecast since 1917). The Bolshevik leaders, it was thought, would now accept whatever terms the

Allies laid down in order to secure foreign economic assistance. Lloyd George's attempt to persuade their delegates to accept the Allied terms - which were clearly if not explicitly designed to restore capitalist legal and property conventions in Russia - rested, however, upon a misconception of the strength of the Soviet government, and of opinion within the Bolshevik leadership, and proved unsuccessful.

Lloyd George's policy towards Soviet Russia was regarded, moreover, with considerable scepticism by many of his Cabinet colleagues, and his attempt to solve the Russian problem by direct negotiation was not repeated by Bonar Law's Conservative administration, discussed in Chapter Eight (The Tories and Soviet Russia). British foreign policy now more directly reflected Lord Curzon's views, and his imperial preoccupations in particular. A number of unresolved disputes, together with renewed accusations of colonial propaganda and subversion, formed the substance of the ultimatum which Curzon addressed to the Soviet government in May 1923. His demands were met on many, but not all points; but a rupture of relations, which appeared imminent, was averted. After further mutual recriminations the correspondence was declared closed, although official relations had become no more cordial by the end of the year.

Business opinion, it appeared, had broadly supported Curzon's firm attitude towards the Soviet government in the latter part of 1922 and early 1923; but the views of traders and manufacturers, and to some extent of financiers also, changed markedly in this respect in the summer and autumn of 1923 (Chapter Nine: Recognition). Trade between the two countries had steadily developed, and following the restoration of the Soviet economy and a good harvest seemed likely to develop further. A delegation which went to Russia in the summer of 1923, representing major engineering interests and led by A.G. Marshall and by F.L. Baldwin (the Prime Minister's cousin), reported favourably upon the commercial potential of the Russian market. The members of the delegation gave numerous interviews and speeches, issued reports and conducted private lobbying after their return. Business opinion appears to have been impressed. Together with other developments - the Moscow Agricultural Exhibition, at which some British firms were represented, and the establishment of a Russo-British Grain Export Company in October -

'practically-minded' merchants and industrialists came generally to the conclusion that trade with Soviet Russia should be more vigorously promoted. They accepted the corollary of this proposition, that diplomatic recognition should be extended to the Soviet government in order to provide a juridical foundation for trade and consular and other facilities for British traders in Russia. Direct representations to this effect were made to the government by several national business organizations, with the support of large sections of the press. In default of the normal guardians of business interests, it was the Labour Party which openly espoused this policy and explicitly championed the interests of merchants and manufacturers. The first Labour government's decision to extend diplomatic recognition to the Soviet government is seen, in this perspective, as a 'consensus' decision, which was welcomed by Labour and Liberal opinion, by many Conservatives, and by the great bulk of business institutions and the press.

Chapter Ten (Soviet Russia and Labourism) extends this discussion, and disputes the view that Labour's recognition of the Soviet government was related to the party's 'socialism'. The formation of the country's first 'Socialist Government' gave rise to much dark foreboding. An examination of the party's ideology and origins, and of its policy towards the Empire and towards Communism nationally and internationally, suggests that this anxiety was misconceived. While some amorphous sympathy with the Soviet regime may have existed in working-class circles, Labour's Russian policy seems to have been more closely related to other factors. In particular, the Russian market was considered to provide at least a major part of the answer to the unemployment problem; and secondly, the recognition of the Soviet government, as a contribution to peace and stability in Europe, was advocated on its own merits by the former Liberals in the party, who were generally experienced in foreign affairs and exercised a disproportionate influence in the formulation of Labour foreign policy.

The conclusion deals briefly with the attempt to negotiate a general Anglo-Soviet settlement which followed the formal act of recognition, and offers some general conclusions on the complex interrelation of class, party and foreign policy with which the study concerns itself throughout.

Many people and institutions have assisted me in the course of my research, and I am glad to acknowledge my indebtedness to them. In Glasgow Professor Alec Nove, my supervisor, has offered encouragement and advice at all times. Alan Ross and, in particular, Hillel Ticktin have read earlier parts of the manuscript and made helpful suggestions; and Sidney Aster gave me some initial advice on sources. The International Socialists' informal Wednesday meetings, the Conference of Radical Scholars on the Soviet Union and the Politics Department seminar were read parts of the manuscript in various guises, and I have benefitted from the discussions which followed. In Moscow, where my study was supported by a British Council exchange studentship, Dotsent Papin of the History Department was a solicitous nauchny rukovoditel'. Elsewhere, Walter Kendall read and discussed a number of chapters with me; Barry Hollingsworth and Marcel Liebman corresponded with me and sent me useful material; and Pat Laysell-Ward gave expert bibliographic advice. Rajani Palme Dutt, Andrew Rothstein (in correspondence) and Morgan Philips Price were kind enough to discuss their recollections of the period with me.

The staff of a great many institutions in which I have worked I can thank only in general, but nonetheless sincere terms: Glasgow University Library and the Library of the Institute of Soviet and East European Studies; the Mitchell Library, Glasgow; the Scottish T.U.C., Glasgow; Edinburgh University Library and the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; the Lenin Library and Moscow University's Gorky Library, Moscow; the Brotherton Library, Leeds; Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield Public Libraries, especially their departments of local history and manuscripts; Sheffield Trades and Labour Council; Manchester University Library; Cambridge University Library; the Bodleian Library and Nuffield College Library, Oxford; Birmingham University Library; the Library of Trinity College, Dublin; the British Museum Reading Room and Newspaper Library, Colindale; the Beaverbrook Library, London; the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce, London; the India Office Library, London; the T.U.C. Library, London; and the Conservative Party Research Department, London. The Confederation of British Industries was kind enough to allow me to consult its

records which are otherwise closed to scholars while they are being arranged and catalogued, and Mr G.W. McDonald helped me to find those records of most direct relevance to my research. A number of other libraries and institutions answered questions and provided information in correspondence. Thanks above all are due to the East Room of the Public Record Office and to the British Library of Political and Economic Science, where so much of the research upon which this study is based was conducted.

The transliteration of Russian which has been used is based on the Transliteration of Cyrillic in Headings in the General Catalogue of the Department of Printed Books of the British Museum, but convenience has prevailed over pedantry when other versions have become accepted in English, e.g. Zinoviev not Zinov'ev; and spellings have not been modified to conform with present day usage when they have occurred in quoted passages, e.g. *Ezar*, Nabokoff. Italics are throughout in the original unless otherwise stated. Dates are given throughout in the new style in force in the West and in Russia from 1918 onwards, rather than in the old style in force in Russia in 1917, which differed by thirteen days, and by which is explained the fact that the 'February revolution' occurred in March. Trotsky, who employs old style dating in his History of the Russian Revolution, asked the reader to be "kind enough to remember that before overthrowing the Byzantine calendar, the revolution had to overthrow the institutions that clung to it". It should finally be pointed out that I have not strictly differentiated between the 'Russian', 'Soviet Russian' and 'Soviet' government, and it should be borne in mind that British relations were with the government of the R.S.F.S.R. until 1923, and with the U.S.S.R. government subsequently.

Chapter One: Britain and the Russian Revolution

Despite the relative optimism of Milner's conclusions following his visit to Petrograd in February, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was obliged to announce to the Cabinet on 14 March 1917 that the situation there was deteriorating¹. Recent telegrams indicated "serious developments in the seditious movement in Petrograd". It was accordingly decided that for the moment strict censorship should be imposed on the publication of any details that might escape the Russian censorship. It took some time, therefore, for the significance of the Petrograd events to filter through to British public opinion. Bruce Glasier, writing in the Labour Leader, confessed that "what has happened and is happening in Russia we do not know"; the news was "scanty enough, and such as it is, is contradictory and not to be relied upon"². For the time being the Cabinet contented itself with the "real comfort" that all their information led them to believe that the movement was "not in any sense directed towards an effort to secure peace, but, on the contrary, the discontent - this is the substance of all our information - is not against the government for carrying on the war, but against it for not carrying on the war with efficiency and with that energy which the people expect"³.

The following day the Cabinet learned that a series of further telegrams from the British Ambassador at Petrograd indicated that the situation "had by no means cleared up"; it had, indeed, advanced to such a point that Buchanan now sought the government's authority to recognize the new de facto Russian government. The Ambassador was accordingly given permission to recognize the new government "if and when he considers this to be advisable in view of the local circumstances prevailing at the moment, provided that the French government concurred in this course"⁴. A telegram conveying these instructions was despatched to Petrograd⁵.

The Russian Ambassador in Britain, Nabokov, wrote to Balfour, announcing that Russia would be "faithful to the pact which unites her indissolubly with her glorious Allies", and would "fight....against the common enemy to the end"⁶. Recognition of the new government in itself, as Buchanan explained to Balfour, served the purpose of strengthening the moderates and influencing the government to accept the obligations of its

predecessors, "especially as regards the war"⁷. The Ambassador was directed to attempt to retain influence with "the statesmen whom we desire to keep in power"⁸. The Ambassador was to be reminded that he had the authority to recognize the Provisional Government; but he must obtain guarantees that it would carry out the obligations of its predecessors⁹. "All your influence", he was advised by Balfour, "should be thrown into the scale against any Administration which is not resolved to fight to a finish"¹⁰. The insistence that the new government maintain obligations which it was already clearly unable to discharge in fact contributed significantly to its eventual downfall.

In public, however, the government was more optimistic. The Prime Minister told the Cabinet that, in view of the attitude of the House of Commons, the government had felt obliged to announce their intention of moving a resolution in Parliament, expressing hope and confidence in the Duma, while "pointing out that we are not free from danger"¹¹. The terms were drafted in consultation with the Ambassador in Petrograd; and on 22 March Bonar Law, on behalf of the Prime Minister, presented it to the House of Commons¹². The resolution offered Parliament's "fraternal greetings" to the Duma, and tendered to the Russian people its "heartiest congratulations upon the establishment among them of free institutions". Something of the government's particular concern was evident in the expressed belief that recent events would "lead not only to the rapid and happy progress of the Russian nation but to the prosecution with renewed steadfastness and vigour of the war against the stronghold of an autocratic militarism which threatens the liberty of Europe". The resolution, Bonar Law explained, was an expression of "goodwill to the new government, a government which has been formed with the declared intention of carrying this war to a successful conclusion". It was intended to "strengthen the hands of the Russian Government in their difficult task"¹³.

Bonar Law allowed himself a "feeling of compassion for the late Czar". The Imperial War Cabinet, meeting the same day, went so far as to resolve that the Czar, the Empress and their family be invited to take up residence in Britain; and Buchanan was informed on the same day that the Emperor and Empress had been granted asylum in Britain¹⁴. The Cabinet was subsequently informed, however, that there was a "strong feeling hostile to the Czar in certain working-class circles". The example, moreover, might prove infectious: articles tending to associate the King with the Czar had appeared in

the press (not unreasonably, since they were cousins); and "it was felt that, if the Czar should take up his residence here, there was a danger that these tendencies might be stimulated and accentuated". In the event of any difference of opinion between the British and the Russian governments, moreover, there would be a tendency in Russia to attribute the British attitude to the Czar's presence. It was therefore concluded that "the South of France, or even Spain,.. might be a more suitable place of residence"¹⁵.

The government's reactions were shared by the Conservative section of the press, which in general professed to see in the revolution the restoration of order and the revival of the war effort, at the expense of a Germanophile court. The Morning Post announced that one result would be to make the Russian army more formidable to Germany than ever before; the Mail declared that the "German plotters in Petrograd" had "sustained the most signal defeat"; and the Observer held that an example had been given to the Kaiser's subjects - "political slaves now by comparison with emancipated Russia" - which would "shake to its foundations the German governing system which caused the war". Liberal newspapers displayed rather more enthusiasm, but the difference in their reaction was hardly a fundamental one. The Manchester Guardian described the revolution as the "deadliest blow to the war morale of Germany", and hoped that a "new vigour" would "energize the war, springing from a sincere idealism", now that Liberals were in control in Russia also. Indeed "Liberalism", declared a writer in the Nation, had "won its first great victory"¹⁶. The Review of Reviews thought that the change would "magnetise and electrify the soldier in the trenches", and turn Russia from the weakest into the "strongest link in the European Alliance". The Nineteenth Century and After agreed that the revolution had been the "hardest blow that Germany has received in the war to date. Hitherto Russia has been fighting with one arm bound; now she can really prosecute the war wholeheartedly"¹⁷.

Wardle, speaking for the Labour Party on the government's resolution in the House of Commons, saw in it a "message from the democracy of Great Britain to the democracy of Russia", and an extension to the latter of the "hand of fellowship". He found it unnecessary to express his condolences to the Czar; but he agreed with the government that the revolution heralded no weakening of Russia's will in regard to the war. What in particular attracted his attention and approval were two facts, which, he declared, "stand out with

regard to this revolution - it is parliamentary and it is constitutional"¹⁸.

The 'unofficial' Labour Party in the House of Commons, composed largely of I.L.P. and ex-Liberal members, found in the revolution a confirmation of their own opposition to the conduct of the war. Philip Snowden, welcoming the "declaration of the new democratic government of Russia, repudiating all proposals for imperialistic conquest and aggrandisement," optimistically sought its endorsement by the government. No event in their generation, he declared, had so thrilled the world as the Russian revolution. "It has given us a new hope in democracy and revived our faith in Internationalism". It was, he thought, ~~XX~~ a revolt against the old order and the practice of international diplomacy, the "intrigues and conspiracies which have been carried on in courts and in the chambers of diplomatists": an endorsement, in other words, of the ¹criticism of British policy offered by the small 'pacifist' section of the House of Commons with which Snowden himself was associated. It heralded equally, he thought, a "useful League of Nations after the war", and a "people's peace", to be settled by the democracies of the different countries, sweeping away secret diplomacy and armaments manufacture. In no sense was this a defence of those who even now were calling for the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war. Ramsay MacDonald, indeed, supporting the motion, called upon the government to "help the Russian Revolution to maintain itself against its internal foes", and drew attention to the danger of a separate Russo-German peace¹⁹:

The Labour press reflected similar preoccupations. Some writers, admittedly, preferred to suspend their judgement. William Stewart, for instance, wrote in the Glasgow I.L.P. paper Forward that the question was "and the answer will doubtless come in due course - what kind of a Revolution is this? Is it a Russian revolution or a European revolution?". The paper's editorial, entitled "A Whig Revolution", noted that the beginning of the end was not in sight²⁰. MacDonald was less reserved. The Duma Socialists, he wrote, "take up the general attitude of our own I.L.P", if they were "a little more extreme". The outcome of the revolution would be to bring the I.L.P. policy "more and more into the foreground". Leaders of the "extreme pacifist Left, like Lanine (sic)", would, he thought, by their indiscretions play into the hands of Milyukov with "disastrous results". These were the "impractical groups who would make a separate peace or anything"²¹.

Snowden found in the revolution the "supreme justification of those who have challenged Great Britain's alliance with the Russian autocracy". He was concerned that a permanent, "people's peace", through the "triumph of international democracy", should be achieved by the Russian people. In the triumph of the working classes lay the hope of an early termination of the war²². All friends of human freedom, Bruce Glasier wrote, must rejoice in the revolution, "even though they may not mingle their congratulations with the jingo jubilations that resound from Fleet Street and Whitehall"²³. The Socialist Review, in MacDonald's characteristic tones, in common with "all friends of the Russian people, and of democracy and freedom in all lands", joyously welcomed the event, "not only as a wonderful and beneficent stroke of deliverance for the Russian people, but as a supremely important achievement for the cause of democracy and peace in Europe and throughout the world"²⁴. The National Council of the I.L.P., and the I.L.P. M.P.s, summed up the reaction of this section of the labour movement in a message to Russia of "warm and whole-hearted congratulations on the magnificent achievement of the Russian people", and hoped that the revolution would hasten the coming of a peace, "based, not on the dominance of militarists and diplomatists, but on democracy and justice"²⁵.

It would have been surprising had expressions of support of this kind been uniformly welcomed by those to whom they were addressed. Something of this is, perhaps, evident in the address which the Russian Socialist Groups in London (whose Secretary was the future People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, George Chicherin) presented to the I.L.P. annual conference at Leeds in April 1917. The success of the Russian revolution, it noted, was now in the hands not only of the Russian workers, but also of the workers of other countries. "It would be the greatest tragedy of international Socialism if the Russian internationalists were to be defeated as a consequence of their brothers in other countries having failed them"²⁶. Support for the Russian revolution, in the event, served to unite all sections of the Labour Party, each section of which could find something worthy of support in the Provisional Government's foreign policy of 'no annexations and no indemnities', and in its extensive programme of civil liberties at home. Snowden, MacDonald and the 'unofficial' section found in the repudiation of annexations and indem-

ities a step towards its own policy of an early, negotiated and 'democratic' peace; while all could support the extension of civil liberties, the restriction of which in Britain under wartime regulations was often at the expense of the interests of Labour. The official section of the party could welcome the revolution as improving the democratic credentials of the country's allies, making Russia not only a more acceptable, but also, no doubt, a more effective ally.

Labour support was the more readily forthcoming in view of the opposition which Labour had always offered, before the war and on its outbreak, to the British alliance with Tsardom. Labour figures (especially H.N. Brailsford) were involved in the work of the Society of the Friends of Russian Freedom, under the presidency of a respected Liberal, Dr Spence Watson, and an "Anglo-Russian Committee, formed to watch over the development of Anglo-Russian relations in the interests of the liberties of the Russian people", included among its members Brailsford, MacDonald and J. O'Grady²⁷. The T.U.C. set up a fund in 1906 to assist Russian workers and peasants in their fight for freedom, and in 1912 the president of the T.U.C. formally moved a resolution, which was carried unanimously, expressing the sympathy of the British trade unions with the struggle of the workers in Russia²⁸. O'Grady, Keir Hardie, MacDonald and Henderson opposed the Tsar's visit to Britain in 1909 in the House of Commons, and the T.U.C. passed a resolution deploring the visit²⁹.

An important element in Labour's opposition to the impending war in 1914 was that it would range Britain beside Tsarist Russia. A manifesto issued by the British Section of the International Socialist Bureau on 31 July, signed by Hardie and Henderson, declared that "the success of Russia at the present day would be a curse to the world"; and a resolution adopted at a demonstration in Trafalgar Square two days later asserted that "any step.. taken by the government of this country to support Russia" would be "not only offensive to the political traditions of the country but ~~XXXX~~ disastrous in Europe"³⁰. As Bruce Glasier pointed out, from the death of Ivan the Terrible up to 4 August 1914, Russia had been "universally regarded as the nether-region of autocracy, oppression, reaction, superstition and devouring Empire"³¹. Kingsley Martin recalled that Tsardom was held to be the "very symbol of tyranny", and that "most of the protests against the war in 1914 were based on detestation of an alliance with Russia"³². The New Statesman

noted that the Russian alliance had since 1907 been "steadily and vehemently denounced by a considerable section of Radical opinion. While attacks upon the alliance had ceased since the outbreak of the war, this represented not a reconciliation but an "uneasy acceptance of the practical necessity of the policy"³³.

The February revolution, then, removed the misgivings with which the majority section of Labour had entered the war in alliance with Russian Tsardom, and suggested that the war might, after all,,be one genuinely in defence of democracy and the rights of small nations. Minority Labour welcomed the revolution as the "dawn of a new day", as Lansbury recalled: a formula which implied no support of the movement towards a working-class seizure of power, in Russia or elsewhere. Indeed they cared not whose revolution it was, Lansbury declared, "whether Menshevik or Bolshevik: for us it was enough that the Tsardom had fallen"³⁴.

To some extent this reflected the effect of wartime censorship. They knew so little of internal Russian political developments, wrote the Herald, that speculation was idle and suggestion impertinent³⁵. More importantly, it reflected the preoccupation of the 'pacifist' section of the labour movement with the achievement of an early and negotiated peace. This concern preceded the February revolution; and what was welcome in that revolution was the support it soon began to provide for the renegotiation of war aims and the achievement of a 'people's peace'. At the same time Snowden warned that whatever might be one's views about the war, and however strongly one might desire an early peace, he could "not but regret that there should be strikes, the effect of which may imperil the lives of our men in the fighting line"³⁶; and MacDonald, with more conviction, perhaps, than accuracy, at a Leicester May Day demonstration to welcome the Russian revolution had no hesitation in condemning the "actions of the Lenin Party, which was composed of thoughtless anarchists who had no definite policy..³⁷. He welcomed the apparent moderation of the new Russian government in Parliament; and called for a corresponding revision of British war aims³⁸. Forward found it necessary at a subsequent date to warn that the Russian movement was "not helped by the complicated attempts to exploit the Revolution in the interests of Western pacifism"³⁹.

Characteristic, in fact, of the response of the main section of the labour movement to the revolution was a telegram which was despatched to

the Russian Duma leaders, urging continuation of the war. The telegram followed a request from Buchanan that British labour leaders should send a message to the Duma labour leaders "expressing their confidence that they and their colleagues will know how to strengthen the hands of free peoples fighting against the despotism of Germany whose victory can only bring disaster to all classes of the Allies, and pointing out that every day's work lost means disaster to their brothers in the trenches". It would, he added, be well also to refer to what labour classes in Britain were doing and to "our general unity"⁴⁰. Open opposition was likely to develop very shortly between the parties of the Social Revolution and of the Duma. If the latter prevailed, Russia would be rendered stronger than in the past; but should the former prevail, whose object was "peace at any price", a "military disaster" was likely to ensue. The message he envisaged might, however, contribute to strengthening the influence of the Duma leaders⁴⁰:

The Cabinet decided that the message should be sent at once. The text was drafted by Henderson, approved by the Cabinet, and despatched⁴¹. The telegram declared that British labour was "watching with (the) deepest sympathy the efforts of the Russian people to deliver themselves from (the) power of reactionary elements which are impeding their advance to victory.. Earnestly trust (that) you will impress on your followers that any remission of effort means disaster to (your) comrades in (the) trenches and to our common hopes of social regeneration"⁴². Who could have gathered, Glasier commented, that the Russian working class was engaged in a life-and-death struggle to liberate Russia from the age-long military despotism of the Czar and the Russian bureaucracy⁴³. Chicherin, on behalf of the Russian Socialist Groups in London, submitted their view that the Labour Party message was an "attempt.. to utilize the Russian revolutionary struggle in the interests of the war policy of the Entente imperialist coalition": the appeal was a hypocritical one⁴⁴. Henderson, unabashed, undertook the following month to make the necessary arrangements for the despatch of further telegrams from the workers of Woolwich Arsenal and Vickers Works, as suggested by Buchanan from Petrograd⁴⁵.

The Cabinet was informed by Henderson on 26 March that a delegation from the French Socialist Party was shortly to arrive in Britain en route for Petrograd on a war mission, "their object being to persuade (the Russian

Socialist Party) to do all in its power to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion". The Cabinet decided that Henderson should "use his influence to secure that a suitably composed British Labour Deputation should accompany the French party with the same object"⁴⁶. Henderson reported ~~two~~ days later that J.H. Thomas had been unable to go; but that he believed that Will Thorne and O'Grady would be willing to accept the deputation. The Cabinet favoured the addition of a "reliable Russian socialist .. attached to the mission as an interpreter", and of a "more academic Socialist of the type of Mr Hyndman" (whose loyalty to the war effort was not, nevertheless, in doubt)⁴⁷. The delegation, composed ultimately of Thorne and O'Grady with the addition of William Banders of the Fabian Society, was setting out to Russia with the "one object of encouraging, so far as they can, the present Russian Government in the prosecution of the war"⁴⁸. The government was, he stated, "satisfied that they will serve the purpose"⁴⁸.

The mission, in the event, in spite (or perhaps, because) of the government's confidence in it, was less than successful, even among those 'moderate' sections of the Russian socialists whose support they were particularly to seek. They presented a number of addresses urging continuation of the "present war against German militarism.. until this threat has disappeared to the free democracies of the world"⁴⁹. They were somewhat concerned, they told a press conference, by what they had seen in Russia, but after a discussion of the existing situation with the members of the Soviet, they had been assured that although naturally an early peace was desired, there would be no separate peace⁵⁰. Their reception was not, however, improved by the circulation of an (evidently plausible) rumour that the deputation represented the government and not the working-class movement. The Menshevik-controlled Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet found it necessary to point out in a statement that they had only recently discovered the circumstances in which the delegation had been despatched, and that ~~it~~^{they} had not earlier been aware of the "special attitude of the English government to the mission"⁵¹. In conversations with the delegates, it had become clear that while formally they were ready to accept the Soviet's peace plan, "in fact they did not sympathise with this view. It was evident that they did not sufficiently appreciate the influence of the Russian revolutionary democracy"⁵². In the course of a visit to the front, it became

clear that the "comrades did not entirely share the views of the revolutionary democracy of Russia"⁵³. Sanders, in his subsequent report, noted that while the delegation had been received most cordially by the Provisional Government, it had encountered a "certain air of reserve" on the part of the Petrograd Soviet. At a meeting at the front a representative from the Minsk Soviet had spoken, and "talked crude Marxist Socialism", an attitude which the delegation had done its "utmost to nullify". Questions had also been brought up at the meetings which the delegates had attended ("almost invariably", he stated, by Jews) relating to English rule in Ireland, Egypt and India, and criticisms had been made of British imperialism, which had been represented as the counterpart of German imperialism. The moderate leaders of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, he concluded, had great difficulty in keeping such forces under control; but by the time of the delegates' departure they had at last realised, he thought, the "necessity of ceasing to be an opposition Government and were endeavouring consciously to co-operate with the Provisional Government to bring about order and stability in Russia"⁵⁴. The deputation's report concluded that too gloomy a view of developments in Russia should not be taken: "for bad as the situation was, it would have been much worse had the old regime been existing"⁵⁵.

The experience of the delegates belied Curzon's hope that a "well-chosen deputation of Labour leaders " might do "something to keep the Russian socialist party on the rails", and "strengthen the hands of the moderate party in Russia"⁵⁶. In fact, as Colonel Knox wrote to the Director of Military Intelligence, it had become apparent that "no labour leader who is in favour of the war can have any influence with these people"⁵⁷. As Snowden had predicted, the reception of the delegation had been one of "Siberian chilliness"⁵⁸. Bruce Lockhart wrote from Moscow that the British government was being attacked not only in the extremist Socialist press, but also in the more moderate sections. He concluded that "from the first the visit was a farce". The delegates "never succeeded in winning the confidence even of the moderate Socialists, who from the first regarded them as lackeys of their respective governments"⁵⁹.

Henderson himself shortly afterwards arrived in Russia on a similar mission. As Buchanan was informed from London, the Cabinet had been impressed with the urgent necessity of creating a "more favourable attitude amongst

Russian socialists and workmen towards the policy of the Allies in the war, and more particularly of rectifying false impressions of the aims of this country sedulously spread in Russia by Enemy agents". It was felt that explanations could be given to socialists and workmen more forcibly by one who was a labour leader than by others⁶⁰. The Cabinet, in fact, had been so impressed with these considerations that it had empowered Henderson to replace Buchanan as Ambassador at Petrograd, for an unstated period, if he felt this appropriate. Buchanan, despite his many services, was in existing circumstances "no longer the ideal British representative in Petrograd"; what was needed was a person "calculated to exert a powerful influence on the democratic elements which now predominate in Russia to pursue the war with energy"⁶¹. It was most important, Lloyd George noted, to reinforce those elements which were favourably disposed to continuing the war, since the demand for peace was becoming "more and more imperative"⁶².

Buchanan was tactfully invited to leave Petrograd in a few weeks, in order to give the Cabinet the benefit of his personal advice and information on the Russian situation.⁶³ Buchanan immediately enquired, however, whether he was to regard his leave as a definite recall, in order that he might arrange accordingly⁶⁴. Knox, who learned of the possibility of the Ambassador's recall, wrote that such a move reflected a "complete misreading of the situation here"; and the Embassy staff protested along similar lines.⁶⁵ Henderson himself soon concluded that Buchanan's retention would be in the "best interests of the Alliance"⁶⁶. Buchanan was accordingly informed that there was no question of his recall; and he subsequently arranged with Henderson that he should leave for a short holiday in Finland, returning when he was required⁶⁷.

Henderson's mission was in fact, Lockhart reported, a "considerable success"; but "almost entirely among the so-called bourgeoisie". At the Committee of Workmen's Deputies he had been a "complete failure"⁶⁸. Henderson himself Lockhart found as "God-fearing, as conventionally Methodist, as petit-bourgeois and as scared of revolution as he always had been". The comrades in the Soviets bewildered him; he did not understand their language or like their manners⁶⁹. Henderson admitted in his report on the mission that his knowledge of the views and tendencies of the 'Maximalists' had been mainly deduced from their published utterances and from articles in their papers⁷⁰. His mission had an unfortunate start, when his hotel apartment was searched, and papers

and clothes were stolen (which in the latter case he thought "excusable, ~~as~~ inasmuch as the members of the Soviet themselves were suffering from a shortage of garments, due to the decreased output of the textile mills")⁷¹. His surroundings, moreover, failed to appeal to him. Moscow he described in a letter as "not a bad city", though it was probably the "nearest approach to the Oriental one could possibly find outside Eastern countries", which meant, of course, that there were "certain features in connection with the life of the people not altogether attractive". It had also a "terribly mixed population, including a good many Chinese"⁷².

Henderson had more success with Ministries, where he had interviews almost daily, and with a "number of persons of standing, both Russian and English, of the official, professional and employing classes"⁷³. He reported to the Prime Minister on an interview with members of the Provisional Government, at which he had expressed concern at "widespread and often excessive demands by workpeople for improved conditions"⁷⁴. He reported later on a speech he had made in Moscow, in which he had taken the opportunity to urge the necessity of supporting the Provisional Government. He had noticed a "distinctly more reasonable tone appearing in conversation with business men" since his arrival; and they were, he thought, beginning to accept his argument, of the validity of which he had, he thought, convinced the Ministry of Labour, that the only safeguard against control of industry by the workmen was control by the ~~state~~⁷⁵. As he noted in his report, the capacity of Russian compared with British workmen was low; and the main industrial areas were ~~plagued~~ with labour trouble, and "demands by the workpeople, exorbitant at once in extent and character, presented in an atmosphere heated by every kind of political agitation". Industrial profits in the first two years of the war had been enormous, and there was a case for a 'reasonable' increase in wages. The demands of the workpeople, however, were in many cases, he thought, "quite without economic justification, and amounted to a reckless spoliation of industry". The demand for the control of industry was moreover, "much more difficult and much more difficult to analyse"; and it was "making the life of the employer a burden" and "frightening the banks". Direct representations to the government on behalf of English employers at Petrograd had, however, been in vain. The root of the trouble was, he thought, the "revolutionary psychology"; and the chief hope for Russian industry was that the Government would "take the labour question firmly in hand"⁷⁶. It was not, perhaps, surprising that

his relations with the

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workers and Soviet deputies did not approach in cordiality those with the Government and the employers. As the President of the Moscow Soviet explained to him, "what in particular made (the) views of British Labour on (the) war suspicious to his friends was that they seemed to coincide with those held by Russians of middle class"⁷⁷.

The proposal to hold a Socialist Conference at Stockholm, to be attended by representatives from the belligerent and the neutral countries, was made originally by a Dutch-Scandinavian committee, and subsequently endorsed by the Petrograd Soviet. The Executive Committee of the Labour Party, Henderson told the Cabinet, had decided not to attend, but to "send a Mission to Petrograd to impress on the Russian socialists the danger of a separate peace"⁷⁸. A message was received from the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies asking the governments of Britain, France and Italy not to withhold facilities for the visit to Russia of the socialist representatives⁷⁹. The Cabinet considered the matter on 21 May. Thorne, O'Grady and Sanders, reported Lord Robert Cecil, had been asked to stay at Bergen to facilitate their possible attendance at Stockholm. He pointed out the danger of allowing the Conference at Stockholm to take place without the presence of any British representatives, either to watch the proceedings, or to combat the influence of the German socialists, and urged that a strong delegation should attend. Henderson noted the difficulties of this course: in accordance with the views of the War Cabinet, he had used his influence with the Executive Committee of the Labour Party to reject the proposal to take part in the Conference, in favour of a Conference of Allied Socialists in London, on which the Russian Socialists' views were awaited. The Conference at Stockholm was now to be only a series of bilateral conversations.

It was reported, however, that MacDonald and Jowett of the I.L.P. and Albert Inkpin of the B.S.P. had applied for passports to Petrograd, presumably intending to stop en route at Stockholm. It was generally agreed that if the Conference was going to take place, British representatives should be present: "otherwise the Russian and German Socialists would fraternize without any counteracting influence, and a wholly false impression as to war-weariness among the Allies might be given to the enemy by the French Minority Socialists, and by written communications smuggled out of

this country". A British refusal to take part, moreover, would "have a very serious effect in Russia and would strengthen the German anti-British propaganda in that country". MacDonald, if he attended, could probably be "counted upon to take up a sound line in regard to annexations and indemnities", and he might strengthen the 'democratic movement' in enemy countries. Other members of the I.L.P., however, could "not be trusted to maintain a correct attitude". It was agreed that he should not be allowed to go unless accompanied by a strong delegation of the British Labour Party⁸⁰. Henderson should arrange for a delegation of British Majority Socialists to proceed to Russia, via Stockholm if it seemed desirable⁸¹.

The question was subsequently reconsidered, however, in view of the expressed concern of the American and of the French governments, the latter having refused to allow French socialists to go to Stockholm. The Conference, it was pointed out, "might have an injurious effect on the moral of the soldiers...and might force the Allied Governments into a premature and unsatisfactory peace". A reversal of the decision would also be unfortunate, however, "not perhaps so much in this country, where Mr. MacDonald (had) comparatively small influence", but in Russia. While Russia at present was of little value militarily, the Central Powers were nevertheless bound to allot a considerable number of men and guns to the Eastern Front; while if conditions there became more settled, the country might yet become a "formidable force". A reversal of the decision, also, would exaggerate the importance of the visit and tend to rally support behind MacDonald. On the recommendation of Henderson - now in Petrograd - and the British Ambassador that it would be a great mistake to refuse him permission, the decision was upheld; but MacDonald should nevertheless be made to give an undertaking that he would not delay in Stockholm en route, and that the two minority delegates should be accompanied by four from the majority section⁸².

In the event, the Seamen's and Firemen's Union, taking matters into their own hands, refused to allow MacDonald and Jowett to sail to Stockholm. MacDonald was not on a government mission; and the Cabinet decided, no doubt with relief, that there was "no reason to interfere further in the matter"⁸³.

Henderson while in Russia, however, became convinced of the desirability, in the interests of continuing the war, of the proposed Conference. He, Wardle and MacDonald, representing the Labour Party (of which Henderson had remained the Secretary, despite his government post) went to Paris on 27 July to confer

with the French Socialists on the proposed Allied Socialist Conference in London on 8 and 9 August, to be followed by an International Socialist Conference at Stockholm, early in September⁸⁴. On his return, Henderson explained his views to the Cabinet. The Labour Party's attitude to the Stockholm Conference was, he said, to "postpone it as long as possible". In Russia, the Foreign Minister had attached great importance to the Conference as a means of "clearing away the suspicions that existed in Russia of British Imperialistic designs". In his absence, the Labour Party had accepted an invitation from the French Socialists to the Russian and British Socialists to proceed to Paris to discuss the Allied Socialist and the Stockholm Conferences. Henderson had travelled with the party as a member of the Labour Executive; and it was, he thought, "eminently desirable", in any case, that if the Russian Socialists attended the British should do so also, and that if MacDonald (as Treasurer) did so, that those with other views should do so also. At Paris, the convocation of the Stockholm Conference had been regarded as settled. Henderson had "taken the line which he had decided on his return from Russia to be best calculated to promote the national interests.. (i) to postpone the Stockholm Conference as long as possible; (ii) to do his utmost to ensure that it should not be a conference to take decisions, but merely a consultation, at which the British and French delegates could expound the British and French case". He had secured agreement on this point; and he had also secured the postponement of the Conference from 15 August until 10 September in order to allow the American delegates, who were strongly pro-war, to attend. The Cabinet requested, however, that in view of the opinions upon the war of those who had accompanied him to Paris, he should clarify matters by making a "strong war speech" in the House of Commons, and pointing out the advantages which had accrued to the government in the past as a result of his dual position⁸⁵.

On 8 August the Cabinet considered the question of British attendance at the Conference, and deemed it less important than formerly; but decided that in order to avoid embarrassing the Russian government and relations with the Labour Party, a decision should be left to the Labour Party Conference which was due to meet on 10 August.⁸⁶ Bonar Law was to announce in Parliament, however, that attendance at the Conference would require the government's permission, and that the government was examining the whole question, in association with the other governments concerned. A communication from the Provisional Government's representative in London, Nabokov, was reported to the Cabinet on the same day

as the Labour Party Conference was meeting. On behalf of the Russian Foreign Ministry, it stated that while the Russian government did not deem it possible to prevent Russian delegates from attending the Stockholm Conference, they regarded the Conference "as a party concern and its decisions in no wise binding upon the liberty of action of the Government". A copy was transmitted to Henderson⁸⁷.

Henderson made only indirect reference to the latter, however, in his speech at the Party Conference. The Conference, he told the Labour meeting, would provide an opportunity for the Party's representatives to make a full and frank statement as to why they had supported the war, and as to the aims and objects in the hope of achieving which they continued to support the war. There was no question of negotiating peace terms, and there would be "no binding decision of any kind". The Party's case, he thought, had never been "properly stated" and was "certainly not properly understood to this day in Russia". To have refused point blank to consider the question would have done "incalculable harm". The Conference itself was more than likely to take place; and if it did so, it would be "highly inadvisable and ~~even~~ perhaps dangerous for the Russian representatives to meet representatives from enemy and neutral countries alone". There was a need for every country to use its political weapon to supplement all its military organization, if by doing so it could defeat the enemy. His decision, he emphasized, had been taken "from the standpoint of national interests". British representation was agreed upon by 1,846,000 votes to 550,000; while it was agreed at the same time to exclude anti-war or pacifist groups (in effect, the I.L.P.) from the delegation⁸⁸.

The Cabinet, meeting the same day, considered the decision, and decided to forbid attendance.⁸⁹ More important, however, was Henderson's failure to refer specifically to the letter from the Russian government which had been passed on to him, and which might have been expected to have influenced the Conference's decision. Agreement was reached on a letter to be addressed to him by the Prime Minister; and that Henderson should not be invited to future Cabinet meetings or receive its documents. Henderson's resignation was received and accepted the following day, with an expression of his hope that the war would be carried to a successful conclusion and that in a non-governmental capacity he might be able to assist towards this end⁹⁰. It was decided, however, that the present time was not opportune for a general election, since

"proposals of a plausible nature but tending towards an unsatisfactory peace were in the air".

The reconvened Special Conference of the Labour Party met on 21 August 1917. The Executive Committee declared that the circumstances had been clear at the time of the previous decision, and proposed the reaffirmation of the decision to attend, "in order that the opinions of the Party may not be misunderstood and misrepresented". The resolution was again carried, but by a narrow majority; and the decision to permit no further additions to the delegation "from any affiliated or unaffiliated body in the ^{is} country" was carried by an even more decisive margin. Opinion, evidently, had changed as far as the Conference was concerned; and at the Inter-Allied Conference, held in London on 28 and 29 August, the proposal was dropped, a decision endorsed by the T.U.U. on 4 September⁹¹.

Henderson's departure from the government in connection with the Stockholm proposal, then, had not been the result of any disagreement with the government concerning war aims: it had been a difference concerning only the manner in which that policy might most effectively be promoted. Lloyd George noted moreover, in his letter to him, the help that Henderson had rendered to the government in its relations with Labour, and in "getting the trade unions to co-operate with us in necessary war measures", and stating the government point of view in labour and socialist circles⁹². Nor did Henderson's resignation end the Party's connection with the government: his place in the Cabinet was taken by G.N. Barnes, and three Labour members became junior members of the government⁹³.

The co-operation of the official Labour movement with the government had hitherto been ^{of an} intimate, if somewhat one-sided character. The Executive Committee at the outbreak of the war criticized balance of power diplomacy, and Grey's secret commitments to France; but Labour's duty was to "secure ~~the~~ peace at the earliest possible moment", not to oppose the conduct of the war, and there was no recommendation of a general strike, as a number of Labour spokesmen had earlier urged⁹⁴. On 29 August the Executive endorsed the electoral truce, suspending party differences for the duration of the war; and joined the recruiting campaign, placing its head office at the disposal of the campaign, until "Great Britain and its Allies have obtained victory

and have concluded the terms of an honourable and abiding peace"⁹⁵. In May 1915 Labour entered the Coalition, with Henderson entering the Cabinet; and early in 1916, conscription was accepted⁹⁶. The 1916 Annual Conference favoured repeal of the Military Service Bill, but voted against agitation for its repeal⁹⁷. The formation of a government by Lloyd George in December 1916 led to increased Labour participation. Lloyd George informed them that he was "desirous of securing the co-operation of the Labour Party in the responsibilities of office"; and accordingly Henderson entered the War Cabinet, Hodge and Barnes received ministries, and three junior ministers were appointed⁹⁸. Wardle, who was later in the year to join the government on Henderson's resignation, explained in his Presidential Address that the Party had steadily, and in his opinion wisely, "always declined to be bound by any programme, to subscribe to any dogma...any mechanical formulas or to subscribe to any regimentation either of ideas or of policy" (by which he appeared to have exclusively in mind the "Marxist dogma"). The corollary of this was what Wardle generously described as a "wide and judicious interpretation of the meaning of the word 'independence'"⁹⁹.

As the Webbs noted, though theoretically internationalist in sympathy, and predominantly opposed to 'militarism' at home as well as abroad, British trade unionism, when war was declared, took a decided line. "From first to last the whole strength of the Movement...was thrown on the side of the nation's efforts"¹⁰⁰. At the February 1915 Treasury Conference, the trade union leaders agreed to suspend for the duration of the war all their rules and customary practices restricting the output of anything required by the government for the conduct of the war: overtime regulations, health and safety regulations, the right to strike for better terms were abandoned. The government's pledges, however, the Webbs recorded, were "not kept"; the trade unionists "were, on the whole, 'done'"¹⁰¹.

Labour's co-operation with the government, however, was losing its intimacy throughout 1917 for a number of reasons. The circumstances of the formation of Lloyd George's government provoked some opposition at the 1917 Party Conference. Snowden noted that Labour's participation in the Cabinet had been accompanied by a rise in the cost of living, the erosion of civil liberties, conscription and Munitions Acts. The Executive's Report was carried by a large majority; but resolutions were adopted on a minimum standard of living, the restoration of trade union rights, and the cost of living¹⁰².

These factors, the existence of which there was no reason to doubt, (the cost of living, according to the Labour Party's own figures, had ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ almost doubled between the outbreak of the war and February 1917¹⁰³), had, in combination with profiteering and the 'dilution' of labour, had a considerable effect by this stage of the war. In addition, as the Socialist Review put it, with the German note and the American peace proposals "thoughts of peace, not of war", were now "uppermost in the minds of the nations. Nay, it cannot be doubted that not alone in Germany and Austria, but in all the Allied countries the interest and hopes of the people, and the interest and hopes of the soldiers in the field, are no longer fixed on the struggle on the battle-lines, but on the political struggle for peace in the Parliaments and Cabinets, and in the cities and workshops at home".¹⁰⁴ Nor, as Lloyd George himself recorded, could one overlook as a source of popular dissatisfaction the "meagre supplies of beer and the lightening of its gravity"¹⁰⁵.

These factors were responsible for an increase in industrial unrest, which, as Lloyd George noted, "spelt a graver menace to our endurance and ultimate victory than even the military strength of Germany"¹⁰⁶. Engineering strikes in May, notably, were the most extensive since the beginning of the war. They spread to forty-eight towns, and involved over two hundred thousand men and the loss of a million and a half working days¹⁰⁷. Not the least disturbing aspect of the movement, from the government's point of view, was the evidence it afforded of the declining authority of the official labour leaders. By the end of the year Sidney Webb told Thomas Jones of the Cabinet Secretariat that he was "very seriously alarmed .. by what is reported from the districts". The rank and file were "very angry. The secretaries and shop stewards are doing all they can to prevent an outbreak; but they all say they are in the utmost apprehension of a spontaneous and tumultuous 'down tools'".¹⁰⁸ Jones told Beatrice Webb in October that the Cabinet was much perturbed by the rumours of revolutionary feeling among the working class. The leaders of the Labour movement themselves, she noted, were "distinctly uneasy at the spirit of revolt among the rank and file..¹⁰⁹ The Labour Leader was moved to observe that Henderson and Hodge were "so out of touch with the men in the workshops, and are so mistrusted by them, that any arrangement made through these advisers is looked upon with suspicion"¹¹⁰.

A Commission of Inquiry into Industrial Unrest was appointed in June 1917, with instructions to submit its report as quickly as possible. The

sources of discontent identified by the Commission - food prices and profiteering - had not, perhaps, required such an elaborate proceeding. The report declared that "feelings of a revolutionary character are not entertained by the bulk of the men". In South Wales, nevertheless, it found evidence of a "breakaway from faith in Parliamentary representation. The influence of the 'advanced' men is growing very rapidly", and "attempts of a drastic character" to secure direct control of certain industries had been envisaged¹¹¹. The report dealing with London and the South-East noted that unrest was "real, widespread and in some direction extreme", and was such as to "constitute a national danger unless dealt with promptly and effectively"; indeed a "social upheaval" was possible. In the North-East it was reported that existing grievances formed a "fruitful field for the inculcation of ideas that unless controlled, may lead to active and dangerous upheaval"¹¹². Much the most disturbing finding was that of a loss of confidence in the government, which was "unfortunately associated with a diminished reliance on the power and prestige of the trade unions, and the impairment of the authority and influence of these executive bodies". In the North-West these workmen had "come to regard the promises and pledges of Parliaments and Government Departments with suspicion and distrust"; while in Yorkshire the men were reported as having lost all confidence in their trade union officials, and union executives and the government departments which acted with and through them were apparently regarded with "universal distrust". Despite the advantages of trade unions, as indicated by one of the area reports, in bringing about good relations between employers and employed, the Yorkshire report concluded regretfully that "constitutional trade unionism was no longer of any avail"¹¹³.

It was no doubt at least as much a consequence of this disturbing development as of the discourteous treatment of Henderson by the War Cabinet that Labour Party leaders, and particularly Henderson himself, began to attempt to recover its independence of the government's policy at home and abroad. In August 1917 a sub-committee was formed to prepare a scheme for the reorganization of the party, and the drafting of the party's new programme and constitution were initiated. The failure of the Stockholm Conference, equally, and of the Inter-Allied Socialist Conference in London, led the Executive Committee to draft a document on war aims. The result, the Memorandum on War Aims, was considered and endorsed with virtual unanimity at a joint T.U.C.-

Labour Party Conference in London on 28 December 1917¹¹⁴. In February of the following year it formed the basis of the resolution adopted at an Inter-Allied Socialist Conference on War Aims which was held in London.

There seems, then, no need to invoke events in Russia as an explanation of the increasing militancy and independence of the labour movement, official and unofficial, in 1917. The Revolution in Russia nevertheless gave rise to a series of meetings in Britain called in its support, of which the first of any size was held in the Albert Hall on 31 March under the slogan "Russia Free"¹¹⁵. A discussion of the more important of these meetings may help to clarify the reaction to the Russian Revolution and to the developing struggle in Russia of the 'pacifist' and unofficial sections of the labour movement, which was responsible for their organization; and to this we now turn.

The meeting in the Albert Hall was organized by the Anglo-Russian Democratic Alliance, a body centred upon the editorial staff of the Herald, including such Labour spokesmen as Robert Williams, Bob Smillie and Anderson, as well as Lansbury himself. Nearly 20,000 tickets were sought for the occasion, a number substantially in excess of the 12,000 capacity of the hall¹¹⁶. Ivan Maisky, then a Russian emigre living in London, attended the gathering and noted that the hall was packed. The Royal boxes were filled with workers for the occasion¹¹⁷. The gathering was addressed by ten speakers, including Smillie, Williams, Anderson, H.W. Nevinson and Lansbury himself, who together represented, according to the official report of the meeting, all that was "most advanced in the Trade Union, Labour, Socialist and Radical movements". The meeting was declared by Lansbury the most representative held in Britain since the Congress of the International in 1896. The official report conceded, however, that there was "some difference of opinion" among the members of the audience, and indeed among the members of the platform also. The resolution adopted at the meeting, referred to as embodying the "Russian Charter of Freedom", congratulated the Russian "Democrats", and called upon the governments of Britain and other countries to "follow the Russian example by establishing Industrial Freedom, Freedom of Speech and the Press, the Abolition of Social, Religious and National Distinctions, an immediate Amnesty for Political and Religious Offences, and Universal Suffrage". As Lansbury recorded, "not in any of our minds was there even a thought of violence and bloodshed; one and all, we hoped,

longed and prayed for Peace.." "We all felt that at long last a break was being made in the evil passions which the war had created, and that very soon the night of doubt and disappointment would pass...From the first moment to the last the meeting was one of thankfulness and praise"¹¹⁸. When the organ pealed out the Internationale, the audience "rose and sang as at a revival meeting"; and when Madame Clara Butt (who had rendered, the Herald remarked, a splendid service to the democratic cause on this occasion) sang the verses of 'God the All Terrible', "Atheists and Christians, Deists and Jews, Moslems and Hindus all joined in the prayer 'Give us peace in our time, O Lord'"¹¹⁹. The Call's observer reported that he had listened in vain for the true lesson of the Revolution; international Labour solidarity and uncompromising hostility to capitalist imperialism and war¹²⁰. As an anonymous correspondent ('a soldier and a democrat') wrote to Lansbury, it remained unclear, the speeches notwithstanding, how Labour was going to act. Workers in France and Germany were not limiting their expressions of sympathy to words. There was a need, he thought, for "something stronger than appeals to the Government"¹²¹.

The meeting had nevertheless, it was claimed, released the feelings which the great masses of people were holding unexpressed. From that day on, it has been suggested, there was a "great change of heart and a great change of mind throughout Britain; what had been the unpopular propaganda of a small minority became, in a greater or lesser degree of fervour, the conviction of the greater portion of the thinking working class of the country, and of many outside the working class"¹²². Further meetings were held, and Russian ships on the Clyde and the Mersey were contacted¹²³. May Day was celebrated with particular energy¹²⁴.

It was the United Socialist Council, however, which now took the initiative in summoning the Labour and Socialist Convention at Leeds on 3 June 1917, the declared purpose of which was to "follow Russia" and which called for the establishment of Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils throughout Britain, and which was termed shortly afterwards the "most spectacular piece of utter folly for which (the Socialist Left) during the whole war-period, was responsible - which is saying not a little"¹²⁵. The formation of such a Council had been recommended by a Conference which met under the auspices of the International Socialist Bureau in December 1913¹²⁶. The I.L.P. National Executive decided unanimously, however, on 15 October 1914 that "the time was

inopportune to proceed with the formation of the proposed United Socialist Council". It was noted that the B.S.P. was not yet affiliated to the Labour Party. At its Easter Conference in 1916, however, Hyndman and the pro-war group withdrew from the B.S.P., and a resolution was adopted, which was submitted to the I.L.P. National Executive, urging that the U.S.C. now be established. The I.L.P. appointed its Chairman and Secretary and four executive members to confer with the B.S.P.¹²⁷. A meeting was arranged for 16 August, at which the I.L.P. and B.S.P. representatives agreed that the U.S.C. be set up. Since the Fabian Society could not "see its way to join", the U.S.C. was composed only of I.L.P. and B.S.P. delegates. Under its constitution the U.S.C. was charged with the "preparation of a common policy upon all matters where that is possible". It should have "power to initiate demonstrations and other forms of propaganda, both national and local, prepare and issue manifestoes, leaflets and other literature, and generally endeavour to co-ordinate the work of affiliated organizations". What were described by the I.L.P. Executive as "several mutually helpful discussions" had taken place since then: in particular a circular was issued to trades councils and affiliated organizations on the subject of industrial conscription, and a letter was addressed to the Conference of the French Socialist Party at the end of 1916¹²⁸. The summoning of the "Great Labour, Socialist and Democratic Convention" at Leeds was, however, the first substantial task to which the U.S.C. addressed itself.

The circular announcing the Convention appeared on 11 May 1917, under the slogan "Follow Russia". The purpose of the meeting was stated to be to "congratulate and encourage our Russian comrades upon the success they have achieved in overthrowing the reactionary forces of that country and establishing real political freedom". It was the duty of the British working class to repudiate the "aims and aspirations - dynastic, territorial, and capitalist - that were supported by the Russian Czarism, and which have substantially influenced the collective aims of the Allies". The fifteen signatories, on behalf of the U.S.C., held it to be their "urgent duty to convene a representative conference of Trades Councils, local Labour Parties, ^{and} Socialist Organizations in order to ascertain and pronounce upon the opinions of the working class of this country regarding the developments which have taken place, and are taking place, in Russia.. Just as the Russian democracy have taken the most significant steps in favour of an international peace, so must the democratic forces in every country strive to emulate their magnificent example.. It is

our duty to work for a complete and international peace based upon working-class solidarity, and, therefore, likely to be honourable and enduring". The arrangements for representation were also specified¹²⁹. A further circular issued twelve days later added that the purpose of the Convention was to "hail the Russian Revolution and to organize the British Democracy to Follow Russia". The circular, which was addressed to Trades Councils, trade unions, local Labour Parties, Socialist societies, women's organizations and 'Democratic bodies', declared that the Conference was already assured of a great success. It would be historic; and would begin a new era of democratic power in Great Britain. It would begin, the circular added, to "do for Britain what the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates is doing for Russia"¹³⁰. Snowden, writing the day before the Convention opened, declared that it would "be the beginning of doing things in this country...This next weekend should see Great Britain painted red"¹³¹.

The convening of the meeting was not without its difficulties. The texts of the four resolutions to be discussed were distributed to those bodies which were invited; and the fourth, which called for the formation of Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils, in particular aroused some misgiving. In many cases strong opposition to representation was manifested in local Trades Councils and political society branches, and in a number of cases delegates were instructed to seek to amend the terms of the resolutions¹³². When the delegates arrived, moreover, it was found that the bookings which they had made in local hotels had been cancelled by the proprietors. The temperance hotels, it was reported, which "benefit so largely out of democratic assemblies of the kind were the worst offenders". Alternative accommodation was arranged for all but those who arrived late, who were compelled to spend the night in railway carriages¹³³. Following, apparently, the visit of a member of the British Empire League to the homes of nearly all members of the local Council, the letting of the Albert Hall, where the meeting was to have been held, was cancelled, and delegates assembled instead in the Coliseum. The Council also refused to permit an open-air assembly arranged to have taken place in Victoria Square. At least one report concluded, however, that the extent of the opposition which had had to be overcome had "added interest and zest to the gathering"¹³⁴.

By noon on the day of the Conference, 1150 delegates had arrived, and it was reported that "many more" had arrived later. The total audience was

estimated to have been as large as 3,500¹³⁵. The proceedings~~s~~ opened with the reading of a telegram from Lansbury, who was unable to be present as a result of ill-health¹³⁶. "When they condemn you for wanting peace", he wrote, "when they charge you with treason for being determined to end the war, tell them that it is treason against God, treason against humanity, not to end it - and at once". Smillie, who acted as chairman, noted the Convention's debt to the series of meetings welcoming the Russian Revolution which had already been held, and in particular to the "great Albert Hall meeting". If it had been a right thing for the Russian people to be congratulated on securing their freedom, "surely it cannot be a wrong thing for Britain to desire freedom also". They had not come to talk treason, but reason.

The first resolution, congratulating the Russian people upon their Revolution, was moved by MacDonald, who noted that "for years" they had wanted it to happen. The Russian people should put themselves "at the head of the peoples of Europe". He voiced his concern, however, that they should maintain the Revolution, find a cause for unity, stand by their liberites and "restrain the anarchy in (their) midst". Snowden proposed the second resolution, which hailed "with the greatest satisfaction" the declaration of the foreign policy and war aims of the Russian Provisional Government, pledged the delegates to work for such a peace, and called upon the government "immediately to announce its agreement with the declared foreign policy and war aims of the democratic Government of Russia". They had been appealing to the government for three years to be told their peace terms; the time had now come, he said, "for us to tell the Government what our peace terms are": which were, he specified, based upon "no annexation and no indemnity, and the right of every nation to dispose of its own destiny". The peace, he declared, would be a people's peace.

The third resolution called upon the government to "place itself in accord with the democracy of Russia by proclaiming its adherence to and determination to carry into immediate effect a charter of liberties establishing complete political rights for all men and women, unrestricted freedom of the Press, freedom of speech, a general amnesty for all political and religious prisoners, full rights of industrial and political association, and the release of labour from all forms of compulsion and restraint". Many of the best public-spirited men in the country, the proposer pointed out, were in prison; and Labour was "enchained". Nearly a thousand conscientious objectors were in prison, some doing their third or fourth terms; and they would be "kept in prison unless we do what Russia has

done". Such liberty as they had had before the war, added Mrs Despard, they were now allowing to be taken away from them.

It was the fourth resolution, however, which was regarded by the press, as Anderson pointed out in moving it, as the "ugly duckling among the resolutions", for which reason he claimed for it the delegates' "special solicitude and support"¹³⁷. The resolution called for the establishment in every town, urban and rural district of "Councils of Workmen~~XX~~ and Soldiers' Delegates for initiating and co-ordinating working-class activity in support of the policy set out in the foregoing resolution, and to work strenuously for a peace made by the peoples of the various countries, and for the complete political and economic emancipation of international labour". The convenors of the Conference were appointed as a Provisional Committee, whose duties were to "assist the formation of the local Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils and generally to give effect to the policy determined by (the) Conference". If there were to be justice for the soldiers, for the wives and widows of the soldiers, and industrial freedom for the workmen, then workmen and soldiers must join hands. This had been termed revolution. If revolution were the conquest of political power by a hitherto disinherited class, if revolution meant that they would not put up in the future with what they had put up in the past, with its "shams and.. poverty", then the "sooner", he declared, they had revolution in this country, "the better". The organization was not subversive or unconstitutional - "unless", he added, "the authorities care to make it so"; but it would be a "definite challenge to tyranny wherever tyranny (might) show itself". Robert Williams, who seconded the resolution, declared that "if it means anything at all", it meant "that which is contained in the oft-used phrase from Socialist platforms: the dictatorship of the proletariat". Parliament, he added, would "do nothing for you. Parliament has done nothing for you for the whole period of the war.. We are competent to speak in the name of our own class, and damn the Constitution.. Have as little concern for the British Constitution as the Russians you are praising had for the dynasty of the Romanoffs". It was, declared Sylvia Pankhurst, an "attempt to make a beeline for the Socialist Commonwealth". Despite some concern from the floor that the formation of the Councils might be premature or even superfluous, the resolution was adopted "amid enthusiasm with only two or three dissentients".

Outside Labour journals, press comments on the Convention were disapproving. The Review of Reviews assured its readers that the Socialist societies

which had called the meeting were neither very large nor very powerful, and in no way represented the great mass of British labour. The Leeds Mercury sourly noted that the "best way to achieve permanent peace would be to pass resolutions urging the troops to pursue unrelenting warfare, and the munitions workers to work ~~unceasingly~~^{incessantly} to keep the troops supplied"¹³⁸. Labour comment was naturally more enthusiastic. The meeting had been a success, wrote Snowden, "far beyond the most sanguine expectations of the promoters. It was not only the largest Democratic Congress held in Great Britain since the days of the Chartist agitation", but a "spontaneous expression of the spirit and enthusiasm of the Labour and Democratic movement"¹³⁹. Lansbury, who was sent a telegram by the meeting conveying its "best wishes for (a) speedy recovery to full health", received letters from many delegates giving him their impressions of the meeting¹⁴⁰. Leeds was splendid, wrote Sylvia Pankhurst. Mrs Despard wrote of the "wonder of Leeds". She had noted a "strong current that is making for peace and open and righteous dealing now"; and at Leeds she had felt it "even more strongly than before". Pethick-Lawrence and his wife "enjoyed the Conference enormously. It was splendid to see such unanimity and enthusiasm", Leeds "was great", wrote A.A. Watts. "There was a fine feeling about the whole show". He added "I felt all on the tingle all day"¹⁴¹.

What the Convention would mean in terms of a national movement was, however, by no means clear. The meeting had been virtually without debate, and no amendments were allowed to the resolutions. The delegates, Beatrice Webb wrote in her diary, had been "quite incapable of coherent thinking. They were swayed by emotions"..¹⁴² Pankhurst and Snowden agreed that the meeting had been composed of a "mass of conglomerate elements, not yet fused, lacking as yet a common policy or plan of action"; it had represented all sections of the Labour and Socialist movement and all shades of democratic opinion~~XXX~~. Nor had the meeting had time for details¹⁴³. Noah Ablett, who represented the South Wales miners at the Convention, complained that the delegates had heard ideas which they had heard thousands of times before, and with which they all agreed. What he had not found was "some sort of programme, some sort of practical suggestion of how we are to set up the Councils". The Convention, declared the Times, had brought together in one hall a thousand or more individuals who were anxious for peace at almost any price. "Curiously diverse in their origin and in their views on other questions, they had found themselves united under the banner of pacifism". The meeting had begun no new era and established no new social scheme;

its only tangible product had been a telegram of some fifty words¹⁴⁸. Some delegates, at least, were aware of the justice of this criticism. Watts, in his letter to Lansbury after the Convention, noted that "the great thing is for us to get to work.. Locally I think we must 'get on with it'"¹⁴⁹.

The Convention had, nevertheless, adopted four resolutions outlining a policy for the implementation of which the thirteen convenors of the meeting had been declared responsible, as a Provisional Committee. The first three resolutions had aroused practically no opposition, as Smillie told the Convention. The terms of the fourth resolution, however, had called for the formation of local Councils of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, and required the Provisional Committee to assist in the formation of local Councils, which were to meet in district conferences to elect a further thirteen delegates to the Provisional Committee, and to give effect to the policy determined by the Conference. It was on the basis of this resolution that a contemporary journal declared that many of the I.L.P. men had become "avowed Syndicalists or Bolsheviks", and that the King had confessed himself to be "greatly disturbed" to Will Thorne¹⁵⁰. Had the Convention, then, decided upon the formation of "extra-Parliamentary Soviets with sovereign powers", and upon the "extension of the Russian system of Soviets to Britain"¹⁵¹?

In the first place it should be noted that the functions entrusted to the new Councils were limited and scarcely revolutionary ones. The Councils were, in the terms of the fourth resolution, required to initiate and co-ordinate working-class activity in support of the previous resolution, to work strenuously for a 'people's peace ', and for the "complete political and economic emancipation of international labour". The Councils were also required "watch diligently for and resist every encroachment upon industrial and civil liberty"; to "give special attention to the position of women employed in industry and generally (to) support the work of the Trade Unions"; to "take active steps to stop the exploitation of food and all other necessities of life"; and to "concern themselves with questions affecting the pensions of wounded and disabled soldiers and the maintenance grants payable to the dependants of men serving with the Army and Navy"; and to make "adequate provision for the training of disabled soldiers and for suitable and remunerative work for the men on their return to civil life". As Mrs Pankhurst commented, this resolution was the "only one which meant action". It foreshadowed (she thought) revolution; yet it concerned itself with "matters of detail which are obviously

part and parcel of the present system". The resolution spoke of resisting encroachments upon ~~freedom~~: while "every worker knows that real freedom we have never had, nor can have under this system ". The one specific aim of the Councils, added the New Statesman, was the laudable but scarcely revolutionary one of looking after the interests of discharged soldiers¹⁵².

It was, moreover, in these terms that the formation of the Councils had been discussed in the columns of the Labour press in the period immediately preceding the Convention. At Leeds a means must be found, Lansbury wrote, of "setting up committees representative of the people - soldiers and civilians"; and they must also "imitate Lord Northcliffe and make our voice heard, our wishes known to the Government", in circumstances in which Parliament had "abdicated its functions". There was no question, he emphasized, of the Leeds Conference "asking anything dishonourable or ^{anything} unpatriotic". Workers' and Soldiers' "Committees" should be formed in every district, "not for the absurd, ridiculous reasons attributed by the Press, but in order that the working class may be united"¹⁵³. Snowden envisaged the Councils undertaking the task of "combining some of the activities of the various Labour and Democratic bodies"¹⁵⁴. The resolution was, he later wrote, a "very harmless" one, and "largely unnecessary since it duplicated work already being undertaken by the Labour Party and the trade unions"¹⁵⁵.

The resolution was printed in the Bolsheviks' paper Pravda; but the Soviets in Russia were not at this time yet under their control¹⁵⁶. There is little to indicate, in any case, that the Councils were conceived as counterparts of the Russian Soviets. The Councils were termed 'Workmen and Soldiers' Councils', not 'Workers' and Soldiers' Councils', which, as Sylvia Pankhurst pointed out, would have been a more correct translation of the title of the Russian bodies; and information other than from official and censored sources regarding developments in Russia was in any case hard to obtain¹⁵⁷. The idea for the establishment of the Councils was, moreover, according to Snowden, that of W.C. Anderson; and it seems unlikely that he envisaged the Councils as British Soviets. It was certainly his expressed opinion shortly after the Convention that the task of the Councils was simply to prepare machinery for the "great rebuilding" which would take place after the war. He disclaimed any intention of "getting the soldiers into trouble"; described as "nonsense" the notion that the movement was pacifist in character; and suggested that he and his colleagues now felt that it would be best to obtain the government's consent to the formation of the Councils before

proceeding further¹⁵⁸.

Snowden reported on recent developments to the I.L.P. National Executive at the end of June. There was general agreement on five points: that the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council should be constituted as a war emergency organization; that it should not interfere with or limit the work of any existing organization; that it must not be allowed to dissipate the energies of members of the party; that it should be a co-ordinating body locally; and that the National Council should be "mainly an advisory body"¹⁵⁹. A week later the Provisional Committee, announcing the formation of the local Councils, stated that there must be no attempt on their part to "encroach upon or supercede organizations already established. All friction must be avoided..a and overlapping must be eliminated as far as possible". A further communication in October, representing the agreement of the National Council concerning the objects of the movement, declared that it must serve "primarily as a propagandist body, not as a rival to, or to supplant any of, the existing working-class organizations, but to infuse into them a more active spirit of liberty". It should attempt to influence public opinion by means of meetings and leaflets, with a view to the ultimate establishment of a Labour government¹⁶⁰. That the Councils might provide a means of focussing working-class energies with a view to the overthrow of the capitalist order, or that they might assume any quasi-governmental functions, there was no suggestion.

It might perhaps be objected that while this was the role which the I.L.P. section intended that the Councils should play, the B.S.P. section had rather more radical aims in mind. The B.S.P. certainly claimed subsequently that had other sections displayed the same spirit and enthusiasm, the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils "would have been well established by now"¹⁶¹. Rivalry does, indeed, appear to have existed between the two bodies, which may well have limited the effectiveness of the Provisional Committee¹⁶²; but the objection seems nevertheless a misconceived one. In the first place, the I.L.P. was the dominating element in the movement, and to this extent it was beside the point for the B.S.P. to complain that its proposals had been overruled. At the Convention itself the I.L.P. delegates outnumbered by more than three to one those of the B.S.P.; and within the Provisional Committee it had a similar ascendancy¹⁶³. Quelch suggested in the B.S.P.'s journal that as the causes of discontent grew in intensity, and as the revolutionary urge deepened and gathered strength, the local Councils might become more "aggressively

Socialist". The following week, however, he suggested no more, if the local Councils achieved "complete local solidarity", than that the next Parliamentary Election might witness the return to the House of Commons of a majority of working-class representatives¹⁶⁴. It seems clear, moreover, that B.S.P. spokesmen differed little in substance from those of the I.L.P. with regard to the issues with which the ~~Convention~~ should concern itself. The B.S.P.'s Annual Conference in April adopted a resolution which pledged the party to "act in the spirit of the Russian Revolution": which was, however, specified as "endeavouring to arouse the British working class to a sense of the despotism and militarism which are growing up in this country", and attempting to bring about the end of the war on "terms involving no annexations and no humiliation to any country": in other words, a 'people's peace'. The party's journal saw Leeds as a call to "shake off the bloody nightmare of the war and to stand up for the cause of Peace and Liberty among the nations"¹⁶⁵. Mrs Montefiore, who supported the first resolution on the B.S.P.'s behalf, declared that their duty was to ensure that the peace was not made by 'materialists'. The working-class movement, which had the power to end the war, and establish peace, had also the power to "bring in the Co-operative Commonwealth"; but this, she indicated, was a task to be undertaken only after the war had ended. Neither she nor any other B.S.P. speaker suggested that it might, on the contrary, be possible to end the war only by means of socialist revolution.

For common to the B.S.P. and the I.L.P. was the conviction that, as Snowden put it, the "immediate question" was the "settlement of the war by an honourable peace on the lines set forth by the Russian Democratic Government". It was in this sense that the call had been issued to "follow Russia". The resolution by "organized democratic forces" of industrial and social problems was an important, but a "post-war" and therefore subsidiary task. The democracy of Britain should bring influence to bear upon the Government as the Russian people had done: this was the only way in which the war could be brought to an end and an enduring peace established. To end the war was, moreover, the most effective way to work against conscription and to defeat the attacks upon industrial and civil liberties¹⁶⁶.

Mrs Pankhurst wrote that the promoters of the Convention had decided to concentrate the opinions and will of the people upon peace; and "peace was of all words the most popular"¹⁶⁷. They wished, Smillie told the gathering, to concentrate the will and opinion of the people upon peace. When

peace came, it would be a peace by negotiation; and such a peace could be made only by the common people (He was not however in favour of the Russians making a separate peace). The meeting proved, Snowden believed, that the movement for ending the war was becoming more powerful; and the reception of the speeches "very clearly indicated", reported the delegates from Glasgow Trades Council, that the delegates and the "vast majority of those they represented were tired of the war". Labour, they considered, had "awakened to the horror of it" and was now demanding a 'people's peace' without annexation or indemnity. There had never been any question of advocating or suggesting a physical force revolution, Lansbury emphasized. There was, he thought, a "more excellent method of securing Labour's aims". The Councils should for this purpose serve as a "unifying force throughout the land, drawing to themselves all the men and women who wish to work for a better Britain after the war and an early peace.." ¹⁶⁸. The Convention gave a "moral impetus" towards this end; it reflected a "growing adherence to the view that there (could) be no military victory, no knock-out blow" ¹⁶⁹.

The Convention's decision to include soldiers as well as civilians within the ambit of the Councils aroused some opposition within, as well as outside the labour movement. Henderson, for instance, declared that if the Councils were to be formed on the model of those in Russia, with the same possible consequences, there would be no harder fighter against it than himself. He had seen quite enough of the consequences of such a course of action in Russia. What had happened there had shown the "folly of allowing an army, as an army, to take part in political discussions, and this ought to be a warning to us". He would "fight more strongly against any course of action which (could) paralyse our military force as it (had) paralysed the military force of Russia" ¹⁷⁰. Yet no effort was made, or appears to have been intended, to organize actively among the armed forces, or to weaken military discipline in any way. The resolution, Anderson made clear in moving it, was "not intended to be subversive of military responsibilities". The resolution covered no more than the questions of the pensions of wounded and disabled soldiers and the allowances of the dependants of servicemen, and for the training of soldiers for civilian occupations. The linking up of the civilian element with the military, the Times commented, had not yet begun, and "not the slightest inkling" had been given of how it was to be accomplished ¹⁷¹.

The inclusion of soldiers within the scope of the Councils

reflected, in fact, more than anything else the concern of the I.L.P. to demonstrate that, while opposed to the war itself, it had done everything possible to improve the conditions of the "soldier and the sailor, and for those who were and are dependent upon him". The I.L.P., it was claimed, had carried on with "tireless energy" the campaign to secure a greater measure of justice to the dependants of soldiers in an increased scale of allowances and pensions".¹⁷² A joint conference of Poplar Trades Council and the League of Rights for Soldiers and Sailors was held two months before the Leeds Convention in London¹⁷³. It showed, the Herald suggested, that the forces at work on behalf of "our broken soldiers and sailors" were "widening, deepening, and gathering in strength". The meeting was presided over by Lansbury, who was elected chairman of a Provisional Committee, with Sylvia Pankhurst as its honorary secretary. A resolution was carried unanimously that a "Central Organization be formed for the purpose of safeguarding the interests of soldiers and sailors and their wives and relatives and discharged soldiers, and that a provisional committee be elected to draft a Constitution for such a body". It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates became precisely the 'central organization' envisaged in the resolution: it undertook, certainly, the same functions, and was under the same direction¹⁷⁴.

The Council did undertake propaganda among the soldiers and sailors, and a number of Soldiers' Councils existed for short periods. At Tunbridge Wells an attempt was made among soldiers awaiting demobilisation to organize support for a local Soviet, without, it appears, much success¹⁷⁵. A unit stationed at Sevenoaks also sought to establish a Soldiers' Council, as a "means of representing the views of the rank and file to the commanding officers". But the movement, it was reported, "fell very flat": the unit was called overseas "where they had other things to think about"¹⁷⁶. It is difficult to establish to what extent these Councils were a response to Leeds: there was in any case considerably greater discontent among the armed forces (as reflected in, for instance, disciplinary offences) than during the first two years of the war; and it had been the purport of the resolution to have established Workmen's and Soldiers', and not separate Soldiers' Councils. Propaganda leaflets distributed among the armed forces

declared that the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council~~s~~ would "take steps to promote a public opinion favourable to freedom of association for soldiers," and to their right to be represented. Pending changes in the Army Regulations, however, it was stated that the Councils would "confine their activities to men discharged from the Army"¹⁷⁷.

These developments were a source of understandable concern to the government. On 24 May the Ministry of Labour's periodic report on the labour situation noted that at meetings at Glasgow and elsewhere the "wildest peace talk appeared to have been received with general acclamation". The Leeds Conference, which had been called in favour of definite action to secure peace", had not, it was reported, itself adopted the catchword of 'peace without annexations or indemnities', but the "whole trend of the notice calling a conference proves the organizers to be in sympathy with this cry"¹⁷⁸. The Cabinet was informed the following day by Lloyd George that a "large Labour, Socialistic and Democratic Conference" was to be held at Leeds, with a view, inter alia, to "establishing in Great Britain a Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, on the lines of the one now in existence in Russia". The meeting was widely known already; and the Cabinet decided that it would therefore be undesirable to take any steps to suppress further advertisements, or to prohibit the meeting itself, "although it was of such a revolutionary character". The Secretary of State for War was, however, charged to ensure that no soldier in uniform attended¹⁷⁹.

It was too late, Milner wrote to Lloyd George on 1 June, to stop the Leeds meeting; but there might still be time to "instruct the Press.. not to 'boom' the Leeds proceedings too much". Meanwhile the time was "very near at hand", he considered, when they would have to "take some strong steps to stop the 'rot' in this country, unless we wish to 'follow Russia' into impotence and dissolution"¹⁸⁰. The Cabinet decided on 5 June, largely prompted, no doubt, by the Leeds meeting, that the "time had come to undertake an active campaign to counteract the pacifist movement, which at present had the field to itself", and a National War Aims Committee was established later in the month¹⁸¹. The Cabinet was informed in July that efforts were being made to "induce soldiers to interest themselves actively in political agitation of a character likely to weaken the discipline of the Army. Cases had already

occurred where meetings had been convened and addressed by soldiers". Efforts were being made in various parts of the country to encourage serving soldiers to form committees, which had been successful in a number of cases. Soldiers appeared, also, to have become involved in a meeting held in connection with the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils. It was agreed that soldiers could not be given permission to join the Councils¹⁸².

The government, then, regarded the Councils movement with greater concern than Lloyd George was subsequently prepared to admit¹⁸³. It was nevertheless true that, apart from a general effort to stiffen morale on the home front, the government need attempt to oppose the Councils movement only to the extent to which it appeared to be prepared to go beyond the limited and pacific proposals of its I.L.P. sponsors. Lansbury, at least, professed a concern to focus the energies of the Councils upon domestic social change. At Leeds, he wrote, they had celebrated the triumphant Russian revolution and pledged themselves to work for the social salvation of the people. He put forward a "New Charter for the Workers" as a "translation into plain facts and policies of the enthusiasm of that Convention"¹⁸⁴. It represented a programme of reforms for which the new Workmen's and Soldiers' Council should work, as a "logical interpretation of the resolutions adopted at the Leeds Conference", which meant "something like this or...nothing at all". Leeds had been a "Conference, not a Demonstration"; it had been called to inaugurate action, not to talk; and if it failed to inaugurate action, it would have failed altogether. "But", he added hopefully, "it will not fail"¹⁸⁵.

The Charter was founded upon the principle of ownership by the state and management by the workers. It provided for increases in soldiers' pay, for the right of speech and the right to strike, and for the freedom of the press. Negotiations were to be instituted at once to end the war upon a basis of no annexations and no indemnities. "Better homes and better pubs" were demanded. The conscription of wealth was included, but justified with reference to the Eighth Commandment. In general Lansbury appeared concerned lest discontent, which was "seething all over the place", should break out in "undirected and sporadic forms". The Council had a "great patriotic task" to perform in saving the nation

from the danger of such a "disaster": for it would be able, if it acted effectively, to remove this unrest by insisting upon the causes of unrest being removed¹⁸⁶.

Whatever Lansbury's motives for the proposal of a Workers' Charter, however, his initiative remained dependent upon the extent to which the machinery set up by the Convention became effective. The extent to which it did so has often been understated. It has been suggested, for instance, that the Convention "had no sequel. No British Soviet or Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' deputies were founded and even the Provisional Committee elected by the Conference soon broke up". It has been suggested that the Convention took place "almost in vacuo and nothing more was heard of the Soldiers' and Workers' Councils except on the Clyde"; and that the Provisional Committee never in fact met¹⁸⁷. District conferences of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils did in fact take place in most areas in order to elect thirteen members to the Provisional Committee; and the Provisional Committee did meet, and at least one meeting of the full National Council was held. It remained true, however, that the Committee did not sit, as Sylvia Pankhurst had urged, from day to day, as Parliament did (a revolution, she noted, was "not...a thing which can be carried on as a spare-time occupation"¹⁸⁸); and the district meetings in many cases met with strong and sometimes insuperable opposition. The role of the Councils became increasingly marginal.

The Herald announced at the end of June that the Provisional Committee was about to issue a general manifesto; and when the thirteen district members were added to their number, thus making up the full National Council, they would "doubtless put forward a more definite programme". A "Manifesto to the District Conferences" was issued a week later. It professed to seek the support of "lovers of freedom" and "men and women of goodwill" in order to "prevent the further loss of liberty, to recover the ground already lost, to attack Governmental and all other forms of tyranny, and to quicken the responsibility and power of democracy. Close alliance and solidarity" was sought with the Russian democracy, but "not in any narrow or exclusive sense", for "every people must work out their own salvation in their own way". The present hour did "not call immediately for programme-building"; but when the full

Council of twenty-six was assembled, a "full statement of immediate aims and objects" would be forthcoming. Meanwhile such a volume of "clear-thinking public opinion" should be created as would compel the British government to fall in with the Russian war aims¹⁸⁹. A fortnight later it was announced that the District Conferences had all been arranged (Ireland was omitted for the time being, in view of the development of Sinn Fein), and that they were "calling forth a response from the workers without precedent in the history of the working-class movement"¹⁹⁰. Two resolutions were submitted for adoption by each Conference, one which hailed the Russian revolution and called for a peace without annexations or indemnities, and another which called for the formation of local Councils, based where possible upon local Trades Councils, to work for the implementation of the Leeds resolutions¹⁹¹.

The district conferences at Norwich, Bristol and Leicester passed off smoothly enough; but the proceedings were interrupted at Newcastle, Mstockport and Swansea, and the meetings arranged for Birmingham and Glasgow were prohibited on the authority of the Home Office.¹⁹² The meeting in London on 28 July was disrupted and the Brotherhood Church, where the meeting was held, was seriously damaged.¹⁹³

These methods, Tom Quelch declared on behalf of the Provisional Committee, represented a direct challenge to the Councils; and they would be answered, for their cause, he wrote, thrive on opposition. Lansbury affirmed that the work of the Councils would go on¹⁹⁴. It proved, nevertheless, impossible to hold the London Conference elsewhere, and as at Glasgow and as also at Newcastle, a postal ballot had to be held to select the two representatives from each area to sit on the Provisional Committee¹⁹⁵. The central body had no greater success. Tom Quelch had been appointed Secretary with offices at 4 Duke Street, Adelphi, in London. After a month, however, Quelch received notice to quit and he joined the Army, from which time the Council had no fixed central address. Quelch was eventually arrested as a deserter on 12 September¹⁹⁶.

It had still not proved possible to bring together the full National Council. A list of delegates so far elected appeared in the Call on 4 October, some four months after the Convention, and it was announced that a full meeting of the Council would be held in the following week at which the policy of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council would be formulated

and a "vigorous campaign instituted". Following the election of the two Scottish representatives, a meeting of the full National Council was eventually held. It was the National Council's first, and apparently its last meeting. A seven-point statement of the aims and objects of the Council was adopted, which stated that the Council had been formed "primarily as a propagandist body", not as a rival to or replacement for any of the existing working-class organizations. A vigorous campaign was "about to be instituted"¹⁹⁷. It was nevertheless MacDonald's conclusion, in his report on the meeting to the I.L.P.'s National Executive, that there did "not appear to be much prospect of activity on the part of the Council"¹⁹⁸. Government intelligence agreed that workers were losing interest in the Councils. By the middle of October, Basil Thomson concluded, "it was possible to report that the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council movement was moribund"¹⁹⁹.

This was not the last which was to be heard of Soviets in Britain. The formation of a Soviet for the West of Scotland was proposed at the end of 1918; but Glasgow Trades Council decided to take no part in the conference which was to consider its foundation,²⁰⁰ and the proposal failed to arouse the enthusiasm evident at Leeds. For the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council movement had been the product of special circumstances. In its essence, as has been suggested, an organization formed in order to press for a negotiated settlement to the war rather than for revolutionary social change or 'dual power', it could have a role to play only so long as official Labour bodies remained ~~MM~~ committed to the Coalition government and the 'fight to a finish'. There would have been no immediate need for the Leeds Convention, the Socialist Review pointed out, had not the trade union MPs and the majority of the Labour Party executive "abrogated their functions and scrapped their Labour Party powers"²⁰¹. The Labour Party executive announced that it had nothing to do with the Leeds Convention, and urged that no local organization affiliated to the party should convene conferences which were not in harmony with the general policy of the party - which was that of a fight until victory had been achieved²⁰². This underestimated the strength of feeling which now existed, and of which Leeds, almost unexpectedly, gave evidence, in favour of a negotiated peace. Leeds represented, according to the Socialist Review, an "unmistakable and warning sign of the spreading feeling of Labour revolt

in the country", a revolt which Henderson's expulsion from the Cabinet and his introduction of a more independent political ^{movement} allowed the Labour leadership to contain²⁰³. The movement for a negotiated peace, moreover, lost most of its reason for existence with the ^{movement} to the centre of political debate in the Labour movement of the Stockholm proposal, a question which was discussed at special conferences of the Labour Party. Leeds, the I.L.P. Executive reported the following year, "undoubtedly gave an impetus to the Movement for summoning the International". In doing so, however, it could not but contribute to its own supersession²⁰⁴. The Councils assisted the opposition section of the Labour movement to conquer not political power, but the official section of the party. For those who wielded most influence in the Councils movement, this was^a more than sufficient return.

' If a growing pacifism in the ranks of Labour was a major problem for the Cabinet, it was by no means the only one: for whatever the achievements of the new government in Russia in restoring liberty, it soon became apparent that its efforts in the military field were by no means so successful. As early as the end of March the Cabinet was told of "very serious disorders" in the Russian Baltic fleet; the situation at Kronstadt was "unsatisfactory" and "generally speaking, the discipline in the Baltic fleet had weakened considerably"²⁰⁵. The trouble was compounded by the removal, for what appeared to be political reasons, of some of the most efficient Russian officers from posts on the White Sea²⁰⁶. As Basil Thomson observed, "the worst of revolutions is that they never know where to stop"²⁰⁷.

On 18 April the Cabinet heard a report from Colonel Knox who stated that he did not believe that a big Russian offensive was practicable in existing conditions. The Military Attache at Petrograd reported the view of a Russian officer that any question of a Russian offensive was now out of the question; and it was considered doubtful if the troops could even hold their ground if attacked. The despatch of heavy artillery was suspended, owing to the "improbability of its being usefully employed in Russia if sent there, owing to the generally chaotic state of the Russian army"²⁰⁸. By May, the military situation had not improved and it was reported that a "wave of pacifism was spreading over

the Army. It seemed, however, that the officers were trying to control the men"²⁰⁹. There was a "deplorable lack of discipline in the Russian Army at Odessa, and very poor prospects of any offensive"²¹⁰. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff declared that according to his information, the situation in Russia was very serious; and Lord Robert Cecil noted the "lack of discipline and the spread of the extremist movement to Moscow and Odessa"²¹¹. The Russian forces in the Caucasus, it was reported, would be obliged to withdraw to the east in the autumn since transport and supply were in a very bad state²¹². Knox reported at the end of the month that the military situation had not improved, that many of the drafts refused to obey orders to proceed to the front, and that there were large numbers of deserters every day²¹³. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff noted that while Knox had "never erred on the side of optimism, his information in the long run generally proved to be accurate"²¹⁴. The situation was already such as to require a secret Cabinet discussion on the situation which would arise in the event of Russia making a separate peace, although it was recognized that no conclusion could be reached. The discussion was continued at the end of July²¹⁵.

In June, the retirement of General Alexieff was, according to the Director of Military Intelligence, "entirely political". The general was known to be a "strong disciplinarian", of no political orientation; and the Provisional Government had some apprehensions that the measures which he might take to restore discipline might prove a source of embarrassment²¹⁶. In the army the "recent impression of an improved moral was weakening". Already, it was reported, eleven German divisions had been moved from the Eastern to the Western Front²¹⁷.

The view was already finding currency in the Cabinet that the government was "paying too high a price and risking too much to support a government in Russia whose prospects were at the best very uncertain and who were probably unlikely to exert any further influence on the war"²¹⁸. All, however, might not be lost. An offensive was planned and initiated by General Brusilov. On 11 July the C.I.G.S. was able to report a breakthrough to the Cabinet²¹⁹. A fortnight later he was forced to note that a retreat had begun and was continuing²²⁰. Russian proposals for a Conference on War Aims should still be postponed, the Cabinet considered, "as long as possible," for "once it was known that we were discussing these

questions, the effective prosecution of the war might be rendered more difficult"²²¹. At the heart of the problem, it seemed, was the "considerable and serious vacillation" of the government "in regard to the re-enforcement of discipline". By now, indiscipline "prevailed almost throughout the Russian Army"²²². The only grounds for optimism were that General Kornilov's army was reported to be in a better state of discipline than any other army. The C.I.G.S. had "great hopes that his appointment as Commander in Chief of the Russian Armies would lead to the restoration of discipline and the regeneration of the Russian army"²²³. On the advice of Buchanan, a message was composed (but not, it appears, despatched) that while Britain was "ready to make any sacrifice to help a Russia which had a strong government, our duty to ourselves and our other Allies might make us question the advisability of helping a government that delayed to take the necessary steps to restore discipline"²²⁴. Kornilov's terms of acceptance of his appointment, including strict discipline and the application of the death penalty, were reported to have led to some improvement in the morale of the Russian forces²²⁵. The Cabinet discussed the possible exercise of its influence in favour of the acceptance of Kornilov's conditions, in particular the reintroduction of the death penalty; but it "might be said that the British government was urging the Russian Government to shoot soldiers". Instead a "careful message in support of discipline" should be sent to Buchanan, to be used at his discretion and after consultation with the representatives of the Allies²²⁶.

In the face of a continued retreat, the destruction of ammunition dumps, and the continued drift towards a separate peace, Kornilov alone seemed to offer salvation. Knox described him as a "strong character, an honest patriot, and the best man in sight". Knox had no faith in Kerensky, who was "afraid of shedding blood and was allowing matters to drift towards anarchy". He urged that the Allied governments should represent to the Russian government that Kornilov should be fully supported in the measures which he desired to make to restore discipline at the front, on the railway and in Petrograd²²⁷. It was therefore a misfortune that his relations with Kerensky had deteriorated. Kornilov, the Cabinet felt, "represented all that was sound and hopeful with regard to an improvement in the situation in Russia. To talk of

General Kornilov as a 'traitor to his country' was monstrous, and it should not be forgotten that in the past we had been in general sympathy with his endeavours to aid the cause not only of Russia but of the Allies". It was difficult for the British government to interfere in the situation without appearing to take sides with General Kornilov, in his dispute with Kerensky; but it was equally "impossible, in the interests of the Allies and of democracy generally", to make no effort to "improve the situation", even though any steps in that direction would have to be taken through Kerensky, as the representative of the existing government. Buchanan was to be instructed to use his discretion in addressing an appeal to Kerensky to compose his differences with Kornilov, "not only in the interests of Russia herself, but in that of the Allies". All that was secured, however, was a promise by Kerensky to the chief Allied military representatives to endeavour to restore the discipline of the officers in the Russian army²²⁸.

A month later the Cabinet heard from the Director of Military Operations of "more encouraging accounts of the state of the Russian Army"; but Balfour offered another report to the effect that the situation in Russia was "worse than hitherto", and that peace would probably be made in two months, "unless Japanese and American divisions were sent to pull the nation together"²²⁹. A week later it became apparent that Balfour had erred only in optimism²³⁰.

The position for some time, however, remained unclear. "In connection with the absence of news from Russia", the First Sea Lord was instructed to contact Archangel and to make "every endeavour to obtain from Moscow, Petrograd and Hango an appreciation of the situation"²³¹. His report from Archangel was that "anarchy prevailed in Petrograd, there being a general strike of all government employees. Street fighting was taking place in Moscow". The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had heard that in Odessa "the Maximalists had the upper hand. Civil war was raging in Kiev". In Petrograd "the behaviour of M. Kerensky appeared to be lamentable, and to give little hope of success on his part"²³². Buchanan reported on 17 November that the Bolsheviks in Moscow had surrendered to government troops²³³; but by 19 November he informed London that fighting there had ended in "complete victory for the new revolutionary Party"²³⁴. The First Sea Lord had had the distressing news from Petrograd that "the discipline of the Baltic Fleet was very

bad, all the officers being under open arrest" ²³⁵.

On 12 November Balfour had told the House of Commons that he could furnish no other information than that which had appeared in the public press ²³⁶. A week later he was obliged to admit that it appeared that the "extremists" were "now in complete control of Petrograd and Moscow" ²³⁷.

Readers of the Labour press received little forewarning of the Bolshevik revolution. Only days beforehand the New Statesman's correspondent wrote from Petrograd that the city was "much quieter.. Some of us still quote Marx.. but one feels the presence of a new, and probably fruitful, empiricism" ²³⁸. The revolution itself received less approval than the March revolution had done. Information, admittedly, was lacking. It was impossible, wrote Forward, in the absence of better information, to comment on events in Russia; and "none of our usually recognized authorities on Continental Socialism" appeared to know much about Lenin ²³⁹. Snowden wrote that it would be foolish, in view of their limited knowledge, to "dogmatize or take sides definitely in a temporary conflict" ²⁴⁰. Bruce Glasier, at the I.L.P.'s conference the following Easter, declared that it would be wrong for the I.L.P. to make a pronouncement which would "definitely proclaim their sympathy on the side of the Bolsheviks to the exclusion of other sections of Russian Socialists" ²⁴¹; and the National Executive's report made no reference to the Bolsheviks' success. The Presidential Address at the Labour Party Conference suggested that the Labour movement sympathize with the Russian people in their "efforts for an ordered Government", and "help them to a fuller understanding of our position, our aims and objects in this war" ²⁴².

Other Labour spokesmen were more forthcoming. Henderson, who had had, as he pointed out, first-hand experience, declared that he had been able to determine that Bolshevism was "nothing but oppression, violence and terror" ²⁴³. The situation, however, was still in solution, and there was "yet hope that the re-statement of Allied war aims might restore the moderate leaders to power" ²⁴⁴. Snowden wrote that for a time the "Extremists" had captured the government; but the position, he thought, was "not irretrievable" ²⁴⁵. MacDonald saw no hope of Lenin securing a firm grip on Russia. Lenin was, he considered, a "doctrinaire fanatic.. with all the unscrupu-

lousness of his kind "²⁴⁶. Brailsford, writing in the Herald, accused the Bolsheviks of making a separate truce with the enemy. They were thereby "putting themselves outside the pale of our International Socialist Society"²⁴⁷.

The Call declared that "genuine and not make-believe Socialists" had seized the reins of power; and praised the Bolsheviks for their "courageous loyalty to the principles of International Socialism as laid down, for the time of war, by the Stuttgart and Basle Congresses". The paper, however, called for a coalition government of the socialist parties, and for the transfer of power to the Constituent Assembly when it met²⁴⁸. It was a singular pity, wrote a correspondent in the Herald, that no paper in the country had so far endeavoured to have a "sympathetic understanding of the position of the newer Revolutionaries"²⁴⁹. They were, Snowden noted, "naturally prone to look on what is happening among the Revolutionaries from our British point of view"²⁵⁰. Litvinov, who had been appointed to represent Bolshevik Russia in Britain, wrote in a pamphlet issued the following Easter entitled 'The Bolshevik Revolution: its rise and meaning', that it had been ^{precisely} the "international character of the Russian revolution that had "not yet been fully understood or appreciated by the workers of other countries"²⁵¹.

Whatever their attitude to the BolsheviksI seizure of power, there were few if any misgivings among Labour leaders about their denunciation of secret diplomacy and their publication of the secret treaties which had been discovered in the Foreign Ministry. Again, the effect was to strengthen the movement in favour of a negotiated peace. According to Snowden, publication of the documents (which began in Izvestiya on 23 November) had not revealed much to those who had closely followed international affairs during the previous three years. The publication was, nevertheless, valuable, inasmuch as it placed beyond all doubt the truth of the rumours which had circulated, and established the "Imperialistic character of the war"²⁵². The I.L.P. adopted a resolution at its conference in Easter 1918 welcoming the publication of the documents²⁵³. Their impact was much wider than the Labour movement; C.P. Scott of the Manchester Guardian, republished the documents in his paper and was moved by them to express his contempt of an "imperialist and reactionary government"²⁵⁴. In Parliament, Outhwaite declared that

the publication of the secret agreements revealed that the Allies were "committed to aims of vast territorial aggrandizement"^{245a}. Lord Robert Cecil, for the government, refused to accept the documents as accurate, and declined to comment on their authenticity. He did not doubt, however, that the British Ambassador would send home copies of the publications in the ordinary course^{246a}. Balfour later declared that the documents "ought not to have been published", but made no attempt to repudiate them^{247a}.

Shortly thereafter the Labour Memorandum on War Aims appeared, and at a Special Conference of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. on 28 December 1917 it was adopted. Framed to provide a "definite statement of War Aims and Peace Policy which shall express the general sense of the Labour Movement as a whole", the fact of its publication and adoption was, perhaps, of greater significance than its detailed provisions, which reflected the sentiments of Labour and dissident Liberal spokesmen. The Memorandum omitted to refer to the Bolsheviks' proposals for a general peace. It did, however, according to Lloyd George's Secretary, make a "most favourable impression on many sections of opinion outside the Labour Party". Together with Lord Lansdowne's letter to the Daily Telegraph of 29 November, calling for an early negotiated peace, opposition to the government's war policy had been notably extended^{248a}.

The Cabinet was informed by Carson, who was responsible for anti-pacifist measures, that his survey of the government's propaganda had led him to conclude that the pacifists were "greatly assisted by the lack of definiteness in our territorial war aims". Barnes expressed his agreement^{249a}. This was a serious matter. Without the goodwill and co-operation of the trade unions, Lloyd George recalled, they "could not have secured further recruits from among the exempted". In order to secure their co-operation it was necessary to place before them with what he described as "complete frankness" the purposes for which the war was being prosecuted^{250a}. There had been "mischievous statements circulating in the Press and at meetings, and in private that our aims were of an 'imperialistic' or predatory character". The Cabinet agreed that a public statement of war aims had become increasingly important, and that the statement should "take the form of a counter-offensive"^{251a}. The idea, according to Thomas Jones, was to make the statement "ultra-

democratic, to go to the furthest points of concession, so as to support the war spirit at home, which (had) been seriously weakened"^{252a}. Lloyd

George's draft statement was considered on 4 January 1918 by the Cabinet, the section on self-determination being modified so as to apply "not to all races indiscriminately, but merely to the settlement of the New Europe"^{253a}; and the speech was delivered the following day^{254a}. The effect of the speech, Jones considered, was "splendid on Labour"²⁵⁵. That it had succeeded in transforming Labour opinion would, however, be too much to say. Especially at the local level, unrest continued. Barnes reported in dismay to the Cabinet that he had mentioned the name of Trotsky at his meetings in Scotland, and "it had been received with cheers"²⁵⁶. J.H. Thomas told Jones that the railwaymen were "much less easy to move" than they had been in August 1914, and that many favoured peace terms²⁵⁷. The strike movement hardly abated. It was against this background, of a steady increase in the strength of feeling in favour of an early peace, and of a continued Labour unrest no more to the taste of the official Labour leadership than it was within their control, that the government had to form its policy in regard to the new Bolshevik regime in Russia.

Whatever that policy was to be, it would certainly not be one of recognition. On 23 November, the day after a Soviet proposal for a general peace had been received, Lord Robert Cecil gave an interview to Reuter's agency, and made it clear that there would be no recognition, and that the new Russian government was "'outside the pale' of international society"²⁵⁸. Balfour told the House of Commons that since the fall of the Provisional Government, no government had been formed in Russia with which the British government had found itself able to enter into relations²⁵⁹. Nor, indeed, did the question have the importance it was later to assume, for few among even its supporters believed that the new regime would have other than a transitory existence. The Manchester Guardian on 12 November reported "Kerensky returning - Extremist defeats", quoting a communique to the effect that the defeat of the Bolsheviks was "only a matter of days or even hours"²⁶⁰. Buchanan told the government that the ability of the Bolsheviks to hold out indefinitely was "unlikely"; but ~~they~~ might, he thought, "hold out for two or three months"²⁶¹. Guesses were made, Nabokov recorded, as to the number of days that the Bolshevik regime would last, and "who would

replace it"²⁶². Only one thing seemed certain, the New Statesman suggested: "the Bolsheviks cannot possibly maintain themselves in power"²⁶³. As late as 5 January 1918, a leader in the Daily Telegraph declared that the Soviet government might be "swept out of existence at any hour and no sane man would give them as much as a month to live"²⁶⁴.

Similarly the question of public and private debts appeared to arise only in the short term. Their size was estimated in the House of Commons at six hundred and sixty million respectively²⁶⁵. An answer as to whether they were adequately protected was at first refused as "not in the public interest"²⁶⁶. Subsequently, however, Bonar Law offered a review of the situation. He foresaw, after the collapse of the Bolshevik regime, the emergence of a "recognized and responsible government" in Russia, which would be compelled to recognize that the "development of its resources and its prosperity would be impossible without financial assistance from other countries". This would in turn be "impossible unless as a first provision previous debts are accepted by that Government". He did not, therefore, believe that the debts would "not be recovered sooner or later by this country"²⁶⁷.

The question still remained, however, as the Cabinet was told, of "how far it was possible for the Allies to take any effective action in Russia against the Bolsheviks", who were now engaged in the negotiation of an armistice with the Germans²⁶⁸. The Allies had not recognized "Lenin and his associates", nor could they recognize any government which "officially put forward to the enemy proposals for peace". The trouble was - and this was at the heart of the Allies' predicament - that "any overt official step taken against the Bolsheviks might only strengthen their determination to make peace and might be used to inflame anti-Allied feeling in Russia, and so defeat the very object (the government) were aiming at". There remained, too, a lack of reliable information on the strength of anti-Bolshevik forces. Steps should be taken, it was suggested, to "build up in Russia some sort of unofficial organization which could counter the work of the German organization". The Roumanians were to be persuaded to get in touch with General Kaledin, which would provide some information as to his strength, while it would "not constitute an intervention in Russian internal affairs" to the same extent as action by the Allies directly. Buchanan

was told that an "unfortunate effect would be created by anything which might be interpreted as official recognition"²⁶⁹. He was later informed that the Paris Conference had decided that "Allied governments should have no relations at present with the Bolshevik government"²⁷⁰.

The Cabinet approved a "formal and strongly-worded protest" signed by the military representatives of Britain, France, Italy, Roumania and Japan to General Dukhunin, the Bolshevik Commander in Chief, warning against any infraction of the Russian treaty obligations towards the Allies²⁷¹. But Knox reported that "quite apart from the action of the government authorities, the Russian troops at the front were insisting upon an armistice"; it was "quite clear that whatever happened politically in Russia, the bulk of the Russian army refused to continue the war". The Military Attache in Petrograd, surmising that the Bolsheviks would remain in power "some weeks if not months", gave as his opinion that it was "useless to try to hold any Russian Governments to strict fulfilment of obligations which nine-tenths of the people repudiate, because no government can collect the force to carry out a policy in opposition to (the) will of the vast majority of the people". A separate peace or not, Germany could hope for very few supplies from Russia; it would be "almost impossible" for Russia and Germany to agree upon terms; and even if an agreement for a separate peace were concluded, "we would lose no more than we have lost already". The "first thing", he added, was to "prove to (the Russian people) that they are not required as cannon fodder by Allied Imperialists"²⁷².

On 29 November a further Note was received from Trotsky asking if Allied governments would take part in discussions with a view to concluding a "democratic peace without annexations or indemnities with the right of every nation to decide its own destiny". The discussions would begin on 2 December²⁷³. Balfour's reply, to what he termed the "present Provisional Government", was to declare that the proposal was "contrary to Russia's treaty with her Allies" and to "deeper principles accepted to the full by the Provisional Government itself". The "very worst way" of obtaining peace - which, "speaking broadly", was accepted by the British government also - was the method adopted, which could result only in a "German and Imperialistic" settlement²⁷⁴. Trotsky protested in vain that "all the steps we have taken go to show that we are striving

for a general and not a separate armistice.."275

The Cabinet considered the latest communications from its representatives in Russia on 29 November. Cecil urged a decision at the earliest possible moment. If Kaledin and the Cossacks could be united against Germany, supplies would thereby be prevented from reaching the enemy. There was, he thought, "no evidence to show that the Bolsheviks have anything like general support throughout Russia: there was reason for thinking that the peasants were against the Bolsheviks". Kaledin was the one man with an organized force, and as the chief of the Cossacks had great prestige. Cecil recommended that a military envoy be attached to his staff, and that up to ten million pounds be placed at his disposal. "Some members" of the Cabinet, however, found objections to entering into active co-operation with Kaledin without further information. There were, moreover, "signs that the Cossacks were not prepared to fight". The scheme's only result might be to drive the Russian government definitely into the arms of Germany, at a time when the German peace terms, which were shortly to be announced, might have the opposite effect. The Cabinet was "divided in opinion", as the Prime Minister, Balfour and Milner, then conferring in Paris, were informed²⁷⁶.

Following the Paris Conference, recognition was definitely ruled out, and efforts were made to discourage neutral governments (notably the Swiss and the Swedish governments) from doing so. The supplies of food and clothing (but not munitions), which the Cabinet had decided to continue to send to Russia to encourage friendly feelings towards the Allies, were discontinued²⁷⁷. Their dilemma, however, remained no nearer solution. The Bolsheviks had entered into separate peace negotiations with the enemy, and had begun to issue manifestoes composed, as Carson complained, "chiefly" of "Bolshevik propaganda". Some, he pointed out, were "appeals to the people as against their governments, and were in many respects of a violent character". At the same time the Soviet representatives might yet be compelled to break off their negotiations with the German representatives, especially if the Allies refrained from hostile action which might force them together. Again, as Buchanan urged, they could not afford to boycott the Bolsheviks altogether if they were to attempt to safeguard their "many interests" in the country, and to "try to prevent them throwing in their lot entirely with the Germans". They were, he thought,

likely to be the "ruling factor for some time to come"; and should their position, as he thought probable, be legitimized by the Constituent Assembly, some form of personal relations would be necessary. In general, however, he took a "very gloomy view of the outlook, more especially as regards the safety of our subjects and protection of British capital invested in banks, mines and factories"²⁷⁸.

On 3 December the matter moved closer to a resolution, with the decision of the Cabinet to subsidize, within reason, the Russian army in the Caucasus, which (according to Nabokov) remained loyal to the Provisional Government. Moreover, in view of the need of making a "tremendous effort to maintain Southern Russia on the Allied side", financial assistance was approved to the Cossacks and the Ukrainians. Buchanan was to be informed that the policy of the British government was to "support any responsible body in Russia that would actively oppose the Maximalist movement", an instruction which at least avoided equivocation, while affirming at the same time that it was government policy to "give money freely, within reason, to such bodies as were prepared to help the Allied cause"²⁷⁹.

Buchanan was accordingly informed of the Cabinet's decision to "strengthen by every means in our power those elements who are generally friendly to the Entente of whom the chief are Kaledin, Alexeiff and their group. Any coalition of Bolsheviks with Social-Revolutionaries or even Mensheviks would be no real improvement; it would be under Bolshevik influence and would besides consist of talkers and theorists". A "southern block" of the Caucasus, the Cossacks and the Ukraine might however be set up with a reasonably stable government, and "through its command of oil, coal and corn (would) control the whole of Russia". Buchanan was authorized directly or "through such agents as you select" to implement this policy. "No regard should be had to expense" and he should furnish to the Cossacks and Ukrainians "any funds necessary by any means you think desirable". Similar instructions were sent to Jassy and Teheran²⁸⁰. Buchanan's reply noted, however, that the forces at Kaledin's and Alexieff's disposal were "not sufficient to enable them to engage in any serious enterprise"²⁸¹.

Plans for the commitment of British forces began to emerge at the same time. If "some old battleships with some marines" were sent to

Archangel, it would form a "place of refuge.. for British residents in Russia, as a door for communications with that country in the future, and.. it would have a good effect from a propaganda point of view". Equally, following discussions at the Inter-Allied Conversations in Paris, proposals were examined for the occupation of Vladivostok with a view to the control of the Siberian Railways by American or Japanese forces, for police purposes, for the protection of military stores there, and later, if necessary, to obtain control of the Trans-Siberian Railway and open up communications with South Russia. The seizure of Vladivostok was, however, open to the familiar objection that it might "do more harm than good, by strengthening Russian opposition to the Allies even amongst the most friendly sections of the population", and might even jeopardize the lives of the British Ambassador and other British subjects in Russia". There was a real danger than Russia "might not only make peace with Germany, but also might be provoked by us into fighting with the Germans against us". At the same time an "ambiguous and uncertain policy towards the Bolshevik government" was "also fraught with serious disadvantages". Enquiries were to be made in Washington and Tokyo whether conditions were thought favourable for the despatch of a police force to Vladivostok²⁸².

The Cabinet was told on 6 December that the "many questions arising out of the state of affairs in Russia would be easier if the policy of the Allies was more clearly defined". For the time being, however, all that was decided was for "suitable financial help" to be granted to the Armenians. It was reported that British armoured cars, officers and men were already in Southern Russia²⁸³. A fuller discussion followed some days later on the basis of a memorandum submitted by Balfour, with the Prime Minister in attendance. It was made clear that the government was "not primarily or specially concerned with the composition of the Russian government, or with the local aspirations of the Bolsheviks ", described by Balfour as "dangerous dreamers" with "wild theories", or other political parties, except insofar as they bore on their attitude to the conflict with the Central Powers. British aims should be to keep Russia in the war; or if this were not possible, to "ensure that Russia was as helpful to us and as harmful to the enemy as possible". It seemed likely that the Bolsheviks and their 'crazy system' would be able to maintain an

ascendancy for the few months following only; but these months were nevertheless crucial, and to antagonize them needlessly would "throw them into the arms of Germany". It was also expected that the Constituent Assembly would shortly endorse the new regime. There appeared to be a change on the part of the Bolsheviks of late, moreover; the attacks upon the Allies in the official press had ceased, and the Bolshevik Commander in Chief, Krilenko, was reputed to be insisting upon the inclusion in the agreement with the Germans of a clause forbidding troop transfers from one front to another. The Cabinet "without making any change in their recent policy towards Russia", decided to accept Buchanan's proposal covering the position of British subjects in Russia and to end the imprisonment in Britain of two Soviet representatives, Chicherin and Petrov, and to allow their return to Russia, where "judged by local standards", thought Balfour, their opinions would "probably appear sane and moderate"²⁸⁴.

Buchanan boldly declared in an interview published in the Soviet press that there was no truth in the reports that Britain was "contemplating any coercive or punitive measures in the event of the Russians making a separate peace"²⁸⁵. Meanwhile the H.M.S. Iphigenia was directed from Archangel to Murmansk, a more defensible site; and Lord Robert Cecil told the Cabinet that in his opinion the "best plan was to continue the present policy of rallying to the Allies, and assisting all those elements in Southern Russia that were resisting the Bolsheviks" (while he admitted that there was a "danger, if care were not taken, of support being given to different separate organizations which had varying, if not actually hostile views"²⁸⁶). The "vague nature" of British policy towards developments in Russia distressed him, and he called for "some definite policy" to be established²⁸⁷. The French Ambassador had suggested to him a "delimitation of Southern Russia into British and French spheres of ~~XXXXXXX~~ activity", which he had specified. The forces in the South, Cecil thought, had a reasonable chance of success were the government to support them; whereas "we could hope for nothing from Trotsky, who was a Jew of the international type". The Cabinet still refused to come to a decision on Cecil's question. There was, it was thought, a "danger that by backing a losing horse in South Russia, we were destroying any hope of preventing the Germans appearing in Petrograd as the friends and helpers of an all-powerful

Bolshevik government". Moreover, it was necessary to take a long view, for "that Power which assisted the future Russian government in the reconstruction of the country would have the whole of Russia's resources at her command".²⁸⁸ Cecil, Milner and Macdonough subsequently left for a conference with Clemenceau, which took place on 23 December. The memorandum there agreed upon was endorsed by the Cabinet on 26 December²⁸⁹. With its adoption, intervention had developed from a response into a policy.

The situation remained, of course, a complicated and changing one; and to the extent to which the Bolshevik government occupied only a part, and not even the most important part economically, of Russia, for what was expected to be a matter at most of a few months, it would be too much to hold that the agreement in Paris was nothing more than an 'anti-Bolshevik charter'. Yet despite Cecil's assertion that "it was not a question of spheres of influence", it would be difficult to find a more accurate description of the provisions of the agreement²⁹⁰. It did, moreover, coincide with the actual course of events and the roles played in Russian events by both powers; and it formed, evidently, a considered statement of policy to the extent of being subsequently reviewed and its extension proposed by the Cabinet²⁹¹. The choice of respective areas of influence was, too, rather more than accidental: as a recent study has pointed out, "British investment was heaviest in the Caucasian oilfields, French in the coal and iron mines of the Ukraine"²⁹².

At the meeting Milner explained the mission of the British delegates as one of discussion of the situation in Russia with the French government, with regard particularly to the question of "providing help for the various Provisional Governments that showed signs of opposing the Bolsheviks". Cecil added that the situation in Russia was "very critical". The Allies must be quite clear in their own minds as to what they intended to do, lest they should merely antagonize the Bolsheviks without succeeding in establishing effective centres of resistance to Germany in the South. It was agreed that resistance in the Ukraine must be supported; while Clemenceau felt that they should keep contact with the Bolsheviks for as long as was possible, since they were in power at least "for the moment", making "such concessions as were reasonable and possible". The French Ambassador had proposed a "division of activity, that France should look after Rumania and the Ukraine, and

Great Britain after the rest of South-East Russia", which had been accepted by the British government. It was agreed to continue to support the Ukraine, even if Trotsky declared that this was civil war and sided with Germany.

The memorandum itself proposed that at Petrograd the powers should get in touch with the Bolsheviks through unofficial agents. Buchanan should go on leave, his long residence in Petrograd having "indelibly associated him, in the minds of the Bolsheviks, with the policy of the Cadets". The Bolsheviks were to be informed that the Allies had no desire to take part in any way in the internal politics of Russia, and that any idea that they favoured a counter-revolution was a "profound mistake". The Allies at the same time felt it necessary to keep in touch "as far as we can with the Ukraine, the Cossacks, Finland, Siberia, the Caucasus etc.". The dangers implicit in the German terms were to be pointed out, and those of allowing Russian artillery and wheat reserves to pass into German hands.

The Allies, it was noted, would thus require money to "reorganize the Ukraine, to pay the Cossacks and Caucasian forces and to bribe the Persians". The sums required were "not, as things go, very enormous". If the French could undertake the finance of the Ukraine, the British government would find the money for the others. Also necessary were "agents and officers to advise and support the provisional Governments and their armies". It was essential that this should be done "as quietly as possible" so as to "avoid the imputation - as far as we can - that we are preparing to make war on the Bolsheviks". The Ukraine should again, in these matters, be dealt with by the French, while the British would attend to the other South-Eastern provinces. A general officer from each country should be appointed to take charge of each country's activities, but they "would of course keep in the closest touch with one another...in order to ensure the utmost unity of action..". A Convention was drawn up, additional to the agreement, by Foch and Macdonough, concerning the spheres of French and British activity in South Russia.²⁹³

Measures were already in hand to secure an unofficial representative to be sent to Petrograd. Robert Bruce Lockhart, previously Vice-Consul at Moscow, was called to Downing Street on 21 December 1917 for a discussion.²⁹⁴

Lloyd George was clearly impressed with his talents; and his despatches from Moscow throughout the year had been unusually well-informed and prescient. In a communication of 1 November (which did not, however, reach London until 28 November, when it was initialled "out of date"), he had reported that "considerable anxiety" was felt by the Moscow people in view of "constant rumours of a projected Bolshevik rising to place the Government of the country in the hands of the Councils of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies.. Serious disturbances may be avoided at Moscow, but it is impossible to say what the future holds for us"²⁹⁵. Nor could he at this time share the general belief, he recorded, stimulated by the opinion of "nearly all the Russian experts in London, that the Lenin regime could not last more than a few weeks and that then Russia would revert to Tsarism or a military dictatorship", or the "firmly-rooted conviction that Lenin and Trotsky were German staff officers in disguise or at least servile agents of German policy"²⁹⁶.

The opportunity to send him to Russia was found in the appointment of Litvinov as Soviet Consul in England on 4 January 1918. On 5 January Litvinov wrote to Balfour, informing him of his position and seeking a meeting with him²⁹⁷. He received a polite note some days later from the Foreign Office, informing him that since the Soviet government was officially not recognized by Britain he could not be received by Balfour himself, but that he wished to maintain contact with him, and had nominated an agent for this purpose, Mr Rex Leeper, through whom Balfour could be informed of matters which required his decision. Lockhart swiftly got in touch with Litvinov, and a meeting was held in a London cafe, at which it was agreed that although no official relations existed, Litvinov in London and Lockhart in Russia would have diplomatic privileges²⁹⁸. Litvinov wrote a note for Lockhart to serve as an introduction to the Soviet Foreign Ministry. On 7 January the Cabinet was informed that Lockhart was proceeding to Petrograd as an unofficial means of contact with the Bolsheviks²⁹⁹. On 14 January he left Britain on his way to Soviet Russia³⁰⁰. He was, he wrote, "head of a special mission to establish unofficial relations with the Bolsheviks"; his instructions were "of the vaguest"³⁰¹.

Litvinov's position in Britain presented, however, a number of difficulties. His demand to be entrusted with the funds and records of the Russian Embassy was refused: Cecil was "strongly opposed to the idea, as

the funds of the Embassy would probably be spent by M. Litvinov on spreading Bolshevik propaganda"³⁰². Litvinov, certainly, was not inactive. He addressed an appeal "to the workers of Great Britain", informing them that Russian workers were "not only fighting their own battles, they are fighting your battles too, and they will succumb unless the workers in other countries come speedily to their help"³⁰³. He appointed the Scottish socialist John Maclean as Soviet Consul for Scotland.³⁰⁴ He addressed the Labour Party Conference at Nottingham in January 1918, and a pamphlet of his was issued in April³⁰⁵.

The Cabinet, seriously embarrassed already by the developing 'pacifist' movement, considered his conduct on 15 January, and noted that the propaganda he had conducted involved breaches of the Defence of the Realm regulations. It was agreed that "this Bolshevik agitation would have a bad effect on the people of Great Britain in general". Sir George Cave assured the Cabinet that in the past he had deported men for less objectionable propaganda than that under consideration. As Balfour pointed out, however, if he were deported it would be impossible to maintain the contacts which had been established with the Bolsheviks in Petrograd, where the situation was currently "extremely critical"³⁰⁶. Shortly afterwards, following his appearance at the Labour Party Conference, the Cabinet was told that it was evident that his presence had been "exploited in the interests of pacifism", and his position was again discussed³⁰⁷. It was agreed, however, that he must be dealt with in accordance with the government's general policy towards the Bolsheviks. To drive him out would be "tantamount to a declaration of war against the Bolsheviks", which would force them to side with the Germans, and prejudice the position of British nationals who still remained in Russia.

It was later added, in connection with Litvinov's efforts to secure exemptions from military service, that he would "undoubtedly exempt all the East End Jews if he could", who were prospering in existing conditions through supplanting English traders³⁰⁸. It was agreed that he should be reprimanded, however, for an article in the "Woolwich Pioneer", which had been authored by him in his official capacity, and had, it was considered, incited the Woolwich munitions workers to revolution; and also for efforts which he was reported to have made to "tamper with the discipline of British troops". A visit which Petrov had requested to be allowed

to make to Britain was refused, in view of the opinion of the Counter Espionage Department that it would be a "grave danger to allow (him) to return to this country". A visit by Kamenev had already been approved, but it was agreed that he should be kept under close observation³⁰⁹. This led to the opening and examination of his baggage on arrival, and to the confiscation, as MacDonald reported to the House of Commons, of such incriminating evidence as a Bible³¹⁰.

This led to Litvinov adopting what was described as a "quieter tone"³¹¹; but discussion was still required of the measures which should be undertaken by the government to put a stop to his activities, which included "attempts to undermine the discipline of Russian Jews serving in the British and Canadian forces, the formation of an Information Bureau in the East End of London for the dissemination of Bolshevik propaganda, the formation of Red Guards in London". A Communist Club in Soho had been raided the previous day, where a "meeting of Russian revolutionaries" had been taking place. Litvinov had not been present, but was a member of the Club. An Order in Council was approved, enabling the Secretary of State to prohibit any alien from addressing meetings or engaging in propaganda.

Meanwhile in Russia Lockhart was making "little progress"; and indeed he recalled that "most of (his) telegrams to London remained unanswered"³¹². His position was indeed a difficult one: any serious attempt to secure Russian re-entry into the war would depend upon Allied military assistance; but the Cabinet in London at no time appeared ready to consider such support. Indeed, the opinion was expressed that Trotsky's motive in wishing to establish contact with the Allies was to find a means of "extricating himself from his difficulties", which were regarded as a necessary consequence of Bolshevik policies. Another view was that he was "endeavouring to get the Socialist parties of the different countries into a conference in order to extend the scope of his fanatical attacks upon the existing order of civilization"³¹³. Lockhart did not share the optimism of the military experts about the 'loyal Russians and about the restoration of the Eastern Front', which he found was not a major preoccupation in Russia; the aim, rather, of the 'loyal Russians' (who were, in effect, the bourgeoisie) was to secure the restoration of their property through British military intervention, or if necessary

German. He received no reply to his proposal that support be offered to the Bolshevik authorities³¹⁴:

At the same time, intervention plans continued to crystallize. Intervention was declared to be a form of 'assistance' to the Bolsheviks which should preferably be rendered with their agreement; but, it became increasingly apparent, it would if necessary be rendered regardless of or even despite Bolshevik wishes. Buchanan drew the attention of the government to the "present anomalous situation" which could not, he was convinced, be indefinitely prolonged; nor, indeed, was it "in keeping with traditions of British diplomacy for (an) Ambassador to proclaim (the) strict neutral attitude of his government when (the) latter is actively supporting one of the parties in it"³¹⁵. Balfour acknowledged that from a purely Foreign Office point of view, there would be great advantages in cutting off all relations with the Bolsheviks. They had broken treaty obligations, repudiated debts and were "openly trying to raise revolutions in all countries"³¹⁶. On the other hand, there were "great interests in Northern Russia" to be safeguarded, and a number of British subjects in Russia whose position had to be considered. It was therefore necessary, he considered, that communications of a practical kind should take place through agents. He was, moreover, "quite clear that we could not give full recognition to the Bolsheviks until they could show that they were representative of the Russian people".

There remained other, and perhaps more substantial objections. The Bolsheviks, Balfour explained, appeared to be determined to spread what he described as 'pacifist propaganda' in Britain, and in Germany. Trotsky was less, he thought, a German agent than a "genuine fanatic bent on spreading the doctrines of revolution throughout the world, but particularly in the two countries which he regarded as Imperialistic, viz England and Germany". Such propaganda was in Britain "dangerous and attractive to those who had nothing to lose"³¹⁷.

Besides, to establish closer relations with the Bolsheviks would be "clearly incompatible with the modest degree of recognition and support which we had been, or were giving, to the Ukraine and Don Cossacks". Cecil added that even to increase the powers of Lockhart to facilitate dealings with the Bolshevik government, as Buchanan had recommended, might "discourage what remained of the anti-Bolshevik elements" and might also

"prove helpful in the spread of Bolshevik propaganda in this country, as also in France and Italy". In Italy, he declared, the danger of the spread of Bolshevik propaganda was "serious". Lloyd George added that the Bolsheviks represented a "formidable menace to Austria and Germany", and that what information they had available regarding the internal conditions of Austria suggested that the authorities there were "seriously embarrassed by the spread of Bolshevism". It was agreed that any recognition of the Bolsheviks would assist in the spread of their propaganda in Britain.³¹⁸ There was, Lloyd George recalled, a "genuine fear that recognition would involve admitting into Allied countries a swarm of Bolshevik intriguers to foment revolution"³¹⁹. British relations with Soviet Russia were becoming, evidently, to an increasing extent the product of the Cabinet's estimate of the state of labour unrest in Britain, and indeed elsewhere in Europe. British relations with Russia had acquired a political dimension which differentiated those relations from British relations with other countries; and had come to involve issues the gravity of which might often seem to exceed those involved in the struggle with the Central Powers.

Plans for action in Siberia were foundering, meanwhile, on American objections. The American Secretary of State, it was reported from Washington, hoped that it would not be necessary to take any action. Japanese, and even more American intervention would, he thought, provide German anti-Ally propaganda with a "powerful weapon"³²⁰. An interview with the Japanese Ambassador, on the other hand, led to the conclusion that the Japanese intended to land a force "if they can get a reasonable excuse for doing so"; and while American or British participation might be allowed, they intended to keep control of the operation in their own hands. The Ambassador had remarked cryptically that Japan had "great interests in that part of the world"; but no decision had, he thought, been taken with regard to intervention.³²¹ The Cabinet ordered the H.M.S. Suffolk to proceed to Vladivostok, with instructions to act with the Japanese and report on the situation. Cecil believed that the Japanese "ultimately intended to seize Vladivostok, but that they would not do so at present"³²². The Americans remained the most appropriate Allied power to participate in a Siberian intervention, in order both to ensure that military action met Allied objectives as closely as possible, and not

simply Japanese plans of territorial aggrandizement; and to present at least an appearance of joint Allied action for the sake of Russian opinion. The Cabinet was told, however, in February that apart from "jealousy and suspicion of Japanese enterprises", the Americans considered the Japanese the "worst possible agents of the Allies in Russia"³²³.

The protection of the military stores at Vladivostok (635,000 tons of railway materials, nitrates and barbed wire, and "other valuable supplies", the Cabinet was told) was necessary because unless safeguarded, they "might very probably fall into the hands of the enemy". General Richardson felt that a force should be sent, necessarily Japanese or American, but preferably both; and it should "for choice.. not be solely Japanese, as in this case the Russians as whole, not merely the Bolsheviks, would be opposed to this step". It would also be desirable to send a few Chinese and British troops to "show the flag"³²⁴.

It appeared, however, that the Japanese might be content with a limited occupation of the Eastern portions of Siberia, and might "prove unwilling to effect our main object, namely, the opening up of communications with South-Eastern Russia by securing control of the whole of the Siberian railway from Vladivostok to the Cossack country". Curzon emphasized the danger that the Japanese might be content with the "domination of Eastern Siberia only", and might be "unwilling to entertain the main proposition". A Japanese occupation would probably result also, Cecil warned, in the ^{ir}domination over the whole of Asia; and the Government of India was not in favour of Japanese action, since it would "enormously enhance the prestige of Asiatics as against Europeans, and would considerably react upon the attitude of Indians towards the British"³²⁵.

The main difficulty remained the securing of American participation. The introduction of the Japanese, Balfour noted, would "probably involve war with the Bolshevik government", and this they must be prepared to face. Lloyd George added that Bolshevism was a "growing menace to all the civilized countries of the world". Bolshevik doctrines were beginning to spread in Britain, they had undoubtedly spread in Austria, and there was reason to believe that they were at work in Germany. Russia, he declared, was a "plague house". It was agreed that the Japanese should be urged to seize control of the Trans-Siberian railway as far as Cheliabinsk, and that telegrams should be sent to Washington and Paris explaining the decision

reached, and seeking support³²⁶.

The withdrawal of British diplomatic personnel was effected on 28 February 1918³²⁷. Lockhart remained: the peace terms had not yet been signed, the peace with Germany might be of short duration, and contacts had to be maintained. He remained convinced, as he recalled, that the Bolsheviks' internal strength was greater than was generally realized, and that there was no other power in Russia which was capable of replacing them. "This, indeed, was the fundamental difference between Whitehall and myself"³²⁸. A landing in Vladivostok would, he wrote, destroy all possibility of an understanding with the Bolsheviks; and common sense would seem to indicate that as a measure for reconstructing the Eastern front against Germany it was ludicrous³²⁹. Lloyd George later conceded that it was "admittedly difficult to foresee any very large positive result that might be achieved thereby"³²⁰.

In the absence of Allied assistance on acceptable terms, the Brest-Litovsk treaty was signed on 3 March 1918, and ratified by the Fourth Special Congress of Soviets. An Allied Conference on 16 March condemned this "final betrayal". A declaration drafted by Clemenceau was issued two days later, which concluded with a repudiation of the treaty: "peace treaties such as these we do not, and cannot acknowledge"³³¹. Events now moved swiftly towards their conclusion. Although Lockhart was subsequently urged to "do (his) utmost to secure Bolshevik consent to an Allied military intervention in Russia", the possibility of the conclusion of such an agreement had largely passed.³³² The Cabinet, meanwhile, was already examining the proposal to land a force at Murmansk in order, it was stated, to protect military stores there³³³; and efforts to secure American approval for action at Vladivostok were not relaxed.

Lockhart informed the Cabinet on 13 April that Trotsky wished the Allied governments to submit to him, at the earliest opportunity, a full and proper statement of the assistance which they could furnish in order to enable Russia to continue the war against Germany, and of guarantees which the Allies were prepared to give in this direction³³⁴. Trotsky had added that if the conditions were friendly, an agreement was "both necessary and desirable". A further communication contained definite terms of intervention along the lines of Trotsky's proposal, as formulated by the Allied military representatives. This led only, however, to a renewed appeal to President

Wilson, quoting this new evidence which suggested that Bolshevik approval might be forthcoming for Allied action³³⁵. Lockhart was sent a copy of this appeal, and a message from Balfour to the effect that the terms forwarded as a basis for Allied action "may well serve as a basis for discussion".

On 22 April the Cabinet considered it desirable that an emissary, perhaps General Smuts, should be sent to Russia to discuss with Trotsky the "organization of Russia for military purposes"³³⁶. Four days later, however, it was decided that the question should "stand over" until a reply had been received from President Wilson on the proposals for Allied action³³⁷.

The following month the question arose again. Lloyd George argued that it was "very desirable that a nucleus of Allied troops should be sent to Russia, so that M. Trotski might feel that he had some force behind him". It was military advice, however, that no troops could for the present be diverted in this way³³⁸. The opinion was subsequently expressed in the Cabinet that an "overdue weight had been placed, in our recent correspondence, on the desirability of an invitation for intervention from the Bolshevik Government"³³⁹. As Cecil expressed it in a memorandum, "we should prefer to see the acquiescence of the Soviet government in any action we might take, but we do not regard this as absolutely essential"³⁴⁰. Lockhart, he considered, should inform the Soviet government that "we regard ourselves as free to take any steps that seem to us desirable to prevent the further establishment of German influence in any part of Russia". It is difficult, in fact, to believe that the Cabinet, with the possible exception of Lloyd George, who insisted that there was "something to hope from Trotsky and the Bolsheviks"³⁴¹, regarded co-operation with the Bolshevik government as possible, even if it were desirable. Lockhart's attempts to reach an agreement with Trotsky simply led, for instance, Curzon to conclude that he was "with Trotsky", and Milner to state that he did "not keep our end up with Trotsky"³⁴².

In fact Lockhart, while originally opposed to intervention (without, at least, Bolshevik approval), rapidly changed his ground. He urged, certainly, that intervention should be carried out, if at all, with adequate forces; and he later wrote that "to have intervened with hopelessly inadequate forces was an example of spineless half-measures which in the circumstances

amounted to a crime"³⁴³. His statement that "to have intervened at all was a mistake", however, does not accord with his communications from Russia at the time.³⁴⁴ His telegrams from May onwards urged intervention as swiftly as possible, and reported the position of the Bolshevik government to be so weak and declining as to leave little room for surprise that the forces which were despatched to Russia were found to be insufficient.

The only alternative, he argued, to an agreement with the Bolsheviks was Allied intervention "on a large scale preferably with the consent of the Russian government, but if not without it", which should be prepared secretly and launched at the "first favourable moment in the political situation here"³⁴⁵. It would be "foolish", he added, to "hope for too much from the Russians themselves". As for the Bolsheviks, the concealment of British intentions would "render any opposition they might offer ineffectual". Their power was diminishing and a counter-revolution, he felt, might "easily be successful", although not without Allied intervention³⁴⁶. The consent to this of the Bolsheviks was "more than doubtful" but this was now, he argued, a question of secondary importance, for the Allies would "never have (a) more favourable moment for intervention than the present", and their intervention, he suggested, would "cause (the) downfall of (the) Bolsheviks"³⁴⁷. These impressions were confirmed in a conversation with Chicherin and Karakhan. The power of the Bolsheviks, he told London, was "decreasing daily"³⁴⁸.

In June he reported that the Bolsheviks were "almost at the end of their power". Their attempts to create an army had failed, and they were not even in a position to deal with the Czechs, who were then collecting in Siberia³⁴⁹. Two days later he added that the Bolsheviks were in a "desperate situation.. Discontent grows daily". Radek's wife was reported to have fled to Switzerland; and where the Czechs were in force they were "completely masters of the situation"³⁵⁰.

His new-found enthusiasm and urgency were not, it appeared, matched in London; but this was not, Balfour reassured him, because his work was unappreciated, or because he had "in any way lost the confidence of H.M.G.", who understood the "peculiar difficulties" of his position. The changing and contradictory character of his advice found its explanation in the "constantly changing aspects of the present transitional period of Russian history". Balfour was doubtful, however, whether Lockhart

"equally (apprehended) the difficulties as seen from the side of the Allies". The delay was the consequence of the fact that the Allies "did not all decide the same way.. Without the participation of America nothing effective can be accomplished through Siberia, and the active participation of America has so far been refused". What was lacking was "not decision but agreement"³⁵¹.

Despite such considerations as the "personal repugnance" felt by a British representative in Russia in regard to the "occupation, even temporary, of a Christian country by non-Christian troops", the Cabinet had been in favour of Allied-Japanese intervention from at least the beginning of the year (in Lloyd George's view, the essential decision had been taken on 24 January³⁵²), since when the policy of the British government had been "steadily in favour of intervention"). The Japanese, however, demanded American moral and material support; and this President Wilson refused to sanction. (The American government had indicated on 1 March that while unwilling themselves to take part in a joint intervention, they would not object to the British and French governments doing so. Four days later, however, it was learned that they had decided against intervention in any form, and were informing the Japanese government accordingly³⁵³) Following discussion at the Inter-Allied Conference in London on 15 March the expediency of intervention was urged upon the President by the British Ambassador; but Wilson had decided that a sufficient case had not been made by the military authorities³⁵⁴. Further entreaties by Allied military representatives were made later in the month; and an overture was made by the Cabinet, following Trotsky's request for a precise statement of the proposed nature of Allied intervention³⁵⁵. President Wilson had promised to reconsider the whole question, in consultation with the Japanese Foreign Minister, who was then in America³⁵⁶. On 7 May, however, Lord Reading was informed that the President was convinced that the moment was not opportune or that a sufficient military advantage would be gained, and could not therefore at present endorse the British proposals³⁵⁶. In an interview with him later in the month, Reading found Wilson "quite decided in opinion that (the) moment was inopportune", since according to his military advisers no military advantage would be gained by intervention, and the proposed operations

would be resented by the Russians³⁵⁷.

Wilson's diffidence was described by a Foreign Office memorandum to his "sincere belief that his reputation as a prince of peace will be jeopardized if he mixes himself up with a policy which he believes will end in annexations and interference with the domestic concerns of Russia". It was also worthy of note that in the American elections which were due to be held in the following November, an alliance with Japan would be an ~~XXXXXXXX~~ liability, especially in the important state of California, a circumstance which Balfour believed "exercised not a small influence on his judgement"³⁵⁸. The British government had consequently "exhausted the vocabulary in urging the U.S. Government to consent to intervention, but without success"³⁵⁹.

In fairness to Wilson, he was not alone in finding it difficult to associate military action in Vladivostok with military fortunes on the Western Front. Both Lloyd George and Lockhart, it has been noted, treated this thesis with some scepticism. In the House of Commons, H.B. Lees-Smith introduced a debate on the possibility, which Lord Robert Cecil had welcomed in the press, of Japanese action in Siberia. As regarded the question of the arms at Vladivostok, Lees-Smith noted that there was no evidence that the Russian government had "expressed any unwillingness to return them", and the Japanese themselves had "refrained from asking that they should be returned", and therefore, he said, he could "not see that those arms and ammunition by themselves constitute any ground for a declaration of war". There was no evidence at all of the organization of German prisoners of war in eastern Siberia; and there was in fact "no evidence at all that the German government intended to play into our hands and dissipate their forces by the mad enterprise of an expedition into Siberia". Balfour conceded that he "did not for a moment believe" that Germany was going to attempt to send a great organized military force from Riga to Vladivostok. He agreed that it would be an operation of "very great difficulty, and certainly, from a purely military point of view, would be a very great, unnecessary, and even fatal waste of power"³⁶⁰.

Even were the Japanese persuaded to act, however, their objectives were by no means bound to coincide with those that the Allies had in mind for her. Lord Robert Cecil stressed, in a conversation with the Japanese Ambassador on 22 May, that the Japanese should intervene "not for

the purpose of obtaining any territorial advantage, but in order to assist Russia and the Allied cause generally", and that they should be willing to "push their expedition as far west as Cheliabinsk, or somewhere in that neighbourhood". The Ambassador commented that this was an "entirely new idea", and that a more limited action had been contemplated³⁶¹. A decision of the Supreme War Council at Versailles on 3 June was forwarded to the Japanese Ambassador by Balfour. Several conditions were specified on the basis of which, it was hoped, Japan might agree to take action, and which might then receive the "assent and co-operation" of the American government, "without which it is evident that the whole policy must prove abortive". The conditions, specified "in order to make Allied intervention in Siberia acceptable to the Russian people and to public opinion in the three Allied countries and in America", required respect for the territorial integrity of Russia, a declaration of non-interference in Russian domestic politics, and an advance "as far West as possible, with the avowed object of meeting and defeating German influences"³⁶².

The Japanese government's reply expressed a willingness to co-ordinate their policy "as far as possible" with that of the Allied governments in Siberia. Since their attitude depended on the question of American assistance, no decision could be taken before a "complete understanding" was reached between the three Powers and the American government. With regard to the conditions, the first and second were "quite acceptable", but while in "full sympathy" with the third condition, of crucial importance for the British government, they regretted that it would be "impossible for them to engage to extend westward the sphere of their military activities beyond the limits of Eastern Siberia in view of the grave difficulties with which such operations (would) be practically confronted". Nor was any reassurance afforded by their concern that "supreme command of the whole international contingents in Siberia" be placed in their hands³⁶³. If, then, American assistance were eventually forthcoming, Japanese action might be induced: but not necessarily, or even probably, on a scale and of a nature sufficient to secure the objectives of the British and Allied governments.

In the circumstances it was not surprising that the Cabinet should sympathize with Milner's view that the "hesitation of the U.S. ought

not to be able to block the whole policy"³⁶⁴. The discovery of a large force - 45,000, or two good divisions - of Czech troops in Russia was therefore most opportune. The suggestion was made that it "would be advisable that these troops should be used for an Allied expedition from Siberia"³⁶⁵. On 13 May, on the basis of a Note by General Smuts, the Cabinet discussed "steps which could be taken to organize military resistance to the enemy in Russia while the correspondence with America and Japan in reference to intervention was proceeding". The Czech troops at Vladivostok or en route "should be taken charge of there and be organized into efficient units by the French Government", which should be asked that "pending their eventual transport to France, they might be used to stiffen the Japanese as part of an Allied force of intervention in Russia". The remainder of the forces should be collected at Archangel and "used to hold those places and to take part in any Allied intervention in Russia"³⁶⁶.

The trouble was, however, that the French wanted the forces in France, while the Czechs themselves would fight Germans, but not Russian internal battles³⁶⁷. They still offered the possibility of Siberian intervention without either American or Japanese involvement; while the chances were, as Cecil pointed out, that "the rest of the Allies would soon conform". French approval was obtained at the beginning of June for the use of Czech forces in Russia not in France³⁶⁸.

The position of the Czech forces was enough to overcome President Wilson's remaining scruples. Lord Reading reported that he was likely to declare against armed intervention, but in favour of a civilian economic Mission to Siberia for relief and to assist Russians in organizing railways and food supplies³⁶⁹. The government welcomed the proposal, but considered that without an expeditionary force it would "lack the material backing without which it cannot be expected to prove really successful"³⁷⁰. The views of the Supreme War Council were that what was termed "Allied armed assistance to Russia" was an "urgent and imperative necessity". There was held to be no doubt that the Bolshevik power was "waning" (an assurance had already begun to lose its novelty), while the "best liberal and democratic elements in Russia" were "beginning to lift their heads" and "to get in touch with one another"³⁷¹:

The Czechs had apparently been welcomed by the local population, and had obtained control of the railway in western Siberia. It must

remain a matter for conjecture upon which side lay the responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities between them and the Bolsheviks. There was nevertheless no doubt that this was a development which powerfully furthered British policy, which had for some time previously envisaged the employment of the Czech forces in such a situation. The British government, Lloyd George later wrote, felt "bound to take the necessary steps to protect and succour them" in the predicament in which they had now, apparently fortuitously, found themselves; while at the same time, as he noted, this offered a means of establishing "something like an anti-German front in South-Eastern Russia and along the Urals"³⁷². The Allies, President Wilson was urged, were "under (the) responsibility of taking immediate action if these gallant allies are not to be overwhelmed". Balfour instructed Lord Reading to point out to Wilson that the Czechoslovak successes gave them an "opportunity of restoring an eastern front which may never return"³⁷³.

The situation within Russia reflected these developments. Attacks were made on Britain by Uritsky, about which Lockhart promised to complain to Chicherin³⁷⁴. The Allied Embassies were withdrawn to Archangel in July, a move which the Bolsheviks "rightly interpreted.. as the prelude to intervention"³⁷⁵. A raid on the Allied missions followed, and Lockhart received a note demanding withdrawal from the positions that British forces had occupied in Archangel and Murmansk³⁷⁶.

The involvement of the Czechs in military engagements led Balfour to favour the idea of sending troops as soon as possible. The movement of Allied troops to Vladivostok "in order to protect supplies and preserve order" could not, he ventured, be "considered as intervention in Russia". It was decided to move a British battalion to Vladivostok "for the purposes of preserving order there and protecting supplies". There were already 1,200 troops at Murmansk³⁷⁷.

Action was agreed upon to 'assist the Czechs'³⁷⁸; and on 7 August it was reported that President Wilson had accepted the principle of Allied action in the Far East for this ~~im~~plared purpose (they also proposed to "send a detachment of the Y.M.C.A. to offer moral guidance to the Russian people"³⁷⁹). "With this", Balfour stated, "the co-belligerents had had to remain satisfied"³⁸⁰. Intervention had become a fact.

- 1 Milner wrote in a 'confidential note' that he had "formed the opinion that there is a great deal of exaggeration in the talk about revolution, and especially about the alleged disloyalty of the Army"('Allied Conference at Petrograd', January-February 1917: 13 March 1917, Cabinet Paper G.131, Cab 24/3). Lord Riddell noted that David Davies M.P., who had been a member of the mission, had sent home "more useful and accurate information than any other member of the party" and had alone indicated the possibility of revolution (Lord Riddell: Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After 1918-1923 (London 1933) p248. Davies' report, dates 10 March 1917, is Cabinet Paper G 137, Cab 34/3). The Secretary of State's remarks are contained in Minutes of the War Cabinet, 14 March 1917, W.C. 98(3), Cab 23/2
- 2 Labour Leader 22 March 1917
- 3 Bonar Law, House of Commons Parliamentary debates (5th series) Vol 91, col. 1421, 15 March 1917. References below to the Parliamentary Debates will refer, unless otherwise indicated, to the House of Commons, 5th series.
- 4 Cabinet Minutes, 16 March 1917, W.C. 98(1), Cab 23/2
- 5 16 March 1917, F.O. 371 piece 2998 paper 57216 (hereinafter cited by class, piece and paper numbers respectively)
- 6 Nabokov to Balfour, 18 March 1917, F.O. 371.2998.58022
- 7 Buchanan to Balfour, 18 March 1917, F.O. 371.2998.58189. Buchanan noted in his memoirs that "after the Grand Duke Michael's renunciation of the Crown, our only possible policy was to strengthen the hands of the Provisional Government in their struggle with the Soviet. The latter was undermining the Army with its Socialist propaganda." The speedy recognition of the Provisional Government was therefore "in my opinion necessary" as the "only Government capable of combining the subversive tendencies of the Soviet and of fighting out the war to a finish" (Sir George Buchanan: My Mission to Russia and other diplomatic memoirs (London 1923, 2 vols) vol ii p 90,98; cited hereinafter as Buchanan')
- 8 Balfour to Buchanan, 21 March 1917, F.O. 371.2998.59540
- 9 Cabinet Minutes, 19 March 1917, W.C. 99(17), Cab 23/2
- 10 Balfour to Buchanan, 17 March 1917, F.O. 371.2995.57143
- 11 Cabinet Minutes, 19 March 1917, W.C. 99(10) Cab 23/2
- 12 Cabinet Minutes, 21 March 1917, W.C. 100(16), Cab 23/2; Parliamentary Debates vol 91, col 2085

- 13 Parliamentary Debates vol 91 col 2085-6.
- 14 ibid col 2086; Imperial War Cabinet Minutes, 22 March 1917, I.W.C.2(5), Cab 23/40; F.O. to Buchanan, 22 March 1917, F.O.371.2998.60234.
- 15 Cabinet Minutes, 13 April 1917, W.C. 118(3), Cab 23/2. Lord Stamfordham wrote to Balfour on 30 March that despite the King's "strong personal friendship" for the Emperor, he doubted the wisdom of his proposed residence in England on "general grounds of expediency". Balfour wrote to Buchanan, following the Cabinet's decision, informing him that the government "would rather deprecate visits of Grand Dukes to this country" (Stamfordham to Balfour, 30 March 1917, Balfour Papers F.O. 800 vol 205 p.63; Balfour to Buchanan, 18 April 1917, ibid).
- 16 Morning Post 17 March, Mail 16 March, Observer 18 March, Manchester Guardian 16 March, Nation 17 March 1917, cited in R.P. Arnot: Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain (London 1967) p.14-16. The Times held that the "highest credit" was due to the Tsar for having conceded magnanimously to the Duma's demands. It could "not be pretended", it added, that "all the perils inseparable from so profound a change" had yet passed away; in particular it was concerned with the consequences which might follow "were the extremists to obtain the upper hand". It welcomed the change on the whole, however, especially the "manifest eagerness of all parties that Russia should continue to wage the war with even greater vigour". The news, moreover, had been "very well received" in the City (Times, 16, 17 March 1917) Lansbury noted the curious circumstance that "even the most loyal can support the overthrow of monarchy when this does not involve the destruction of capitalism" (George Lansbury: The Miracle of Fleet Street (London 1925) p.112).
- 17 C. Sarolea, Review of Reviews 1v April 1917 p.364,365; Nineteenth Century and After vol 81, April 1917 p.783.
- 18 G.J. Wardle, Parliamentary Debates vol 91 cols. 2089, 2090.
- 19 P. Snowden, Parliamentary Debates vol 93, cols. 1625, 1626, 1632, 1635; Ramsay MacDonald ibid col 1661, 16 May 1917.
- 20 Forward 24 March 1917
- 21 MacDonald Forward 31 March, 14 and 28 April, 12 May 1917.
- 22 Snowden, Labour Leader 22 and 29 March, 12 April 1917.
- 23 Glasier, Labour Leader 22 March 1917.
- 24 Socialist Review vol.14, May-June 1917 p.97-8.
- 25 Labour Leader 5 April 1917

- 26 Labour Leader 19 April 1917
- 27 Lansbury, The Miracle of Fleet Street (London 1925) p 109, B. Hollingsworth, The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom: English Liberals and Russian Socialists 1890-1917 Oxford Slavonic Papers New Series iii (1970) 45-64, H.N. Brailsford, The Fruits of our Russian Alliance (Anglo-Russian Committee, London 1912) endpaper. The links between socialists in the two countries have been examined in W. Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900-1921 (London 1969) esp pp 77-83
- 28 B.C. Roberts, The Trades Union Congress 1868-1921 (London 1958) p271
- 29 Cited in K.E. Miller: Socialism and Foreign Policy (Hague 1967) p45, Arnot op cit p 47, B. Sacks: J. Ramsay MacDonald in Thought and Action (New Mexico 1952) p 472
- 30 I.L.P. 1915 Annual Conference Report p 117, 119;
- 31 Socialist Review October-December 1914 p 313
- 32 Socialist Review October-December 1914 p 394
- 33 Kingsley Martin: Father Figures (London 1966) p118
- 34 New Statesman 24 March 1917 p578
- 35 Lansbury: My Life (London 1928) p186
- 36 Herald 31 March 1917 p9
- 37 Labour Leader 17 May 1917
- 38 Leicester Post 7 May 1917, cited in Arnot op cit p70 n.1
- 39 Parliamentary Debates vol 96 col 1494 26 July 1917
- 40 Forward 22 September 1917
- 41 Buchanan to F.O., 16 March 1917, F.O. 371.2995.56428
- 42 Cabinet Minutes 16 March 1917, W.C. 98(2) Cab 23/2
- 43 16 March 1917, F.O. 371.2995.56428. Commenting on the Labour message, the Times noted that "all the prudence, all the courage, and all the self-restraint of the Moderates" would be needed to carry the country "safely through the period of transition". The government's position in Russia was compared with that of "cowboys 'heading off' stampeding cattle" (Times 17 and 20 March 1917)
- 44 Labour Leader 22 March 1917
- 45 ibid
- 46 Cabinet Minutes, 10 April 1917, W.C. 116(7), Cab 23/2
- 47 Cabinet Minutes, W.C. 104 (5), Cab 23/2
- 48 Cabinet Minutes, 28 March 1917, W.C. 101(9), Cab 23/2
- 49 Parliamentary Debates vol 92, cols 1277, 1278, 4 April 1917

- 49 Rech' 5 April 1917
- 50 Times 18 April 1917. The activity of the delegation was reported or commented upon in the Russian (Pravda 27 April, Rech' 23 April etc.) and British press (Times 16 April and subsequently, and in Labour journals). Shlyapnikov's recollections of the meeting with the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet are in Krasny Arkhiv xv(26) and xvi(26), under the title 'Fevral'skaya Revolyutsiya i Evropeiskye Sotsialisty'. A recent Soviet account is Lozovsky: The Labour Party and the February Revolution Voprosy Istorii No. 2, 1948, pp.70-88, and also A.L. Ignat'ev (Moscow 1966) esp. p.182f. A source of much comment was Will Thorne's opulent fur coat, a present from F.E. Smith on his departure (Thorne: My Life's Battles (London 1925), p.189). The most picturesque remarks were perhaps those of the Socialist, which declared that Thorne's "elephantine dancings before the throne of Capital" had deprived him of the right to "represent Labour under any circumstances, unless some betrayal is at hand". If, as had been reported, the garment was "lined with skunk's skin, then the elements of irony have conspired to make the gift as appropriate as are the donor and dealer" (Socialist May 1917 p.60).
- 51 Izvestiya 27 April 1917.
- 52 Izvestiya 4 May 1917. The reports that the delegates were the paid emissaries of the British government, and did not represent the working-class movement, stemmed from a message to a Russian socialist from an I.L.P. member, the impact of which was evidently not significantly diminished by a telegram from Hyndman which dismissed it as a "lying statement" (Buchanan: p.120, 121). The I.L.P. statement provoked a meeting in front of the delegates' hotel, at which they were denounced as traitors and spies, as Thorne subsequently reported (National Review vol. 69, July 1917 p.525). Sir A. Mond wrote to Lord Robert Cecil to express his concern that a message "so detrimental to our interest" as that of the I.L.P. has escaped the censor. It appeared, however, to have been taken by hand by a Russian traveller, and not sent by post or telegraph (Mond to Cecil, 14 May 1917, and Cecil to Mond 19 May 1917, Cecil Papers, F.O. 800.198).
- 53 Rabochaya Gazeta 5 and 6 May 1917, cited in Lozovsky art cit.
- 54 S.W. Sanders, Report, 28 May 1917, Cabinet Paper G.T. 858, Cab 24/14.
- 55 Reports on the Visit of the Labour Delegation to Russia, April-May 1917, Cabinet Paper G 150, Cab 24/3.

- 56 Curzon memorandum, Cabinet Paper G.T. 703, 12 May 1917, Cab 24 /13
- 57 Knox to the D.M.I., 26 May 1917, Balfour Papers, F.O.800.205 No 1128 p126
- 58 Labour Leader 5 April 1917
- 59 Lockhart to F.O., 4 May 1917, F.O. 371.2996.105142; Lockhart: Memoirs of a British Agent (London 1932, hereinafter cited as 'memoirs') p 183
- 08 Grady had sought permission from his union to extend his stay in Russia in order to offer his services in the organization of the Russian workers on British trade union lines (Times 19 May 1917). The TUC's Parliamentary Committee agreed to extend his stay by two months in order to "help the Russian workers organize". A resolution was adopted assuring them of the Committee's "willingness to co²/₄-operate with them in the direction of strengthening the powers of democracy and trade unionism for the purpose of securing the economic and political emancipation of the people" (Parliamentary Committee Minutes 24 May 1917)
- 0'Grady did not in fact ~~stay~~; but in his report to the Committee on his return he suggested that one or two Labour representatives might be sent to Russia for the purpose of organizing "on British trade union lines". John Hill and J.H. Stuart-Bunning were nominated to proceed to Russia were invitations forthcoming, but this did not prove to be the case (ibid 30 May, 6 June 1917) In connection with the ^{ostensibly ~~gracious~~ fraternal} offer to extend 'British trade unionism' to Russia (an offer which was also made to, and rejected by, the Indian trade ~~union~~ movement), it is worth noting the conclusion of a recent study of Russian 'police trade unionism' that "had the regime been intelligent and far-sighted enough" to permit such a social 'safety valve', "there would probably have been no violent revolution and civil war in Russia" (D. Pospelovsky: Russian Police Trade Unionism (London 1971) p 163). The departure of the delegates was regretted at least by Colonel Knox, who found their "solid bulk" a "pleasure to look at after the nervous, excitable people we see here" (Sir A. Knox: With the Russian Armies (London 1921, 2 vols.) ii p616); and by Buchanan, who found them "splendid types of the British working man" (Memoirs p 132)
- 60 F.O. to Buchanan, 23 May 1917, F.O. 371.3012.103717
- 61 Cabinet Minutes, 23 May 1917, W.C. 144(1), Cab 23/2
- 62 D. Lloyd George: War Memoirs (London 1933-6; references to two-volume edition, London n.d.; cited hereinafter as 'War Memoirs') p 1122
- 63 F.O. to Buchanan, 23 May 1917, Balfour Papers No 1539, F.O. 800.205

- 64 Buchanan to Balfour, received 25 May 1917, ibid p 123
- 65 Knox to Balfour, 26 May, ibid pl26; Bruce (Petrograd) to Balfour, 26 May 1917 ibid p 124-5
- 66 Henderson to Lloyd George, 14 July 1917, Lloyd George Papers F 27/3/13; M.A. Hamilton: Arthur Henderson (London 1938) p 126-8, letter of 14 June 1917; Buchanan: Memoirs p 146
- 67 F.O. to Buchanan, 28 May 1917, Balfour Papers F.O. 800.205 pl28; Buchanan to Balfour, received 14 June 1917, ibid p 138
- 68 Lockhart to F.O., 3 July 1917, F.O. 371.2997.145767. Bruce added from Petrograd that Henderson had been a "conspicuous failure", a reverse which Henderson appeared equably to have accepted (Bruce, 15 June 1917, Balfour Papers F.O. 800.205 p 141). An account of Henderson's mission is available in M.A. Hamilton's biography; and recent Soviet studies include M.M. Karliner: Angliiskoye Rabochee Dvizhenie v godakh pervoi mirovoi voyny (Moscow 1961); and A.V. Ignat'ev: Russko-Angliiskkiye Otnosheniya v 1917 godu (Moscow 1966), p226f.
- 69 Lockhart: Memoirs pl87; who noted the opinion (shared by Conservatives) of the Labour delegates that Henderson was "playing for revolution".
- 70 Henderson, 'British Mission to Russia, June-July 1917', 16 July 1917, (hereinafter referred to as '~~British~~ Mission') Cabinet Paper 152, Cab 24/4
- 71 Times 14 June 1917
- 72 Cited in Hamilton: Arthur Henderson (London 1938) pl29
- 73 Henderson: British Mission
- 74 Henderson to the P.M., 4 June 1917, F.O.371.3012.112209
- 75 Henderson to the P.M., 1 July 1917, F.O.371.2997.131118
- 76 Henderson: British Mission
- 77 Henderson to the P.M., 1 July 1917, F.O. 371.2997.131118. Henderson noted, as had the Labour delegates before him, that the difficulties of the Russian government were compounded by the absence of what he termed "proper labour organizations" (presumably, non-political ones; Henderson to the P.M., 4 June 1917 above). Henderson told the Petrograd Soviet that British Labour was in favour of peace, but it must be a peace "in strict harmony with the ideals of free democracy", not one made by "uncontrolled and unrepentant military despots" (Speech at Petrograd Soviet, 9 June 1917, Lloyd George Papers F201/4/2)
- 78 Cabinet Minutes, 11 May 1917, W.C. 136(15) Cab 23/2
- 79 Cabinet Minutes, 15 May 1917, W.C. 138(9) Cab 23/2

- 80 Cabinet Minutes, 21 May 1917, W.C. 141(15) Cab 23/2
- 81 Cabinet Minutes, 23 May 1917, W.C. 144(1) Cab 23/2
- 82 Cabinet Minutes, 7 June 1917, W.C. 158(1) Cab 23/2
- 83 Cabinet Minutes, 11 June 1917, W.C. 160(15) Cab 23/2
- 84 Cabinet Minutes 26 July 1917, W.C. 196(16), Cab 23/3
- 85 Cabinet Minutes, 1 August 1917, W.C.202, Cab 23/3
- 86 Cabinet Minutes, 8 August 1917, W.C. 207(5), Cab 23/3
- 87 Cabinet Minutes, 10 August 1917, W.C. 210(12), Cab 23/3
- 88 Labour Party Special Conference Report 10 and 21 August 1917, p9, 10, 13, 20, 21,
- 89 Cabinet Minutes, W.C. 211(1) Cab 23/3
- 90 Cabinet Minutes 11 August 1917, W.C. 212(1), Cab 23/3
- 91 Labour Party 1918 Annual Conference Report, p6, 7, 11-12
- 92 Lloyd George: War Memoirs p1128, 1129, 1130
- 93 G.D.H. Cole: History of the Labour Party since 1914 (London 1948) p35-8
- 94 Labour Party 1916 Annual Conference Report p2, 4; Labour Leader 6 August 1914
- 95 Labour Party 1916 Annual Conference Report p5
- 96 ibid p6
- 97 ibid p124
- 98 Labour Party 1917 Annual Conference Report p4
- 99 ibid p p82
- 100 Sidney and Beatrice Webb: History of Trade Unionism (rev.ed.1926) p636-7
- 101 ibid p 638, 641, 644
- 102 Labour Party 1917 Annual Congress Report p98
- 103 ibid App vi
- 104 Socialist Review January-March 1917, vol 14 p2
- 105 Lloyd George: War Memoirs p1145
- 106 ibid p1141
- 107 Labour Leader 24 May 1917, Kendall op.cit. p157. As the New Statesman pointed out, the May strikes were nothing less than a "spontaneous and widespread Labour revolt among some of the most highly skilled and most responsible sections of our manual working class" (19 May 1917, p149). In the first half of 1917 there were thirty-three engineering strikes, and the total number of working days lost was more than sixteen times than of the previous year (Ministry of Labour Gazette, No 7, vol 25, p248, cited in Harliner op cit p263).
- 108 Sidney Webb to Thomas Jones, 20 January 1918 (Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary vol 1 (London 1969) p48)

- 109 Beatrice Webb: Diaries 1912-1924 (London 1952) entry for 5 October 1917 (p96-7), 21 January 1918 (p108). Cole (op.cit.p38) adds that in September 1917 the local Shop Steward Committees had definitely come together to form a Shop Steward National Committee: an implicit challenge to the official Labour leadership.
- 110 Snowden Labour Leader 17 May 1917
- 111 Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest, Reports: Parliamentary Papers 1917-1918, Cmd 8662-9,8696. References are to Cmd 8696 p5, and Cmd 8668 p23-4
- 112 ibid Cmd 8666 p2, Cmd 8662 p11
- 113 ibid Cmd 8666 p5,8663 p19,8664 p3,8662 p9, 8664 p5. J.R. Clynes, who was working in the department of Food Control, opposed the reduction in brewing which some were urging (as he noted, "vodka was banned in Russia just before the Revolution" (Clynes: Memoirs, 2 vols, London 1937-8, vol i p242)); but some reduction in gravity was in fact allowed.
- 114 Labour Party 1918 Annual Conference Report p 12
- 115 Earlier demonstrations were held by the B.S.P. at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, on 26 March 1917; and at Mile End Road on 24 March under the auspices of the Committee of Delegates of the Russian Socialist Groups. Lansbury declared however that the "Labour and progressive forces of the capital should rally in even larger numbers" (Herald 31 March 1917 p5)
- 116 I.M. Maisky: Puteshestvie v Proshloe (Moscow 1960) p269; Lansbury: Miracle of Fleet Street (London 1925) p113; F.Meynell: My Lives (London 1971) p104
- 117 I.M. Maisky: Puteshestvie v Proshloe (Moscow 1960) p269; Lansbury: Miracle of Fleet Street (London 1925) p113. About 5,000 had to be turned away. The proceedings of the meeting were published: 'Russia Free ! Ten Speeches delivered at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on 31 March 1917; authorized report (London, Pelican Press 1917). Quotations from the proceedings are taken from this source unless otherwise indicated.
- 118 Lansbury: Miracle of Fleet Street (London 1925) p114
- 119 Herald 7 April 1917, Lansbury: My Life (London 1928) p187
- 120 Call 5 April 1917. That note was not altogether absent, he added, but it was "timid and hesitant", and "marred" by pro-war utterances.
- 121 Anon. to Lansbury, 8 May 1917, Lansbury Papers vol 7, No 310

- 122 R. Postgate: Life of George Lansbury (London 1951) p165
- 123 details in the Call, cited by Karliner op cit p254-5. The Woman's Dreadnought (26 May 1917) reported meetings at Brighton on 18 May and at Liverpool on 20 May 1917.
- 124 Karliner op.cit.p 266
- 125 W.A. Orton: Labour in Transition (London 1921) p104; the meeting is incorrectly dated 9 June. Lansbury allowed the Anglo-Russian Committee to lapse, a decision which he subsequently regretted (Miracle of Fleet Street (London 1925) p116)
- 126 I.L.P. 1917 Annual Conference Report p23
- 127 I.L.P. National Administrative Council Minutes, 15-16 October 1914 (p110), 6-7 July 1916 (p201) (B.L.P.E.S.)
- 128 I.L.P. 1917 Annual Conference Report p23,p24-5. The formation of the ~~U.S.C.~~ U.S.C. has been incorrectly dated by Karliner op cit ("after the February Revolution" p 132), and by the Labour Year Book (in 1917; 1919 edn.,p320); and incorrectly termed the 'United Social Council' by A. Bullock: Life and Times of Ernest Bevin (London 1960) p 74
- 129 Labour Leader 17 May 1917, Forward 19 May 1917 (reprinted in Snowden: An Autobiography (London 1936) vol i p450-2). Trades Councils, local Labour Party branches. I.L.P. and B.S.P. branches, and other bodies were invited "in order to make the Conference as representative and powerful as possible". The basis of representation was one delegate for every 5,000 members or part thereof.
- 130 Labour Leader 31 May 1917, 24 May 1917
- 131 Forward 2 June 1917
- 132 Glasgow Trades Council agreed by a "large majority" to be represented; but instructed its delegates to seek to exclude soldiers from the scope of the Council (Trades Council Minutes, 16 and 30 May 1917). The texts of the resolutions as circulated are in ibid 30 May 1917. In Leeds itself, the local Labour Party agreed to representation by 75 votes to 15, the Trades Council by a margin of only 37 votes to 30 (Leeds Weekly Citizen 1 and 8 June 1917).
- 133 Leeds Weekly Citizen 8 June 1917. A letter of thanks for local hospitality from Tom Quelch, on behalf of the Council, is printed in ibid. It was perhaps some consolation to note that the hotel owners had through their action lost about £1,000 (ibid)
- 134 Leeds Weekly Citizen 8 June 1917, Herald 9 June 1917, Times 2 June 1917.

The Times reported that the authorities had "yielded to patriotic pressure". An attempt had been made to attempt to induce the Watch Committee of the City Council to ban the meeting, but without success: it was considered that more might be lost than would thereby be gained.

- 135 What Happened at Leeds (London 1917)pl (reprinted, with a new introduction by Ken Coates, by the Institute for Workers' Control (Archives in Trade Union History and Theory, Series One, No 4, Nottingham n.d.) . References to the proceedings of the Convention have, unless otherwise indicated, been drawn from this source (based on the Herald report), and from the Labour Leader 7 June 1917, Leeds Weekly Citizen 8 June 1917.
- 136 William Gallacher wrongly reports Lansbury as present (Revolt on the Clyde (London 1936) pl49). The figure of attendance reported by the Woman's Dreadnought (iv No 11,9 June 1917 p773) of 11,051 is also mistaken: presumably an (exuberant) misprint.
- 137 Middlemas: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ The Clydesiders (London 1965) incorrectly suggests that Snowden and MacDonald spoke in favour of this resolution (ibid p75)
- 138 Review of Reviews lxi July 1917 p8; Leeds Mercury editorial 5 June 1917
- 139 Labour Leader 7 June 1917
- 140 telegram to Lansbury, 3 June 1917, Lansbury Papers vol 7 No 329
- 141 Pankhurst to Lansbury, June 1917, No324; Mrs Despard to Lansbury, 1 June 1917, No 337; Pethick-Lawrence to Lansbury, 3 June 1917, No 335; A.A. Watts to Lansbury, 15 June 1917, No 348, Lansbury Papers Vol 7
- 142 Webb: Diaries 1912-1924 (London 1952) p38, entry for 7 June 1917
- 143 Woman's Dreadnought iv No 11 9 June 1917 p770; Labour Leader 7 June 1917
- 144 Times 5 June 1917
- 149 Watts to Lansbury, 15 June 1917, Lansbury Papers Vol 7 No 348
- 150 Nineteenth Century and After Vol 87, April 1920 p590; W. Thorne: My Life's Battles (London 1931) pl95. Thorne recalled that his reply had "seemed to relieve his mind" (ibid).
- 151 V.H. Rothwell: British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy (Oxford 1971) p97
- 152 Woman's Dreadnought 9 June 1917 p773; New Statesman 9 June 1917 p218. Mrs Pankhurst's journal recommended that the Councils be re-named "Workers', Soldiers' and Housewives' Councils" (ibid 21 July 1917 p807).
- 153 Herald 26 May 1917 p8, and 9 June 1917 p2
- 154 Labour Leader 7 June 1917
- 155 Snowden: An Autobiography (London 1934, 2 vols) vol 1 p456

- 156 Pravda 17 May (old style) 1917; Snowden op.cit. p 453
- 157 Woman's Dreadnought 9 June 1917 p 773; H.Pollitt: Serving My Time (London, 1950 ed) p91
- 158 Snowden op.cit. ~~XX~~p455; Manchester Guardian 30 July 1917 p6; G.Elton: Life of James Ramsay MacDonald (London 1939) p322
- 159 I.L.P. National Administrative Council Minutes, 30 July 1917 (p222)
- 160 Woman's Dreadnought iv No 15 7July 1917 p795; Herald 27 October 1917 p10
- 161 B.S.P. 1918 Annual Report p43, cited in Kendall op.cit. p379 n.43
- 162 Lansbury: My Life (London 1928) p138
- 163 Kendall (op.cit. p175) suggests incorrectly that the Convention elected a nine-man Provisional Committee. The names of the thirteen members and two secretaries are recorded in What Happened at Leeds p2
- 164 Call 21 June 1917, 28 June 1917
- 165 Call 12 April 1917 p4, 31 May 1917
- 166 Forward 2 June 1917, Herald 2 June 1917 p7; Labour Leader 31 May 1917. Snowden: Labour in Chains (London 1917) p16. Anderson, the proposer of the Councils resolution, was President at this time of the National Council of Civil Liberties, Smillie, the Convention's chairman, was one of its Vice-Presidents, and Mrs Snowden was its Honorary Treasurer. The objects of the N.C.C.L. coincided closely with the terms of the third resolution on civil liberties (M.Farbman: The Russian Revolution and the War (London 1917) p47)
- 167 Woman's Dreadnought iv No 11 9 June 1917 p770
- 168 Labour Leader 7 June 1917; Glasgow Trades Council Minutes 6 June 1917; Herald 8 September 1917 p2. What "hurt most of all" to the Russian people, Michael Farberman wrote following his return there, was the "tendency in Britain to "judge of the Revolution mostly from the standpoint of its possible influence on the issue of the war, and not to judge of it from the point of view of Russia itself, and the cause of freedom and democracy throughout the world" (Manchester Guardian 1 May 1917). Karliner conceded that Leninist programme of a revolutionary withdrawal from the war "remained unknown to the majority of the English workers" (op.cit. p264).
- 169 Herald 9 June 1917 p8. The editorial comment in the Times was predictably hostile and suggested that the object of the meeting was really to "stop the war". While the organizers would then embark upon a "domestic war", even the Times did not suggest that this would be other than "afterwards" (Times 4 June 1917)

- 170 Industrial Peace Vol i No 28 October 1917
- 171 Times 4 June 1917
- 172 C.J. Bundock: The I.L.P. and the Soldier (London 1918) p4,10, ~~the~~ I.L.P. M.P.s were stated to have dealt with numerous individual cases privately: Snowden had handled over seven thousand, MacDonald three thousand from his own constituency alone (ibid pl2).
- 173 Herald 31 March 1917 p6. References to this meeting are derived from this source, unless otherwise stated. The 189 delegates represented in the main Labour bodies, including eighty-nine London Trades Councils.
- 174 Woman's Dreadnought No 11 9 June 1917 p770. Could anyone say, Mrs Pankhurst asked, that the treatment of discharged soldiers had been such as to render action to help them unnecessary?
- 175 Basil Thomson: The Scene Changes (London 1939) p283
- 176 Thomson 'Bolshevism in England', 23 December 1918, F.O.371.3300.21251
- 177 J.M. Kenworthy: Soldiers, Sailors and Others (London 1936) pl00
- 178 Cabinet Paper G.T. 832, Cab 24/14
- 179 Cabinet Minutes, 25 May 1917, W.C. 147(11) Cab 23/3
- 180 Milner to Lloyd George, 1 June 1917, Lloyd George Papers F38/2/8
- 181 Cabinet Minutes, 5 June 1917, W.C. 154(22), Cab 23/3
- 182 Cabinet Minutes, 31 July 1917, W.C. 200(1), Cab 23/3; 'Formation of Soldiers' and Sailors' Committees', 26 July 1917, Cabinet Paper G.T. 1522, Cab 24/21
- 183 In his War Memoirs (pl154) he wrote that he "thought it would be a mistake to treat it too seriously.. The leaders were mostly men of the type which think (sic) something is actually done when you assert vigorously that it must be done".
- 184 Herald circular, 28 June 1917, in Lansbury Papers Vol 7 No 359
- 185 Herald 23 June 1917 p3, editorial p7
- 187 A. Bullock: Life and Times of Ernest Bevin (London 1960) p76; Postgate: Life of George Lansbury (London 1951) pl70; Middlemas: The Clydesiders (London 1965) p75; Thomson: The Scene Changes (London 1939) p283
- 188 Woman's Dreadnought 9 June 1917 p773
- 189 Workers' and Soldiers' Council: Manifesto to the District Conferences (London, National Labour Press 1917 (reprinted in the Herald 7 July 1917 p6)
- 190 Herald 21 July 1917 p 16. The same issue reported, however, that

- London Trades Council had decided not to be represented at the London District Conference (ibid pl5). A list of the locations and dates of the District Conferences was printed in the Times (25 July 1917)
- 191 Workers' and Soldiers' Council: Circular of 12th July 1917 (London, National Labour Press 1917~~1~~; reprinted in the Times 25 July 1917 and the Woman's Dreadnought 14 July 1917 p802)
- 192 Call 19 July, 2 August 1917; Labour Leader 9 August 1917; Times 30 July 1917, 2, 8 and 16 August 1917; Herald 11 August 1917; 'Proposed Prohibition of Meeting at Glasgow', 6 August 1917, Cabinet Paper G.T. 1625, Cab 24/22, and Cabinet Minutes 8 August 1917, W.C. 207(6) Cab 23/3.
- 193 Times 30 July 1917; Woman's Dreadnought 14 August 1917; Bertrand Russell: Autobiography, Volume 2 (London 1968) p31; Snowden: An Autobiography (London 1934) Vol i p556. The New Statesman was among the journals which remarked upon the apparent unconcern of the police (ibid 4 August 1917). The only arrest which was made at the time of the meeting was that of an N.U.R. member who had not been attending the meeting as a delegate, but had come on behalf of his union as an observer. He had been badly injured in the course of the proceedings; but he had nevertheless been taken to a police station and charged with ~~using~~ "insulting words and behaviour". The magistrate at the North London Police Court expressed his opinion that such "peace meetings" ought not to be allowed; and while discharging the defendant, observed that he would have done better had he avoided the meeting (Times 30 July 1917)
- 194 Call 2 August, 9 August 1917; Herald 4 August 1917 p5
- 195 Call 23 August 1917
- 196 Thomson, 'Bolshevism in England', 23 December 1918, F.O.371.3300.212521; Herald 11 August 1917 p6
- 197 Call 25 October 1917; Herald 27 October 1917 pl0
- 198 I.L.P. National Administrative Council Minutes, 26 October 1917 (p231)
- 199 Report on the Labour Situation, 9 August 1917, Cabinet Paper G.T.1660, Cab 24/22; Thomson, 'Bolshevism in Britain' op cit
- 200 Glasgow Trades Council Minutes, 18 December 1918
- 201 Socialist Review vol 14, July-September 1917, pl99
- 202 Times 27 July 1917; Workshire Factory Times 26 July 1917, cited in Report on the Labour Situation, 1 August 1917, Cabinet Paper G.T.1593, Cab 24/21. The Scottish T.U.C. Parliamentary Committee refused to

participate in the Glasgow District Conference (S.T.U.C. Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 4 August 1917)

203 Socialist Review ibid

204 I.L.P. 1918 Annual Conference Report p31

205 Cabinet Minutes, 28 March 1917, W.C. 107(7), Cab 23/2

206 Cabinet Minutes, 2 April 1917, W.C. 110(8), Cab 23/2

207 Thomson: ~~Queen's People's Changes~~ (London 1912) p279. Curzon, who "regrett-
ed" the Revolution, told C.P.Scott that "all the talk of the revolutionaries about peace and the rights of subject peoples would come to nothing", while from the British point of view, the "only practical result" had been a reduction of 50% in the efficiency of the Russian armies, and the "probable great prolongation or loss of the war" (Political Diaries of C.P. Scott 1911-1928, ed. T.Wilson (London 1970) entry for 21 April 1917, p279,280)

208 Cabinet Minutes, 18 April 1917, W.C. 122(5) and (17), Cab 23/2. It was later reported that ten out of eleven howitzers sent to the Russian Army had burst, probably as a result of the use of the wrong ammunition (Cabinet Minutes, 26 July 1917, W.C. 128(2), Cab 23/2).

209 Cabinet Minutes, 1 May 1917, W.C. 128(2), Cab 23/2

210 Cabinet Minutes, 4 May 1917, W.C. 136(5), Cab 23/2

211 Cabinet Minutes, 14 May 1917, W.C. 137(1), Cab 23/2

212 Cabinet Minutes, 23 May 1917, W.C. 144(5), Cab 23/2

213 Cabinet Minutes, 30 May 1917, W.C. 150(1), Cab 23/2

214 Cabinet Minutes, 31 May 1917, W.C. 152(3), Cab 23/2

215 Cabinet Minutes, 9 May 1917, W.C. 135A(2), Cab 23/13; and 31 July 1917, W.C. 200A(1), Cab 23/13

216 Cabinet Minutes, 7 June 1917, W.C. 157(5), Cab 23/8

217 Cabinet Minutes, 7 June 1917, W.C. 157(6), Cab 23/8

218 Cabinet Minutes, 5 June 1917, W.C. 154(21), Cab 23/8

219 Cabinet Minutes, 11 July 1917, W.C. 181(4), Cab 23/3

220 Cabinet Minutes, 23 July 1917, W.C. 193(4), Cab 23/3

221 Cabinet Minutes, 16 July 1917, W.C. 187(19), Cab 23/3

222 Cabinet Minutes, 31 July 1917, W.C. 200(8), Cab 23/3

223 Cabinet Minutes, 3 August 1917, W.C. 204(2), Cab 23/3

224 Cabinet Minutes, 7 August 1917, W.C. 205(1), Cab 23/3

225 Cabinet Minutes, 9 August 1917, W.C. 208(6), Cab 23/3

226 Cabinet Minutes, 17 August 1917, W.C. 217(11), Cab 23/3

- 227 Cabinet Minutes, 7 September 1917, W.C. 229(13), Cab 23/4 . Buchanan believed that despite the services which Kerensky had rendered in the past, he had "almost served his part". But he did not "see who is to replace him with advantage" (Buchanan to London, 3 September 1917; Buchanan vol ii p173) Buchanan urged that Kornilov reach a compromise with Kerensky; but when Kornilov declared himself dictator and began a march on Petrograd, he thought that nothing was to be done but to await the outcome of events and "trust that Kornilov will be strong enough to overcome all resistance in the course of a few days" (ibid 10 September 1917, p 182). Two days later he recorded that Kornilov was reported to have resigned, and Kerensky to have become Commander in Chief (ibid 12 September, p184)
- 228 Cabinet Minutes, 12 September 1917, W.C. 231(3), Cab 23/4; and 24 September 1917, W.C. 238(1), Cab 23/4
- 229 Cabinet Minutes, 1 November 1917, W.C. 262, Cab 23/4
- 230 Cabinet Minutes, 9 November 1917, W.C. 269(8), Cab 23/4
- 231 Cabinet Minutes, 15 November, W.C. 274(5), Cab 23/4
- 232 Cabinet Minutes, 16 November 1917, W.C. 275(10), Cab 23/4 . Buchanan ~~XXX~~ noted that Kerensky had "again failed us, as he did at the time of the July rising and of the Korniloff affair" (13 November, Buchanan ii p212)
- 233 Buchanan to F.O., 17 November, F.O. 371.2999.219422
- 234 Buchanan to F.O., 19 November, F.O. 371.2999.220343
- 235 Cabinet Minutes, 19 November 1917, W.C. 277(10), Cab 23/4
- 236 Parliamentary Debates, Vol 99 col 9, 12 November 1917
- 237 ibid col 838, 19 November 1917. The Times reported the existence of "Maximalist Sedition" in Petrograd on 8 November; but assured its readers the following day that the "great mass of the people.. would not countenance" a separate peace. These people, the "real Russia", were contrasted the Bolsheviks, who were in general "adventurers of German-Jewish blood and in German pay" (23 November 1917). The National Review reported that a "gang of Boloists, headed by a paid German scoundrel calling himself Lenin, have not only seized power, but to the horror of the civilized world have kept it, or enough of it to violate every engagement into which Russia had entered" (ibid vol 70, December 1917, p414). The Fortnightly Review thought that it would "come as a shock to ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ many in this country to hear that Bolshevism, like the Marxism from which it is derived, was born on English soil" (ibid Vol 103, March 1918, p371)

- 238 New Statesman 3 November 1917 p106
- 239 Forward 24 November, 1 December 1917
- 240 Labour Leader 24 January 1918
- 241 I.L.P. 1918 Annual Conference Report p48
- 242 Labour Party 1918 Annual Conference Report, Mr W.F. Purdy, p94
- 243 Cited in A.J. Mayer: Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking (London 1968) p403
- 244 Henderson, Athanaeum December 1917 p (reprinted as 'A World safe for Democracy'(London 1917))
- 245 Labour Leader 15 November 1917
- 246 Forward 1 December, 8 December 1917
- 247 Herald 1 December 1917
- 248 Call 15,22,29 November, 6 December 1917 (an error noted by Karliner op.cit., p328)
- 249 Herald 15 December 1917 p15
- 250 Labour Leader 24 January 1918
- 251 M.M. Litvinov: The Bolshevik Revolution: its rise and meaning (B.S.P., London 1918, with a preface by E.C. Fairchild) p10
- 252 Labour Leader 6 December 1917. The secret treaties were published in accordance with the Bolsheviks' repudiation of secret diplomacy in the Decree on Peace of 8 November 1917 (Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR Vol i (Moscow 1959) document 2 pp11-14). Their publication in volume form began in December. Each published secret document, it was stated, was a "very sharp weapon against the bourgeoisie" (Sbornik Sekretnykh Dokumentov iz Arkhiva byvshego Ministerstva inostrannykh del (N.K.I.B., Petrograd, December 1917 etc) p1).
- 253 L.Labour Party 1918 Annual Conference Report p58
- 254 Cited by A.P. Thornton: Imperial Idea and its Enemies(London 1959; 1966 ed.) p150
- 245a Parliamentary Debates, vol 99 col.1986,28 November 1917
- 246a Parliamentary Debates vol 99 col 2191,29 November 1917, and vol 100, col 25,3 December 1917
- 246a Parliamentary Debates, vol 100 col 1133, 12 December 1917. Buchanan forwarded to London a translation of the secret treaties which had been published in Izvestiya on 23 November (F.O. 371.3018.234581, 23 November 1917. Further disclosures were similarly communicated: Buchanan to F.O. 6 December 1917, F.O.371.3018.243337, etc)
- 248a Labour Party: Memorandum on War Aims (adopted 28 December 1917). Labour figures were prominent in the Lansdowne Committees, formed after

- Lansdowne's letter had been published; and Lansdowne received declarations of support from Henderson, MacDonald and others in the event of his formation of a government (Karliner op.cit. p332). Thomas Jones' opinion is in Jones: Whitehall Diary vol i (London 1969) p43; the statement of the purpose of the Labour Memorandum is from the Special Conference Report p3.
- 249a Cabinet Minutes, 21 November 1917, W.C. 279(4), Cab 23/4
- 250a Lloyd George: War Memoirs pl491
- 251a Cabinet Minutes, 31 December 1917, W.C. 308(10), Cab 23/4
- 252a Jones: Whitehall Diary vol i (London 1969) p42, 1 January 1918
- 253a Cabinet Minutes, 4 January 1918, W.C. 314(3), Cab 23/4
- 254a Copies of the speech are in the Appendix to W.C. 314, and in the Balfour Papers, F.O. 800.199 p52f.
- 255 Jones op.cit. p43, 7 January 1918
- 256 Cabinet Minutes, 17 January 1918, W.C. 324(9), Cab 23/4
- 257 Jones op.cit. p62
- 258 Cited by R.P. Arnot: Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain (London 1967) p109
- 259 Parliamentary Debates vol 99 col 1694, 26 November 1917
- 260 Manchester Guardian 12 November 1917
- 261 Buchanan to F.O., 27 November 1917, F.O. 371.2999.225633. A Foreign Office official in a memorandum written on 12 November thought that it could be "taken ~~for~~ granted" that the Bolshevik government was "probably already on its last legs" (Intelligence Bureau, Foreign Office, Weekly Report on Russia xxix, cited by R.H. Ullman: Intervention and the War (London 1961) p3)
- 262 Nabokov: Ordeal of a Diplomat (London 1921) p 182
- 263 New Statesman 24 November 1917 pl74
- 264 Daily Telegraph 5 January 1918, cited in Arnot op.cit. pl03. A 'secret report' which was circulated to the Cabinet on 19 January 1918 considered that "the final struggle with Bolshevism may be expected within a few days" (Cabinet Paper G.T. 3432, Cab 24/40)
- 265 Parliamentary Debates vol 100 col 973 and 1152, 11 and 12 December 1917
- 266 ibid vol 100 col 973, 11 December 1917
- 267 Parliamentary Debates vol 100 col 1228, 12 December 1917
- 268 Cabinet Minutes 22 November 1917, W.C. 280(6), Cab 23/4. The Russian Peace Note of 21 November (contained in Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki ~~SSSR~~, Vol 1 (Moscow 1959) pl6-17) was received and communicated to London by Buchanan (F.O. 371.3017.223949, 22 November 1917)

- 269 F.O. to Buchanan, F.O. 371.2999.221684, 22 November 1917
- 270 ibid F.O. 371.3000.229363, 4 December 1917
- 271 Cabinet Minutes 26 November 1917, W.C. 282(7), Cab 23/4; Buchanan: Memoirs vol ii p224; Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR Vol i p25
- 272 Cabinet Minutes 26 November 1917, W.C. 282(7), Cab 23/4 ; Military Attache (Petrograd) to London, 26 November 1917, F.O. 371.3017.226991.
- 273 Buchanan to F.O. 29 November 1917, F.O. 371.3017.228417
- 274 F.O. to Buchanan, 3 December 1917, F.O. 371.3017.230066
- 275 Buchanan to F.O., 7 December 1917, F.O. 371.3017.223844. Negotiations began on 13 December, and an armistice was signed on 15 December (Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR, vol 1 pp47-51), in accordance with the second article of which there were to be no further troop movements . Orders had, however, already been given for the bulk of the German Army to be transferred (J.W. Wheeler-Bennett: Brest-Litovsk (London 1938; 1963 ed.) p89).
- 276 Cabinet Minutes 29 November 1917, W.C. 286(7), Cab 23/4
- 277 Cabinet Minutes 6 December 1917, W.C. 293(13), Cab 23/4. For approaches to the Swiss and Swedish governments, see F.O. 371.3000.236229, 13 December 1917, and FO 371.3000.242053, 22 December 1917.
- 278 Buchanan to F.O., 2 December 1917, F.O. 371.3000.230632
- 279 Cabinet Minutes 3 December 1917, W.C. 289(9 and 10), Cab 23/4
- 280 F.O. to Buchanan 3 December 1917, F.O. 371.3018.229192
- 281 Buchanan to F.O. 5 December 1917, F.O. 371.3018.232003
- 282 Cabinet Minutes 3 December 1917, W.C. 289(11) Cab 23/4
- 283 Cabinet Minutes 6 December 1917, W.C. 294(13,13,15), Cab 23/4
- 284 Cabinet Minutes 10 December, W.C. 295(15); Balfour's Memorandum is in the Appendix to W.C. 295; Cab 23/4
- 285 Izvestiya 1 December 1917; translation in W.C. 295(16), Cab 23/4
- 286 Cabinet Minutes 12 and 19 December, W.C. 296(4), 302(11), 298(10) Cab 23/4
- 287 Cabinet Minutes 20 December 1917, W.C. 303(11), Cab 23/4
- 288 Cabinet Minutes 21 December 1917, W.C. 304(10), Cab 23/4. The note of anti-Semitism struck by Cecil was rarely absent from public, or indeed from Cabinet discussions. Basil Thomson considered that it was "inevitable in a country like Russia, when the dregs of the population had boiled up to the top", that a "preponderance of Jews would be found among the scum" (Thomson: Queer People (London 1922) p285)
- 289 Cabinet Minutes 26 December 1917, W.C. 306 (13) Cab 23/4

- 290 Anglo-French Conference at Quai d'Orsay, 23 December 1917 (Secret), F.O. 371.3086.243036; reprinted in Documents on British Foreign Policy First series (hereinafter DBFP) Vol iii No 256 Annex A pp.369-70.
- 291 The Convention appears to have been reaffirmed by the Cabinet on 13 November 1918. A Foreign Office memorandum written in June 1919 noted that the "system of spheres of influence will be continued" following the recognition of Kolchak (Selby Memorandum, F.O. 371.5440, N539, 15 October 1920; memorandum dated 6 June 1919)
- 292 D. Mitchell: Red Mirage (London 1970) p.21
- 293 The Convention is contained in 'Anglo-French Conference' above.
- 294 Lockhart: Memoirs p.199
- 295 Lockhart to F.O., F.O. 371.2999.226677
- 296 Lockhart: Memoirs p.196-7
- 297 Litvinov to Balfour 5 January 1918, F.O. 371.3298.4358, 8 January 1918
- 298 F.O. to Litvinov 10 January 1918 ibid; I.M. Maisky: Puteshestvie v Froshloe (Moscow 1960) p.70
- 299 Cabinet Minutes 7 January 1918, W.C. 316(16), Cab 23/5
- 300 Maisky op.cit. p.70.
- 301 Lockhart: Memoirs p.210. A 'Memorandum on the Status of the Mission' was composed on 11 January 1918. It noted that its purpose was to establish an "unofficial connecting link" with the Bolshevik government; but "every care" should be taken to ensure that the mission was "in no sense" regarded as a political mission from the British to the Bolshevik government, and "every care should be taken to conceal the political association of the Mission with the Embassy" (Memorandum, 11 January 1918, F.O. 371.3300.6903). The scheme, as the Charge d'affaires at Petrograd was told, was that "Lockhart's mission should be of a political character but with a commercial facade" (F.O. to Lindley, 14 January 1918, F.O. 371.3300.8082)
- 302 Cabinet Minutes, 7 January 1918, W.C. 316(16), Cab 23/5
- 303 Labour Leader 10 January 1918
- 304 Lindley (Moscow) to London, who had been informed by Chicherin, 29 January (rec. 2 February), F.O. 371.3300.20491; Maclean was, however, arrested just over two months later.
- 305 Maisky op.cit. p.75; 'The Bolshevik Revolution: its rise and meaning' (B.S.P.1918). Ullman: Intervention and the War (London 1961) appears to be mistaken in referring to "a number of pamphlets" (ibid p.78)

- 306 Cabinet Minutes 15 January 1918, W.C. 322(18), Cab 23/5
- 307 Cabinet Minutes 22 January 1918, W.C. 328(18), Cab 23/5
- 308 Cabinet Minutes 23 January 1918, W.C. 329(12), Cab 23/5
- 309 Cabinet Minutes 11 February 1918, W.C. 342(14), Cab 23/5. A copy of the article in the Woolwich Pioneer ('Russian Soviets' (sic) message to British Labour', 8 February 1918) is contained in F.O.371.3317.28147, 13 February 1918.
- 310 Parliamentary Debates vol 103 cols 1477-9, 27 February 1918. Kamenov was obliged to return shortly after his arrival.
- 311 Cabinet Minutes 25 February 1918, W.C. 353(10), Cab 23/5
- 312 Lockhart: Memoirs p223
- 313 Cabinet Minutes 2 January 1918, W.C. 311(11), Cab 23/5
- 314 Lockhart: Memoirs p213,229
- 315 Buchanan to F.O., 25 December 1917, F.O. 371.3000.243642
- 316 Cabinet Minutes 17 January 1918, W.C. 324(9), Cab 23/5
- 317 Cabinet Minutes 21 January 1918, W.C. 327(1), Cab 23/5
- 318 Cabinet Minutes 7 February 1918, W.C. 340(7), Cab 23/5
- 319 Lloyd George: War Memoirs p1541
- 320 British Ambassador, Washington, to London, 22 December 1917, F.O.371.3020.242611
- 321 26 December 1917, F.O. 371.3020.244653
- 322 Cabinet Minutes 7 January 1918, W.C. 316, Cab 23/5
- 323 Cabinet Minutes 20 February 1918, W.C. 350(4) Cab 23/5
- 324 Cabinet Minutes 1 January 1918, W.C. 309A, Cab 23/13
- 325 Cabinet Minutes 24 January 1918, W.C. 330A, Cab 23/13
- 326 ibid p 236
Memoirs
- 327 Cabinet Minutes 25 February 1918, W.C. 353(11) Cab 23/13; Lockhart:
- 328 Lockhart: Memoirs p~~328~~236
- 329 Lockhart: Memoirs p240-1
- 330 Lloyd George: War Memoirs p1899
- 331 Lloyd George: War Memoirs p 1558. The text of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, which was signed on 3 March and ratified on 15 March 1918, is contained in Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR vol i document 78 p119f
- 332 Lockhart: Memoirs p270
- 333 Cabinet Minutes 1 March 1918, W.C. 357(1), Cab 23/5
- 334 Lockhart to London, telegram No 94, quoted in Cabinet Minutes 19 April 1918, W.C. 395(9), Cab 23/6. Lockhart had reported on 12 April that

- Trotsky now favoured British co-operation (telegram No 91, 12 April 1918, quoted in Cabinet Minutes 17 April 1918, W.C. 393(17) Cab 23/6)
- 335 Lockhart tel.No 96, 15 April 1918, in Cabinet Minutes 22 April 1918, W.C. 396 App I(A) Cab 23/6; F.O. to Lord Reading, Washington, 19 April 1918, tel. 2303, quoted in W.C. 395, Cab 23/6
- 336 Cabinet Minutes 22 April, W.C. 396A(13), Cab 23/14
- 337 Cabinet Minutes 26 April 1918, W.C. 400A(2), Cab 23/14
- 338 Cabinet Minutes 11 May 1918, W.C. 409A(1), Cab 23/14. Trotsky, Lloyd George considered, "could go no further than he had done. It was obvious that M. Trotsky could not trust M. Lenin, who was a disciple of Tolstoi" (ibid).
- 339 Cabinet Minutes 13 May 1918, W.C. 410, Cab 23/6
- 340 Cecil Memorandum 25 May 1918, F.O. 371.3286.105471, and Cabinet Paper G.T. 4663, Cab 24/52
- 341 Jones: Whitehall Diary Vol i (London 1969)p 59, 12 April 1918. Lloyd George confessed to C.P. Scott that he was "extremely puzzled" by the conflicting views of the experts on intervention; but by June Scott found him "quite definitely in favour of intervention" (~~EXXX~~ of C.P. Scott
The ~~XXXXXX~~ Political Diaries 1911-1928 (London 1970) p339,348)
- 342 Jones: Whitehall Diary Vol i (London 1969)p60, 12 April 1918. Cecil wrote to Balfour on 7 March 1918, wondering whether the government should "hint to Lockhart that it is his business to persuade Trotski that we are right, not to persuade us that Trotski is right.. Surely we have enough of Trotski?" (Cecil to Balfour, 7 March 1918, Balfour Papers F.O. 800.205,p248)
- 343 Lockhart: Memoirs p311
- 344 ibid
- 345 Lockhart to London 23 May 1918, F.O. 371.3286.94955
- 346 Lockhart to London, 26 May 1918, F.O. 371.3286.95628
- 347 Lockhart to London 27 May 1918, F.O. 371.3286.96656
- 348 Lockhart to London 27 May 1918, F.O. 371.3286.97822
- 349 Lockhart to London 18 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.117933
- 350 Lockhart to London 20 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.114921
351. Balfour to Lockhart, 10 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.99204
- 352 Wardrop to London, 10 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.111385
- ~~XXX~~ Lloyd George's view is in Cabinet Minutes 29 May 1917, W.C. 420(17), Cab 23/6. A Foreign Office memorandum written in December 1919 stated

that intervention with military force, especially Japanese, had first been discussed by the government on December 1917 (DBFP iii No 613 pp 700-732, p711). Colonel Ward, commanding the 255th battalion of the Middlesex Regiment in Hong Kong, had received instructions as early as November 1917 to prepare his men for departure for an unknown destination, which he believed to be Vladivostok (J. Ward: With the 'Die-Hards' in Siberia (London 1920) pl).

- 353 telegram No 859 from Lord Reading, 2 March 1918, and No 929, 5 March 1918, both quoted in Foreign Office memorandum 'Japanese Intervention in Siberia', 5 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.99971
- 354 telegram 1158A, 19 March, cited in ibid
- 355 telegrams 2204,2303,2479 of 15,19 and 26 April 1918, in ibid; Cabinet Minutes 19 April 1918, W.C. 395(9) Cab 23/6
- 356 telegram 1833,26 April, and telegram 2031,7 May 1918, in ibid
- 357 Lord Reading to London,23 May 1918, F.O.371.3286.92247
- 358 Foreign Office memorandum, 'Notes and Comments',21 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.110734; Balfour's views are contained in Imperial War Cabinet Minutes 20 June 1918, I.W.C. 19(6), Cab 23/41
- 359 Foreign Office memorandum, 'Notes and Comments', op.cit.
- 360 Cecil's views in the press are in the Times 11 March 1918. Parliamentary Debates vol 104 cols 511-2,513,549, 14 March 1918
- 361 Cecil and the Japanese Ambassador, 22 May 1918, Cabinet Minutes 24 May 1918 , W.C. 417 App. I Cab 23/6
- 362 Balfour to Japanese Ambassador, 7 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.103896
- 363 Japanese Ambassador to F.O., 24 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.114303
- 364 Cabinet Minutes 29 May 1918, W.C. 420(7), Cab 23/6
- 365 Cabinet Minutes 30 April 1918, W.C. 401(9) Cab 23/6
- 366 Cabinet Minutes 13 May 1918, W.C. 410 Cab 23/6
- 367 Milner, Cabinet Minutes 17 May 1918, W.C. 413(2) Cab 23/6
- 368 Imperial War Conference 1-3 June 1918, cited in Cabinet Minutes W.C. 421 Cab 23/6
- 369 Reading to London, 27 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.114323
- 370 F.O. to Lord Reading, 1 July 1918, ibid
- 371 ibid
- 372 Lloyd George: War Memoirs pl901. Ullman (op.cit.pl68) noted that Balfour's Russian policy "sorely needed an 'incident'". Cecil wrote to Clemenceau on 18 May, at the direction of his colleagues, that

the Czechs "could be used to start operations in Siberia". Once started, there could be "little doubt that the Japanese would move and the Americans would find it impossible to hold back" (Cecil to Clemenceau, 18 May 1918, Milner Papers, unfiled folder 33, cited in Ullman op.cit. p169-70). This need not necessarily establish ~~that~~ the outbreak of hostilities between the Czechs and the Bolsheviks was other than fortuitous. That it was not of such a character was, ^Whowever, the contention of the Soviet government itself (Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR vol 1 documents 203,370)

373 Balfour to Lord Reading, 5 July 1918, F.O. 371.3286.116763

374 Lockhart to London, F.O. 371.3286.116259, 25 June 1918

375 Lockhart: Memoirs p206

376 Lockhart to London, 15 June 1918, F.O. 371.3286.116258. A Right S.R. rising occurred in Moscow on 30 August, in which Uritsky was killed and Lenin wounded, and for which the British were blamed. On 31

August Soviet troops entered the Embassy building, and shots had been fired as a result of which the British Naval Attache, Captain Cromie, had been killed (Sir R. Paget to Balfour, 3 September 1918, A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia, Cmd 8 (1919) p2) The Times (24 October 1918) reported that he had been shot in the back, and had had no pistol in his hands. He had, nevertheless, managed to kill three Soviet soldiers before he had himself been shot (Cmd 8 ibid).

Lockhart was arrested on 3 September, after an official announcement of the discovery of a British-French conspiracy (Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR Vol 1 document 329, p462-3, 2 September 1918), with which Lockhart himself appears to have less to do than Sidney Reilly and Captain Cromie (who had, according to Lindley, come "more or less into contact with Russians hostile to (the) Bolshevik regime", whose plans might well have included the destruction of bridges (Cmd 8 ibid p31, Lindley to Balfour, 6 (received 13) September 1918) Chicherin wrote that Reilly had intended to secure the capture of Vologda and a rising in Moscow (Vneshnyaya Politika Sovetskoi Rossii za dva goda (Moscow 19-20) p17). Litvinov was arrested in reprisal, and both were released in October 1918 (Maisky op.cit. p77-79) and (9)

377 Cabinet Minutes 10 July 1918, W.C. 443(8), Cab 23/7. A number of British marines had landed at Murmansk on 6 March 1918 (Ullman op.cit. ^{p109}

378 Cabinet Minutes 4 August 1918, W.C. 454, Cab 23/7. The first British

troops landed at Vladivostok on 3 August 1918 (Foreign Office memorandum, December 1919, DBFP vol iii No 613, p.715)

379 W.S. Churchill: The Aftermath (London 1929) p. 95

380 Cabinet Minutes 7 August 1918 W.C. 455(4), Cab 23/7

(Lloyd George remarked at a meeting of the Committee of Prime Ministers on 12 August 1918 that Lockhart "had had relations with the enemies of the Bolshevists, and had actually given money to General Alexeiff, and if this were discovered by the Bolshevists his position would be a very dangerous one" (I.W.C. 29B(10), 12 August 1918, Cab 23/44)

Chapter Two: The Rise and Fall of Intervention.

British forces occupied Soviet Russia in the north, in the Far East and in the south; and maintained a blockade in the Baltic. It was maintained at the time - and has been maintained since - that the aim of British policy was not an anti-Bolshevik one: that obligations had been contracted to groups in Russia who had opposed the Germans during the war, and could not now, after the Armistice, be abandoned. These groups, as it happened, were opposed to the Moscow government. Recent studies have recorded the "absence of any overriding 'principle'" in British policy, but rather the "habit, so ingrained in British politics and administration, of making a virtue of the lack of a 'principle'"; and have talked of the Cabinet's "piecemeal decisions" which formed the basis of its first post-Armistice policy formulations¹. Another study has described intervention as a "striking example of British pragmatism at work"². It is worth noting at the outset that a number of members of the government, at least in private, were somewhat more forthcoming.

The British government, Curzon wrote to Sir J. Jordan in Peking, had "not changed (its) policy of active opposition to Bolshevism"³. Defeat of Bolshevism, he told Wardrop, "even if we do not take active part in operations", was the "interest of this country"⁴. The supplies to the Baltic States and to Denikin, the British Minister told the Polish Prime Minister, were "sufficient proof of our desire to see an end put to the Bolshevik regime"⁵.

"If", the Cabinet stoutly maintained, "we were making war on the Bolsheviks, our policy would be a thorough one", and the government would not have contented itself with the extent of material support it had provided for the anti-Bolshevik forces⁶. This was, however, to miss the point. What was lacking was not the Cabinet's desire to secure the overthrow of the Bolshevik regime, but its power to do so. The downfall of Bolshevism, it has been noted, was "universally desired in the Cabinet"⁷; but there was no serious support for the view that a large number of British troops, or greater material support of the anti-Bolsheviks, should be provided, since neither could be found. Both Lord Robert Cecil (who had left the Foreign Office) and Lloyd George admitted in February 1919 that "effective war against the Bolsheviks" was

"impracticable".⁸ Apart altogether from the opposition of public opinion, which obstinately clung to the notion that British policy aimed at the overthrow of the Bolshevik government, there could be "no question", the Cabinet eventually concluded, "of making active war on the Bolsheviks, for the reason that we have neither the men, the money, nor the credit"⁹.

This, indeed, left little scope for differences of opinion within the Cabinet. If there was agreement upon ultimate objectives, there was agreement also that their achievement did not (at least unaided) lie within British means. This left room for disagreement only of personality and of emphasis. These, admittedly, existed. The most notable was certainly that between Lloyd George and Churchill: and to contemporaries it might often appear that fundamentally divergent policies were being pursued. Lloyd George himself later called attention to the "powerful and exceeding pertinacious influences in the Cabinet working for military intervention in Russia". Since he himself, owing to the business of the Peace Conference, was "not on the spot in London to exercise direct control over the situation, for a time I was out-manoeuvred, and Mr. Bonar Law, who presided over the Ministers in my absence, was overridden. Mr. Winston Churchill in particular threw the whole of his dynamic energy and genius into organizing an armed intervention against the Russian Bolshevik power"¹⁰. Churchill wrote to Lloyd George that "since the Armistice my policy would have been 'Peace with the German people, war on the Bolshevik tyranny'. Willingly or avoidably, you have followed something very near the reverse"¹¹. Sir Henry Wilson noted in his diary that "Winston (is) all against Bolshevism, and therefore in this, against Lloyd George"¹². A recent study, following these views, has referred to Churchill's "unremitting campaign for effective, decisive intervention" as one of two factors making for the continuance of intervention after the Armistice¹³.

Churchill, admittedly, was the more picturesque in his denunciation of what he called the "foul baboonery of Bolshevism"¹⁴. The Bolshevik regime, he assured the Cabinet, was the "most horrible tyranny and brutality the world had ever seen"¹⁵. To the House of Commons he was even more emphatic. Britain, he declared, could "not remain impartial as between the two sides in Russia". Bolshevism was "not a policy, it is a disease. It is not a creed; it is a pestilence. It presents all the characteristics of a pestilence. It breaks out with great suddenness; it is

violently contagious; it throws people into a frenzy of excitement; it spreads with alarming rapidity; the mortality is terrible.. In its first stages, Bolshevism offers a considerable attraction to the worst elements in an uneducated people, like the Russian masses.."16

Churchill had, however, acquired a responsibility for Russian policy only on his assumption of the Secretaryship of War and Air on 10 January 1919. As he remarked, with only slight exaggeration, "up to this moment I had taken no part of any kind in Russian affairs, nor had I been responsible for any commitment"17. By this time the Cabinet had endorsed a number of decisions concerning Russian policy, which, as Churchill pointed out, amounted to a "far-reaching programme. It not only comprised existing commitments, but added to them large new enterprises in the Caucasus and in South Russia"18. Churchill had simply inherited this programme, which had not been of his own making; and during his period of office his concern was less the enlargement of this programme than for its more effective prosecution. While he urged that the government should "make war upon the Bolsheviks by every means in (its) power.. with a coherent plan on all fronts at once, until such time as a definite victory is won..", he conceded that this policy must "not involve the employment of British troops or the expenditure of large sums of money"19. Lloyd George differed from Churchill not in regarding the overthrow of the Bolsheviks as other than desirable: but in coming more swiftly to terms with the truth that, in these circumstances (which were not contested within the Cabinet), this objective lay beyond the capacity of the British government to achieve.

Divisions within the Cabinet, while they tended naturally to become identified with these two figures, extended beyond them. As "zealous and untiring advocates of the policy of intervention" Lloyd George included Lord Curzon as well as Churchill20. Geddes and Long, also, as well as the naval and military leaders Weymss, Beatty and Wilson, have been added to those whose favour of an 'anti-Bolshevik crusade' was undoubted21. Sceptics included Fisher and Austen Chamberlain, as well as Bonar Law, who had a Scottish businessman's distrust of Churchill's extravagant schemes22. Lord Davidson described his attitude as "always cautious, and he was inclined to take no risks, especially with Russia. He didn't think that the White Russians were worth backing, and he always took the line against Winston, who wanted to help Kolchak and Denikin"23. It would, however, be misleading

to suggest that the sceptics remained sceptical whatever the fortunes of the battlefield : which was understandable, since their objection to Churchill's urgings was not that they were wrong in principle, but that their optimism was not well founded (or, as Lloyd George put it, that Winston was "backing the wrong horse"²⁴). It has justly been remarked that the Cabinet was divided, not into 'interventionists' and 'non-interventionists', but into 'circumspect' and 'extreme interventionists'²⁵.

Much criticism was directed at the appearance of indecision which resulted: as Lord H. Cecil observed in the House of Commons, the government had "sometimes followed one policy, and sometimes another"²⁶. Lord Robert Cecil, a former member of the government, focussed also on the "oscillation between ^{the} two policies". Whenever the anti-Bolsheviks were successful, he noted, "then there was a considerable reversion to what I may call the Churchillian policy. As soon as they were driven back there was a great movement towards non-intervention"²⁷. An examination of the Cabinet's Russian policy tends to sustain this charge.

"In the event of an armistice", Balfour told the Cabinet on 18 October 1918, "we were faced with a serious state of things in Russia. The main justification of our intervention had been to prevent German aggression and absorption of that country.. If we now withdrew our forces from European and Asiatic Russia we should suffer a serious loss of prestige and should be letting down our friends". Lord Robert Cecil "hated the idea of abandoning to Bolshevik fury all those who had helped us, but he quite saw that it might end badly if we tried to destroy Bolshevism by means of military interference". Smuts was already looking beyond the conclusion of an armistice. "Before the Allies could have an armistice with the Central Powers", he declared, "they must be clear about political and military questions in Russia. Bolshevism was a danger to the whole world, and we were already committed at Murmansk, Archangel and in Siberia". The groups in northern Russia, moreover, could not be withdrawn until the following spring when navigation again became possible²⁸.

The Cabinet returned to the subject immediately after the armistice, and it became still clearer that something more than the fate of former allies was concerned. Balfour opened with a discussion of "our future policy in Russia and neighbouring countries". A "military crusade against

Bolshevism was impossible"; it would "involve us in military operations of unknown magnitude". He proposed the provision of "whatever assistance lay in our power to those elements in Siberia and South East Russia who had stood by us during the war"; in addition, "we could not allow" the western border states of Russia to be "overwhelmed by central Russia". The danger lay in the combination of invasion and revolution. The Bolsheviks took the attitude that they did not mind about national boundaries, but insisted upon revolutionary forms of government". The aristocracies and land tenure systems of these states "constituted a class division which was a source of great weakness". He had made "great efforts to get the Scandinavian countries to assist in providing arms and in policing these Border States. They had, however, all refused, and if anything was to be done, it would have to be done by the Allies". Milner agreed that "under no circumstances could we send troops". Lord Robert Cecil added that it would be "fatal to let it be thought that we were committed to an anti-Bolshevik crusade". At the same time, however, "we ought to do what we could to prevent the rich countries of Southern and South-Eastern Europe from drifting into anarchy". Lloyd George indicated his "entire agreement with the Foreign Secretary as to the line to be pursued". The Cabinet endorsed the recommendations of a Foreign Office conference which had met the previous day: to remain in occupation of Murmansk and Archangel; to recognize the anti-Bolshevik government in Omsk as a de facto government; to maintain the Siberian expedition; to occupy the Baku-Batum railway; to establish contact with Denikin and "afford him all possible assistance in military material"; and to supply the Baltic States with military material.²⁹

Whatever obligations the Cabinet might have assumed towards those who had resisted German operations in Russia during the war, it was evident that they had now come to form no more than a part of a programme of considerably greater import. Moreover even this ground was a weak one. The government, Churchill explained to the House of Commons, had "incurred heavy commitments towards the people.. who have espoused our cause, and to the Russian armies, which were encouraged and called into being largely by the Allies, and largely for our own purposes during the period of the German War". There was, he thought, a need to "do our duty by those who have put their trust in us".³⁰ If this obligation applied in respect

of General Alexeiv, it was less clear that it applied to General Denikin, who had succeeded him at the time of the conclusion of the armistice, and with whom, subsequent to the armistice, the Cabinet had decided to "establish contact"³¹. It had also been decided to recognize the Omsk government; but the government's support was subsequently extended also to General Kolchak, who overthrew it with the benevolent neutrality, if ~~M~~ not the actual assistance, of the local British representatives³². The government's favour was no doubt not without relation to the undertaking made by Kolchak ten days later to recognize all Russian debts due to the Treasury, and promise their repayment³³.

The Imperial War Cabinet, meeting at the end of the year, debated and endorsed without substantial modification the government's policy. Churchill urged "joint action by the ~~five~~ Great Powers", who should be prepared to "use force to restore the situation and set up a democratic government. In his view, Bolshevism in Russia represented a mere fraction of the population, and would be exposed and swept away by a general election held under Allied auspices"³⁴. Lloyd George later wrote that at this time he found himself "frequently leaning first in one direction, and then in another"³⁵. He told the Cabinet, however, that he was "definitely opposed to military intervention in any shape". Where were the troops to be found, in view of popular resistance to serving in Russia and commitments elsewhere? And there was the danger, as the French Revolution, his favourite parallel, demonstrated, that military intervention might simply strengthen the force to which it was opposed. It was agreed to support existing allies in Russia, with supplies but not with men, and to support existing governments in the event of Bolshevik attack³⁶.

Lloyd George extended the logic of this policy at the Paris Peace Conference, in proposing that the contending parties meet with the Allies on Prinkipo island in the Sea of Marmora³⁷. Bolshevism, he declared, was "stronger than ever". Either a million men would have to be sent against them - and he "doubted whether a million men would be willing to go" - or a "siege of Russia" would have to be instituted, leading to great loss of life among the "ordinary population, with whom we wished to be friends". The Czechoslovak troops were by report "tainted with Bolshevism and could not be trusted. Neither were the Russian troops of Kolchak equal to the task"; while Denikin occupied only a "little backyard near

the Black Sea". Lloyd George's original proposal was that representatives of the existing Russian governments should be invited to Paris; but such was the "universal fear created by the Bolshevik outbreak that we experienced great difficulty in finding a suitable location to meet these terrors of the East". A proposal inviting the parties to Prinkipo was finally agreed upon; but while the Bolsheviks were willing to attend, the conditions made by their opponents were unacceptable, and the meeting did not take place.³⁸ Simply the rumour that it might do so, however, aroused vociferous opposition in the House of Commons, and Lloyd George hastened to make it clear that there had been no proposal to recognize the Bolsheviks, a government of "assassins"³⁹.

The proposal to reach an agreement with the Bolsheviks had been made, admittedly, at a time when little seemed to be possible to hope of their opponents. At a Cabinet meeting on the same day as Lloyd George's statement in Parliament, Churchill complained that the Bolsheviks were "getting stronger every day. In the south, General Denikin's army had greatly deteriorated.. The situation in Siberia was exactly the same. There was complete disheartenment everywhere". Chamberlain agreed that "the chances of any good results had greatly diminished in the last few weeks"; and Curzon conceded that the Bolsheviks "were in the ascendant militarily". Curzon wished the Cabinet to be "perfectly clear that they were doing all they could in what he would call the bolstëring policy"; but admitted that a "determined and thorough-going intervention" was "impossible". Churchill agreed with him that "intervention on a large scale was not possible"⁴⁰. It was decided at the beginning of the following month to "press for the early withdrawal of Murmansk and Archangel"⁴¹. "Everything", Churchill lamented, "was going wrong"⁴².

Things continued to 'go wrong' until almost the end of April. By early May, however, Churchill was able to report to the Cabinet that Kolchak "was moving rapidly"; his army was "really rolling forward". He felt that it was "quite possible that the Bolshevik regime would crumble up, and we should get a civilized Russia friendly to us above all other Powers if events continue to proceed on satisfactory lines"⁴³. In the circumstances the Cabinet felt justified in moving into a position even more ~~difficult~~ to reconcile with what Lloyd George had called the "fundamental principle of all foreign policy in this country.. that you should never interfere in the

internal affairs of another country, however badly governed" (a principle from which he regarded it as "not in the least.. a departure", however, to "support General Denikin, Admiral Kolchak and General Kharkoff"⁴⁴)

The Foreign Office, Curzon told the Cabinet, had "come to the conclusion that the time had now arrived for recognizing (Kolchak's) Government, and were in favour of according it recognition as the Provisional Government of Siberia"⁴⁵. On 26 May an Allied note was despatched to Kolchak in this sense⁴⁶. His reply was received on 5 June, and was welcomed by the Allies on 12 June as "in substantial agreement with the propositions^{which} they had made"⁴⁷.

At the same time a more material contribution to his success swiftly acquired form. A telegram had been received stating that Kolchak expected to be in Kotlas by the end of May or the beginning of June. "If this was the case", Churchill considered, "it would greatly facilitate future military operations"⁴⁸. What operations these might be became clear at a meeting of the Cabinet on 11 June, summoned on Churchill's request so that he might outline a plan of action in North Russia which, he said, had been submitted to the Prime Minister in Paris and approved, and approved also by the General Staff and the Admiralty⁴⁹. "For the first time", he said, "we proposed to depart from our present defensive policy and embark upon definite aggressive action against the Bolsheviks". It was proposed that General Ironside should advance with two brigades against Kotlas, which it was expected would be taken within fifteen days. A junction was here to be effected with anti-Bolshevik forces, following which General Ironside was to retire back to Archangel. Field-Marshal Wilson declared that the aim of the operation was to "hit the enemy hard" and to "join up with friendly forces in the south". Curzon noted that "this was the first time that we were taking the offensive against the Bolsheviks". The action, as a Foreign Office official pointed out, was "directed to achieve the overthrow of the Russian Soviet Government at the earliest moment"⁵⁰. Churchill, nevertheless, said that he "saw no difficulty in justifying to Parliament the present plans", which, he stoutly maintained, were "simply designed to secure our withdrawal from North Russia". The Cabinet's approval was obtained for the operation⁵¹.

Only a week later there was disquieting news. "Almost immediately", Curzon told the Cabinet, after the plans had been approved, telegrams had

been received "recording the serious setback which had been suffered by Admiral Kolchak"; and subsequent telegrams had been "far from reassuring". Curzon was understandably "much disturbed at the possibility of our undertaking a venture which would prove unsuccessful". He was "in favour of a forward policy, but he was not prepared to give his ~~assent~~X to a proposition that might launch our men on an expedition into Central Russia which was doomed to failure". Churchill argued that the military experts believed that the "real trouble on the Kolchak front was now coming to an end", although he admitted that the position was still "not quite a happy one". He remained in favour of the advance even if a union with Kolchak's forces was no longer feasible. Bonar Law, however, stated that he and Lloyd George had been under the impression when approving the attack that it "would not be undertaken unless there was a possibility of joining up with Admiral Kolchak". The situation "caused him great concern". It was agreed that the matter should be considered again on 27 June⁵².

By this date the Chief of Staff had to admit that, while with the "Russian temperament.. anything was possible", the chances of a junction with Kolchak's forces were "very remote"⁵³. Reports from the government's representatives in Russia, moreover, gave little ground for optimism. The military situation, it was reported from Omsk, was "admitted by all to be extremely bad". This was the result of "bad management"; the men had "little confidence or enthusiasm" and the peasantry were "Not really well disposed to (the) government"⁵⁴. From Vladivostok it was reported that the situation was "serious": the recent retirement of Kolchak's forces had, indeed, been a "rout", and it was "not easy to see how (the) panic can be stopped". Attempts to turn the struggle into a holy war had not been successful: "I am told that (the) religious feelings of (the) peasantry are not strong at present"⁵⁵.

A mutiny, meanwhile, had taken place among the Russian troops at Archangel. Curzon told the Cabinet that he was "rather perturbed regarding the situation at Archangel"⁵⁶. The advance on Kotlas had now been abandoned. General Ironside stated that he had come independently to the conclusion that the suggested attack would be "unwise, at any rate during the present month"; and his decision was confirmed. Evacuation would continue as planned⁵⁷.

A week later Churchill admitted that "there was no doubt that the situation was critical"⁵⁸. Chamberlain pointed out ~~that~~ at a subsequent meeting of the Cabinet that it appeared that the situation in Siberia was "just as

serious as, or even more serious than, that in Archangel". Churchill admitted that it was quite probable that in the course of the following two months the "whole Kolchak movement would ~~fall~~^{crumple} to pieces"⁵⁹. It was still, however, possible, he argued on 29 July, that Admiral Kolchak might "retrieve his position"; while withdrawal would only "give the greatest satisfaction to.. the Bolshevik sympathisers throughout the world"⁶⁰. The government could not, however, Lloyd George replied, "bind ourselves to help Russia indefinitely, and must not give any pledges as to the future". Balfour added that Kolchak's army had sustained "not only a serious but a calamitous reverse, from which it was almost inconceivable that it could recover". It was accordingly decided that all British troops, at Archangel and Murmansk, should be evacuated; that no British mission should be left at Archangel; that British forces should be withdrawn from Siberia as soon as transport allowed; and that evacuation of British forces from the Caucasus should begin the following month. Archangel had been evacuated by 27 September, Murmansk by 12 October; while the Siberian army "continued to retreat, broke up and ceased to be a factor in the military situation"⁶¹.

The situation prompted some disillusioned reflection within the Foreign Office. A memorandum circulated at the end of July argued that Kolchak's forces had suffered such reverses as would require many months to recover from; and that while Denikin was making considerable progress, Kolchak's prospects had before been "no less promising". While anything in the nature of temporary setbacks should be the "last reason for altering our policy in Russia", the "sudden reversal of the very favourable conditions of two months ago" was nevertheless felt to justify a "close revision of that policy in the light of our recent military and political experiences". There could be no question of increasing British support either in men or materials: "no government in Europe or America is strong enough to undertake an extensive military expedition in Russia". It was considered "very improbably" that Kolchak would overthrow the Bolsheviks, and "extremely doubtful" whether Denikin would do so. The present Russian government was "accepted by the bulk of the Russian people". Its conditions were reasonable, and negotiations among the parties concerned should be initiated⁶².

Curzon agreed, in a memorandum of 17 July, that the Bolsheviks were "now embarking upon a course more in accord^{ance} with the adopted principles of

international comity and intercourse". Their peace proposals were indeed "attractive at first sight". Allied support had however been given to Admiral Kolchak, and it was "impossible for the Allies to abandon his cause, even if they felt any inclination to do so"⁶³. In a memorandum prepared for the Cabinet the following month, he admitted that the general impression was one of "disappointment, in some cases of admitted failure". The results produced by Allied intervention had so far been "incommensurate either with the objects for which they were undertaken or with the enormous expenditure involved". The anti-Bolshevik government in northern Russia was unlikely to survive the Allies' departure; while in Siberia the situation had "undergone a decided change for the worse", and Kolchak's forces were reported in "full retreat". The Russian forces which the British government had supported had been generally unsuccessful; and the Soviet government had become stronger⁶⁴.

All, however, was not lost. For in South Russia the situation was much more favourable. Indeed if he were supported, Denikin might "yet attain a success which has been denied to his chief"⁶⁵. On 4 July Churchill told the Cabinet that the growth of the Volunteer Army had been "remarkable"⁶⁶. Increasingly British assistance was directed to aiding his "far more serious and sustained" movement⁶⁷. On 1 August Churchill informed the Cabinet that "up to date, no men had been sent to General Denikin except what was called a British Mission. This was not to exceed the number of two thousand, and they were not supposed to be fighting men"; although, he added disingenuously, "of course, if in the front line they might have to take part in the fighting"⁶⁸. He later told the House of Commons that "a few airmen and tank corps personnel" had been involved in the fighting under Denikin (who had himself been awarded the K.C.B.⁶⁹).

Even Curzon, however, had come to the conclusion that it was "impossible for us to continue our support both in Siberia and in South Russia". His proposal was for an Inter-Allied Council with a fund jointly subscribed: "it would then be for the powers to agree to ~~th~~ assign to themselves spheres in which they were respectively politically interested, or which were suitable on account of geographical propinquity". The Prime Minister and Bonar Law both believed, however, that the Powers would refuse the suggestion of a pool; and Lloyd George thought, indeed, that Clemeneau had "practically written Russia off his books". Churchill

urged that the "one bright spot in Russia was the present position of General Denikin, who was now halfway to Saratov" and "seemed to be welcomed everywhere"; and who was reported to be intending to proceed as far as Moscow. Balfour remained sceptical: "if we really thought that Denikin could reach Moscow, we might entertain hopes of his crushing Bolshevism"; but this, he thought, was unlikely. Curzon offered a "word of warning.. :he doubted whether Denikin would achieve any great success, and it was always possible that he might fail like Kolchak". Barnes added that "we were always backing the wrong horse". Lloyd George observed that while support of Kolchak in May had been a "legitimate risk", this was not now the case. An estimate should be prepared of a "final contribution" to Denikin.⁷⁰ ~~Three~~ ^{A week} ~~days~~ later the Cabinet decided that assistance to Russia should be confined to Denikin; and "all operations in other parts of the former Russian empire should be brought to an end as soon as possible"⁷¹.

Churchill, however, continued to press for assistance. On 25 September he called for "war upon the Bolsheviks by every means in our power...with a coherent plan on all fronts at once, until such time as either a definite victory is won, or it is decided to make a general peace in which all parties would be included". He conceded, crucially, that such a proposal should "not involve the employment of British troops or the expenditure of large sums of money"⁷². By mid-October, nevertheless, Denikin had reached Tula, 220 miles from Moscow; and Churchill wrote in a public letter that there were "good reasons~~4~~ for believing that the tyranny of Bolshevism will soon be overthrown by the Russian nation..."⁷³. He wrote to Curzon on 5 October that the Bolsheviks were "failing and perhaps the end is not distant. Not only their system but their regime is doomed. Their military effort is collapsing at almost every point on the whole immense circle of their front", a situation paralleling that of the final debacle of the German forces in October 1918. "Everything in our power" should be done to help Denikin, at the expense if necessary of what he termed "very small passing interests of a subsidiary character"⁷⁴.

Denikin's fortunes appeared to have improved to such an extent that a Foreign Office memorandum was issued, which proposed the recognition, even at this late stage, of a Denikin-Kolchak government. Leeper wrote to J.D. Gregory that the remaining military difficulties before Denikin were "comparatively slight"; he should, he considered, "be in Moscow by December".

Gregory agreed, in a minute written on 17 October: "as far as we can see now", he wrote, "Denikin is about to come out on top". As Curzon noted, "we seem to be swinging round rather rapidly". There was "clearly nothing", he remarked, "that succeeds like success". The government, however, should "not take a false step now". An Allied decision would be necessary; and did Denikin's success, he wrote in a further minute on 22 October, justify the recognition of Kolchak also? He would "rather wait a bit before proposing recognition". A telegram to Eyre Crowe in Paris, which noted that the situation in Russia had "undergone such a drastic change that we are bound now to reckon with the possibility of the collapse of the Bolshevist power at no distant date", and asked whether he agreed that it might now be "politically expedient" to recognize a Denikin-Kolchak government, was accordingly suspended⁷⁵.

The Cabinet had approved a final contribution to Denikin on 7 October of three million pounds and nonmarketable supplies, however⁷⁶; and Denikin was forced to begin a protracted retreat later in the month. ^{Prisk}Curzon, in a memorandum written at the beginning of December, professed to see "no reason to conclude that the wheel of fortune" had "finally turned in favour of the Bolshevik armies and against their opponents", he admitted that the fortunes of the latter were then "not the most favourable"⁷⁷. A Foreign Office memorandum of 22 December went so far as to state that ~~in~~ despite some expressed opinions that the Whites might yet overcome the Bolsheviks, it was in fact "utterly impossible to hope (for) anything of the sort"⁷⁸. To subsidise the White armies further would amount, it appeared, to throwing good money after bad: a line of conduct which failed to find an advocate within the Cabinet.

The Cabinet's contribution to the anti-Bolshevik cause had already become a very substantial one. These forces had suffered, as Lloyd George told the House of Commons, "no failure.. from any lack of equipment"⁷⁹. Britain was giving these forces, Churchill ~~complained~~, "all the help we can without violating our fundamental principle, that Russia must be saved by Russians". This help comprised "arms, munitions and.. a certain number of volunteers, especially in the technical services"⁸⁰. Denikin was supported by every means in our power, short of the despatch of large fighting units from this country⁸¹. This amounted to "ample supplies of munitions of war of

all kinds": the troops had "not lacked anything we were responsible for providing them with"; as well as "instructors and technical advisers in regard to the supply of complicated war material"⁸². The government, declared Churchill, had also "not failed in our task of supplying Admiral Kolchak's troops with arms"⁸². Lloyd George remarked that "far more than moral support" had been given to the anti-Bolshevik governments in Siberia and the south. They had received "substantial" support, both financial and in terms of ammunition and guns: the government had "not denied them anything in that respect". Indeed "pretty much the whole of their equipment - at least a good deal of it - (had) been supplied by the Allies"⁸³. (Part of the trouble, indeed, had been that the abundance of British supplies had led Denikin's forces, in an appreciable number of cases, to interest themselves more in its sale than its use: a "roaring trade" was done by some of Denikin's supporters, it was stated, selling British munitions to the Bolsheviks⁸⁴; and in the battle in which the Red Army captured Kharkhov in November 1919, British anti-freeze was being sold across the bar of the Hotel Metropole while lorries and tanks froze for lack of it⁸⁵).

The government remained somewhat coy regarding the precise numbers and costs involved. Churchill declared that it would be "very undesirable" to disclose the number of British troops in Russia; and the cost of the British missions in Russia could not be stated without a "very great deal of elaborate work, such as I am not prepared to undertake at the present moment"⁸⁶. Three weeks later, however, what was described as a "rough estimate" was published⁸⁷. It covered military and naval operations from the Armistice only until the end of July 1919. Already by that date, however, military and naval operations (including the cost of issue of 'non-marketable stores and munitions') had amounted to nearly £26 million, largely as a result of operations at Archangel and Murmansk. Assistance to the Russian armies contributed a further £43 million, making a total of almost £70 million pounds⁸⁸. By the end of October, when further figures were published, these totals had swelled to nearly £33 million and nearly £47 million respectively. In addition a 'final contribution' of stores and assistance of about £15 million had been made to General Denikin, raising the total sum to nearly £95 million⁸⁹.

These, however 'unmarketable' the stores, were substantial sums; and the Cabinet was understandably concerned that the cause on which they

were lavished should not be thought an unworthy one. It was "important", Lloyd George thought, that the public in England should realise more fully what Bolshevism meant in practice. France was more secure against Bolshevism, owing to the existence of a large population of peasant proprietors. Here we had a great, inflammable industrial population". It was "very desirable" that they should know of the sufferings of industrial workers in Russia at the hands of the Bolsheviks. Chamberlain considered it "most important" that they should get the press to take up the question of Bolshevik excesses more fully. Lord Robert Cecil revealed that the Foreign Office had a "good deal of information on the subject which could be made available". It was decided that the Foreign Office should "collect as much material as possible in regard to the behaviour of the Bolshevik Government.. with a view to its full and speedy publication".⁹⁰

The results of the Foreign Office's investigations appeared in April, with a foreword expressing understandable confidence that the accounts it embodied would "speak for themselves in the picture which they present of the principles and methods of Bolshevik rule, the appalling incidents by which it has been accompanied, the economic consequences which have flowed from it, and the almost incalculable misery which it has produced".⁹¹ In a number of respects, admittedly, the Bolsheviks might in retrospect appear to have been guilty of no more than pioneering. Religious education, for instance, had been ended; and boys and girls were being educated together in schools run by committees of pupils, in which marks, homework and punishment had been abolished. Teachers were appointed by a vote in which students and non-teaching staff took part.⁹² The "idea of a six to eight hours' working day with higher wages" was shamelessly espoused. An especial source of indignation was the treatment meted out to the 'educated classes'. General Knox reported to the War Office that officers had been "put on to the most menial forms of work, such as street cleaning, loading bricks at railway stations, and a colonel is now a night watchman".⁹³ There was moreover evidence to show that commissariats of free love had been established in revolutionary towns, "and respectable women flogged for refusing to yield". A decree for the 'nationalisation of women' had been put into force, and efforts made to 'nationalize children'. Loss of life had been very considerable: although its extent in the prisons was not fully appreciated because "during the executions a regimental band plays

lively tunes". The Bolsheviki, General Poole reported, were now "employing gangs of Chinese for the purpose of killing officers and deserters". "Many thousands" were reported to have been shot by "Mongolian soldiers"; and in one case a number of captured Russian officers were reported to have been "given over to the Mongolian soldiers, who sawed them in pieces". In such circumstances it was not, perhaps, to be wondered at that there were signs that the Terrorist Oligarchy is tottering", and that the Allies "would be welcomed with open arms everywhere"⁹⁴.

In Parliament the report provoked concern that no dealings whatever should be had with "these anarchist assassins"; their recognition, thought Clement Edwards, would bring "anarchy, revolution and red ruin on the whole of the civilized communities of the world"⁹⁵. Brigadier General Croft saw the extension of Bolshevism as the "end of civilization, the end of Christianity - absolutely the end of Christianity". In churches under Bolshevik control "they are dancing day and night"; they had "become the homes of the harlots of Russia"⁹⁶. The government was urged to "do something definite and effective .. to stamp it out"; without, however, the sacrifice of British lives⁹⁷. This was a fatal reservation: for if (as became evident) not by Kolchak and Denikin, the overthrow of the Bolshevik regime could be brought about only by the despatch of a military force the size of which not even the most determined anti-Bolshevik was prepared to contemplate. As Sir J.D. Rees later remarked, "whether we like it or not we must be content with the moderate measure of support which we are now giving to the anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia, and it is hopeless for us to attempt, much as one would like to do, any larger and more heroic form of intervention". There was "really no alternative but to support the policy announced by the Secretary of State for War"⁹⁸.

Beyond the measures which have been noted above, the government also took "steps.. to prevent trade with that part of Russia which is at present under Bolshevik rule" (although it was nevertheless maintained that this did "not, in fact, constitute a blockade in the legal sense of the term"⁹⁹). They would "continue until a democratic government which can be recognized by the Allies has been established in the part of Russia in question"¹⁰⁰. Prisoners, also, although there was no war, would be "treated in the same way as prisoners of war would be treated"¹⁰¹. The Cabinet had in fact ruled on 4 July that "in fact, a state of war did exist

as between Great Britain and the Bolshevist government of Russia": or as Lloyd George put it, "actually we were at war with the Bolsheviks, but we had decided not to make war".¹⁰²

The government also made payments for the upkeep of the Russian diplomatic, consular and other services, amounting in the year 1919 to nearly £10,000. It was stated that these payments should be regarded as "in the nature of a debt to be repaid by a future government of Russia".¹⁰³ The payments had been discontinued as of 31 March 1919. The total amount paid in support of - in effect - Nabokov, the Russian charge d'affaires before the Bolshevik revolution, was later announced to have been over £184,000.¹⁰⁴ Nabokov was later succeeded by Sabline, representing Kolchak's administration, at the Russian Embassy; and the treasury was reported to be paying a proportion of the rates for the building. As late as August 1920 the Foreign Office exerted its influence upon the Treasury in order to secure that the "representatives in London of the late Provisional Government", while "strictly speaking" not entitled to this or other diplomatic privileges, he exempted from local rates in respect of Embassy and Legation houses in accordance with a reciprocity agreement of 1892.¹⁰⁵

Even at the time it was suggested that economic motives might form a central preoccupation of the government's Russian policy. Neal Maclean remarked, with some justice, that it had not been government policy before to intervene in a foreign country or send troops or munitions there "merely because atrocities were being committed there". The real cause, he charged, was because there was so much British capital invested in Russia, and "because we want to be sure that there is a government in Russia which will safeguard the capital invested". He estimated that there was £1600 million of European capital invested in Russia, most of it British; and three members of the government were among the investors.¹⁰⁶ Walton Newbold, in a pamphlet which claimed to contain "startling facts about the financial powers in Great Britain interested in the overthrow of the Russian Revolution", noted that Eric Geddes, Walter Long and Austen Chamberlain all held shares in companies which had been nationalized in whole or in part by the Bolshevik government.¹⁰⁷ Further details were supplied in the House of Commons (somewhat to its consternation) by Colonel - Malone, who concluded; "when you have £1,600 million invested in Russia it is not likely that (the) honourable Members opposite, who largely control

it, are going to risk losing it"¹⁰⁸.

Business opinion, certainly, offered much support for this view. One journal concerned with Anglo-Russian trade declared in mid-1918 that "what we are witnessingX now in Russia is the opening stages of a great struggle for her immeasurable war materials". The Federation of British Industries added: "Siberia! The richest prize ever offered to the civilized world since the discovery of the Americas"¹⁰⁹. Archangel, Lindley wrote to Curzon from Vienna, had a "great commercial future": it was the "largest timber reserve in Europe"¹¹⁰. There was a livelier interest, perhaps, in the south of Russia, where oil and minerals were available. Mr Stinton Jones, a member of the British-Russian Club, an association of business people with an interest in Russian trade, went on a tour which included "such parts of Russia as (had) been freed from the domination of the BolsheviksW on behalf of a number of British engineering firms; and despite a breakdown in transport and currency difficulties, it was apparent that significant trading opportunities existed, for the purchase of coal, oil and corn, for instance, and the sale of automobiles¹¹¹. The Cabinet authorized the Shell company to proceed with the export of oil from the area; and H.J. Mackinder, a geographer and M.P. with Business connections, was despatched there on a government mission, with instructions which included the development of British trade and industry¹¹².

This may be part, at least, of the explanation of government policy: but there is no need to regard the members of the Cabinet as other than mortal to suggest that it is not the whole of that explanation. For what was common to them, and, indeed, to business opinion, was an assurance that what Lloyd George termed the "fantastic and hysterical experiments" characteristic of Bolshevism could not long continue¹¹³. Lord Robert Cecil told C.D. Scott that "Bolshevism in his view was impossible as a basis of society and nothing could be built on it"¹¹⁴. Lloyd George had no doubt that you could not carry on a great country upon rude and wild principles such as those which are inculcated by the Bolsheviks¹¹⁵. There were even those who were prepared already to state that Lenin was "moving directly towards the right. The fact is that like all of us he realises that extreme socialism is a farce". Internal conditions in Russia were changing from Socialism into "Radicalism or even Liberalism"¹¹⁶. A stable Russia, such as would ultimately emerge, could not, moreover, and no doubt would not even

wish, to suspend what were considered to be natural and immutable laws of commerce within and among nations. Whatever the size of the Russian debt (reckoned by Bonar Law to be £568 million¹¹⁷), there could be no doubt, said Churchill, that when Russia "becomes again a great civilized state she will pay"¹¹⁸.

Another part of the explanation, undoubtedly, is in what Lord Curzon delicately termed the "wider aspect" which the question had assumed since intervention had first been undertaken.¹¹⁹ In a paper submitted to a meeting of the Cabinet on 12 August he noted that the government's policy had been inspired "partly by obligations and responsibilities toward those Russians who have trusted the Allies and thrown in their lot with them"; but it had also been "partly in the nature of defensive measures designed to preserve the fruits of victory by preventing, or at least restricting, the spread of a political conflagration which is capable, if unarrested, of nullifying its result not only over Russia alone, but over vast contiguous areas of the European continent"¹²⁰. Writing in July 1919, Mr O'Malley of the Foreign Office pointed out that it was not because the de facto Soviet Government was a tyranny that recognition had been refused to it, but accorded to the other de facto Russian governments. It was, he considered, "rather because we hope by this means to fend off a threat to the 'social order', which means our class distinctions and private incomes"¹²¹. J.D. Gregory agreed that the government's policy towards Russia, and towards the spread of Bolshevism, were "closely bound up"¹²². The nature and extent of this connection - in other words, the international and political dimensions of intervention - will now be examined; and it will be suggested that the policy of intervention can only adequately be understood within a context of social upheaval on the European continent, and an Allied policy designed here as in Russia to preserve an embattled status quo.

A revolutionary upheaval appeared, indeed, to await their principal adversary. The alacrity with which an armistice was concluded in the last month of the war stemmed partly, it has been noted, from a natural desire to place the outcome of the war beyond doubt, but also from a "wish to minimise social upheavals summed up in the word 'Bolshevism'". Smuts called for the immediate conclusion of a full peace treaty in late October, for the reason at least in part that "today the grim spectre of Bolshevik anarchy

is stalking to the front", leading him to the conclusion that it would be "wrong" (or more precisely, perhaps, imprudent) "merely for the sake of still further and more adequately punishing Germany for her misdeeds to continue the war".¹²³ On 7 November the Cabinet heard the news of the Kiel naval mutiny.¹²⁴ Three days later Lloyd George read the Cabinet a telegram from Clemenceau who was "afraid that Germany will break up and Bolshevism will become rampant". Lloyd George asked Henry Wilson if he wanted this, or would rather have an armistice. Wilson "unhesitatingly said 'armistice'. All the Cabinet agreed. Our real danger now is not the Boches but Bolshevism".¹²⁵ A Polish Jew sent to Basil Thomson, the head of the Special Branch, by the Foreign Office, told him that "unless we negotiate quickly with the existing German government we shall have nothing left to negotiate with. The process of Bolshevik desintegration has already begun..".¹²⁶ It was reported to the American Secretary of State from Europe that "there was running through the minds of all the high political men the fear of revolution and Bolshevism in Germany and their belief that the only barrier against the spread of it would be to leave the German army sufficiently armed to put down such revolution".¹²⁷

The continuance of the blockade of Germany in the following year led to extreme food shortages; and the Allies to the fear that "under the twin pressures of defeat and famine the Teutonic peoples - already in revolution - might slide into the grisly gulf that had already embraced Russia".¹²⁸ Wilson was becoming "very anxious" about the interior condition of Germany, owing to the want of food that was reported, and about the spread of Bolshevism that was taking place in consequence. On 3 March 1919 he confided to the King that he was "getting very frightened of Germany going smash altogether", leading to the "most awful chaos the world has ever seen". The peace terms to be forced upon Germany were, he thought, "fantastically severe and illogical".¹²⁹ Hankey posed the question to Jones: "can we get through the preliminaries of peace in sufficient time, and in such form, as to save Germany?.. It is outrageous and intolerable that Germany should not pay, and yet, if she is made to pay, we may raise a danger as may overwhelm civilisation itself".¹³⁰ The Spartacists, he added, were a "very horrible and dangerous spectre to raise and I doubt if Schiedemann and his lot will ever be able to lay it".

Not all were impressed. Bolshevism in Germany, the National

Review declared, "leaves us stone-cold. Germans could hardly be better employed than in cutting each others' throats"; and some suspicion remained that the 'Bolshevik danger' was being used by the German negotiators to outflank their Allied counterparts¹³¹. The danger, nevertheless, was real enough. A report from agent 'V.77' on conditions in Germany in February, circulated to the Cabinet on 7 March 1939, concluded that if the Spartacists were allowed a few weeks more for the development of their propaganda under the increasing stress of famine and unemployment, there was "no ~~doubt~~ question but that the whole country will be consumed by the flame of Bolshevism which will spread with such rapidity that the waters of the Rhine will be incapable of checking its advance"¹³². A report on 'Bolshevism in Germany', circulated a month later by Churchill, stated that the danger was "both real and imminent"¹³³. A note by the General Staff on the 'Relaxation of the blockade of Germany', circulated by Churchill on 25 April, noted that the maintenance of the German government was a "primary interest to the Allies"; but its position was weak, and unless it could alleviate the terrible conditions existing in a large part of Germany, its fall was "probably certain. This would be disastrous from every point of view": and it would "throw Germany into the arms of the Bolsheviks", leading to a "general conflagration in Europe". The blockade should be relaxed, it was urged, to "enable the more stable elements to make head ~~W~~ against Bolshevism"¹³⁴.

Lloyd George brought the views of British officers who had been in Germany to the attention of the Allies at the Peace Conference. They believed, he said, that Bolshevism was being created: "as long as the people were starving they would listen to the arguments of the Spartacists, and the Allies by their action were simply encouraging elements of disruption and anarchy". Nor was the problem in any sense a local one: "if Germany went, and perhaps Spain, who would feel safe? As long as order was maintained in Germany, a breakwater would exist between the countries of the Allies and the waters of revolution beyond. But once that breakwater was swept away, he could not speak for France, and he trembled for his own country. The situation was particularly serious in Munich. Bavaria, which once had been thought to represent the most solid and conservative part of Germany, had already gone Bolshevik". If Germany starved and ran riot, "a state of revolution among the working classes of all countries

would ensue with which it would be impossible to cope"¹³⁵.

He returned to the question in the 'Fontainebleu memorandum' of 25 March 1919. The whole of Europe, he wrote, was "filled with the spirit of revolution. There is a deep sense not only of discontent but of anger and revolt amongst the workmen against pre-war conditions. The whole social order in its political, social and economic aspects is questioned by the masses of the population from one end of Europe to the other". There was a serious danger that the Allies might through their actions "throw the masses of the population throughout Europe into the arms of the extremists, whose only idea for regenerating mankind is to destroy utterly the whole existing fabric of society". The "greatest danger" was that Germany might unite with Russia, and it was "no mere chimera". Germany must be offered a peace which, "while just, will be preferable to all sensible men to the alternative of Bolshevism". A League of Nations must also be constructed, which should act as a "safeguard to those nations who are prepared for fair dealing with their neighbours, and a menace to those who would trespass on the rights of their neighbours, whether they are imperialist empires of imperialist Bolsheviks". Bolshevik expansion, he concluded, "does not merely menace the states on Russia's borders, It threatens the whole of Asia and is as near to America as it is to France"¹³⁶.

To an extent the memorandum formed a part of Lloyd George's effort to secure a moderation of the peace terms with Germany: an effort which required him to exaggerate the danger to the other Allied governments of harsh terms. Yet the news which had come from Hungary (where a Soviet government, headed by Bela Kun, had come to power on 21 March) demonstrated that the danger was "no ~~fantasy~~ fantasy". This "offshoot of the Moscow fungus sprouting independently at Budapest", as Churchill termed it, emphasized the serious ~~part~~ that the whole continent might lapse into anarchy"¹³⁷. Less than a week after the accession of the new government a "plan for dealing with this new situation by military force" was under discussion at the French Foreign Office¹³⁸.

The implications of the establishment of another Soviet regime in Europe were not lost on the Foreign Office. Sir Samuel Hoare wrote to Churchill, in a letter which was forwarded to Lloyd George, that the Czechoslovak Republic was "in real danger of destruction". Bela Kun was

"Lenin's lieutenant"; his objective was to establish through Galicia a junction with Soviet Russia; and his administration was "to be reckoned with". His government, however, Hoare urged, could "easily be destroyed now"; while if no action were taken, in two months' time, trading on Magyar and German nationalism, it would have "smashed Czechoslovakia and established itself firmly in Buda (Pest) and in Vienna as well". He was convinced of the "necessity of destroying Bela Kun and his Government"¹³⁹. Lt. Commander Graham was interviewed in the Foreign Office following his escape from Hungary in July. "Some definite action should be taken without any delay to overthrow the existing Communist Government at Budapest", he had argued; it could be done without the loss of a single life, since the population was largely hostile but "unfortunately.. not organized". The Foreign Office sent the record of the interview to Balfour in Paris, with a covering note suggesting that Graham's arguments merited the "most careful attention", and trusted that the Allies could be persuaded to "take common action to put a final end to a state of affairs which is prejudicial to the interests of all parties, and can only be relieved by a strong and concerted policy on the part of the Allied Governments"¹⁴⁰.

In discussion of the problem at Paris, whence decisive Allied action must come, Foch, who strongly favoured military intervention, stated that "to liberate Hungary from Communism in one week" eight infantry divisions, a cavalry division, a hundred airoplanes and "as many armoured cars as possible" would be necessary. The arguments on both sides strikingly recapitulated those which had been advanced concerning intervention in Russia. Balfour insisted that in considering the question he was "not animated by any consideration of Hungarian internal politics"¹⁴¹. For there were, he noted, in all countries sections of opinion which had a "certain sympathy for Bolshevik programmes", and were "most strongly opposed to military action against the Bolsheviks". Within Hungary, however, General Boehm had sought support in opposition to Bela Kun; and "all these disadvantages ^{would} ~~might~~ be avoided by proceeding through General Boehm"¹⁴². Concern was general that "the evil might spread all over the world"; but the Italian and French governments in particular were not prepared to provide military forces, and intervention was eventually rejected in favour of economic sanctions¹⁴³. On 12 March the Supreme Economic Council had approved the lifting of the blockade against Austria and Hungary; but on 28 March

the Council of Foreign Ministers decided "in view of the events that had lately taken place in Hungary" to maintain the blockade, pending further study. The Council of Foreign Ministers on 9 May, and the Council of Four on 22 May approved plans to exert pressure upon Bela Kun, by announcing that the blockade would be lifted as soon as a government was formed in Hungary "which gives some assurance of settled conditions". A military investigating mission was despatched to Hungary on 17 June, leaving open the possibility of military action. More effective, however, was a statement on 26 July promising the Hungarian people food and an end to foreign occupation as soon as a responsible government was formed. The implication, it has been noted, was clear; the Allies had surmised correctly that such measures would "accomplish the Allied objective of deposing Bela Kun without the need for open military intervention". Food was shipped in on 2 August, the day after the fall of Kun's government¹⁴⁴. Allied actions were not, admittedly, alone responsible for the downfall of the Soviet regime in Hungary; yet the Allied response to the establishment of a revolutionary government, in a country where no obligations could have been professed to earlier allies in the war against the Central Powers, appears to have differed little, if at all, ~~in~~ ^{from} the Allied response to the establishment of the Moscow Soviet government. The Allies did not intervene militarily in Hungary; but it was clear that they would have done so, had it not proved possible (as was not the case in Russia) to bring down a revolutionary government by indirect means.

Nor could governments nearer home feel secure. On Armistice Day, Basil Thomson recorded, there were "simultaneous attempts at revolution in Switzerland and Holland.. Italy and Spain were unstable, and in the U.S. and Canada the spread of Bolshevik ideas had begun to cause serious alarm"¹⁴⁵. As early as March 1918, the Dutch, he wrote, were "in a ticklish state, Bolshevism having made great headway"¹⁴⁶. In November he heard from the British Consul General in Holland that "revolution is very near.. unless the people are supplied with food and coal". In Italy, he wrote, both the government and the Vatican were "growing very nervous about Bolshevism". Sir Samuel Hoare, who came to see him after a visit there, was "sure that Italy is on the eve of a serious social upheaval". Hoare, he noted, had been in Petrograd right up to the revolution, and had professed to notice the same signs¹⁴⁷.

Lord Robert Cecil raised the matter of "the growth of Bolshevism

in Holland " in the Cabinet. He thought the idea of sending squadrons of ships or arming prisoners of war was "most inadvisable, at any rate, unless the Dutch government appealed to us to do so. However, we ought to say to the Dutch, and to everybody, that, in the event of Bolshevik disturbances, we should give them no food.. We should use our cXontrol over the food supplies of the world to assist the forces of order against disorder"^{146a}.

More direct measures were nevertheless undertaken by the ~~XXXXXX~~ British government to control the spread of Bolshevism, in particular to prevent the movement of Bolshevik agents and funds through the neutral countries. Following a Foreign Office circular telegram at the end of 1918, addressed to the British representatives in eight neutral countries, agreement was eventually reached with the governments concerned that an 'anti-Bolshevik control officer' should be attached to the British mission to work closely in co-operation with the local police and customs staff. The arrangement, conceived at a period when Bolshevism appeared to offer its maximum threat to the established order, hardly lasted beyond the end of 1919; but it does appear to have played some part in co-ordinating anti-Bolshevik activity between the British government and those (at least) of Scandinavia, Holland, and Spain and Portugal^{147a}.

Of most immediate concern, however, was the situation in the countries on the western borders of Russia. Russia, said Lloyd George, was "just like a volcano; it is still in fierce eruption, and the best you can do is to provide security for those who are dwelling on its remotest and most accessible slopes, and arrest the devastating flow of lava, so that it shall not scorch other lands". Their objective must, be, in other words, to "prevent the forcible eruption of Bolshevism into Allied lands"¹⁴⁸. The Cabinet on 14 November 1918 endorsed the decisions of the Foreign Office conference held the previous day, which held that "support should be afforded to the border States of Western Russia from the Baltic to the Black Sea", which should be recognized and supported¹⁴⁹. The Cabinet, Bonar Law observed, had in effect "undertaken to support the Baltic States against the menace of Bolshevism"¹⁵⁰.

A request from the French government to join its effort to "ensure order" in Austria and Czechoslovakia had to be declined, in view of the "appalling dimensions" which British military liabilities had assumed¹⁵¹. It was agreed, however, to assist the Roumanian government to "defend her

frontiers and to resist internal Bolshevism". Churchill argued that "unless speedy steps were taken to go to the relief of Roumania, our ally would become a prey to Bolshevism and would be lost to us.. The Bolshevist menace was growing daily more formidable". Clothing and equipment for 150,000 men were provided¹⁵². In January the Cabinet considered a message from Marshal Foch, impressing upon them the "enormous importance of assisting Poland against the Bolsheviks", and urging that it was "to the interest of the Associated Governments to stop the advance of Bolshevism before it penetrated Austria and Germany". The Allied governments, "not being able to intervene themselves with sufficient force, ought to organize as quickly as possible a Polish army". Lord Robert Cecil, who forwarded the proposal, described himself as "personally, warmly in favour" of it. Curzon noted that the "situation in Poland was rapidly becoming dangerous. The military position, both to the east and to the west, was precarious". Churchill agreed that it was "quite impossible for us to stand aside and let Poland go to pieces". Indeed it was a "matter for serious consideration whether we ~~ought~~ ^{should} not now decide to bolster up the Central Powers, if necessary, in order to stem the tide of Bolshevism"¹⁵³.

It is, in fact, precisely because the Cabinet so clearly regarded Bolshevism, wherever it emerged, as a unitary and total challenge that its response, whether in Russia or elsewhere in Europe, must be considered as an inter-related whole. It was, as Churchill wrote, a "delusion to suppose that all this year we have been fighting the battles of the anti-Bolshevik Russians. On the contrary, they have been fighting ours"¹⁵⁴.

The point was not lost on the Bolshevik government, which had a similar awareness that the issues at stake went far beyond the territorial boundaries of the former Russian Empire. The war between us and Denikin, Yudenich and Kolchak", wrote Chicherin, "is just part of an international civil war, taking all the time more obvious forms"¹⁵⁵. The policy of the capitalists to crush Russia, Lenin noted, was because they knew that "in their own countries they have the same enemy - the bolshevist movement". World imperialism had resolved to crush world bolshevism in the form of its main cell, Soviet Russia¹⁵⁶. The "so-called 'Russian' question", Zinoviev wrote, "is in fact a world question: the question whether capitalism will continue to exist"¹⁵⁷. The imperialist war, Lenin declared, had inevitably

into a civil war of the exploited labouring classes with the proletariat at its head, against the exploiters, against the bourgeoisie. The resistance of the exploiters and the international solidarity and organization of the bourgeoisie were leading to the unification of civil war inside individual countries with revolutionary wars between proletarian countries and those remaining bourgeois, a process which had been "especially swift since the end of 1918"¹⁵⁸. Imperialists and capitalists now understood that "in Russia is being decided the fate, not only of the Russian, but also of international capital"¹⁵⁹.

An especially unwelcome innovation, to orthodox diplomatists, was the Bolsheviks' early revolutionary diplomacy. The government, Chicherin noted, had occupied itself less in "writing notes to governments, but more (in) writing appeals to the working masses.. The foreign policy of the Soviet republic is more and more becoming identified with the world struggle between revolution and the old world"¹⁶⁰. The first act of the Soviet government in the foreign policy field, the Decree on Peace, was addressed to "all belligerent peoples and to their governments"¹⁶¹, and appealed in particular to the former to follow the precedents of Chartism and other acts of "proletarian heroism and historic creativity" in the course of their struggle to establish peace and free mankind from "all slavery and exploitation". The failure of the Allied governments to respond to the call for a general armistice and peace negotiations led the Bolsheviks increasingly to address themselves to 'peoples' rather than their 'governments': indeed, Trotsky's appeal of 19 December 1917, after a preliminary armistice with the Germans had been concluded, addressed itself specifically to workers as against their governments, stating that "only the revolutionary struggle of the working classes against existing governments" could bring about a democratic peace¹⁶². Allied intervention led to a series of appeals to workers and labour organizations in the Allied countries¹⁶³.

Such appeals were the more disconcerting in that it was considered that they might meet with a ready response in Britain. During the first three months of 1919, wrote the head of the Special Branch, "unrest touched its highwater mark. I do not think that at any time in history since the Bristol Riots (of 1831) have we been so near revolution"¹⁶⁴. There was agreement from contemporaries. "The only time in my life", ~~XXXXXX~~ recalled,

Kingsley Martin, "when revolution in Britain seemed likely was in 1919".¹⁶⁵ C.P. Scott, writing in his diary somewhat earlier, was concerned to find the "crude extravagances and injustices of the Bolshevik economic doctrine.. penetrating to some extent our own Labour extremists".¹⁶⁶ British workers, wrote an alarmed contemporary, "have turned to Bolshevism with an avidity and enthusiasm that Englishmen have never before displayed for any alien political philosophy". The home, he thought, was "in grave danger", while the socialists were making efforts "openly to discredit the family and virtually to abolish marriage". The Bolshevik danger he thought "not only serious, but acute".¹⁶⁷ The Nineteenth Century and After found a "notable feature" of the new situation to be the "marked and ominous decline of faith in Parliaments", a change it thought "menacing". Labour supporters, in particular, often "would not vote. They no longer believe in Parliaments".¹⁶⁸ Even people who usually kept their heads, the National Review noted, were "talking of impending 'revolution'". Labour leaders saw themselves in Buckingham Palace and the King "working in a mine or driving a lorry". Lloyd George was considered by the journal "in some ways worse and more dangerous than Kerensky..".¹⁶⁹

There were revolutionaries to be found in the most unlikely places. They were present, Thomson noted, "even among the undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge, and in one or two of the public schools".¹⁷⁰ The Cabinet, however, found more to concern itself with on the industrial scene. The later stages of the war had brought a threatened rail strike and a shipwrights' strike, both, alarmingly, against union advice, as well as a threatened coal strike.¹⁷¹ The new year brought the threat of action on London transport, and among engineers and electricians.¹⁷² Undoubtedly more serious, however, was the situation in Glasgow, where a strike for a forty-hour week had gripped Clydebank. Bonar Law told the Cabinet that it was "vital.. to be satisfied that there was a sufficient force in Glasgow to prevent disorder". If the movement there grew, he thought, it would spread all over the country. Two brigades of troops and six tanks were despatched to Glasgow. "Their reliability was not, however, above question. General Childs explained to the Cabinet that previously there had been a "well-disciplined and ignorant army, whereas now we had an army educated and ill-disciplined".¹⁷³ The following day, subsequently known as "Bloody Friday", the demonstrators were charged by

mounted police in the centre of the city, and some casualties resulted. It was, the Secretary for Scotland asserted, a "misnomer to call the situation in Glasgow a strike - it was a Bolshevik rising"¹⁷⁴.

The miners' strike in July was, Lloyd George told the Cabinet, "practical and not theoretical Bolshevism, and must be dealt with with a firm hand.. If the government were beaten and the miners won, it would result in Soviet government. A similar situation might result to that of the first days of the Revolution in Russia.." The people should be appealed to to "defend themselves against Bolshevism"¹⁷⁵ (The word 'Bolshie' or 'Bolshy', which came into popular usage at about this time, was, it has been noted, one "loosely used by opponents"¹⁷⁶) The Home Secretary explained later that the Triple Alliance's "present agitation was not really for nationalization only but for something much bigger". Churchill reassured the meeting somewhat: "militarily, we were in a good position to fight the Triple Alliance"¹⁷⁷.

It was, indeed, a novel and significant element in the situation that neither the armed forces nor the police had remained unaffected by the prevailing unrest. A police strike had occurred in the later stages of the war over the issues of wages and union recognition. It was described by the Assistant Commissioner as "very serious.. every district was affected"¹⁷⁸. In January 1919 the Cabinet was warned of the "strong probability of another police strike, which would be a serious matter". The Secretary of State for Scotland added that there was "very considerable unrest among the Scottish Police"¹⁷⁹. The position was undoubtedly serious, the Home Secretary subsequently reported. There ~~were~~^{was} "a number of firebrands in the Force who were working with confessed Bolsheviks.."; but a "troublesome feature in dealing with the situation was the fact that.. they had a number of genuine grievances"¹⁸⁰. When the strike did take place, it was reported to the Cabinet that 240 men were absent¹⁸¹. The movement in fact attained considerably greater dimensions: over a thousand men were involved in London, and in Liverpool; Birkenhead, Bootle and Birmingham the strike was officially reported to have had a "regrettable amount of success". Many of the warders at Wormwood Scrubs Prison had also joined the strike. All, however, were dismissed¹⁸². The dispute had been concerned with the recognition of a policemen's union; but it had nevertheless, declared a contemporary journal, been "staged.. according to revolutionary ideas",

and a minority of the strikers had "accepted the doctrine of class warfare"¹⁸³.

In the army, a "wave of intense impatience and resentment accompanied by serious breaches of discipline", wrote Churchill, who had come to the War Office at the beginning of 1919, spread across the ranks. Mutinies and disorders had already taken place on both sides of the Channel. In a single week more than thirty cases of insubordination among the troops were reported. "In several cases considerable bodies of men were for some ~~the~~ ^{entire} days ~~completely~~ out of control.. Some units informed their officers that they had constituted themselves a Soldiers' Council, and intended to march to the nearest township and fraternize with the workmen"; and the situation was "very threatening in many places". Luton Town Hall was seized and burned. In Calais at the end of January there was a "regular ~~M~~ mutiny", with three or four thousand troops in charge of the town for some days. A mutiny occurred at Folkestone on 3 February¹⁸⁴. On 7 January some 1500 soldiers demonstrated first at Whitehall and then at Downing Street, demanding to see the Prime Minister, despite efforts to dissuade them. The men, Henry Wilson noted in his diary, were "respectful and quiet, but not much saluting"¹⁸⁵. The delegation, he told the Cabinet, "bore a dangerous resemblance to a Soviet"¹⁸⁶. The First Sea Lord had "no doubt that we were up against a Bolshevik movement in London, Glasgow and elsewhere. He had just returned from one of the naval ports where there had been a little trouble, which was purely of a Bolshevik nature.. He had no doubt that a skilful organization was behind the revolt"¹⁸⁷.

"Everywhere", noted Churchill, "the subversive elements were active; and everywhere they found a response..A tremor, and indeed a spasm, shook the foundations of every State". It was a "testing time, if ever there was one, for.. the British Democracy"¹⁸⁸. It was not the case, of course, that Bolshevism was alone responsible, as members of the Cabinet hastened to make clear. The working man, Long reported to his colleagues, "regarded the indifferent quality of beer as a typical case of class legislation, and complained that whereas the labouring classes could only get a very poor quality of beer, the upper classes could still get wines of pre-war strength". Roberts suggested that an increase in barrelage and in gravity would "have a good effect on public opinion, and do much to allay the prevailing industrial unrest"¹⁸⁹. A decision was also taken to dispose of

the "expensive type of car" favoured by ministers and to substitute a "single inexpensive type". Bonar Law told the Cabinet that he had been informed that "few abuses are causing greater discontent than the fact that junior officials are seen passing through London in powerful cars, the upkeep of which is maintained out of the public purse".¹⁹⁰

In January Curzon expressed his alarm at the fact that no concerted action was being taken by the various departments with regard to combating the spread of Bolshevik propaganda. A Minister without portfolio should, he thought, be appointed.¹⁹¹ A Committee on Industrial Unrest was appointed shortly afterwards.¹⁹² Bolshevik activity in Britain, the House of Commons was told, "is widespread and is going on all the time". A great deal of literature of a "most pernicious kind", added Bonar Law, was being circulated. The government promised that "firm action" would be taken.¹⁹³

The question of the prosecution of seditious speakers was examined by the Cabinet in February. In ordinary times, Bonar Law considered, prosecutions "did more harm than good, but the present circumstances were exceptional". Proposals were to be drawn up to deal with the problem of "aliens coming to this country and indulging in propaganda". A "legal difficulty" nevertheless remained, as the Home Secretary observed, that "so many who were aliens by parentage and upbringing had been born on British soil and were British subjects".¹⁹⁴

A number of public bodies came into existence to supplement the government's efforts to control Bolshevism. A number of bodies which had already been founded, such as the Liberty and Prosperity Defence League and the Anti-Socialist Union, acquired new functions at this time; but a considerable number of new organizations was formed, from the names of most of which - Liberty League, League against Bolshevism, Middle Class Union, Christian Counter-Bolshevik Crusade - their object was clearly evident. Many of them emphasized the need for 'sound economic education', a need which was felt to be the more pressing in view of the manifest inability of the union leaders to control their men, among whom 'extreme' and 'doctrinaire' views were widespread. The National Review regretted that patriotic sentiment and energy appeared to be dissipated over about twenty of such "small and obscure bodies, each with its representative bureaucracy, all ostensibly 'fighting Bolshevism', but which, in view of their separation one from

another, were in sum "comparatively futile, except for the purpose of spending their subscribers' money".¹⁹⁵ Their importance was greater than this judgement might suggest, however: their directors and sponsors were in many cases men who either controlled or administered considerable wealth;¹⁹⁶ while the main recipients of industrial generosity were the distinct, but nonetheless related bodies which concerned themselves with more strictly industrial functions, such as propagating the principles of the Whitley Councils and prompting 'sound' working-class education, and which received from business and business associations a measure of financial support and advice without which it is unlikely that they could have continued to exist.¹⁹⁷

Lloyd George, C.P. Scott was told, was not mainly concerned about the situation in Ireland in the summer of 1919; he was "far more concerned about the Bolsheviks at home".¹⁹⁸ "Will Capitalism survive the Winter?" asked Forward.¹⁹⁹ The same question, evidently, disturbed Lloyd George. In a remarkable Cabinet meeting on 5 August, he reported that "responsible Labour leaders" had told him that there was in existence a "formidable body of young men whose aim was to destroy the present industrial and Parliamentary systems and who would then take the reins of government. These young men had a definite philosophy. They accepted the doctrine of class government". The workers' instrument, they believed, was "Soviet government.. The futility of talk was contrasted with the value of action. It was the duty of the government to demonstrate to the working classes the folly of such doctrines. No-one was doing this now". The only people who were using the press were the Bolsheviks, and they held meetings on Sundays which were attended by thousands, at which they spread their views. They had also "captured the trade-union organization". Legitimate demands, he thought, must be met, such as on the question of profiteering ("he had heard Army officers talk wild Bolshevism of the subject of profiteering", a reaction which was, he thought, a "great danger to the State"). Housing was another problem which was "federating the lower-middle class with the working classes in the general discontent". The people had seen nothing done: what they (not unreasonably) "wanted to see was the houses actually being built". Unlike France and Germany, Britain lacked the balancing element of an agricultural society: for in those countries the agricultural population was a "solid foundation for the State, and, in the event of

trouble, could always be relied upon". In Britain, on the other hand, they "could not take risks with Labour.. We had in this country millions of men who had been trained to arms, and there were plenty of guns and ammunition available". Despite a reluctance to interfere with the workings of what Balfour delicately termed "the moral machinery interested in increasing production", a Committee on Profiteering was established²⁰⁰.

In October a National Emergency Committee of the Cabinet was set up, taking over the functions of the Strike Committee and the Industrial Unrest Committee "to meet industrial crises in the future"²⁰¹. An "elaborate supply and transport system was worked out", recalled Amery. The organization was decentralized under regional commissions who were to assume all necessary powers of government if communications with London were severed, for which purpose junior ministers were selected²⁰².

Military officers were sent to assist local authorities in the organization of a Citizens' Guard²⁰³. It was later decided to encourage the formation of Special Constables rather than the Citizens' Guard²⁰⁴. In January 1920 the Cabinet was gloomily contemplating the "probability of a large combined strike during the next month or two, the more extreme leaders of which were believed to contemplate a movement not far short of revolution.. The greatest stress was laid on the inadequacy of the military forces available.." Measures originally devised for the provision of special forces had broken down, and the number of Special Constables was "totally inadequate", the trade unions having refused to allow their members to join. Might ex-officers be mobilized? It was agreed that "discreet enquiries should be made on a large scale to obtain the names of persons of undoubted loyalty who would agree to join a Special Constabulary in an emergency". Sir Robert Horne reported that what he would term the "Bolshevist forces in Great Britain were very active.. They were conducting a very large number of meetings, and being provided, apparently, with guns and hand grenades"²⁰⁵.

Ministers were informed of the number of troops which would be available for use in the event of revolutionary disturbances; and a committee was appointed to go into the question of the safekeeping of weapons and especially to "ascertain the distribution of lethal weapons throughout the country", and the "best method for making them available to loyalists in the event of any emergency"²⁰⁶. There were, Roberts

reported, "large groups preparing for Soviet government". Long complained that the "peaceable manpower of the country is without arms. I have not a pistol less than 200 years old". Bonar Law considered that "all weapons ought to be available for distribution to the friends of the Government". The universities, Auckland Geddes observed, were "full of trained men who could co-operate with clerks and stockbrokers". Bonar Law indeed, "so often referred to the stockbrokers as a loyal and fighting class" that Thomas Jones gained the impression that "potential battalions of stockbrokers were to be found in every town"²⁰⁷.

There was, then, evidently good reason to wish to secure the overthrow of a government in Russia which both incarnated and vigorously encouraged a movement which represented a grave threat to British (and Allied) interests, both in Europe and in Britain. The shrewd mind of Lloyd George, however, had by early 1920 ceased to "believe in the imminence of the revolution"²⁰⁸; and the situation in Europe became rather more stable during the latter part of 1919, with the fall of the Bavarian Soviet Republic in May and, in particular, of Bela Kun's government in August. Basil Thomson felt able to conclude, in his 'Monthly Review of the Progress of Revolutionary Movements Abroad' in October, that "on the whole, Bolshevism appeared to be less menacing to the civilisation of Europe than it was"²⁰⁹. In these circumstances the objections to the intervention policy began to claim rather more of ministers' attentions.

A decisive factor, certainly, was the failure of those whom the Cabinet had elected to support. It was "no good", thought Chamberlain, to assist the anti-Bolsheviks unless the War Office "thought that there was a reasonable chance of success". The Cabinet, Curzon declared, was "relying on General Denikin to fight and beat the Bolsheviks". By the November 1919 this prospect seemed most unlikely to be realised²¹⁰.

The anti-Bolshevik leaders, moreover, had signally failed to either to agree among themselves or to provide assurances for the Allies which might allow them to reassure their own people that they were "not", in Churchill's words, "endeavouring to reinstate a Czarist regime"²¹¹. It was thought "advisable", before Admiral Kolchak was recognized, to "obtain ~~XXXXXX~~ a declaration from him regarding his democratic policy

on land questions etc." Churchill urged Kolchak to accept the "broad principles of a Constituent Assembly and a democratic franchise whose decrees shall settle the future government of Russia"²¹². Kolchak was reported, however, to have found a number of conditions made by the Allies in their note of recognition difficult to accept, in particular the proposal to summon the Constituent Assembly of 1917, of which Lenin, Trotsky and other Bolsheviks had been members. Curzon noted that "so far from exhibiting any satisfaction.. he seemed inclined to cavil at the conditions, and to claim, the right of modification or revision"²¹³. Moreover, many of the states which had formerly been part of the Russian Empire and were now claiming independence viewed "with misgiving the intentions of Admiral Kolchak and his adherents in regard to the liberties to which they have so long aspired". A compromise would present "undeniable advantages" for the Allies, especially in view of the "widespread suspicion" that Kolchak and his associates sought with the Allies' assistance to reconstitute the former Russian Empire, and lacked popular support within Russia²¹⁴.

No solution appears, however, to have been found. Indeed Fisher later drew the Cabinet's attention to the "atrocities committed by Admiral Kolchak's force" which had "alienated the whole of the Siberian peasantry". He was informed that "Admiral Kolchak himself was an estimable officer, but he was surrounded by a bad entourage"²¹⁵. This, however, was not sufficient to recommend his government as a whole either in England, or in Siberia. Lenin, in fact, observed that the government had "given us millions of supporters of Soviet power in the districts farthest away from industrial centres, where it would have been difficult for us to gain them"²¹⁶. This, needless to say, was not the object of British policy.

The situation in the south of Russia was if anything more unsatisfactory. Denikin, it appeared, was also "surrounded by persons of reactionary tendencies"; and it was "quite possible", added Lloyd George, that he might be beaten "not by the Bolshevik army in front of him, but by the forces behind him". It was "very desirable to have effective guarantees that General Denikin and the officers with him were going to play the game"²¹⁷. Three months later it remained necessary for Curzon to ask Mackinder in the course of his mission to urge Denikin to "adopt a policy consonant with the trend of Western democratic opinion". Pogroms, in particular, were to be avoided: they "create the worst possible impression in Western countries"²¹⁸.

Denikin, moreover, continually appeared to threaten the independence not simply of those states in the north of Russia which were seeking independence, but also and indeed, particularly, of those states in the south of the country in which the government took an independent interest. His attitude to the Baltic states had been "uncompromising", although it was in his own interest not to alienate those forces if he were to "gain their assistance in his struggle against Bolshevism".²¹⁹ Denikin had nonetheless protested to the Allies about their recognition of the independence of Finland (on 6 May 1919): it was, he declared, a question for the Russian people to decide.²²⁰ More importantly, perhaps, as Chamberlain observed, "there was a great deal to be said for our supporting Denikin, providing he undertook merely to fight Bolshevism, but he was also attacking Georgia".²²¹ Curzon recalled that "one of the conditions which we had made with Denikin was that he was to fight against Bolshevism but he was also attacking Georgia and Armenia". Churchill suggested that the supply of arms might serve as a "lever, on the one hand, to enable him to fight the Bolsheviks, and, on the other, to prevent him maltreating the Southern States",²²² where British troops were committed. During Denikin's advance in August, Curzon declared that the "most serious difficulty" was that his ambitions lay "not in the direction of Moscow, but towards the Caucasus". He believed that he might indeed "turn his back on Moscow and overrun Georgia and Azerbaidjan, which seemed an easy prey". There was a "certain safeguard" in the fact that the arms supplied to him were conditional on his respecting a line north of the Caucasus. But Chamberlain doubted if any of the Russians helped by Britain "would ever listen to our advice or give us the guarantees we wanted, and accept our direction of their policy".²²³

In the circumstances it was difficult to secure popular approval for the government's policy. It remained a "difficulty", as Curzon pointed out, that a "great many people in England objected to any British soldier still remaining in Russia, as they could not get it out of their heads that we were there solely for the purpose of fighting Bolshevism".²²⁴ The Minister for Health believed that people did not understand the reasons for British operations in Russia, and were "very antagonistic towards them". He laid "great stress on the popular feeling.. against operations in Russia". Long concurred²²⁵.

The extent to which this feeling was shared by the armed forces more directly limited the government's freedom of manoeuvre: a decision might be taken to commit a large number of British forces, but the men might refuse to go. There was in any case considerable unrest in the army; but Wilson noted that it was "notorious that the prospect of being sent to Russia was immensely unpopular". The result, he concluded, was that it was "impossible for us to reinforce our troops in North Russia and in Siberia".²²⁶ Churchill, on his arrival at the War Office, sent a circular to all commanders, marked "secret and urgent", enquiring among other things whether their men would "parade for draft to overseas, especially to Russia". He was informed that they would do so, with the exception of Russia.²²⁷ Lloyd George told the Allies in January of his certainty that "if the British tried to send any more troops (to Russia) there would be mutiny".²²⁸ The following month he reported that he "understood the military view to be that, if we were going to do any good, we should need a million men at least, and these should be despatched in the spring"(of 1919).^{228a} Such a policy could not seriously be advocated; and not even Churchill attempted to do so.

Moreover the armed forces were rapidly being demobilized during 1919 (the disorders at the beginning of the year had sprung in large part from delay in demobilization, and led to an acceleration in the rate of doing so) while commitments in Ireland, Egypt and elsewhere demanded increasing numbers of troops to sustain them. A call was received from Egypt for reinforcements in April; but, noted Henry Wilson, the War Office "were in difficulties as to how to meet the call as the regular army was very short of establishment". "I really have not enough troops to cope with our present difficulties", Wilson wrote in his diary.²²⁹ Wilson increasingly favoured the limitation of the British commitment in Russia, and the distribution of such forces as were available within the Empire. In Transcaucasia, he wrote, "It is impossible for us to remain on". The cost was a major consideration; "nor could we find the men, as we have not enough to garrison our own Empire".²³⁰

Related, and decisive objections were that the cost of intervention, even at existing levels, was excessive, and could certainly not be increased; while the conviction became increasingly strong that the effect of the policy was in fact precisely to strengthen the position of

those against whom it was directed. Support for Denikin, noted J.D. Gregory, was "unquestionably limited by reasons of economy. If we could afford to put down millions for helping the armies now engaged in crushing Bolshevism, I suppose we should do so"²³¹. The disasters to the anti-Bolshevik forces, Beatrice Webb wrote in her diary, were "doubtless the immediate cause of the Cabinet's somewhat ignominious confession of the failure of its policy of subsidising civil war in Russia. Even the middle class would not stand further expenditure in Russia, with prices steadily rising and the National Debt increasing - a debt which sooner or later must be paid by the property owners"²³². The cost, Lloyd George told the Cabinet, was a "determining factor"²³³. In March he reported that he had just been put in possession of figures showing the cost of "all these various Russian commitments". Taking the military forces alone, it appeared that £73 million was required for a period of six months; while if naval requirements were added, the total cost would be £150 million per annum, "for what were after all very insignificant operations". Chamberlain objected to "pouring money in this way into the Russian sieve"²³⁴.

There was "not the slightest chance", moreover, Chamberlain pointed out, of securing financial help from France or Italy for undertakings ~~XXX~~ in Russia. "If therefore ~~XXX~~ it meant that the whole burden of resisting Russian Bolshevism was to be thrown on this country, we should break down under the strain. That was a very real danger". It had become clear, he added later, that the whole burden of fighting the Bolsheviks in Russia was now being borne by Britain alone: the situation "was becoming intolerable"²³⁵. The French, Lloyd George noted, "had always wished to carry out the campaign against the Bolsheviks at our expense". Facts had to be faced. "We were shouldering the burden alone, and we were spending £100 million a year on operations in Russia, which was half our expenditure before the war". The question of cost was "most important in defining our policy"²³⁶. Writing to Churchill, he pointed out that Denikin had been supplied with all the munitions and equipment he needed; and between £100 and £150 million had been spent in various ways on the Russian enterprises. But "not a member of the Cabinet is prepared to go further.. Neither this Government nor any other Government that this country is likely to see will do more. We cannot afford it"²³⁷.

Defining the policy he would pursue at the peace negotiations, Lloyd George declared that the troops for an intervention policy could not be found without conscription; and if Parliament endorsed conscription for that purpose, "he doubted whether the troops would go". Beyond this, however, was the danger that military intervention would "only strengthen the very force ^{which} we set out to destroy.. The one thing to spread Bolshevism was to attempt to suppress it. To send out soldiers to shoot down the Bolsheviks would be to create Bolsheviks here". The one sure way of establishing the power of the Bolsheviks was to attempt to suppress it with foreign troops. An expensive war of aggression against them would strengthen Bolshevism in Russia and create it in Britain. "We cannot afford the burden. Chamberlain tells me", he added, "that "we can hardly make both ends meet on a peace basis even at the present crushing rate of taxation and if we are committed to a war against a continent like Russia it is the royal road to Bankruptcy and Bolshevism in these islands"²³⁸.

He elaborated the argument to the House of Commons in April. The government could not, he said, "in a quarter of a century spend as much money on railways and canals in Britain as a single year of military enterprise in Russia would cost". He shared the House's horror of all the Bolshevik teachings, but "I would rather leave Russia Bolshevik until she sees her way out of it than see Britain bankrupt, and that is the surest road to Bolshevism in Britain". To attempt intervention in force would be the "greatest act of stupidity that any government could possibly commit"²³⁹. Opposition to intervention, moreover, on the grounds that it tended to strengthen the position of the Bolsheviks, was an argument which had found converts among the anti-Bolshevik forces themselves. "Nothing could come of any plan, declared Kerensky, who had originally urged intervention on the government, which did "not leave Russia alone"²⁴⁰. With the failure of the anti-Bolshevik armies in the field, these objections could no longer be dismissed.

On 29 October Churchill assured the House of Commons that there had been a "very great improvement in Russia from every point of view" since his last speech. A "great improvement in the position of the anti-Bolshevik forces" had taken place; Denikin was in control of an "enormous territory"; and there was "no reason" why he should not be able to be self-supporting after the end of the financial year. British involvement was being brought

to an end while securing the "main objects and interests of those with whom we had entered into a joint responsibility"²⁴¹. During November, however, Denikin's army "melted away, and his whole front disappeared with the swiftness of pantomime"²⁴²; while it was reported from Vladivostok that "militant anti-Bolshevism in Siberia" was "at an end, and (the) Omsk Government, at all events in its present form" was "moribund"²⁴³. Lloyd George, speaking at the Guildhall on 8 November, accordingly delivered what has been termed the 'epitaph' to the policy of intervention²⁴⁴. On 20 November the Cabinet agreed that "unless there should be some change in the present situation, the blockade should not be re-instituted"²⁴⁵.

A meeting of Allied representatives in London on 12 December confirmed the abandonment of direct intervention in Russia. Clemenceau (influenced, in Lloyd George's view, by recent elections in France which had convinced him that there was no immediate danger of the extension of Bolshevism to France²⁴⁶), observed that "intervention had been tried by every means - men, supplies and money - with the object of setting up a stable Government.. (but) it was certain that up to now the Allied policy had not succeeded.. It therefore seemed useless to continue on these lines". He was prepared to give up all idea of further direct intervention in Russia. Lloyd George agreed: Britain had spent £100 million and "had not got much in return for it". Clemenceau felt that there should be erected "as it were, a barbed wire entanglement round Russia in order to prevent her from creating trouble outside, and in order to stop Germany from entering into relations with Russia, whether of a political or a military character". It would also be a "great mistake if we did not maintain Poland in order to dam up the Russian flood..". The resolution agreed upon the following day provided for the ending of commitments to anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia; for leaving ~~RUSSIA~~ Bolshevik Russia "as it were, within a ring fence"; for a strong Poland, with guarantees to be decided later; and support as appropriate for the "border communities" opposing the Soviet government²⁴⁷. Churchill objected in the Cabinet to the decisions which, he said, "involved the abandonment of the anti-Bolshevist forces in Russia which we had supported up till now". The Cabinet reached the perhaps more prudent conclusion that on ^{its} Russian policy "the less said the better"²⁴⁸.

The definite abandonment of direct intervention allowed the negotiations for the exchange of prisoners, which had been discussed since January 1919 and actively since June, to take place.²⁴⁹ The difficulty of deciding in which country the negotiations should take place, and the conditions there to be afforded to the Soviet representatives, delayed their initiation; and "only on the 7th November was a final invitation received from Lord Curzon to send Cde. Litvinov to Denmark"²⁵⁰. Discussions between Litvinov and the British delegate, Mr O'Grady (a Labour MP who had been a member of the government's ill-fated mission in 1917), began on 25 November in Copenhagen²⁵¹. O'Grady had been instructed to be "particularly careful in no way to countenance any attempt on their part to negotiate on any other subjects than that of the exchange of prisoners and the arrangements connected therewith"²⁵². Litvinov later recalled that the number of English prisoners of war in Soviet hands "was very small.. But among them were members of English aristocratic families" whose relatives had exerted considerable pressure upon Curzon to secure their return²⁵³. Litvinov declared that he had full authority to enter into peace negotiations, if the British representative were ready to do so; but O'Grady was instructed to "decline to receive any peace proposals from Litvinov whatever may be the method ~~by~~ ⁱⁿ which he attempts to deliver them"²⁵⁴. O'Grady pointed out that the ~~WHOLE~~ question of exchanging prisoners of war and of providing for the repatriation of civilians had become "merged in (the) whole issue of a resumption of relationships between Western Europe and Soviet Russia"²⁵⁵. O'Grady finally revised a draft which had been broadly approved by the government, and the agreement was signed on 12 February 1920. It provided for an "exchange of combatant and civilian prisoners and.. the return of.. nationals", under the joint supervision of both governments²⁵⁶.

Lloyd George's exposition of government policy in the House of Commons on 17 November was greeted with dismay by those who had been the most vehement in their denunciation of the Bolsheviks. The speech had been "extremely disappointing", said Lt Col Guinness, although he conceded that no-one ~~what~~ ^{wanted} armed intervention in Russia, and that they could "not involve ourselves in heavy financial obligations". The Bolsheviks, claimed Colonel Malone, "have won"²⁵⁷.

It was a conclusion which underestimated Lloyd George's considerable

resource as a politician. In the first place, he had, he told the House of Commons, an "overwhelming sense of the importance of bringing peace to Russia"; for "nor only is Russia a source of unrest and disturbance to all its neighbours, with all the infinite possibilities for mischief which lurk in such a condition over so vast an area, but a settlement of the Russian problem is essential to the reconstruction of the world". Russia was one of the great sources of food and raw materials. The prevailing condition of Russia was one of the contributing causes to the prevailing high prices, and high prices were "undoubtedly in all lands the most dangerous form of Bolshevik propaganda"²⁵⁸.

It was not possible, he declared at the beginning of the 1920 Parliamentary session, to "restore Europe without putting into circulation the resources of Russia, the strength of Russia, the wealth of Russia". It was clear that the withdrawal of Russia from the supplying markets was contributing to high prices, a high cost of living, and to scarcity and hunger. Russia before the war had provided wheat, flax, butter and other products in quantities which were "prodigious in every direction. The world needs this supply"²⁵⁹. It was not simply a question of ensuring that British merchants were no worse off than Germans in which was termed "that most lucrative market"²⁶⁰. Conditions in Europe, Lloyd George warned, were "serious". High prices were being used to "stir up strife, suspicion and jealousy of existing institutions throughout the land. The dangers are not in Russia, they are here at home". He spoke "with knowledge, with apprehension, and with responsibility.. We must fight anarchy with abundance"²⁶¹. More, evidently, might be lost by refusing to trade with Russia than by doing so.

Secondly, and not less importantly, the resumption of trading relations might not be without effect in Russia. The establishment of business relations with Russia, suggested a Foreign Office memorandum of 22 December, might assist the Allies in gaining the favour of the Russian population, and would serve to convince the British population that Bolshevism had been "given a chance". More than this, Bolshevism itself might "vanish away", once the pretext for violence had been removed²⁶². The notion that attempts to alter fundamentally the existing order of society were futile, and could exist only in abnormal conditions, was congenial to Lloyd George. He developed it in the House of Commons. No detestation

of Bolshevism, he declared, could be deeper than his own; but intervention was "not the way to fight it", and it had become "perfectly clear to every unprejudiced observer that you cannot crush Bolshevism by force of arms"²⁶³. The anti-Bolshavik armies had clearly "failed in their great attempt to recover Russia". The government and the Allies had "failed to restore Russia to sanity by force. I believe we can save her by trade. Commerce has a sobering effect in its operations. The simple sums of addition and subtraction which it inculcated soon dispose of wild theories.. Trade, in my opinion, will bring an end to the ferocity, the rapine and the crudities of Bolshevism surer than any other method"²⁶⁴. It was this belief which informed the negotiations which were now entered upon for the conclusion of a trade agreement.

- 1 R.H. Ullman: Britain and the Russian Civil War (London 1968) p15,17
- 2 Lowe, C.J. and Dockrill, M.L.: The ~~Mil~~Image of Power (London 1972, 3 vols) Vol ii p305
- 3 Curzon to Sir John Jordan, 1 September 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 410 p536
- 4 Curzon to Wardrop, 2 October ibid No 452 p575
- 5 Sir H. Rumbold to Curzon, received 8 November 1919, ibid No 506 p622
- 6 Cabinet Minutes 4 November 1919, Cab 12(19)5, Cab 23/18
- 7 James, Robert Rhodes: Winston Churchill: A Study in Failure (London 1969) p111
- 8 Kerr's memorandum on behalf of Lloyd George to Paris, 17 February 1919, in Lloyd George: The Truth about the Peace Treaties (London 1938, 2 vols.) Vol i p373; Lord Robert Cecil to C.P. Scott, 21 February, in The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott (London 1967) p370
- 9 Cabinet Minutes 29 January 1920, Cab 7(20)1, Cab 23/20
- 10 Lloyd George: The Truth about the Peace Treaties (London 1938) i p367
- 11 Churchill to Lloyd George 24 March 1920, cited in Churchill: The Aftermath (London 1929) p377
- 12 C.E. Callwell: Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson (London 1927, 2 vols) ii p165, entry for 20 January 1919 (hereinafter Callwell: Wilson)
- 13 Lowe and Dockrill op.cit. p 305
- 14 Churchill used the expression at the Mansion House on 19 February 1919 (The Aftermath (London 1929) p163)
- 15 Cabinet Minutes 12 August 1919, W.C. 612(2), Cab 23/11
- 16 Parliamentary Debates Vol 116, cols 1526, 1527, 29 May 1919
- 17 Churchill: The Aftermath p169
- 18 ibid p166
- 19 Cabinet Minutes W.C. 624, Appendix ii 25 September 1919, Cab 23/12
- 20 Lloyd George: The Truth about the Peace Treaties (London 1938) i p324
- 21 Roskill, S.W.: Naval Policy between the Wars: Vol i: The Period of Anglo-American Antagonism 1919-1929 (London 1968) p179. Wilson's personal car had been built for the Tsar of Russia, and its speedometer was marked in versts not miles, a fact which may have helped him to bear in mind the ^{fortunes of} ~~fact~~ the monarchical cause (Lord Riddell: Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After (London 1933) p372). Ullman (op.cit. p297) includes Milner among early advocates of intervention.

It is clear, at any rate, that in his support of the principle of intervention Churchill was not "almost unsupported" or a "lone figure" in the Cabinet (Lowe and Dockrill op.cit.p305). Churchill's visit to Paris on 14 February 1919 led to his advocacy at a meeting of the Council of Ten the following day of a proposal for a united anti-Bolshevik offensive under the direction of an Allied Council for Russian Affairs. Lloyd George responded with a telegram which endorsed the telegram which Churchill had proposed to send to the Bolsheviks, containing a ten-day ultimatum (Churchill's message to Lloyd George informed him also of "joint measures" which had been planned, and of the proposal of an Allied Council for Russian Affairs; telegrams Churchill to Lloyd George No 310, Lloyd George to Churchill No 177, 15 and 16 February 1919, in F.O. 371.3956. 26048). He was alarmed by a further telegram from Churchill, and sent a further message to him expressing his alarm that war appeared to be under consideration against the Bolsheviks, and pointing out that the Cabinet had never authorized such a proposal (Lloyd George to Churchill, telegram No 178, 16 February 1919; also in Lloyd George Papers F8/3/120). Lloyd George subsequently wrote that Churchill had "adroitly seized the opportunity presented by the absence of President Wilson and myself to go over to Paris and urge his plans with regard to Russia" (The Truth about the Peace Treaties (London 1938) i p368). Churchill had, nevertheless, made his position clear at a meeting of the Cabinet at noon on 13 February, at which he had expressed his belief that the Allies should have a "decided plan" which should be carried out "energetically", and had mentioned the possibility of an Allied declaration of war with a united declaration at Paris (Cabinet Minutes 13 February, W.C. 532A, Cab 23/). It had, moreover, been Lloyd George's own suggestion that it should be Churchill who should "go to Paris immediately and try and obtain a decision" (on Russian policy) (Notes of a Conversation in Bonar Law's room, 13 February 1919, Lloyd George Papers F202/1/1). Despite the assertion that Lloyd George was "flatly opposed to any sort of intervention in Russia" (Lowe and Dockrill op.cit.p305), Lloyd George "fully shared the responsibility for both initiating ~~xx~~ and keeping it going". There was, in fact, "really no conflict between Churchill and Lloyd George on Russian policy" (Silverlight, J: The Victors' Dilemma (London 1970) p285, Ullman op.cit.p302). As the New Statesman commented, "Mr Churchill's faculty of securing blame is almost

as pronounced as Mr. Lloyd George's faculty of evading it. But, after all, Mr. Churchill has only been carrying out the policy of the British Government, and the British Government at present is Mr. Lloyd George" (New Statesman 27 September 1919 p.637)

- 22 Bonar Law remarked on one occasion, according to J.C.C. Davidson, "we have had quite enough of Winston's nonsense" (Memoirs of a Conservative, ed. Robert Rhodes James (London 1969) p.53). According to Kenworthy, Bonar Law "took a reasonable view of the Russian revolution and had hopes of the future market in Russia". Kenworthy (who favoured closer relations with Soviet Russia) found him the "most objective, practical and least prejudiced, of any of the Elder Statesmen who have held supreme power since the war" (J.M. Kenworthy: Soldiers, Sailors and Others (London 1933) p.200,201). Balfour's attitude is less easy to identify, and perhaps Lloyd George's estimate is a fair one: "on the whole indifferent, and prepared to support either course, but with a natural disinclination for energetic action on either side" (Lloyd George: Truth about the Peace Treaties (London 1938) p.323 i).
- 23 J.C.C. Davidson: Memoirs of a Conservative (Ed. Robert Rhodes James, London 1969) p.90.
- 24 Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary Vol. i (London 1969) p.105.
- 25 A.J. Mayer: Politics and Diplomacy of Peace-making (London 1968) p.321.
- 26 Parliamentary Debates vol. 125 col. 46, 10 February 1920.
- 27 Parliamentary Debates vol. 125 col. 282, 12 February 1920.
- 28 Cabinet Minutes 18 October 1918, W.C. 489(5) Cab. 23/8.
- 29 Cabinet Minutes 14 November 1918, W.C. 502(5), Cab. 23/8. The Minutes of the Foreign Office Conference of 13 November 1918 are in ibid Appendix.
- 30 Parliamentary Debates vol. 113 col. 81, 3 March 1919.
- 31 Churchill: Aftermath p.164, and Cabinet Minutes 14 November 1918 above.
- 32 Colonel Ward, in charge of British forces in Siberia, wrote that he was "certain that Admiral Kolchak could never have gone to Siberia, nor have become the head of the constitutional movement and government of Russia, if he had not been advised and even urged to do so by the Allies. He had received the most categorical promises of whole-hearted support and early Allied recognition" before he agreed to take up his position at the head of the Omsk government (Col. J. Ward: With the

'Die-Hards' in Siberia (London 1920) px). Maisky, in his introduction to a translation of a part of Ward's work which appeared three years later in Russia, observed that Ward had demonstrated General Knox to have been the "spiritual patron of the coup of 18 November" (Col. J. Ward: *Soyuznaya Interventsiya v Sibiri* 1918-1919 (Moscow-Petrograd 1923) p.19). Ullman, who does not refer to Maisky's opinion, considered Knox's part in the coup to have been probably "no more than that of a warm sympathiser" (*Intervention and the War* (London 1961) p.281); but concedes that the British representatives and forces were of considerable indirect assistance to Kolchak. Their support was certainly crucial to his maintenance of his position subsequently.

- 33 DBFP vol iii No 223 section 1 24 May 1919 p.314. The acceptance of this obligation was subsequently made one of the conditions upon which the Allies were prepared to extend recognition and assistance to his government (*ibid* Appendix i p.319).
- 34 Cabinet Minutes 31 December 1918, I.W.C. 48(3) Cab 23/42. There was no need to doubt the latter part, at least, of Churchill's assertion.
- 35 Lloyd George: *Truth about the Peace Treaties* vol i p.326.
- 36 Cabinet Minutes 31 December above. As the New Statesman remarked, the French Revolution was the one historical event with which Lloyd George frequently displayed some acquaintance (New Statesman 15 February 1919 p.410). It served him, in effect, as a source-book of counter-revolutionary strategy.
- 37 Churchill, who was opposed to such conciliatory moves, found the proposed location for the talks not unappropriat: it was beside an island where stray dogs had been taken to die, the decomposing carcasses of which filled the area with their stench (Churchill; *Aftermath* p.170).
- 38 Lloyd George: *Truth about the Peace Treaties* vol i p.330,331,334,354,364-6.
- 39 *Parliamentary Debates* Vol 112 col 194, 12 February 1919.
- 40 Cabinet Minutes 12 February 1919, W.C. 521(4) Cab 23/9.
- 41 Cabinet Minutes 4 March 1919, W.C. 541A(2), Cab 23/15.
- 42 Cabinet Minutes 17 March 1919, W.C. 545A, Cab 23/15.
- 43 Cabinet Minutes 6 May 1919, W.C. 563(3), Cab 23/10.
- 44 *Parliamentary Debates* Vol 114 cols 2940,2943, 16 April 1919. The identity of the last-named gentlemen may have puzzled some of Lloyd George's audience: it is in fact the name of a town in the Ukraine. The slip

was not an isolated one: in his telegram to Churchill in Paris of 16 February 1919 approving the terms of the latter's proposed telegram to the Bolshevik leaders, Lloyd George pointed out that it would be futile, at the same time, for the Allies to attempt to overthrow them "if Russia is not behind Kharkoff and his coadjutors" (F.O. 371.3956.26048, telegram No 177 of 16 February 1919). Published versions of this telegram render the name as Krasnov, the leader of the Don Cossacks, to whom Lloyd George presumably wished to refer.

45 Cabinet Minutes 14 May 1919, W.C. 567(3), Cab 23/10

46 DBFP vol iii No 283 Appendix i p331-2, Paris 26 May 1919

47 DBFP vol iii No 255 Appendix ii p362-4, communicated by the French Charge d'Affaires at Omsk, 4 June 1919, received in Paris 5 June 1919; ibid No 257 Appendix i p376-7, 12 June 1919. The Allies expressed themselves "willing to extend to Admiral Kolchak and his associates the support set forth in their original letter" (p377).

48 Cabinet Minutes 29 April 1919, W.C. 560(2), Cab 23/10

49 Cabinet Minutes 11 June 1919, W.C. 578A, Cab 23/15. Henry Wilson recorded the agreement of Lloyd George to the proposal on 1 May (Callwell: Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson (London 1927) i p186). The operation, he wrote to Churchill on 22 September 1919, was "hardly a covering one to protect the retirement of Ironside's troops... it was quite unnecessary from that point of view. It was in the nature of an attack to cut through in order to join hands with Kolchak. Nevertheless (Churchill had) received all support in your effort", which had "failed, but it was not the fault of the Cabinet that it did not succeed" (Lloyd George to Churchill, Lloyd George Papers F9/1/20, 22 September 1919). On 7 May Lloyd George told the Council of Four at Paris that there had been a "curious collapse" on the part of the Bolsheviks, while Kolchak had "made such progress" that he might shortly be in a position to establish a government at Moscow (cited in Mayer op.cit. p817-8)

50 Cabinet Minutes 11 June 1919 above; Mr Selby, Memorandum, Foreign Office 6 June 1919, DBFP vol iii No 256, Enclosure, p365

51 Cabinet Minutes ibid. The War Office had given General Ironside provisional instructions on 4 May to "make all preparations, with the resources at your disposal, to strike a heavy blow against the Bolsheviks

- in the direction of Kotlas". Authorization followed on 27 June to "carry out (the) advance as planned" (Parliamentary Papers 1920, Cmd 818, p35,42).
- 52 Cabinet Minutes 18 June 1919, W.C. 580A(1), Cab 23/15
- 53 Cabinet Minutes 27 June 1919, W.C. 585B(1), Cab 23/15
- 54 Sir C. Eliot to Curzon, received 27 June 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 261 p380,
- 55 O'Reilly to Curzon, received 9 July 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 293 p415,6
- The Times reported that a regiment of monks was attached to Kolchak's forces, who engaged in battle with images and crosses in their arms, and had proved ~~very~~ effective especially against Bolshevik forces of peasant origin (Times 21 May 1919)
- 56 Cabinet Minutes, 9 July 1919, W.C. 590A, Cab 23/15. The mutiny of the Slavo-British Legion battalion on 7 July, in which three British officers had been killed, caused Ironside (as he recalled) "a greater shock than I liked to admit even in my innermost thoughts. I now felt a distinct urge to extricate myself and my troops as quickly as I could" (Field-Marshal Lord Ironside: Archangel 1918-1919 (London 1953) p160). General Maynard recorded that before the undertaking reached its close, "there were units of nearly every nationality upon which I could not rely with absolute confidence" (Maynard: The Murmansk Venture (London 1928) p190). Mutiny was infrequent among the British troops (among the Russian forces, according to Lt Col Sherwood-Kelly, it was endemic, and they constituted a "greater danger to our troops than the Bolshevik armies opposed to them" Daily Express ~~and~~ 6 September 1919, and Coates, W.P. and Z. : Armed Intervention in Russia 1918-1922 (London 1935) p170-1). It was, ~~however~~ ^{nevertheless}, by no means unknown. A battalion of the Royal Marines, in Russia since May 1918, was ordered to proceed to Murmansk; in their first engagement, however, a number of men became demoralized, and the greater part of two companies returned to camp. Ninety men were subsequently convicted at court-martial, and thirteen were sentenced to death (the sentences were later commuted. Parliamentary Debates Vol 123, cols 1018-9, 22 December 1919, Mr Long). Mutinies also occurred among the naval forces during the last three months of 1919 (Roskill: Naval Policy between the Wars Vol i (London 1968) p153. See also Ullman: Britain and the Russian Civil War (London 1968) 'A Note on British Mutinies in North Russia' pp201-3). Nor were mutinies the only form of indiscipline:

there remained what Lindley, the British Commissioner in Northern Russia, described as the "curse" of drink. One operation had been unsuccessful, he informed Balfour, "because an English colonel was dead drunk for the four days preceding the operation" (Lindley to Balfour, 24 January 1919, Balfour Papers F.O. 800.205 p460f).

Many causes of unrest existed: the climate, the lack of amenities, poor wages, and the feeling, as Sherwood-Kelly described it, that so far from having the defensive purpose professed to them, the troops were "being used for offensive purposes on a large scale and far into the interior, in furtherance of some ambitious plan of campaign the nature of which we were not allowed to know". Attempts were also made by the Bolsheviks to encourage a principled opposition to the purpose of the operations. Propaganda leaflets were printed in the languages of the Allied soldiers and distributed among them (Workers, Peasants and Soldiers of Soviet Russia: (Appeal to) British and American working men (Moscow November 1918); A Communist: The Work of the Soviets and the unconfessable war (Petrograd July 1919); Why have you come to Murmansk? (n.p.n.d.(1918)); Say, What are You? (Moscow 1919); etc.) One such leaflet concluded: "Bomzages, do not be the means of restoring Capitalism and landlordism in Russia. Go home and establish Industrial Republics in your own country, and together we shall form a world-wide Co-operative Commonwealth" (Executive Committee of the Communist International: Russia's Appeal to British Workers, preface John Maclean (Petrograd 1920) p15). "Don't be the dirty blood-hound for Rockefeller and Morgan", urged the 'Appeal' to British and American working men. "You can quit and come over to us; you will be welcomed by comrades who speak English". The "most poisonous and least honest" of the pamphlets, Lindley reported, had been signed by a "renegade Englishman", one Philips-Price, the Manchester Guardian correspondent. (Lindley to the F.O., 3 January 1919, No 5A, F.O. 371.3950.1702). The reference was presumably to Philips Price's 'Truth about the Allied Intervention in Russia', which was dated Moscow August 1919. It concluded: "the workers of England must know the truth, and knowing it must dare to act" (a copy was sent to the Foreign Office in F.O. 371.3317.201146, 6 December 1918. Another edition, published in Berne in 1918, was also communicated, in F.O. 371.3342.161058). Philips Price also wrote a pamphlet entitled 'Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia', dated Moscow November 1918, which was published by the B.S.P. (London 1919). Philips Price edited a journal,

entitled 'The Call' ('of the workers and peasants of Russia, to their English speaking fellow workers'). The editorial of the first issue announced the intention of the journal to "keep its readers informed of the progress of the class struggle at home and abroad" (The Call, No 1, 14 September 1918, Moscow, p2; copy in F.O.371.3342.206940, 17 December 1918). Despite misprints ('glass struggle in the Ukraine') the paper appears to have attracted some interest, and the issue of 30 November 1918 contained letters from four British soldiers (Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Director of Military Intelligence, 15 February 1919, F.O. 371.3956.25181). It was proposed that Philips Price's passport be withdrawn, and that the Manchester Guardian be persuaded to dispense with his services, not, it appears, without ^{some} effect (F.O. 371.3342.171249, 12 October 1918). The American 339th regiment's commander was reported to have sought Bolshevik literature, and to have spoken favourably of the Red Army's courage; and a mutiny occurred in the regiment in March 1919 (Strakhovsky, L.I.: Intervention at Archangel (N.J. 1944) pl63). It was Ironside's view, however, that the British soldiers "kindly but marked contempt for all 'foreigners' provided him with an armour which is difficult to pierce "; and he "never found the British soldier touched by foreign-made propaganda" (Ironside: Archangel 1918-1919 (London 1953) p58). There seems, certainly, to have been sufficient ground for discontent among Allied troops and the local population to render superfluous an explanation based upon the effect of Bolshevik propaganda. Maynard at Murmansk, for instance, saw his problem in terms of securing greater financial support from the Treasury than the "insignificant sum" he had been granted. (The Treasury had suggested that a number of barrels of salted herrings, which were being stored at a Norwegian port, might serve as an "excellent substitute for cash" (Maynard: Murmansk Venture pl8,17)).

57 Cabinet Minutes 9 July 1919, W.C. 590A, Cab 23/15

58 Cabinet Minutes 16 July 1919, W.C. 594(2), Cab 23/11

59 Cabinet Minutes 23 July 1919, W.C. 598(5), Cab 23/11

60 Cabinet Minutes 29 July 1919, W.C. 601(4), Cab 23/11

61 The Cabinet's decision is in Cabinet Minutes 25 July 1919 W.C. 599(3), Cab 23/11; the description of the Siberian army is Churchill's (The Aftermath p244,245)

62 Mr Harvey, Memorandum, 28 July 1919, in F.O. 371.3960.108847; reprinted in DBFP Vol 111 No 342 pp461,463

- 63 DBFP Vol iii No 320 pp438,443
- 64 Curzon memorandum, 21 August 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 399 pp520,522
- 65 ibid p522
- 66 Cabinet Minutes 4 July 1919, W.C. 588A, Cab 23/15. Lloyd George supplied part, at least, of the explanation when he noted ~~that~~ Denikin levied no taxes on his supporters. "It was possible to get any people on one's side if they were not taxed" (Cabinet Minutes 1 August 1919, W.C. 605(3), Cab 23/11)
- 67 Churchill: The Aftermath p 250
- 68 Cabinet Minutes 1 August 1919, W.C. 605(3), Cab 23/11
- 69 Parliamentary Debates Vol 126 col 222, 2 March 1920. British planes and tanks in fact played a considerable role in Denikin's forces, and were largely responsible for the taking of Tsaritsyn on 23 June 1919. General Holman reported the "almost magical", "spectacular" success of the first military use of British tanks and equipment, and of the 47th R.A.F. squadron (Holman, 'Report on the British Military Mission, South Russia' p24, 8 October 1919, Cabinet Paper C.P. 219, Cab 24/94; also F.O. 371.5448.3724) Henry Wilson had been informed a year earlier that the use of aeroplanes and armoured cars in Ireland tended to "terrify the natives" (Callwell: Wilson ii 68, 8 March 1918)
- 70 Cabinet Minutes 12 August 1919, W.C. 612(2), Cab 23/11
- 71 Cabinet Minutes 19 August 1919, W.C. 612(1), Cab 23/12 . James: Churchill : a study in failure (London 1970) incorrectly dates this decision 15 August. Russian policy was not, in fact, discussed at the Cabinet meeting on that day.
- 72 Cabinet Minutes, W.C. 624 Appendix ii, Cab 23/12. Lloyd George failed to respond to Churchill's renewed optimism. At the end of August he wrote in reply to a memorandum from Churchill that the Cabinet had already been assured that the seizure of Moscow was within the grasp of the anti-Bolsheviks, who were "now running as hard as (they) can back to Omsk". Their failure had not been due to any British default, but to "facts which are none the less stubborn because some of our advisers have habitually refused to take cognisance of them". Russian policy had, he thought, "taken away the mind of the War Office from important administrative tasks", where had the "amount of intense and concentrated attention which has been devoted to the running of these

Russian wars" ~~XXXXXXXX~~ scores of millions of pounds, he thought, might have been saved (Lloyd George to Churchill, 30 August 1919, Lloyd George Papers F9/1/15; Churchill's memorandum of 24 August is in ibid F9/1/19). He returned to the subject on 22 September, after Churchill had replied to him, and confessed himself "in despair". He had found Churchill "so obsessed by Russia that I felt I had good ground for the apprehension that your great abilities, energy and courage were not devoted to the reduction of expenditure". Churchill's preoccupation was, he suggested, "upsetting your balance" (Lloyd George to Churchill, 22 September 1919, Lloyd George Papers F9/1/20; Churchill's letter is in ibid F9/1/19).

73 Churchill: Aftermath p250; James: Churchill pl21. Writing to Lloyd George on 9 October, he noted that Denikin's success was "increasing every day and no-one can say how far he will go". A week later in a Cabinet paper on the 'Situation in Russia' he thought it would be "prudent to count upon the collapse and destruction of the Bolshevik power and its replacement by some form of Government based upon the forces of Kolchak and Denikin" (Churchill to Lloyd George, 9 October 1919, Lloyd George Papers F9/1/30; 'Situation in Russia', 15 October 1919, in ibid F202/1/13).

74 Churchill to Curzon, 5 October 1919, F.O. 371.3961.137299

75 Foreign Office memorandum, F.O. 371.3961.145297, 25 October 1919; Leeper to Gregory 16 October 1919; Gregory minute, 17 October; Curzon minutes 19 October, 22 October 1919; telegram to Sir E. Cfove (Paris), 19 October 1919 (suspended); in ibid

76 Cabinet Minutes 7 October 1919, W.C. 628(5), Cab 23/12

77 Curzon memorandum, 2 December 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 576 pp672-3

78 Mr Hoare memorandum, 22 December 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 619 p736

79 Parliamentary Debates Vol 125 col 42, 10 February 1920

80 Parliamentary Debates Vol 116 col 1527, 29 May 1919

81 Parliamentary Debates Vol 118 col 186 15 July 1919

82 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114, cols 373,374, 25 March 1919

83 Parliamentary Debates Vol 112 cols 195,197, 12 February 1919. Curzon noted that Denikin had received from the government a "very full measure of support without which it would have been impossible for him to carry on the struggle" (Curzon to Admiral de Robeck, for General Keyes, 31 March 1920, DBFP Vol xii No 673 p692)

- 84 Kenworthy: Soldiers, Sailors and Others (London 1933) p180
- 85 Hodgson, J.E.: With Denikin's Armies (London 1934), cited in Ullman : Britain and the Russian Civil War (London 1968) p213
- 86 Parliamentary Debates Vol 118, col 1333, 23 July 1919
- 87 Parliamentary Debates Vol 119 col 1653, 14 August 1919, Mr Forster
- 88 Cost of Military and Naval Operations in Russia, from the Armistice to 31 July 1919; Parliamentary Papers 1919, Cmd 307 (13 August 1919)
- 89 Cost of Military and Naval Operations in Russia, from the Armistice to 31 October 1919; Parliamentary Papers 1919, Cmd 395 (31 October 1919).
- A further 'Statement of Expenditure on Naval and Military Operations in Russia', from the Armistice to 31 March 1920, was published by the War Office on 15 July 1920, containing a "material modification" of the figures provided in the previous statement. Stores, instead of being accounted for at their 'full nominal value', were represented by "figures more closely representing the actual value of the articles", and allowing in some cases for non-delivery. The total cost of munitions and stores for the Russian armies to the end of ~~October~~ 1919 was accordingly reduced from almost ~~thirty~~ million pounds to less than three million pounds; and the total cost from the Armistice until the end of March was given as £55,973,000 (Parliamentary Papers 1920, Cmd 772, p2,5). There is little evidence that this relatively more modest sum was taken seriously by the Cabinet. Lloyd George, writing to Churchill on 22 September 1919, suggested that the total cost of the Russian operations, "when Army, Navy and Shipping are taken into account", had been in that year between ~~£150~~ and £150 million, a sum evidently larger than any the War Office was prepared to admit (Lloyd George to Churchill, 22 September, Lloyd George Papers, F9/1/20).
- 90 Cabinet Minutes 14 November 1918, W.C. 502, Cab 23/8
- 91 A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia, Parliamentary Papers 1919, Cmd 8; p vi
- 92 ibid p17,30,45-6
- 93 ibid p57,45. In an appendix it was reported that Zinoviev had declared that the bourgeoisie had in fact been making an excellent job of unloading coal and cleaning barracks(ibid p81)
- 94 ibid p 26,31,26,23,66,63.
- 95 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 col 2147, 9 April 1919. The 'Report' had been issued at an unusually low price.

- 96 Parliamentary Debates ibid cols ~~6253~~ 2154
- 97 Parliamentary Debates ibid col 2150
- 98 Parliamentary Debates Vol 120 cols 1592,1593, 5 November 1919. Selections from the 'Report' were published in various journals, among them the National Review, which held ~~xxx~~^{it} "essential to any serious attempt to understand the plight of Russia" (ibid Vol 73, May 1919, p416). There was no shortage of complementary accounts: thus the Russian Outlook reported the seizure and 'nationalization' of sixty girls, "most of them members of the middle classes" (ibid 3 January 1920 p819). There was also no shortage of explanations. The professional criminal, the Fortnightly Review pointed out, "usually finds his opportunity in times of social upheaval", and never had he had "such a magnificent scope for his energies as in revolutionized Russia" (ibid Vol 166 November 1919 p751). It was noted that "when we are dealing with a people that is semi-barbaric we cannot expect the best of manners" (Raine and Luboff: Bolshevik Russia (London 1920) p10).
- 99 Parliamentary Debates Vol 120 Col 1473 5 November 1919
- 100 ibid
- 101 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 col 776 18 November 1919
- 102 Cabinet Minutes 4 July 1919, W.C. 588A, Cab 23/15
- 103 Parliamentary Debates Vol 118 col 368, 16 July 1919
- 104 Parliamentary Debates Vol 119 col 447, 28 October 1919. According to Nabokov himself, a sum of ~~xxxx~~ £190,000 was received (Ordeal of a Diplomat (London 1921) p218). Nabokov had written to Balfour on 28 November 1917 that power in Russia was "at present in the hands of a group of persons calling themselves Bolsheviks or Maximalists", and assuring him that they did "not represent Russia as a Nation or a State". The Russian representatives in Britain deemed it "necessary to continue their duties uninterruptedly in full accord with the Allied Governments in the real interests of Russia and the requirements of the war against our common enemies". Balfour's reply acknowledged the "difficult situation in which you and your staff are now placed", and indicated that the government would be "glad to receive (him) upon the footing indicated in (his) letter pending the constitution at Petrograd of a Government recognized by H.M.G.". A minute added: "It is anomalous, but the whole situation is" (Nabokov to Balfour, 28 November 1917, and Balfour to Nabokov, 5 December 1917, F.O. 371.2999.227511). Nabokov

Provisional Government's representatives

was one of the ~~one~~ who ~~XXX~~ failed to reply to a circular from the Bolshevik government asking whether they were prepared to support its policies (the response to the circular was generally hostile, except in the case of the Russian representatives in Spain and Portugal; DVPSSSR Voli No 21 p41, 5 December 1917⁶). Those from whom no reply had been received, including Nabokov, were on 9 December 1917 officially deprived of their salary, pension rights and position by the Bolshevik government (ibid No 23, p43-4, 9 December 1917)

- 105 T8243/458/350/19, in F.O. 371.8209. N2423, 14 March 1922, Memorandum 27 March 1922. The memorandum added that it was "not easy to determine" when relations ceased with the Kerensky government. Nabokov had not been recognized as the "official representative of Russia in this country", as ~~XXXXX~~ had originally ^{been} proposed. His name nevertheless appeared in the Diplomatic List until 30 June 1918, and was retained subsequently as that of a representative of the "late Provisional Government". In September 1919, he was replaced by Sabline, who was described, until March 1921, as "charged with (the) liquidation of matters connected with the late Provisional Government". It was reported in the House of Commons that the Treasury was paying a proportion of the rates on the Russian Embassy buildings (Parliamentary Debates Vol 127 col 601, 25 March 1920).
- 106 Parliamentary Debates Vol 116 cols 1558,1559, 29 May 1919
- 107 J.T. Walton Newbold: Bankers, Bondholders and Bolsheviks (I.L.P., London 1919) p14-5,16
- 108 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 col 302, 10 August 1920; and cols 387-384
- 109 cited by R.C. Wallhead in the Labour Leader 24 October 1918
- 110 Lindley to Curzon, received 21 November 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 551 p653
- 111 Russian Outlook 2 August 1919 p310; ibid 27 September 1919 p497, on the basis of a report from H.M. Vice-Consul at Kharkov, and Economist 24 January 1920 p143-4. As the Russian Outlook, a journal of businessmen with an interest in the Russian trade, pointed out, "in our economic outlook we cannot afford to overlook such enormous sources of supply of the things that are vital to our existence as a commercial nation" (ibid 6 December 1919 p742)
- 112 Cabinet Minutes 10 December 1919, Cab 12(19)19, Cab 23/18; and ibid Appendix 4 (3), Conference of Ministers 2 December 1919. A British

Economic Mission to South Russia arrived there in July 1919; but its staff (one temporary Major) was considered by General Hoffman to be inadequate, and he urged its increase (Report on the British Military Mission, South Russia, 8 October 1919, Cabinet Paper C.P. 219, Cab 23/94). Mackinder was asked to "report on the entire situation in its various aspects" (Curzon to Mackinder, 2 December 1919, Mackinder Papers, F.O. 800.251). The government co-operated in other ways with business interests in regard to Russia. The Board of Trade made arrangements for a select group of businessmen to visit South Russia in March (Times 17 March 1919), and the British Club, an association of businessmen, was approached by the government for nominations for four new salaried Vice-Consulates in South Russia in October (Russian Outlook 11 October 1919 p 539). Sir F. Barker and A.G. Marshall represented the F.B.I. on a Committee of the Department of Overseas Trade whose purpose was to "go into the question of future trade with South Russia" (F.B.I. 3rd Annual Report 1918-1919, p25). It was noted (ibid p30) that the F.B.I. had "on many occasions" offered advice to the government, which had "usually been acted upon, where the interests of manufacturers were affected".

113 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 col 2495 16 April 1919

114 The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott 1911-1928 (London 1970) p370

115 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 col 2945 16 April 1919

116 Parliamentary Debates Vol 115 cols 1924,1925 15 May 1919, Col Malone

117 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 col 16, 10 November 1919

118 Parliamentary Debates Vol 120 col 1636, 5 November 1919. Business appears to have shared this opinion. The owners of the Altai concessions in Russia told shareholders that they "would have to be patient", but time would surely bring the return of "conditions that make for the stability and wellbeing of the Russian people". The City was reported to be concerned by the "temporary failure of Russian credit" (Times 3 and 19 January 1918). The chairman of the British Bank for Foreign Trade could "see no economic reason why Russia's default in payment of interest should be other than temporary" (Times 24 July 1918).
F.O. 371.3960.117081 and in

119 Curzon memorandum 21 August 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 399 p520

120 Cabinet Minutes 12 August 1919, W.C. 612(2), Cab 23/11

121 Mr O'Malley memorandum, 29 July 1919, F.O. 371.3960.109354

122 Gregory memorandum 16 October 1918, F.O. 371.3344.177046

- 123 Smuts memorandum, 24 October 1918, Cabinet Paper G.T.6091, Cab 24/67
- 124 Cabinet Minutes 7 November 1918, W.C. 499(2), Cab 23/8
- 125 Callwell: Wilson ii 148
- 126 Basil Thomson: The Scene Changes (London 1939) p376
- 127 cited in P. Guinn: British Strategy and Politics 1914 to 1918 (London 1965) p321
- 128 Churchill: Aftermath p20-1
- 129 Callwell: Wilson ii 172, 174
- 130 Thomas Jones; Whitehall Diary (London 1969) i p81
- 131 National Review Vol 73 March 1919 p16; Callwell: Wilson ii 177
- 132 Report on Germany, February 1919, by "V.77", 7 March 1919, Cab 24/76.
- 133 Bolshevism in Germany, circulated 10 April 1919, Cabinet Paper G.T. 7092, Cab 24/77
- 134 Note by the General Staff, 'Relaxation of the Blockade of Germany', circulated by Churchill 25 April 1919, Cabinet Paper G.T. 7149, in Harmsworth Papers (Private Papers concerning the blockade, February-May 1919, P.R.O. 800.250). Reports on 'economic conditions prevailing in Germany' by British officers, dealing with the period from December 1918 to April 1919, were subsequently published (Parliamentary Papers 1919, Cmd 52,54,208). It was ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ the common burden of the reports that Bolshevism (as was reported from Bavaria on 9 April) was "undoubtedly making great strides at the moment" (Cmd 208 p27) and was a "serious movement" (ibid 26 April 1919 p43). In Berlin it appeared ~~that~~ "everyone" was "reckoning with the probability or inevitability of Bolshevism" (23 March, Cmd 54, p3). A summary of the views of several British officers towards the end of March, while it conceded that the Bolshevik bogey was "undoubtedly being used as an argument to modify the peace terms" was "none the less real and imminent" because it was perverted to this use. All the reports agreed that "the situation in Germany has increased in gravity. Bolshevism is rapidly gaining influence. The present Government is uncertain of itself, and may not retain power long enough to sign the terms of peace" (ibid p17). Major Knyvett was "so convinced.. of the urgency of immediate help" that he wrote personally to the President of the British Section of the Armistice Commission at Spa on 26 March. There was a "great danger - an immediate one - of the utter ruin of Germany

through Bolshevism", he thought; and "I feel sure that if this happens it must spread to France and eventually England" (ibid pl6)

135 Lloyd George: Truth about the Peace Treaties i 295,296. For the views of British officers in Germany, see above note 134

136 Some Considerations for the Peace Conference before they finally draft their terms, 24 March 1919 (Cabinet Papers Cab 1/28/15); the published version is contained in Parliamentary Papers 1922, Cmd 1614, Memorandum circulated by the Prime Minister on 25 March 1919. Hankey wrote to him on 19 March that he did not discuss the danger of Bolshevism in Siberia, the Caucasus, and Persia, "though this is real enough. The great and imminent danger is that it will spread throughout Europe and destroy European civilization". There was in particular the "gravest danger" of Germany becoming Bolshevik (ibid).

137 Churchill: Aftermath pl40,143

138 Callwell: Wilson ii 176-7

139 Hoare to Churchill, 10 June 1919, forwarded to Lloyd George, 15 June 1919 (Lloyd George Papers F8/3/63)

140 Mr Spicer, Memorandum on conversation with Lt Cdr Graham, 7 July 1919, and F.O. to Balfour, No 4635, 10 July 1919, F.O. 371.3515.101018

141 BBFP Vol i No 13 Section 3 17 July 1919 pl21,125

142 DBFP Vol i No 17 Section 1 25 July 1919 pl77

143 DBFP Vol i No 19 Section 2, 26 July 1919, p208

144 based on J.M. Thompson: Russia, Bolshevism and the Versailles Peace (N.J. L967) p206,209,211,212

145 Thomson, Basil: Queer People (London 1922) p305

146 Basil Thomson: The Scene Changes (London 1939) p364

147 ibid p381-2,376

148^a Cabinet Minutes 14 November 1918, W.C. 502(5), Cab 23/8

147a The Foreign Office circular telegram of 28 December 1918 is in F.O. 371.3317.213118, 30 December 1918. A minute "on the subject of the control of Bolshevik activities", containing references to the main communications and decisions, was written by Mr Crookshank (F.O. 371.3951.64755, 6 May 1919). A list of those appointed as "Anti-Bolshevik officers abroad" is in F.O. 371.3951.64755, dated 21 May 1919. See further Stephen White: 'Anti-Bolshevik Control Officers and British Policy 1918-1920', Critique (forthcoming).

148 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 cols 2939,2943, 16 April 1919

- 149 Cabinet Minutes 14 November 1918, W.C. 502(5) and Appendix Cab 23/8.
- 150 Cabinet Minutes 17 March 1919, W.C. 545A, Cab 23/15. The sums which these states had sought from Britain as loans had however been "absurdly large" (*ibid*).
- 151 Cabinet Minutes 22 November 1918, W.C. 506(7), Cab 23/8.
- 152 Cabinet Minutes 24 March 1919, W.C. 550(1), Cab 23/9.
- 153 Cabinet Minutes 10 January 1919, W.C. 55(5), Cab 23/9.
- 154 Churchill: Aftermath p.259.
- 155 G.V. Chicherin: Vneshnyaya Politika Sovetskoi Rossii za dva goda (Moscow 1920) p.32.
- 156 V.I. Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 38 p.248, Vol 37 p.164.
- 157 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional No. 1, 1 May 1919, p.43.
- 158 V.I. Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 38 p.113.
- 159 Ibid Vol 39 p.137.
- 160 G.V. Chicherin op.cit. p.31, 32.
- 161 DVPSSSR Vol i document No. 2, p.11, 14.
- 162 Yu.V. Klyuchnikov and A. Sabanin: Mezhdunarodnaya Politika noveishego vremeni v Dogovorakh, Notakh i Deklaratsiakh (3 vols., Moscow 1925-8; hereinafter cited as Klyuchnikov and Sabanin) Vol ii No.83 p.100 (this document appears to have been omitted from DVPSSSR Vol i).
- 163 DVPSSSR Vol ii Nos. 89 (18 April 1919, p.135-40), 136 (17 July 1919 p.208-212) etc. A writer later recalled that the Bolsheviks on seizing power had "firmly conducted their foreign policy, as their internal policy, on the principle of basing itself on the working class, independent of national and territorial boundaries" (N. Iordanskii: The International Proletariat as an ally of Soviet Russia Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 15(133) 7 November 1922 p.7).
- 164 Basil Thomson: Queer People (London 1922) p.276.
- 165 Kingsley Martin: Father Figures (London 1966) p.88.
- 166 The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott (London 1970) p.332. He regarded G.D.H. Cole as a "genuine British Bolshevik" (*ibid* p.333).
- 167 C.S. Jones: Bolshevism (London 1920) p.16, 79, 70.
- 168 Nineteenth Century and After Vol 85, May 1919, p.894, H. Spender.
- 169 National Review Vol March 1919 p.43, April 1919, p.172.
- 170 Basil Thomson: Queer People (London 1922) p.299. At Oxford, however, he found that "even here...some of the advocates of revolution are of alien origin", and were composed in the main of the "glib and

raw type of young intellectual that is always to be found at a University" (~~Report~~ on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K. 29, 13 November 1919, Cabinet Paper C.P. 125 Cab 24/93).

- 171 Cabinet Minutes 18 September 1918, 25 September and 24 October 1918, W.C. 474(1), 477, 490(7), Cab 23/7, 23/7 and 23/8
- 172 Cabinet Minutes 31 January and 4 February 1919, W.C. 523(3) and 525(3), Cab 23/9
- 173 Cabinet Minutes 30 January 1919, W.C. 522(1), Cab 23/9; Churchill: Aftermath p62
- 174 Cabinet Minutes 31 January 1919, W.C. 523(1), Cab 23/9. The truth of the matter seems to be that the police launched a virtually unprovoked and unexpected attack upon a peaceful demonstration. Whatever the possibilities of the situation, it appears clear that the leaders of the demonstration had (as Gallacher complained) "never thought" of a rising (Revolt on the Clyde (London 1936) p234). It was, indeed, precisely the charge of the Glasgow Trades Council that the police's conduct and the reading of the Riot Act were "calculated to inspire terrorism" (Trades Council Minutes, 3 February 1919). It is, however, the attitude of the members of the Cabinet which here concerns us, and not the validity of their views.
- 175 Cabinet Minutes 21 July 1919, W.C. 596A, Cab 23/15. Over 150,000 miners were involved in the strike, and over four million working days lost.
- 176 Chambers Twentieth-Century Dictionary (London 1958) p116. The word came into use in about 1920, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, although Basil Thomson noted that the word 'Bolshevik' (of which 'Bolshie' was a contraction) had been used in the press from about the middle of 1918 as "synonymous with advanced revolutionaries and pacifists" ('Bolshevism in England', 23 December 1918, F.O. 371.3300. 217529). The 'Glossary for the use of employers' of political and labour terms in the Employers' Yearbook (London 1920 ed) stated that the term 'Bolshie' was "often loosely used in England to describe extremists, revolutionaries, and those in favour of 'direct action'" (ibid p 356)
- 177 Cabinet Minutes 7 August 1919, W.C. 607A(2), Cab 23/15
- 178 Cabinet Minutes 30 August 1918, W.C. 467(1), Cab 23/7 . The Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis reported that police service in the

capital had been "practically paralysed by the withdrawal from duty of the bulk of the Force" (Report of the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis for the years 1918 and 1919, Part I; Parliamentary Papers 1920 cCmd 543 p4). It was reported that Guardsmen armed with rifles had been posted outside the government offices in Whitehall (Times, cited in T.A. Critchley: A History of Police in England and Wales 900-1966 (London 1967) pl88) +

179 Cabinet Minutes 24 January 1919 W.C. 519(5) Cab 23/9

180 Cabinet Minutes 27 May 1919, W.C. 571A, Cab 23/15

181 Cabinet Minutes 1 August 1919, W.C. 605, Appendix, Cab 23/11

(+ "Spirit of Petrograd!", commented the Workers' Dreadnought. "The London Police on strike! After that anything may happen" (7 September 1918, cited in Industrial Peace Vol iii October 1918 p57). Long wrote to Lloyd George in November and enclosed an extract from a private letter he had received dealing with the situation at Birmingham, where the police were "not to be trusted.. If called upon to act they would go over to the masses.. At Coventry the feeling is the same.. the police are again not much use here" (Long to Lloyd George, 18 November 1918, Lloyd George Papers F33/1/32)

2 Basil Thomson: Queer People (London 1922) p295; Reports of His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary for the year ended the 29th September 1919 (Parliamentary Papers 1920, House of Commons Papers 91,3 May 1920)p3

~~182~~ At Liverpool it was reported that half the force had joined the strike, and that an "amazing outbreak of looting and rioting" had followed, which "was an object lesson in Bolshevism that the country immediately took to heart" (Review of Reviews September 1919 pl48)

183 Nineteenth Century and After Vol 86, August 1919 p413 . Further details

~~184~~ are available in Critchley op.cit. (who states that a total of 2,364 men from seven forces were involved in the strike, pl88-9); and in G.W. Reynolds and A. Judge: The Night the Police went on Strike (London n.d. (1968?)), who quote a statement made by the Prime Minister to the strikers that he "would not have a repetition in this country of what had happened in Russia" (p69).

184 Churchill: Aftermath pp54,55,61. The reference to Folkestone appears to be rather to the mutiny there on 3 January 1919, when a procession had marched to the town, and a Soldiers' Union had been formed (Herald 11 January 1919 p4). Details of the mutinies are available in T.H. Wintringham: Mutiny (London 1936) pp 311-327.

- 185 Callwell: Wilson ii 162.
- 186 Cabinet Minutes 8 January 1919, W.C. 514 (9), Cab 23/9.
- 187 Cabinet Minutes 5 February 1919, W.C. 527(1), Cab 23/9.
- 188 Churchill: Aftermath, 60, 61.
- 189 Cabinet Minutes 13 March and 24 January 1919, W.C. 544(3) and 519(1) Cab 23/9.
- 190 Cabinet Minutes 10 July 1919, W.C. 591(7), Cab 23/11.
191. Cabinet Minutes 22 January 1919, W.C. 518(6), Cab 23/9.
- 192 Cabinet Minutes 4 February 1919, W.C. 526(1), Cab 23/9.
- 193 Parliamentary Debates Vols 119 col 1251 12 August 1919, 117 col 14
24 June 1919.
- 194 Cabinet Minutes 4 February 1919, W.C. 526(1), Cab 23/9. The Cabinet never doubted that the 'real unemployed' were not demonstrating, nor that, as Curzon put it, "the present agitations were organized by a mere handful of persons" (*ibid.*). British Communists, the Head of the Special Branch considered, were "largely diluted with aliens and Jews" (Basil Thomson: *Queer People* (London 1922) p.302)).
- 195 National Review vol 76 October 1920 p.159-160. Basil Thomson shared their belief that "whenever the British working man really understands a question he can be relied upon to show good sense". He admitted that in the short term there remained a need for "effective propaganda" ('Bolshevism in England', 23 December 1918, F.O. 371.3300.217529).
- 196 The organizational committee of the Middle Classes Union was analysed in the Worker (19 July 1919); and the patrons and members of the British Empire Union in the Workers' Dreadnought (ix No. 43, 6 January 1923 p.8).
- 197 Sir W. Dupree, for instance, presented £20,000 to the Industrial League, in the expressed belief that "no question (was) of such National value, after the winning of the War and the Peace to follow, as the securing of Industrial Peace" (*Industrial League Journal* vol i No. 3 March 1919 p.29-30). Dupree directed three companies.
- 198 H. Spender to C.P. Scott, 23 August 1919, *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott 1911-1928* (London 1970) p.377.
- 199 Forward 2 August 1919.
- 200 Cabinet Minutes 5 August 1919, W.C. 606A(1), Cab 23/15.
- 201 Cabinet Minutes 14 October 1919, W.C. 630(8), Cab 23/12.
- 202 L.S. Amery: *My Political Life* vol ii 1914-1929 (London 1953) p. 205. Amery himself was the junior minister responsible for the North Midlands.
- 203 Cabinet Minutes 7 October 1919, W.C. 628(6), Cab 23/12.

- 204 Cabinet Minutes 26 November 1919, Cab 9(19), Appendix, Conference at 10 Downing Street, 18 November 1919 (3), Cab 23/18^{and S 11 (6)}
- 205 Conference of Ministers 16 January 1920 (1), S 10, Cab 23/35
- 206 Cabinet Minutes 11 February 1920, Cab 10(20), Appendix I, Conference of Ministers 2 February 1920
- 207 Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary Vol 1 (London 1969) p100,101,2 February 1920
- 208 ibid p103,
- 209 Monthly Review of the Progress of Revolutionary Movements Abroad 12, 14 October 1919, Cabinet Paper C.P. 28, Cab 24/92, p2. There had, admittedly, been a strike that "usually phlegmatic community", the Dutch Domestic Servants' Union (ibid p25). W. Angress: Stillborn Revolution: the Russian bid for power in Germany 1921-1923 (London 1963) observes that by the summer of 1919, the first revolutionary wave in Germany, which had followed in the wake of the Armistice of 1918, had "reached a temporary standstill (ibid p38). The Political Intelligence issued a report on the Bavarian Soviet Government, which concluded that the capture of Munich on 1 and 2 May probably heralded the "triumph of law and order in Bavaria" (Memorandum on Soviet Governments in Munich and their Suppression, May 1919, Cabinet Paper G.T. 7372 Cab 24/80).
- 210 Cabinet Minutes 6 March 1919, W.C. 542(2), Cab 23/9
- 211 Cabinet Minutes 29 April 1919, W.C. 560(2), Cab 23/10
- 212 ibid; Churchill: Aftermath p246, Churchill to Knox 28 May 1919 (the message clearly paralleled that of the Allies* from Paris on 26 May 1919, referred to above; DBFP Vol iii No 233 Appendix I p331-2). Churchill had written to Lloyd George on 21 May 1919 that it was "clearly the moment" to secure from Kolchak in return for formal recognition and active support, "effective guarantees" for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly on a democratic franchise, for a "bold agrarian policy, and for the acceptance of the independence of Poland, the autonomous existence of Finland and the validity of the League of Nations agreements covering the Baltic and Caucasian states (Churchill to Lloyd George, 21 May 1919, Lloyd George Papers F8/3/29).
- 213 DBFP Vol iii No 254 11 June 1919, p360, and p 361 note 3, in which Curzon minuted a meeting with M. Sazonov on behalf of Kolchak.
- 214 DBFP Vol iii No 288 1 July 1919 p409, 410, Curzon to Balfour (Paris). The Review of Reviews noted that such suspicions had "greatly hampered Russia's friends in all Allied countries" (ibid June 1919 p370).

- 215 Cabinet Minutes 14 July 1919, W.C. 592(2), Cab 23/11
- 216 V.I. Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 39 p241
- 217 Cabinet Minutes 25 July 1919, W.C. 599(3), Cab 23/11
- 218 Curzon to Mackinder, November 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 576 pp676,677
- 219 ibid
- 220 Denikin to General Briggs, DBFP Vol iii No 258, forwarded by Briggs to the Foreign Office on 14 August 1919, p377
- 221 Cabinet Minutes 26 February 1919, W.C. 537(2), Cab 23/9
- 222 Cabinet Minutes 6 March 1919, W.C. 542(2), Cab 23/9
- 223 Cabinet Minutes 12 August 1919, W.C. 612(2), Cab 23/11
- 224 Cabinet Minutes 16 December 1918, W.C. 510¹(4), Cab 23/8
- 225 Cabinet Minutes 25 July 1919, W.C. 599(3), Cab 23/11
- 226 Cabinet Minutes 10 January 1919, W.C. 515(4), Cab 23/9
- 227 Herald 13, 14 May 1919; Ullman: Britain and the Russian Civil War p130f
- 228 Lloyd George: Truth about the Peace Treaties i 360
- 228a Cabinet Minutes 12 February 1919, W.C. 531(4), Cab 23/9
- 229 Callwell: Wilson ii 182,183, entry for 23 April 1919. The regimental strength of the Army, including the Territorial Force, during 1919 stood at 3,676,473 on 1 January, 2,269,832 on 1 April, 1,445,179 on 1 July and 1,064,743 on 1 October (General Annual Reports on the British Army, 1 October 1913 to 30 September 1919, prepared by command of the Army Council, Parliamentary Papers 1920, Cmd 1193 p22).
- 230 Callwell: Wilson ii 208, July 1919
- 231 J.D. Gregory minute, 6 October 1919, on Churchill memorandum, F.O. 371.3961.137299
- 232 Diaries of Beatrice Webb 1912-1924 (London 1952) p170, 18 November 1919
The question of finance, Buchanan conceded, had "to be taken into account, for with the income tax at six shillings in the pound we could not lightly embark on an enterprise of this nature" (Buchanan: My Mission to Russia ii 257).
- 233 Cabinet Minutes 26 February 1919, W.C. 537(2), Cab 23/9
- 234 Cabinet Minutes 4 March 1919, W.C. 541A(2), Cab 23/15; Cabinet Minutes 14 July 1919, W.C. 592(1), Cab 23/11
- 235 Cabinet Minutes 17 March 1919, W.C. 545A, Cab 23/15; and 29 May 1919, W.C. 573(2), Cab 23/10
- 236 Cabinet Minutes 29 July 1919, W.C. 601(4), Cab 23/11; and W.C. 612 (2), 12 August 1919, Cab 23/11

- 237 Lloyd George to Churchill, 22 September 1919, Lloyd George Papers
 238 Cabinet Minutes 31 December 1918, I.W.C. 48(2) Cab23/42; ^{F9/1/20}
 Lloyd George: The Truth about the Peace Treaties i 327, 371, 372.
 Beatrice Webb thought that the "most telling argument in favour of goodwill and reason" was probably the "incipient revolt of the armies. The practical pacifism of the common soldier, intent on getting home, is counteracting the 'Power Policy' of the General Staffs" (Diaries 1912-1924, pl44, entry for 14 January 1919). Kenworthy agreed that "the whole nation was war -weary". If troops had been conscripted to continue the war, now against Russia, "I firmly believe we should have had a revolution in England" (Soldiers, Sailors and Others pl53). Philip Kerr, Lloyd George's private secretary and a member of the 'Garden Suburb', wrote to his mother on 18 February 1919 that all he was certain of was that a war against Russia was the "surest way of producing Bolshevism at home.. Let's try and do in Bolshevism peacefully first" (quoted in J.R.M. Butler: Lord Lothian (London 1960) p75).
- 239 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 cols 2941-2, 16 April 1919
- 240 Kerensky's views were reported in Russian Outlook 29 November 1919 p714. Krasin later told Kenworthy that in his opinion but for Allied intervention the Bolsheviks would have fallen within six months (Soldiers, Sailors and Others pl80).
- 241 Parliamentary Debates Vol 120 cols 791, 793, 794, 29 October 1919
- 242 Churchill: Aftermath p256. The Red Army recaptured Orel on 20 October, and Kursk on 17 November, and continued to advance.
- 243 Lampson to Curzon, received 27 November 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 554 p655. Omsk was evacuated on 12 November and fell to the Red Army on 15 November. Kolchak resigned his post in January, was handed over to the Red Army, and on 6 February 1920 he was executed. Yudenich's North-Western Army was halted in its drive on Petrograd in November, and collapsed forthwith.
- 244 James: Churchill pl21, Ullman : Britain and the Russian Civil War p304f. Lloyd George hinted at the employment of "other methods".
- 245 Cabinet Minutes 20 November 1919, Cab 8(19)1, Cab 23/18
- 246 Lloyd George quoted in Riddell: Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After pl52, entry for 14 December 1919; *thus also Conference of Ministers at 10 Downing Street, 11 December 1919, S-5, Cab 23/35.*

- 247 DBFP Vol ii No 56 Section 2 p745,744; and ibid No 62 Resolution A 13 December 1919 p782^{and in} Conferences of Allied and Associated Powers and of the British and French Governments, London 11-13 December 1919, Cab 14(19) 15 December 1919, Appendix I: meeting of Lloyd George and Clemenceau, Cab 23/18
- 248 Cabinet Minutes 12 December 1919, Cab 13(19)2,3, Cab 23/18
- 249 The negotiations to this point are detailed in Otchet N.K.I.D. VII S''ezdy Sovetov za period s noyabrya 1918 g. po dekabru' 1919 g. (reprinted in DVPSSSR Vol ii p599f) p605f
- 250 DVPSSSR Vol ii p606. The telegrams are contained in DBFP Vol iii Nos 241,253,279,295,336,355,356,370,402,417,436,444,471,477, and in ibid Nos 124,131,145,163 etc.
- 251 ibid p 673
- 252 Curzon to O'Grady, 13 November 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 535 p644
- 253 Maisky: Anglo-Sovyetskii Torgovy Dogovor 1921 g. Voprosy Istorii No 5, 1957, p63, and Godovoi Otchet NKID VIII S''ezdy Sovetov 1919-20 (Moscow 1921) p15
- 254 Curzon to Grant Watson (Copenhagen), 6 December 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 590 p687
- 255 Grant Watson(Copenhahgen) to Curzon, from O'Grady, received 15 January 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 644 p757
- 256 Grant Watson (Copenhagen) to Curzon, from O'Grady, received 13 February 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 681 p816. The text of the agreement was published as 'Agreement between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government of Russia for the exchange of prisoners', Parliamentary Papers 1920, Cmd 587 (reference to p.2); and is contained in DVPSSSR Vol ii No 236 p364f
- 257 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 Cols⁷²⁴ 727,734, 17 November 1919
- 258 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 col 474, 13 November 1919
- 259 Parliamentary Debates Vol 125 cols 40,45, 10 February 1920
- 260 Parliamentary Debates Vol 118 col 574 17 July 1919, Kenworthy
- 261 Lloyd George ibid col 46
- 262 Mr Hoare Memorandum, 22 December 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 619 p738
- 263 Parliamentary Debates Vols 121 col 726, 17 November 1919 and 125 col 42, 13 February 1920
- 264 Parliamentary Debates Vol 125 cols 44,45, 13 February 1920

Chapter Three: Labour and Soviet Russia 1917-1921

In addressing the House of Commons in November 1919 Churchill was asked by the Cabinet to "make it clear that the British Government were not out to destroy a revolutionary Government in Russia"¹. The statement was intended to answer the charge ^{urged} mainly, although by no means exclusively, by Labour and working-class opinion to the contrary. There was indeed "no doubt", Barnes told the Cabinet, "that the feeling among Socialists and Labour men was that the Government were pursuing a capitalist policy"²; and opposition from this and other sources played a part in first limiting, and then bringing to an end the government's direct involvement in Russian affairs. It has sometimes been maintained that, as the New Leader claimed, Labour had "compelled the abandonment of Mr Churchill's campaign of intervention..brought the blockade to an end" and "stopped the plans for interference in the Polish war" in 1920³. It has already been suggested that there were other, and perhaps more compelling reasons which persuaded the Cabinet to reverse its policy in regard to intervention and the blockade; and it will be suggested below that while suspicion existed in regard to the government's policy during the Russo-Polish war of 1920, there was in fact little substantial difference between its policy and that of the Labour movement. It has, also, been stated that the position of the Labour movement at this time was one, not simply of opposition to the continuation, by direct or indirect means, of war, but one of active solidarity with the Soviet republic. Its opposition to war has been termed a "fight to save the Workers' Republic"⁴, and "solidarity with the Russian Revolution"⁵. This proposition will be examined below. It should first be noted, however, that Labour's opposition, whatever its nature, had hardly begun to develop before the signature of the Armistice and the Labour Party's withdrawal from the Coalition in November 1918, although intervention on a major scale had taken place in the summer of that year⁶.

The rumour of an imminent Japanese incursion into Siberia with the blessing of the Allies led H.B. Lees-Smith to raise the question in the House of Commons. The venture, if it were launched, would he thought demonstrate the "moral bankruptcy of the Alliance"⁷. Writing in the Labour Leader, Snowden charged that Ministers despite their "hypocritical

platitudes about this being a war for democracy" were secretly encouraging the "most militarist and imperialist country in the world to attack, and to endeavour to overthrow, the newly established democracy of Russia"⁸. Colonel Wedgwood later ~~XXXX~~ suggested the establishment of a committee to consider "how best relations between this country and Russia can be improved". Intervention in Russia, against the will of the Russians, he thought "absolutely futile and damaging to the whole of the Allied cause". The Bolsheviks, King added, "may not have been our choice, but they are at the present time undoubtedly the choice of the people of Russia"⁹.

At the Labour Party annual conference, however, which opened two days later, there was little discussion of Russian affairs. Indeed the only direct reference to intervention was that of Sylvia Pankhurst who commented briefly on "the Japanese business"¹⁰. Attention centred rather upon the surprise appearance of a "strange man with a yellow face"¹¹, Kerensky, who was introduced to the conference by Henderson, who "took the fullest responsibility" for his presence. He had "learned to admire" Kerensky in the course of his visit to Russia, and had a "very high appreciation of the work he was endeavouring to do on behalf of that great people he represented". He introduced Kerensky as "one whose name had been closely associated with their work during the past year", and secured the conference's agreement that he should be heard.¹² Delegates, Snowden wrote, were "naturally suspicious that there was some deliberate intention to use M. Kerensky's presence at the Conference for the purpose of assisting the designs to use Allied intervention in Russia for the purpose of overthrowing the Bolshevik government"¹³. The Bolsheviks' envoy, Litvinov, was present but was not allowed to address the delegates. Whatever the reason for Kerensky's appearance, however, his address, in which he declared that the "Russian people and the Russian democracy" were "fighting against tyranny" and were "going to fight to the end", appears to have been less than completely successful¹⁴. His appearance was reported to have been greeted with cries of "whom does he represent" and "down with Kerensky", which, since he did not know English, he took to be friendly greetings, and smiled and bowed until Henderson sat him down. He made a short speech in Russian, which was then translated, and appeared equally gratified by the mixed applause and abuse which it

provoked¹⁵. The Allied Socialist and Labour Parties, wrote Brailsford at the end of July, had chosen to keep silent about intervention, although to oppose it did not necessarily mean to support the Bolsheviks. "But even an honest Liberal would have said 'Let Russians settle their own affairs'. An honest Socialist would have withstood with double stubbornness a patently capitalist intervention". The "damning record" would relate that British Labour "looked on as dumb spectators" at the destruction of the Soviet Republic¹⁶.

The landing of troops in Russia in August was a "challenge to democracy and Socialism", the I.L.P. National Council considered in a Manifesto issued at this time. It represented an attempt to over-throw the social revolution and to re-establish the rule and power of capitalism. Socialists in Britain and in other Allied countries could "not remain silent and indifferent under the challenge and menace of this act of imperialist aggression. . We appeal therefore to British organized Labour to express the strongest condemnation of the participation of the British government in an act which constitutes a crime against national independence and against the Russian Revolution.. a crime which if persisted in will prove not only disastrous to Russia but to the cause of freedom and democracy throughout the world"¹⁷. Snowden talked of a "departure of momentous significance", a "second Belgium"¹⁸. Sylvia Pankhurst, Walton Newbold and others urged "Save the Revolution"¹⁹.

An Inter-Allied Conference of Labour and Socialist Parties, however, meeting in London on 17-20 September 1918, as a result of "discussion.. supplemented by a speech by M. Kerensky, who attended the Conference as a visitor", confined itself to an "expression of deepest sympathy to the Labour and Socialist organizations of Russia" which had continued the struggle against German imperialism, and condemned the treaty of Brest-Litovsk²⁰. The resolution as finally adopted not merely failed to point out, as a minority draft had done, that intervention "under the pretext of fighting Bolshevism, should serve the reaction against Socialism and Democracy": it omitted ~~explicit~~^{explicit} reference to intervention altogether. Henderson, whose influence was in favour of the final amended version, had been instructed by the Labour Party neither to "approve or condemn Allied intervention, but (to) accept intervention as an accomplished fact"²¹. The workers, complained the Call,

"should intervene. Why do they accept the word of Kerensky in preference to that of the representatives of organized Russian labour?"²².

Brailsford, writing in November, talked of Labour's "failure to stand by the Russian Revolution". Call asked why official Labour was dumb in regard to intervention. "Do not let it be said", it wrote, "that it was ~~xxx~~ the apathy if not the hostility of the workers of Britain that delayed the complete triumph of the workers of the world"²³. The Labour Party manifesto issued in connection with the 1918 general election did include a call for the "immediate withdrawal of the Allied forces from Russia"²⁴. The time had come, as the New Statesman remarked, to break the "self-imposed silence which we have observed with regard to the British government's attitude towards Russia", on which they had previously "shrunk from the responsibility of taking a strong line". So long as the need existed of repelling German advances in Russia, "we were naturally willing to support precautionary measures"²⁵.

Following the election, the Party and the T.U.C. "concerned at the reports respecting the Government's policy with regard to Russia", addressed a letter to the Prime Minister, seeking an assurance that there was "no intention on the part of the British government to interfere with the right of the Russian people to decide for themselves their own form of government", and that the armed forces would be withdrawn at the "earliest possible moment". An acknowledgement was received two days later, but no more. A further letter on 3 January 1919, asking that a deputation be received, was not even acknowledged. "Up to May 1919", the Executive reported, "it had not been possible.. to secure any official indication of the objects sought to be achieved by the Allies in their Russian policy"²⁶.

The industrial side of the movement did not require such lengthy consideration of the matter. Shortly after the general election the Birmingham Trades Council adopted a resolution calling for a Conference to consider action to "compel the Government to withdraw all troops from Russia, in order that the Russian Democracy be allowed to establish whatever form of internal government they require"²⁷. By the following spring Basil Thomson reported to the Cabinet that "every section of the workers" appeared to be against conscription and intervention in Russia. "Even mild trade unionists are said to be strongly moved over these two matters..²⁸.

On 26 March the National Conference of the Miners' Federation

unanimously ~~carried~~ an executive resolution calling on the government immediately to "withdraw all British troops from Russia, and to take the necessary steps to induce the Allied Powers to do likewise"²⁹. A week later a special conference was convened by the executive committee of the Labour Party and by the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. to define their attitude to the proposed Covenant of the League of Nations. An emergency resolution was submitted by the Miners which called on the government to cease its intervention in Russian affairs, lift the blockade against Germany, bring conscription to an immediate end, and release all the conscientious objectors. Speaking for the resolution, Smillie urged that a special conference be held with the object of determining what form of industrial action should be taken to achieve these objects. The chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, Stuart-Bunning, who presided, however, refused to accept the second part of the Miners' resolution, since it implied industrial action, a course to which, he said, the political section of the movement could not be committed. The ruling was accepted, and the first part of the resolution was adopted³⁰.

The Labour Party executive issued a manifesto to the press after the meeting, expressing "grave concern regarding the long drawn-out delay of the Paris Conference to agree upon the terms of peace, thus entailing a continuation of the blockade and a paralysis in industrial and political order which have led inevitably to the spread of anarchy in certain European states, so that democratic government there and elsewhere is now seriously threatened...", and urging that the policy of military interference in Russia be "stopped forthwith". British soldiers, it was noted with particular indignation, had been "left practically isolated in Murmansk and Archangel, and exposed to attack". It was agreed to send a delegation to the Prime Minister to present the terms of the resolution which the Miners had proposed; but an attempt to defeat the government's policy by industrial action would be a "new precedent in our industrial history"³¹. As Smillie observed later, "nothing effective was done"³².

The Council of the Triple Alliance, meeting at Southport on 16 April, supported the Miners' initiative, with a rider that the Parliamentary Committee be called upon to summon a special national conference to decide what action should be taken³³. A deputation from the Council of

the Triple Alliance met the Parliamentary Committee on 15 May "in order to urge upon them the absolute necessity of calling a Conference immediately". The Committee decided in the first place to seek a meeting with the Prime Minister, and a meeting with Bonar Law took place on 22 May for the purpose of a discussion of the Triple Alliance's resolution. Following the interview the Parliamentary Committee decided (on 28 May) not to call a conference, as the Triple Alliance had urged. The Herald found the decision "amazing"; and it was, admittedly, taken by a small majority vote. It was not intervention in Russia, however, which appeared to account for the reservations of the minority, but the questions of conscription and Churchill's secret military circular which had been published in the Herald³⁴. No answer had yet been found to the Herald's question: "Resolutions and pious protests are not enough. The war must be stopped. What will Labour do, not say, to stop it?"³⁵

In his Presidential Address to the Labour Party Annual Conference, which met in Southport on 25-27 June, McGurk declared that there could be "no peace so long as we continue to indulge in military adventures in Russia. Russia must be left free to work out its own political salvation". He warned, however, that a movement was "already afoot to employ the strike weapon for political purposes. This would be an innovation in this country which few responsible leaders would welcome. But the danger is there, and the proposal is being canvassed with much energy". It was, ~~indeed~~, advocated at the conference itself by Hodges, Williams, Bromley and other major union leaders. Smillie considered that the action of the government in sending troops ~~to~~ Russia might not be constitutional; and thought it "rather strange that the Executive Committee of the Labour Party should have taken up exactly the position of every exploiter and capitalist and politician in this country at the present time". Such were the feelings of the delegates that despite the appeals of J.R. Clynes a motion was carried by a 2-1 majority demanding the "immediate cessation" of intervention and instructing the executive to consult with the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. with a "view to effective action being taken to enforce these demands by the unreserved use of their political and industrial power"³⁶. The Fortnightly Review thought the proposal that of "firebrands who are bent on destroying the Constitution! The Labour movement had been "captured by extremists"³⁷. Yet

Hodges himself had pointed out that the resolution was no more than an "expression of opinion". The Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. would be invited to call a conference and to put a resolution on the agenda on the lines of that adopted at the Labour Party conference. It was "not suggested that the T.U.C. could make a declaration as to an immediate strike". The Times noted that the resolution "committed nobody to anything"³⁸.

Discussions also took place at the Labour conference on a proposal which had been made more than a month earlier that a general strike be called in Italy, France and Britain in order to end intervention. The Labour representatives secured the adoption of a statement that demonstrations of protest (rather than industrial action) should be made on 20 and 21 July by the workers in each country, "in the form best ~~XXXXX~~ adapted to their circumstances and to their method of operation". It was agreed that the British labour movement would stage demonstrations throughout Britain on 20 July, a Sunday; while French and Italian workers were prepared to stage a twenty-four hour general strike on 21 July, a working day. The British labour leaders made little effort to implement the decision; and the resulting national series of demonstrations was widely regarded as a fiasco³⁹. The appeal, commented Industrial Peace, was "ignored". The workers apparently did "not mind what happens to Comrades Lenin, Trotsky and Bela Kun"⁴⁰. The movement "collapsed ignominiously", it has been noted, Turati accusing the British working class of forming the "bourgeoisie of the international proletariat"⁴¹. The London dockers, the Norwich boot and shoe operatives, and the Merthyr miners were the only strikes of importance; and the demonstrations were reported to have been poorly attended, both of those held in London coming into opposition from counter-demonstrators, and those in other towns simply endorsing the official resolution⁴². A number of resolutions reached the Foreign Office; but as a minute drily observed: "No action seems necessary. We frequently receive such protests"⁴³.

The Parliamentary Committee refused to act on the Labour Party conference resolution, and a conference of the Triple Alliance on 23 July decided that action should be taken on its own initiative. A ballot paper should be circulated to elicit members' opinions on the question of the withdrawal of their labour to secure, among other objects, the end of the intervention in Russia.⁴⁴ The decision was publicly opposed by J.H. Thomas

and the Call thought it an opportunity for British labour to clear itself of "all suspicion of having betrayed the cause of the Russian Revolution"⁴⁵. In the event, however, Churchill's announcement on the same day in the House of Commons that Murmansk and Archangel were to be evacuated before the winter led to a decision to postpone the ballot until after the T.U.C. had met⁴⁶. The T.U.C. in its turn decided on 12 September that the Parliamentary Committee should again present the movement's demands to the government, and if not satisfied should call a special meeting. Bob Williams commented in Forward: "With 5½ millions of organized workers", British labour was "helpless and impotent" on Russian policy, as a result of the "inaction of many of the leaders of the trade union movement, Marx had once called the British workers the advance guard of the international proletariat, but now they had become the Chinese of Europe"⁴⁷. Thomson reported to the Cabinet that by August feeling with regard to intervention in Russia had "practically died out"⁴⁸.

On 13 October the Secretary of the Labour Party wrote to Balfour on behalf of the Party executive, who had instructed him at a meeting the previous week to put before the government six queries, "with a view to eliciting information as to the present position of affairs". The questions dealt with restrictions still obtaining on trade via the Baltic, and asked when it was proposed that military action in Russia should cease. The Party was told that it was "impossible to fix such a date"⁴⁹. A further resolution reached the Foreign Office from Herbert Morrison, on behalf of the London Labour Party, who was content to "ask that the points dealt with will receive your careful consideration"⁵⁰. As the Call pointed out, people grumbled, they were discontented, they adopted resolutions protesting against intervention, sometimes they even threatened, "but they do nothing which could really frighten the bandits in office". People would "have to do something more than pass resolutions of protest"⁵¹.

Following an interview with Lloyd George, the proposed special conference of the T.U.C. met on 9 and 10 December 1919. A resolution was adopted which expressed ^{ing the} "profound dissatisfaction" of the deputation which had met the Prime Minister. No more was resolved, however, than to send a delegation to Russia to make an "independent and impartial inquiry into the industrial, political and economic conditions in Russia", and to consider a further report on the question at the next T.U.C. meeting⁵².

The resolution adopted at the special T.U.C. conference, in particular, fell short of the policy urged upon the labour movement by the National 'Hands off Russia' Committee, which in a circular of 18 September had called not only for the withdrawal of troops, but for the stoppage of supplies to Denikin and Kolchak, the raising of the blockade, and the establishment of diplomatic relations⁵³. The Committee was probably the most prominent body at this time urging opposition to the government's policy in Russia within the labour movement, and succeeded to the tasks which had earlier been performed by such bodies as the "People's Russian Information Bureau"⁵⁴. The Committee originated in a meeting held in London on 18 January 1919 at which 350 delegates were reported to have been in attendance, representing I.W.W., S.L.P. and B.S.P. branches, trade union branches, British and Irish socialist societies and a number of other bodies ranging as far as the West London League for the Blind⁵⁵. A fifteen-man committee was elected, and a resolution was adopted which called for an "active agitation upon every field of activity to solidify the Labour Movement in Great Britain for the purpose of declaring at a further conference, to be convened for that purpose, a general strike, unless before the date of that conference the unconditional cessation of Allied intervention in Russia.. shall have been announced". Some difference of opinion was recorded: some delegates believed that the workers would "only strike on economic questions ~~XXXXXX~~ immediately affecting them"; but it was agreed that 'Hands off Russia', or even the British Revolution, could subsequently be added to such demands. The bodies represented should form 'Hands off Russia committees' in their own localities⁵⁶.

In view of the very limited extent to which the labour movement in fact engaged in active opposition to intervention, in circumstances of ~~unprecedented~~ ~~unprecedented~~ labour unrest., it is difficult to sustain the claim that the Committee was a "powerful force" in the agitation⁵⁷, and still less that that agitation had a considerable influence upon the government's Russian policy. The meeting in London established only a body responsible for the capital⁵⁸. A further meeting was held on 8 February in the Albert Hall, presided over by E.C. Fairchild, and addressed by Lansbury, John Maclean, Wallhead and others. The Times reporter considered that "young aliens of Jewish extraction.. formed a large part of the audience"; and Professor

Simpson of Edinburgh, who attended the meeting and sent a report of its proceedings to the government, agreed that "half of the audience was of alien origin and that three-quarters of that alien half were Jews"⁵⁹. Simpson also professed to notice a "distinct advance in audacity of statement and general bearing", and an increase in the waving of red flags. Yet less than one-third of the proceedings of the meeting had, he thought, been devoted to Russian affairs⁶⁰. The Call's report termed the meeting "memorable", but conceded that the difficulties of transport had been "without a parallel in recent years", limiting, presumably, the attendance. The grounds upon which it chose to criticize the government's policy was that it constituted a "flat denial of their own announcements in support of the principle of self-determination". On this score, it noted, the organizers of the demonstration had received the "active assistance and support of a legion of people in the country who do not ordinarily, as yet, find themselves in alliance with the B.S.P." Messages of support for the demonstration were, indeed, recorded from Morel, Bertrand Russell, Ponsonby, and Bernard Shaw⁶¹. Such was the basis of the Committee's opposition to intervention in Russia that while composed mainly of Labour and trade union politicians, it attracted also, as Kenworthy recalled, a "sprinkling of Liberals, Quakers, Pacifists, and even some Conservatives"⁶². A manifesto issued by the Woolwich 'Hands off Russia' Committee pointed out that what the Committee stood for was simply 'hands off Russia': while the Woolwich committee ^{itself} considered that workers were in control in Russia, the 'Hands off Russia' Committee had avoided "expressing any definite opinion on this point"⁶³.

A further meeting took place in Manchester on 21 June 1919, which condemned intervention in Russia, and also military and industrial conscription. Smillie had warned the delegates of the "perpetuation of militarism and conscription for all time"⁶⁴. Following the Conference it was agreed to establish a National Hands off Russia movement "which accepted the broad principle of non-interference in Russia". The Conference appointed a Committee, the chairman of which was A.A. Purcell and vice-Presidents of which were Cramp, Shaw, Peet, and Brassington. W.P. Coates, the B.S.P. National Organizer, was loaned to the body as Secretary, and offices were taken in Manchester⁶⁵. Coates told an interviewer in Tiflis in 1923 that the Committee had been "inaugurated in August 1919"⁶⁶. A

National Organizer was eventually appointed in September⁶⁷. Already by this time the evacuation of Northern Russia had been decided upon by the Cabinet, as well as the re-direction of support to Denikin rather than Kolchak, and the decision on 12 August that a 'final' contribution should now be made to Denikin. The Cabinet had reversed its ~~policy~~ ^{policy} ~~decision~~ before a national 'Hands off Russia' organization had been formed. Pollitt conceded, moreover, that while "every effort was made to intensify all the work connected with the Hands off Russia Movement", they were "not able to develop the mass movement to the point where the trade unions were prepared to take strike action"⁶⁸. It had no greater success, as we have seen, in persuading the T.U.C. to endorse its four-point programme. Indeed somewhat later the attempt to organize among unionists led to the publication of an acrimonious correspondence in which the National Transport Workers' Federation accused the Committee of "attempting to induce its members to strike without the authority of their Unions"⁶⁹.

The Labour Party in Parliament offered, certainly, no greater resistance to intervention than the party outside it. Labour MPs seemed, indeed, hardly less concerned to denounce the principles of Bolshevism and of extra-constitutional action in the labour movement, than to attack government policy in Russia. Bolshevism, Graham told the House of Commons, was a "mixture of tyranny, autocracy, plunder and social and political ideals.. There could hardly be a more dangerous mixture in any country"⁷⁰. Bad as the old regime was, J.H. Thomas held, "it is infinitely worse today"; and ~~that~~ ~~bad~~ as the German Government had been, it "certainly was preferable to the atrocities that are committed in the name of the Soviet Government"⁷¹. It was, Clynes declared, the "very negation of Socialism", especially in its rejection of Parliament⁷². Intervention, however, was believed not to be justified, since it constituted a violation of the principle of self-determination; and in any case, as Clynes put it, "military interference with what is going on in Russia on a large scale is beyond our power, and must be ruled out as totally impossible", while military intervention on a small scale was futile. He suggested that it would be "better to try and kill Bolshevism by feeding it rather than by fighting it"⁷³. The New Statesman agreed that force had failed against the Bolsheviks: "it is time for other measures". In particular it believed ~~that~~ the blockade of Russia had probably done more than anything else to maintain

the Bolsheviks in power; and ^{it behind} in the power of an economically re-established Russia to "make short work of Bolshevism". To raise the blockade would probably constitute, it considered, the "severest blow that Great Britain is capable of dealing to the Bolshevik regime"⁷⁴. The raising of the blockade and the establishment of a complete peace with Russia, declared 'Labour's Russian Policy', a statement of party policy, would no more imply moral approval of (the Bolshevik government) than did our formal recognition of the Tsar's Government"⁷⁵. Clynes claimed with some justification that there was a "definite Labour policy on the question of intervention in Russia, and, if the words of the Prime Minister mean what they say, that Labour policy is not different from the policy of the Government"⁷⁶.

Labour MPs were particularly impressed with the danger that government policy might lead to serious outbursts of social unrest. The House of Commons was assured that "in the event of any attempts being made to engineer anything in the form of a revolution" Labour parliamentarians would be "standing up against any such movement" and would "not give encouragement either to revolution or to unofficial action in the Labour movement"⁷⁷. The Party stood for the "policy of law, order and constitutional government"⁷⁸. In Clynes' view, the movement should "think, in the main, in the terms of their country, and be moved, in the main, by inspirations of real patriotism", not "those narrower class struggles" which some groups were currently "pressing too far"⁷⁹. It was precisely because the Labour representatives did "not want to see the spread of disorder and anarchy" that they declared themselves "in favour of immediate peace, democratically considered"⁸⁰. Hartshorn referred to the "intense feeling that exists in this country at the present time in relation to this particular question". He was as "whole-heartedly opposed to the spread of Bolshevism in this country as any man in the House, but (he saw) a real danger of it taking root .. and of its pretty rapid development", and feared that the attitude of Churchill would "help very considerably in that ~~direction~~ development"⁸¹. H.H. Thomas thought that the people of the country, especially those who had sons in the Army, were "alarmed and amazed" that they should be sent to Russia. He believed that "nothing would be more fatal in the present industrial situation than for it to go forth that, because we happen to disagree, and we do disagree,

with the Russian Constitution, we are prepared to send or even keep troops there for the purpose of interfering with what after all are the internal affairs of that particular country"⁸². There was an "intense dislike to any of our soldiers remaining in Russia", Adamson added, and the government would be "well-advised to take steps for bringing back our men.. at the earliest possible moment". The situation represented "one of the dangers of serious trouble in this country"⁸³.

The government's eventual abandonment of intervention, and its efforts to restore normal trading relations with the European continent, were welcomed for the same reason. Adamson held that "unless you can get the world back quickly to work there is a great danger of universal disaster"⁸⁴. The blockade of Russia, Graham declared, apart from the human suffering to which it led, would "impose a burden upon us, because we shall be committed ultimately to some policy of reconstruction for Russia, as for the rest of the world". Britain needed Russian food imports, and Russia could take British exports, which because of government policy might be placed elsewhere⁸⁵. Russia should be given not only supplies, machinery and credit, Henderson believed, but what he coyly described as "advice.. in the restoration of her economic life"⁸⁶.

Revolutionary Russia, it has been suggested, was "central in Labour thought on foreign affairs" and the "chief issue in foreign affairs" dividing the Labour Party and the Conservatives⁸⁷. This was hardly apparent, at least, in the House of Commons, where Balfour, indeed, drew attention to the "extraordinary measure of agreement" which existed⁸⁸. The intervention issue had been raised in the War Office debate on 29 May, the Labour executive reported, following an "unsatisfactory speech" from Churchill⁸⁹. It was pointed out at the conference, however, that it had been raised not by the Labour Party as such, but by a private member of the Labour Party⁹⁰. An amendment was proposed by Colonel Wedgwood to the Army Vote to reduce it by the amount of the subsidy to Debikin; but only 37 Labour MPs voted in favour of it⁹¹.

The action of the British trade union movement towards the Allied war upon the Russian revolution, Snowden wrote on 13 November, was the "'acid test' of its belief in democracy and internationalism. The full story of the apathy and weakness of British Labour towards the policy of the Allied governments in their determined efforts to overthrow the Socialist Revolution

and to re-establish the monarchical and capitalist regime is one which should make ~~every~~ democrat feel hot with shame and humiliation". The efforts of the official Labour movement from March until November 1917 had been "directed to trying to induce a wartorn and exhausted people to continue to give military support to the capitalist and imperialist war aims of the Allies"; and there had been no response to the call for a general peace.⁹² Despite Henderson's statement to the press that Labour had "never failed" to protest against intervention, commented the Workers' Dreadnought, the policy had in fact been inaugurated with Labour members in the government. The Party "made no protest in those days"; and the Inter-Allied Conference had, indeed, "set the seal of its approval on the Russian Intervention". The Party had now come to find intervention a "good stick with which to beat the Government"⁹³. Only rank-and-file pressure, Snowden noted, had secured the adoption of the resolution on Russia at the Labour Party Conference in June 1919; and it had been the non-Coalition Liberals, not the Labour members, who had been most active in the House of Commons. The indifference and complacency of official Labour amounted, he considered, to "practical support of the government's policy".. "If the Allied adventure fails, as it seems likely to do, it will not be due to the opposition of the British Labour Movement.. A determined attitude against this policy by British Labour would have brought intervention to an end long ago"⁹⁴. The charge was a harsh, but not unmerited one. Nor, indeed, is it sufficient to attribute responsibility for Labour's attitude to the Labour executive. The executive members, certainly, had no love of militant or extra-constitutional action: yet where rank-and-file pressure was strong and determined, it could make itself effective. This, evidently, was not the case. Basil Thomson, whose reports on "Revolutionary Organizations in the United Kingdom" generally exaggerated the revolutionary threat and the influence of Bolshevism, supported this view. The objection of trade unionists to intervention, he reported, was that "they do not see any necessity for it. They say that Russia has never been any good to us as an Ally, and should be left to settle her own affairs. No British lives ought to be lost for her sake". At the same time, it was "not at all likely that anything drastic will be done to stop conscription and intervention, for drastic action means the loss of wages for themselves"⁹⁵. Despite the "sound and fury" of resolutions on Russian policy, the rank and file refuse to be interested in

anything Russian"⁹⁶. While the outcry against intervention was loud, the motive was "apparently not sympathy with the Bolshevik regime, but the fear of individual soldiers and sailors of being sent abroad again". Even the extremists, he told the Cabinet, had "realised that it would be useless to call a national strike on such a question"⁹⁷. Pollitt, certainly, who was probably one of those whom Thomson had in mind, admitted the truth of the charge⁹⁸. Murphy, who was another, conceded that the British labour movement "rejected the principles of the Soviet Revolution so far as its own development ~~was~~ concerned"⁹⁹. It is indeed difficult to find (at least until the end of 1919, by which time intervention had effectively ended) a case in which a significant section of the labour movement called for an end to the government's policy in Russia in terms which clearly extended beyond a desire to avoid the loss of working-class lives and unnecessary expenditure to a defence of the principles of the Bolshevik regime itself. There was no 'fight to save the Soviet Republic'.

Labour's opposition to Allied intervention in Russia, again, derived from a variety of motives, among which the classic liberal principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries (especially where this was likely to prove an expensive operation) was only one. Labour sought to bring to an end wartime restrictions on civil and trade-union liberties, which the continuation of the war in the form of intervention in Russia appeared likely to prolong. This contributed to the fact that opposition to intervention began to develop on a significant scale only after the Armistice; and throughout the following year the demand for withdrawal of troops from Russia was combined with a number of issues of a more straightforward character. So long as intervention continued, McGurk told the 1919 Labour Party conference in his Presidential Address, there could be "no question of disarmament and the alleged need for retaining conscription in this country will remain... The workers of Great Britain will have no conscription, and we shall resort to every legitimate means to bring about its withdrawal."¹⁰⁰ Smillie remarked "was it not the duty of the trade unionists who were still free from the curse of militarism to safeguard the interests of their men who were away?". The Special Conference on the League of Nations on 3 April, at which the emergency motion calling for the withdrawal of troops from Russia had been adopted, carried as parts of the same resolution the demands

"to raise the blockade; to withdraw the Bill now before Parliament for the conscription of men for further military service; and to release forthwith all conscientious objectors"¹⁰¹.

The Triple Alliance included the same demands in the resolution adopted at its meeting on 16 April; and in the following month added the demand that the controversial circular seeking information on the reliability of troops in civil and industrial disputes, which the Herald had published, should be withdrawn. The ballot paper which it was decided to circulate on the question of the withdrawal of labour to end intervention in Russia referred also to the abolition of conscription and military intervention in trade-union disputes.¹⁰² Smillie pointed out, at the Triple Alliance conference at which the decision to circulate the ballot papers was taken, that with regard to Russia, it was impossible to know the real truth. Britain had, however, "quite sufficient trouble of its own", and had "come through quite sufficient" without "unnecessary intervention in the affairs of another nation outside of ourselves".¹⁰³ The Prime Minister, another delegate argued, had expressed the sentiments of the Labour Party on the question: non-interference. Neither the country's wealth nor ~~xxx~~ the lives of its citizens should be "wasted in Russia". Other matters, thought Tillett, were "much more important" than the Russian question.¹⁰⁴ Smillie agreed that the apparent desire of the government to crush trade union action by the use of troops, revealed by the Herald circular, would "of itself have been sufficient justification for calling a General Conference"¹⁰⁵. The movement against the Russian people, he told the Miners' Annual Conference, while a very important matter to them, was a "~~xxx~~ small matter to us". It affected the delegates "to this extent", that if the movement in Russia were allowed to be crushed, "our turn may come next"¹⁰⁶.

These related considerations emerged at the Labour Party Conference, which in addition to the endorsement of the resolution on intervention adopted resolutions calling for the repeal of the Defence of the Realm Act, under which civil liberties had been effectively suspended, during the war, and for the release of political prisoners and conscientious objectors. The general election Appeal had pledged the Party to seek the "destruction of all war-time measures in restraint of civil or industrial liberty"¹⁰⁷; and it was feared that the continuation of the war in Russia

might be used as a pretext for their maintenance. As Wallhead told the Conference, "if the reactionary government could force 180 millions of people under the heels of autocracy, did they not see that, even from the trade union point of view, it was going to react upon them. It was up to the Labour Party to stop the damnable brigand war in Russia, in the interests, not only of Russia, but of the British people.." ¹⁰⁸.

It was a danger to which socialist bodies were equally alive. It was "up to us to save the Russian Socialists" declared Sylvia Pankhurst, "and thereby to save ourselves.. A state of war with the Bolsheviks will enable the capitalists of all countries to attack, intern and harry all whom Northcliffe and his coterie care to consider as Bolsheviks. That means all sections of the Socialist movement not in alliance with the authorities" ¹⁰⁹. If reaction triumphed in Russia as a result of the efforts of Allied militarism, Labour Leader pointed out, socialists would "fasten upon ourselves the chains we forge for Russia" ¹¹⁰. There were, in fact, compelling reasons for Labour opposition to intervention, apart altogether from a hypothetical desire to assist the Soviet revolution. The continuation of the war in Russia appeared to involve expenditure and the loss of life on a major scale, and to threaten the continuation of the war-time restrictions upon political expression and trade-union activity. This could not but provoke the opposition of all sections of the labour movement, whatever their attitude to Bolshevism, towards the government's policy in Russia. The explanation of 'solidarity' is a superfluous one. ¹¹¹

The readiness at least to consider industrial action for political ends must, moreover, be placed in context. The immediate post-war period was one of great labour unrest: over six times as many working days were lost in industrial stoppages, for instance, ^{in 1919} as had been the case in the previous year; and seven disputes occurred in which more than half a million working days were lost, compared with two each in 1918 and 1920 ¹¹². The Labour Party had, also, been placed in a very weak Parliamentary position following the 1918 general election. The election resulted not simply in a severe defeat for the Party's candidates as a whole, with the return of only 57 of 363 ^{endorsed} and 3 of 31 unendorsed candidates. It resulted, more specifically, in the near-elimination of the I.L.P. and radical section only three of the former being returned, a state of affairs variously described as the "temporary defeat of those who have stood for a sane

national and international policy", or as the "engulfing of Pacifism and Bolshevism"¹¹³. Those who had been elected, declared the Review of Reviews, represented the "sanest and best elements of Labour in the nation"; the "Pacifist and Bolshevik irreconcilables" had been "swept into limbo"^{113a}. Those closer to the Party had a shrewder idea of what this might mean in terms of the movement as a whole. To protect themselves from Bolshevism, the New Statesman noted, they must "at all costs, maintain the popular faith and confidence in the House of Commons.. Especially must we see that the Labour Party, the orderly constitutionalism of which is anathema to the Bolsheviks, is strongly and effectively represented in the new Parliament". Clynes agreed that the "best guarantee against violent forms of unrest was a large and independent Labour representation in the House of Commons"¹¹⁴. The result, Snowden forecast, would give an "irresistible impetus to the most extreme forms of industrial action", a prospect he evidently regarded with distaste¹¹⁵. Henderson wrote in April 1919 that the unrest which existed was "more widespread and deepseated than ever before in the history of industrial England". Its "chief danger" he found not in unrest which was "definitely organized and controlled and wisely guided and directed by recognized leaders", but in "sporadic local efforts". The chief political factor contributing to the industrial trouble he considered to be the under-representation of Labour in Parliament¹¹⁶.

The leadership of the Party in Parliament was entrusted to Adamson and Clynes: "both", wrote Snowden, "admirable representatives of Labour in their way, but neither of them has distinguished himself as a formidable champion of the political principles of the Party"¹¹⁷. Beatrice Webb was characteristically uncharitable regarding the "respectable but dull-witted Adamson, elected Chairman because he is a miner". He had "neither wit, fervour nor intellect; he is most decidedly not a leader, not even, like Henderson, a manager of men"¹¹⁸. The lack of a more vigorous opposition to the government in the House of Commons, Snowden noted, caused a good deal of dissatisfaction and criticism of the Party in the country; and in his Chairman's Address to the 1919 I.L.P. Conference, he pronounced the Labour Parliamentarians "very disappointing in regard to such fundamental questions as civil liberty and economic and international policy"¹¹⁹. Part of the trouble was that "on most of the leading questions of the day there was no ~~essential~~ ^{essent} difference" between the parties¹²⁰. At the 1919

Labour Party Conference, the Parliamentary Party was described as a "failure", and its report was referred back¹²². Shinwell believed that there was a "tendency on the part of the rank and file to swing away from Parliamentary activity to industrial action. He thought that was very largely due to the inactivity of the Party in the House"¹²².

Within Parliament, the Review of Reviews commented, the Labour representatives were "not likely to have much influence over a Government which still controls a majority of over three hundred votes". It was "not surprising therefore that Labour places its faith in its industrial power"¹²³. Even constitutionalists within the labour movement, such as MacDonald, were prepared to accept extra-constitutional action in such circumstances. Where action, he wrote, was "defensive against injustice, where Parliamentary forms are abused by a Party in power, where governments seek to deprive Labour of its due rights.. then industrial action is justified"¹²⁴. The decision to hold the general election so soon after the end of the war, in an atmosphere of public hysteria, was widely regarded as one which had frustrated the expression of the popular will; and the government's Russian policy was held to be one conducted in secrecy and despite the opposition of the public and Parliament, and therefore to be unconstitutional. In such a situation the "justification for direct action", it was declared, was that it could "compel the government to be constitutional": that it represented, in fact, a "constitutional check upon tyranny". The workers, Bob Williams wrote, were "really being compelled to adopt the same extra-constitutional methods for the restitution of the British Constitution"¹²⁵.

Labour was prepared in these circumstances to act outside the constitution in order to attempt to secure the withdrawal of military forces from Russia. Had this been a movement of principled solidarity with Soviet Russia, it might have been reasonable to expect its extension in support of movements with which it had something in common, in Ireland and Hungary, where popular and national forces were opposed by Allied troops, at the expense of the principles of non-interference and national self-determination. This was not the case. The Socialist International formally condemned "any intervention in (the) internal affairs" of Hungary in April; but when the "Hungarian working classes cried out for help to their comrades", it was subsequently stated, "their answer was the shameful

fiasco of the general strike of protestation of July 21" (1919)¹²⁶. Allied action, wrote Mrs Snowden, was an "outrageous violation of all the professions about radical unity and national rights and self-determination.. Cannot International Socialism do something to prevent this iniquity?"¹²⁷. The Labour Party conference the following year was informed that the Hungarian labour movement, "thrown ~~from~~ power by the intrigue and the military forces of the Allies", had been "almost exterminated". A Labour delegation which visited Hungary in May 1920, at the invitation of the Hungarian government, confirmed this impression¹²⁸. This was, however, some months after the overthrow of Bela Kun's government. Not without reason the Hungarian Communists and Social Democrats charged the workers of the Allied countries with "heartless indifference"¹²⁹.

On the Irish question it was "time", Stewart wrote in Forward, "that the British Labour Party spoke out strongly, decisively and fearlessly". Two years later Morel declared that the party was doing "precious little" about the war in Ireland, which had by this time attained major dimensions¹³⁰. Labour, the Socialist International was told at Berne in January 1919, had "always supported Home Rule for Ireland", and was "recognized by the Irish people as a steady and reliable ally in their agitation for National Self-Government"¹³¹. The Party Conference held the previous summer had, however, contemplated only "self-determination in all purely Irish affairs"¹³². The Labour Executive in a statement of March 1920 accepted that there should be a vote on the issue of union or separation; but not, however, at that time, since the atmosphere was held to be "neither healthy nor normal", and might result in what was described as the "sacrificing of Ireland's ultimate interests to the immediate satisfaction that might be gained by a total repudiation of any form of connection with their old-time political oppressors"¹³³. The Review of Reviews noted an "apparent reluctance of British labour to side definitely with Sinn Fein"¹³⁴. The subsequent efforts made by Labour to prevent the outbreak of war with Russia during the Polish crisis were regarded by Irish workers, it was reported, "with a mixture of amusement and contempt", since they could not "forgive or forget the fact that British Labour (had) not yet succeeded in stopping the war on Ireland". Labour's belief in freedom was "restricted to the other side of Europe"¹³⁵.

It was indeed "unfortunate", wrote MacDonald, that the Labour Party was "becoming suspect in Ireland"¹³⁶. The despatch of a Commission

of Inquiry to Ireland ~~InterXXXXXX~~ was unable to reverse this development. It "did not get to the hearts of the people whom it saw", and in general "did not make a very good impression". However, while a "majority of the world men", thought MacDonald, might be "in favour of a Republic", this was "no reason why the Labour Party should declare for it"¹³⁷. The Labour Commission proposed that a constituent assembly should be elected, after peace had been restored¹³⁸, to establish an Irish constitution; but it should be required to "prevent Ireland from becoming a military or naval menace to Great Britain"¹³⁸. C.R. Buxton noted the "strange indifference of the British Labour Movement to the tragedy of Ireland"¹³⁹.

It was an indifference which must tend to reinforce the impression that Labour supported a popular political movement, as in the case of Soviet Russia, when an attempt to crush it appeared to involve a threat to its interests, and in particular to political and trade union liberties, and when it appeared likely to prove an expensive failure. Wartime military controls had come to an end, however, by the spring of 1920; and proposals to re-constitute the Council of Action to force an end to ~~X~~ the war in Ireland (as appeared to have been achieved when a Polish war was threatened in the summer of 1920), or to attempt to bring about a settlement consistent with the wishes of the political movement (Sinn Fein) which evidently commanded overwhelming electoral support on the part of the Irish population were not adopted, or even seriously advocated. Labour had no greater sympathy for the Bolsheviks than for Sinn Fein: it believed, simply, that an armed attempt on the part of the Allies to overthrow their regime would lead to conscription and censorship, and would fail notwithstanding. It might, worse, even strengthen the position of the Bolsheviks, as the Mensheviks were believed to have concluded¹⁴⁰. These considerations did not operate in favour of the independence movement in Ireland. A socialist journal commented: "to our everlasting shame we have stood by in cowardly silence while Ireland has been ravaged by fire and sword"¹⁴¹.

On 24 April Polish forces began an offensive against Soviet Russia. There seemed no doubt that Poland, a "bankrupt State.. could not put a regiment on the field without the connivance of the Allies"¹⁴². The marionettes,

wrote the Herald, "are in Warsaw, but the strings are being pulled from London and Paris". The country was "again at war with Russia". On 8 May Kiev was captured by the Polish forces. Despite government assurances, it was not a Polish war but an "Allied offensive"¹⁴³.

A ship called the "Jolly George" was at this time awaiting cargo in the East India Dock. Some of the cargo which arrived for it was packed in crates labelled "OHMS Munitions for Poland". The dockers sent a deputation to Bevin and Thompson of the Dockers' Union, and received assurances that the Union would support them if they refused to load or coal the ship. The crates had to be disembarked¹⁴⁴.

It is difficult to agree, however, that the dockers' action was "indicative of the intense feeling aroused among Trade Unionists" or that the British workers were now "ready for any action to defend workers' Russia"¹⁴⁵. The extremists were "much elated" by the incident, Basil Thomson reported, but he considered that "most of the agitation will end in talk for there is no real support for the cause of the Russian Soviets among the working classes"¹⁴⁶. Pollitt, who was actively involved in the dockside agitation, confessed himself "greatly disappointed" by an earlier failure to secure a stoppage of work on two Belgian barges which were being converted for the transport of munitions to Poland. On 1 May the Danish steamer Neptune left the East India Docks: "we had", said Pollitt, "failed to stop her"¹⁴⁷. Following the 'Jolly George' incident, the Hands off Russia Committee urged that a national conference be called to declare a strike ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ to force the government to attempt to bring about peace between Poland and Russia. "Mere pious resolutions won't force the hands of the Government", stated the appeal, "but resolutions backed by industrial action will"¹⁴⁸. A week later an appeal, signed by a number of prominent trade unionists, called for a conference "in order to declare a National 'down-tools' policy of 24 Hours to make peace with Russia". Peace, they believed, was "to the interest of the organized workers of Great Britain": the European economic situation, indeed, necessitated it. Moreover "King George V created a precedent of a down-tools policy by advocating a general cessation of work on November 11th as a reminder of Armistice Day". The Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. and the Labour Party were urged to follow this worthy initiative¹⁴⁹.

✓ The President of the Labour Party Conference the following month, however, noted that while they had "protested" they had nevertheless

stood "almost idly by while the reactionary forces of the world - capitalists, governments, and Press - have been putting forth every endeavour to strangle the Socialist experiment which has been going on, in face of truly colossal difficulties, in Russia". There was no need to be in full sympathy with the policy and outlook of Russian Bolshevism to oppose their action. The conference adopted a resolution which declared that the economic restoration of Europe was the "only secure foundation for the peace and prosperity of the world", and called upon the Allied governments to recognize the Russian government and to end all direct or indirect attacks upon it. Proposing the motion, Tom Shaw called for the extension of the hand of friendship "not merely to Lenin and Trotsky, but to the 160 millions of peace-loving people in Russia", who might otherwise acquire a "hatred of this country that could only end in another war". All Central and Eastern Europe was in a ferment because, he believed, "of our mad policy". No more was proposed, however, to implement the policy than to send another deputation to the Prime Minister to urge the "Necessity of peace with Russia and the lifting of the blockade with a view to the renewal of trade activities"¹⁵⁰.

An addendum to the resolution was proposed by Hodgson, a B.S.P. representative, calling for the summoning of a national conference to organize a general strike to end the government's direct and indirect support of attacks on Soviet Russia. In the twelve months since the last resolution on Russia had been adopted there had been, he told the conference, "no earnest attempt ^{had been made} to act upon it". It was urged that "something more than a deputation to Mr Lloyd George was necessary"¹⁵¹, and something more than a deputation would have been undertaken, had it indeed been the case that a "powerful movement to halt intervention stirred the British working class, .. under the leadership of the militants and revolutionaries. " . The proposal was, however, "heavily defeated"¹⁵².

It was, in fact, not ~~simply~~ a concern for the fate of the Soviet Republic, but a threat that the war which had developed between Poland and Soviet Russia might come to involve British forces which led to the most striking demonstration of Labour opposition to government policy towards Soviet Russia, the establishment of the Council of Action in August. The Polish offensive had been stopped, and then reversed by the Red Army, which had instituted a successful counter-attack. Armistice negotiations,

negotiations, however, broke down at the beginning of August; and it appeared possible that the British Government would be required to fulfil a promise to maintain Polish independence. The Times and the Herald agreed (for once) that - as the Herald put it - "exactly six years after Britain's declaration of "The War to end Wars" - the country is again in urgent danger of a great war".¹⁵³ The Review of Reviews considered that Europe was "faced with a situation that not only threatened to undo the whole work of the Peace Treaty, but even to plunge the continent once again into the ghastly nightmare of War".¹⁵⁴ It was difficult to know how seriously to take the threat; but recent experience of the Government's relations with Russia, and of Churchill's conduct in particular, suggested that the nation might have a military engagement sprung upon it, as was thought to have been the case in 1914, were the government to be left the slightest opportunity of doing so. Henderson, accordingly, as Secretary of the Labour Party sent a telegram to every local branch of the Party describing as "extremely menacing" the possibility of an extension of the Russo-Polish war, and urging local parties to organize demonstrations against intervention and the supply of men and munitions to Poland.¹⁵⁵ The Party issued a statement that in view of the "grave situation" which had arisen in relation to the Russo-Polish war and the possibility that the government might involve the people in its extension, a meeting would be held on Monday 9 August with the Parliamentary Labour Party and the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C.¹⁵⁶ The issue was not in doubt. As an "Appeal to the British Nation" stated it, over the signatures of Purcell, O'Grady, Clynes, Lansbury and Williams, it represented a protest against an attempt to involve the country in a war, which would "drive us over the precipice of bankruptcy, on the edge of which we now stand". British workers wanted "peace - a real peace, a lasting peace - rather than endless wars and threats of war".¹⁵⁷ Unless working people wanted militarism and conscription back, and "your sons dragged away and butchered, desmembered, disembowelled, as your brothers have been - act now".¹⁵⁸ The Labour Party appeal "met with an unparalleled response", it was later reported, "and it was evident that Labour had mobilized public opinion rapidly and successfully".¹⁵⁹ Demonstrations, in many cases on a massive scale (10,000 turned out in Glasgow) took place; and in a special Sunday edition the Herald urged "Not a Man, Not a Gun, Not a Sou".¹⁶⁰

The following day, Monday 9 August, the meeting took place as arranged

in the House of Commons of the T.U.C. Parliamentary Committee, the Labour executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party. A resolution was adopted with what was described as "surprising unanimity", expressing the conviction that war was "being engineered between the Allied Powers and Soviet Russia on the issue of Poland", a plan which if successful would constitute an "intolerable crime against humanity". It warned that the "whole industrial power of the organized workers" would be used to defeat the war; and that affiliated bodies would be instructed to prepare their members for a "down tools" call from a national conference, which would shortly be convened. A Council of Action was "immediately constituted to take such steps as may be necessary to carry the above decisions into effect"¹⁶¹. The Council was composed of five members each from the three bodies in attendance, with powers to co-opt further members¹⁶². The Council met immediately, and decided to convene a Special Conference to which trade unions affiliated to the T.U.C. and to the Labour Party should be invited to send representatives of their executives, and all societies affiliated to the Labour Party should send delegates¹⁶³.

The Council sought and obtained an interview with the Prime Minister the following day, Tuesday 10 August, and presented him with the resolution. Bevin, who presented the Council's case, declared that it was "not merely one in opposition to direct military action, but it is a declaration in opposition to what I would describe as an indirect war, either by blockade or by the supply of munitions or by assisting the forces that are now at war with Russia". They were ready and determined to resist the triumph of reaction and war. It was "not merely a political action", he declared, "but an action representing the full force of Labour and we believe it represents the desire of the great majority of the British people"¹⁶⁴. Labour supported the principle of Polish independence, but believed that it was not in fact threatened: a conviction strengthened by the publication later that day, in a special edition of the Herald, of the Russian peace terms¹⁶⁵. The Council wrote to the Prime Minister urging that the government clarify its attitude to peace terms with Russia¹⁶⁶. On 12 August, Bevin was summoned to 10 Downing Street, accompanied by some of his colleagues, and told of the Prime Minister's belief that the Soviet authorities were frustrating a meeting of the respective peace negotiators on the Polish frontier. Following an interview with Kamenev, Krasin and

Klishko of the Russian Trade Delegation, the Prime Minister was informed that after some difficulty in establishing contact the Polish negotiators were now at Minsk. The point, it appeared, would "not be pursued". The Prime Minister urged the delegation on its departure to "use its influence with the Russian Government to keep to the published Peace Terms rather than stiffen them, in view of the military successes then being achieved by the Red Army"¹⁶⁷. The Council made representations to the Trade Delegation to this effect, which were transmitted to Moscow; and the Council was subsequently informed that the original terms would be maintained.¹⁶⁸

It must be borne in mind, accordingly, that by the time ~~of~~ the National Conference assembled on 13 August, peace appeared in all essentials to have been secured, subject to the Soviet authorities making no major change in the peace terms offered to the Polish negotiators.¹⁶⁹ What was needed was a demonstration of determination and unity in order that this achievement should not be challenged. The conference was accordingly "one of the most striking examples of Labour unanimity, determination and enthusiasm in the history of the Movement"¹⁷⁰. The resolutions were carried without dissent, and no amendments were allowed: the avoidance of war was an "issue on which all the warring sections were absolutely united and determined"¹⁷¹. The was, Snowden recalled, a manifest determination not to permit any differences of opinion to obtrude into the discussions and thereby weaken the demonstration of unity on the one essential thing, that the "whole force of Labour should be employed to prevent Great Britain giving support in any form to a war against Russia". It was, he found, a "strange spectacle to see and hear the men - most of ~~whom~~ had been enthusiastic supporters of the Great War - displaying an almost religious fanaticism in opposition to war"¹⁷².

In his opening address to the Conference, Adamson, who presided, declared that at the beginning of the week the "situation in Europe appeared to be then so grave, and the black shadow of war so near", that the Labour Party and the T.U.C. had felt obliged to meet and to set up the Council. The Council, he said, had "focussed the practically unanimous opinion of this country against any more war^I or armed intervention in the affairs of other countries", and had done so "so effectively that up to the present the Government have been kept back from the slippery slope that would lead to another European conflagration". The Conference was intended to "demonst-

rate the deep and united feeling existing against any action on the part of our Government which would drag our people into war and abolish the prospect of peace in Europe". They were "not concerned about the merits ~~XXX~~ or demerits of the present rulers of Russia; the issue is far greater than that". He hoped for a demonstration of a "deep resolve to have nothing to do with assisting in the nefarious designs of those who care more for ~~XXX~~ conquest and the maintenance of force than they do for the welfare of the common people and the rights of nations to work out their own destinies"¹⁷³.

Bevin, presenting the report of the Council of Action to the conference, noted the general feeling that "last week, under what was almost fatalism, we were drifting again to war". On the question of war, whatever their views on ordinary industrial matters, "we felt convinced that we were justified in taking any and every means. Hence the absolutely unanimous resolution that was carried". The Council "began work immediately", as his report made clear. "We must", he stated, "have peace. Progress depends upon it. The economic salvation of the working classes depends upon it". The consciousness of the value of peace was "now being realised", he thought, "as it was never realised before". The Council was united in a "willingness to take any action to win world peace". No other measures, Clynes added, than those recommended could "save the country from being committed to war against its will"¹⁷⁴.

A resolution, proposed by Thomas, which endorsed the decision to establish the Council was carried unanimously. Another instructed the Council of Action to remain in being until satisfied that British military and naval forces would not be used in defence of Poland and against Russia, nor any blockade maintained, and "unrestricted trading and commercial relationships" established between Britain and Russia. The Council was authorised to call for "any and every form of withdrawal of labour which circumstances may require to give effect to the foregoing policy", and to endeavour to "sweep away secret bargaining and diplomacy and to ensure that the foreign policy of Great Britain may be in accordance with the well-known desires of the people for an end to war and the interminable threats of war"¹⁷⁵. The resolution would be used, said its proposer, Hutchinson, "intelligently but nevertheless determinedly, if it is required". The Council was empowered to take "any steps that may be necessary" to carry out the decisions of the Conference or the policy of the trade-union movement and

the Labour Party; and the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. was authorised to charge a levy of a halfpenny per member to be paid by each of its affiliated organizations "as and when required".¹⁷⁶

"One cannot say", wrote Snowden, "what would have happened if the Council of Action had been called upon to put the resolution into effect. Fortunately, the necessity never arose and shortly afterwards the Council of Action was dissolved".¹⁷⁷ A certain amount of activity was in fact undertaken subsequent to the Conference. The Council, which declared its intention of meeting daily "until further notice", assembled on 14, 15 and 16 August, and reached a decision that Labour bodies and trade-union branches should be asked to summon local conferences at which local Councils of Action should be formed.¹⁷⁸ It was decided to call not national "Peace with Russia" demonstrations the following Sunday, 22 August. "Make Sunday a day of national protest against war and in favour of an immediate peace between Britain and Russia..Demand peace, demonstrate for peace, organize for peace", it urged. A 'Manifesto to the Workers of Great Britain' called upon the workers "not to relax their efforts", to be "prepared to make every sacrifice in the cause of PEACE".¹⁷⁹

The resolutions which had been adopted at the Conference were forwarded to the Prime Minister. On 24 August the Council met the Russian Trade Delegation to urge the withdrawal of the proposal for a civic militia in Poland under the peace terms, and this was agreed by the Soviet Government. The Council sought a meeting with Balfour but he was prepared to meet only Adamson and his Parliamentary colleagues and "no further action was therefore taken in that direction".¹⁸⁰ On 5 September the Council agreed that it would be desirable to be represented at the Polish-Russian peace talks, and two delegates were appointed. The Council wrote to Lloyd George explaining the purpose of the deputation, and naming its members. They were refused passports, however, and were accordingly unable to travel.¹⁸¹ The local Councils were circularized from time to time on various aspects of the National Council's work, and asked to supply information concerning the manufacture and transport of war munitions. They were responsible for the organization of demonstrations for peace with Russia on 27 August and 17 October. The Council devoted considerable attention to the economic possibilities of trade with Russia, and a "special series of four leaflets dealing particularly with the relation of Russian peace to unemployment"

was issued in connection with the October demonstration¹⁸².

The studied moderation of the Council did not dispose of the fears of those who saw in its establishment an "attempt to impose Soviet rule"¹⁸³. The presence of Kamenev and Krasin, the Review of Reviews charged, was "undoubtedly.. largely responsible for the extraordinary speed and efficiency with which the Council of Action was brought to life.. Its constitution was so closely modelled upon the Russian system of Soviets that there could be no doubt as to its origin.. Bolshevik propaganda was poured forth from thousands of platforms". The Polish situation had been used as a "pretext for creating a complete organization of Workers' Councils on the Russian model with a view to subsequent action in the event of a general strike"¹⁸⁴. The victory of the Poles, wrote the Fortnightly Review, "miraculously saved this country from an attempt to introduce the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in accordance with the Russian precedent". The Labour Party seemed to mean in regard to foreign affairs, observed another journal which compared Lloyd George with Kerensky, "not England, but the East End Jew". With regard to the 'local Soviets' it consoled itself with the thought that there were, mercifully, "hardly sufficient Jews to go round"¹⁸⁵.

Even Lenin was convinced that "Bolshevism (was) growing among the English workers". The establishment of the Council of Action had "the same significance as the February revolution of 1917 had for us". The English press had - rightly - described the situation as one of 'dual power'¹⁸⁶. Britain had reached the stage of political relations which had existed in Russia after the February revolution. The Mensheviks in the Councils of Action - which, he declared, were Soviets, although not called such - would be obliged to assist the path of the British workers to Bolshevik revolution¹⁸⁷.

Only exceptional circumstances, however, had allowed the Council to be formed, and its powers remained strictly confined to the issue which had united Labour and popular opinion in support of its establishment, the threat of British military involvement in the Russo-Polish conflict. Only extraordinary unanimity had created the Council, wrote J.C. Wedgwood, ~~and~~ member of the Council, and only extraordinary unanimity had allowed the delegates to hand over their powers to such a Council. "War and the fear of war made this a special case": the "Christian Nonconformists" who supported the Council believed in the principle of non-interference and held that war was "morally wrong". This required the Council to "use the machinery

of general consent", which was "only rarely available"¹⁸⁸. The function and aims of the Council, wrote Snowden, were to be confined to the specific and definite purpose of preventing war, and it was "~~never~~ intended that the Council of Action should be used to aid general revolutionary propaganda". As Hodges noted, the motives which brought the Councils into being were "transient. Their main object is peace. There is no desire to destroy Parliamentary government, and there is no question of Soviet government"¹⁸⁹. Writing in the Labour Leader, Snowden opposed a possible attempt by the "extreme" section to widen the functions and aims of the Council.. "The great majority of the British Labour movement, while willing to employ, if necessary, Direct Action for the specific and definite purpose of preventing war", were "in no sense committed to an approval or support of Bolshevism"¹⁹⁰.

It was made clear to the local Councils that they were "not to supersede the powers of (the) trade-union executives", but were to act as "centres of information" and in accordance with any instructions issued by the National Council. The instructions were later expanded: local Councils were to exercise "care" as to their functions, and in particular were "not in any way to usurp the powers of trade union executives, especially so far as the withdrawal of labour is concerned..¹⁹¹". A circular from the 'Hands off Russia' Committee to local Councils, urging them to demand that the National Council call upon them to prevent the export of coal to France, and thereby to compel that country's abandonment of support for the anti-Soviet forces, provoked considerable trade-union indignation. C.T. Cramp, a Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen and a member of the Council, addressed a protest to the Committee in reply. He favoured, as they would be aware, anything which could be done to cripple the attacks upon Russia, but this must not lead to an "undue interference with the executive rights" of trade unions, and had been adversely commented upon at a meeting of the Council.¹⁹²

Such ~~XXXX~~ a conception of the role of the Councils was not to the taste of all of those who were involved in the movement; but such evidence as exists suggests that they were overwhelmingly those of not simply the leadership, but of the rank and file also. A letter from a branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union pointed out that the majority of people were "absolutely sick of war and the after-effects of war", and wanted only peace

and reconstruction. This was the "sole reason", the member thought, for the acceptance of the policy of 'direct action', and the only cause for which the members would consent to act¹⁹³. Basil Thomson reported that any attempt by the local Councils to involve themselves in questions outside the Polish conflict would be resisted by "bona fide trade-union branches. The Councils owed their existence to the "general fear of conscription that exists in the lower middle and working classes and not to any tenderness for Russia, for if there were no question of war there would be a very feeble response to a strike-call to enforce recognition of the Soviet government". The local reports which had reached him suggested that "although the men would refuse response to calling up notices, they would support the Government in countering Bolshevik action"¹⁹⁴. In the manifesto which appeared on 7 August under the signature of a number of prominent labour leaders, including three Communists (as Klugmann notes¹⁹⁵) it was pointed out that the country could "ill afford to spare even a few thousand men or a few million pounds from our depleted financial resources" for the purposes of the Polish "enterprise". Housing was "lamentably short", the prime necessities of life "becoming increasingly difficult to obtain.. The people in every country want only to devote themselves more and more to rational and peaceful reconstruction"¹⁹⁶. The issue, ^{admitted} ~~was~~ Palme Dutt in the Communist, was "not essentially a revolutionary class-issue, but simply a popular expression of war-weariness and horror at the prospect of being dragged into another war". The final outcome might, he thought, be disappointing to those who had built high hopes upon it¹⁹⁷.

Basil Thomson nevertheless expressed considerable ^{concern} that the response to the call for local Councils~~W~~ had been "considerable", and hundreds of them had been formed, he estimated, by the end of August.¹⁹⁸ The movement called for "very serious consideration". Local Councils were permeating that "great mass of the workers which is usually apathetic". Bolshevism was "openly advocated", and enormous quantities of 'extremist' literature was distributed. There had been adverse ~~comment~~ from the middle classes at the licence allowed to ~~an~~ ^{extremists}¹⁹⁹. A week later he found the tendencies which he had noted "becoming more pronounced". The local Councils were "adopting revolutionary resolutions"; they appeared to have the intention, if not the power, of broadening their scope. Lambeth Central Labour Party

was reported to be advocating the establishment of a Civil Guard; and moves were being made in Wales to federate the local Councils²⁰⁰. At Brighton a Cycle Corps was reported to be under formation; and the Councils were evolving in a radical direction also at Coventry, while at Merthyr and Cardiff the local Councils were, he thought, "almost frankly Soviets" and ready for revolutionary action of "even the most sanguinary kind"²⁰¹.

It was upon the potential of the local Councils, indeed, that most of the revolutionary groups had built their hopes. It was up to the rank and file, the Workers' Dreadnought declared, to infuse them with life and energy, so that they become "really Revolutionary Councils, which will work for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the Communist Republic". Set up in a society in which the class struggle was intensifying, the Worker noted, the Councils would be "forced by the logic of events to engage in activities which their promoters never contemplated". It was "essential", however, that the revolutionaries should play their part in the creation of the new weapon²⁰². Lansbury agreed that the local Councils should be as inclusive as possible, including trades councils, local Labour Party branches, the I.L.P. "and", he specified, "the new Communist Party" which had been formed shortly beforehand²⁰³. In setting up the Councils "let us not", he urged, "be afraid of words and bogies", such as 'Soviet', 'Bolshevism'.²⁰⁴ They nevertheless turned out to be, as Thomson noted, "shy of Communists"²⁰⁵.

The Communist Party had been formed at the Unity Convention on 1 August, but it was not represented at the meeting which had established the Council of Action on 9 August, and its attempts to secure representation at the National Conference on 13 August, and on the Council itself, were met with a firm refusal. Further attempts were unavailing, despite the party's intention to "insist upon such representation"²⁰⁶. Two members of the Council were at that time also members of the Communist Party; but this was a tiny minority in a body of twenty-seven, including co-opted members²⁰⁷.

In the meantime, McManus urged members to "get on to the local councils". Their work was not for the return of a Labour government, but for a "social revolution with administration by Soviets or Workers' Councils". The local Councils had "potentialities which should be nourished and developed". Even at the local level, Communists, however, so far did "not play the principal part in organising" the local Councils.²⁰⁸ Indeed a letter

to party branches a week later reported that a "large number of letters" had reached the central office from local branches complaining that there had been "considerable difficulty" even in securing representation upon them.²⁰⁹

A circular from the London and Home Counties Council of the party in mid-October expressed dissatisfaction that Curzon was permitted to send his despatches with impunity, and to suspend peace and trading negotiations at his pleasure. "Nothing" had been done. The Communists had been barred from the National Council of Action, and from the London Council, "despite repeated protests". In the absence of such representation, the formation was urged of several local Councils (Communists were occasionally able to secure representation as the delegates of trade union branches) into a Federation of London Councils of Action. "We know that the rank and file is with us", it was optimistically claimed; "the revolt against this apathy is everywhere". No more, however, was heard of the proposal.²¹⁰ Attempts by Stafford Trades Council to convene a Conference of Local Councils, and by the Party to "Fix a Date" for industrial action in the absence of a more satisfactory response from the government had no greater success.²¹¹ The Communist Party's role during the Council of Action period may have been (as has been claimed) a "most honourable" one; but it remains difficult to dispute that its role was at the same time a marginal one.²¹²

Granted the relatively weak position of the more radical sections within the Council, however, as compared with more aldermanic figures, it remains necessary to account for the adoption by a body composed in this way of a policy which, declared Thomas, were it implemented, would constitute a "challenge to the whole Constitution of the country".²¹³ It should accordingly be noted, in the first place, that it was unlikely that the Council would be compelled to exercise the powers with which it had been entrusted. They would not take action, Cameron promised the National Conference on 13 August, "unless they were absolutely compelled" to do so. The Labour Leader had, moreover, already termed the government's plans "defeated".²¹⁴ Lloyd George told the House of Commons that there had never, in fact, been the least justification for extra-constitutional means: Labour had acted, he declared, "merely in order to impress the public with the idea that they did it, and that had it not been for this dire threat this country would have been plunged into war". The government's policy,

as announced to the House of Commons, appeared to him to differ in no way from that enunciated at the Labour Conference: "the swinging of a sledge-hammer against an open door is merely made for the purposes of display"²¹⁵. There was an element of exaggeration in this: there was widespread suspicion that Britain might become involved through her alliance with France, which Thomas warned would not be countenanced, or through the secret machinations of Churchill, who more than any other individual, stated Clynes, had been responsible for the establishment of the Council²¹⁶. The Economist, however, considered that anything like a revival of war on its recent scale was "impossible": there had, indeed, been a "good deal of make-believe about the whole business". Labour was accused by another of having employed an "unscrupulous electioneering device"; and the New Statesman conceded that Labour's action had probably "had no influence on the course of events"²¹⁷. Conceived as a means of demonstrating the widespread popular opposition to the prospect of the government, or of sections within it, wishing to consider intervening in the Polish conflict, the Council of Action found that the hypothetical need to carry out its threat had begun to recede even before the National Conference had met.

In the second place, as Thomas, who had "always opposed direct action when (he felt) that the same result could be obtained through the ballot box", explained to the Conference, no Parliamentary means could do what the delegates were being asked to do; and "desperate as are our means, dangerous as they are, we believe that the disease is so desperate and dangerous that it is only desperate and dangerous methods that can provide a remedy". The action, added Shaw, was not opposed to the Constitution which "if (it) means anything at all.. means that the men and women of this country have the right to determine its policy, and the policy on which this government was elected was to end war". The Parliamentary Party had endorsed this view without hesitation: "no question of difference~~xxxx~~ of method ever arose, for this was a matter in which there was no alternative. No Parliamentary or political measures .. could be effective in themselves to save the country from being committed to war against its will"²¹⁸. It was not simply that the 1918 election had been, as MacDonald put it, a "conspiracy to cheat the country and take it by assault unawares, under circumstances which "deprive the Parliament of moral authority"²¹⁹. Within

the existing Parliament, in addition, Labour had been "taught to place no reliance whatever on the word or pledges of Ministers, and Russian policy in particular" had from the beginning been "conducted with conspicuous bad faith".²²⁰ Clynes told the Commons that he doubted whether the country had ever lived through a period of greater secrecy in matters of the highest importance than in the previous twelve or fifteen months. "We cannot call that democratic government. It is not even representative government".²²¹ In foreign affairs in particular, noted Wedgwood, Parliament had now "no voice and no ears and no control": the constitution had "broken down so far as foreign affairs are concerned".²²²

"We Parliamentarians", MacDonald wrote earlier in the year, had before them a "fight against revolution and direct action". It was however "sound democratic doctrine" to take extra-Parliamentary action when a Parliamentary majority set aside the national will. Accordingly when what he termed the "lying and unscrupulous gang which now controls international policy" threatened to involve the country in a demonstrably unpopular war, such action was not an attack upon, but on the contrary an affirmation of the Constitution.²²³ There was "as much Communism about the Council of Action and the policy that created it, as in taking a breakfast".²²⁴ It had been an emergency measure to meet an emergency situation, wrote Forward, as a result of the "abuse by the Government of Parliamentary power".²²⁵ Labour's action, indeed, had "restored constitutional government in Great Britain", and "reasserted the authority of Parliament over matters of war and peace". It had been a "great victory for constitutionalism".²²⁶

A considered statement of the whole problem of 'direct action and the constitution' was published by the I.L.P. The necessity of their day, the author, C.J. Bufdock, found, was "drastic action in defence of the constitution, with which Mr Lloyd George in his period of office has so seriously tampered". He had done his best to convert the government of the country into a dictatorship, while maintaining an outward show of democratic form. The Russian intervention had in particular been a "story of unconstitutionality": it had all been done in secret, and each stage had been "engineered behind the backs of 'the representatives of the people'", a "gross betrayal of the electors". Labour, he concluded, "so far from attacking the British constitution", was precisely "defending the constitution against those who would wreck it".²²⁷

While this was naturally the charge of their opponents, it is

difficult to see the Councils movement as one in support of Soviet Russia or Bolshevik principles as such. Such a purpose was, certainly, explicitly disclaimed by its leaders. Addressing the National Conference, Adamson told the delegates that they were "not concerned about the merits or demerits of the present rulers of Russia", and they were not concerned with the "virtues or vices of the Bolshevik form of government"²²⁸. Thomas told the House of Commons that so far as Soviet methods were concerned, he did not agree with them, nor with Lenin or Trotsky. If the Russian people did, however, this was their own business²²⁹. Part, indeed, of the burden of Labour's criticism of the government was that its activities were in fact "calculated, not to weaken the Bolshevik government, but to strengthen it". The party believed, said Mills, that only when peace came would Bolshevik theories of administration be successfully challenged, a constituent assembly set up there and reforms introduced²³⁰. They did not want Bolshevik principles to spread, added Spencer; but this was precisely what the government's policy was likely to promote. Those who desired to confine the system of Soviet government to its narrowest limits "would do well", he advised, "to allow Russia to work out her own salvation along those lines"²³¹. Neither the French Government nor Churchill had been able to succeed in crushing Bolshevism by military force, said Clynes; perhaps it "would be better after their experiences to try some other method"²³².

What the country was concerned about, said Sexton, was that "under no circumstances shall this or any other Government compel them to go to war with any country". Men who were opposed to Bolshevism and "would tomorrow protest against being allied with Bolshevism" were nevertheless "solid" on this question. They were "not concerned about Russia or Poland"; and the Conference vote had not been upon the question of whether they should go to war with Russia, or what their attitude should be to Polish independence. "It was the opinion of men who differ on these questions" expressed "against war at any time and under any circumstances"²³³. To "meddle in affairs that do not concern us, to pledge our nation into a war that can be avoided, is a crime against humanity and against God", felt Wignall.²³⁴ This note recurred at the National Conference. Its resolutions constituted "Labour's Charter of Peace", suggested Bowen, a member of the Council. Labour would fight for peace, he declared, "for that peace which

the peoples of Europe have striven to attain for so ~~long~~ many years.. so that we can live the life that God Himself intended we should live with one another"²³⁵. The failure to do so, Thomas warned, might have serious consequences within Britain, and would seriously exacerbate labour unrest. More alarming still was the view of the Labour Leader that unless Allied policy were reversed, a chapter in human history would be initiated which might "lead to world-wide war, to world-wide starvation and to world-wide revolution"²³⁶.

Against this prospect not simply labour but large sections of middle-class opinion were united. The Polish offensive had been widely regarded as a purely aggressive venture, and had given Soviet Russia the sympathy of liberal opinion. Popular opinion of Polish actions was no doubt not improved by charge (denied indignantly by Harmsworth) that the Poles were using coloured troops²³⁷. Indeed there was every indication, Shaw told the National Conference, that "the whole of the people, whoever they are, with very few exceptions, are opposed to war with Russia. Clynes believed that the Party was "acting and speaking not merely for the Labour Movement, but that we were moulding and interpreting what we felt to be national opinion"²³⁸. Labour's action was declared to be the "echo of a huge consensus of opinion". Indeed it was reported that "some of the most enthusiastic people" at meetings in support of the Labour policy were "people who are generally understood to be called the middle classes". The government's policy had alienated not only the country's trade unionists, but a "good section of the middle classes and the business people", thought Mills.²³⁹ Concerning Russia and Poland, at least, the New Statesman reported, the views of Labour were shared by the City. "Everyone in England wants a settlement and peace"²⁴⁰. Labour knew that for once, the House of Commons was told, "they had the country not behind them, but in front of them"²⁴¹.

Without a doubt, Beatrice Webb considered, many non-Labour elements - "all the middle-class pacifists and many middle-class taxpayers" - had been grateful for the Labour Party's intervention. She was however inclined to doubt whether 'direct action', "unless it proved to be a symptom of public opinion among all classes, would have been sufficiently universal to be effective"²⁴². Yet if it was widespread public concern which allowed the Labour initiative to be made, this had at the same time

the corollary that Labour's threatened sanction was virtually a superfluous one: for widespread public concern, equally, formed an effective constraint upon government action.

Public ~~interest~~ began to ebb, however, once the immediate crisis had passed. Without the widespread popular support which had earlier existed, the Council was compelled in effect to relinquish the sanction of general industrial action with which it had been entrusted. In a manifesto issued on 28 August, "possibly to rehabilitate itself", thought Thomson, the National Council warned that it might still be necessary to prevent a continuation of open or disguised warfare against Soviet Russia, and to resort for this purpose to a partial or complete stoppage of work. They had utilized argument and persuasion, only to be met by evasion and subterfuge on the part of the government. The workers were accordingly called upon to "hold themselves in readiness for any call to action which may be made.. Be warned,- be ready and prepare for any contingency that may arise"²⁴³. One such contingency, evidently, was the possible continued supply of munitions to Poland, a supply which the Council declared "must be stopped". The Council was most carefully watching for such supplies, the Herald told its readers, and would certainly stop them when it was aware of them. Munitions for Poland, however, need not be addressed to Poland. They were, in short, "very much where ~~they~~ we have always been. The war ~~against~~ Soviet Russia goes on.. British Labour has not yet stopped it", because it had been "tricked and fooled by the Government as usual"²⁴⁴. It appeared also that army boots were being made for Poland in Northamptonshire, and the local officials of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives had asked their union and the Council to take appropriate action.²⁴⁵ The Secretaries of the Council did, in fact, report that a number of indications had reached them which suggested the manufacture and transport of munitions of war and other supplies for use by the Polish forces or in connection with General Wrangel's offensive in the latter part of 1920. In considering the reports, however, the Council "met with the difficulty that were Direct Action to be recommended, it could only be used effectively by the Trade Unions, and taking into consideration all the circumstances the Council felt it would be unfair to put the whole onus upon single sections of the Movement". A "general movement of a wider kind", it was considered, "would not have met with the successful response that it was evident such an appeal would

commanded had open war been declared by the Government early in August". Since then "public interest" had "waned considerably"²⁴⁶. So also, it appeared, had that of the labour movement as a whole. The response to the special levy for the Council of Action was not found satisfactory, and in October it was decided to send a second circular to those affiliated bodies which had not yet paid it. A total of 112 societies eventually contributed a sum of £9300. This represented less than half, however, of the number of bodies affiliated to the T.U.C. at the time²⁴⁷.

A good many people, the Manchest Guardian observed in November, had "probably almost forgotten by this time the existence of the Council of Action"; and the Council, indeed, had "not met regularly of late". It was still meeting from time to time, however, and it was now preparing to take a hand should any complication arise in the negotiations for the reopening of trade with Russia²⁴⁸. The Council met on 23 December, and a statement on the Russian trade and unemployment was issued for the consideration of the special Party Conference on Ireland six days later²⁴⁹. Coventry Council was reported to have prevailed upon the Mayor of the town to hold an open-air meeting upon the subject of trade relations with Russia²⁵⁰. Little more was heard of the Councils.²⁵¹ ~~IN MARCH 1921~~

As early as 25 August Colonel Malone, in a letter to a friend, had observed that from what he had seen of them, the Councils of Action, both local and national, should rather be termed 'Councils of Inaction'. They were "mostly in the hands of reactionary labour parliamentary place seekers. The most they want is a General Election."²⁵² "Frankly", declared a writer in the Communist, "the National Council of Action has failed". It had been formed to prevent supplies and munitions being sent in support of the attack on Soviet Russia, which it was "quite obviously not doing". Somehow, from somewhere in the country, "those supplies are being sent". The war, Malone told the 'Hands off Russia' Committee, "was still going on", and munitions were "still being despatched from this country"²⁵³. British workers, commented the Worker, had formed a Council of Action, "and then, as if that were enough work for a year, we have gone to sleep again". The movement had not gone beyond the bounds of a purely pacifist, anti-war action. The process of communist education of the British working class, Philips Price tactfully concluded, would "take some time"²⁵⁴.

The post-war boom came to an abrupt end in October 1920. Unemployment more

than doubled in the last quarter of the year; and the figures for those unemployed of the membership of certain trade unions almost trebled. In Sheffield the number of those unemployed doubled in only one week after 16 October; and it was unemployment "of a kind and ^{of an} extent unknown ~~XXXX~~ before 1914", which formed a "new experience for the local working class"²⁵⁵. Foreign trade was especially in decline. In such circumstances the concern which the Council of Action had come to manifest for the development of trade relations with Soviet Russia ~~became~~ increasingly ~~shared~~ ^{to be} shared within the labour movement as a whole. Already in March Maclean had pointed out to the House of Commons that Russia was willing to take locomotives, railway rolling-stock, and engineering products from Britain, and willing to send in return oil, grain, timber and the goods which were needed to restore pre-war ~~levels~~ of production in Britain. The prospect was one which "must appeal to the commercial instincts of business men, to say nothing of the practical needs of the very people themselves"²⁵⁶. Labour and Independent Liberals had urged the opening up of trade with Russia "time and time again". If they were to "save this country, if we are to effect the security and happiness of the people, to remove unrest and discontent and prevent the social revolution", Swan urged, then that trade must be restored, allowing prices to be reduced²⁵⁷.

The opening of negotiations with the Russian Trade Delegation, and the threat that the talks might be broken off at the time of the Polish crisis, brought this theme to the fore. Krasin's arrival was welcomed. The Cabinet had been beaten, Forward considered, partly by public opinion, but "mainly by sheer necessity. We must enter into trading relations with Russia. . or we shall be left out"²⁵⁸. The seriousness of the economic situation in Europe, noted the Labour Leader, which was beginning to be felt in Britain, and could be alleviated by the opening up of Russia to trade, should influence the government to carry the negotiations to a successful conclusion²⁵⁹. The possible breakdown of the negotiations was viewed with alarm by the Party Conference: no private financial interests, it resolved, should be allowed to stand in the way of an immediate resumption of trade with Russia²⁶⁰. Nor was this enough: the government must "face the inevitable", thought MacDonald (perhaps aware that this was, of any government, an optimistic assumption) and recognize the Soviet government, and make peace. One of the greatest gains which he foresaw was the "cessation of Bolshevik mischief-

making". The Russo-Polish conflict had a "very serious bearing" upon the internal state of the country, Clynes told the House of Commons; and on this basis he felt entitled to condemn government policy²⁶¹. The war could not be continued, Thomas argued, without the effects being felt in Britain. The "one solution for the world trouble" was not its continuation, but the establishment of peace which would set industry going again. Summing up the change, the Labour Leader noted that Labour had been "compelled.. to take the international view", and forced to recognize that "international policy largely determined industrial conditions at home"²⁶².

Industrial conditions excited concern not only in Labour circles by the latter part of the year. By the end of the year the figure had more than doubled (as we have seen) to almost 8% of the insured workforce; and by March, when the Russian Trading Agreement was signed., it had reached 15%. Over a million applications for employment were received in January 1921, and the number increased rapidly, reaching nearly two million in April. The overall figures concealed the fact that those sectors which depended more than others upon foreign trade were especially seriously affected. The percentage of the insured population registered as unemployed in iron and steel manufacture, tinsplate, engineering goods, ironfounding and ship-building reached a third, a half, or even more of the total in March and June 1921²⁶³.

In October Henderson announced his conversion to the view that "one immediate and practical way of dealing with the growing menace of unemployment" was to develop trade with Soviet Russia. It would mean "employment to the workers in the engineering, textile, clothing and boot and shoe industries"²⁶⁴. British imports from and exports to Russia in 1913 amounted respectively to nearly £100 million and £50 million, at current prices, Adamson reminded the House. The imports could make a considerable contribution to the reduction of prices in Britain; taken together, they demonstrated the "importance of renewing trade relations with the Russian people at the earliest possible moment, from the point of view of the cost of living, and as a means of finding a market for our goods". He thought that there was a prospect of an even greater export business than in 1913, since the Russians were in great need of many commodities²⁶⁵.

The prospects of Russian trade received a more detailed examination in the press. In 1913, Forward reported, nearly half of Britain's imports

of coniferous timber and pitwood had come from Russia; as well as huge quantities of wheat, eggs and butter, the prices of which were going up "because the British profiteers won't make peace with Russia". Exports to Russia had been of major significance for the engineering, boot and shoe, textile and other industries. The passage of time had if anything increased the possibilities of exports to Russia; indeed here was a "colossal market, able to find employment for the whole of the West", as Professor Goode had concluded after a recent visit. Government policy, concluded the paper, was "not only strangling and starving Russia; it is strangling and starving us"²⁶⁶.

The notion that trade with Russia would relieve unemployment, Adamson told the House of Commons, had "taken hold of the imagination of a great section of our people". He himself, and the Labour Party and the trade unionists, were in "complete agreement" with the proposition²⁶⁷. Many Labour representatives had been directly influenced by the situation in their own constituencies, and the views which the unemployed there had pressed upon them. In Leeds, said O'Grady, he had been "flooded" with resolutions on the subject sent to him by local trade unionists. About 60,000 workers in or near Leeds would be directly affected were a trade agreement concluded. Even manufacturers had approached him in connection with the Russian trade²⁶⁸. Other speakers drew attention to the effect the decline of the Russian trade was having upon the dockyards, the Scottish herring industry and the tea industry. Orders that might have been placed in Britain were now being placed in Germany, or held up indefinitely²⁶⁹. A party statement, 'Unemployment: A Labour Policy', was issued in January 1921, containing the report of a Joint Committee with the T.U.C. on the subject, and the resolutions of a Special Conference which had been held on the subject on 27 January 1921. There must be an "immediate resumption of trade with Russia", it concluded. The trade agreement should be agreed upon and put into operation. "Almost immediately employment would be provided in some of our staple industries and the process of slowing down production would be retarded and perhaps reversed"²⁷⁰.

More was involved in the question of unemployment than trade figures alone. Many Labour representatives drew attention to the "serious results" which might attend the failure to relieve the situation of the unemployed. The greatest assistance and encouragement that could be

given to Bolshevik propaganda in the country, Sexton warned, was the fear of unemployment: since no revolutionary propaganda could take place in a country that was prosperous. The government's efforts were not sufficient to meet the problem²⁷¹. Bolshevism had no hold in Britain, Thomas told the House, but it would "thrive on hungry and starving people. Because we want to save our country from that, we plead with the Government to do their duty.. the only thing that matters to us is the unemployment problem"²⁷². The fact that the leadership of the organized unemployed had passed largely into the hands of radicals undoubtedly increased the unease of Labour spokesmen. Wignall stated that "unemployment produced poverty, poverty produced discontent, discontent produced revolution". From circumstances of destitution, he noted, "foolish acts sometimes arise". The Labour Party was "sitting on the safety valve". It realized the "growing force and power that (was) outside", and asked the government to "meet this question in the most generous way"²⁷³.

The signature of the Trade Agreement on 16 March 1921 was welcomed by Labour. Maclean thought it would give a "very great impetus.. to work, and to the lessening of our unemployment"²⁷⁴. It was conceded that the Agreement in itself could not solve the unemployment crisis, which was the result of the government's policy in regard to countries besides Russia, but there was "no doubt" that it would make a "great difference in the immediate situation" and might "mark the turning of the tide"²⁷⁵. The Agreement was welcomed by the Party Conference later in the year²⁷⁶.

The opening of trade, moreover, and the restoration of normal economic relations, was expected to "remove one of the strongest props that supported the present system in Russia", of which Labour representatives yielded to none in their abhorrence. Government policy had hitherto succeeded only in uniting the Russian people behind the Soviet government. In a trade agreement lay the best means of securing a "stable government" in Russia. Myers agreed with the President of the Board of Trade: the opening up of trade with Russia would "prove one of the shortest cuts towards breaking down the impossible theories" which the Bolsheviks were believed to hold²⁷⁷. Trade with Russia, then, might reduce the level of unemployment, and thus reduce labour unrest and inhibit the growth of groups which sought more far-reaching social change; while the development of trade appeared more likely to prove effective in undermining Bolshevism in Russia than attempts to overthrow it by military force, which had clearly failed. Such was 'Labour's Russian policy'.

- 1 Cabinet Minutes 4 November 1919, Cab 1(19)5, Cab 23/18
- 2 Cabinet Minutes 25 July 1919, W.C. 599(3), Cab 23/11
- 3 New Leader 13 October 1922
- 4 H. Tracey (ed.) Book of the Labour Party (London 1925) i 235
- 5 T. Ali: The Coming British Revolution (London 1972) p186. Mr Ali, admittedly, finds the Second International to have been founded in 1891 (p49), the founding conference of the Communist International to have been held in 1920 (p76), and the London School of Economics to have been established in 1880 (p179).
- 6 Gurovich (Pod''em angliiskogo rabochego dvizheniya v 1918-21 gg. (Moscow 1956)) is clearly incorrect in stating that the movement "in defence of Soviet Russia, against intervention, began in England immediately after the Great October Socialist Revolution" (ibid p97).
- 7 Parliamentary Debates Vol 104 col 513, 14 March 1918
- 8 Labour Leader 14 March 1918
- 9 Parliamentary Debates Vol 107 cols 775,770, 24 June 1918
- 10 Labour Party Annual Conference, London 26-28 June 1918, Report p34
- 11 The description was that of the Workers' Dreadnought v 15 6 July 1918 p1033
- 12 Labour Party Annual Conference Report ibid p59,35
- 13 Labour Leader 4 July 1918. Kerensky had, indeed, shortly beforehand met Lloyd George and urged "immediate intervention" upon him. (interview with Lloyd George 24 June 1918, Cabinet Papers G.T. 4948, Cab 24/55).
- 14 Labour Party Annual Conference Report ibid p35. Litvinov wrote a reply to him which appeared in the Herald and the Workers' Dreadnought on 6 July 1918 (p4 and p1035 respectively).
- 15 Vestnik N.K.I.D. No 1 1919
- 16 Herald 27 July 1918 p4
- 17 I.L.P. National Council Manifesto, Forward 3 August 1918, Labour Leader 1 August 1918. Glasgow I.L.P. Executive Council agreed to a motion of protest (Minutes, 9 August 1918).
- 18 Labour Leader 1 August 1918
- 19 Forward 3 August 1918 ; the BSP's manifesto appeared in Call 29 August 1918
- 20 Labour Party Nineteenth Annual Conference (1919) Report p10
- 21 Paul U. Kellogg and Arthur Gleason: British Labor and the War (New York 1919) p 293-6, and Mayer: Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking (London 1968) p50-52; the final resolution is in the Report ibid p10.

- 22 Call cited in Industrial Peace iii September 1918 p28. Litvinov was reported to have told an interviewer for the Danish paper Social Demokraten on 2 October that to his regret the views of the British workers on the Russian revolution had changed in the previous few months (Times 4 October 1918).
- 23 Call 7 November 1918. Brailsford in the Herald wrote of Labour's "failure to stand by the Russian Revolution" (ibid 23 November 1918 p6).
- 24 Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report Appendix v; Forward 7 December 1918
- 25 New Statesman 21 December 1918 p231,232. If intervention on a large scale with a view to the immediate establishment of a "democratic government" in Russia, the paper later observed, "we should have had nothing to say against it". By the end of the year, however, the opportunity had "passed" (New Statesman 19 July 1919 p384).
- 26 Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report p25,26
- 27 resolution adopted on 28 December 1918, reported in Labour Leader 9 January 1919
- 28 'Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.', 30 April 1919, Cabinet Paper G.T. 7196, Cab 24/76. In a report in October 1918 on 'Bolshevik Propaganda' he noted that the opposition to the Bolsheviks, "so marked in the early days of the revolution, is in fact disappearing, and people are asking whether Allied intervention was really necessary" (Cabinet Paper G.T. 5986, Cab 24/66, 12 October 1918).
- 29 reported in the Labour Leader 3 April 1919
- 30 Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report p26, B.C. Roberts: The Trades Union Congress 1868-1921 (London 1958) p319-20.
- 31 Labour Party 1919 Annual Congress Report p26-27;
- 32 Triple Alliance Conference, London 23 July 1919 Report p6
- 33 Gould, Gerald: The Coming Revolution in Great Britain (London 1920) p108, Bullock: Life and Times of Ernest Bevin (London 1960) i p103
- 34 Triple Alliance Conference ibid p6; Herald 31 May 1919 p4; T.U.C. Parliamentary Committee Minutes, 28 May 1919. The interview was pronounced "satisfactory enough" by seven votes to five. A resolution was adopted that the interview was not "entirely satisfactory" on the Conscription Bill and the secret military circular, and sent to Bonar Law.
- 35 Herald 8 April 1919. "We have been treated to resolutions from the Triple Alliance, trade union executives, and political and industrial demonstrations in regard to intervention, the Worker commented (7 June 1919) "and yet nothing is done".

- 36 Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report p113,118,156.
- 37 Fortnightly Review Vol 106 August 1919 p196
- 38 Times 8 July 1919
- 39 Times 27,28 June 1919. The episode is described in Mayer op.cit. 853-73
- 40 Industrial Peace iv August 1919 p1889. The demonstrations were described as a "fiasco in every country".(p188).
- 41 Mayer op.cit.p869,870. It would be misleading to ascribe responsibility for the failure of the demonstrations to the leadership only. A relatively militant labour body, the Glasgow Trades Council, informed the Labour headquarters that the proposed dates were unsuitable, since the Glasgow Holiday began on 17th or 18th July. It was decided to hold a demonstration on 3 August instead, but both Smillie and MacDonald, the speakers proposed, were unable to attend, and the meeting appears not to have been held (Trades Council Minutes 8 July, 16 July 1919). The Council had earlier decided not to take part in a procession in protest against intervention, which the Clyde Workers' Committee proposed to organize on 29 June 1919 (Trades Council Minutes 18 June 1919).
- 42 'Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.', 24 July 1919, Cabinet Papers G.T. 7790, Cab 24/84
- 43 Sunderland Trades Council and Labour Party, 26 July 1919, and Foreign Office Minute (F.O. 371.3960.109019), and Woolwich and District Trades and Labour Council, 1 August 1919 (F.O. 371.3960.111805).
- 44 Triple Alliance Conference 23 July 1919 Report p53. The Triple Alliance, Smillie pointed out from the chair, was "extremely anxious that any action, if it should ultimately be decided to take action, should be constitutional action", and not "hurried action" (p6,7). "The resolution commits us to nothing", a speaker observed (p46).
- 45 Herald 29 July 1919; Call 31 July 1919 editorial.A.A. Watts, in an 'Appeal to the Working Class' on 19 June, admitted that "to the average man, Russia is a long way off". Would they continue any longer "tamely (to) look on and allow our capitalistic gang to continue its effort to strangle (the Revolution)?" (Call 19 June 1919). It was "time to act", he added, rather than pass further resolutions. A 'Manifesto to British Labour' appeared the following week under the signatures of Inkpin of the BSP, Mrs Pankhurst and others. It noted that workers in all countries were "allowing themselves to be used to fight Communism, as soldiers

seamen, shipbuilders and dockers, and by working to provide munitions and supplies for the counter-revolutionary war". They called upon the Labour Conference to act to "retrieve the already tarnished reputation of our movement", (Call 26 June 1919): without, evidently, much success.

46 Worker 13 September 1919. "The frightful murder of a nation" was being engineered by the government, it stated on 25 October 1919, and "acquiesced in by the British working class".

47 Gould op.cit. p109; Forward 13 September 1919. The decision was noted in Hands off Russia Committee; Peace with Russia (London 1920) p5, which added that the three additional points in its policy (the stoppage of supplies to Kolchak and Denikin, the raising of the blockade and the establishment of diplomatic relations) were not included.

48 The Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.', 11 December, ¹⁹¹⁹ Cabinet Paper C.P. 283, Cab 23/94, p8, noted that the movement had become "quiescent". The reference is to 'Survey of Revolutionary Feeling during the year 1919', 15 January 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 462, Cab 24/96 p13.

49 Secretary of the Labour Party to Balfour 13 October 1919, and reply by C.S. Spicer, 5 November 1919, F.O. 371.3961.141106 14 October 1919

50 London Labour Party 18 December 1919, F.O. 371.3961.162909

51 Call 23 October 1919 p1

52 Gould op.cit. 109; the resolution is contained in W.P. and Z. Coates: A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations (London 1944) p 147-8

53 Hands off Russia Committee; Peace with Russia (London 1920) p5. In a circular in January 1920 the National Committee pointed out that only industrial action would alter the government's policy (Coates ibid 148), but it evidently found the labour movement difficult to convince.

54 The People's Russian Information Bureau was established in September 1918, with Sylvia Pankhurst as its Treasurer, W.F. Watts as its President and T.C. Hollowell as its Secretary, with the "object of stirring up agitation against Allied intervention in Russia" (Thomson, 'Bolshevism in England', 23 December 1918, F.O. 371.3300.212521). The premises of its Secretary were searched on 3 October 1918, and in February 1919 its offices were raided, its literature was 'blacklisted' and those associated with it placed under observation (Thomson, 'Fortnightly Report on Pacifism and Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.' No 23, Cabinet Paper G.T. 5923, Cab 24/66X; and Times 15 February 1919).

- 55 Workers' Dreadnought v.44 25 January 1919. The meeting was at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street. The Times (20 January 1919) reported between two and three hundred delegates. Brand: The British Labour Party (London 1964) incorrectly states that the Committee was formed in November (p71).
- 56 ibid; and Pollitt: Serving my Time (London 1940; 1950 ed) p94-5. Pollitt was present and was elected to the Committee.
- 57 Coates op.cit.pl41
- 58 ~~XXXXXX~~ R. Page Arnot: Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain (London 1967)pl49
- 59 Times 10 February 1919; Professor Simpson, Memorandum, 11 February 1919, F.O. 371.4377.PID 115
- 60 Simpson, Memorandum ibid
- 61 Call 13 February 1919; Times 10 February 1919. A report of the meeting appeared in the Call (ibid pp4-5) and in the Workers' Dreadnought v.47 15 February 1919.
- 62 Kenworthy: Soldiers, Sailors and Others (London 1933) pl82
- 63 Manifesto of the Woolwich Hands off Russia Committee (London n.d.)
- 64 Times 23 June 1919
- 65 Call 25 September 1919
- 66 interview with W.P. Coates, Zaria Vostoka (Tiflis) No 174(339) 31 July 1924 (translation circulated in mimeograph form by the Committee, n.d.)
- 67 Pollitt op.cit.107, who was appointed to the post himself.
- 68 ibid p95.
- 69 New Statesman 12 June 1920 p266
- 70 Parliamentary Debates Vol 120 col 1609, 5 November 1919
- 71 Parliamentary Debates Vol 113 col 153, 3 March 1919, and Vol 114 col 2167, 9 April 1919. The Call commented of Thomas' views: "he apparently desired the collapse of Soviet Russia; but by other means". This was an "indelible stain on the British labour movement" (ibid 13 November 1919)
- 72 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 col 3002, 16 April 1919. The charge would certainly have been reciprocated.
- 73 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 col 3001, 16 April 1919. Thomas held that British policy had had the effect of "consolidating Soviet government and strengthening that government" (Vol 130 col 157, 7 June 1920); Graham stated that the view of British Labour from the beginning had been, "rightly or wrongly", that government policy had "merely gathered together very large sections of people in (Russia) under the Bolshevik banner" (Vol 139 col 497, 9 March 1921).

- 74 New Statesman 6 September 1919 p557, 5 June 1920 p242, 26 April 1919 p85
- 75 Labour Party: Labour's Russian Policy (London 1920) p4
- 76 Parliamentary Debates Vol 118 Col 1977, 29 July 1919
- 77 Parliamentary Debates Vol 116 col 1477, 29 May 1919, and Vol 112 cols 60-61, 11 February 1919
- 78 Parliamentary Debates Vol 116 col 1488, 29 May 1919, Mr Davison
- 79 Parliamentary Debates Vol 118 col 965, 21 July 1919
- 80 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 col 2182, 9 April 1919, Mr Jones
- 81 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 col 487, 25 March 1919
- 82 Parliamentary Debates Vol 113 col 153, 3 March 1919
- 83 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 col 2959, 16 April 1919
- 84 Parliamentary Debates Vol 114 col 2960, 16 April 1919
- 85 Parliamentary Debates Vol 120 col 1611, 5 November 1919
- 86 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 col 702, 17 November 1919
- 87 Brend: The British Labour Party p69 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121
- 88 col 766, 17 November 1919
- 89 Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report p28 (the matter was mentioned in the Executive Committee report, but not in the Parliamentary Report)
- 90 ibid pl23
- 91 Forward 15 November 1919
- 92 Labour Leader 13 November 1919
- 93 Workers' Dreadnought vi.44 24 January 1920 pl613
- 94 Labour Leader 13 November 1919
- 95 'Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.' 30 April 1919, Cabinet Paper G.T. 7196, Cab 24/76
- 96 ibid No 26, 23 October 1919, Cabinet Paper G.T. 8400, Cab 24/90
- 97 ibid No 31, Cabinet Paper G.T. 6713, Cab 24/74
- 98 Pollitt: Serving my Time p95
- 99 Murphy, J.T. : New Horizons (London 1941) p203
- 100 Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report pl13
- 101 ibid pl18; p26. Coates (op.cit. pl41) omits the remainder of the resolution
- 102 Gould: Coming Revolution in Great Britain pl08, Bullock op cit. pl03.
- R. Page Arnot (Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain pl49) also omits the remainder of the resolution, thus creating the impression that the proposal to undertake industrial action was exclusively the consequence of the ^{Government's} policy of intervention in Russia. It is evident that the other matters were at least as important, if not more so.

- 103 Triple Alliance Conference Report 23 July 1919, p7
- 104 ibid p15, p13. Clynes was under the impression that the resolution
- 105 ibid p8 [was limited to the question of conscription (p38)
- 106 Miners' Federation of Great Britain: Annual Conference Report, 1919, p145
- 107 Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report Appendix v
- 108 ibid p129
- 109 Forward 3 August 1918
- 110 Labour Leader 17 July 1919
- 111 The identification of non-interference in Russia with the domestic interests of labour sometimes reached unusual lengths: Thus Mr Barr of the No Licence Committee took the opportunity of drawing ~~the~~ attention to the military success of the "water-drinking, vodka-prohibiting no-licence Bolsheviks" (Forward 7 February 1920). Mrs Snowden added that whatever his other faults, Bela Kun had "closed the wine shops of Budapest" (I.L.P. 1920 Annual Conference Report p94).
- 112 Butler and Freeman: British Political Facts 1900-1968 (London 3ed 1969)
- 113 Cole, G.D.H.: A History of the Labour Party since 1914 p218, 217
- (London 1948) p83; Labour Leader 2 January 1919, Review of Reviews lix January 1919 p8)
- 113a Review of Reviews lix February 1919 p84
- 114 New Statesman 7 December 1918 p192; Clynes, Times 9 December 1918
- 115 Labour Leader 2 January 1919
- 116 Henderson in Contemporary Review Vol 115 April 1919 364, 365, Thomson drew attention to some of the non-political contributory factors. In Liverpool and Birmingham, he reported, a "very active grievance" was the "shortage of liquor. The men have fastened upon the fact that even with a medical certificate in cases of influenza, they cannot buy spirits, whereas, they say, well-to-do people can have them when they like". Pollitt was reported to have declared at a meeting that the working class "cared only for beer, tobacco and horseracing, and it would take twenty years to educate them" (Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K. 10 March 1919, Cabinet Papers ⁶⁷ 6976, Cab 24/76). The atmosphere had become easier with the opening of race meetings, it was subsequently reported, but the Liverpool dockers were refusing to handle beer for export as a protest against the beer shortage. An additional six million barrels was authorised; but this was "not considered sufficient" (ibid G.T. 7196, 30 April and G.T. 7367, 28 May 1919, Cab 24/78 and 80.

- 117 Labour Leader 9 January 1919 ^{pl41 and}
- 118 Beatrice Webb: Diaries 1912-1924 ^{pl42,} entry for 10 January 1919. He had, moreover, an "instinctive suspicion of intellectuals" (ibid).
- 119 Snowden: Autobiography ii 532; I.L.P. 1919 Annual Conference Report p35. The Fortnightly Review agreed that Parliamentary talent on the Labour back benches was "singularly diffident in revealing itself" (ibid Vol 110 July 1921).
- 120 Tracey (ed.) The Book of the Labour Party i 237
- 121 Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report pl28, 127
- 122 ibid pl49
- 123 Review of Reviews lxi January 1920 p9
- 124 Forward 7 December 1918
- 125 ^{Williams} Forward 13 September 1919; Tom Johnston Forward 20 September 1919
- 126 Permanent Commission of the Labour and Socialist International 26-29 April 1919, Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report Appendix x; Socialist Review Vol 17 January-March 1920 p55. The difference between the outrage which the Allies had committed upon Hungary and that which they had committed upon Russia, the Herald wrote, was the "difference between frank brutality and sly hypocrisy". The British labour movement passed "splendid resolutions - but it does nothing.. If we betray Hungary we betray ourselves" (Herald 6 May 1919).
- 127 cited in Mitchell: Red Mirage p230
- 128 Labour Party 1920 Annual Conference Report pl13, p4
- 129 cited in Mitchell: Red Mirage p230
- 130 Forward 19 October 1918; ibid 30 October 1920
- 131 Declarations of the British Delegation at the International Labour and Socialist Conference 26 January-10 February 1919, Labour Party 1919 Annual Conference Report appendix ix
- 132 Labour Party June 1918 Annual Conference Report p69
- 133 Labour Party 1920 Annual Conference Report, Executive Committee Report ^{p5-6}
- 134 Review of Reviews lxi June 1920 p373
- 135 Labour Leader 26 August 1920
- 136 Forward 3 April 1920
- 137 ibid; and Forward 12 June 1920. Thomas, at the 1920 Labour Conference, declared that there could be "no solution through Sinn Fein"; and the labour movement would "not agree to the establishment of an Irish Republic."

J. Walker agreed: he was "quite sure they were not prepared to vote for an Irish Republic". . R.J. Davis commented: there were "thousands of Irish people who were suspicious of the attitude of the British Labour Party on the subject". Colonel Bamford noted the "real imperialism of some members of the Labour Party.. Even if they went to the benches of the Coalition Government they would not find imperialism more effectively represented than it was on the platform at that Conference". Tillett thought that the Irish nation had "as great a suspicion of the Labour Party Conference as they had of the Coalition Government" (Report 167,162,167).

138 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p23. See Labour Party: Report of Commission of Inquiry into present conditions in Ireland (London 1920 12pp); and Report of the Labour Commission to Ireland (London 1921, 119pp plus Appendix).

139 Labour Leader 30 September 1920

140 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 col 699 17 November 1919, Henderson

141 Communist Review No 1 1921 p8, F. Willis. The New Statesman commented on Labour's "marked lack of courage". On the crucial points, its leaders had "sat on the fence - and allowed the Liberal leaders to steal a march on them" (New Statesman 9 October 1920 p1). They found it easier to co-operate with the moderate Nationalist party in the House of Commons, with whom their relations were those of "warm friendship and co-operation", than with Sinn Fein, much of whose policy and many of whose deeds, Henderson claimed, no-one had "abhorred more strongly" than British Labour (Snowden, I.L.P. 1921 Annual Conference Report p131; Henderson, Parliamentary Debates Vol 139 col 2696, 23 March 1921) Labour must know "perfectly well that an Irish republic is not Irish freedom", wrote MacDonald (Forward 12 June 1920). Labour welcomed the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921 as an "honourable compromise", in common with "all the liberal forces in this country". It looked to the "saner elements in both camps (and it is, fortunately, these who control the Parliaments in both Belfast and Dublin) to cope with their respective intransigents" and with the "irreconcilables" (Labour Leader editorial 8 December 1921). Labour in Parliament welcomed a settlement "on the lines long advocated by Labour", which was consistent with the "safety of this Empire" and expressed by "proper and constitutional means" (Parliament

ary Debates Vol 149 col 19, 14 December 1921, Clynes, and vol 138, cols 693 and 694, 21 February 1921, Henderson). The position was one of Dominion Home Rule, noted Clynes (ibid) Britain retained control of defence, foreign policy, allegiance to the Crown had been secured, and Irish tariff protection was unlikely since Britain's position was stronger than Ireland's. One day Ireland might "forget that this federation of free States was ever called an Empire", the New Leader considered; and it backed the Free State government's "slow war upon internal anarchy", upon the "wreckers" and "demented idealists" who demanded a Republic (New Leader 8 December 1922, 16 March 1923). A letter to the journal from Louie Bennett in Dublin pointed out that the Treaty had been accepted under duress, and that it was not a "realisation of the principle of self-determination.. (and)..by no means the fulfilment of legitimate aspirations". It was, rather, a "surrender to Imperialism". The Free State could only become a Dominion: "that is, another prop to the British Empire". British Imperialism was "no less powerful because it (emanated) from a 'Commonwealth' or 'Association of Free Nations'" (New Leader 1 December 1922).

142 MacDonald, Forward ~~xx~~ 15 May 1920

143 Herald 30 April 1920; and MacDonald ibid. It was an "Imperialist venture pure and simple", held the New Statesman. The Polish army was "very well-equipped - largely with British aeroplanes, guns and munitions" (New Statesman 8 and 15 May 1920, p117, 149).

144 Times 14 May 1920, Bullock op.cit. 133-4, Pollitt op.cit. 115-6. The action received the approval of many outside the labour movement: Lord Lansdowne, for instance (Socialist Review Vol 17 July-September 1920 206)

145 Coates op.cit. 150, Pollitt op.cit. 117. Bavin, who had given the Union's backing to the dockers, had nevertheless "no sympathy with Communists".

H He expressed his approval of the London dockers' initiative in moving an emergency resolution of ~~XXXXX~~ congratulation at the Dockers' Triennial Delegate Conference at Plymouth a few days later. In a speech which it had been noted, showed a "grasp of the classic principles of British foreign policy which neither Canning ~~nor~~ Cobden could have bettered", he told the delegates that "whatever may be the merits or demerits of the theory of government of Russia, that is a matter for Russia, and we have no right to determine their form of government, any more than we would tolerate Russia determining our form of government" (Bullock

- 146 'Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.' 55, 20 May 1920, Cabinet Paper G.T. 1328, Cab 24/106
- 147 Pollitt op.cit. 113, 114
- 148 Forward 15 May 1920
- 149 Forward 22 May 1920
- 150 Labour Party 1920 Annual Conference Report 132,133
- 151 ibid p138
- 152 as Klugmann concedes (History of the Communist Party of Great Britain: i:Formation and Early Years 1919-1924 (London 1968) p80
- 153 Times 6 August 1920, Herald 5 August 1920. An editorial in the Herald declared that Polish independence was "not in danger. She can have full independence tomorrow. She can have peace tomorrow, if she will ask for it" (Herald 8 August 1920).
- 154 Review of Reviews lxii 8 August 1920 p73
- 155 Times 6 August 1920. A useful account of the episode is: MacFarlane, L. J. : Hands off Russia in 1920 Past and Present 38, December 1967, ppl26-152; a Soviet account is Gurovich, P.: Sovyety Deistviya Voprosy Istorii No 4 1947, pp 41-58, and in his monograph. Rothstein, a member at this time of the Russian Trading Delegation, wrote an account :Avgustskiye Dni Bor'ba Klassov No 2 1931 pp25-30. Macfarlane (who curiously dates the formation of the Council of Action on 5, not 9 August) notes that at the meeting of French and British leaders at Hythe on 8 and 9 August (which therefore preceded the formation of the Council) the involvement of Allied troops in the conflict was "specifically excluded" (p134).
- 156 Times 7 August 1920
- 157 Times 7 August 1920, Herald 7 August 1920
- 158 Herald 5 August 1920
- 159 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p4
- 160 Times 9 August 1920; Herald 8 August 1920. Lansbury was "quite certain that these Sunday editions did a very great deal to make the Councils of Action function" (Miracle of Fleet Street p138). A circular from the National Hands off Russia Committee on 4 August, which drew attention to the "attempts made by Churchill and the Government to commit the workers of this country to a war against Soviet Russia", and proposed a demonstration, was considered but the proposed action rejected by Glasgow Trades Council. A special meeting was convened to consider the Labour Party circular, and a demonstration approved (Minutes 4,6 August 1920)

- 161 Labour Party 1921 Conference Report p.11, Times 10 August 1920, Labour Leader 12 August 1920. The Times in an editorial called the decision a "piece of electioneering"; the resolution raised "issues which do not exist". Arnot (Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain p.174-5) mistakenly refers to the formation of the Council on "Sunday" 9 August, to "Friday" 7 August, and to a special Herald Sunday edition appearing on 9 August, which was in fact a Monday, rather than 8 August. Arnot also declares that the Anglo-French Hythe Conference decided that their threat should be "put into force. The matter was referred to the military and naval staffs to prepare for action. This put the fat in the fire" (p.174). The use of Allied forces (although not a blockade or the discontinuation of the trade negotiations) had in fact explicitly been ruled out (see above, note 155).
- 162 The names are given in Council of Action: Special Conference on Labour and the Russo-Polish War (London 1920) p.3. They were: for the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C.: Gosling, Purcell, Swales, Walker, Bondfield; for the Parliamentary Labour Party: Adamson, Clynes, O'Grady, Robertson, Wedgwood; for the Labour Party executive committee: Cameron, Hodges, Cramp, Williams and Bromley. Joint Secretaries: Bramley, Middleton, Lindsay. Co-opted members: Bevin, Thomas, Smillie, Turner, Lansbury, Ogden, Holmes, Hutchinson, Bowen (Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p.11,12).
- 163 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p.12.
- 164 Times 11 August 1920 p.12, Herald 11 August 1920 (Bulloch op.cit. 136,137)
- 165 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p.13.
- 166 ibid; Times 12 August 1920 p.10.
- 167 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p.13; Times 13 August 1920.
- 168 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p.14.
- 169 The proceedings of the Special Conference were published: Council of Action: Special Conference on Labour and the Russo-Polish War (London 1920), cited hereinafter as 'Special Conference'; and a statement of the 'Declarations of the Russian Soviet Government on Polish Independence' was also issued, together with the Conference agenda and draft resolutions (London 1920). The proceedings were reported in the Times and in the Herald (14 August 1920).
- 170 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p.12

- 172 Tracey (ed.) Book of the Labour Party i 235
- 172 Snowden: Autobiography ii 561
- 173 Council of Action: Special Conference p4,6
- 174 ibid p6,7,11,12
- 175 ibid p13,19
- 176 ibid p19,23. The resolutions are contained in : Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p12-13
- 177 Snowden: Autobiography ii 563
- 178 Times 16 August 1920 . A Manifesto 'Russia and Poland' was issued by the Council of Action on 10 August to local Trades Councils and Labour Parties, which initiated the formation of the local Councils. It added that "spasmodic and ill-considered action should be avoided everywhere" (Council of Action: Russia and Poland (London 10 August 1920). ^{reprinted in the} Herald 12 August 1920).
- 179 Times 17 August 1920; Council of Action: Peace with Soviet Russia (London 17 August 1920). Between six and seven thousand people assembled in London for the "Peace with Russia" demonstration on 22 August, but the success of the meetings was far from universal: at Bradford a downpour of rain reduced attendance to only 300 (Times 23 August 1920).
- 180 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p14
- 181 ibid; Council of Action to Lloyd George 9 September 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1842, Cab 24/111
- 182 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report p17
- 183 Mr Wallace MP, Review of Reviews lxii September 1920 p171
- 184 Review of Reviews lxii September 1920 p148
- 185 Fortnightly Review Vol 109 June 1921 p959; Nineteenth Century and After Vol 88 September 1920 p441,442 (the reference to Lloyd George and Kerensky is in ibid October 1920 p603).
- 186 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 41 p326, 283
- 187 ibid Vol 41 p327, 283. Izvestiya remarked that the working class of Western Europe was "beginning to move on to the path of real struggle with the bourgeois order"; the Committees of Action were evidence of the "completely new character of the working class movement" in these countries, although such as Henderson "unfortunately" were included within them (Izvestiya 10 September 1920).
- 188 Review of Reviews lxii September 1920 p169,170
- 189 Snowden: Autobiography ii 561,562

- 190 Labour Leader 19, 26 August 1920
- 191 Times 16 August, 18 August 1920. A Herald editorial declared that there was "no question at all of encroaching on the power of the Executives" of the trade unions (ibid 19 August 1920).
- 192 Times 26 August 1920; Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.' 70, 2 September 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1830, Cab 24/111
- 193 letter from H. Clayton, President of the No 6 branch, No 10 District of the A.E.U., A.E.U. Monthly Journal and Report October 1920 p85
- 194 Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.' ~~70~~ 68, 19 August 1920, Cabinet Papers C.P. 17193 Cab 24/110
- 195 Klugmann: History of the Communist Party of Great Britain i 83
- 196 Herald 7 August 1920, Times 7 August 1920
- 197 Communist 19 August 1920 p6.
- 198 Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.' 72, 16 September 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1862, Cab 24/111. Klugmann states that "within a few days" of the Special Conference some 350 local Councils of Action had been established (op.cit.p85). This total was in fact attained only by October (Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report pl7), and by the time of the "Peace with Russia" demonstrations on 22 August rather less than half of this number had been formed (Gurovich: Sovyety Deistviya Voprosy Istorii No 4 1947 p56; in fact 152). Bodies were nevertheless swiftly established in industrial areas. In Sheffield, Plymouth, Gateshead, Northampton and Leicester their establishment was reported on 16 August, and some had established (as the National Council had recommended) Sub-Committee to deal with supply and transport; strike arrangements; and publicity and information (Times 16 August 1920; Council of Action: Russia and Poland^{rin}~~xx~~, reported in the Herald 12 August 1920). At Birmingham local trade union officials and Trades Council committee members met on 17 August and established a local Council of Action (Corbett, J: The Birmingham Trades Council 1868-1968 (London 1966) pl19). Arrangements were not so brisk at Glasgow, where a Council was not formed until 5 September. On 18 August the Trades Council approved the report of its Secretary on the Special Conference, and arranged for two delegates from local labour bodies to convene to form a local Council. The I.L.P. (despite some concern at the "most offensive and improper" language which had been used at the

demonstration on 8 August on Glasgow Green; the I.L.P. platform, it was felt, should be "free from indecency") agreed on 20 August to send two delegates accordingly. On 1 September the National Council was informed, in response to an inquiry on its part, that a Conference had been arranged for 5 September, to be composed of two representatives each from each District and Executive Committee and political organization in Glasgow. Thirty-three such bodies were in fact represented at the meeting which set up the Council, together with seven from the Trades and Labour Council itself. Three sub-committees were established as recommended, with three delegates from each and their Conveners to form an Executive Committee, together with a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer (Trades Council Minutes, 18 August, 1 and 8 September 1920; Glasgow I.L.P. Federation: Minutes of bi-monthly and special aggregate meetings 13 August 1920 (remarks about the 8 August meeting) ; Executive Committee Minutes, 20 August 1920).

199 Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.' 69, 26 August 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1805, Cab 24/111

200 Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.' 70, 2 September 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1830, Cab 24/111; and ibid 71, 9 September 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1848, Cab 24/111. Some local Councils appealed to the National Council to be allowed to include the issues of Ireland and of unemployment within their spheres of activity (Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report pl7).

201 Thomson, ibid 72 and 73, 16 and 23 September, C.P.s 1862 and 1885, Cab 24/111

202 Workers' Dreadnought vii.22 21 August 1920 p4; Worker 28 August 1920

203 Lansbury, Herald 14 August 1920

204 ibid

205 Thomson, 'Report...' 68, 19 August 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1793, Cab 24/110

206 McManues, Communist 19 August 1920 pl. The Conference was overwhelmingly composed of trades union and Trades Council delegates: of the 1044 total, 689 were accounted for by trade unions, and 355 by local Labour Parties and Trades Councils (Council of Action: Special Conference pl8)

207 Klugmann (op.cit.p84) notes that two of the original fifteen-man Council were Communists. Robert Williams, one of them, left the Party in 1921 (Bullock op.cit.p62). Thomson (Report.. 67, 12 August 1920, Cabinet Paper 1772, Cab 24/111) reported that "most unfortunately" the left and right wings of Labour had joined together; but on the original committee, the moderates exceeded the extremists by two to one.

- 208 McManus Communist 19 August 1920 pl, and ibid p5. The local Councils, the New Statesman noted, did "not usually differ much from the existing Trades Councils and Local Labour Parties. The difference is thus largely one of attitude rather than of personnel or organization" (New Statesman 21 August 1920 p539).
- 209 McManus, Inkpin, Letter to Party Branches Communist 26 August 1920 pl2. On 2 September it was reported that representation had been secured at Perth and Birmingham, but not directly at Netherfield. At East Ham and Farsley, Communists had become members of the local Councils, but only as trade union representatives, not as representatives of the Party (Communist 2 September pl2, 9 September pl2, 16 September p8). The Party's representation upon the local Councils appears largely to have been, of necessity, of this indirect nature.
- 210 London and Home Counties ^{Council} Circular, 14 October 1920 Communist p8
- 211 Glasgow Trades Council Minutes 8 September 1920; Communist Party Executive Committee statement 'Fix a Date', Communist 26 August 1920 pl, and (as an advertisement) Herald 24 August 1920 p8. It noted that there was no guarantee that British uniforms and guns were "not still reaching the Polish landlords".
- 212 Klugmann (History of the Communist Party of Great Britain i 85) talks of the efforts of the Party to "maintain and strengthen the national and local Councils of Action" and to "keep them in a state of vigilance". He notes the five points of the Communist Party, "all of which were ~~in~~ in fact put into practice" (ibid p83,87). The fifth point called for the formation of a Central Labour Council, however, with a representation from the Communist Party as well as ^{for} the other main labour bodies. The Party was, in fact, excluded from the National Council; ~~and~~ its efforts, however meritorious, to 'strengthen and maintain' the Councils were exerted ~~XXXX~~ predominantly from outside; and its attempt to maintain a state of 'vigilance' ~~was~~ ^{was} admitted by Party spokesman at the time to have been unavailing (see p.197f below).
- 213 Council of Action: Special Conference pl6
- 214 ibid pl7; Labour Leader 12 August 1920
- 215 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 cols 687,688,595, 16 August 1920
- 216 Council of Action: Special Conference pl5; Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 col 673, 16 August 1920. The Herald had on 3 July disclosed Churchill's secret dealings with General Golovin (Herald 3 July 1920)

217 Economist 14 August 1920 p.255; New Statesman 14 August 1920 p.514.

The Times interpreted the decision of the Special Conference to mean that nothing but the beginning of military action against Russia would be held to justify the declaration of a strike. Moreover, the resolution did not necessarily contemplate a general strike: the Council had been left a good deal of discretion, and could limit the area of the strike. (Times 14 August 1920). Four days later it reported that it had become clear that the Council, should it proceed to extreme measures, would not call a general strike: for if declared, it "could not long be maintained, and would invite defeat". J.R. Bromley, a member of the Council, had told a meeting in connection with the formation of a local Council in Sheffield that the National Council would "certainly not call a strike which would starve their own people. They would not interfere with the provision of food or the running of trains", although they would seek to ensure that the trains did not carry materials or soldiers (Times 18 August 1920). A report from Bradford confirmed this impression.

218 Council of Action: Special Conference pp.14,20,12 (Clynes)

219 Socialist Review Vol. 16 No. 88 January-March 1919 p.11. It was impossible, declared the New Statesman, that anyone who really respected the powers of representative government could "have any respect for the present Parliament" (ibid 21 August 1920 p.541). The Economist (14 August 1920 p.255) noted that the British Government, in spite of widened suffrage, was still "far from democratically founded", a "dangerous fact" which went "far to account for, if not excuse, the unconstitutional action of the Labour Council for Action". To demand 'direct action' in circumstances in which a majority of the electorate was vehemently opposed to government policy, as in the case of its Russian policy, amounted simply to a "demand for a dissolution of Parliament, and as such would carry no 'revolutionary' implications". Smillie and his associates in demanding 'direct action' were "conscious of challenging not Parliamentary institutions, but the present Government's abuse of Parliamentary institutions" (New Statesman 13 September 1919 p.580).

220 ibid Vol.17 October-December 1920 p.298.

221 Parliamentary Debates Vol.129 col.1681, 20 May 1920. Here and now, the Herald pointed out, it was "impossible to use, or even to get access to, the political weapon. We are in the hands of autocrats and oligarchs who

- who care nothing for the will of the people, who care nothing for their own solemn pledges or for the million British lives spent in a war to establish universal peace and do away ~~with~~^{for} ~~ever~~ with secret diplomacy" (Herald 14 August 1920)
- 222 Labour Leader 23 September 1920
- 223 Socialist Review Vol 17 April-June 1920 p106;
Forward 22 May 1920; Labour Leader 12 August 1920
- 224 Socialist Review Vol 17 October-December 1920 p298
- 225 Forward 28 August 1920
- 226 Labour Leader editorial 19 August 1920
- 227 Bundock, C.J.: Direct Action and the Constitution (I.L.P. London 1920)
- 228 Council of Action: Special Conference p4 pp4,5
- 229 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 cols 699,700, 16 August 1920
- 230 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 cols 700, 316, 16 August 1920
- 231 ibid col 733
- 232 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 col 498, 11 August 1920
- 233 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 cols 712,713, 16 August 1920
- 234 ibid col 741
- 235 Council of Action: Special Conference p20
- 236 Parliamentary Debates Vol 130 col 156, 7 June 1920; Labour Leader 12 August 1920
- 237 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 col 70, 9 August 1920
- 238 Council of Action: Special Conference p20, 12
- 239 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 col 732, Spencer; col 347, Lawson; and col 316, Mills, 16 August 1920
- 240 New Statesman 14 August 1920 p517
- 241 Parliamentary Debates ibid col 744, Palmer
- 242 Beatrice Webb: Diaries 1912-1924 187
- 243 cited in Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K.' 70, Cabinet Paper 1830, 2 September 1920, Cab 24/111; Herald 30 August 1920.
- ~~XXX~~ The Council announced "exhaustive inquiries" and the accumulation of "abundant information" on the production and movement of munitions, equipment and material of war.
- 244 ibid; Herald 21 August 1920
- 245 Ministry of Labour: Weekly Report on the Labour Situation, 4 September 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1827, Cab 24/111
- 246 Labour Party 1921 Annual Conference Report pp17-18
- 247 T.U.C. Parliamentary Committee Minutes 20 October 1920; 1921 T.U.C. Report p83. The circular of 22 October is in ibid p166

248 Manchester Guardian 13 November 1920

249 Times 24 December 1920

250 Communist 23 December 1920 p7

251 A circular from the North-East Council of Action, proposing that a meeting be convened to consider the immediate future of the National Council of Action and, if deemed advisable, to extend its activities, was considered by Glasgow Trades Council on 16 March 1921. The Chairman noted that the "lack of interest taken in the Local Council of Action" had been reported in November to the National Council. It was agreed to take no action (Glasgow Trades and Labour Council, Executive Committee Minutes 16 March 1921). By the end of the previous September, in fact, Basil Thomson had reported that as the danger of conscription faded, the "uselessness of the National Council of Action seems to be affecting the workers generally; they are losing interest in the local Councils" (Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K. No 74, 30 September 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1908, Cab 24/112). A week later he reported that the Councils were "practically dead", although an attempt to "whip up the laggards" was being made by holding a demonstration on 17 October. The move, he reported, was less than successful: the crowds were much smaller than at the August meetins, and the speakers "dealt with unemployment and the miners' strike rather than with Russia". He noted a "waning interest in Russian affairs" (Report.. Nos 75,77, Cabinet Papers C.P. 1937, 1997, 7 and 21 October 1920, Cab 24/112). On 25 November 1920 he reported a "very general apathy", now that the bogey of conscription had been removed. The movement was "in the national sense, moribund. There is little ^{question} ~~XXXX~~ that if a general strike were called to enforce peace with Russia, its outcome would be a fiasco" (Report.. 82, 25 November 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 2169, Cab 24/115)

252 cited in Thomson, Report.. 70, 2 September 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1830, Cab 24/111

253 Communist 7 October 1920 p2. He described the Council as a "collection of pseudo-diplomats haggling about terms with which it has no concern and which were not germane to the issue", rather than a "body ranging itself wholeheartedly on the side of the Russian workers' Republic, because it is a Workers' Republic". Malone quoted in the Times 8 November 1920

254 Worker 3 October 1920; Worker 18 November 1922. Price noted a

"considerable lack of clear understanding" of the Russian Revolution on the part of British workers.

- 255 British Labour Statistics 1888-1968 (London, HMSO 1971) table 160 p.306, table 159 p.305; Pollard, S: A History of Labour in Sheffield (Liverpool 1959) p.247,248.
- 256 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 127 col. 702, 25 March 1920; Vol. 129 col. 1708, 20 May 1920.
- 257 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 126 col. 1168, 9 March 1920.
- 258 Forward 5 June 1920.
- 259 Labour Leader 22 July 1920.
- 260 Labour Party 1920 Annual Conference Report p.176 (the decision was unanimous).
- 261 Forward 17 June 1920; Parliamentary Debates Vol. 129 cols. 1681,1677 20 May 1920.
- 262 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 130 cols. 156,159, 7 June 1920; Labour Leader 9 September 1920.
- 263 18th Annual Abstract of Labour Statistics (Parliamentary Papers 1926, Cmd. 2740) pp.51,90,56,60.
- 264 Times 16 October 1920.
- 265 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 136 col. 1853,1857, 22 December 1920.
- 266 Forward 6 November 1920; and ibid citing Manchester Guardian 20 October 1919.
- 267 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 136 col. 1852, 22 December 1920.
- 268 ibid cols. 1859,1860-1. Adamson reported communications from the unemployed in London and Glasgow in favour of the renewal of trade with Russia (ibid cols.1851-2).
- 269 ibid cols. 47, 13 December; 485, 15 December; and 1260, 20 December 1920; and O'Grady, ibid col. 16,13 December 1920.
- 270 Labour Party: Unemployment: a Labour Policy (Labour Party, London 1921) p.28.
- 271 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 138 col.373, 17th February 1921.
- 272 ibid col.1095, 23 February 1921.
- 273 ibid cols. 355,356, 17 February 1921. A demonstration of 10,000 was organized to the meeting of the Joint Committee; a request by the London District Committee of the Unemployed to send a deputation to the 27 January Labour Conference on Unemployment was, however, refused (Klugmann op.cit. p.120).
- 274 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 139 col. 2514, 22 March 1921.
- 275 Labour Leader 24 March 1921.
- 276 Labour Party^{nu} Conference Report p.208.
- 277 Parliamentary Debates Vol.139 col.550, 9 March 1921; vol. 136 col. 1853, 22 December 1920, Adamson; Vol. 139 col. 587, 9 March 1921.

Chapter Four: Agreement ?

In January 1920 Lord Riddell noted in his diary: "The Allies now understand the impossibility of fighting the Bolsheviks in Russia. No nation is prepared to supply troops or money"¹. On 16 January the Supreme Council, meeting at Paris, recognized the logic of this argument by declaring the blockade at an end. The resolution adopted provided for an "exchange of goods on the basis of reciprocity between the Russian people and the Allied and neutral countries". While affirming stoutly that this "did not mean a change in the policy of the Allied governments towards the Soviet government", there could be little doubt that the decision was other than a voluntary one². Discussing the trade scheme that had been proposed at a meeting of the British, French and Italian heads of delegations two days previously, Lloyd George found it "worth taking up": prices were rising in Western Europe and "this very fact tended to create Bolshevism.. From the point of view of exchanges and prices, the Russian supplies were vital"³. A memorandum from Mr Wise, ~~the~~ British member of the Supreme Economic Council, on 'Economic Aspects of British policy concerning Russia', was circulated to the Cabinet by Lord Curzon on 7 January 1920. Wise pointed out that Russian resources before the war, though "crudely developed", were a factor of "enormous importance in the economic stability and organization of the world". The linen industry in Belfast and Dundee depended upon Russian supplies for three-quarters of the total raw materials; and in its absence, ^{half of} the local workforce was out of work. A third of imported butter came from Russia, and there was no hope of supplying an adequate ration until these sources were again available. Russia was believed to have a "vast exportable surplus of grain"; while the demand of the Russian market for goods, as soon as trade was possible, would undoubtedly be on a "colossal scale". The renewal of trade with Russia would "go further than any other factor to reduce the cost of living", a critical matter especially in Central Europe. Wise did not recommend the recognition of the Soviet government, but he did favour the restoration of commercial relations and the ending of the blockade"⁴.

The point was reiterated in a memorandum from Roberts, the Minister of Food, to the Prime Minister on 9 January. He noted the "profound importance of the pacification of Russia from the point of view of the world's economic

outlook". For the United Kingdom, the lack of Russian supplies was a matter of "considerable moment". The figures for imports from Russia in 1909-1913 were reviewed. There was a "close inter-dependence", he considered, between "civil war in Russia and famine in Europe". A covering letter to Curzon stressed the "disastrous consequences, as regards Europe's economic life, of a continuance of civil war in Russia".⁵ Wise's memorandum appears to have formed the basis of the proposals which Lloyd George placed before the meeting of the heads of the British, French and Italian governments on 14 January dealing with the restoration of commerce with Russia; and Wise's scheme formed the basis of the report of a 'Committee to consider the Reopening of certain Trading Relations with (the) Russian People' on 15 January, a document which contained proposals for "reconstructing trading operations with the whole of Russia without officially recognizing the Bolshevik Government".⁶

The proposal to suspend hostilities and to enter into (at least) commercial relations with Soviet Russia was, on the face of it, a significant change. Yet other than formally, there was little change in British or Allied policy. The new scheme offered, rather, what a Foreign Office official termed an "opportunity of testing the theory frequently advanced of late that the lifting of the blockade would do more to oust or modify Bolshevism than armed intervention ever accomplished".⁷ Recommending the trade scheme to the heads of delegations, Lloyd George declared confidently that it would "destroy Bolshevism". The "moment trade was established with Russia, Communism would go".⁸ The Daily Chronicle, a journal normally close to his views, regarded the agreement as a means of exerting influence above all upon the Russian peasantry, a group felt to be indifferently disposed to the Soviet regime, which would be drawn into economic relations with the West through the Co-operatives, with which relations were to be established, in which some 25 million of them were enrolled.⁹ The Supreme Council specified in its resolution that the development of trade should take the form of the offering to the Russian co-operative organizations of the possibility of organizing the "import into Russia of clothing, medicines, agricultural machinery" and other objects of prime importance.. in exchange for grain, flax etc."¹⁰ The foreign section of Centrosoyuz, the Russian co-operative organization, had in fact undertaken the provision of supplies to Denikin,

Kolchak and to the White government at Archangel.¹¹ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ As Lord Hardinge noted in a telegram to Paris on 20 January, the Soviet government appeared to have abandoned its repeated plans to absorb the Co-operatives, and was "now looking to them to assist in the distribution of commodities especially in recently conquered Siberia and South Russia. If this is so it constitutes a notable victory for individualism as opposed to Communism!" It would lead, he thought, either to formal relations with the Soviet government or to an "attempt to use the Co-operatives as a substitute for Kolchak and Denikin in the struggle with the Soviet Government"¹².

The possibility of utilizing Centrosoyuz in this way, however, clearly required at least the acquiescence of the Soviet government. The Paris department of Centrosoyuz sent a telegram on 20 January to the chairman of the organization in Moscow, outlining the decision reached by the Supreme Council, and enquiring whether an exchange was possible, and whether import and export operations would be permitted, in which connection the despatch of representatives to Moscow was envisaged. In reply the Chairman of Centrosoyuz announced that the organization had received permission from the Soviet authorities to enter into direct trade relations with the Co-operatives, and also with private firms in Western Europe, America and other countries. It was ready immediately to enter into such relations, and the visit of a delegation to Moscow was approved, and a guarantee of safe conduct promised. The delegation was named by the foreign section on 27 January. Centrosoyuz, however, on 2 February declared that it would act in the name of all the Russian co-operative organizations; and, deprecating the visit of "three co-operators with little authority", proposed to send its own representatives abroad, "in possession of all the necessary information and with the necessary broad powers". Litvinov, in Copenhagen, was named as the mission's chairman, and the names of the other members were announced on 25 February. The delegates would leave as soon as a route and visas were arranged, and would be "provided with the authority to conduct negotiations and to conclude contracts on the spot"¹³.

The connection with the work of the Co-operatives of the mission's chairman and of another of its members, Krasin, ~~was~~ ^{had been} hitherto at best peripheral. The membership of the delegation, and the change in the Centrosoyuz policy, reflected the nationalization of the organization on 27 January¹⁴.

The Bolsheviks, Krasin wrote, accepted the Supreme Council's suggestion and "responded to it in a somewhat unusual way, sending ostensibly as a Centrosoyuz delegation prominent Soviet workers and communists headed by the People's Commissar.. The governments of Western Europe.. right from the beginning regarded it not as a representative body of co-operators, but as a representative~~em~~ body with full powers on behalf of the Russian Soviet Government"¹⁵. Lord Riddell enquired of Lloyd George on 6 March whether the Russian delegation represented the Co-operatives or the Bolshevik government. "The Soviet", he replied, "undoubtedly"¹⁶.

A number of obstacles remained, however, before negotiations could be initiated. In particular, a guarantee to "refrain from interfering in the policies or internal affairs of Great Britain or other countries" was required from Krasin, Nogin, Rozovski and Khinchuk; but in view of his "interference in internal affairs when he was living earlier in London", Litvinov was refused permission to proceed there to take part in negotiations¹⁷, where the "difficult practical details" were to be resolved. He might, however, take part in that further stage of the negotiations which it "would be convenient to conduct through Copenhagen". Centrosoyuz protested that enquiries of the Soviet government had revealed that the grounds professed did "not correspond with the facts". Neither the British, nor the French, Italian or Belgian governments, however, was prepared to grant him permission in "existing circumstances". For the other delegates, agreement was reached on transit rights and a communications link with Moscow¹⁸. Centrosoyuz agreed to despatch its delegation "as soon as it is known whether it will be able to stay in Copenhagen for a sufficient length of time to discuss affairs with Litvinov, a member of the delegation"¹⁹. The mission left at the end of March for Copenhagen, travelling through Finland and Sweden.

In April the delegation began negotiations in Copenhagen with the members of the Permanent Committee of the Supreme Economic Council, which had been mandated by the Supreme Council to "solve all questions of an international character which might arise in the course of the negotiations; to make with the Russian delegation agreements essential for the swift renewal of trade with Russia; to discuss with the Russian delegation and to present for the consideration of the Allied governments general questions connected with the renewal of trade and generally to specify measures which might make Russian raw materials available for the rest of Europe, and European products

and goods for Russia".²⁰ In the course of the negotiations, however, it became apparent that a number of political considerations existed which must be settled before effective trading could be resumed between Russia and Western Europe. The Supreme Council delegates went to San Remo to report on the results of the conference; and Krasin at the same time (21 April) sent a telegram to the Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council, urging that it was "necessary in the first place to agree in broad outlines on general conditions for re-establishing economic and commercial arrangements between countries, which required formal negotiations and definite agreement".²¹ On 26 April the Italian Minister Nitti replied on behalf of the Supreme Council to Krasin, announcing that the Supreme Council had authorised representatives of the Allied governments to meet Krasin and the Russian Trading Delegation currently at Copenhagen "with a view to the immediate re-starting of trade relations between Russia and other countries through the intermediary of co-operative organizations and otherwise". The inclusion of Litvinov would not be permitted; otherwise the Allied representatives would be "prepared to meet the Russian delegation in London at the earliest date convenient to them".²² The Supreme Council concluded its business with the adoption of a resolution empowering its Permanent Committee to make such arrangements as were necessary to enable trade with Russia to be resumed "as rapidly as possible"; to discuss with the Russian delegation, and submit to the Allied governments, general questions arising out of the resumption of such trade; "generally to devise measures which shall render surplus Russian foodstuffs and raw materials available as soon as possible for the rest of the world"; and to consult as appropriate with the American and neutral governments, and with the Secretariat of the League of Nations.²³

Krasin in reply to the communication from Nitti protested at the exclusion of Litvinov, "against whom no accusations of abuse of his diplomatic privileges while in London had been advanced"; and declared his intention of regarding him, notwithstanding, as a member of the Delegation and of discussing with him and involving him in all the delegation's decisions.²⁴ Peters, on behalf of the British government, informed him on 19 May that Lloyd George would be "glad to see him in London and that H.M.G. would be ready to discuss with him the general question of the removal of obstacles to the renewal of trade with Soviet Russia". Litvinov might remain in Copenhagen, provided the Danish government had no objection. Krasin accordingly set

out to join the other members of the delegation in London; and the negotiations began at the end of May, 1920²⁵.

The Russian Trading Delegation had already begun negotiations in Sweden in the course of its journey to Copenhagen. The Swedish government was reluctant to negotiate directly with the Delegation; but overtures to the biggest and oldest Swedish locomotive factory, Niudkvist and Holm, led to the formation of a joint concern comprising this and fourteen other major Swedish firms, which, with the approval of the Swedish government, concluded an agreement with Centrosoyuz on 15 May 1920²⁶. It was agreed that Russian funds and goods imported in connection with the agreement would not be liable to confiscation; and that payment might be made in gold, thus making the first serious inroads for the Soviet regime into the 'gold blockade'. Estonian and Scandinavian banks were influenced to follow suit; and English and French, as well as Swedish, banks began to accept Russian gold in payment at Reval, although at first at a significant discount²⁷.

Negotiations with Britain remained, however, of "decisive importance" for the Bolsheviks. Britain was the most powerful country in Europe, and her decision on this matter might be expected to influence other governments. An agreement might be expanded and augmented; while failure might lead to failure elsewhere also. Thus "from the end of May 1920 all the efforts of the Soviet foreign delegation were concentrated on the realisation of an agreement with England"²⁸.

British policy remained equivocal. Lloyd George had pioneered the Allied change of front, to the detriment, it appeared, of relations with the French government (which protested to the Swedish government following the conclusion of the agreement with the Russian delegation, and refused to participate in the London talks²⁹). Curzon, however, at first refused to conduct negotiations with Krasin, and at the opening of the talks had (as Lloyd George told Maisky somewhat later) refused to shake hands with Krasin until Lloyd George demanded that he 'be a gentleman'³⁰. He had not been present for the decision in Paris to end the blockade. The decision had been taken, he wrote to Hardinge, "in the absence of any Foreign Office representative"³¹. Churchill showed no more enthusiasm. In a memorandum to the Supreme Council meeting at San Remo, he declared that they must "decide which of two factors is most (sic) dangerous to the existing order of

society in Europe and to the security of the United Kingdom, namely, .. recognition of the Soviet Government or starvation and disease in Europe on an unprecedented scale"³². He was not present at the meeting with Krasin; and was reported afterwards to have asked: "Did you shake hands with the hairy baboon?"³³. Differences within the Cabinet were among the factors responsible for the fact that the negotiations lasted almost ten months.

The first meeting was devoted to a preliminary exchange of views on measures essential for the renewal of trade relations. Krasin emphasized the importance of securing a stable peace, allowing the Soviet government to concentrate on peaceful reconstruction; while the Allies, he believed, were surely behind the Polish offensive. Stocks of raw material existed; but there was a need for assistance in the development of the export trade. The removal of the blockade should be made evident to neutrals; the minefields should be cleared; commercial representation, with powers of communication, should be established, and a proper legal and currency basis for trade developed. Lloyd George disclaimed any assistance to the Polish offensive, and raised the question of British prisoners of war remaining in Russia, two of whom had allegedly been killed, and of the Bolsheviks supplying armies and states which were "hostile to British interests". In Asia Minor, Persia, Afghanistan and North West India Soviet emissaries were "stirring up trouble.. Such action must necessarily stop, if trade was to be reopened on friendly terms". The Soviets were ~~desist~~. "encouraging Turkish Nationalists to make trouble" which must be ~~XXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ Britain could "not resume trade unless the Soviets brought to an end all propaganda directed against the Allied governments"³⁴.

At their following meeting Krasin gave a "provisional" reply. He believed that the provisions regarding prisoners had been carried out, while there were some counter-complaints. Propaganda was a reaction to an aggressive British policy towards Soviet Russia; to remedy which he proposed reciprocal guarantees. Lloyd George replied that once trading relations were established, the blockade would be raised fully. Minefields and commercial representation could be agreed upon in principle, provided that there were provisions for "abstention from propaganda or interference in politics". The "recognition" of Russian obligations, if not their immediate payment, was not, in the British government's opinion, a matter

which could be left over until a later stage.

Krasin declared that all British subjects had been released with the exception of "those who were in prison for grave offences". Curzon retorted that it was "precisely the case of those against whom grave offences were alleged that we wished to raise as one of the conditions of entering upon commercial relations". He was "desirousthat the whole of the prisoners in Russia should be released without any distinction as to grave offences". Krasin suggested a reciprocal amnesty following the conclusion of the agreement. As regarded the East, Krasin affirmed that Soviet actions were in response to British anti-Soviet policies , and would cease when British policy changed and guarantees were provided. Curzon noted that Soviet action in Persia, at Resht and Enzeli , was an "act of direct aggression against Persia, and one of the kind of things that we were asking should be stopped". Krasin was prepared to offer an undertaking that no anti-British propaganda would be conducted were an agreement concluded³⁵.

At the resumed negotiations on 29 June 1920, Krasin announced that the Soviet government was prepared to give an understanding not to carry on "communistic propaganda and interference" in the internal political life of Britain, openly or secretly, if an agreement were made, and a British guarantee offered in return. An agreement to refrain from hostile action could be made, if reciprocal, at a bilateral conference. To consider private claims only against either government would be unfair to Soviet Russia. British businessmen, often those who held claims against the Soviet authorities, in fact generally favoured the establishment of trading relations without necessarily requiring a prior recognition of claims, in order that Russia might be enabled to establish her ability to pay. Claims should be reciprocally investigated; foreign policy and economic disputes should be separately examined, while trade in the meantime was allowed to develop.

This (perhaps disingenuously) misunderstood the objects of the British government in entering ~~XXXX~~ into ostensibly 'trading ' negotiations. The development of trade between the two countries was (at least for many members of the Cabinet) not an objective, but a harmless concession in return for which it was hoped to secure worthwhile changes of policy on the part of the Soviet government on precisely the matters which Krasin^{now} proposed to postpone. Lloyd George replied that this amounted to a "practical refusal to ^{now} Krasin proposed to postpone

accept the only conditions which made possible the resumption of trade relations". It was impossible for Britain to admit Soviet agents so long as Soviet Russia was "endeavouring to stir up trouble for the British Empire in the East.. The British Government.. regarded the complete mutual cessation of hostile action, whether military or by propaganda as absolutely essential to the resumption of trade", Krasin was proposing to postpone "fundamental questions"³⁶. Krasin was to leave to discuss these matters in Moscow and then return.

A British memorandum was handed to the Soviet representative on 30 June. It stated that it would be "useless" to enter further into dispute and mutual accusation. The negotiations had reached "such a stage, that it is essential to bring them to a definite result". It sought a "categorical answer: yes, or no, was Russia ready to enter a trade agreement with the British Empire and the other powers " upon certain conditions. These were: that each side should "refrain from hostile actions or measures directed against the other side, and from the conducting of any kind of official propaganda, direct or indirect, against the institutions of the other side: in particular the Soviet Government will refrain from any kind of attempt by means of military actions or propaganda to urge the peoples of Asia to any kind of attempt by means of military action, directed against British interests or against the British Empire". This in the British government's opinion was the "basic condition of any kind of a trade agreement between Russia and any of the western powers". Secondly, British and Russian citizens detained by the authorities of either side should be free to return to their homeland. Thirdly, the Soviet government, with a corresponding obligation on the part of the British government, should agree in principle to pay compensation to private citizens who had rendered goods or services to Russia for which they had not been paid. Such a declaration was felt to be necessary for the "real renewal of trade between the two countries", although it was not demanded that such debts should be settled immediately. Fourthly, the British government agreed with the measures suggested by the Soviet government to facilitate trade relations and communications, retaining the right to refuse entry to someone judged persona non grata, which should be the right of the Soviet government also. The memorandum sought to know definitely whether the Soviet government "agreed or not to accept these principles as the basis of an agreement on the

renewal of trade relations between Russia and the British Empire..". If the reply was a favourable one, the British government was ready to discuss the details with any ~~experts~~ or representatives named by the Soviet government (with the exception of those who had already been rejected); and if no positive reply followed within a week, then the negotiations would be considered to have concluded, and measures would be taken accordingly³⁷.

On 7 July Chicherin despatched a reply to Curzon, which "in the interests of a swift conclusion of peace between Russia and Great Britain", accepted the principles set out in the British government's memorandum as the "basis for an agreement between Russia and Great Britain". The agreement itself should be the object of negotiations between the two governments, which should begin without delay. The opportunity was not lost to protest against the "accusations, contrary to the real state of affairs, that Soviet Russia (was) carrying out attacks on the British Empire.. In its relations with the British Empire Soviet Russia desires only peace..³⁸. Bonar Law announced in the House of Commons that an "understanding had, therefore, been reached as to the principles on which a trade agreement will be negotiated"³⁹. The development of the Russo-Polish conflict, however, halted further moves. The connection with the development of Russo-British trade was not an obvious one: but the negotiations had been pre-eminently political throughout.

The initial stage of the war, characterised by the rapid advance of Polish forces in an operation variously termed "aggressive" or "pre-emptive", was regarded by the British government with an attitude of studied neutrality. Churchill informed the House of Commons that "any operations which Poland may engage in are settled by the head of the Polish state and by the Polish government"; and Lloyd George added that Poland was not being supplied by Britain in any way, either with men, money or munitions.⁴⁰ On 24 April Marshal Pilsudski invaded Russia; on 8 May Kiev was captured. Bonar Law denied that the British government had been consulted by the Polish government before its offensive, or that the government was giving moral or material support to Poland⁴¹. King George V sent a telegram to the Polish government, however, on 3 May, congratulating them on the first anniversary of the Polish state, a gesture which in view of the time chosen to make it was taken to imply rather more than it expressly conveyed. On 11 May Churchill

told the House of Commons that the British and French governments had, in fact, "helped to strengthen and equip the Polish Army". Bonar Law explained that the government was allowing the Poles to ship out of the country munitions and other surplus stores which had been promised to them as a gift in 1919. He "thought that the material had gone long ago"⁴². A British military mission which had been despatched to Poland was "acting in an advisory capacity on naval and mercantile marine matters to the Polish Government"⁴³. A Conference of Ministers considered the conflict on 11 June 1920, and decided not to suggest peace ~~XXXXX~~ negotiations to the Polish government, as this would imply responsibility in the event of failure. Perhaps more importantly, the Poles were in any case winning: the military situation, it was noted, was "distinctly favourable at the moment to the Poles"⁴⁴.

The reversal in the fortunes of the Polish army, however, brought about a sharp change in the government's attitude. Lloyd George pointed out to Marshal Foch that the Allies had undertaken by the peace treaty to defend the independence of Poland, and "if we allowed the Bolsheviks to trample the national independence of Poland out of existence under the hoofs of Buddennie's cavalry, we would be eternally dishonoured"⁴⁵. Not only honour was at stake. The British government had been warned by its representative in Warsaw that the situation was "undoubtedly serious from every point of view.. Economic conditions generally are favourable for the spread of Bolshevism". In Rumbold's view "if the Polish barrier against Bolshevism goes, the barrier will be shifted much further west and an opportunity will be given to latent Bolshevism in Czechoslovakia to join hands with Russian Bolshevism thereby creating a very serious state of things for Central Europe and the Western Powers"⁴⁶. Count Sforza, speaking at the meeting of Allied representatives at Spa on 10 July 1920, declared that "within two weeks of the occupation of Poland by the Bolsheviks, Hungary will become Bolshevik". Lloyd George added that the Allies would be confronted by an Independent Socialist government in Germany. Supposing they refused to carry out the treaty, "where would the Allies be? The Allies must secure an independent Poland.. otherwise all their work would be undone". It was agreed that a document should be sent to the Soviet government, proposing a Russo-Polish armistice, failing which war supplies would be sent to

to Poland; and the Polish representative present was given a guarantee accordingly⁴⁷.

The Allied note, as sent to the Soviet government by Curzon, confirmed Soviet acceptance of the principles contained in the British memorandum of 1st July (30 June) as the "basis of an agreement for the renewal of trade relations and the cessation of mutual hostile actions", and declared British readiness to "continue the negotiations for the conclusion of a trade agreement as soon as the Russian delegates return". The note, however, suggested in addition, in the interests of the "re-establishment of peace throughout Europe", the conclusion of an armistice between Soviet Russia and Poland on the basis of the border established in the previous year by the Peace Conference. A conference in London under the auspices of the Paris Peace Conference should follow as quickly as possible, to establish peace between Russia and not only Poland, but Lithuania, Latvia, and Finland also. Any representatives might be sent who "accepted an obligation not to interfere in the ^{political or} internal affairs of the British Empire and not to conduct propaganda". An armistice was likewise proposed with Wrangel's forces in the South, and it was proposed that he be invited to London for discussion, although not that he should be a member of the conference. While the British government could not assist Poland in any actions hostile to Russia, it was obliged by the League of Nations agreement to "defend the inviolability and independence of Poland within its legal ethnographic frontiers", which the Allies would do if necessary by all means in their power⁴⁸.

The Soviet government replied on 17 July, welcoming the British desire to "facilitate the establishment of a general peace in Eastern Europe", while noting that such a desire had "unfortunately not been apparent at the time of the development of those complications between Russia and Poland which (had) concluded in the Polish offensive on Russia and the Ukraine". It remained, however, to be demonstrated that the Polish government was interested in the conclusion of an armistice; while previous British action hardly suggested that its government might be a suitable arbiter. The Soviet government "considered direct negotiations with Poland, without any external interference.. to be essential". If in the negotiations the interests of both sides were "exclusively taken into consideration", a complete armistice would be "easily attainable", as had been concluded already with Estonia,

Georgia and Lithuania (of the existence of the last of which the British government appeared to be unaware). Nor could the agency of the League of Nations, of which Soviet Russia was not a member, be accepted as a kind of "court of ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{final} instance over all the states of the world". Any appeal by the Polish government to begin peace negotiations would, however, not be rejected, and a more favourable ~~XXXXXX~~ frontier than that outlined by the Supreme Council would be granted to her. ~~XX XXX~~

As for Wrangel, the Soviet government could not be unaware that a link between Wrangel's offensive and the Polish attack existed, in the form of a military agreement. Wrangel's army and administration, in the absence of a source of income of his own, "existed entirely on money rendered to him by several Allied powers"; his military equipment was entirely of Allied origin and had been brought to him on English-owned ships or from ports which were under English control. The Soviet government was ready to offer the General and his staff a safe conduct, provided that they surrendered and handed over their territory and arms, as the northern anti-Soviet government had done. A protest was made that the Allies were attempting by means of Wrangel "in practice to annex the Crimean peninsula". It was hoped that the delegation which was being sent to London to negotiate a final agreement on the basis of the notes of 1 July (30 June) and 7 July, would be able to achieve its purpose without extraneous issues becoming involved⁴⁹.

The Cabinet ,meeting on 20 July, was informed that it was the view of the British diplomatic and military representatives in Poland that the Polish army was "overweighted, to a considerable extent demoralised, and, in spite of a rally in patriotic enthusiasm for the defence of the country, the only real prospect of saving Poland lay in the acceptance of an armistice by Poland". While Poland, it was felt, had probably brought her present "desperate" situation upon herself by "ill-advised attacks", this did not alter the fact that "if nothing were done, Polish independence was threatened with extinction. If she disappeared and were absorbed in Soviet Russia this might be a prelude to the union of the latter with the Bolshevist elements in Germany and the postponement of European peace". The Cabinet approved the Prime Minister's telegram to the Polish government urging them to implement their understanding and to apply directly to the Russian Soviet government for an armistice; to approve the draft of a reply to the Soviet proposal to

conclude an armistice; to approve the Prime Minister's action in requesting the Admiralty to delay the return to Britain of M. Krasin and M. Kamenev, and requesting him to inform the delegation that their return was not desirable until the government learned the terms of the reply of the Soviet government to the Polish request for an armistice.

The Prime Minister was empowered to send a telegram to Millerand proposing the immediate despatch of a joint French and British mission to Warsaw to consult with the Polish and other governments on an armistice, and to co-operate with them in the event of the negotiations for an armistice breaking down, and to report. The British envoy was to be Lord d'Abernon, British Ambassador in Berlin, accompanied by a military officer. If the Bolsheviks refused to accept an armistice, the German government was to be pressed to divert to the Polish government war material due to be handed over for destruction under the Treaty of Versailles⁵⁰.

The telegram despatched to the Soviet government noted the "large number of disputable points" in the Soviet reply (of 17 June), and differences both of fact and principle, but limited itself to the "pressing problem of the conclusion of military actions between Poland and Soviet Russia". The British government did not intend to insist upon the presence of third parties. The Polish government had been urged straightaway to begin negotiations for an armistice and a peace settlement; but despite its request, Soviet forces had continued their offensive, forcing the British government to the "conclusion that the Soviet government intended to carry on war against the Polish people". If this were the case the British government and the Allies would "render the help and support to Poland which they promised". Nor could negotiations for the renewal of trade with Britain begin again if Russia was invading Poland; Kamenev and Krasin had accordingly been instructed to remain in Reval until an armistice had been concluded⁵¹.

The Soviet reply (23 July) accepted the proposal of a conference in London between Soviet Russia and states in direct or indirect hostilities with her; while informing the British government that the military command had been instructed already to meet Polish representatives and to begin with them negotiations for an armistice and a peace settlement. "Surprise" was expressed at the British refusal to continue the trade negotiations, despite the Soviet acceptance of all the conditions which had been stipulated for their continuance. Such conduct would make the reaching of an agreement much more difficult.⁵²

The British government, "in view of the acceptance by the Soviet government of the Polish proposal for an armistice and peace negotiations" declared its readiness to receive the Russian trade delegation. A conference should take place in London, at which the Soviet government should be represented, provided that the aims of such a conference were clear: the participation of the Allies and of the other border states in the negotiations having apparently been rejected. It was felt that ~~if~~ the Allied governments were to meet the Soviet delegates with any chance of success, Polish delegates and delegates from the other border states should also be in attendance. The main aim of the conference should be the restoration of peace in Europe, and above all between Poland and Russia, on conditions guaranteeing the independence of Poland and the legitimate interests of both sides. The unsolved problems of relations between Russia and the border states should also be considered. "After the solution of these questions the conference can go on to discuss the points at issue between Soviet Russia and the Allies and the restoration of normal relations between them"⁵³.

The Allied reply was drafted at the Second Conference of Boulogne, on 27 and 28 July 1920. Lloyd George pointed out that "it was impossible to fight, as neither France nor England would stand any more fighting". His statement to the House of Commons that if Poland were invaded Britain would be prepared to fight had "excited very great uneasiness in the House even among the Conservative elements, and it had aroused the apprehensions of the public. Nobody wanted war, and nobody was disposed to send troops. The feeling in England was that the Poles had made a mess of it, and had only themselves to thank for what had happened". The conference in London was proposed. Lloyd George declared that what was necessary was that France and Great Britain should "establish a common front to combat Bolshevism". It was "essential that France and England should now come in to save Poland". A telegram was drafted and despatched by Curzon to Moscow on 29 July⁵⁴.

In the absence of a reply, a further telegram was sent on 3 August. Russian-Polish negotiations had meanwhile broken down. It had been learned that the Polish delegates had been required to consider the conclusion of peace; and in the absence of other Powers, "the projected summoning

of a conference would lose its meaning". The Soviet army had continued to invade Poland. If this continued it would be concluded that the Soviet government did "not intend to respect the freedom and independence of Poland" and the position earlier envisaged, in which appropriate action would be taken by the Allies, would arise⁵⁵.

On 4 August, Kamenev and Krasin from the Trading Delegation, which was now in London, were summoned to meet Lloyd George and Bonar Law. They were informed that there was no armistice, that Russian forces were invading ethnographic Poland, that Chicherin had not answered the note of 29 July, and that accordingly no agreement existed between England and Russia. "The moment has come, when England should meet her obligations to Poland". The fleet had been ordered out, the blockade renewed and the unloading of ammunition had begun in Danzig. The Polish government had been advised to be moderate and to accept legitimate Soviet conditions and guarantees; but the "reality", which Lloyd George was exclusively prepared to consider, was that negotiations for an armistice had "not yet begun and the army is moving on Warsaw"⁵⁶.

A further meeting took place on 6 August. Unless there was a stoppage within the next forty-eight hours, Lloyd George warned, "the conference, trade and everything else went". A truce was proposed, which the British government was prepared to accept even if the French government would not do so. It was not, however, a guarantee of a conference, which the

French government refused to attend unless the Polish peace were on the agenda⁵⁷. The British proposals embraced the cessation of military activities, the prohibition of re-arming or reinforcement of existing forces, and the agreement of both sides upon a demarcation line, prior to the opening of peace negotiations⁵⁸.

Lloyd George was informed two days later by Kamenev that the Soviet government's proposals had been accepted by the Polish government, and that delegates were to be sent to Minsk to conclude an armistice and a peace agreement. The negotiations were due to open on 11 August. It was hoped that this would meet the desire of the British government that military activity cease and that peaceful relations be established between Russia and Poland in the quickest and simplest manner⁵⁹. Kamenev further informed Lloyd George that immediately the Polish government accepted the conditions of an armistice, which would concern mainly the reduction of her

military forces, Soviet forces would be withdrawn to the line which had been indicated by the Supreme Council and by Lord Curzon, and their number would be reduced, provided that the Allies, especially the French government, accepted an obligation not to attack and not to support any attack upon Soviet Russia⁶⁰.

Lloyd George replied that if Kamenev's note were the final reply of the Soviet government, the British government could "consider it only as a refusal of the conditions for an armistice outlined at the meeting on Friday 6 August". The meeting in Hythe, then taking place, would proceed upon this assumption⁶¹.

The Third Conference of Hythe on 7 and 8 August opened with the receipt of what Lloyd George termed "most depressing" news from Poland. The Poles were "quite demoralised and.. incapable of either civil or military direction". There was "little prospect of saving the situation. It was impossible to defend Warsaw, and there was the danger that the Bolsheviks might reach the German frontier". That being the case, the situation was the "most dangerous one that had arisen since 1914". If the British armistice proposals were not accepted by the Soviet government, the idea of a conference in London would be at an end, and there could be no question of resuming trade relations with Russia. "What would practically be a state of war would supervene". They were confronted with the "definite fact that Poland had collapsed; that neither France, as he understood, nor Britain could send troops"; ships and a blockade forming the only possible means of exerting pressure upon the Soviet leaders. The "trouble was that the Poles could not be trusted, and that Pilsudski was so powerful that he could not be removed". The opinion in Britain was that he had gone too far, and "English public opinion was absolutely opposed to war". The cost of sending the fleet to the Baltic would be a high one. He did not trust the Bolsheviks, he said, "any more than one trusted highwaymen", but he thought that the Allies, by "threatening them with certain consequences, might be possibly induce them to give fairly good terms to Poland". Every endeavour must be made to save Poland, because the "salvation of Europe lay in the salvation of Poland". Millerand, who likewise was not in a position to provide troops, urged the consideration of "measures.. to ward off what was an international peril.. Every day the Soviet peril grew more formidable. It was agreed that the Soviet government's recent communication should be

regarded, in Lloyd George's words, as a "definite refusal to accept the terms which had been proposed to them"⁶².

A further session took place at Lympe that afternoon. Lloyd George stated that the meeting was "trying to review the situation created by the attempts of the Bolsheviks to Bolshevize or destroy Poland, and to see what the Allies could do": or, as Marshal Foch put it, "supposing the Poles were smashed, what the position would be and what action the Allies could take, supposing, for instance, (that) the Bolsheviks pushed right up to the German frontier". If Germany were to ally with Soviet Russia, this would be a "most formidable alliance", a development "essentially to the detriment of the Allies". They must "endeavour to reinforce (Poland) from outside to the utmost extent of their power, but at the same time, they must endeavour to lend her assistance from inside". Blockade of the Russian ports was considered, among other possible measures; and the provision of assistance to Wrangel whose record was "superior to the rest". It was "essential to construct a buffer state in order to combat Bolshevism and to prevent a union of Germany and Russia ". Lloyd George noted that it was an "unfortunate fact that everybody hated (the Poles) except the French, who were in the happy position of not being their neighbours.. That was a source of considerable trouble to us". Moreover, Allied assistance must necessarily "fall short of what was really necessary to support Poland against Bolshevism". The Allies could not continue to oppose the Bolsheviks if the Poles accepted the Bolshevik terms; and it was "conceivable that within a week the Allies might be deprived of any excuse they now possessed for opposing the Bolsheviks". Henry Wilson reported that the "only supplies that the British could give to the Poles would be a certain amount of pack saddlery, sets of equipment, boots, clothing and so on". If Wrangel were supported, the Allies would have to continue to do so until he could make terms of peace. That would involve them in "very considerable commitments". All that Britain could do would be to provide a "certain amount of supplies and to give support from the sea, but that was all".⁶³

Curzon noted that the Daghestanis had offered to raise the whole Caucasus against the Bolsheviks for the "very moderate sum of £40,000". Lloyd George suggested the consideration of the pressure which it might be possible to bring to bear upon the Bolsheviks in order to "save the real independence" of Poland: (i) internally by helping with officers, technical

advisors, munitions and material; (ii) by a reimposition of the blockade; on the assumption (i) that a state of war did not exist with the Soviet government; (ii) that neither England nor France could send troops; (iii) that the amount of money that each of the Allied countries would be able to contribute must be strictly limited⁶⁴.

Measures were considered in more detail on 9 August. Papers were presented on naval and military means of "exercising pressure on the Soviet government", and on "political measures whereby pressure could be put on Russia"⁶⁵. Troops, Millerand confessed, were "impossible", but the Allies must nevertheless "provide a maximum of war material, munitions, officers etc.", and take military and naval measures as appropriate. The border states could not be asked "actually to attack Russia, but they could be asked to get up a defensive barrier against Bolshevism". Lloyd George noted that when it came to taking hostile action, the "difficulties of the British government were greater than those of the French, as British public opinion was the more uncertain. The British government had their difficulties in going to war with the Bolsheviks". Not only the labour elements was opposed to war with Soviet Russia, but also moderate opinion, and "even certain Conservatives were either definitely against war or most reluctant to enter upon it". They must make it clear that their action was "not merely anti-Bolshevik", otherwise there would be "very grave trouble". The danger of this was less in France, as France "had had her revolution in comparatively recent times. Great Britain, however, had not been so recently inoculated". There could be no war for the sake of a forty-eight hour difference in the cessation of hostilities; or because British terms were not accepted by the Bolsheviks; nor should Poland choose to accept the Bolshevik terms. The responsibility for her situation "remained largely that of Poland; the Bolshevik forces were "not well equipped or well organized.. It should have been easy to stop them but for the incredible incompetence of the Poles".⁶⁶

Millerand considered that the Allies were "fighting anarchy and were struggling to prevent anarchy preying upon the whole world". The defence of Poland was "essential to prevent the loss of the fruits of victory". The Soviet delegates in London should be expelled. Lloyd George objected that it would be "quite impossible for them to go on if Poland accepted the terms of peace offered", despite the Allied offer of assistance. In such circumstances the British government could "not possibly ask the House of Commons to

sanction heavy expenditure and the blockade of Poland as well as of Russia". As for the Soviet delegates, he believed that the Cabinet would be in favour of trading with Russia because there was "so much raw material in that country which was sorely needed by the whole world", and because the British government "believed that the resumption of trading would have the effect of disintegrating Bolshevism". The thought that the risk that the Soviet government would be running by the resumption of those relations would be greater than the risks that the Allies would run. If Poland justifiably refused terms, Kamenev and Krasin must leave England; but if terms were accepted, the British government could not terminate the agreement that they had reached with the Soviet delegates. The delegates had come to re-start trading relations upon certain conditions; and if the Poles accepted terms, and the conditions were observed, "those delegates could not be asked to leave". Moreover if they were expelled, "would that affect the question in the slightest degree"?⁶⁷.

Admiral Beatty pointed out that the form of naval action required might prompt reproaches of seamen "such as that the navy was the weapon of the capitalist against the labouring classes. This, as stated by the Prime Minister, had had a certain effect on British sailors, and might be expected to have more". Lloyd George did not wish the working classes to be able to say that he had missed any chance of making peace. "If they could say so with truth, it would rot the navy, and it would rot the working classes and lead to the triumph of Bolshevism in England"⁶⁸.

The draft resolution, adopted at the meeting, agreed that the "only ground upon which (the Allies) can undertake hostile action against Russia is to assist the Polish people to maintain their independence within her ethnographic frontier". If the Polish government, after hearing the policy of the Allies, as defined in the resolutions, came to terms with Russia, the ground for Allied action against Russia lapsed; but if Russia imposed terms upon Poland which infringed her independence, common action would be taken: naval action, the blocking of communications, the provision of war material and advice to Poland, the support of Wrangel and of the border states, counter-propaganda, and the expulsion of Kamenev and Krasin. Foch was given charge of the initiation of military action, and Beatty of naval action; and a draft declaration to Poland was adopted. Crucially, however, no Allied forces were to be provided⁶⁹.

A meeting of the Cabinet took place later that day. In the discussion of Lloyd George's report,, "great stress was laid upon the very strong public opinion against intervention in the Russo-Polish war"; and it was considered possible that a general strike might be undertaken by Labour in order to prevent British intervention into the conflict. The Prime Minister was urged to exercise the "greatest caution" in any references to the circumstances in which Kamenev and Krasin would have to leave the country in the event contemplated in the Hythe resolutions in the speech which he was to make in the House of Commons the following day⁷⁰.

The Prime Minister's statement drew attention first of all to the "grave condition of affairs in Central Europe". While still "hopeful of peace", he hinted nevertheless that "certain steps" might have to be taken. The Polish attack upon Russia had not been justified; but nothing could justify retaliation which went to the extent of wiping out national independence. Polish independence was an "essential part of the structure of European peace"; and the repartition of the country would be, in his opinion, "not merely.. a crime, it would be a peril". There had been a "very suspicious delay" in arranging an armistice. The Poles might choose to accept the terms offered to them, in which case the Allies would not intervene; but should the Minsk conference fail as the result of an insistence by the Bolsheviks upon terms inconsistent with Polish independence, and which were rejected by the Poles themselves, this would give rise to what he termed a "very serious situation". There was the question of the "moral right of the nation"; and also, not less importantly, the "danger which is involved to the peace of Europe if you have a great aggressive Soviet Empire coterminous with Germany". If Poland were overrun, the Soviet republic would become an "aggressive Imperialist State which is a menace to the freedom and independence of the whole world" (not to mention, presumably, the capitalist order). In this case, Poland would receive military stores and training, economic pressure would be put upon Russia, Wrangel would be equipped, and the trade negotiations would be discontinued. If men with "wild, extravagant, irrational views" were "out to challenge the institutions upon which the liberties of Europe and civilisation depend, we shall meet them in the gate"⁷¹.

The situation altered materially upon the receipt from Kamenev of the terms of armistice and peace preliminaries which the Russian delegates

would submit to their Polish counterparts at Minsk. The terms proposed by the Bolsheviks appeared unexceptionable: indeed, territorially they conceded more to Poland than had Lord Curzon's scheme of 20 July. The terms, it was noted, "might be supplemented by details of secondary importance"⁷². Lloyd George observed that the terms were "not nearly so severe as had been imposed by the Allies upon Germany and Austria, and he did not think that Great Britain could make war in order to secure better conditions than these". It was generally agreed that the terms were "as reasonable as could be expected". In particular it was a "great cause of satisfaction" that they "secured the independence of Poland". The Polish government was to be informed that Britain could not assume the responsibility of taking hostile action against Russia if the conditions now offered in their general substance were refused: although the Poles were, of course, at liberty to attempt to secure better terms by negotiation if they could. The French government was to be informed that the Cabinet was "unanimous in thinking that public opinion in Parliament and in the country would not justify the British government in undertaking hostilities against Russia in order to secure better terms". It was hoped that the French representatives in Warsaw would be instructed along these lines⁷³.

Lloyd George returned to the House of Commons later in the day to announce that he had received a communication from Kamenev, which he proceeded to read out. While not prepared to offer his opinion with regard to the contents of the document - the discussions might be prejudiced, and some amplification of particular points was required - it appeared, nevertheless, that the crisis had passed⁷⁴. It was announced in the House of Commons that if an agreement were made, or Polish independence, at least, accepted in principle, the Russian Delegation would be allowed to remain in Britain to conduct further negotiations towards the conclusion of the trade agreement under the terms of the understanding arrived at with the exchange of notes at the beginning of July, and provided that its terms were respected. As regarded Poland, the House was assured that if the terms proposed by Russia did "not go beyond, and are sincerely those given to us, then the Government will not interfere". Moreover the government would "take no action until the House of Commons had been called together", and its approval obtained for any proposed course of action⁷⁵.

It subsequently became known, however, that the Soviet terms

to Poland included at least one provision not to the taste of the Cabinet, a requirement that a working-class civic militia be formed in Poland. Lloyd George and Giolitti, the Italian Prime Minister, meeting at Lucerne on 22 August, agreed that it was desirable that a state of peace with the Bolsheviks be secured. "Otherwise the latter would become even more dangerous and would increase their hold on Europe". Lloyd George pointed out that the Germans "were an orderly people whose natural tendency was anti-Bolshevik. But if they were driven too hard they might be forced into Bolshevism!" What, for instance, if the Bolsheviks reached the German border? "Undoubtedly there were revolutionary elements in Germany, and if the guns and rifles were still there the position would be dangerous". It was agreed to "impress upon the Russian Soviet government, in the interests of peace, not to insist on conditions inconsistent with Polish independence", by which were meant "some special form of government", such as Soviets, or that the army or militia be "drawn from or placed under the control of any particular class of people"⁷⁶.

Meeting the following day, Lloyd George observed that the terms offered to the Poles were "not terms that Poland could possibly accept". Despite Kamenev's assurance that nothing significant would be added to the terms which had been forwarded to Lloyd George, the Bolsheviks had now "included terms which it was absolutely impossible for the Poles to accept". As published in the Times and the Herald, they included a provision (Article 4) for the reduction of Polish armed forces and for the constitution of a "civic militia composed of workers"; and required also that Poland should demobilize within one month of the signature of the treaty. The conditions were "very dangerous, since they meant the establishment of a Red force in Poland"; but a protest from Britain and Italy might secure their withdrawal. A communique was published to this effect in the Times on 24 August 1920, having been delivered in advance to Kamenev, and Curzon sent a telegram to Chicherin to this effect⁷⁷.

The communique, as delivered to Kamenev, was accompanied by a letter from Balfour, which drew "especial attention" to the fact that the conditions with which, the latest information suggested, the Soviet government proposed to bind Poland were in "basic contradiction" with the terms which Kamenev had presented previously to the British government. The Cabinet took an

"extremely serious view of these new conditions.." It was enquired whether the Soviet government intended to insist upon them. The future policy of the British government, it was indicated, would depend upon the terms of the reply which was received. The matter was of extreme importance and should be considered as one of urgency. The communique itself noted with "deep regret" that the Soviet Russian government, despite official assurances to the contrary, was "attempting to impose upon Poland conditions inconsistent with her national independence". The requirement concerning the civic militia was declared to be an "indirect method of organizing military forces for the forcible liquidation of the democratic constitution and its replacement by a despotic regime of a few privileged people, who had absorbed the Bolshevik doctrine" (an inversion of the more familiar marxist charge). This constituted an "unacceptable attack upon the freedom, independence and self-respect" of Poland. Kamenev's failure to mention this provision was a "crude infringement of trust", which made further negotiations with the government he represented "more difficult, if not impossible"⁷⁸.

Chicherin replied on 25 August, expressing surprise that the question of the interpretation of a principle in the proposed agreement could become the pretext for a pronouncement of such a kind. It commented upon the "distrust" which the British government appeared to have of the workers, appearing to assume that workers "by their nature should be imbued with the Bolshevik doctrine, a point of view which could only be welcomed by those who expected the extension of Bolshevism to England". This individual point, however, the Soviet government was ready to remove in order to reach agreement with the British and Italian governments⁷⁹.

This was greeted with "satisfaction" by Balfour, who disagreed, nevertheless, with Chicherin's supporting arguments. Kamenev's communication (the Soviet government affirmed) had been "limited to a few lines, while the final peace conditions were the subject of an extensive document, containing an abundance of material which must inevitably be included in the latter but not in the former". Kamenev ventured the remark that the British government might not have objected so vehemently to the establishment of a civic militia "if it was to be composed of representatives of the propertied classes"⁸⁰.

Kamenev's imminent departure for Moscow allowed the Cabinet to define its attitude to recent developments more precisely. A Conference of

Ministers which met on 10 September considered a letter which he had sent to Lloyd George, which stated his intention of returning to Moscow for not more than ten days, and asked for proposals which he might wish to be placed before the Soviet government. It was agreed that a refusal to let him return would probably end the trade negotiations, "which at present held out some prospect of useful results". The Prime Minister was to see Kamenev and warn him of his conduct⁸¹.

The meeting took place later that day. Lloyd George began by declaring his intention of speaking "quite frankly". The undertaking which ~~Ka~~ Kamenev had given to refrain from political propaganda had been broken: he had taken steps of an active character to subsidise a newspaper not merely hostile to the Government.. a newspaper whose object is to attack the institutions of this country, which every day is trying to sow strife between classes, to create unrest, to spread discord". The £75,000 which, he affirmed, had been communicated to the directors of the Herald constituted a "gross breach of faith". If Kamenev had not in any case been leaving for Moscow the following day, "it would have been our business to ask him to leave". "We cannot have peace emissaries here who are merely conspirators against the institutions of our country". Additionally, Kamenev had communicated Soviet terms with Poland to Lloyd George, omitting provisions "quite incompatible with the independence of Poland". Kamenev's trustworthiness as a representative had been seriously impugned.

Kamenev declared that he "did not give, had no powers to give" and (had at that time) "no powers to give any subsidy or support to any newspaper whatever". The transmission in question, moreover, appeared to have taken place some months earlier when he had not in fact been in the country, and had apparently emanated from the Executive Committee of the Council of Action, of which he was not a member. That he had had "political contacts" could refer only to the provision of information to some MPs who had visited him on behalf of the Council of Action. With regard to the terms of peace with Poland, there had been a dispute in Russia about them; but the provision which was objected to had in any case been dropped three weeks previously. Had "political circumstances.. supervened", he asked, which had made the levelling of accusations against one of the Soviet representatives a "political necessity"?

Lloyd George declared that Kamenev's denials made it more

difficult than ever for negotiations to be conducted through him. The Soviet government would be informed of conditions of peace. It should "give up the idea that (it) can use peace missions to attacks British institutions", and should "abandon their policy of propaganda in this country. Upon that will depend the question of whether we will discuss with them the question of peace". British prisoners, also, had not yet been released, "nor "adequately fed"; a memorandum ~~was~~ promised on this question. ⁸²

Chicherin regretted, in a Note to Curzon, what was "nothingg other than an attempt to interfere by any means with the conclusion of an agreement between the two states and to put off for an indefinite ^{lengthy} period the re-establishment of peaceful relations between Russia and England". The acceptance by the Soviet government of the four conditions advanced by the British government had not led, as was supposed to have been the case, to the conclusion of a definite agreement. Indeed, the acceptance of the British conditions had had no practical consequence. The withdrawal of a provision of the peace terms with Poland had led, not to the renewal of negotiations but to their suspension, on grounds which he asserted were of "obvious insubstantiality"⁸³.

A number of obstacles, however, remained to be removed before negotiations could begin again. In the first place, the position of British prisoners detained at Baku gave rise to anxiety. Despite earlier reports that they had been seen 'playing football', a Conference of Ministers on 15 September 1920 was informed of the "unsatisfactory position" of the British prisoners at Baku and elsewhere in Russia. There about 150 of them; and there was "evidence that they were very indifferently fed"⁸⁴. It was agreed at a later meeting of the Cabinet that no further negotiations would be possible until the prisoners were released⁸⁵. Curzon sent a note to Chicherin on 1 October, asserting that the conditions which had been made by the British government for the renewal of trade relations, on the basis of which Kamenev and Krasin had been admitted to Britain, "have been broken and are being continually broken". Kamenev had engaged in "practically open propaganda"; the recent Third Congress of the Communist International, presided over by Lenin, had "openly announced that the Communist Party, and thus also the Soviet government, intended to use all means to overthrow

existing institutions throughout the world". Radio and press, and the recently convened "revolutionary Conference of Asiatic peoples in Baku"⁸⁶, were "clearly directed against British interests", as were Soviet actions in the Caucasus, Persia, Central Asia and Afghanistan. Moreover, British subjects were "still continuing to languish in Russian prisons or were not receiving permission to return home". The trade agreement could not be concluded ~~while~~ ^{while} the "three conditions, which were included in the Note of 1st July, remain unfulfilled"⁸⁷. When Kamenev left London on 11 September, there remained, apart from the Military mission in Siberia, a "significant number" of British subjects, the names of 81 of which had been furnished to Kamenev. A further 72 remained in prison in Baku, including a Consular representative. Action was sought before the 10th of October, otherwise "we shall take all the measures for their release which we consider necessary"⁸⁸.

It was objected in reply that the British government was equally guilty, in its relations with the Polish government and with Wrangel, of infractions of the agreement; nor had many Russian citizens under British control in Egypt, Persia and elsewhere been allowed to return. The Soviet government was nevertheless ready to return all British subjects remaining in Soviet Russia, including those convicted of crimes, provided that the British government allowed the return to Soviet Russia of all Russian citizens in Britain or under de facto British control who wished to do so. Special negotiations in Tiflis concerning the Baku prisoners were proposed; and some indication was requested as to when the trade negotiations might be resumed⁸⁹.

Curzon took issue on 9 October with many points, and reverted to the questions of the prisoners of war and of Asian intrigue. Soviet Russia had sent forces into Persia; had entered into a "military conspiracy" with Turkish nationalist forces - a movement "obviously aimed against British interests"; had threatened to attack Khorasan; had organized a body in Tashkent whose object was the organization of the forces of Central Asia with a view to an attack upon ^{the sphere of} British interests; had organized a revolution in Bukhara with this end in view; had kept a group of emissaries in Afghanistan for some months, attempting to conclude an agreement with the Emir, in order to provoke an uprising on the Indian border. At congresses in Moscow, in Baku and elsewhere, a "real hurricane of propaganda, intrigue

and conspiracy against British interests and British power in Asia" had been initiated. Large sums were being spent on anti-British propaganda, and operations were being carried out both openly and secretly. "Such a situation must be ended if the trade negotiations, to which both sides attach so much importance, are to be concluded". Appropriate measures were suggested, upon the taking of which the renewal of trade relations would depend.⁹⁰

The question of prisoners of war offered few intrinsic difficulties; and the Soviet government in turn suggested a means of making the exchanges.⁹¹ Further correspondence followed;⁹² and a protocol was signed on 1 November 1920 which provided for the release of all British subjects detained in Baku.⁹² Bonar Law, speaking in the House of Commons, explained that the delay in arranging the resumption of trading relations with Soviet Russia was "not difficult to explain. The agreement was contingent upon some agreements by the Soviet government, among which was the return of prisoners. When that is done, the negotiations will be resumed".⁹³ An agreement on this point had now been reached, and this objection, presumably, no longer applied. There were other factors which also operated towards a resumption of the negotiations; and these will now be discussed.

The near-intervention in August of the British and French governments into the Russo-Polish conflict had been conceived at a time when it appeared that the fall of Warsaw, and, indeed, the collapse of the Polish state were imminent. It was precisely such an outcome, indeed, that their proposed intervention had been designed to frustrate. It was avoided, in fact, not as a result of Allied moves but following a reversal in military fortunes, in which the Polish forces had managed to defeat the Red Army in front of Warsaw on 15 and 16 August. Polish forces had then recorded a steady advance; and the peace negotiations, which had not been suspended, finally resulted in the signature of an armistice on 12 October 1920. The Allies need now concern themselves no longer for the fate of this 'bulwark against Bolshevism'; and equally, must for the immediate future rule out the prospect of a successful Polish onslaught on Soviet Russia. Nothing, either, could now be hoped from Wrangel's forces in the South. His declining fortunes were reported to the Cabinet on 11 November; and agreement was reached that British policy (which had throughout been more circumspect towards his forces than the French had been) "should be that of strict neutrality which on no account should be compromised". His

final defeat came in the same month, when the Bolsheviks invaded his last stronghold and, on 14 November, took Sebastopol⁹⁴. No alternative to the Soviet regime could now reasonably be foreseen by even its bitterest opponents in the government.

It was also the case that sufficient contact had by now been established by individual journalists and groups with Soviet Russia to allow the formation of another opinion, one often better-informed, about that country's stability and form of government. Not all approached their experience in the same spirit. Lansbury, for instance, who visited Soviet Russia in February and March 1920, wrote in his record of his visit that he had not gone to Russia as a "Cold-blooded investigator.. I went as a socialist, to see what a socialist revolution looks like at close quarters"⁹⁵. He concluded characteristically that the revolutionary leaders "of all men, in their work for Russia, are doing what Christians call the Lord's work". He found Lenin's "wholehearted enthusiasm and devotion to the cause of ~~humanity~~ humanity" made his "whole life (seem) to be that of one of the saints of old"⁹⁶. He declared that no set of men and women responsible for a revolution of the magnitude of the Russian revolution "ever made fewer mistakes or carried their revolution through with less interference with the rights of individuals, or with less terrorism and destruction, than the men in control in Russia"⁹⁷. He sent a telegram to Lloyd George from Moscow, which suggested that the Prime Minister was making the "mistake of (his) life" with regard to the Bolshevik leaders. Lenin and his colleagues, he told Lloyd George, were "first-rate clear-headed honest humane men". Somewhat optimistically, he concluded: "beg you come here (and) join in (a) conference with Lenin. (I) am certain (that) your eyes would be opened (as) soon as you cross (the) frontier". He was invited to "crown (his) career by coming out and making a peace honourable to both democracies"⁹⁸. He made less impression upon the Prime Minister, however, than upon liberal and labour opinion. Lansbury, the Evening Standard commented, had seen "Russia with the wide-eyed wonder of the child he will never cease to be". His reports were nevertheless widely read, and a crowd of over a thousand greeted him at the station upon his return, some having waited for over four hours. He addressed a meeting at the Albert Hall two days later, on 21 March. The hall, built to accommodate 10,000, was "packed", according to the Times report, as Lansbury gave an account of his visit and denounced the "stupendous crime of the Allies"⁹⁹.

H.G. Wells differed in regarding Marx as a "Bore of the extremest sort", and developed in the course of his visit to Russia in 1920 a "very active hostility" towards him. He gained the impression of a "vast irreparable breakdown" in the country. But he concluded that the Communist Party was and "is the only sort of administrative solidarity possible in Russia"; and the Bolshevik government in Moscow was, he thought, "as securely established as any government in Europe"¹⁰⁰.

Those who had visited the country from Britain in 1919 had much in common in their views with Wells and Lansbury. Arthur Ransome, whose account was intended to provide simply a "bald record of conversations and things seen" in the course of his visit, nevertheless conveyed his impression of the "creative effort of the revolution.. the living, vivifying expression of something hitherto hidden in the consciousness of humanity"¹⁰¹. Professor Goode, whose reports had appeared in the Manchester Guardian, produced an account of his visit in July and August 1919 entitled 'Bolshevism at Work'. He was granted interviews with Lenin and with Chicherin, and recorded that the leaders were "profoundly simple in their dress, food, life", despite the "slandorous descriptions of them circulated in the West of Europe". He had "not found the millennium - far from it - but the reality is far otherwise than the stories circulated at home would make one believe". The Bolshevik government he found to be supported by a "mass of the workers solidly", and by as many as two-thirds of the peasantry actively or passively. He attacked the blockade, and called for greater contacts¹⁰². Mrs Pankhurst, who visited the country in 1920, added that Russia had become a 'prohibition' country, in which all alcoholic drink was banned. "To-day", she wrote, in a remark which may appear ironic in retrospect, it was believed that the Russian people had "mostly forgotten the very existence of alcohol"¹⁰³.

A greater impression than any of these individual travellers was made, perhaps, by the visit of the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party delegation to Russia in the summer of 1920. The delegation, composed of Mrs Snowden, Tom Shaw and Robert Williams from the Labour Party, Margaret Bondfield, A.A. Purcell and H. Skinner from the T.U.C. with C. Roden Buxton and L. Haden Guest as joint secretaries, found British press reports to be "perversions of the facts". The revolution, in their view, had "not had a fair chance". They decided to recommend that the entire

British labour movement should "demand the removal of the last vestige of blockade and intervention, and the complete destruction of the barrier which Imperialist statesmen have erected between our own people and our brothers and sisters of Russia". The present Russian government, they considered, should be "unconditionally recognized"¹⁰⁴. Many notions which had enjoyed wide currency in the press were refuted: nobody had been seen to fall dead of starvation in the street; no evidence had been found of interference with religious observance; no Chinese soldiers had been found, nor particular luxury on the part of the leading Commissars; nor did either women or children appear to have been nationalized¹⁰⁵. The report as published concluded with a number of documents, including pleas from Prince Kropotkin and from the Socialist Revolutionary Party that the intervention be ended, on the ground (among others) that its effect was to strengthen the Bolsheviks, and weaken the position of their opponents¹⁰⁶.

Not all the delegates reacted favourably to what they had seen. Mrs Snowden's views, for instance, were strongly hostile, and were subsequently deployed by Lloyd George in his speeches. The result of her visit she summed up briefly in the book which she wrote after her return: it had been to confirm her approval for the Russian revolution which had overthrown Czarism; but she was "utterly opposed to the coup d'etat of the Bolsheviks, as I should be to the seizing of power by any small minority of the people; for out of this action has sprung a large part of the misery the unhappy people of Russia endure"¹⁰⁷. Bertrand Russell, who had travelled with the delegation and also wrote a book on his return, although he regarded the revolution as "one of the great heroic events of the world's history" was also critical¹⁰⁸. Leslie Haden Guest (whose conduct in Russia was regarded by some as suspicious, even to be that of a secret agent of the British government, and who was accordingly closely watched by the Cheka¹⁰⁹), wrote a series of articles in the Times and made contributions to other journals. His views, also, were hostile; the Soviets, for instance, had in his view "degenerated into rule by unrepresentative executive committees"¹¹⁰.

Most of the delegates, however, would have agreed with Ben Turner, the delegation's chairman, who told the labour press on his return that the stories of attempts to hoodwink the delegates were "nonsense", and those which reported Russia in a condition of anarchy to be "totally untrue"¹¹¹.

There was evidence of hunger, but for this intervention and the blockade were "chiefly responsible". The public health arrangements of the Soviet government were "marvellous"¹¹² Turner, ~~who~~ had brought back to Britain Lenin's 'Letter to British Workers',¹¹³ It was certainly rather more 'advanced' than the thinking, at least, of the Labour delegates themselves; and Shaw explained in an interview that Lenin's knowledge of England was "very poor"¹¹⁴. There was no doubt, however, to Turner that the Bolshevik government had the acceptance of the bulk of the people; and the delegates agreed upon the "urgent necessity of an immediate peace"¹¹⁵. Five members of the delegation appealed to trade unionists to take direct action in an attempt to exert an influence upon British-Soviet relations¹¹⁶.

Not all reports written by those who had recently been in Russia were of the nature of those by the labour delegates. A book by H.V. Keeling appeared, entitled 'Bolshevism', and devoted to the author's five years in that country. Keeling addressed meetings in Britain in which he dealt with his experiences there; and he favoured intervention. The impact of the book may, perhaps, have been reduced by the clarification which Keeling found necessary to include in his preface: he had not, he wished to make clear, received government money¹¹⁷. Keeling's was one of a series of works which the Times included in its issue of 21 August 1919 as being of probable value as anti-revolutionary propaganda. The other tracts referred to 'Bolshevism: curse and danger', the 'tragedy of Russia', among others, and to the unimaginable fate of 'London under the Bolsheviks',¹¹⁸. The concern manifested by the government, however, to propagate a view of developments in Russia more in accord with its own policy than those of the labour delegates and the liberal journalists suggested that the anti-Bolshevik argument ^{was considered to} ~~required~~ more effective advocacy. The government's own efforts in this direction were not inconsiderable¹¹⁹.

A Committee to Collect Information on Russia was set up in May 1920 under the chairmanship of Lord Emmott. An Interim Report was issued the following November, which dealt with the treatment of British prisoners in Russia. It reported that although their suffering had not been, it appeared, "nearly so severe as those of the Russians themselves", the Soviet authorities had nevertheless proved themselves "incapable of discharging (their) responsibilities towards British subjects detained in Russia"¹²⁰. One man's soup, the Committee discovered, had had a horse's eye floating

in it; another man had been given a space in an overcrowded cell only by the somewhat primitive means of removing the most accessible inmate and shooting him (The report conceded that the probability of execution in the case of Russians was "far greater"¹²¹).

The Final Report which was presented on 25 February 1921 expressed the opinion that for the economic equilibrium of the world Russian exports were an important factor, whose increase on the European market was particularly desirable. It did not, however, offer any confidence in the repudiation by the Soviet government of any connection with the Communist International; and it found the "complete renunciation" of propaganda "directed towards the destruction of the political and economic order existing in other countries" to be a "fundamental premise" for capital aid and credits for Russia, which were considered to be vital needs of the Bolshevik regime¹²².

The importance of developing trade was not lost on the British government, especially towards the latter part of 1920 following the collapse of the post-war boom. From the middle of October, special weekly reports on unemployment were circulated to the Cabinet¹²³. It appeared, moreover, that the development of trade with Russia might significantly alleviate the problem. The Observer on 5 November predicted orders of up to £100 million in the first year after trade with Russia had been resumed¹²⁴. Addressing the House of Commons on 15 November, Bonar Law (himself a businessman), dealing with the future of the negotiations with Russia, declared that trade was "still more desirable now, when there is a state of unemployment in this country. We shall certainly do nothing to prevent these relations being resumed as far as we can.. Trade relations have been renewed by other governments, and this government must do its best to get its share of the trade"¹²⁵.

Trade contacts between the two countries had, in fact, been well developed in 1913, the last complete normal year of trading, and the year upon which comparison and forecasts were based (although somewhat misleadingly, since the area, and even more so the economic resources of Soviet Russia were smaller than those of the former Russian Empire). In this last pre-war year, Russian exports to Britain totalled 933,313,000 roubles, a figure exceeded only by that of exports to Germany. Imports (602,946,000 roubles) were considerably less in value than those from Germany, but again placed Britain in second place¹²⁶.

The war, followed by intervention, blockade and civil war,

drastically reduced Russia's economic exchanges with Britain, as with other countries. In 1913 Russia's total trade turnover with other countries reached 2,895 million roubles; but in 1918 it was only 113 million roubles, in 1919 3 million roubles, and in 1920 30 million roubles¹²⁷. Exports to Britain dropped to 6,970,000 roubles in 1918; and for 1919 and 1920 none at all are recorded¹²⁸. Imports dropped correspondingly to 41,877,000 roubles in 1918, to 94,000 roubles in 1919, increasing to 20,973 ~~million~~ ^{thousand} roubles in 1920¹²⁹. It was not an exaggeration to state that trade relations with capitalist countries were "in practice broken off after the October revolution". Until the beginning of 1920, only a few semi-contraband operations could take place¹³⁰.

The end of the blockade and the establishment of peace with Estonia (2 February 1920) provided the first practical possibility of foreign trade for Soviet Russia. Import plans, in view of the state of the economy, envisaged "almost exclusively the import of the means of production: equipment, machinery, seed, metals¹³¹. These, however, were precisely the goods which Britain was best equipped to provide (and had in the past provided¹³²) ; while raw materials from Russia had had an important place in pre-war British imports from Russia, and in the case of many branches of industry had been Britain's major source of supply.

The President of the Board of Trade, speaking in the House of Commons, discussed the possibility of the renewed import of timber from Russia. While this was of course "dependent upon the general question of the re-opening of trade with Russia", timber, which was "one of Russia's chief exports", would "naturally be one of the main factors to be considered"¹³³. The continued progress of the negotiations attracted further enquiries. Nearly two million pounds' worth of wheat, and four and three-quarters of a million pounds' worth of eggs, had been imported from Russia in 1913, the President of the Board of Trade reported, although he was at pains to point out that it would be some time before trade could be re-established on a large scale¹³⁴. Taken as a whole, the Russian trade had not ~~been~~ ^{accounted for} a major part of British foreign trade before the war. In some cases, however, it predominated. Almost 70% of British flax imports had come from Russia; as well as 52% of hewn and sawn fir, and 45% of pit props¹³⁵. The absence of these imports was in many cases believed to be holding back the development

of important industries, and to be the source of redundancies and short-time; the absence of food imports (butter, eggs and beans in particular¹³⁶) was held to have contributed to the high cost of living; while the export potential of the Russian market was believed to be considerable. Unemployment in Britain, the Minister of Labour told a Conference of Ministers on 24 January 1921, "was becoming increasingly serious". A Cabinet Committee on unemployment had been set up the previous month¹³⁷. To many members of the Cabinet there were now important economic arguments for the continuation and successful conclusion of the trade negotiations.¹³⁸

The decision to retain the Trading Delegation in London after the departure of Kamenev and the effective suspension of the negotiations might, Lenin considered, serve to strengthen the parties and groups in Britain that were working for the conclusion of a trade agreement¹³⁹. The Soviet delegation accordingly, and not without success, attempted to influence British public opinion, and to grant orders to and have dealings with trading and business circles in order to stimulate interest in trading relations with Russia¹⁴⁰.

An important part was played by the All-Russian Co-operative Society, or 'Arcos', which was founded in London on 9 June 1920¹⁴¹. On Krasin's proposal, the decision was made to register a private company in Britain, yet retaining control in Soviet hands, as a means of avoiding the possibility of actions for the seizure of goods by holders of Russian bonds or owners of property in Russia which had been nationalized, pending the settlement of these questions and the recognition of the Soviet government. The company was registered on 11 June 1920 with a capital of £15,000. Two of its directors, Krysin and Polovtseva, had been domiciled in Britain for some time, and Rozovskii, the third, had come with the Trade Delegation¹⁴². All were members of the co-operative societies. In 1921, however, the capital was increased to £100,000, and officials from the Commissariat of Foreign Trade took over the positions of chairman and managing director¹⁴³.

The company, reported the Secretary of the Department of ~~Foreign~~^{Overseas} Trade, had entered into negotiations with various firms and some contracts had been signed for the eventual supply of goods¹⁴⁴. Krasin had published a detailed list of export goods which the Soviet authorities proposed to offer in trade relations; but banks remained reluctant to offer credit, and

the import of gold into Britain remained subject to the risk of confiscation. "Deals in Britain, Krasin wrote on 17 August, were possible "only to the extent to which firms can be found which are prepared to receive gold in Reval for their goods"¹⁴⁵.

A great impression was created by the placing of an order with five Yorkshire firms for broadcloth to a total value of nearly a million pounds sterling, payable in cash, which was concluded in the middle of September on receipt of an urgent order from Moscow. The news, Krasin recalled, had a "most striking effect" on the London stock exchange; and it "caused a sensation in the City.. We were inundated with inquiries". There followed a "whole series of newspaper articles in influential papers and interest in trade deals with Soviet Russia increased markedly"¹⁴⁶. The Times, on the basis of enquiries made among business circles, admitted that "the urge to establish trade relations with Russia grows daily". Interviews appeared in the press in October with the managing director of 'Becos', a federated organization of engineering firms, Mr A.G. Marshall, and with the chairman of the professional association of the rubber industry, both of whom urged the establishment - in Britain's interests - of the closest possible trading relations with Russia. The Daily News the following month printed a series of leading articles by Arthur Cummings whose conclusion was a similar one. The opinion of businessmen was quoted, and the conclusion as swiftly as possible of an agreement was urged¹⁴⁷.

The Cabinet reviewed the order for broadcloth on 21 September. The cloth was required, it was noted, for the manufacture of military uniforms for the Bolshevik army, who "might even be employed against British troops in Persia or elsewhere". It was decided to investigate the matter.¹⁴⁸

Writing to Lloyd George on 4 October, Krasin dwelt upon the trade relations which were already developing, the further development of which would be facilitated by the conclusion of a trade agreement. There was a series of "definite deals and trade contracts" which "could be made forthwith following the conclusion of a trade agreement". Preliminary negotiations had established the possibility of exporting railway locomotives to Russia, and of arranging for the repair in Britain of Soviet locomotives, in which "several railway and machine-engineering firms in Britain were interested". The annual value of orders from Soviet Russia for railway equipment would be in excess of £10 million, and they could be placed largely in English factories, which

were short of orders and far from fully employed, There might be further orders for machine tools, electrical equipment and lorries, in the case of which negotiations were already in progress, and for which orders could be made "extremely quickly". Orders had been placed for the supply of medicines and other goods, and the list could be greatly extended. Despite her limited financial resources, instructions had been received to place orders for textiles to the value of several million pounds. Orders for colonial raw materials "could be swiftly made after the conclusion of a trade agreement". Negotiations had been conducted and agreement effectively reached with a series of English firms for the export from Russia of wood and railway sleepers; and other substantial orders were being held up only in consequence of a lack of available shipping and the "impossibility of establishing normal trading relations until an agreement was concluded between the two states on these questions"¹⁴⁹.

Negotiations, Krasin recalled, were entered into with a "whole range of major firms"; with a Slough firm, for instance, for the delivery of five hundred automobiles, with Marcni, on the formation of a British-Russian society for trade with Britain, and with Armstrongs¹⁵⁰. It was reported in the Glasgow Herald that several contracts with large firms had been signed, and orders had been placed to the value of several hundred thousand pounds, mainly in the fields of textiles and engineering¹⁵¹. Inquiries were received, Krasin noted, and proposals began to be received from major British firms with regard to concessions. While no binding promises were given by the delegation, "all the same several industrial groups began to exert pressure upon the Foreign Office and on Lloyd George". By the time the question of the prisoners of war had been settled and the negotiations renewed, the trade delegation "had a fairly powerful group in the City behind it"¹⁵².

It was stated in the House of Commons that the "commercial men of this country" had "quite made up their minds that, whatever may have happened in the past with regard to Russia, the question of commercial relationships being resumed with Russia should be undertaken now openly and freely": a view expressed to O'Grady by "gentlemen who are great men in the business life of this country". He declared that if the government would "take the commercial men of this country into their confidence, we should see a resumption of commercial relations with Russia". Russia's

financial obligations could be met in five years by the development of her resources¹⁵³. "The commercial men of this country", Tillett added, "will have no quarrel with Russia when they can make a profit out of them"¹⁵⁴.

This current of opinion did not pass unnoticed in the Foreign Office. On 20 December an article from the Sunday Times of the previous day was placed on file. The article's headline read: "Why we must trade with Russia: Orders British firms require: An end to depression". It went on to state that if Britain did not enter into trading relations with Russia "other countries will capture the market". British manufacturers were reported to be "unanimous" in the belief that there would be no settled trade conditions in the country until trade relations with Russia had been resumed. The representatives of a Midland engineering firm, it was added, had recently made contact with Krasin¹⁵⁵. On 6 December a letter arrived at the Foreign Office from the Indian Tea Association. It urged that "every effort" should be made to bring about trading relations with Russia¹⁵⁶.

Later that month the information was circulated that two mills in Yorkshire, Fenton Textiles Ltd. and C. and J. Hirst Ltd., had signed contracts with the Russian Trading Delegation. According to a letter to the Prime Minister ~~from Ben Turner~~ ~~which the YorksHire Post~~ which the YorksHire Post had published on 11 December, these were the only two mills in Yorkshire which were working on a full-time basis. The "leading commercial associations and business men", noted a Foreign Office minute, now favoured the "resumption of trade" with Russia. A further minute was added by Mr Clark, who noted that disappointment if the negotiations broke down "would not be limited to labour only". There had been a "good many indications lately of a change of mind in commercial and industrial circles"¹⁵⁷.

There were, then, some grounds for thinking that the negotiations might proceed further when Krasin again communicated to Curzon a note from the Soviet government on 9 November 1920. The conditions specified in the British note of 30 June, it was pointed out, which the Soviet government had been required to observe, had been described by the British government itself as obligations dependent upon the conclusion of a trade agreement, and not, therefore, binding in the absence of such an agreement. The British Government had, however, made the renewal of negotiations dependent upon the

prior fulfilment of these obligations, as they had been interpreted in Curzon's note of 9 October. The removal of misunderstandings and those disagreements which still remained should form the subject, it was proposed, of further and direct official negotiations.¹⁵⁸

A further note drew attention to the "most unsatisfactory position" in which the negotiations had been left, although ten months had now passed since the Supreme Council had proposed their initiation, and four since the basis of an agreement had been reached. A "direct and swift answer" was sought to the question of whether the British government was ready to enter into negotiations in order to establish normal relations.¹⁵⁹

Lloyd George's speech at the Guildhall, and a speech by Sir Robert Horne at Oxford in which he had argued the necessity - in Europe's interests - of the resumption of trade between the West and Russia, gave some indication of the trend of Cabinet thinking.¹⁶⁰ But in Krasin's view, the Cabinet remained divided, sometimes bitterly, on the matter. Curzon, Churchill, and that section of business whose interests had suffered as a result of the nationalization in Russia declared against any kind of agreement, or even negotiations with Soviet Russia.¹⁶¹ Some evidence of the concessions which it might be necessary to make to this group was apparent in the unofficial text of a trade agreement which appeared in the Times on 5 October. The text contained a number of alterations in the British interest as compared with the basis of agreement reached in the June-July exchange of notes; in particular it required the recognition by Soviet Russia of the whole of the governmental debt. The Delegation's protest, however, led the Department of Overseas Trade to announce that the text as printed had had no official endorsement.¹⁶²

The negotiation of the agreement remained within the Board of Trade, assisted as appropriate by Lloyd George, and the Foreign Office, as Gregory noted in a minute, would take "no responsibility for the drafting of the Trade Agreement".¹⁶³ Curzon later noted that he desired to "have nothing to do with the agreement myself".¹⁶³

The Cabinet considered the resumption of the negotiations at its meeting on 17 November. The debate extended into the following day, and ultimately approved the Lloyd George-Horne proposal to do so. The Russians, Horne argued, were prepared to place large orders in the country and many of the contracts were at an "advanced stage". They were "of the greatest importance.. from the commercial point of view and because of the menace of unemploy-

ment, of the likelihood that during this winter the slump will last for a considerable time". Trade, if not engaged upon, would be lost to other countries. Moreover he "felt strongly(that) the only way we shall fight Bolshevism is by trade. It thrives best in uncivilized conditions". If trade were not initiated the debts would never be paid. Moreover "our trading community as a whole want to resume trade although no doubt there will be protests from concessionaries".

Curzon objected. He did not dispute the economic arguments; he was concerned with the conditions of the agreement. The Bolsheviks were bound by conditions which had been laid down repeatedly as fundamental: the complete repatriation of nationals and the cessation by Russia of hostile propaganda and the movements against Great Britain in the East. The Russian menace in the East, he declared, was "incomparably greater than anything else that has happened in my time to the British Empire". With regard to prisoners, the Russians had been "trying to trick us" (Lloyd George thought the remark an unfair one); while as regarded propaganda the evidence was that "from Moscow to Tashkent conspiracies worked by Bolshevik agents and paid for by Bolshevik gold are going on.. They do not intend to desist from propaganda. The purpose and pith of their government is propaganda throughout the world. You conclude an agreement with them. The same business will go on at Teheran, Baku, Enzeli, Bokhara etc.." He felt that the government should be "very cautious at signing the trade agreement because the two conditions have not been loyally acted upon".

Chamberlain "agreed generally" with him. Lloyd George pointed out that, had the agreement been regarded as already binding, then there were some things that Britain also should not have done: such as unloading rifles at Danzig with British troops, sending a military mission to Poland and so ¹⁶⁴on. Curzon however wanted the "two conditions made effective before we sign the agreement".

Bonar Law agreed with Horne. Britain had been "playing with this Russian situation too long. You cannot go on talking and not conclude an agreement". Furthermore, the country was "in for bad unemployment. There is some business to be got in this way. If we make no agreement the effect on the public mind of the imaginary volume of trade.. would be very bad. As for propaganda.. if we make no agreement we shall have no leverage against the political hostility of Russia.. We shall lose the chance of political

influence and do it at the expense of losing some trade". Moreover, he "agreed with Horne that Bolshevism will come to an end under civilized conditions".

Lloyd George shared these views. He had seen a "good many businessmen and they have rather frightened me about the next eighteen months". Bonar Law and he had met Rylands, the Chairman of the Federation of British Industries, and found that "there are no orders coming in.. We may have the worst period of unemployment any of us have known. The Russians are prepared to pay in gold and you won't buy". The refusal of Russian orders, besides, would be discovered and would "add to the public discontent". The manufacturers were in favour. The financiers naturally wanted their Bonds, X and "I don't blame them. But the pressure from the Midlands is all the other way". He had, moreover, heard predictions of the fall of the Soviet government for the previous two years. Denikin, Yudenich, Wrangel, "all have collapsed, but I cannot see any immediate prospect of the collapse of the Soviet government".¹⁶⁵

The debate was continued the following day. Churchill contended that the Cabinet "were not committed". The scale of the proposed transactions was petty compared with the bulk of British trade as a whole; and it would "only bolster up the Bolshevik government and their military organization". He "objected to helping them out of the difficulties which they have made for themselves by their Communism". He felt - somewhat inconsistently - that they "should not turn (the agreement) down", but the government ought to make sure that the Bolsheviks had "given evidence of goodwill and ceased hostilities in the East.." Lloyd George pointed out that they could stipulate that henceforward there must be no hostile action. "You can name all the places.. Meanwhile trade is going from bad to worse". He spoke not as an advocate of Bolshevism: indeed, he was on the contrary "trying to prevent Bolshevism in this country". Churchill, unabashed, retorted that he was "on the high road to embrace Bolshevism. I am going to keep off that and denounce them on all possible occasions". He, Curzon, Montagu and Long wanted conditions to be specified and observed prior to the conclusion of an agreement.

It was eventually decided to authorize the President of the Board of Trade to conclude a Trade Agreement with Russia on the general lines of the exchange of notes of June and July; but it should be signed on the under-

standing that the conditions specified in that exchange should be accepted as its basis, and "definitely re-stated in the Trade Agreement", and that a provision should be included whereby in the event of either party failing to fulfil its undertakings the other would be entitled to denounce the agreement. The attention of the Russian government was to be drawn ~~XX~~ "either in the agreement itself or in a covering communication to the Russian representatives, to any specially important respects in which, in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, the Bolsheviks must alter their present procedure or policy, e.g to annul their treaty with Afghanistan, to desist from co-operation with Mustapha Kemal, and from hostilities or propaganda in Persia, India etc". The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, War and India were to communicate with the President of the Board of Trade regarding these matters. The Prime Minister could announce that a draft Agreement was in preparation; but the conclusion of a Trade Agreement "would not be assumed to hamper the discretion of Ministers in public statements regarding the Bolshevik system of Government"¹⁶⁶.

Lloyd George announced accordingly in the House of Commons that a draft agreement to carry out the July agreement for trade with Russia was in preparation, and that it would be submitted to the Russian government within the few days following¹⁶⁷. A meeting of Ministers on 25 November noted the "growing importance from a political point of view of pushing on as rapidly as possible with the Russian Trade Agreement. Evidence was accumulating that a bad period of trade must be anticipated this winter". A new element was the publication in the press of the huge orders which had apparently been obtained in Russia by an American merchant, Mr Vanderlip. Whatever their truth, the meeting agreed that "from a political point of view it was desirable to remove all governmental obstacles to trade"¹⁶⁸.

The draft agreement was considered at a meeting of the Cabinet the following day. It was adopted after a number of amendments had been made, prohibiting more specifically in the Preamble hostile action and propaganda against the institutions of the United Kingdom and Dominions, and referring back for further consideration the draft letter which was to be handed to Kramin as embodying the government's interpretation of the Agreement. It was agreed that, in the case of the Agreement being concluded, it should be understood that the Russian government would "not be allowed to

escape responsibility for hostile propaganda by sheltering itself behind the activities of the 'Third International'. Divisions within the Cabinet nonetheless remained serious: the dissent from part of the conclusions was recorded of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chamberlain, and of Curzon, Churchill and Montagu.¹⁶⁹ Three days later the draft Trade Agreement was handed to Krasin.¹⁷⁰

The new text, on the basis of which Horne and Krasin began negotiations on 1 December, contained a number of changes of substance from the terms of the British note of 30 June 1920. Writing to Wise on 30 November, without prejudice to a more detailed study of the document by the Soviet government, Krasin offered a "few observations" upon it.¹⁷¹ The period of validity of the agreement was a question of "cardinal importance": the agreement appeared to have been concluded for an indefinite period, but either side had the right to terminate the agreement three months after it had given notice of its desire to do so. This period seemed to Krasin "completely insufficient", bearing in mind the importance of the agreement and the practical arrangement of trade dealings. Such a period, he thought, would discredit the trade agreement in advance in the eyes of the world, and "above all.. in the eyes of business people". Contracts for railway locomotives, turbines, railway materials and so on required a period of two to five years to fulfil. He proposed that the minimum period indicated in the agreement for its revocation should be "at least twelve months", with both governments agreeing to help to secure the fulfilment of contracts based on a longer period. Nor was there any provision for the realisation of valuable metals, in particular gold, at normal market rates and conditions. This, Krasin considered, should be provided for in the Agreement.¹⁷²

The Soviet government communicated its views on the draft agreement on 4 December 1920. As regarded the political principles included in the draft, an agreement, it considered, already existed, based on the British memorandum of 30 June and the Russian note of 7 July. The agreement comprehended both mutual restraint from hostile action and official propaganda, and compensation for private citizens. It was therefore "with some surprise" that the Soviet government "found in the draft agreement handed to it principles, in respect of which agreement had already been reached,

changed and made more specific in such a way that the obligations of one of the parties, Russia, have been significantly increased and widened". The Soviet government was "not prepared to go further than this agreement or to alter even one point in it, without holding proper political negotiations"¹⁷³

In the course of the opening session of Krasin's discussions with Horne on 1 December, a Russian draft agreement was handed to the British negotiators.¹⁷⁴ Subsequent discussion centred mainly upon three points: the preamble and consequent application of the conditions of the agreement of June 30/July 7; the question of the treatment of Russian gold on the London market~~X~~; and the question of security for Russian exports, including gold, against attachment by English creditors of Russia. So far as the conditions were concerned, it was disputed whether they should come into force on the signature of the agreement, or should be regulated by a political conference after the agreement had been signed, or whether indeed they had been binding upon the Soviet government since their acceptance ~~XX~~ as the basis of an agreement in the note of 7 July 1920. A Foreign Office memorandum, reviewing British-Soviet relations from September until December 1920 and written on 30 December, inclinedⁿ to the view that the agreement would be signed on the "basis that the conditions of the note of June 30th become operative at the date of signatu~~X~~re". The question of hostile action and propaganda, also, must, the British government insisted, be defined more precisely than in the note of 30 June. If the British government demanded the right to specify where hostile action must cease, it was conceded that the Soviet government must be allowed to claim the same right, on a basis of reciprocity. The question of debts, it was agreed, should be deferred, but should not be prejudiced by the resumption of trading relations¹⁷⁵.

The question of the import of gold from Russia into Britain remained in dispute. Gold of Russian origin realised on 77/9d an ounce in Britain when it was sold to the Bank of England, while on the world market it realised 106/- - 120/=. The delegation sought to secure the right to the free import and export of gold in the course of the negotiations, so that its full price might be realised¹⁷⁶. Discussion centred upon the prospect of securing 'most favoured nation' treatment for Russian gold in London; but the Soviet title to the gold remained one for the courts to determine, and it was decided accordingly that no definitive clause about gold should be included¹⁷⁷.

The question of the possible attachment of goods and gold exported from Russia remained one of "some difficulty"¹⁷⁸. Krasin at first proposed that a moratorium bill should be introduced in Parliament, which would exempt Russian property from such an action pending ~~XX~~ a peace conference. The British side refused on principle to take such action, and declared that the only solution lay in the decisions of the courts¹⁷⁹. The decision of Mr Justice Roche in the case of Luther v. Sagor and Co on 21 December that certain definitely identifiable goods manufactured in a definite factory within a specified period were the property of the original owners, and that the purchasers of them from the Russian Trade Delegation must restore them accordingly, was based upon a communication from the Foreign Office which established to the court's satisfaction that the Soviet government had not been recognized by the British government.¹⁸⁰ In a speech the following day in the House of Commons, however, Horne argued that if the Soviet government had been one recognized de facto by the British government, no action for attachment could lie: an opinion based upon the considered judgement of the Law Officers of the Crown. The signature of a trade agreement would, however, constitute an entirely new set of facts "so far as the other Government's claim to recognition as a de facto Government is concerned"¹⁸¹. It was agreed that following the signature of the agreement, the decision of the courts on the matter should be tested. If an unfavourable judgement resulted, "the English government would find some other way"¹⁸².

On 20 December Krasin reviewed these problems in a letter to Lloyd George. The preamble in the British draft was "very substantially different" from the conditions specified in the note of 30 June, and contained a number of one-sided obligations which could not be accepted or fulfilled by any government. The difference[^]s were set out in an appendix. There was no need to include the conditions, which did not concern trade, in an agreement of such a nature; it should be sufficient to rely upon an exchange of notes. Their alteration, if this were found necessary, should be considered at a special conference. Nor could trade develop if the ships, property and cash of one side were liable to confiscation in the other's country. A moratorium bill was suggested. It was also proposed that, as had been provided for in articles 11 and 12 of the Russian draft agreement, an export licence should be granted in the case of gold imported into Britain.

from Russia, allowing it to be realised at its full market price, but without affecting British reserves. It was suggested that a twelve-month delay following notice of denunciation of the agreement should be substituted^{ut, 183}.

The main points of dispute were considered at a meeting of British ministers and the Russian Trade Delegation the following day. Lloyd George found "no objection at all" to the specification by Soviet Russia, as Britain had done, of particular countries in which its interests might be threatened by the propaganda of the other side. The British government had specified certain countries "because undoubtedly a good deal of hostile propaganda had been carried on in those particular areas against British interests", which should be brought to an end. It would, he said, be "almost impossible" for him to secure acceptance of the agreement by the government unless "those who were specially interested in those particular countries were satisfied that hostile propaganda would cease". He did not favour a special conference to consider this matter, which in its essentials had been included in the earlier agreement. He "might not press", however, regarding the inclusion of, for instance, the Caucasus: "he understood there was some objection to that on account of its being part of the Russian Empire before the war". Krasin undertook to seek a reply from Moscow on this issue¹⁸⁴.

The question remained, however, of the restriction of propaganda by private Russian citizens. It was quite impossible, Krasin held, to restrain private citizens from conducting propaganda. "He doubted if any government could give such an undertaking". Lloyd George was inclined to agree. He proposed the prohibition rather of "encouragement or assistance to any propaganda conducted outside its own territories" on the part of both governments, a formulation which Krasin thought "might be acceptable", while he did not formally withdraw the proposal of a Special Conference.

Krasin's suggestion of a Moratorium Bill, it was pointed out by Horne, involved the government influencing the courts "in order to alter the legal rights of our citizens, and that was a thing we could not do". Lloyd George proposed a test case, after the signing of the agreement, in which the Court would decide on the basis of a different set of facts from those which had obtained in the Luther v. Sagor case, on which a judgement had that day been made. If the decision was one which the Soviet government

found unsatisfactory, Lloyd George was prepared to undertake that the whole situation be reconsidered.

On gold, he thought it would be difficult to find a way of preventing gold other than of Russian origin leaving the country, if re-export licences were granted: "we could not allow one set of people to export and not others, otherwise the whole system would be interfered with". A revised procedure for the termination of the agreement was submitted, including a six-month period, but Horne warned that "if the Soviet government were to continue hostile propaganda in Persia, Afghanistan or India, that would be a fact that would lead us at once to cease to carry out the agreement"¹⁸⁵.

The Cabinet met the following day and considered the statement which Horne was due to make in the House of Commons. In discussion reference was made "particularly to the covering letter which was to be handed to Mr Krasin..", the substance of which had not yet been agreed. If the negotiations broke down it would be better, it was felt, that this should occur over the question of hostile propaganda rather than over ~~the~~ technical questions of debts¹⁸⁶.

Horne's statement warned that many of the hopes regarding Anglo-Russian trade were "founded on entirely fallacious grounds". The government's attitude, in resuming the negotiations, had "not been (dictated) by a love of Bolshevism.. We believe that there could scarcely be a greater boon to the world at the present time than if you succeeded in entirely destroying Bolshevism, which we have seen rearing its head in Europe. But you will not destroy it by isolating Russia. The only way in which you will succeed in killing Bolshevism will be by bringing Russia and the Russian people under the civilizing influence of the rest of the world, and you cannot do that in any better way than by beginning to enter into trade and commerce with them". Apart from this, Russia was "one of the great producing countries of the world", providing Britain before the war with one-eighth of her grain, one-seventh of her butter, one-half of her eggs and timber, and four-fifths of her flax. The shortage of these commodities had led to increased prices, and "unrest followed amongst the masses of the workers". The government, therefore, although it would be "years and years" before the earlier levels were equalled, was "anxious to see Russia producing again". Sales to Russia, moreover, had been substantial before the war, and sales there of machinery

had been exceeded only by those to India. "It is of the greatest possible moment that we should have opportunities of selling that machinery to Russia, of selling all the manufactures which our people work into fabrics by their hands - that we should especially at the present ~~XXXXXX~~ be able to give increased employment to our people"¹⁸⁷.

Conditions had been advanced on the basis of which an agreement might be concluded. The general question of debts was to be deferred; but private debts were to be acknowledged, if not immediately paid off, in order to get trade going. "Unless we get started with trade with Russia, there will be nothing to be paid to anybody", Horne warned. On the question of propaganda, the government had found since 30 June the "most active propaganda" going on in Persia, Afghanistan and India of a character "most hostile to British interests". A "most definite propaganda, originating in Russia, is being carried on in that Eastern quarter of the world hostile to British interests, and avowedly for the purpose of upsetting British institutions in India". The government had put to the representatives of the Soviet government that, particularly in Persia, India and Afghanistan, this propaganda should "cease at once.. if this agreement is to be carried out"¹⁸⁸.

At the end of December and the beginning of January 1921 a number of further meetings took place between Horne and Krasin, in which the positions of either side were further clarified. On 11 January Krasin left for Moscow for discussions with the Soviet government. The responsibility for this further delay in the negotiations, as for previous difficulties, was denied by both sides¹⁸⁹.

On Krasin's return to Moscow, a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party took place, in which both Krasin and Lenin participated.¹⁹⁰ It was decided, Lenin later ~~XXXXX~~ reported, to "give this question a more important place" and to accept as "correct on our part a tactic of concessions, allowing us to reach a trading agreement with England". The agreement would lead to the development of economic relations with the other major capitalist powers¹⁹¹.

A note was despatched to the British government which stated that so far as the conditions of the trade agreement themselves were concerned, no differences existed between the two governments which could

not be resolved by means of further discussions between Krasin and a competent British authority. The main obstacle, however, was the introductory section, which the British government wished to increase and widen beyond the limits of what had been agreed in the June-July exchange of notes. It was not the case that Bolshevik forces had invaded Persia or Asia Minor; nor could the Soviet government be identified with the Third International,

any more than the Belgian government could be identified with the Second International, which was based in Brussels, or the British government could be identified with the international organizations which had their headquarters in London, or even with the Third International, of which the British Communist Party was as full a member as the Russian. The British government had itself been guilty of infringements of the June-July exchange of notes, which it regarded as already binding upon both sides; it had attempted, in particular, to interfere with the improvement of Soviet relations with Persia and Afghanistan. The Soviet government was, nevertheless, prepared to conclude an agreement on the basis of the draft, if it were amended so as to include a reciprocal obligation upon the British government as regarded hostile propaganda, and to exclude a recent additional point regarding the general debts of previous Russian governments ¹⁹².

The new Soviet note was not to the taste of the Times or of Curzon, who regarded the new proposed preamble as even "more shameless" than the "previous tricks" of Chicherin, and the reply as a whole "even more impudent and mendacious than his previous performances"¹⁹³. There was no official response from the British government; but the Cabinet's views were evident in the King's Speech at the opening of the new session of Parliament on 15 February, which expressed the "hope that the negotiations for a trade agreement with Russia will... be brought to a successful conclusion"¹⁹⁴. Lloyd George reported that a reply had been received from the Soviet government proposing certain amendments to the agreement, which were under consideration by the Cabinet. Krasin would shortly return to London. He himself had been, he declared, "from the beginning a strong advocate of renewing trade with Russia"; he had (or so he declared) "never hesitated at all". To love one's neighbour was "not only good sound Christianity; it is good business"¹⁹⁵.

Precisely what good business it might in fact be became apparent

at this time. The Trading Delegation had entered into negotiations with the vehicle engineering firm Armstrong, which following the end of the war had decided to convert some of its workshops into locomotive repair shops. The possibility arose of commissioning Armstrongs works with the repair of 300 Soviet locomotives annually for a period of five years. The order was "very tempting.. allowing the partial reduction of unemployment, from which British industry was then seriously suffering". A preliminary draft agreement was concluded, the final signature of which the Trading Delegation made conditional upon the conclusion of an Anglo-Soviet agreement, which would allow gold to be realised at its world market price and would guarantee the inviolability of goods of Soviet Russian origin ¹⁹⁶. It was noted in the House of Commons when the existence of the Armstrongs agreement was confirmed by the government, that it would provide for the employment of three thousand men now unemployed on Tyneside ¹⁹⁷. Negotiations in Britain, moreover, were being conducted by representatives of the Russian Trade Delegation with Swedish and German firms for the purchase of agricultural ~~XXXXXX~~ equipment ¹⁹⁸. The orders could readily be met by British firms had Anglo-Russian trade an adequate legal basis.

A further Soviet note, enquiring as to the British reaction to the earlier communication of 4 February, was answered by Curzon. The government, he stated, was awaiting the return of Krasin, so as to "hear from him a detailed exposition of the latest Russian proposals" ¹⁹⁹. On 4 March Krasin returned, and the negotiations were renewed ²⁰⁰.

Discussing the renewal of the negotiations in the House of Commons, Horne expressed the view that "nothing will so upset the Communist system there as to resume trade". If the trade was begun with gold, the system then existing would be "so upset" that the Russian people would "very soon become ready to adopt individual effort to produce goods which can be exchanged for our commodities". Even if only a small trade could be done, "we can look forward to.. a better system in Russia" ²⁰¹.

Not even this inviting prospect, however, resolved remaining doubts within the government. Harmsworth let it be known in the House of Commons that, in the view of the Foreign Office, the Kronstadt mutiny, which had broken out at this time, revealed the instability and insecurity of the Soviet regime ²⁰². The Foreign Office officially confirmed press reports ~~XXXX~~

dealing with the risings in Petrograd and Moscow, which reported the flight of Lenin and Trotsky and the hoisting of the white flag over the Kremlin. On 8 March a statement was issued declaring that almost all of Petrograd was in the hands of the mutineers. The Soviet government made a vigorous protest: the statement, it declared, was "undoubtedly intended to harm further negotiations between Russia and England concerning the trade agreement"²⁰³.

The mutiny formed the background to the discussion in the Cabinet on 14 March, when the conclusion of an agreement was considered. The President of the Board of Trade informed the Cabinet that Krasin had now returned from Russia with authority to conclude an agreement, subject to a British guarantee not to support hostile action against Soviet Russia, to respect the independence and integrity of Persia, Afghanistan and the territory of the Turkish National Assembly, and not to aid in any way those other than the Soviet government who claimed to represent the government of Russia.

It was pointed out that the draft agreement which Krasin had taken to Moscow represented, however, the maximum concession of those who opposed the scheme. Safeguards had been insisted upon to "check Bolshevik propaganda in the East". In the interval since Krasin's departure this propaganda had "greatly intensified". Krasin was now adding "extravagant demands" at a time when the Soviet government's position - in view, notably, of Kronstadt - was itself "by no means stable". There were "advantages in not hastening the conclusion of an Agreement which was desired by the Bolsheviks mainly in order to enhance their prestige".

The principle of reciprocity with regard to hostile action and propaganda had, however, already been accepted; nor did intelligence reports suggest that reliance might safely be placed upon the Kronstadt mutineers²⁰⁴. Moreover, the economic arguments were strengthened at this time (in Krasin's view, this had significantly affected the government's decision) by the placing of a major order for 600 locomotives by the Soviet government with German firms²⁰⁵. The Cabinet accordingly, with some detailed criticism of the Soviet proposal, agreed that they had "already suffered delay in this matter" and that the issue should "now be forced to a conclusion". Subject to the Cabinet's amendments, Horne was authorised to conclude the Agreement.

Two days later, 16 March 1921, Horne and Krasin signed the agreement and brought the extended negotiations to a close.

The agreement itself, in its final form, was described as only a "preliminary Agreement" pending the "conclusion of a formal general Peace Treaty between the governments of these countries by which their economic and political relations shall be regulated in the future". It was concerned simply with the "resumption of trade and commerce between the countries"²⁰⁶. The agreement was subject to the condition that each party should refrain from "hostile action or undertakings against the other and from conducting outside of its own borders any official propaganda direct or indirect against the institutions of the British Empire or the Russian Soviet Republic respectively, and more particularly that ~~XXXX XXXX~~ the Russian Soviet Government refrains from any attempt by military or diplomatic or any other form of action or propaganda to encourage any of the peoples of Asia in any form of hostile action against British interests or the British Empire, especially in India and in the Independent State of Afghanistan. The British Government gives a similar undertaking to the Russian Soviet government in respect of the countries which formed part of the former Russian Empire and which have now become independent". All British subjects in Russia should be free immediately to return home if they wished to do so, as should Russian citizens in Britain. The term "conducting any official propaganda" included the "giving by either party of assistance or encouragement to any propaganda outside its own borders"²⁰⁷.

Under the terms of the Agreement, trade was to be facilitated by the removal of any form of blockade or other obstacle, by the extension of foreign merchant marine status to the ships, crews and cargoes of either nation, by the clearance of the sea of mines, and by the exchange of officials and official agents with rights and facilities and protection for the purposes of ~~XXX~~ commercial dealings. Private postal and telegraphic communication was to be restored, and documents and official papers concerned with trade should be treated as if issued by a recognized foreign government. The British government would not attempt to seize gold, money, or goods rendered by the Soviet government to Britain in the course of trading relations. The "funds or other property" of the late Imperial and Russian Provisional Governments in Britain, and of British government funds

and property in Russia, were guaranteed, pending the resolution of these questions in a general treaty, which would deal also with the questions of patents, trade marks, designs and copyright. The Agreement would come into force immediately, and both parties should "at once take all necessary measures to give effect to it". Following an initial period of twelve months, the treaty could be dissolved after a period of six months, upon receipt of notice of termination from either side. The contravention by either side of any of the provisions of the Treaty, however, or of any of the conditions outlined in the Preamble, would immediately free the other side of its obligations²⁰⁸.

A special Declaration was also signed, providing for the "just settlement in the formal Treaty, envisaged in the Preamble", of the claims of either party or of its citizens towards the other, concerning property, rights, or the obligations of existing or previous governments. The Russian Soviet government, and the British government also, in the meantime accepted the obligation of payment of compensation to private citizens for goods or services rendered by them to Russia for which they had not been paid; the means of carrying out of which obligation would be determined by the general Treaty²⁰⁹.

Informing Moscow of the conclusion of the Agreement, Krasin noted that Persia and Asia Minor had been omitted from the Preamble, there remaining only a restraint in India and in the "Independent State of Afghanistan". In general the text "came considerably closer to our original draft". The obligation not to support the successors of Denikin and Wrangel had been included at the final meeting²¹⁰.

The agreement, Krasin later wrote, was the "signal for the majority of states of Europe": by the end of 1921, Soviet Russia had concluded trade agreements also with Germany and Sweden, as well as with Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Italy²¹¹. The "fundamental and decisive factor, defining the trade relations towards us of capitalist Europe, was our negotiations and mutual relations with England". But even the government of Lloyd George, which had "perhaps of all the bourgeois governments of Europe the most realistically appraised the international situation", consistently hesitated between the need for the establishment of trade with the whole world, which was "impossible without

then inclusion of such a supplier of raw materials and bread, as Russia", and the hope of the "imminentⁱ downfall of the Soviet order".²¹¹

The agreement itself "with all its incompleteness.. represented a major victory for Soviet diplomacy, significantly strengthening further efforts for the development and consolidation of trade"²¹² The agreement, it was true, might be broken off by either side; but as Krasin wrote in Pravda , the effect of the development of trade and the influence of the working class would make this difficult, in the absence of international or domestic crises. Its conclusion was a "major success"; now "new paths, new tasks and new dangers" lay before Soviet Russia²¹³ He wrote to Moscow that in the following few months a real basis for unobstructed trade would be established²¹⁴.

Initial reaction in the Soviet press was somewhat less enthusiastic. The signing of the agreement itself, said the Ministry of Foreign Trade's journal in its editorial columns, said "nothing about how long it will last or of the opportunities which it opens before us". Claims from third parties were not covered, which if they were successful would deprive the agreement of meaning for Soviet Russia. The question of the realisation of Russian gold was "only partly solved", since only a limited quantity could be imported into Britain. There was no certainty that such judgements as in the case of Luther v. Sagor would be reversed; and "only when a favourable legal precedent is firmly established.. will we be able to recognize the Trade Agreement as the basis of our trade relations with England"²¹⁵.

Much certainly depended upon the measures taken to implement the agreement, above all with regard to the exemption of Soviet goods brought to Britain from legal action on the part of previous owners . On 12 May, however, the British Appeal Court, in view of the recognition ~~de~~ de facto of the Soviet government by Britain, reversed the earlier decision in the case of Luther v. Sagor and found in favour of the Soviet government, thus establishing a legal precedent. In June 1921, the Soviet government won a test case (Marshall v. Grinbaum) concerning its right to deposit gold in a British bank²¹⁶. On the basis of these rulings, Krasin sent a telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Trade which advised them that "bearing in mind, that the London market is the most favourable for the sale of our raw material",

it was his opinion that it was now possible to "begin immediately to send our ships with wood and other raw material for 'Arcos'"²¹⁷.

Postal and telegraphic communications with the RSFSR were renewed at the beginning of April, and in May 1921 the Soviet trade delegation was granted the right to issue visas to travellers to Russia²¹⁸. On 11 April the Soviet government adopted a decree designed to encourage trade, opening a number of ports for foreign merchant ships, and providing for the framing of suitable regulations²¹⁹. A Lloyds' agent visited Petrograd and inspected the facilities ~~XXXXX~~ at the port, upon which he reported favourably²²⁰. Finally, in accordance with the provisions of the agreement a British trade mission was selected to represent the British government in Moscow, composed of Mr R. Hodgson (Official Agent), Mr W. Peters (Assistant Agent) and four others. They arrived in Moscow on 31 July²²¹. No attempt was made, however, to convene a conference to make a general peace with Russia. Lloyd George explained that the government considered that the "first step is to bring the Trade Agreement into practical working. They are not prepared to make proposals for a general conference until they have gained experience of the working of this agreement"²²².

Chamberlain warned that the amount of trade which there was any chance of doing with Russia could produce for the moment "no appreciable effect upon our unemployment"²²³. Nevertheless the agreement, together with legal decisions which followed it, was held to have "established that essential legal basis for deals with the RSFSR without which no trade would be possible"²²⁴; and trade in fact developed considerably. ~~THE~~

The agreement led directly to major purchases of coal in Britain to meet serious shortages of fuel in Soviet Russia; and in the period until the end of the year, nearly a quarter of a million tons of coal were bought in Britain alone²²⁵. A major order for up to two million poods of grain was to be placed in Britain²²⁶. The volume of Soviet foreign trade as a whole, and of Soviet trade with Britain correspondingly, increased considerably. From January to September 1921 Britain accounted for 32.6% of Russian imports, and for 33.6% of Russian exports. For the year 1921 as a whole, Britain was the most important supplier of imports to Soviet Russia, accounting for 35.2% of all imports, and for an even greater proportion of food and textile imports; and was overall Soviet Russia's main trading partner. The

total turnover of Soviet trade with Britain increased by more than ten times in 1921 compared with 1920²²⁷. Most business was conducted on the Soviet side through 'Arcos', which developed trading links with fifteen countries, and whose turnover in 1921 amounted to £9 million, compared with £2.8 million in 1920²²⁸.

The agreement did not, however, effect more than a very limited and conditional improvement in British-Soviet relations. A number of important questions, notably mutual debts and claims, were left unsolved. While the agreement "recognized the Soviet government as the de facto government of Russia", which, Lloyd George conceded, "undoubtedly it is", the agents appointed by the Soviet government were not to be recognized as ~~XXX~~ diplomatic representatives of Russia by the British government²²⁹. It was, as Lloyd George explained to the House of Commons, "purely a trading agreement". Claims were to be reserved for discussion until a general settlement of all the disputes between the governments was ~~XX XX~~ made, when the government "meant to insist upon them"²³⁰.

The government's motives for concluding the agreement were, however, clear enough. "The view of the trading community was that we ought to enter into it"; and neither he nor Hogg had "heard any expression of opinion from any great trading community against the renewal of trade relations with Russia". On the contrary, Lloyd George found a "general sense of relief that we had done it.. On the whole, the trading community came to the conclusion that it was the right thing to do under the circumstances".

This was not, however, the only reason for concluding the agreement: for there was a change in Russia, he believed, from the "wild extravagant Communism of a year or two years ago.. There is a recognition.. that.. that system is an impossible one". All the time "we are simply converting them", in what was a "gentlemanly process of instruction". An opponent of the scheme would find that "Lenin is a man after his own heart if he has only a little patience, if he does a little business with him, a little trading, a little exchange of commodities~~ties~~~~XXXX~~. The moment they begin to realize they cannot run their country except upon the same principles which have brought prosperity to other countries, they will begin to realize that the only way to

bring prosperity to Russia is to put an end to their wild schemes"²³¹

The agreement of part of the Cabinet had been secured, however, only on certain conditions, concerning essentially the Preamble and the terms of the letter handed to Krasin by Horne at the same time as the agreement was signed. The letter, it was justly remarked, did "not appear to have anything to do with ~~trade~~". Chamberlain explained that "under the Preamble of the Trade Agreement, the Soviet government expressly undertook to refrain from propaganda against British interests in India and Afghanistan.. The letter handed to Mr. Krasin states the action required to be taken by the Soviet government as an essential corollary of the Trade Agreement".²³² The conclusion of the Trade Agreement, the central concern of which was evidently with matters other than the development of trade, did not significantly alter the supremely political, and therefore conditional character of Anglo-Soviet relations. The trend which the negotiations had taken, however, from the latter part of 1920, and the conditions which now underlay the new agreement, did nevertheless suggest that the political antagonism, of which the negotiations and agreements were a manifestation, had been located elsewhere. If in 1919 and for much of 1920 it had appeared that the bourgeois order was itself at stake in the deep crisis which then gripped Europe, by 1921 the relative stabilization in Europe allowed the Cabinet's attention to focus rather upon the emergence in the British colonies, especially in Asia, of a militant anti-colonialist revolt. Imperial rule appeared to be under vigorous assault; and those who assaulted it often appeared to derive ideology, tactics and even (it was thought) their material resources from Bolshevik Russia. In such circumstances Soviet relations with the developing anti-colonial movement in the British colonies in Asia rapidly became central to Soviet-British relations as a whole. The Trade Agreement did not resolve that basic political antagonism: it re-stated it.

- 1 Lord Riddell: Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After 1918-1923 (London 1933) pl61, entry for 22 January 1920
- 2 'Note respecting the Decision to Permit the Exchange of Goods on a Basis of Reciprocity between the Russian People and Allied and Neutral Countries', DBFP Vol ii No 76 Appendix A p912, Paris, 16 January 1920; also quoted in DWPSSSR ii note 63 p748
- 3 DBFP Vol ii No 71, Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the British, French and Italian Governments, Paris, 14 January 1920, p874
- 4 'Economic Aspects of British Policy concerning Russia', by E.F. Wise, 6 January 1920, ibid note 2 p867-70
- 5 Memorandum communicated by Roberts to Lloyd George, 2 January 1920, F.O. 371.3961.168948, 9 January 1920; Roberts to Curzon, 2 January 1920, ibid.
- 6 DBFP ibid p867 note 2; 'Report of Committee to consider the Reopening of certain Trading Relations with Russia', ^{F.O. 371.4032.172409, reprinted in} DBFP Vol ii No 74 ^{Appendix 1} p898-899, Paris, 15 January 1920, p898
- 7 Memorandum, Mr Birse, 21 January 1920, F.O. 371.4032.172292
- 8 Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the British, French and Italian Governments, Paris, 14 January 1920, DBFP Vol ii No 71 p874. A press communique issued by the Supreme Council phrased the matter rather differently: its object was to "remedy the cruel situation and isolation of the peoples in the interior of Russia, who find themselves deprived of all manufactured products and food from abroad as a result of the complete disorganization that exists in the interior of Russia". The "humane attempt" of the co-operatives to remedy this situation was intended to be carried out "quite outside all political interference" (DBFP Vol ii No 74 Appendix 2, p899, 'Braft Press Communique', Paris, 16 January 1920).
- 9 Daily Chronicle 19 January 1920
- 10 DBFP Vol ii No 76 Appendix A p 912 (as in note 2 above)
- 11 DVPSSSR Vol ii note 634 p749-50. M. Berkenheim, who was present at the Paris meeting, headed the foreign section of the Co-operatives, based in Paris. He told the heads of delegations at their meeting on 14 January that while the co-operatives "had no politics" and their organization was "in no sense political", it was nevertheless his

personal view "as a prattical man" that the "only solution of the struggle against (the) Bolsheviki was to supply the people with what they required, and to establish commercial relations with the Russian people". In reply to a question from Lloyd George, he expressed himself "absolutely sure" that the re-opening of commercial relations with the Russian people through the co-operatives would be the most effective way of striking a blow at Bolshevism. (Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the British, French and Italian Governments, Paris, 14 January 1920, DBFP Vol ii No 71 p866-875; pp868, 871, 872).

- 12 Hardinge to Derby (Paris) for Curzon, draft telegram No 77, 20 January 1920, F.O. 371.4032.172293
- 13 copies of the telegrams are in F.O. 371.5434.N4512, 20 December 1920; also DVPSSSR Vol ii p327-9;p327;p358-9 (names of delegates);p358;p391-2 (the delegates were: Krasin, Litvinov, Nogin, Rozovskii and Khinchuk).
- 14 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 40 p74-5 (Lenin's draft decree of 26 January, on which the Council of People's Commissars decree the following day was based: ibid note 33 p377). Lenin's draft decree ~~XX XX~~ for the Party Politburo meeting was written earlier, on 17 or 18 January. It noted that the Entente's decision to allow the exchange of goods through the co-operatives had clearly the aim of using the co-operatives as a "mechanism for the restoration of capitalism" (ibid p53)
- 15 Krasin, L.B.: Vneshtorg i Vneshnyaya ekonomicheskaya politika Sovyetskogo Pravitel'stva (Petrograd 1921) p5-6
- 16 Lord Riddell op.cit. pl75, entry for 6 March
- 17 Russian co-operatives abroad to Centrosoyuz, 28 February 1920, DVPSSSR Vol ii p397
- 18 ibid; Lezhava, President of the board of Centrosoyuz, to the Russian co-operatives in London, 5 March 1920, DVPSSSR Vol ii No 259 p396-7;p39
- 18 British government to the board of Centrosoyuz, transmitted by the Russian co-operatives abroad, 11 March 1920, DVPSSSR Vol ii p408
- 19 Lezhava, chairman of the board of Centrosoyuz, to the British government, 12 March 1920, DVPSSSR Vol ii No 269 p407

- 20 DVPSSSR Vol ii note 63 p748
- 21 Summary of relations with Soviet Russia since 16 January 1920, Commander Maxse, 13 June 1921, F.O. 371.6855,N6913, 16 June 1921, ^{where the telegram is incorrectly dated 12 April.} Krasin's telegram is in DBFP Vol viii No 16 Appendix ii pl84-5, and in DVPSSSR Vol ii No 318 p474-5.
- 22 DBFP Vol viii No 20 Appendix I p230-1, telegram for communication to M. Krasin, 25 April 1920, approved by the Supreme Council 26 April 1920; text contained in F.O. 371.5434.N4512, 20 December 1920; transmitted by Mr Peters, 14 May 1920, DVPSSSR Vol ii p548. The telegram was drafted by the British delegation.
- 23 resolution of the Supreme Council, San Remo, 26 April 1920, circulated to the Cabinet as C.P. 1189, Cab 24/104 (a copy of the telegram to Krasin was also included); copy in Lloyd George Papers F/58/1/9
- 24 Krasin to Peters for the Supreme Economic Council, 19 May 1920, DVPSSSR Vol ii No 352 p532-4; p533
- 25 Peters to Krasin, 19 May 1920, DVPSSSR Vol ii p539; Krasin to Peters DVPSSSR Vol ii No 356 p538-9, 20 May 1920
- 26 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow-Leningrad 1928) p249; the text of the agreement is in DVPSSSR Vol ii.349 pp523-8
- 27 Krasin ibid
- 28 ibid p250
- 29 Millerand told an Inter-Allied Conference at Boulogne that he saw "grave objections to substituting political relations for purely commercial relations" (Notes of an Inter-Allied Conference at Boulogne, 22 June 1920, DBFP Vol viii No 36 p377)
- 30 Maisky, I.M.: Anglo-Sovyetskoe torgovoe soglashenie 1921 goda Voprosy Istorii No 5 1957 p77
- 31 Curzon to Hardinge, 22 January 1920, F.O. 371.4032.172952
- 32 Churchill, Memorandum, 11 May 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 1309 Cab 24/106
- 33 Lord Beaverbrook: Decline and Fall of Lloyd George (London 1963) p292
- 34 Conference of British Ministers with the Head of the Russian Trade Delegation, 10 Downing Street, 31 May 1920, DBFP Vol viii No 24 p281-292; quoted in abbreviated form in DVPSSSR Vol ii note 108 p762
- 35 Conference of British Ministers with the Head of the Russian Trade Delegation, 10 Downing Street, 7 June 1920, DBFP Vol viii No 25 pp292-306

- 36 Notes of a Conference with the Russian Trade Delegation, 10 Downing Street, 29 June 1920, DBFP Vol.viii No.37 pp.380-388; Krasin's formal answer on p.381f is in DVPSSSR Vol.ii.403 pp.593-8. Lloyd George had opened the proceedings by noting his imminent departure for Spa, and declaring that "only one or two important questions remained to be settled" and that it was "impossible to keep the negotiations open much longer". He sought a "definite answer on behalf of the Soviet government".
- 37 Typescript copy in Lloyd George Papers F/202/3/20; also DVPSSSR Vol.iii pp.17-19.
- 38 Chicherin to Curzon, 7 July 1920, DVPSSSR Vol.iii No.6 pp.16-17, received 8 July 1920 in F.O. 371.5434.N4512 20 December 1920.
- 39 Parliamentary Debates Vol.131 col.1950, 12 July 1920.
- 40 Parliamentary Debates Vol.125, col.502, 16 February 1920, and Vol.125 col.1022, 19 February 1920.
- 41 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 129 col.23, 10 May 1920, and Vol. 128 col. 2221, 6 May 1920.
- 42 Arnot: Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain (London 1967) p.166, quoting Churchill; Parliamentary Debates Vol. 129 col. 1698, 20 May 1920, and col. 1008-9, 17 May 1920.
- 43 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 129 col. 1387, 19 May 1920.
- 44 Conference of Ministers, 11 June 1920, Cab. 35(20) Appendix ii.
- 45 Notes of a Conversation with Marshal Foch, Villa Neuvois, Spa, 8 July 1920, DBFP Vol. viii No. 51A p490-1; p490.
- 46 DBFP Vol.iii No 651 23 January 1920 pp 765, 766
- 47 Notes of a Conversation held at the Villa Fraineuse, Spa, 10 July 1920, DBFP Vol. viii No. 57 pp. 513-8; p.515; and ibid No. 59 pp. 524-30, p. 530, App.I
- 48 Curzon to Chicherin, Spa, 11 July 1920, F.O. 371.4058.207846, 12 July 1920 and Parliamentary Debates Vol. 131 Cols. 2372-4; and in DVPSSSR Vol. iii p.54-5.
- 49 Chicherin to Curzon, 17 July 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii No. 15 pp. 47-53; received 19 July, F.O. 371.4058.208802, 19 July 1920, and in Lloyd George Papers F/58/1/23.
- 50 Cabinet Minutes 20 July 1920, Cab 41(20), Cab 23/22.
- 51 Curzon to Chicherin, 20 July 1920, F.O. 371.4058.208802, 19 July 1920; also DVPSSSR Vol. iii pp.62-3.

- 52 Chicherin to Curzon, 23 July (received 24 July) 1920, in F.O. 371.4058.209307 and DVPSSSR Vol. iii No. 19 pp. 61-2.
- 53 Curzon to Chicherin, 26 and 29 July 1920, in F.O. 371.4058.210022 and DVPSSSR ibid p634
- 54 Notes of a Conference between Mr. Millerand and Mr. Lloyd George, Boulogne, 27 and 28 July 1920, DBFP Vol. viii Nos. 79 and 80, pp. 650-61 and 665-8; Curzon's telegram is in ibid No. 79 Appendix 4 pp. 663-4 and note 14, p.664, and in DVPSSSR Vol. iii pp.63-4.
- 55 Curzon to Chicherin, 3 August 1920, in F.O. 371.5434.N4512, 20 December 1920; also Parliamentary Debates Vol. 132 col. 2626, and DVPSSSR Vol. iii p. 86.
- 56 Notes of a Conference hold at 10 Downing Street, 4 August 1920, DBFP Vol. viii No. 81 pp. 670-80. Kamenev addressed an interim reply to Lloyd George on 5 August, suggesting that the interests of both the Russian and Polish peoples would best be served by direct bilateral discussions (Kamenev to Lloyd George, 5 August 1920, 210837/N55, in F.O. 371.5434. N 4512, 20 December 1920, and in Lloyd George Papers F/58/1/28; text also in DVPSSSR Vol. iii No. 39 pp. 83-6).
- 57 Notes of a Conference held at 10 Downing Street on 6 August 1920, DBFP Vol. viii No. 82 pp. 681-707.
- 58 ibid Appendix I p. 707, and DVPSSSR Vol. iii pp. 97-8.
- 59 DVPSSSR Vol. iii No. 47 pp. 95-6; and DBFP Vol. viii No. 83 Appendix 3 p. 723
- 60 Kamenev to Lloyd George 8 August 1920, DVPSSSR Vol. iii No. 48 p. 97; and DBFP Vol. viii No. 83 Appendix 2 pp. 722-3.
- 61 Lloyd George to Kamenev, 8 August 1920 DVPSSSR Vol. iii p. 98
- 62 Notes of an Anglo-French Conference, Lympne, 8 and 9 August 1920, DBFP Vol. viii No. 83,84,85 and 86, pp. 709-722, 724-730, 731-745, 748-754; p. 709,710,713,714,716.
- 63 ibid pp.724,725,726,727.
- 64 ibid pp.727,730.
- 65 ibid No. 85 Appendix I and II pp. 745-7.
- 66 ibid pp.732,733.
- 67 ibid pp.735,736,740.
- 68 ibid p.741
- 69 ibid No. 85 Appendix 3 pp.747-8; No. 86 Appendix 4 pp.754-5.
- 70 Cabinet Minutes 9 August 1920, Cab. 46(20)1, Cab. 23/22; the resolutions were approved.
- 71 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 133 Col. 253,254,259,260,271,272, 10 August 1920.
- 72 Conference of Ministers, 10 August 1920, Cab. 23/22; the terms as communicated to Lloyd George are in DVPSSSR ^{W3}No. 52, 9 August 1920, pp.100-1.

- 73 ~~Parliamentary Debates Vol XXX~~ ibid
- 74 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 cols 351-3, 10 August 1920
- 75 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 col 564, 16 August 1920
- 76 Notes of a Conversation at the Villa Haxlihorn, Lucerne, 22 August 1920, DBFP Vol iii No 87 pp756-774; pp757,759
- 77 ibid No 89, 23 August 1920, pp777-781; pp777,778; Curzon to Chicherin, 24 August 1920, in F.O. 371.5434.N4512, 20 December 1920 (telegram 212670/N55).
- 78 Balfour (on behalf of the Prime Minister) to Kamenev, 23 August 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii ppl47-9
- 79 Chicherin to Balfour, 25 August 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 72 ppl44-7
- 80 Balfour to Chicherin, 1 September 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii ppl70-1; ppl71; Chicherin to Balfour, 8 September 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 89 ppl67-170
- 81 Conference of Ministers, 10 September 1920, Cab 51(20) Appendix 4 minute 2, Cab 23/22
- 82 Notes of a Conference with the Russian Trade Delegation, 10 Downing Street, 10 September 1920 (at 4.30 p.m.), DBFP Vol viii No 90 pp783-91. Kamenev's letter to Lloyd George of 9 September 1920, announcing his forthcoming return to Moscow, is in Cabinet Paper C.P. 1840, Cab 24/111. On 24 August Churchill sent Lloyd George a paper, with a memorandum from the C.I.G.S. of 18 August attached. The presence of Kamenev and Krasin he held to be a "source of continued and increasing danger..Are we really going to sit still until we see the combination of the money from Moscow, the Kamenev-Krasin propaganda, the Council of Action, and something very like a general strike, all acting and reacting on one another, while at the same time our military forces are at their very weakest?". The paper from the C.I.G.S. mentioned the possibility of a "Revolutionary attempt by the 'Council of Action' in Great Britain and by affiliated societies in Ireland, Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and other theatres". A number of intercepted secret telegrams between the Russian delegates and Moscow were appended, consisting for the most part of practical discussion of the conduct of the negotiations (in Lloyd George Papers F203/1/1). Further evidence was forwarded to Lloyd George (see F/203/1/2;5,7,9,10,11). Curzon found the evidence "not only startling but absolutely overwhelming" (to Lloyd George, typescr-

ipt, 2 September 1920, Lloyd George Papers F203/1/3). Subsequent accounts have generally accepted the authenticity of the intercepted telegrams (for instance, Macfarlane in Past and Present December 1967); and the cipher used by the Soviet authorities was admittedly changed shortly after this episode. Their significance was another matter. Lloyd George himself retained some scepticism. Would such propaganda be ended by the expulsion of the Russian delegates? And would the government not lose thereby such leverage as it had secured through the presence of the delegates in Britain, and lose trade of some value? He suggested that Kamenev and Krasin be warned, but that the negotiations be continued (memorandum, 2 September 1920, Lloyd George Papers F203/1/4). Curzon urged the expulsion of Kamenev and Krasin (to Lloyd George, 2 September above); and following the refusal to re-admit Kamenev he wrote in a Cabinet memorandum that the evidence against Krasin was sufficient for his expulsion also if desired; while Klishko, an "unprincipled agitator", should be expelled forthwith. He was supported "in the most earnest manner" by Churchill (Cabinet Paper C.P. 1897, 16 September 1920, Cab 24/111, and C.P. 1898, 21 September). Long agreed with their view (Cabinet Paper C.P. 1909, 30 September 1920, Cab 24/112). It appears reasonable to conclude with regard to the matter that the Russian delegates were more guilty of a lack of tact in their private communications than of an abuse of their position (although some financial support of left-wing causes may have been considered); and that the decision to refuse re-entry to Kamenev (he was leaving anyway, and was not, therefore, formally expelled) allowed Lloyd George to appease his colleagues without allowing the trade negotiations to be brought to an end. Basil Thomson reported at the beginning of September that the Russian Trading Delegation represented a "greater menace to the stability of the country than anything that has happened since the Armistice" (Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the U.K. No.70, C.P. 1830, Cab. 24/111); and Shortt ventured the view that "the situation at home really (required) that (the) Russian Trading Delegation be sent out of England" (to Lloyd George, 26 August 1920, Lloyd George Papers F45/6/29). Krasin met Mr. R. Morris M.P., who wrote to Lloyd George subsequently about their discussions. The Delegation, Krasin had said, had been asked by Adamson of the Council of Action for an interview, and had agreed, with "no idea that they were committing an offence against the British Government". Krasin, he thought, was a "straight man and anxious

to play the game according to British rules, but he finds it difficult to know what those rules are.. He is anxious to avoid laying himself open to any charge, however trivial, of violating the conditions of his stay here" (Morris to Lloyd George, 14 September 1920, Lloyd George Papers F58/1/58). If a Russian delegate had to be expelled, it was clear that Lloyd George was likely to prefer to secure the removal of Kamenev rather than Krasin, who was, he told Riddell at the end of July, "not a Bolshevik at all" (Riddell: Diary p227, entry for 31 July 1920),

- 83 Chicherin to Curzon, 25 September 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 105 pp208-10
- 84 Conference of Ministers, 15 September 1920, Cab 51(20) Appendix IV minute 2 (a), Cab 23/22
- 85 Cabinet Minutes 30 September 1920, Cab 53(20)2, Cab 23/22
- 86 Curzon to Chicherin, 1 October 1920, 215561/N 38, in F.O. 371.5434.N4512, 20 December 1920; and DVPSSSR Vol iii pp242-4. For the Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East (1-8 September 1920), see below.
- 87 ibid. The British note of 30 June (1 July) had in fact specified four
- 88 conditions.
- 89 ibid Chicherin to Curzon, 6 October 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 128 pp237-242
- 89 ~~Chicherin to Curzon~~ transmitted by Krasin on 8 August (F.O. 371.5431.N70, 8 October 1920)
- 90 Curzon to Chicherin, 9 October 1920, F.O. 371.5431.N118, p October 1920; and DVPSSSR Vol iii pp317-20
- 91 Chicherin to Curzon, 13 October 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 133 pp258-9
- 92 DVPSSSR Vol iii No 144, 21 October 1920, p290; No 160, 30 October 1920, p307-8; protocol concerning the setting free of English prisoners of war in Baku, Tiflis 1 November 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 167 p313
- 93 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 col 918, 20 October 1920
- 94 Cabinet Minutes 11 November 1920, Cab 60(20)1, Cab 23/22. Lloyd George had "waited", in Krasin's words, "to see if the Soviet order would fall apart under the blows of the Polish legions" (Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p279)
- 95 Lansbury, George: What I saw in Russia (London 1920) xiii
- 96 ibid xv, 22, 27
- 97 ibid xiii
- 98 Lansbury to Lloyd George, telegram ^{received} 14 February 1920, Lloyd George Papers

According to Mrs Pankhurst (Soviet Russia as I Saw It (London 1921) pl65) Lansbury's first telegram to England was regarded "with amazement" in revolutionary Russia. It was "regarded as extraordinary that a man who is supposed to be a leader of British progress and enlightenment, should single out as the first matter for rejoicing, the fact that, though bread may be lacking, there is still gold on the domes of the churches, and poor people are still held by chains of ignorance and superstition under the influence of the reactionary church".

He was nevertheless considered a "sincere man" (pl66).

99 Evening Standard 3 April 1920 (copy in Lansbury Papers Vol 8 No 106);
Herald 20 March 1920; Times 22 March 1920

100 Wells, H.G.: Russia in the Shadows (London 1920) pp67,69,11,62,64

101 Ransome, Arthur: Six Weeks in Russia in 1919 (London 1919) vi,viii.

His reports appeared in the Manchester Guardian and the Daily News.

Ransome was better known as a writer of such stories for children as 'The Chinese Puzzle', 'Swallows and Amazons' and 'The Imp, the Elf and the Ogre'.

102 Goode, W.T.: Bolshevism at Work (London 1920). His papers and memoranda were seized on his return and placed under official embargo (p5).

Colonel Malone was another visitor in 1919 (The Russian Republic [London 1920]).

103 Pankhurst, E. Sylvia: Soviet Russia as I Saw It (London 1921) pl84

104 British Labour Delegation to Russia, 1920, Report (London 1920) p6,27,29

105 ibid p6

106 ibid p85

107 Snowden, Mrs Ethel: Through Bolshevik Russia (London 1920) pl1. She had returned, a writer in the Fortnightly Review observed, "firmly ~~persuaded~~ ^{persuaded} of the superiority of the traditional English methods to those of Bolshevik Russia" (Fortnightly Review Vol109 January 1921 p72

108 Russ11, Bertrand: Theory and Practice of Bolshevism (London 1920) p7

109 Pankhurst op.cit. pl65 Nineteenth Century and After Vol 88 December

110 1920 p901. The series of articles in the Times began on 30 September 1920; and according to the introduction provided by the paper it constituted an "indictment of the tyranny of the Bolshevik minority".

- 111 Turner, 'What we Saw in Russia', Labour Leader 17 June 1920
 112 ibid
 113 the Message appeared in the Times 11 June 1920, and in the Call 17 June
 1920 p7
 114 Times 11 June 1920
 115 Times 8 July 1920, 10 June 1920. An article by Turner appeared in the
Yorkshire Post 10 June 1920; and one by Williams in the Call 8 July
 1920. However 'extreme' the remarks of the Labour delegates in Britain,
 those with which their hosts greeted them must have proved a source
 of some embarrassment. A reception arranged by the Trade Union Council
 of the Province of Petrograd took place on 12 May, the day after the
 delegates' arrival. Lozovsky, in his speech of welcome, declared that
 the Russian workers would share their revolutionary experience with
 the delegates, and share theirs. They would not "hide from you the fact
 that in the English labour movement we feel nearest to those that stand
 for direct action, for the revolutionary class struggle, the Soviet
 system and the Social Revolution through the dictatorship of the
 proletariat". Ziperovich, seconding the toast, thought that the time was
 "not far when we shall gather under the banner of the Third International,
 not only in order to get acquainted with each other, but also in
 order to enter together upon the final decisive fight against world
 imperialism". Turner, who gamely replied on behalf of the delegation,
 admitted that "not all" members of the British labour movement were
 "class conscious, but they all heartily support the struggle for freedom".
 The proceedings concluded with the adoption of a resolution which
 expressed "intense hope that English labour will quickly emancipate
 itself from the superstition and tradition of a revolution by peaceful
 means and that with an iron hand they may sweep the imperialist masters
 out of their country. That is the answer, that is the help the Russian
 workers expect from their English brothers" (Petrograd Trade Union
 Council: The British Labour Delegation (Petrograd 1920)). This pamphlet,
 with other material, has been preserved in the British Museum, having
 apparently been deposited there by the Delegation.
- 116 Labour Leader 29 July 1920
 117 Keeling, H.V.: Bolshevism (London 1920) vii
 118 Times 21 August 1921

- 119 Government publications on Russia in these years, it has been noted, "seem generally to have been attempt~~a~~ to counteract Opposition propaganda" (Vogel, Ron: Breviate of British Diplomatic Blue Books 1919-39 (Toronto 1963) xii. The remarkable compilation 'A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism', which appeared in April 1919, has already been noted.
- 120 Committee to Collect Information on Russia: Interim Report (Parliamentary Papers 1920, Cmd 1041, 18 December 1920) p2,17
- 121 ibid p11
- 122 Report (Political and Economic) of the Committee to collect Information on Russia (Parliamentary Papers 1921, Cmd 1240, published 2 May 1921) ³⁹pp6
- 123 Unemployment: Special weekly Reports: No 1, week ending 15 October 1920 (Cabinet Paper C.P. 1979, Cab 24/112); sqq.
- 124 Observer 5 November 1920
- 125 Parliamentary Debates Vol 134 col 1521, 15 November 1920
- 126 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR^{2a} 1918-1940 gg.: statisticheskii obzor (Moscow 1960) pp449,467
- 127 ibid p13 (expressed in constant 1913 rouble values)
- 128 ibid p449 (~~in~~ 1913 prices)
- 129 ibid p467 (~~in~~ 1913 prices)
- 130 Vestnik N.K.V.T. No 1, 1921, 20 January 1921; Shtein, ibid Nos 5-6, 1 July 1921
- 131 Vestniki N.K.V.T. No 1, 1921, p2, 20 January 1921
- 132 In 1913 British exports of engineering machinery to Russia had amounted to nearly £4 million in value, nearly one-tenth of total exports in this category (Parliamentary Debates Vol 135 col 955 29 November 1920).
- 133 Parliamentary Debates Vol 126 col 886, 8 March 1920
- 134 ibid Vol 134 col 2115-6, Vol 135 col 67
- 135 ibid Vol 135 col 897, 29 November 1920, col 954, 29 November 1920
- 136 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya 1918-40 pp451-2
- 137 Conference of Ministers 24 January 1921, Cab 4(21) Appendix II (3), Cab 23/23
- 138 Cabinet Minutes 24 December 1920, Cab 77(20) 2,3, Cab 23/23
- 139 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 42 pp97-8
- 140 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli p279
- 141 Soviet archival source, cited in Shishkin, V.A.: Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Strany Zapada v 1917-1923 gg (M~~oskva~~ Leningrad 1969) p185
- 142 Parliamentary Debates Vol 134 col 1520, 15 November 1920, and Vol 133 col 1516, 20 October 1920

- 143 All-Russian Cooperative Society Limited. Memorandum and Articles of Association (London 1920); and Soviet archival source, cited in Shishkin op.cit. pl86
- 144 Parliamentary Debates Vol 133 col 1516, 20 October 1920
- 145 Daily News 18 June 1920 ; Krasin to Moscow, Soviet archival source cited in Shishkin op.cit. pl86
- 146 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli p251, 252; and Soviet archival source cited in Shishkin op.cit. 186
- 147 Times 29 September 1920; Shishkin op.cit. pl87
- 148 Cabinet Minutes 21 September 1920, Cab 52(20)6, Cab 23/22
- 149 Krasin to Lloyd George, 4 October 1920, Lloyd George Papers F58/2/1, and DVPSSSR Vol iii 123 pp228-232
- 150 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p279 - 80
- 151 Glasgow Herald 29 December 1920
- 152 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p280
- 153 Parliamentary Debates Vol 130 col 179, 180
- 154 ibid col 188
- 155 Sunday Times 19 December 1920, in F.O. 371.5434.N4547, 20 December 1920
- 156 Indian Tea Association to government, 6 December 1920, F.O. 371.5434.N4637
- 157 F.O. 371.5434.N4645, 22 December 1920
- 158 Krasin to Curzon, 9 November 1920, F.O. 371.5431.N2218, 10 October 1920; and DVPSSSR Vol iii No 170 pp314-6
- 159 Chicherin to Curzon, 9 November 1920, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 171 pp320-4; received 11 November 1920, F.O. 371.5431.N2266. Gregory noted in a minute on 12 November that this note did "not add anything materially, except in insolence", to Krasin's note of 9 November. He conceded that it was "more than possible that the Soviet Government could make it exceedingly unpleasant for us in Georgia and Armenia and in Persia and Asia generally, if the trade negotiations were definitely broken off". The resumption of political fealtions, however, would come, "if unfortunately it has to come", at a "considerably later stage".
- 160 Godovoi Otchet N.K.I.D. ~~XX~~ k IX S''ezdu Sovyetov, 1920-21gg (Moscow 1922) p631
- 161 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p280
- 162 ibid
- 163 Gregory Minute, in F.O. 371.5434.N3741, 4 December 1920
- 163 Curzon minute, in F.O. 371.5434.N3804, 6 December 1920

- 164 Cabinet Minutes 17 November 1920, Cab 61(20)6, Cab 23/23; a further example became public when on 28 February 1921 the Herald reproduced a forged Pravda which, it declared, the Special Branch was having produced and distributed in Russia. The Home Secretary admitted the truth of the charge, and regretted its occurrence, in the House of Commons on 3 March 1921. The matter does not, appear, however, to have been considered or approved by the Foreign Office. On 16 November (the day before the Cabinet meeting at which Lloyd George made his remark) Mr Tallents reported to London that he had received "some hundreds" of copies of forged Pravdas by official courier. It contained many statements about England, he noted, for instance that there were few Communists there. It was "well printed on good paper" and he did "not think that the most ignorant Russian would have supposed it to be genuine", when able to compare it with the bad paper of the Bolshevik journals. He thought the exercise an "entire waste of money". Leeper wrote to Basil Thomson suggesting that he might be able to throw some light on the origin of the papers in question, and recommending the abandonment of such efforts (F.O. 371.5446.N2507, 16 November 1920). Thomson replied that the paper had been paid for from White Russian funds. But how then, a Foreign Office minute observed, had it come to be in the official diplomatic bag? (F.O. 371.5446.N3136, 25 November 1920).
- 165 Cabinet Minutes 17 November 1920, Cab 61(20)6, Cab 23/23
- 166 Cabinet Minutes 18 November 1920, Cab 62(20)4, Cab 23/23
- 167 Parliamentary Debates Vol 134 col 2074, 18 November 1920
- 168 Conference of Ministers 25 November 1920, Cab 65(20) Appendix I (1), Cab 23/23
Krasin discussed the Vanderlip concession with Farbman in an interview in the Manchester Guardian on 10 December 1920 (DVPSSSR Vol iii No 216 pp 376-8). Vanderlip was reported to have broadcast on a programme from Petrograd on 22 October that he had been granted a sixty-year concession on Kamchatka from the spring of 1921, in spite of the fact that his economic theories were "dramatically opposed to those of the Soviet government". He considered their position strong, and thought that "all the combined Governments of Europe" could "not break up or tear down the present Russian Government" (reported in F.O. 371.5439.N962, 21 October 1920). A report from a confidential source reached the Foreign Office that the agreement involved "several hundred million dollar-s on very favourable terms" (F.O. 371.5439.N1904, 5 November 1920).

- 169 Cabinet Minutes 26 November 1920, Cab. 64(20)3, Cab. 23/23. A Draft Trade Agreement had in fact been prepared as early as September (the text as revised by the President of the Board of Trade is in Cabinet Paper C.P. 2086, 30 September 1920, Cab. 24/114). Immediately before the Cabinet meeting on 17 November, Churchill had submitted a memorandum in which he stated in conclusion: "Ought we.. to sustain this deadly conspiracy with the favour and countenance of the British Government?" (Memorandum, 16 October 1920, Churchill Papers C 16/53. He had had to be persuaded by Birkenhead against resignation: Churchill Papers C 22/3; cited in Glenny, M.V.: The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement, March 1921 Journal of Contemporary History V.2 (1970) pp. 75,76). Curzon thought that the "renewed lease of life" which the proposed agreement would give to the Bolsheviks would be "consecrated to no other purpose more unswervingly than to the subversion and destruction of the British connection with the Indian Empire" (Memorandum, 14 November 1920, Cabinet Paper C.P. 2099, Cab. 24/114). He refused to have anything to do with the subsequent negotiations.
- 170 Minutes of a meeting at the Board of Trade, 29 November 1920, between British representatives and Krasin and Klishko, F.O. 371.5434.3620, 2 December 1920. The draft was handed by Wise to Krasin. The text is in F.O.371.5434.N4655, 22 December 1920, reprinted in DBFP Vol. viii pp. 869-878.
- 171 Krasin to Wise, 30 November 1920, DVPSSSR Vol. iii No. 196 pp.351-3
- 172 ibid
- 173 Chicherin to Curzon, 4 December 1920, DVPSSSR Vol. iii No. 207, pp.367-9.
- 174 DBFP Vol. viii pp.869-878, F.O. 371.5434.N4655, 22 December 1920.
- 175 Maxse, 'Summary of Relations between H.M.G. and the Soviet Government from September 12, 1920, to December 22, 1920', 30 December 1920, F.O. 371.5435.N4997, reprinted in DBFP Vol. viii pp.866-869.
- 176 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p282.
- 177 DBFP Vol. viii (above note 175) p.868.
- 178 DBFP Vol. viii (note 175 above) p868.
- 179 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p281.
- 180 Times 22 December 1920, DBFP ibid pp.868,867, Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p.281. The legal representatives of Luther and Co. approached the Foreign Office for a statement of the position of the

Soviet government in Britain. Curzon wrote to them, in a letter which was endorsed by the Attorney General and cited in Court, that H.M.G. had "never officially recognized the Soviet Government in any way" (Curzon to Linklaters and Paines, 27 November 1920, F.O. 371.5447.N2852, 20 November 1920). The decision, it was noted in the Foreign Office, was an "extremely important" one. Gregory thought, however, that it might have the "unfortunate effect of strengthening the hands of those who want us to recognize the Soviet Government, inasmuch as without such recognition the Trade Agreement will be largely ineffective. The advocates of the Trade Agreement will automatically become the advocates of recognition". The reaction of the Herald of 22 December (which, with the Times report of the same date, was included in the file) appeared to confirm this prediction. The government, it stated, "must be forced to swallow its false pride and face the facts. It must allow trade with Russia, and to do so it must recognize the existing Russian Government" (F.O. 371.5447.N4666, 22 December 1920; minutes by Shearman, 23 December, and Gregory, 24 December 1920).

- 181 Parliamentary Debates Vol 136, col 1876-7, 22 December 1920
- 182 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p281
- 183 Krasin to Lloyd George, 20 December 1920, DVP Vol iii No 231 pp399-404
- 184 Meeting of British Ministers and the Russian Trade Delegation, 21 December 1920, F.O. 371.5435.N4777, 24 December 1920; and DBFP Vol viii No 102 pp879-892
- 185 ibid
- 186 Cabinet Minutes 22 December 1920, Cab 75(20)2, Cab 23/23. A draft of the accompanying letter as of 26 November 1920 is in Cabinet Paper C.P. 2171, Cab 24/115
- 187 Parliamentary Debates Vol 136, cols 1866-9, 22 December 1920 (incorrectly dated in Glenny art.cit. p80). As Maxse pointed out ('The Political Aspect of Trading with Russia', 22 November 1920, F.O. 371.5434.N2966) if trade were successful, the Soviet government would have to "modify its economic practice", leading to a "very modified and much less dangerous Soviet". It was "more than probable that the days of the Communist Government as such will be numbered".
- 188 Parliamentary Debates Vol 136 cols 1872-5, 22 December 1920

- 189 A communique issued by N.K.I.D., which appeared in the Soviet press on 30 December 1920, announced that since ^{the} British government was "obviously refusing to acknowledge the obligations which it had accepted in the July agreement", the Soviet government had decided to recall Krasin for the purposes of consultation (DVPSSSR Vol iii No 240 PP437-8; p438). An exchange of accusatory notes took place: Chicherin to Curzon 31 December 1920 (F.O. 371.6853.N5, 1 January 1921, and DVPSSSR Vol iii No 242 pp440-1); Curzon to Chicherin 6 January 1921 (F.O. ibid, DVPSSSR ibid pp461-2); Chicherin to Curzon 9 January 1921 (F.O. 371.6853.N461 11 January 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 254 pp458-461). The text of the draft trade agreement which Krasin took to Moscow, dated 6 January 1921, is in Cabinet Paper C.P. 2431, Cab 24/118.
- 190 The meeting was held of 26 January 1921. Karpova, F.R. : Zaklyuchitel'ny etap Anglo-Sov'yetskykh peregovorov 1920-1921 gg. Vestnik LGU (Seriya istorii i literaturny) No 14, 1962, Vyp. 3 p43
- 191 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 43 p20
- 192 Chicherin to Curzon, 4 February 1921, F.O. 371.6853.N1665, 7 February 1921, and DVPSSSR Vol iii No 284 pp501-6.
- 193 Curzon's remarks are in DBFP Vol xii pp832-3, and in a minute on F.O. 371.6853.N1997, 14 February 1921
- 194 Parliamentary Debates Vol 138 col 13, 15 February 1921
- 195 Parliamentary Debates Vol 138 cols 251,419, 17 February 1921
- 196 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p248,249
- 197 Parliamentary Debates Vol 138 col 780, 22 February 1921
- 198 Parliamentary Debates Vol 138 col 1391, 28 February 1921
- 199 Chicherin to Curzon, 21 February, F.O. 371.6853.N2448, 22 February 1921, and DVPSSSR Vol iii No 299 pp530; Curzon to Chicherin, 25 February 1921, DBFP Vol xii p834
- 200 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139, col 12, 7 March 1921
- 201 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139, cols 537,538, 9 March 1921
- 202 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139 col 480, 9 March 1921
- 203 N.K.I.D. Statement, 9 March (published in Izvestiya 11 March) 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 326 p582
- 204 Cabinet Minutes 14 March 1921, Cab 13(21)1, Cab 25/24. Curzon found Krasin's proposed amendments to the British draft "wholly unacceptable", and refused to participate further in the matter (minute, 8 March 1921, in F.O. 371.6853.N2999, 8 March 1921).

Two intelligence reports dealing with Kronstadt were received on 14 March 1921. Mr Kidston reported from Helsingfors that according to agents, the Revolutionary Committee there described themselves as "true upholders of the Soviet system" (Kidston to F.O., 11 received 14 March 1921 (Secret), F.O. 371.6847.N3223, 14 March 1921). The Secret Intelligence Service offered the opinion of an 'experienced agent', who had made his way into the garrison. He reported that the Communists who had been arrested were to be released; that the feeling there was "very confident, but anti-White". The Revolutionary Committee was composed of seventeen, of whom three were "very Left. The present tone is non-party, but probably Soviet" (S.I.S. Report 86 (Secret), 14 March 1921, F.O. 371.6847.N3296, 15 March 1921).

- 205 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (Moscow 1928) p249 R.S.F.S.R.,
 206 Trade Agreement between H.M.G. and the ~~Russian Soviet Government~~, 16
 March 1921, Parliamentary Papers 1921 Cmd 1207; also in DVPSSSR Vol iii
 No 344, pp607-614
- 207 ibid
 208 ibid
 209 ibid
- 210 Krasin to Chicherin, 16 March 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iii No 345, p615
 211 Krasin: Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli (new ed., Moscow 1970) p253,255
 212 ibid p255
- 213 Pravda 23 March 1921 (reprinted in ibid pp277-80).
- 214 Krasin to Chicherin, 19 March 1921, Soviet archival source cited in
 Shishkin op.cit. p254
- 215 Vestnik NKVT No 2-3, 1921, pp4-5
- 216 judgment of the Court of Appeal, 12 May 1921, by Lord Justice Bankes,
 who ruled that in view of the recognition de facto of the Soviet
 government by H.M.G. (to which effect a letter from the Foreign Office
 had been adduced in evidence), the acts of that Government "must be
 treated here with all the respect due to the acts of a duly recognized
 foreign sovereign State". Mr Justice Peterson ruled in the Chancery
 Division on 13 May 1921 that the gold brought to Britain on behalf of
 the Soviet government was not attachable in respect of obligations of
 former Russian Governments (cases cited in Coates op.cit. p53-4)

- 217 Krasin to Lenin and N.K.V.T. 6 June 1921, Soviet archival source cited in Shishkin op.cit. p255
- 218 Godovoi Otchet N.K.I.D. k VIII S''ezdy Sovetov za 1920-1921 gg (Moscow 1922) p63
- 219 'Concerning measures, connected with the signature of the trade agreement between the RSFSR and England', 11 April 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 44, pp59-61
- 220 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 14 August 1921, and Soviet archival sources cited in Shishkin op.cit. p256
- 221 Parliamentary Debates Vol 143, col 1578, 23 June 1921; Izvestiya 5 August 1921. Hodgson's instructions are contained in Curzon to Hodgson, 22 June 1921, N6993/3779/38, in F.O. 418.55 (Confidential Print), No 113 ppl44-5
- 222 Parliamentary Debates Vol 140 col 111, 5 April 1921, and col 709, 11 April 1921
- 223 Parliamentary Debates Vol 140 col 111, 5 April 1921
- 224 Shtein, Vestnik N.K.V.T. No 7-8, 1921, 1 October 1921
- 225 Chicherin to Krasin, 4 April 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 30 pp44-5, and p771 note 15
- 226 Lenin and Krasin to the official representative of the RSFSR in Britain, 7 May 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 74 pl09
- 227 Vestnik N.K.V.T. No 4-5, November-December 1921, p46,47; Vestnik NKVT No 2(7) 1922; Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR 1918-1940 (Moscow 1960) p21, where imports and exports are stated to have increased from respectively just over six million roubles and nil to 9,344,000 and 61,752,000 roubles (at 1913 prices).
- 228 Soviet archival source cited in Shishkin op.cit. p257
- 229 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139 col 2506, 22 March 1921, and col 2198, 21 March 1921 (Harmsworth).
- 230 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139 cols 2506-8, 22 March 1921
- 231 ibid cols 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511
- 232 Parliamentary Debates Vol 1389, col 1696, 17 March 1921; and col 23836, 22 March 1921 (Cecil and Chamberlain respectively). At the meeting of 16 March Sir Sidney Chapman handed Krasin the letter "on behalf of the British government which drew the attention of the Soviet govern-

ment to events whose continuance would be regarded as a breach of the understandings in the Agreement and which required the Soviet Government to give immediate attention to them" (16th meeting of British and Russian representatives, Minutes, 16 March 1921, F.O. 371.6878.N4032, 2 April 1921). The letter, and the text of the Agreement, were circulated as Cabinet Paper C.P. 2724, 16 March 1921, Cab 24/121, ^{and are in F.O. 371.6854.N3438, 17 March 1921.} The letter appeared in the Times on 17 March 1921, but appears not to have been officially published.

The Russian Trade Agreement was evidently concerned only in part with the development of trade between the two countries. The requirement contained in the preamble, upon the fulfilment of which the Agreement was stated to be conditional, specified the cessation by the Soviet government of "any attempt by military or diplomatic or any other form of action or propaganda to encourage any of the peoples of Asia in any form of hostile action against British interests or the British Empire, especially in India ^{and in} ~~the~~ the Independent State of Afghanistan"¹. The countries which had been named by the British government, the Cabinet was told, were "those bordering on India, or specially concerning us from the point of view of its defence". The "guiding principle throughout should be the safeguarding of our Empire in the East"². The action which was required of the Soviet government in consequence of the signature of the Agreement was set out in some detail in the accompanying letter which was handed to Krasin at the same time as the Agreement was signed, and which, as Lord Robert Cecil justly observed, did "not appear to have anything to do with trade"³.

The letter contained a recital of "facts.. characterising the activity of the Soviet Government in India and in Afghanistan, not conforming to the requirements of the Treaty and requiring immediate cessation if this Agreement (was) to be observed in good faith"⁴. The Soviet government in its official declarations and in the official press had "made no secret" of the fact that the "main aim of its policy in recent years" had been the overthrow of British rule in India. The British government had for some time been aware of "intrigues, which are being carried on by various means and in various directions by the Soviet government, by its agents, by people acting under its instructions and by its supporters for the achievement of this aim". Soviet negotiations with Afghanistan had been directed towards securing a "means of disturbing the peace in India through Afghanistan"; and the right of ~~XXX transport~~ unimpeded movement through the country had been sought in order to bring rifles and ammunition to the border tribes which inhabited the British side of the border. Relations had also been established with the tribal leaders most hostile to Britain. Many Indian rebels, also, were

now working in Bolshevik institutions and with Bolshevik money "in order to sow unrest in India and to encourage anti-British feeling in the countries bordering India, mainly in Afghanistan". Such people who had arrived in Kabul were there "with the aim of establishing contact with disloyal elements in India". M.N. Roy, the Indian Communist, had established a "forward base for work in India" at Tashkent, with a political department and a military-technical centre. If a revolutionary base as far removed from the Indian border as Tashkent could "not threaten India with serious danger", it was nevertheless proposed to transfer it to Kabul "as soon as circumstances allowed". Emissaries had already been sent to India "for the study on the spot of the possibility of revolutionary work, in the army or in the peasant or industrial population, or by means of the organization of extremist political schools on a basis favourable to Bolshevik and revolutionary plans"⁵.

While the British government did not object to a Soviet-Afghan agreement which concerned the "normal form of neighbourly and commercial relations", the proposal to grant money, ammunition and aeroplanes to the Afghan government, and to establish Soviet consulates on the eastern border of the country, were declared to be "exclusively.. measures hostile to British interests". The Red Army was believed to have been instructed to raise the red flag on the Pamir plateau, as an "indication to the Indian peoples that their liberation is near"; and there was reason to believe that a "plan of action" was envisaged in the area. Enough had been said, it was considered, to "indicate the general character of the activity of the Soviet government on the cessation of which H.M.G. must insist as an essential condition of the conclusion of any kind of agreement between the two governments"⁶.

The mounting wave of unrest in British colonies after the World War gave the government every motive for wishing to secure safeguards to "check Bolshevik propaganda in the East"⁷, which there as in Europe might be expected to stimulate unrest where it did not actually give rise to it. The defeat of the interventionary forces allowed the Bolsheviks to extend their control to areas of Asia often directly adjoining those in which the British government had a direct interest. The question of Soviet

policy in the East, ~~correspondingly~~ ^{correspondingly}, and especially that of revolutionary propaganda, became an increasingly important issue in the trade negotiations: perhaps even, as some studies have suggested, that of greatest importance⁸. It had been, equally, an important determinant of British policy during the period of intervention. Particularly in the south of Russia and the Caucasus, British policy was broadly concerned to secure a federal settlement in Russia, and the continued independence of the states on the southern border of the former Russian Empire. The British government was not in a position to provide a ~~sufficient~~ number of troops and munitions sufficient to ensure such an outcome: it could attempt only to influence events. There was, of course, much that was eminently traditional in a policy designed to minimise the influence of the Russian government in the Indian sub-continent. The far-reaching social changes which had taken place in Soviet Russia, however, and the revolutionary propaganda which sought to promote similar changes in the colonial world, gave this perennial problem a disturbing new form. Lord d'Abernon, the British Ambassador in Berlin and a member of the mission to Poland during the 1920 crisis, wrote that Western civilization was "menaced by an external danger which.. threatened a cataclysm equalled only by the fall of the Roman Empire". This was particularly true when "judged from the special standpoint of the British Empire.. England's stupendous and vital interests in Asia were menaced by a danger graver than any which existed in the time of the old Imperialistic regime in Russia"⁹.

He was "personally very much afraid", Lloyd George told the Cabinet on 25 July 1919, "that a united Russia would be a great menace to us in the East". He would consider that the British government had failed in its war purposes, he wrote somewhat earlier to the Ambassador in Washington, "unless by the end of the war Russia is settled on liberal, progressive and democratic lines"¹⁰. He desired such an end not only from the point of view of the Russian people, but from that of "the peace of the world and the ~~security~~ peace and security of the Indian frontier"¹⁰. The anti-Bolshevik forces which the government supported, however, proved unforthcoming on the question of the right to self-determination of states which had formerly been part of the Russian Empire. Two months later Lloyd George broached the question of the "ultimate aim of British policy in connection with Russia". It might, he thought, be "in the interests of

the British Empire to aim at a limited Russia under any government, whether it was Bolshevik or anti-Bolshevik". Quoting Lord Beaconsfield on the Russian threat, he declared that "the future of the British Empire might depend on how the Russian situation developed, and he personally did not view with equanimity the thought of a powerful Russia of 130 million inhabitants"¹¹. To the House of Commons he expressed his doubts whether a reunited Russia, which was the aim of Denikin and Kolchak, was in the interests of the British Empire. Certainly, at least, it was true that it was not acceptable to the other anti-Bolshevik forces¹². Denikin's failure inverted the problem. His retreat, the C.I.G.S. told ministers, would "inevitably have reflex actions upon the British position in Persia and Afghanistan". It was agreed that "Bolshevist activity in Persia and Central Asia was one of the most troublesome problems which the British Empire had to face"¹³.

Alarming reports began to reach the ~~XXXXXX~~ Foreign Office from its local representatives. Chicherin's assistant, Dr Narimanov, a Baku doctor, was reported to have written to the Azerbaidjani government urging them to join a "great movement against England"; and the Tashkent Soviet had written to the Georgian Prime Minister to the same effect¹⁴. The text was submitted to London of a proclamation "widely circulated through Transcaucasia" under the signature of Chicherin and Narimanov addressed to the "workmen and peasants of Georgia, Daghestan and Azerbaidjan"¹⁵. Wardrop from Tiflis reported that the Bolsheviks were "sending numerous agents to ~~XXXXX~~ ^(the) Caucasus and Persia with large funds.."; and 1500 Bolsheviks were known to have left Baku for Persia. The Foreign Office in reply found the development a "highly dangerous" one¹⁶. Unless some "speedy action" were taken, Wardrop urged two days later, there was a "grave risk of the crushing of Transcaucasia by (the) Bolsheviks, who will then work their will in Persia and Transcaspia and beyond"¹⁷. Urgent entreaties were received from the Persian government for assistance lest the country be "overrun by Bolshevism"¹⁸. It was agreed that arms, munitions and if possible food should be sent to the Transcaucasian States. Transcaucasia was the "bridge which must be defended by the Allies to prevent (the) union" of Bolsheviks and Moslems, who were believed to have concluded an "agreement ... to attack the East". It was a question of "preventing (a) Bolshevik

invasion of the East", following the defeat of Denikin¹⁹.

Churchill developed this theme in a speech which he made in January 1920. The Allies, he said, might abandon Russia, but Russia would "not abandon them". The Russian bear "ranges widely over the enormous countries which lead us to the frontiers of India, disturbing Afghanistan, disturbing Persia, and creating far to the southward great agitation and unrest among the millions, hundreds of millions, of our Indian population, who have hitherto dwelt in peace and tranquillity under British rule"²⁰. As Lord Hardinge put it in a letter to Paris, Britain was "anxious to stabilize the political and economic situation in the Caucasus, in order that it may serve as a barrier against a possible Bolshevik military advance instead of becoming a free passage for communication between the Bolsheviks and Pan-Islamic forces and possibly necessitating our abandoning the greater part of Asia and concentrating on the defence of India"²¹.

How such a barrier was to be constructed was, however, by no means clear. Henry Wilson attempted to demonstrate, at a meeting in the Foreign Office, the military impossibility of supporting Georgia and Azerbaidjan, despite what he considered a "ridiculous wire" from Curzon urging this policy, and despite his belief that the areas concerned would in its default "go Bolshevik"²². Wilson attended a meeting of Ministers in Paris on 16 and 18 January which discussed the problems raised by the retreat of Denikin and the consequent threat to the Caucasus and the Caspian. The Caspian, it was stated, was the "pivot of our whole strategical position in the East". Its capture by the Bolsheviks would "bring about the final downfall of Denikin, turn the frontier of the Caucasus, expose North Persia to attack, and immediately increase the resources of the Bolsheviks by giving them control of the oil and other produce of these regions. Churchill doubted whether it was right to construct the line of defence against a Bolshevik advance through the Caucasus, thereby leaving the Denikin country "outside the ring fence and inside the Russian bearpit". Curzon pointed out, however, the "real difficulty" which "was that the anti-Bolshevik Russians had failed". It was agreed that Churchill's plan was not feasible, but that enquiries should be made as to whether it would be possible to "galvanise the Caucasus people into permanent independence and opposition to the Bolsheviks"²³.

At a further meeting two days later Churchill urged that the government had a "supreme interest in the Caucasus and the Caspian in connection with the defence of India". Wilson reported, however, that he had traced the history of Georgia back to the year 1212, and "could not find any case where they had not given in to every enemy.. Their record was one of constant cowardice". Two divisions of troops was the "absolute minimum" which would be required for such an operation, and neither he nor Marshal Foch would be willing to undertake it. "He could not advise action with less than two Divisions and it was impossible for us to find that force". Churchill retorted that control of the Caspian was an "essential element in our whole position in Central Asia.. Its loss would lay open to the Bolsheviks not only North Persia but the Caucasus and the country to the South, and would open up a fresh and direct line from Russia towards Afghanistan".

Long believed that the "danger to our Eastern Empire" was "greater than it had ever been before. If we did not take immediate steps we might in the near future be fighting desperately for the retention of our Eastern Empire". Curzon added that "if command of the Caspian was lost we might find that before long our whole Eastern Empire was rooking, but if we could dominate the Caspian it might alter the whole situation in the East". Wilson replied that the "real question" in his opinion was the defence of India and Mesopotamia, which was not affected by the command of the Caspian unless a very advanced line were held, which he himself would not choose. Lloyd George added the "no-one present had suggested for a moment that the British could send three divisions". He thought himself that the danger of Bolshevism was "not military, but political"²⁴.

The Supreme Council, nevertheless, decided to grant de facto recognition to Armenia (without prejudice to changes of frontier), as it had done to Georgia and Azerbaidjan. No Power, however, the Foreign Office was told, had been prepared to supply the three divisions which the Inter-Allied Military Council had ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ considered necessary for their defence²⁵. In the circumstances the Foreign Office could only disappoint those Caucasian states which sought more tangible evidence of the support of the British government. On 3 March Curzon told Wardop in Tiflis that the Treasury was not prepared to give a loan to the Caucasian republics. The Armenian and Georgian governments were advised to direct their attentions

rather to the City.²⁶ The following month Curzon made it clear that there could be "no question of our giving Georgia and Azerbaidjan active military support in case of an attack upon them by Soviet forces".²⁷ Azerbaidjan, deprived of Allied military support, was declared a Soviet Republic in April 1920, and Armenia became a Soviet Republic the following November. The British government, Curzon wrote to Tiflis, was "not indifferent to the fate of Georgia"; indeed, the Cabinet was "strongly in favour of her independence". "Other burdens", however, were "such that they cannot say what practical form their sympathy is likely to take".²⁸ Georgia accordingly was declared a Soviet Republic in February 1921. Colonel Stokes wrote to Curzon that the British mission had been successfully withdrawn. All that had remained to indicate the government's support was a typewriter and a sunbeam car.²⁹

The opening of negotiations with the Russian Trade delegation offered a more promising line of approach. If it was not feasible militarily to defend the borderlands of the Eastern Empire against Bolshevik advances, it might nevertheless prove possible to limit the Bolshevik danger by requiring that they offer undertakings to their future conduct in return for the opening to them of the European market. The Cabinet, accordingly, reviewing the withdrawal of British forces from northern Persia and the vulnerable position in which this placed Persia and Mesopotamia, found the question "closely connected with our general policy towards Soviet Russia". The War Office had recommended withdrawal from Batum; but this, it was objected, was "tantamount to an invitation to the Bolsheviks to enter and make themselves master of Northern Persia, the friendly Persian Government would then fall", and there would be an end to the 1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement which "without infringing the independence of Persia had been concluded with the object of establishing decent conditions and providing a barrier against Bolshevism". The hopes that the Anglo-Persian Agreement might serve as a model for the administration of Egypt and Mesopotamia would disappear; in time the Bolsheviks would either penetrate to the borders of Mesopotamia, or Persia, "permeated by Bolshevism, would go rotten"; and the outcome would be to "weaken our whole position in the East". The agreement with Persia had placed no obligation upon the government to defend Persia, but this was an "obligation of self-interest which we could not afford to set aside, since Persia was a great key position of our

Imperial defence". Against this Churchillian view it was argued that there was in fact no evidence that the Bolsheviks had designs on Persia; they had considerable domestic problems, and communications were bad. It was "more probable that they would seek their aims by means of propaganda", which a British occupation could not prevent. The government moreover must recognize that "we had not the military forces available to enable us to keep the Bolsheviks out".

It was agreed that policy in North Persia was "intimately connected with our general policy towards the Bolsheviks " which was "at present indefinite and somewhat paradoxical". The Bolsheviks, on the one hand, were "making difficulties" for the government "all over the East", in Turkey, the Caucasus, Persia, Turkestan, and Afghanistan, and had "not concealed their intention to create trouble for us in India". On the other hand, trade negotiations with the Soviet government were shortly to be initiated and Krasin, when he arrived, would be received by the Prime Minister and by the Foreign Office. It was "generally felt that advantage should be taken of the forthcoming conversations with M. Krassin, if possible, as a condition of entering into trade relations, to effect an all-round settlement which would include the East.."³⁰.

Curzon expanded upon this theme at a Conference of Ministers on 28 May 1920. Any agreement in regard to trade, he thought, would be "impossible unless a general agreement on the political questions at issue with the Soviet government were arrived at. It was most desirable that a comprehensive arrangement should be ~~arrived at~~ ^{reached}. The Conference was asked to remember that the recent political situation gave H.M.G. an opportunity for driving a good bargain"³¹. The Russian government, Curzon argued in a memorandum, was "threatened with complete economic disaster", and he believed that it was "ready to pay almost any price for the assistance which we - more than anyone else - are in a position to give". But the government could hardly consider coming to the rescue of the Bolsheviks without "exactng our price for it". That price, he thought, could "perhaps better be paid in a cessation of Bolshevik hostility in parts of the world ~~as~~ important to us than the ^{ostensible} exchange of commodities, the existence of which on any considerable scale in Russia there is grave reason to doubt"³².

The question of Soviet policy and propaganda in the East accordingly

assumed a major role in the negotiations³³. If guarantees^{were sought} from the Soviet government, they might not be observed; but equally, there was at least a possibility that Soviet policy might be influenced by an agreement, while there was none whatsoever in the absence of one. The accompanying letter would allow the conduct of the Soviet government arising from the agreement to be specified in some detail; while the agreement itself might be terminated if its conditions were considered not to have been observed. Afghanistan, India, Persia and the Caucasus had been mentioned as countries in which anti-British propaganda must be abandoned, Horne told the Cabinet in December 1920. Krasin had however objected to the inclusion of the Caucasus (the independence of which the Cabinet had thought in June the Soviet government might be induced to recognize³⁴) on the grounds that it had formerly been part of the Russian Empire, and Horne did "not intend to press for specific mention" of this area³⁵. The Preamble of the Agreement, as has been noted, required the Soviet government to refrain from propaganda against British interests in India and Afghanistan; and the accompanying letter, as Chamberlain told the House of Commons, stated the "action required to be taken as an essential corollary of the Trade Agreement"³⁶.

The National Review wondered "how the authors of the covering letter could reconcile themselves to the 'Trade Agreement' - how the authors of the 'Trade Agreement' ever consented to deliver this fulmination to their new-found friends". The answer, it thought, was "locked in the bosom of the Coalition"³⁷. Curzon, admittedly, in a memorandum written the previous November, had described the Bolshevik regime as one which made "no secret of its intentions to overthrow our institutions everywhere and to destroy our prestige and authority, especially in Asia". There was "overwhelming evidence that the one object at which the whole of their policy is and has been aimed is India". The renewed lease of life which the proposed agreement would give the Bolsheviks would be devoted above all to the "destruction of the British connection with the Indian Empire"³⁸. If he and his associates in the Cabinet had agreed to the conclusion of the Agreement, it was only insofar as it might restrain this activity and propaganda. As Leeper put it in a minute of 23 April (which was endorsed by Curzon) "If we care about anything in the Trade Agreement, it is the possibility that it may stop Bolshevik propaganda against us in the East or elsewhere"³⁹. The Agreement

had, indeed, been made explicitly conditional on such an outcome. The delicately-posed compromise which the Agreement thus represented was subjected to considerable strain in the months which followed.

The wave of mass unrest which affected the colonial world, and many British colonies, after the World War undoubtedly owed more to the war itself than to the Russian Revolution. The war, it has been suggested, produced a "complete transformation" in the attitude of Indians towards British rule⁴⁰. India sent more than a million troops overseas during the war; and as the war developed, "so did her contribution"⁴¹. This, Lloyd George noted, gave "force to the plea that the principle of government with the consent of the governed should be extended to India"⁴². The war, moreover, had ostensibly been fought in defence of the principles of national self-determination and the rights of small nations. Britain could not, concluded the 1918 Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, "deny to the people of India that for which she is herself fighting in Europe"⁴³. These principles, with which the Fourteen Points appeared to identify the Allies, strengthened the movement for independence in other countries also.

In Ireland, Balfour noted, the Sinn Fein movement, though "based on no solid foundation", had "gained a fictitious and sentimental strength from the movement which was spreading rapidly over the world in favour of nationality"⁴⁴. Tilak wrote that not only India, but "every other country in the world is, at this time, inspired with the new ideals of Freedom, Liberty, Self-determination and Self-government, owing to the repeated public statements of European and American statesmen about the aims and objects of the the war"⁴⁵.

The movement, launched in support of liberal ideals, became increasingly a radical and anti-colonial one when it became clear that the implementation of these ideals by the Allies after the war would be - outside of central Europe - of an extremely limited character. It emerged, in fact, that they were most likely to be implemented where an effective challenge was mounted to the imperial authority. It was still a "moot point", the New Statesman considered, whether the "shortest cut to an adult and self-governing status" was "to be a good boy or a bad boy". India, it noted, had received self-government, while Burma, a "good boy", had not⁴⁶.

Reviewing the situation at the end of 1919, Henry Wilson noted in his diary that "the coming year looks gloomy. We are certain to have serious trouble in Ireland, Egypt and India". He was concerned to transfer troops from Russia and Europe to these "coming storm centres" so that the "British Empire will be well clothed and well defended against all the bangs and curses of the future"⁴⁷. It was a period, moreover, not only of imperial crisis, but also one of the extension of Soviet Russian influence in the colonial world, and of the foundation of Communist Parties and the development of radical mass movements there. It was not, perhaps, surprising that British-Soviet relations became increasingly involved in these issues.

The war, however, had equally demonstrated to the government the necessity of strengthening Imperial unity (a conviction which was not always accompanied by a sure grasp of the strategic and geographical questions involved⁴⁸). The Imperial War Cabinet had been instituted during the war, composed of the representatives of the Dominions and India together with the British Cabinet. It, and the Imperial War Conference, met in 1917 and again in 1918; and an analogous body, the British Empire delegation, attended the Paris peace talks. In the decision to summon an Imperial Conference in 1921 the Times professed to see the "beginning of a definite system of Empire Government in peace by an Imperial Peace Cabinet"⁴⁹. Such a hope was belied by the Conference itself, and seems hardly to have survived the Chanak crisis of 1922, when the Dominions ^(especially Canada & South Africa) made it clear that the British government could not be allowed to commit them to a war without their prior agreement, as had happened in 1914. Yet the following year Curzon (in a speech as Grand Master of the Primrose League) said that he hoped to see "how far by consolidation, by improvement of communications, we can develop a common policy in international matters, so that the Foreign Minister of this country, when he speaks, may speak, not for Great Britain alone but for the whole British Empire". There had been "great advances" towards this objective, he thought, in 1921⁵⁰.

The revelation during the war of the dependence of Britain upon imported supplies of foodstuffs and raw materials led to an effort to strengthen intra-Empire trade by means of tariff agreements. A committee appointed by Lloyd George dealt with the safeguarding of essential British industries, the recovery of lost markets and the protection of Imperial supplies from

from foreign control. Its report recommended that countries of the Empire should be granted preferential duties on imports into the British market; and the scheme of Imperial Preference was approved by Parliament in March 1919⁵¹. The 1921 Imperial Conference recommended the "redistribution of the white population of the Empire in the manner most conducive to the development~~xxx~~, strength and stability of the whole"⁵². The Empire Settlement Bill was adopted by Parliament the following year, providing the sum of £15 million annually over a period of fifteen years to assist res ttlement⁵³. The movement of population within the Empire proved overwhelmingly to be movement from Britain to the ~~xxxxx~~ Dominions. A post-war peak of a quarter of a million emigrants was reached in 1923⁵⁴. The 1923 Imperial Conference endorsed the scheme; and decided to establish an Imperial Economic Committee, affirmed the importance of an Imperial wireless service, and passed a resolution on Economic Defence "which implied the possibility of combined action to protect Empire shipping against discriminatory legislation by other nations"⁵⁵. Imperial bodies of various sorts were founded. An Empire Parliamentary Association received an annual £5,000 Parliamentary grant; and the Imperial Institute was also supported by the Government⁵⁶. An Imperial Airship Service was proposed, and a scheme was endorsed in principle at the 1923 Conference. Imperial Airways was established in 1924⁵⁷.

Nor was foreign policy forgotten. The defence of the Empire, Lloyd George told the House of Commons, "ought to be an Imperial concern. It is too much to ask these small islands, with the gigantic burdens they are bearing, .. to undertake themselves the whole burden of the defence of this gigantic Empire". The question should, he thought, be considered by the Imperial Conference⁵⁸. In particular "united action against the spread of Communist propaganda", a Cabinet Committee considered, should be placed on the agenda of the 1921 Conference as suggested by the Indian government⁵⁹. The matter came up at the Conference's sixth meeting, on 24 June. Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister, agreed with Curzon's opening remarks to the effect that Bolshevism was the "very negation of all the British Empire stands for". It was "no use shutting our eyes to the fact that against the British Empire there is a world-wide conspiracy.. We cannot, we dare not, ignore its sinister purpose, its menacing effects". He believed that it was time "some

deliberate and systematised effort was made to counteract this propaganda and to tell the world the things for which the British and the Empire stand". Montagu added that the evidence was accumulating that the Bolshevik government was "pursuing by propaganda, and even, indeed, by preparation for warlike operations, determined action against British interests in the East". He drew attention to the Bolshevik government's "sinister purpose"⁶⁰.

A paragraph dealing with "united action against the spread of Communist propaganda" was omitted from the agenda of the 1923 Conference; but the Cabinet agreed that the matter might be raised after the Foreign Secretary's statement, which "must necessarily include a reference to our policy towards the Russian Soviet Government"⁶¹. There was "ample evidence", Curzon considered, in a memorandum prepared for a speech to the Conference, that the Soviet government would "lose no opportunity by bribes, intrigue and propaganda" to destroy the United Kingdom, the British Empire and indeed "the existing organization of society". The weight of their attack was for geographic and traditional reasons "directed against India and against the position of H.M.G. in Turkey and the Near East"; and "imperial considerations (required) that it should be resolutely met"⁶². The matter was raised at the fifth session of the Conference. Lord Peel, the Indian Secretary, said that the "Bolshevik menace" had not "gone very far ^{at present} in India, but it is a thing which always has to be watched". Sapru, for the Indian government, added that unrest could not be identified in every case with Bolshevism; but there was "every need for being alive to the danger and for taking active steps to prevent the poison spreading, and we must be forearmed.. There is no country which required more or greater development of publicity or propaganda on sounder lines than India does", in order to "let the people know really what the danger of Bolshevism are"⁶³. The reality of Imperial unity was somewhat more modest than proposals for 'united action' might have suggested. The Conference, indeed, itself pointed out that it was a meeting of "the representatives of the several Governments of the Empire", and that its views and decisions on foreign policy were "necessarily subject to the action of the Governments and Parliaments of the various portions of the Empire"⁶⁴. Its deliberations had nevertheless made apparent that not just the British government, but the Dominion governments also, considered Bolshevik policy and propaganda a danger not only to the 'existing order of society', but also and more specifically to the existence of the Empire itself.

Imperial unity received, perhaps, its most serious early setback in Ireland; and there was, indeed, no need to go farther than Marx to conclude that the possession of Ireland lay at the very foundation of the Imperial edifice, and of bourgeois rule in Britain itself. This view was (no doubt unconsciously) echoed in Churchill's declaration that Ireland was the "heart's centre of the British Empire. Any disturbance or movement there produces vibrations, almost convulsions, throughout the whole of our system of society"⁶⁵. Despite the efforts of the government to assist in the formation of a "new central party of moderate men in Ireland united in opposition to the lawless and revolutionary propaganda of the Sinn Feiners", Lord French, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, was forced to conclude at the end of the war that "any relaxation of the Defence of the Realm Act at this moment would make it impossible to govern Ireland". Any reduction in the military garrison would be "fatal"; the country was "seething with discontent and rebellious intentions"⁶⁶. The following spring Curzon declared that the situation was "worse than they had thought". Fisher pointed to what he considered to be the heart of the government's problem. It was a "very difficult thing" to ban an association that "had the moral support of the country"⁶⁷. A lengthy guerilla war led eventually to the signature of Articles of Agreement on 6 December 1921. The Treaty, Lloyd George told the Cabinet, ended the "disputes and frictions between the two peoples" which had "been a source of weakness, not merely to Great Britain but to the Empire"⁶⁸.

The statement proved an optimistic one. In the first place, the situation there remained for some time a source of concern to the government. There was even a possibility, as Churchill told the Cabinet in April 1922, of the declaration of a Republic. The Viceroy was recalled "ostensibly for purposes of consultation", but in fact for his protection; and orders were issued to the Army Command to take action in the event of the declaration of a Republic. The differences within the Irish political leadership, and, indeed, within the population at large, were the source of these dangers. Churchill complained in May of the Irish people's "general reluctance to kill one another"⁶⁹.

In the second place, the Treaty - (however unsatisfactory to many on the Irish side - had been won by what Curzon termed "revolution by murder". Now, Balfour wondered, "could such a state of affairs be said to fit in with

the scheme of the Empire?". The agreement, Henry Wilson wrote, was an "abject surrender to murderers". He offered to make a calculation as to the "number of murders that would be necessary in Egypt and India for those countries to achieve independence"⁷⁰. Carson thought that if "you told your Empire in India, in Egypt and all over the world that you have not got the men, the money, the pluck, the inclination and the backing to restore order in a country within twenty miles of your own shore, you may as well begin to abandon the attempt to make British rule prevail throughout the Empire at all"⁷¹.

The point was not lost by either side. When the Egyptian patriot, the National Review wrote, observed Downing Street "surrendering to the man with a gun in Ireland, can we be surprised that he should argue that Force is his only remedy in dealing with British Politicians?". "Funk", it urged, "never pays in the long run"⁷². In India "all the wild men" were "on the warpath, convinced that if they perpetrate enough murders their 'Leaders' will also be invited to 'confer' in Downing Street as to whether the British Raj is to peaceably withdraw from Ireland or to be kicked out.. Egypt is likewise noting the 'negotiations'". Indeed the most serious feature of the Irish treaty, thought the Duke of Northumberland, was its probable effect upon British authority in India and Egypt, where the course of the nationalist agitation was "following the same lines as in Ireland". It was the "First Act, in .. the dissolution of the British Empire"⁷³.

It was, equally, impossible not to notice, wrote a Soviet observer, that the colonial movements as it were "mutually supported each other". The movement in Ireland or India inspired Egypt; while the Egyptian and Irish movements found a response in India⁷⁴. The Nagpur Congress of the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution ~~in~~ in connection with the death, following an extended hunger strike, of the Sinn Fein Lord Mayor of Cork, and supported the Sinn Fein programme, and many of the principles of guerilla war which had found use in Ireland. The I.N.C., indeed, was often described as a 'Sinn Fein movement'. The parallel with Sinn Fein, the Statesman agreed, was "in the minds of all educated India"⁷⁵.

Their objective, it might have been thought, had been conceded in large degree to the Indian nationalists ~~with~~ Montagu's declaration ~~that~~ in the House of Commons in favour of the gradual development of self-governing institutions "with a view to the progressive realization of responsible

government in India as an integral part of the British Empire"; and this proposition was enshrined in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian constitutional reform which was published the following year⁷⁶. The Government of India Act of 1919, however, disappointed many Indians; the Assembly and Council of State which were set up, although both had a majority of elected members, had no control over the Viceroy and his executive, who could, indeed, 'certify' legislation and thus secure its adoption on their own authority if they wished to do so. The Chamber of Princes had a consultative function only. The Imperial government, moreover, was to judge the "time and the measure of each advance" towards fully responsible government⁷⁷.

The hope that the scheme might satisfy nationalist aspirations was, however, effectively frustrated by the adoption at the same time of sedition and conspiracy acts which allowed political trials without jury and arbitrary arrest (the Rowlatt Act of 1919 especially). Above all, the action of General Dyer in firing on an unarmed crowd at Amritsar in April 1919, as a result of which 379 lost their lives and 1200 were wounded, gravely compromised British rule in the eyes of (even formerly loyal) Indians. The reaction of British official circles compounded the offence. When the details of the massacre became public, Dyer was dismissed from his post and barred from future military employment. The Hunter Committee, which investigated the Amritsar and other ~~Indian~~ disturbances^{in Bengal}, concluded that Dyer had been guilty of a "grave error" in ~~ordering~~^{order} his troops to continue firing for as long as he had done. No warning had been given; and the crowd had been defenceless. Less satisfactory to an Indian nationalist was the Committee's view that "in the ordinary case.. notice is properly given to the crowd before they are actually fired upon"; and that had notice been given and been disregarded, "firing would have been justified"⁷⁸. ~~Dyer's~~

Dyer's action, moreover, was defended in the House of Lords, and a public collection was well subscribed. Carson, in the House of Commons, drew attention to the "conspiracy to drive the British out of India and out of Egypt.. to destroy our seapower and drive us out of Asia". The preceding riots at Amritsar, moreover, had been of a serious character: the mob, for instance, had "tried to get hold of the Christian Missionary Society Girls' School", and the "Religious Tract Society's depot was burned"⁷⁹. Yet opposition to Dyer's action, Montagu believed, was "fundamental to a continuance of the British Empire, and vital to the continuation, permanent as I believe

it can be, of the connection between this country and India". Churchill, too, while he shared Carson's view of the "world-wide character of the seditious and revolutionary movement with which we are confronted", nevertheless did not believe that it was "in the interests of the British Empire or of the British Army" to assume responsibility for such actions. It was not only appropriate, it was also in the highest degree expedient to make it "absolutely clear.. that this is not the British way of doing ~~things~~ business"⁸⁰. A change had nevertheless been wrought. Until 1920, it has been noted, the Congress continued to give "pride of place to the loyalty resolution in its proceedings. Its tone was respectful of loyalty, the British people and Parliament. It never expressed any desire to break away from the British Empire", and its demands for a greater degree of civil rights for Indians had been in their capacity as "British citizens". Speeches were frequently of "gushing loyalty and warm attachment to the British throne". Amritsar and its aftermath, together with the terms of the treaty with Turkey in May 1920 (which was offensive to Muslims), brought about a sharp change. The non-co-operation movement was launched at the beginning of August 1920; and in September a special session of the Congress approved and adopted Gandhi's programme⁸¹.

Montagu's original undertaking had in fact owed much to the circumstances of the time, in particular to the need to retain Indian support in the prosecution of the war; and it had been sanctioned by the Cabinet with considerable misgiving. "Constant harping on the theme that we are fighting for ~~the~~ liberty and justice and the rights of peoples to direct their own destinies", complained Montagu in May 1917, together with the reception of the Russian revolution and the position which Indian representatives had assumed in the councils of the Empire, had strengthened the movement for reform and had "created a ferment of ideas by which the Government of India are evidently somewhat alarmed". If reform were rejected, he noted, the moderate element - "such as it is" - would be thrown into the hands of the extremists "and we may well be confronted in India with a second Ireland". A decision to deny reasonable reform would, he thought, be fraught with "grave danger"⁸². The situation in India, Chamberlain ~~xxxx~~ told the Cabinet on 29 June, was "causing grave anxiety". National self-consciousness was developing in India; and the Congress and the Moslem League "could not be

safely ignored"⁸³. An indication that the government favoured at least ultimate self-government for India was necessary, he wrote to Montagu, to "avoid the growth of a most serious and even dangerous movement"⁸⁴. Curzon agreed that the "strongest case for moving at all" was that if the government did "not take charge of the opinion someone else will (a Home Rule movement in India is already active and growing) and there may easily grow up a dissatisfaction that would soon become dangerous"⁸⁵.

Balfour considered, however, that while government policy should be to "increase the share of natives in Indian administration as rapidly and to as great an extent as circumstances will permit", the form of government operating in the self-governing Dominions was "quite inappropriate" for India. He deprecated any "hasty decision to concede to an Oriental country a system of self-government which was appropriate and just in the case of the great dominions of the Empire, but was, in his opinion, quite unsuitable to the Dependency". He favoured no more than a "greater share in local administration (for Indians) under a benevolent, sympathetic and wise suzerainty". Curzon disagreed. The situation "imperatively demanded some advance in the direction of self-government". Action of some sort he thought unavoidable, for "the position was serious; the revolutionary propagandists of the genre of Tilak and Mrs Besant were dangerous, and in the East things were apt to move with the startling rapidity of a prairie fire". A declaration should be made "as impressively as the unique situation demanded". Chamberlain added that the mood in India was one of "alert expectancy". Unless the government made a "timely and satisfactory pronouncement", the situation was "fraught with the gravest of possibilities"⁸⁶.

The decision could not be postponed. The Viceroy reported that the "Extremists were having it all their own way; the Moderates were asking for a lead, and being denied it, were wavering". There was a "serious risk of their throwing in their lot with the agitators", whose demands were increasing daily. The government's declaration, Montagu told the Cabinet, must contain the words "ultimate self-government within the Empire". He was aware of the objections to the term; but it "had become a shibboleth", and could not safely be omitted. Curzon objected that this implied a transfer of responsibility to the ~~Exh~~ Indian people themselves rather earlier than the Cabinet probably intended. For the good of the country, Britain must continue to

rule unless India were to "relapse into chaos", or, he hinted, be "dominated by some other nation less well qualified to guide her destinies"⁸⁷. Montagu's declaration was nevertheless made three days later.

The possible significance of events in Russia, evidently, had not escaped Lord Curzon. Yet the government's own policies were sufficient, it has been suggested, to account for the rapid development of the nationalist movement of 1920-22. Reform came too late to satisfy those for whose benefit it was intended, and its chances of success were seriously diminished by the repressive legislation which accompanied it. Even this, however, represented a concession greater than many in political circles in Britain were prepared to accept. Henry Wilson noted in his diary that Montagu and Chelmsford, the Viceroy, had "set up a Council with a lot of natives on it" and had "lost control"⁸⁸. The government itself became increasingly concerned to counter the "idea, which was prevalent among many people, both in India and at home, that the British raj was doomed, that we were fighting a rearguard action in India, and that India would gradually be handed over to the Indians". On the contrary, declared Churchill, at this time Colonial Secretary, "we must strengthen our position in India". He had supported the reforms at the time, but believed that "opinion would change soon as to the expediency of granting democratic institutions to backward races". A way out might, he thought, be found by extending the system of Native States, "with their influential aristocracies and landed proprietors"⁸⁹.

The "false impression should at once be dissipated", Lloyd George told a Conference of Ministers the following day, that government policy was "ultimately to hand over India to the Indians and surrender British rule in India". It must be made clear that the government had "no intention of leaving India or of allowing British supremacy there to be challenged". Any further extension of self-government in India must depend upon the Indians showing that they were "capable of making proper use of the constitution which that had been granted to them. There must be a master in India.. We were now masters in India, and we should let it be understood that we meant to remain so"⁹⁰. The Viceroy had been informed that no change in the 1919 Act could be considered, in the event of a conference with the non-co-operators; and the House of Commons was told by the Prime Minister that

"under no circumstances or conditions" did the Government "propose to withdraw from, or to impair, the full sovereignty of the King Emperor in India"⁹¹. The Earl of Winterton, Under-Secretary of State at the India Office, later added that ~~while~~ the 1919 Act had not held out "any promise that selfgovernment would be granted automatically on any arbitrary date irrespective of the degree of progress shown"⁹². He did not himself specify the length of the intervening period, but it was implied that it might be a lengthy one. Curzon, indeed, had objected to the inclusion of the expression of "ultimate self-government" into Montagu's original statement of the grounds that to Indians it might suggest a delay of perhaps a generation; whereas the Cabinet "probably contemplated an intervening period that might extend to 500 years"⁹³.

It was, then, perhaps not surprising that ~~xxxx~~ for some time the discontent ~~xxxxxxxx~~ showed little sign of abating. A "very serious situation" existed in India, the Secretary of State for India reported in August 1921. Further risings, he thought, "must be anticipated". There was a danger of a "rebellion of the first magnitude" for which the troops available appeared inadequate. Gandhi's challenge to the government, the Cabinet later agreed, "could not be ignored"⁹⁴. At the beginning of 1922, however, it seemed to Henry Wilson "quite clear" that the Indian situation had "got completely out of Montagu's grip. I am afraid the Empire is gone. Ireland Free State is gone, and India from Montagu's showing is in a very dangerous state"⁹⁵. Lloyd George admitted to the House of Commons that there was "much in the state of India that justified grave concern". The situation was reported to be "anxious and menacing"⁹⁶. The Indian Yearbook declared 1922 to have been "one of the most anxious (years) in the political history of India"; and the New Statesman thought the situation "far more difficult and perhaps far more dangerous than that of 1857"⁹⁷.

The Cabinet reacted in two ways. The Prince of Wales was despatched to India to "arouse the enthusiasm of the masses for the Crown"; or, as he put it himself in a communication to the Cabinet, to "foster and maintain that feeling of mutual understanding and unity" which he ~~thought~~ would "prevail throughout the British Empire", in order that the "future of the British Empire might "fully uphold the fine traditions of its past"⁹⁸. He ~~had been~~ ^{was} met, in fact, by an extensive boycott; and as the Review of Reviews wrote, the demonstrations in his favour could not hide the "stern realities of

the new regime". Thousands of leaders of the non-co-operation movement had been arrested; yet the situation remained "so grave that to comment upon or describe it" was "extremely difficult". The government's congratulations to the Prince, the New Statesman thought, appeared to "pass beyond the limits of reasonable euphemism". The "failire" of the tour was in fact the "most serious symptom that (had) yet appeared" of the extent of Indian disaffection.⁹⁶

The arrest of Gandhi in March 1922 appeared to have a greater effect. It had been carried out, Winterton noted, "after a long period of unrest, characterised by much sporadic lawlessness and by several more serious outbreaks of violence". Since then, the country had become "progressively quieter" and there had been "some improvement.. in the tone of political controversy"¹⁰⁰. The development was noted and welcomed by the Chairman of the Mercantile Bank of India, and ascribed to a "little more resolution in the conduct of her affairs". The country was, he thought, "sound at the core.. if only a reasonable restraint is kept on disturbing elements"¹⁰¹. A report published periodically by the Indian government noted, however, a "recrudescence of anarchical movements" in 1923-4. A section of the Bengal press had been devoted to "promoting the spread of academic bolshevism". The trade union movement, it was considered, was "too much bound up with the occurrence and successful conduct of strikes". Its development in the immediately preceding years was considered "disappointing". Its leaders, in particular, had "not in all cases distinguished between economic and political considerations"¹⁰².

If developments in Ireland and India posed the most serious threat to the Empire, they were by no means the only ones with which the Cabinet had to reckon. Closely associated with the defence of India was the British position in Afghanistan and Persia. In Afghanistan, following the murder of Amir Habibullah on 19 February 1919, in part as a result of his strongly pro-British orientation, his son Amanullah declared himself Amir. British recognition of his accession was not, however, immediately forthcoming. Amanullah reacted by opening relations with Soviet Russia, and declaring Afghanistan to be independent of British suzerainty¹⁰³. The Cabinet considered the "disquieting situation" in the country on 6 May. Curzon reported that the Amir had recently adopted a "truculent attitude", and had issued a proclamation of a "most outrageous nature, stating that both Moslems and Hindus in India were being subjected to abominable treatment by the British administration".

This had followed a statement which had been "tantamount to a declaration of complete independence". The atmosphere was "electrical". The month-long Third Afghan War ensued; and on its conclusion the independence of Afghanistan was recognized and the British annual subsidy was discontinued¹⁰⁴.

The fourth clause of the peace agreement provided for a subsequent Treaty of Friendship. In October 1920 the Amir invited a British delegation to Kabul for negotiations. It had, however, in the meantime been discovered that the Amir had concluded a treaty with Soviet Russia, containing clauses which appeared to the Cabinet "clearly directed against ourselves". The Amir assured the government that Bolshevik consulates would be required to conform to international usage; but he had not, as requested, provided the text of the agreement. In the circumstances, it was argued in the Cabinet, the British delegation might be played off against the Bolshevik, and a subsidy secured from both sides; nor would the lives of its members be safe. Bolshevik consulates near the Indian frontier, it was felt, could "have no other object than the promotion of propaganda in India". But the government must "endeavour to avoid a war with Afghanistan, for which we were prepared neither financially; nor from the point of view of public opinion"¹⁰⁵. Something should be done also, it was added, to offset the influence of the Bolshevik and Turkish Nationalist missions. It was decided to leave the decision to the Government of India; and a delegation was in fact despatched to Kabul. It became known, however, that the Afghan government was about to ratify the treaty with Soviet Russia, which provided for consulates near the Indian frontier, for an annual subsidy and for war materials and munitions. The Cabinet laid the "utmost emphasis" upon the "undesirability of permitting the Afghan government to receive a subsidy from Russia, directed against Indian interests, as well as from India". On the other hand, "in view of our military obligations elsewhere, it might be preferable to tolerate a Russian subsidy for the present rather than incur the risk of the heavy expense of a fresh frontier war". The Government of India was nevertheless informed that the Cabinet still strongly held the view that a "Bolshevik subsidy would in itself be the strongest prima facie evidence of arrangements directed against the British Empire"¹⁰⁶.

Having failed to prevent the signature of the Russo-Afghan Treaty, the Cabinet turned to a consideration of the possibility of offering the Afghan government "sufficient inducement in money and arms to make her throw over the Bolshevik Treaty entirely". The Viceroy of India was informed that

the British representative in Kabul should "naturally regulate his offer of money etc, according to the completeness of Bolshevik elimination". Russia was governed by a Bolshevik government with a "known hostility to the British Empire" and a "known desire to wound what they describe as a capitalist government through the East"¹⁰⁷. The chances of concluding such an agreement, however, which had at one time appeared good, steadily diminished. The Government of India, which had hoped to secure the "exclusion and discomfiture of the Bolsheviks", felt it necessary to fall back on a treaty which would "leave the Afghans free to receive a subsidy and munitions" from them. The outcome was viewed by the Cabinet with "intense dislike"¹⁰⁸.

The British position in Persia appeared to have been secured with the conclusion of the Anglo-Persian Treaty on 9 August 1919. The British government undertook explicitly to "respect absolutely the independence and integrity of Persia". Such a statement was not apparently considered to conflict with subsequent clauses, which provided for the ^{appointment of} British "expert advisers" with "adequate powers" to work in the Persian administration, and of officers and arms for the "establishment and preservation of order in the country and on its frontiers". Control of the Persian customs was envisaged as a means of guaranteeing the repayment of a loan¹⁰⁹. Advances of cash ~~were~~ to be made to the Persian government under the terms of the Agreement, Harmsworth told the House of Commons, "with a view to the establishment in Persia of a Government able to withstand pressure from any quarter". An additional safeguard was that the South Persian Rifles, a force instituted in the middle of the war "for the purpose of maintaining British interests" ~~xxxx~~ ^{were to} remain under British control under the terms of the Agreement¹¹⁰.

The British armed forces in Persia (which amounted to nearly 100,000 men, including those in Mesopotamia, at a cost of nearly half a million pounds weekly¹¹¹), were warned to be "prepared, in the event of the naval command of the Caspian passing to the Bolsheviks, for Bolshevik aggression against Persia from the Caspian, and for an attempt to use Enzeli as a base for propaganda and possibly for serious operations". A "hold front" should be offered; but provisions also made for a safe withdrawal¹¹². There was a danger, Churchill told the Commons, of the "ancient capital of a monarchy like that of Persia being engulfed in the tides of barbarism and.. being swamped and beaten down under the heel of a Bolshevik invasion". British forces could not, however, be maintained there indefinitely¹¹³. It had been

decided on 12 August that they should remain there until the Treaty had been signed. Evacuation would allow the formation of hostile forces on the Persian-Afghan border, "possibly endangering the Persian oilfields"; while the establishment of a Bolshevik Government in Persia would "immediately react ~~upon~~ Afghanistan"¹¹⁴.

At this stage it appeared that the situation had "eased considerably". The Persian Government, it was believed, honestly intended to summon Parliament at an early date "with a view to the ratification of the Anglo-Persian Agreement", which had aroused considerable local hostility. Sir Percy Cox, the British representative, reported that the Agreement was not unpopular "except in certain extremist ~~and~~ interested circles"¹¹⁵. The hope that the Agreement might be ratified was, however, based upon the loyalty of the Prime Minister, Mushir-el-Dowleh. The Cabinet was told on 3 November 1920 that "he had failed us and had resigned". Moreover, while the Bolsheviks were engaged in operations against Wrangel, once he had been defeated the Bolshevik forces would be released and "could be let loose in Persia and (would) involve our forces there in great danger"¹¹⁶. The Treaty was not ratified, and the following spring it was announced that the 1st British forces were "in process of being withdrawn".¹¹⁷ More than two years later the Times reported that it was an "unfortunate but undeniable fact" that the British were not popular in Persia. They had "not yet recovered", the paper thought, from the suspicion aroused by the 1919 Agreement¹¹⁸. Here, as in India, there was no need to refer to Soviet policy or Bolshevik propaganda to explain the unpopularity and lack of success of the Imperial power.

While Egypt had no place in schemes for the defence of India, it was equally possessed by what Balfour called "unrealisable expectations" at the end of the war¹¹⁹. Balfour acknowledged that the "spirit of unrest" had been active in Egypt; and he gave it as the government's view that "the Egyptians, the Egyptian native population", should be associated "in every way we can" with the government of the country. Egypt, however, the Sudan, and the Suez Canal formed an "organic and indissoluble whole"; and neither in Egypt nor in the Sudan was England going to give up any of what Balfour described as "her responsibilities. British supremacy exists, British supremacy is going to be maintained"¹²⁰. Egypt, Lloyd George explained to

an understanding House of Commons, was "not in the position of other nations to whom complete self-determination can be afforded, without reference to any external conditions". The country had the misfortune to be "abnormally placed in reference to the world, and especially in reference to the British Empire". Of the four hundred million inhabitants of the British Empire, more than three hundred million lived to the east of Suez. Egypt thus formed a "highway between the Eastern part of this Empire and the Western part of this Empire"¹²¹.

Within these terms, the Cabinet must nevertheless find it more satisfactory if Egypt were a "friendly and Allied country which was decently governed, and able to stand on its own feet", and able to grant of its own accord a "strategic base at all times, and to place its harbours, railways and other means of communication at the disposal of the British government in peace as well as in war, than if the country were to be kept in subjection by force and "requiring in time of peace a large permanent garrison". The situation should not be allowed to become a "reproduction of that in South and West Ireland", Milner urged; but "it was rapidly moving that way". Many of the middle and semi-educated classes had in the past supported British rule; but it had been the "greatest shock" to him to find on his visit what a change had taken place in this regard, and how strong the spirit of nationalism had become. Milner considered that "if we were to keep any control over the country otherwise than by martial law we must break up the 10% of the more educated classes and get some of them on our side, even if, in order to do so, it was necessary to make some considerable sacrifices". The Egyptians, "who for forty years past we had professed to be training to govern themselves", should be given a chance to do so. Phraseology and face-saving, also, were important aspects of a settlement: the government was dealing with Orientals who were "very clever and potentially very naughty children", but who once convinced of British goodwill would become "very manageable"¹²².

Negotiations took place with Adly Pasha, the Egyptian Prime Minister, in London in the summer of 1921. While the Cabinet was prepared to declare the Protectorate ended, and Egypt an "independent State under a constitutional monarchy", the country should be bound by a "perpetual Treaty and bond of peace, amity and alliance" to Britain. A British military occupa-

tion and a right to the use of aerodromes and harbours was thought necessary "to support Egypt in the defence of her vital interests". A British High Commission was to render what was termed "all possible assistance" to the Egyptian government on diplomatic and foreign policy questions. Financial and Judicial Commissions should be appointed in consultation with the British government, and that government should "at all times enjoy the right of access to the Egyptian Ministries of Justice and of the Interior". No external loans, or foreign officers in the Egyptian army were to be allowed¹²³.

The negotiations - not, perhaps, supprisingly - were unsuccessful; and by November Allenby, who had been sent on a mission to Egypt, sent a telegram from Cairo warning that the decision to refuse Egypt national independence "must entail serious risk of revolution throughout the country and in any case result in complete administrative chaos" and "serious injury to financial and economic interests"¹²⁴. A Conference of Ministers considered the question the following day. There was a danger, Curzon reported, of the "creation of a very serious situation in Egypt"; the government was probably on the verge of a "serious new emergency", which might "strain our available resources to the utmost". It was urged, however, that "if the Government were weak in dealing with the Egyptian situation, they were not fit to run a great Empire". The government's proposals "if anything, might be criticized for going too far"¹²⁵.

By January 1922 the National Review declared that Egypt was in a condition of "seething unrest, verging on revolt". It was officially admitted that the "gravity of the present situation in Egypt" could "not be exaggerated"¹²⁶. The proposal to abolish the Protectorate before a treaty was made was, the Cabinet was told, to "concede to Egypt what we declined to grant to Sinn Fein". The decision might "gravely affect the interests of the British Empire". It was nevertheless "desirable" to "obtain the co-operation of the Egyptians in the Government of the country"¹²⁷. Three questions in particular appeared to be outstanding: and there was much in them that might recall the Government's dealings with India, Afghanistan and Persia: "security for the communications of the British Empire, the defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression, protection of foreign interests in Egypt"¹²⁸. Eventually the protectorate was ended and Egypt was declared an independent country. The Sultan took the title Fuad I.

The agreement, the New Statesman commented, represented a "signal defeat" for the imperialists in the Cabinet¹²⁹.

The British High Commissioner, however, and the British garrison remained in the country, and continued control was asserted over foreign policy¹³⁰. There remained, moreover, an awareness of what Churchill termed, in its various forms in Ireland, Egypt and India, a "world-wide conspiracy against our country"; and the Cabinet at no point lost sight of that near-universal source of sedition and unrest, Bolshevism. Reports were collected by the Foreign Office on the question, and the appointment of an officer, whose particular responsibility it would be to watch and control Bolshevik activities, was actively considered¹³¹. Allenby wrote to the Foreign Office at the beginning of 1920 following a discussion with the officials responsible for advising on matters of public security and the organization of intelligence in Egypt "as to measures necessary to deal with Bolshevism and cognate problems". The appointment of a junior officer attached to Intelligence was, he thought, "essential".¹³² A Mr Ingram of the Alexandria Police Secret Service was recommended; and the Foreign Office informed Allenby that arrangements could be made in Britain to him to "receive training in anti-Bolshevik methods". A further appointment was under consideration, but does not appear to have been made¹³³.

On 18 April 1922, following the government's declaration that it intended to end the protectorate and grant Egypt independence, the British government through its Moscow representative informed the N.K.I.D. that while the protectorate was being ended, Britain nevertheless was maintaining her special rights in Egypt, and would regard any interference in the internal affairs of that country as a hostile act against Great Britain¹³⁴. In March 1923 it was announced in the House of Commons that four leaders of the Egyptian Communist Party had been arrested for organizing a public demonstration. Their headquarters had been raided and papers seized¹³⁵.

Bolshevik propaganda in the colonial world had, in a sense, become a problem to the Cabinet as soon as the Bolshevik revolution had taken place. In December 1917 the Intelligence Bureau of the Department of Information issued a memorandum, which was circulated to the Cabinet, dealing with

the manifesto which the Soviet government had issued 'to all the labouring class Moslems of Russia and the Orient'. The Manifesto, the Bureau considered, was "another indication of the ultimate Bolshevik policy, which is.. a campaign ~~of xxxxxxxx~~.. designed to overthrow the existing order all over the world, as it has ^{already} been overthrown in Russia"¹³⁶. A 'Blue Book' was issued in Moscow in the following year under the auspices of the N.K.I.D.. Its title page read "India to the Indians: Down with Imperialists: Long Live the International". Two copies were forwarded to the Foreign Office from Moscow by Wardrop, who commented that the introduction was a "malicious attack on British rule in India by a person who is obviously ignorant of the rudiments of the subject". Translations were being prepared into European and Asiatic languages¹³⁷.

In March 1919 it was reported that The Hague had become the chief centre for Bolshevik propaganda in the East. "Very large sums" were being spent in propaganda directed at India, Persia "and especially Egypt". Recent troubles there had been "almost certainly originated by them"¹³⁸. At the beginning of 1920 the Times warned: "The menace of Bolshevism hangs over Asia and Europe". The "road to the East", it thought, "may very well be through India". Bolshevism was "threatening our relations with Persia, and is almost at the gates of India itself". Paul Dukes explained that "for a year after the Bolshevik revolution little attention was paid to the East, the Bolsheviks being so confident of an immediate Western revolution. But in proportion as their expectations sank in the West their hopes in the East rose, and they are now concentrated entirely on Asia"¹³⁹.

The Bolsheviks, Churchill told a Dundee audience, would "do their utmost to stir up rebellion and sedition and fan the flames of class hatred in every other land, and especially in the Eastern world, where we in Britain have such great interests"¹⁴⁰. Evidence of conspiracy began to accumulate in the Foreign Office, especially following the Second Congress of the Communist International (which the government had discussed engaging Pinkerton's detective agency to report¹⁴¹). A report from Copenhagen stated that the Communist International was "making huge preparations to develop revolutionary propaganda in (the) Near and Far East"; a "general revolt in the East next autumn" was planned, to "hurry on the World

Revolution, for which the chiefs of Soviet Russia have still great hopes"¹⁴². A further report stated that a secret treaty had been signed recently at the Foreign Ministry in Moscow by representatives from Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, India and other Eastern countries, the "main points" of which were that England was to be "attacked through India" and that the national movement in India was to be assisted by all¹⁴³. Not all such reports were taken seriously; and a Foreign Office minute on a report of Lenin's speech to the Second Comintern Congress, in which he had claimed the support of 70% of the world's population, noted drily that "if Lenin really represented 70% of the population of the world, his speech would be magnificent"¹⁴⁴. Leeper minuted, however, on 6 July 1920 that the reports of 'huge preparations' for propaganda and of a 'general revolt' planned for the East that autumn appeared to him "reliable". They confirmed "several other reports we have lately had from Moscow", and demonstrated that "the plans in the East are an essential part of the Bolshevik programme"¹⁴⁵.

In the period, then, in which the Trade Agreement with Soviet Russia was being negotiated, and in the first year or so of its operation, powerful and often - it appeared to official circles - mutually related waves of unrest swept British colonial possessions in spheres of influence in the Middle East and Asia. It had been suggested above that in the cases of Afghanistan, Egypt and Persia, British relations with Soviet Russia were directly affected. There was much, also, in the character of the anti-colonial movement in the two main storm centres, Ireland and India, which appeared to establish the agency of Soviet policy or propaganda (or, indeed, both).

For some years past and at the present, the Chief Secretary for Ireland informed the Commons, "Sinn Fein extremists and their Soviet colleagues in Ireland - there is Sovietism in a marked degree in Ireland - have conspired to smash the Empire". Sinn Fein policy was "watched by sinister eyes in Great Britain, in Egypt, in India and throughout the world". Its success would mean the "breakup of the Empire and of our civilisation"¹⁴⁶. The National Review had no doubt that Sinn Fein was the "advance guard of the international conspiracy to destroy the British Empire, of which Moscow is the headquarters". It was, the Duke of Northum-

between Bolshevism and Sinn Fein" was published. It contained a document "captured in Dublin", containing a draft treaty between the Soviet Russian and the Irish Republican governments, and a number of commentaries on it. The treaty, drafted in June 1920, was a rather inoffensive document, which proposed mutual recognition, economic co-operation, and the prevention of the transport of military supplies intended for use against the other side. Among other things, it entrusted the accredited Irish representative in Russia with the "interests of the Roman Catholic Church" within the territory of the RSFSR¹⁵⁴. Nor did the Republican government appear to undertake more than that the treaty should be "very carefully considered". Its preamble did, however, include as an object the "liberation of all people from imperialistic exploitation and aggression"; and a memorandum written by a Sinn Fein MP, Dr McCartan, clearly envisaged the despatch of a Mission to Russia under his leadership¹⁵⁵. It was also his view that the treaty might be interpreted to provide for the training of Irish Republican naval and military forces in Soviet Russia. The House of Commons was informed that he was, in fact, at that time in Russia, acting as a representative of the Sinn Fein Republic¹⁵⁶. Subsequent intelligence reports stated that the Irish Communist Party had received money from the Comintern¹⁵⁷.

India, Montagu declared, was "notoriously the object of Bolshevik propaganda"; although, in July 1920, there was no reason to expect an armed Bolshevik attack on the north-western frontiers of India¹⁵⁸. He had "no reason to think that the well-known desire of the Bolsheviks to spread their doctrines in India" had "met with any success". The War Office, however, in a statement released on 15 January 1920, reported the progress of a party of Bolsheviks and Turks with aeroplane parts, petrol and a wireless set in the direction of Kabul. A "large number of propaganda schools" had been opened up in Tashkent, where Oriental languages would be taught and whence agents would be despatched to India, China and the Muslim countries. The Tashkent Soviet, at a recent meeting, was believed to have "determined to concentrate efforts first on India" and it was intended to open up propaganda schools there shortly¹⁵⁹. The Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, opening the session of the Legislative Council, declared the chief menace before them to be Bolshevik propaganda and secret agitation, and announced that a special staff had been set up to deal with it¹⁶⁰.

The Bolsheviks, the House of Commons was told, were "working against us all over the world". Lenin was reported to have "assured the Indian revolutionaries that the whole of the Russian proletarians were watching with sympathy their attempt to establish a free India" (an objective to which, Kenworthy retorted, under the terms of the 1919 Act the British government was officially committed¹⁶¹). A writer in the Review of Reviews, discussing the 'Bolshevist menace to India', could "confidently state that the disruptive influences at present to be observed in the countries of the Middle East assuredly (had) their origins in Bolshevik Russia". The headquarters were unquestionably centred in Afghanistan (while Bolshevik efforts were naturally deprecated by "thoughtful Afghans"). The agreement with the Afghan government had "undoubtedly been entered into with a view to the destruction of the last barrier which divides the Bolshevik power from the invasion of India"¹⁶².

Accusations directed at Bolshevik propaganda were often distinguished more for their vigour~~EMEREX~~ than their accuracy: Lt Col Hall, for instance, in calling attention to the statements of a Mr 'Linovieff' had presumably in mind either Litvinov or Zinoviev¹⁶³. The government, however, was evidently disposed to take them seriously. The Russian thousand-rouble note, the House of Commons was told, had 'Workers of the world, unite' printed in nine languages on its face, including English. Russian rouble notes were accordingly declared illegal in India. The restriction would be lifted if there was "evidence of a cessation of Bolshevik propaganda in India"¹⁶⁴. Rouble notes to a total value of two and a half million pounds were surrendered, a sum which the Times found "both surprising and significant". A "continuance of attempts at Bolshevik propaganda in the Dependency" must be expected¹⁶⁵.

Various other forms of propaganda were reported. Bolshevik leaflets, it appeared, had been inserted into copies of the Gospels (printed, moreover, in Chinese); and a news service was provided for Indian newspapers, the response to which was stated to have been "remarkable". Bolshevik financial support, the Times continued, could not be ascertained, but it was "certain that Red propagandists take every advantage of Indian susceptibilities"¹⁶⁶.

Montagu announced that the terms of the Trade Agreement had been communicated to the Government of India. A special organization had been set up there, he added, to deal with Bolshevik activities in India. It would not be prudent to disclose the details; but "every step necessary to checkmate them had been taken, I trust successfully"¹⁶⁷. A year later he informed the House that Bolshevik propaganda had "contributed something" to the unrest in India. A "splendid organization", however, had been built up against this menace¹⁶⁸.

Writing to the Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office in February 1920, Curzon expressed his full awareness of the "danger of subversive doctrines being spread by Bolshevik agents", and his strong conviction that "no efforts should be spared to check them by all the means at the disposal of HMG"¹⁶⁹. The Viceroy had, in fact, informed him that officers had already been specially appointed for the purpose of counter-propaganda, the co-ordination of internal and external intelligence, and the organization of measures to prevent the ingress of Bolshevik emissaries¹⁶⁹. A more detailed statement of the 'Bolshevik situation.. and of the precautionary measures taken by the Government of India up to the end of January 1920' was received in March. A Special Bureau of Information had been set up under Lt. Col. W.F.T. O'Connor, with a staff of two. Their first direct action had been the banning of rouble notes (on 6 December 1919); and a surveillance had been undertaken of the frontiers and the ports. The Bureau issued a 'Weekly Report' from the beginning of 1920, which the Foreign Office received¹⁷⁰.

No "actual avowed Bolshevik agents" had been detected by the following October, the Viceroy informed London; but some people were under observation who were known to be sympathetic to Bolshevism. Their number was "constantly increasing", and many of them were connected with other forms of agitation such as strikes, peasants' movements and so on, since the Bolshevik movement in the East was "not for the moment mainly Communist but (used) for its purpose every form of anti-British agitation". Precautionary measures included extra vigilance on the part of frontier officials, the "appointment of officers on special duty in most provinces to investigate, report on, and hinder (the) spread of Bolshevism", and the proscription of

"undesirable papers" such as the Herald. The surveillance and detention of refugees had also been undertaken, and press and other written propaganda¹⁷¹. An outline of 'precautionary measures' which was compiled at the end of the year added further details: the movement of jewels was closely watched, and anti-Bolshevik fiction was "encouraged". The production of suitable films was under consideration, but over-energetic measures, it was thought, might arouse an "unhealthy interest in the question in quarters where little or nothing may be known regarding it"¹⁷².

Ever since the Russian government had fallen into the hands of those who were the exponents of the "ruin-producing doctrines of Bolshevism", Montagu declared, India had been the "object of their propaganda". It offered a means, he supposed, of striking a blow at what was described as the "greatest capitalist institution in the world". India was not a fertile soil for such propaganda, whether directed through consulates in Afghanistan or schools in Moscow. The belief existed, however, which he hastened to add was a "very mistaken" one, that a retreat from India was contemplated by the government; and Bolshevik propaganda had undoubtedly made a further contribution¹⁷³.

While the Special Bureau of Information was disbanded in India, at the end of 1920, this did "not, however, involve any relaxation of the watch on Bolshevik movements in India", the Government of India made clear. An officer of the Foreign and Political Department had been appointed to carry on the duties which the Bureau had undertaken¹⁷⁴. An Inter-Departmental Committee on 'Bolshevism as a menace to the British Empire', which met at the Foreign Office in July 1921, agreed in its Report that there was "no question of the essential hostility of the Soviet Government towards the British Empire"¹⁷⁵. A paper on 'Bolshevik Intrigue' circulated to the Cabinet by Montagu concluded that India still formed the "main objective of Bolshevik foreign policy". Every possible medium was being used to damage British interests in India and throughout the East, and to bring about a "combined effort converging on India". The general effect of these activities, it was considered, had been to bring about a situation "actually dangerous to the safety of the Empire", requiring "serious steps to be taken to counteract their "hostile influence"¹⁷⁶.

Further measures, therefore, were taken when an upsurge of Bolshevik propaganda was detected towards the end of 1922, in connection with the Fourth Congress of the Communist International¹⁷⁷. The Workers Weekly was banned in India, since, it was explained, it had "contained writings of an Indian revolutionary which (were) seditious in India"¹⁷⁸; and a trial was instituted in the summer of 1923 at which Usmani and other Indians who had received training in Soviet Russia were charged with conspiracy¹⁷⁹.

However little evidence was in fact found to connect the Bolsheviks with unrest in India, the Government in Britain and in India was evidently obliged to take the threat seriously, in circumstances of popular disaffection unparalleled since the Mutiny. There were many, moreover, who agreed with the National Review that the anti-colonial movements in India, Egypt and Ireland were something more than what they seemed: that they were part, in fact, of a "much greater world-wide Movement which has its centre in Moscow and is, in fact, the Revolutionary Government of the World"¹⁸⁰. The Times criticized the government for "weakly trying to buy off" the Bolshevik intrigues in India and Afghanistan through the conclusion of the Trade Agreement¹⁸¹. It is difficult to see, however, that the government had any alternative, once the Army had returned to its peacetime footing. In October 1918 the strength of the Army stood at four million men; a year later the total was hardly more than a million; and a year later still, it stood at less than half a million. In 1922, the Army's strength stood at 217,477¹⁸². The attack on public expenditure of the same year found even these figures excessive. Geddes' Committee recommended a further reduction of 54,000 men in February 1922¹⁸³. The "only method of effecting savings on a ^{considerable} ~~large~~ scale", declared the Draft Resolutions on Economy approved by the Cabinet in December 1920, "is in the War Departments". Military expenditure should be limited to the minimum "compatible with the fulfilment of our Imperial obligations and national safety"¹⁸⁴.

These objectives proved difficult to reconcile. Considering military expenditure in February 1920, the Finance Committee of the Cabinet found that expenditure "appeared on the face of it excessive".

Yet the number of troops available was already "quite inadequate to resist any serious attacks by the Bolsheviks" in Persia or elsewhere¹⁸⁵. Wilson complained to the Cabinet that he had "not enough troops to carry out the Cabinet policy in Ireland, Constantinople, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Persia, not to mention England, Egypt and India"¹⁸⁶. Criticism of the government's military spending was becoming "every day more insistent, particularly from the Government's own supporters". Yet not the least obstacle to reducing military expenditure to its pre-war level was the fact that, as Churchill noted, British responsibilities had in fact "considerably increased", especially "in regard to Ireland and the East"¹⁸⁷. No further reductions beyond those then proposed, Horne told the House of Commons in March 1922, could be contemplated in view of the "disturbed condition of many of the great regions in which the British Empire is especially interested". As things stood, only two Divisions could proceed overseas in an emergency¹⁸⁸.

Labour and Liberal spokesmen found the reductions in military spending proposed by the Geddes Committee "quite inadequate". Replying to them, Horne noted that the Army had always been based upon what were considered to be the needs of the Empire; and these were not less than they had been before the War, but, on the contrary, "greater than ever they were". The world was in a "more unrestful condition"; there were "difficulties" in many parts of the world which made it necessary to see that the security of the Empire was preserved. Harmsworth was more specific. A Republic might be declared in Southern Ireland; independence might be declared in Egypt; a mutiny might take place in India. The whole Empire was in a "state approaching upheaval"¹⁸⁹. The government naturally wished to limit Soviet revolutionary propaganda in these areas. No more effective means of doing so, however, appeared to exist than by attempting to use as leverage the undertakings which had been given by the Soviet government under the terms of the Trade Agreement; and a move was accordingly made in this direction.

On 5 August the Cabinet agreed that sufficient use had not been made of the terms of the Russian Trade Agreement to prevent Russian hostility and anti-British propaganda in Afghanistan and elsewhere". It was agreed that the Prime Minister should make representations to the head of the Russian Trade Delegation; and he was to be supplied by the Secretary of State with

details of breaches of the Agreement (the Foreign Office was maintaining a series of files dealing with 'Violations of the Trade Agreement')¹⁹⁰. There was 'strong evidence of bad faith on the part of the Bolsheviks in carrying out the conditions of the Trade Agreement'¹⁹¹. Two days later the Cabinet was told that the material would be circulated¹⁹². On 19 August a draft Note to the Soviet Government was circulated by the Secretary of State for India, setting forth "numerous breaches of the Russian Trade Agreement by the Soviet Government". It was agreed that it should be used as the basis of a despatch to be prepared by the Foreign Secretary, to be approved beforehand by the Prime Minister. It should contain instances of breaches of the Agreement and press for explanations, and demand that such infringements should cease. It should however "stop short of an actual threat of cancellation of the Trade Agreement, which should at this stage be held in reserve"¹⁹³.

The British note of 7 September was handed to Chicherin on 15 September. It drew attention to the failure of the Soviet government to give effect to the obligations laid upon it by the Trade Agreement¹⁹⁴. The "more flagrant violations" only were included, based on "irrefutable" evidence. A reply was requested without delay. Hostile activities, upon the cessation of which the successful working of the Trade Agreement depended, "still continued unabated". The Communist International played a large part in the propagation of subversive principles; and one of its "foremost aims" was to "undermine British institutions, particularly in the East". The essentially subversive character of its aims was clear; as was the "close association", if not absolute identity of the Soviet government with it.

There was evidence "continued intrigue with Indian revolutionaries in Europe". Among other objectionable activities, the Soviet government had been "trying to persuade a well-known Indian anarchist, Dr Hafiz, who (had) been studying **THE MANUFACTURE OF** bombs in Vienna, to proceed to Afghanistan to supply a bomb depot on the borders of India in order to facilitate their importation into India". He had now undertaken the task of "manufacturing smokeless powder in Kabul". In Persia, the government declared that it had the strongest reasons for considering that Soviet policy was directed "principally against British interests", Rothstein, the Soviet representative

in Teheran (and a former member of the Russian Trading Delegation in Britain) was believed to be influencing Persian Members of Parliament and "other Persians of good standing" against the British government. The "obnoxious work" of the Tashkent propaganda centre had not ceased. In Turkey, the government thought itself in possession of the "real motives" for the Soviet government's support of and provision of material assistance to the Nationalists. The "most serious charge of all", however, was in connection with Afghanistan, where the Russo-Afghan Treaty provided for a subsidy, a telegraph line, and for consulates for the location of which ~~commercial~~ grounds had been professed but which were regarded rather as "prospective centres of propaganda". The Soviet aim was to secure the formation of a "powerful united Moslem movement which would deal the final blow against the power of capital and destroy the colonial system upon which the power of West European capital rests". The government asked for an assurance that the "constant flow of inflammatory invective" and "actual hostile activities by (Soviet) agents", which constituted breaches of the Trade Agreement, should cease forthwith¹⁹⁵.

The Soviet reply to what Lloyd George rightly termed in the House of Commons a "very stern message" was less than forthcoming. Berzin, the Soviet representative in Britain, submitted an 'interim reply' on 26 September, which noted that many of the charges in the British note would "not bear even the most superficial examination"¹⁹⁶. Litvinov's formal reply was handed to Hodgson in Moscow the following day, and forwarded by him to London. It was at once apparent, said Litvinov, that the accusations were either groundless, or based upon ~~false~~ ^{also} information or forged documents¹⁹⁷. He had nevertheless considered them carefully. It was no more possible to identify the Third International with the Soviet government, on the basis of the location of its headquarters in Moscow, where alone freedom to propagate communist ideas existed, and of the membership of its executive of some members of the Soviet government, than to identify the Second International in Brussels with the Belgian or the British governments, two former ministers of which were on the executive of that body. Only five ~~Russians~~ were among the thirty-one members of the Third International's executive; and three of these were not members of the Soviet government¹⁹⁸.

Stalin and Eliave had no relations with the International, and

and neither they nor Karakhan had delivered the reports which had been ascribed to them in the British note. Nourteva likewise had had nothing to do with the International; and in June 1921, when he had supposedly been giving a speech, he had been in fact for that (and the three preceding) months in prison. Lenin had not delivered a speech on 8 June as stated; nor had the phrases attributed to him occurred in his speeches at other times, which had concerned completely different topics. ~~There~~ No school of revolutionary propaganda and the training of Indian emissaries existed in Tashkent; and no relations existed with Dr Hafiz and his smokeless powder factory. Strict instructions had, in fact, been sent to the Soviet diplomatic representatives in the East, instructing them to refrain from anti-British propaganda (a copy of the instructions which had been sent to the Soviet representative in Kabul had, indeed, been communicated to the Prime Minister by the Soviet representative in Britain, and circulated to the Cabinet¹⁹⁹).

In what way, Litvinov continued, could the assistance given openly to the Afghan government in accordance with a treaty, the terms of which had been communicated to the British government, be considered an anti-British action? The Soviet government expressed its great respect for the independence of the countries of the East, and had surrendered all the privileges and concessions in this regard which the Tsarist government had obtained by force. Material and financial assistance had in some cases been offered to these countries, but this was in order to compensate for the inequity of their former relationship with Tsarist Russia²⁰⁰.

The facts upon which the British note had been based, Montagu wrote in a note circulated to the Cabinet, had been collected by his officers at the India Office, and could be "fully substantiated"²⁰¹. Hodgson, however, wrote from Moscow pointing out a number of weaknesses in the British note. The Third Congress of the Communist International had opened on 22 June, and it was therefore (to say the least) unlikely that Lenin had addressed it on 8 June; although the speech which he had made on 5 July did contain passages "reminiscent" of those which had been quoted. The reports supposedly given to the Congress on 1, 5 and 20 June were open to the same objection. Nourteva had indeed been in prison since March of that year, and it was "impossible" for him to have made the speech which had been cited²⁰².

Hodgson wrote to Gregory on 17 October and suggested that there was in fact "no evidence ~~that~~ to the effect that the (Soviet) Government is wilfully evading its obligations". Those who were hostile to the government had ~~in fact~~ been surprised by the British note. Lenin's utterances, he thought, however indiscreet, were considerably less exceptionable than Churchill's remark to the effect that Lenin and Trotsky were "living on the jewels they stole from the women they murdered"²⁰³.

Curzon learned to his consternation that the Foreign Office could substantiate only two or possibly three of the charges; and that there existed no independent evidence, and certainly no quotable evidence, in support of the rest of the government's case. He had been advised to reply briefly, "reasserting the truth of our charges, without however producing any evidence (because we have not got it)". He declared himself "positively appalled at these suggestions and indeed at the entire history of this case". A department committee had been collecting and assessing evidence for months, and a document had been issued, asserting the "irrefutable and indisputable" authenticity of the government's charges. Indeed he had "grave doubts" whether a reply of any kind was possible; in which case there would be "nothing left for me but to bear the odium of having made public charges which I cannot sustain". Those who had led him thus far, he thought, should attempt to extricate him as best they could. He regarded the position "with dismay"²⁰⁴.

A reply was eventually drafted. Silence in answer to such a challenge, Curzon noted in a minute, "would be held to imply acceptance of the charge, or at least inability to meet it"²⁰⁵. The British reply, which was communicated to Hodgson on 2 November 1921, declared that the charges in the earlier note had been made only after a "prolonged and careful investigation in each case". It was "necessarily impossible in many cases", however, to specify the source from which the information had derived. The speech by Lenin which had been referred to had been delivered in fact on 5 June. Litvinov's attempt to dissociate the Soviet government from the Third International was impossible to accept: this was a familiar stratagem which had "ceased to beguile". The government had no doubt as to the authenticity of the reported statements of Stalin and ~~Kamenev~~ Elieva; nor did it accept the denial of connections with Indian revolutionaries, or of Roth-

stein's propagandist activities in Teheran. The Soviet government had continued to print propaganda in the languages of the East. The British government had, it declared, "consistently and faithfully" conformed to the conditions of the Trade Agreement. A "similar degree of loyalty" was insisted upon on the part of the Soviet government²⁰⁶.

The correspondence, clearly, was getting nowhere. The government, Lloyd George told the House of Commons in February 1922, had not been satisfied with the Soviet reply to their reaffirmation of the truth of their original charges. It was, ~~however~~ ^{however}, "looking to the opportunity afforded by the Genoa Conference for establishing a more definite and satisfactory understanding"²⁰⁷. Before discussing the new attempt to 'solve the Russian problem' which this remark presaged, the course of early Soviet foreign policy, and in particular of relations with the countries of the East, should be considered.

- 1 Trade Agreement between H.M.G. and the RSFSR, Parliamentary Papers 1921 Cmd 1207 Preamble (a)
- 2 Cabinet Minutes 14 March 1921, Cab 13(21)1, Cab 23/24
- 3 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139 col 1696 17 March 1921
- 4 Klyuchnikov i Sabanin ~~Vol~~ Vol iii Section i document 57 pp98-102, 16 March 1921 (slightly abbreviated) p98. Horne's letter is reprinted also in ~~Anglo~~-Sovetskiye Otnosheniya: Noty i Dokumenty (Moscow 1927) pp8-11; but is not contained in DVPSSSR Vol iv.
- 5 Klyuchnikov i Sabanin pp99,100
- 6 Klyuchnikov i Sabanin pp100-1
- 7 Cabinet Minutes 14 March 1921, Cab 13(21)1, Cab ~~22~~23/24
- 8 Yusupov, I.A.: Ustanovlenie i Razvitie Sovetsko-Iranskykh Otnoshenii (Tashkent 1969) p86
- 9 Lord d'Abernon: An Ambassador of Peace (London 1929-30, 3 vols) i 19-22,
- 10 Cabinet Minutes 25 July 1919, WC 599(3), Cab 23/11; LloydGeorge telegram to Washington, 17 July 1918, cited Ullman: Intervention and the War p221
- 11 Cabinet Minutes 25 September 1919, WC 624A, Cab 23/15
- 12 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 col 723, 17 November 1919
- 13 Conference of Ministers 12 November 1919, Cab 18(19) Appendix iii (1), Cab 23/18
- 14 Wardrop to Curzon, 2 received ~~5~~ October 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 453 pp 575,576
- 15 Wardrop to Curzon 12 received 14 October 1919, DBFP Vol iii No 472 p594
- 16 Wardrop to Curzon 27 December 1919 received 4 January 1920 DBFP Vol iii No 622 p741,742, and note 2 p741-2
- 17 Wardrop to Curzon 6 received 8 January 1920, DBFP Vol iii No 631 pp747-8
- 18 Teheran to London, 6 received 7 January 1920, DBFP Vol iii No 635 note 3 p751
- 19 Note prepared by the British Delegation, Paris 12 January 1920, DBFP Vol ii No 77 Section 2 p92~~15~~5, document 2 p926,7
- 20 Times 5 January 1920
- 21 Lord Hardinge to Sir W. Goode (Paris), 13 February 1920, DBFP Vol xi1 No 500 p562

- 22 Callwell: Wilson ii 221,222, entry for 12 January 1920
- 23 Conference of Ministers, Paris 16 January 1920, S-10, Cab 23/35
- 24 Conference of Ministers, Paris 18 January 1920, S-11(4), Cab 23/35
- 25 F.O. 371.4032,179080, 19 January. Georgia and Azerbaidjan had been granted de facto recognition on 10 January 1920 (DBFP Vol xii No 500, p559 note)
- 26 Curzon to Wardrop 3 March 1919, DBFP Vol xii No 512 p572
- 27 Curzon to Wardrop 27 April 1919, DBFP Vol xii No 547 p599
- 28 Curzon to Colonel Stokes, DBFP Vol xii No 642, 15 December 1920,p659
- 29 Colonel Stokes to Curzon, 20 April 1921 DBFP Vol xii No 662 p6278
- 30 Cabinet Minutes 21 May 1920, Cab 30(20)3, Cab 23/21
- 31 Conference of Ministers, 10 Downing Street, 28 May 1920, Cab 33(20),Cab 23/21
- 32 Curzon memorandum, 'Negotiations with M.Krassin', Cabinet Paper C.P. 1350, Cab 24/106, 27 May 1920
- 33 see above chapter 4 passim
- 34 Cabinet minutes 7 June 1920, Cab 33(20)5, Cab 23/21
- 35 Cabinet Minutes 22 December 1920, Cab 75(20)2, Cab 23/23
- 36 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139 col 2336, 22 March 1921
- 37 National Review Vol 77 April 1921 pl71
- 38 Curzon memorandum, 14 November 1920, 'The Russian Trade Negotiations', Cabinet Paper C.P. 2099, Cab 24/114
- 39 Leeper minute, 23 April 1921, on F.O. 371.6854.N4823, 20 April 1921
- 40 Mukherjee, S.N., St Antony's Papers 18: South Asian Affairs 2 (London 1966), introduction
- 41 Lloyd George: War Memoirs ii 2005
- 42 Lloyd George: Truth about the Peace Treaties ii 755
- 43 Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, (Montagu-Chelmsford Report) Parliamentary Papers 1918 Cmd 9109
- 44 Cabinet Minutes 23 October 1917, WC 255A(1), Cab 23/23
- 45 Socialist Review Vol 16 No 90 July-September 1919 p219
- 46 New Statesman 8 November 1919 pl50
- 47 Callwell: Wilson ii 219, 182
- 48 A Conference of Ministers took place on 24 November 1921, for instance, which dealt with the status of Wei-hai-Wei, the British treaty port in China. Curzon recalled a meeting at the Admiralty which he had attended,

which had discussed the same question. The matter had been under discussion for half-an-hour when the Duke of Devonshire asked where the place was. No use had been made of the port other than as a sanatorium, Curzon explained because Balfour, in "entire ignorance" and believing the place to be surrounded by mountains, had given an undertaking that a railway would not be built. "At this point", Jones recalled, "the P.M. got up and wandered about looking for an atlas". Churchill nevertheless wondered "why should we melt down the moral capital collected by our forebears to please a lot of pacifists". "In the interests of a lot of decrepit mandarins", added Curzon (Jones: Whitehall Diary i 181)

49 Times 18 November 1920

50 Curzon, Times 5 May 1923. The Chanak incident is considered in D. Walder: Chanak (London 1969)

51 Parliamentary Papers 1918, Cmd 9035; Amery, L.S.: My Political Life Vol ii (London 1953) p186

52 Parliamentary Papers 1921, Cmd 1474, resolution v

53 Amery: My Political Life ii 207

54 Thomson, D: ~~Britain~~ ^{England} in the Twentieth Century (Harmondsworth 1965) p120

55 Amery: My Political Life ii 277

56 Parliamentary Debates Vol 140 col 1553 18 April 1921, and Vol 151 col 2367 16 March 1922

57 Parliamentary Debates Vol 154 col 525, 22 March 1922; Amery ii 277
Thomson op.cit.105

58 Parliamentary Debates Vol 138 col 83, 16 February 1921

59 Imperial Conference (Agenda) Committee, 3 May 1921, Cabinet Paper C.P. 218 (23), Cab 24/160

60 1921 Imperial Conference proceedings, 6th meeting 24 June 1921, Cab 32/2 part 1 p7,8,17

61 Cabinet Minutes 9 May 1923 Cab 25(23)3, Cab 23/45

62 Curzon, memorandum for a speech to the Imperial Conference, F.O. 371. 9373.N8795, 8 November 1923

63 1923 Imperial Conference proceedings, Cab 32/9, 5th meeting ppl6-17,20

64 cited in Keith, A.B.: Speeches and Documents on the British Dominions 1918-1931 (Oxford 1932; 1966 ed.) p318

65 Parliamentary Debates Vol 136 col 536, 15 December 1920

- 66 Cabinet Minutes 14 July 1917, WC 186 (1)^{Cab 23/3}, and 21 November 1918, WC 505 (11), Cab 23/8
- 67 Cabinet Minutes 14 May 1919, WC 567A(1), Cab 23/15
- 68 Cabinet Minutes 6 December 1921, Cab 90(21)1, Cab 23/27
- 69 Cabinet Minutes 5 April 1922 Cab 23(22)1, Cab 23/30; and 16 May 1922 Cab 27(22)3, Cab 23/30
- 70 cited in A.P. Thornton: The Imperial Idea and its Enemies (London 1959, 1966 ed) p185,186; Wallwell: Wilsonii 300
- 71 House of Lords Debates 14 December 1921, cited in Beloff, M: Imperial Sunset i: Britain's Liberal Empire 1897-1921 (London 1969) p315
- 72 National Review Vol 79 March 1922 p33, and Vol 78 December 1921 p465
- 73 National Review Vol 78 December 1921 p465-6; and Vol 79 January 1922 p618.
- 74 Vestnik NKID No 7-8 1921, 1 October 1921 p28
- 75 ibid; New Statesman 17 December 1921 p305. The unrest in India had been stimulated by the "recent turn of events in Egypt and by the victories of Sinn Fein" (18 September 1920 p638). It did, however, agree that when Britain entered the war in order to uphold the right of all peoples to govern themselves, and when the Russian revolutionaries raised the flag of 'self-determination', it "became clear that we could no longer damp down with safety the demand for self-government or Home Rule in India" (13 July 1918 p285).
- 76 Montagu's declaration was made in the House of Commons on 20 August 1917; the Montagu-Chelmsford Report is in Parliamentary Papers 1918 Cd 9109
- 77 Hancock, W.K.: Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs i: Problems of Nationality 1918-1936 (London 1937) 169
- 78 Hunter Committee Report on the Punjab Disturbances, Parliamentary Papers 1920 Cmd 681 pp29-30. Dyer had expressed his intention of creating a "moral effect" throughout the Punjab; but the Committee warned that his action was as "likely as not to produce the opposite result to that intended" (ibid).
- 79 Parliamentary Debates Vol 131 col 1718, 8 July 1920, Carson; and col 1759, Hicks.
- 80 Parliamentary Debates Vol 131 cols 1711, 1728, 1730, 8 July 1920
- 81 Mehrotra, S.R.: India and the Commonwealth 1885-1929 (London 1965) ppl11-4

- 82 Montagu, memorandum 22 May 1917, Cabinet Paper G.T. 822, Cab 24/14
- 83 Cabinet Minutes 29 June 1917, WC 172(13), Cab 23/3. A "large section of educated men", he continued, were demanding a greater share in the administration of the country; and while the "wiser and more moderate" members realized that "progress must be gradual", "even the most loyal" had made it clear that in the absence of a declaration by the Government in favour of self-government in principle, "the Moderate Party would either have to efface themselves or join the extremists". The government should, he thought, declare itself in favour of the "gradual development of free institutions in India with a view to ultimate self-government within the Empire". Immediate self-government was however "impossible", and agitation for it "mischievous".
- 84 Chamberlain to Montagu, 8 August 1917, G.T. 1664, in WC 214^{14 August 1917} Appendix i Cab 23/3
- 85 Curzon memorandum, 'Indian Reforms', 27 June 1917, in Curzon Collection India Office Library Mss Eur F 111, Vol 438. Correspondence with Montagu and Chelmsford on Indian reform is in ibid Vol 439.
- 86 Cabinet Minutes 5 July 1917, WC 176(13), Cab 23/3
- 87 Cabinet Minutes 14 August 1917, WC 214(11) Cab 23/3
- 88 Callwell: Wilson ii 277, entry for 11 January 1921
- 89 Conference of Ministers 9 February 1922, Cab 12(22) Appendix i, Cab 23/29
- 90 Conference of Ministers 10 February 1922, ibid Appendix iii
- 91 Conference of Ministers 20 December 1921, Cab 93(21) Appendix ii, Cab 23/27; Parliamentary Debates Vol 150 col 963 14 February 1922
- 92 Parliamentary Debates Vol 165 col 746, 14 June 1923
- 93 Cabinet Minutes 14 August 1917, WC 214(11), Cab 23/3
- 94 Cabinet Minutes 25 August 1921, Cab 72(21)2, Cab 23/26; Cabinet Minutes 12 October 1921, Cab 78(21)1, Cab 23/27
- 95 Callwell: Wilson ii 320, entry for 11 January 1922
- 96 Parliamentary Debates Vol 150 col 955, 867, 14 February 1922
- 97 Indian Yearbook (ed. Sir S. Reed) 1923 ed. pl; New Statesman 11 February 1922 p522
- 98 Edwardes, M: Raj (1967; 1969 ed.) p187; Cabinet Minutes 23 January 1922, Cab 3(22)1, Cab 23/29
- 99 Review of Reviews Vol 65 January 1922 p13, February 1922 p93; New Statesman 28 January 1922 p462
- 100 Parliamentary Debates Vol 155 cols 593, 594, 15 June 1922

- 101 Economist 31 March 1923 p699
- 102 Government of India: India in 1923-4, ed. L.F. Rushbrook Williams, pp79,80, 2202
- 103 Samra, C.S.: India and Anglo-Soviet relations (Bombay 1959) p37,38; details in Parliamentary Papers 1919, Cmd 324, 'Papers regarding hostilities with Afghanistan'. Amanullah's message of greetings to Lenin and Kalinin of 7 April 1919 is in Sovetsko-Afganskye Otnosheniya 1919-1969 gg (Moscow 1971) Document No 2 pp8-9
- 104 ^{Cabinet Minutes 6 May 1919, W.C.563, Cab 23/10} [Samra: Indian and Anglo-Soviet Relations p39;
- 105 Cabinet Minutes 6 December 1920, Cab 65(20)3, Cab 23/13
- 106 Cabinet Minutes 3 March 1921, Cab 10(21)2, Cab 23/24; message to the Government of India, ibid Appendix i, 4 March 1921. The Soviet-Afghan Treaty is in Sovetsko-Afganskye Otnosheniya document 18, pp28-31, 28 February 1921
- 107 Cabinet Minutes 10 May 1921, Cab 27(21)3, Cab 23/25; telegram of 11 May
- 108 Cabinet Minutes 5 August 1921, Cab 63(21)1, Cab 23/26
- 109 Anglo-Persian treaty of 9 August 1919, Parliamentary Papers 1919 Cmd 300
- 110 Parliamentary Debates Vol 132 cols 2080, 2082, 2 August 1920
- 111 Parliamentary Debates Vol 130 col 240, 8 June 1920
- 112 Cabinet Minutes 18 February 1920, Cab 11(20)4, Cab 23/20
- 113 Parliamentary Debates Vol 136 col 538, 15 December 1920
- 114 Cabinet Minutes: Conference of Ministers 12 August 1920, Cab 49(20) Appendix i (1), Cab 23/22
- 115 ibid
- 116 Cabinet Minutes 3 November 1920, Cab 59(20)4, Cab 23/23
- 117 Parliamentary Debates Vol 140, col 89, 5 April 1921, Worthington Evans.
- 118 Times 2 August 1923
- 119 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 col 771, 17 November 1919
- 120 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 cols 770, 771, 17 November 1919
- 121 Parliamentary Debates Vol 150 col 46, 7 February 1922
- 122 Conference of Ministers 1 November 1920, Cab 62(20) Appendix i Cab 23/23
- 123 Cabinet Minutes 11 July 1921, Cab 58(21)1, Cab 23/26
- 124 Allenby to London 17 November 1921, Cab 92(21) Appendix ii Cab 23/27
- 125 Conference of Ministers 18 November 1921, Cab 93(21) Appendix iii(5), Cab 23/27
- 126 National Review Vol 65 January 1922 pl4

- 127 Cabinet Minutes 18 January 1922, Cab 2(22)5, Cab 23/29
- 128 Cabinet Minutes 16 February 1922, Cab 10(22)2, Cab 23/29
- 129 New Statesman 4 March 1922 p610
- 130 Cross, C: Fall of the British Empire (London 1968;1970 ed) p112
- 131 F.O. 371.3720.147429 and 136445. Churchill's remarks were reported in the Times 5 November 1920
- 132 Allenby to London, 17 received 23 February 1920, F.O.371.5005.E511
- 133 Foreign Office to Allenby, 19 March 1920, F.O. 371.5005.E1519
- 134 NKID: Mezhdunarodnaya Politika v 1922 g: Otchet (Moscow 1923) p25
- 135 Parliamentary Debates Vol 163 col 27, 23 April 1923
- 136 Intelligence Bureau, Department of Information, 'Short Memorandum on the Manifesto of the Bolshevik Government at Petrograd to all the labouring class Moslems of Russia and the Orient', 13 December 1917, Cabinet Paper GT 2959, Cab 24/35
- 137 NKID: Sinyaya Kniga (Moscow 1918, ed. K.M. Troyanowsky); two copies were enclosed, with his comments as quoted, in Wardrop to London, 17 June 1918, F.O. 371.3999.140052, 14 August 1918
- 138 Sir C. Marling (Copenhagen) to London, 30 received 31 March 1919, F.O. 371.3951.50116, 1 April 1919
- 139 Times 15 January 1920; Paul Dukes in ibid
- 140 Times 16 February 1920
- 141 see F.O. 371.5416.N7
- 142 Copenhagen to London 23 June 1920, F.O. 371.3951.207541
- 143 Secret report from agent D/57, Copenhagen 2 June 1920, F.O.371.4057. 202035
- 144 Minute on Tallents(Riga) to Curzon 11 August 1920, F.O.371.3951.212499
- 145 Leeper minute 6 July 1920 on F.O. 371.3951.207541. A circular on the 'Bolsheviks in Central Asia and Afghanistan' prepared by the Political Department of the India Office on 30 March 1920 noted that the aim of the Bolsheviks was to "foment trouble throughout the East for the 'capitalistic' powers, especially Great Britain, trouble that will ultimately lead to their downfall in these regions" (F.O.371.3991.191281)
- 146 Greenwood, Parliamentary Debates Vol 138 cols 647,648, 21 February 1921
- 147 National Review Vol 78 January 1922 p615
- 148 Parliamentary Debates Vol 141 col 507, 28 April 1921
- 149 Parliamentary Debates Vol 129 col 1719, 1 June 1920

- 150 Cabinet Minutes 16 May 1922, Cab 27(22)3, Cab 23/30; Parliamentary
~~XX~~ Debates Vol 150 col 1265, 16 February 1922
- 151 Parliamentary Debates Vol 129 col 1729, 1 June 1920, Vol 141 col 2364
 152 Parliamentary Debates Vol 135 cols 505-6, 24 November 1920 13 May 1921
- 153 Parliamentary Debates Vol 134 col 1351, 1352, 11 November 1920
- 154 Report on Bolshevik Propaganda No 153, 15 April 1921, in F.O. 371.
 6844.N4709, 18 April 1921 ; 'Intercourse between Bolshevism and Sinn
 Fein', Parliamentary Papers 1921, Cmd 1326, pp2,3
- 155 'Intercourse..' ibid pp2,4
- 156 ibid p5; Parliamentary Debates Vol 143 col 36, 13 June 1921
- 157 Special Branch, New Scotland Yard Report No 206, 12 May 1923, Cabinet
 Paper C.P. 249(23), Cab 24/160. The Irish Communist Party, however, it
 was added, appeared at the same time to be heavily in debt, and working
 on an overdraft. President Cosgrave stated that the 'Irregulars' (anti-
 Treaty Republican forces) had been attempting to buy guns and ammunition
 from Russia (Irish Times 17 February 1923; cited, with a denial on the
 part of the Russian Trading Delegation in Britain, by Russian Information
and Review Vol ii No 21, 24 February 1923 p322).
- 158 Parliamentary Debates Vol 132 col 403, 21 July 1920
- 159 Parliamentary Debates Vol 123 col 374, 17 December 1919; Times 16 January
 1920
- 160 Times 5 February 1920, cited in Samra op.cit. p47
- 161 Parliamentary Debates Vol 130 col 177, 7 June 1920, Lt Col Archer Shee
 162 Shah, Review of Reviews Vol 63 pl07f
- 163 Parliamentary Debates Vol 145 col 1138, 2 August 1921
- 164 Parliamentary Debates Vol 135 col 1719, 6 December 1920
- 165 Times 7 April 1920
- 166 Times 16 May, 17 August 1922
- 167 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139 col 2545, 23 March 1921
- 168 Parliamentary Debates Vol 150 col 895, 14 February 1922
- 169 Curzon to Under-Secretary of State at the India Office, 14 February
 1920, F.O. 371.4028,177199; Viceroy to India Office, 28 January received
 2 February 1920, in ibid.
- 170 'Summary of the Bolshevik situation..', F.O. 371.4028,186084, 18 March
 1920; copies of the Weekly Report of the Special Bureau of Information
 - are in F.O. 371.4028.193237, 22 April 1920 (Numners 1 and 2), sqq.

- 171 Viceroy to London, 12 received 14 October 1920, F.O. 371.5383.N614, 18 October 1920
- 172 Memorandum 171, Delhi 16 December 1920, section iii: Precautionary measures, India Office Papers L/P and S/10/886, file 1229/1920 part i
- 173 Parliamentary Debates Vol 150 col 895, 14 February 1922
- 174 Memorandum 163, Delhi 3 February 1921, Denys Bray, Secretary to the Government of India, India Office Papers L/P and S/10/886 file 1229/1920 part 1 paper 1339
- 175 Inter-Departmental Committee on 'Bolshevism as a menace to the British Empire', India Office Papers L/P and S/10/886 file 1229/1920 Part 1 paper P3378/1921, 4 August 1921; Report in ibid P2956/1921; p49
- 176 Montagu circulated a paper on 'Bolshevik Intrigue' prepared by the India Office, circulated on 14 June 1921; ibid paper 2094
- 177 A Foreign Office memorandum noted that following the 1921 note, the Bolsheviks had worked more secretly and "appeared to be less active in the East". In the last few months, however, they had again become more active (Gregory ^{inute} ~~memorandum~~, 11 October 1922, F.O. 371.8219.N9291, 12 October 1922). The Secret Intelligence Service provided a report of the Fourth Comintern Congress, which stated that a decision had been taken to allocate £120,000 to M.N. Roy for his activities (S.I.S. Report 898, 6 December 1922, F.O. 371.8171.N10823, 8 December 1922). A decision had been taken, Maxse reported from Zurich, to "institute immediately a re-inforced communistic activity and propaganda in the Far East, especially in India" (Maxse to F.O., 21 received 28 December 1922, F.O. 371.8171.N11298, 28 December 1922).
- 178 Parliamentary Debates Vol 167 col 8, 23 July 1923
- 179 Times 16 May 1923
- 180 National Review Vol 78 February 1922 p782
- 181 Times editorial 17 March 1921
- 182 Statistical Abstract, 71st Number, Parliamentary Papers 1928 Cmd 3084 table 87 p106
- 183 Cabinet Minutes 11 February 1922, Cab 11(22)3, Cab 23/29
- 184 Cabinet Minutes 8 December 1920, Cab 67(20)1, Cab 23/23
- 185 Conclusions of a Meeting of the Finance Committee, 9 February 1920, Cab 11(20) Appendix iii, Cab 23/20

- 186 Callwell: Wilson ii 244, entry for 18 June 1920
- 187 Conference of Ministers 1 December 1920, Cab 82(20) Appendix ii, Cab 23/23 and Cabinet Minutes 5 August 1919, WC 606A, Cab 23/15
- 188 Parliamentary Debates Vol 151 col 437, 1 March 1922
- 189 Parliamentary Debates Vol 150 col 686, 13 February 1922; ibid col 702 (Horne), col 725 (Harmsworth)
- 190 Cabinet Minutes 5 August 1921, Cab 63(21)2, Cab 23/26; No 16, for instance, of a series of reports on 'Violations of the Trade Agreement' is in F.O. 371.6844.N5434, 6 May 1921)
- 191 Cabinet Minutes 15 August 1921, Cab 67(21)8, Cab 23/26
- 192 Cabinet Minutes 17 August 1921, Cab 69(21)5, Cab 23/26
- 193 Cabinet Minutes 19 August 1921, Cab 71(21)9, Cab 23/26
- 194 Curzon to Hodgson 7 September 1921, F.O. 371.6855.N10221, 8 September 1921; the file records that the Prime Minister had wished to weaken, and Curzon and Montagu to strengthen the note's conclusion. Such amendments as were made moderated the tone of the note: a reference to the "malign work" which it had been "proved beyond dispute" that the Soviet government carried on, for instance, was omitted. The text was reprinted in 'A Selection of Papers dealing with relations between H.M.G. and the Soviet Government', Parliamentary Papers 1927, Cmd 2895, p3ff. It has not been reprinted in DVPSSSR Vol vi; but Litvinov's reply in ibid p374 notes that the note was communicated to the Soviet government on the date quoted above.
- 195 'A Selection of Papers..' ibid pp3-12
- 196 Berzin to Foreign Office 26 September 1921, F.O. 371.6855.N10849, 27 September 1921
- 197 Hodgson to Curzon, 7 October 1921, F.O. 371.6855.N11283, 10 October 1921; reprinted in DVPSSSR Vol iv No 240 p374f, and in 'A Selection..' above. References are to the text in DVPSSSR Vol iv; p374
- 198 ibid p375
- 199 ibid p376, 378, 379 ; copies of the instructions sent to the Soviet representatives in the East are in DVPSSSR Vol iv Nos 112, 251. The instructions to Raskolnikov in Kabul, dated 3 June 1921, received by the Prime Minister from the Trading Delegation are in Cabinet Paper C.P. 3201, circulated 5 August 1921, Cab 24/127.

- 200 DVPSSSR Vol iv No 240 p379
- 201 Montagu, memorandum, Cabinet Paper C.P. 3411, Cab 24/129, 14 October 1921
- 202 Hodgson to F.O., 17 October received 1 November 1921, F.O. 371.
6856.N1212. Leeper minuted determinedly (on 2 November) that Nourteva
"even if a thief, remains a Communist and as such there is no inherent
impossibility in his having written the report while serving sentence
for his uncommunist offences".
- 203 Hodgson to F.O., 17 October received 3 November 1921, F.O. 371.
6856.N12208, 3 November 1921
- 204 Curzon minute, in F.O. 381.6855.N11337, 11 October 1921
- 205 Curzon to Chicherin 2 November 1921, F.O. 371.6856.N12040, 29 October
1921; Curzon minute, 27 October 1921 in ibid
- 206 ibid; reprinted in 'A Selection..' ppl8-20
- 207 Parliamentary Debates Vol 150 col 579, 13 February 1922

Chapter Six: Soviet Russia and Revolution

The British note of 7 September 1921¹ was examined in Pravda by Karl Radek. He concluded that the documents upon which the British government's accusations were based were "not only forgeries, idiotic forgeries, but the forgeries of the German counter-intelligence, which have been sold to all who wish to buy them¹. Their publication, he charged, had followed a meeting between Basil Thomson, Head of British Intelligence, and the Security Head in Germany, Weisman; but part had already appeared in the White Russian press. He recommended Curzon to subscribe directly to their journal, 'Ostinformation', whose elementary errors had appeared in the British note, rather than proceed through the intermediary of Weisman. Their address was thoughtfully appended². It seemed unreasonable to believe that Nourteva could be released and address meetings, though accused of treason. Lord Curzon, he suggested, might be working on the analogy of "some countries where people involved in speculation in Marconi shares can remain members of the Government" (a reference to the pre-war shares scandal, in which Lloyd George, among others, had been implicated). The despatch of the agitational trains to the East within Soviet Russia was a concern of Soviet Russia alone; and as for Afghanistan and Persia, "no trains have been seen by anyone.. for the simple reason that neither country has any railway"³.

Less easily disposed of was the essential charge of the British notes, that the Soviet government was improperly engaging in revolutionary activity. This was not simply the product of Soviet disingenuousness regarding the activities of the Communist International. It reflected, also, the very real dilemma of the conduct of foreign relations by a socialist country with the surrounding capitalist countries with which it was, at least for the time being, obliged to coexist. During the period of foreign intervention and civil war, there was no obvious difficulty. The foreign policy of the Soviet countries, wrote Chicherin, was "simple and clear: the quest for close links with the world proletariat, sharp hostility to all capitalist powers"⁴. A "most important fact, influencing the whole of our foreign policy of this year", had been the "foundation of the Third Intern-

ational". Kamenev also drew attention to the "close link between the first proletarian state - Soviet Russia - and the Third Communist International. One cannot exist without the other"⁵.

Later in 1919, however, Chicherin found it necessary to point out that revolutionary soviet government found themselves in a "somewhat different position from revolutionary parties". As factually existing governments within a framework of other existing governments, they were "obliged to enter into official relations with them, and these relations place on them obligations, which have to be taken into account". A revolutionary soviet government by virtue of its character and tasks was necessarily in "direct opposition to capitalist governments", and could in "no case.. participate in their robbers' combinations". The Commissar, nevertheless, was bound by the position of the Government which was "not that of a revolutionary party far from power". "When we speak of the positive tasks of the Third International, we cannot identify Communist parties with Soviet governments, in which Communist parties rule"⁶.

The distinction might understandably escape a foreign government. Trotsky, on his appointment as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, announced simply that he would "issue some revolutionary proclamations to the peoples and then ~~start~~^{close} up shop"⁷. The new Commissariat took some time, in fact, to adjust itself to the refusal of the senior staff to work for the new government, and to appoint its first representatives⁸. Chicherin himself, moreover (who had officially succeeded to Trotsky's position in May 1918) achieved membership of the Central Committee only in 1925, and never became a member of the Politburo. Zinoviev, on the other hand, the President of the President of the Comintern executive, was a man of considerably greater political weight⁹.

The Communist International initially assumed, indeed, a virtually supra-governmental character. The Workers' Opposition group within the Russian Communist Party appealed to it over the head of the Central Committee. The question was discussed at the First Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee in February 1922, and examined by a commission under the chairmanship of Clara Zetkin. The appeal, it has been recorded by a contemporary, "appeared in the eyes of western Communists to be fully justified"; and

they were "surprised" by its failure¹⁰. Nor was there any reason for the executive necessarily to be located in Soviet Russia. Zinoviev, addressing the Second World Congress, declared that "should the proletarian revolution be victorious in England or France, we would naturally agree to transfer the executive to one of these countries"¹¹.

Only with considerable reservation, then, can Chicherin be considered (at least at this period) the authoritative spokesman of Soviet foreign policy, and the equivalent in position to the Foreign Ministers of other states with whom he dealt. The Communist Party, he explained, stood at the head of a great state. As a government, it entered into relations with other governments, and established firm friendly relations with them, and defended the political and economic interests of the Soviet Republic. It conducted a state policy, defined by the interests of the workers. Government policy and party policy, however, were "severely separated. Speaking on behalf of the government organs, we place the second on one side. The fate of the communist movement, the successes and trials of Communist parties are the concern of other organs. Our attention", he pointed out, "devoted to the fate of the Soviet state"¹². The ambivalence of Soviet foreign policy was aptly symbolized in a Pravda cartoon of 1924: a fiery Zinoviev harangued a crowd, while behind him a distraught Chicherin held his head in his hands¹³.

The Russian revolution had been carried through on the assumption that if the Russian workers, a minority in their own country, broke the chain of imperialism at its weakest link, the workers in the advanced industrial countries would carry it through to completion. As Lenin said in the summer of 1918: "We do not close our eyes to the fact that we cannot achieve a socialist revolution in one country alone, even if that country were less backward than Russia and even if we lived under easier conditions than those created by four years of hard, distressing war.. We are deeply convinced that in the near future historical events will bring the West European proletariat to supreme power, and in this respect we shall not be alone in the world arena as we are now. Through this, the road to Socialism and its embodiment in life will be made easier"¹⁴. The revolution's easy success in Russia was deceptive: a conflict with imperialism could

not be avoided, and in world revolution lay its guarantee of survival¹⁵. The revolution in Russia was only the "beginning of the world socialist revolution". There was no doubt that the socialist revolution in Europe "must and will begin. All our hopes of a final victory of socialism are founded on that certainty"¹⁶. Capitalism was an international force: hence to conquer it finally was possible only in all countries, not in one. This, equally, was why the war in Russia was one "against the capitalism of all countries, against world capitalism, for the freedom of all workers"¹⁷. The Soviet movement was not Russian, but a form of the world proletarian struggle; hence the struggle against the Bolshevik regime was at the same time a struggle against Bolshevism elsewhere¹⁸.

Only working-class revolution, Lenin suggested, could end the war. Italy and Austria were on the "eve of revolution". The crisis in Germany was either the beginning of the revolution, or at least an indication of its inevitability and closeness¹⁹. History was advancing "hourly" to the world proletarian revolution. Their cause, he said in spring 1919, was "close to victory throughout the world"²⁰.

Addressing the First Congress of the Communist International in March, he noted the strength of the international Soviet movement - even in England. The victory of the proletarian revolution in the world was guaranteed; and the formation was imminent of the international Soviet republic. All the comrades present who had seen the formation of the Communist International and the Soviet Republic would see the formation of the World Federal Republic of Soviets²¹. The month of July of that year, he forecast, would be the "last difficult July": the following July would be met by the victory of the international Soviet republic - "and that victory will be complete and final"²².

The new journal Communist International carried the Comintern's May Day appeal in its first number. It announced that the "last hour of our oppressors has struck". In 1919 the Communist International had been founded. In 1920 "the great International Soviet Republic will be born"²³. The formation of Soviet republics in Bavaria and Hungary was enthusiastically greeted. No efforts on the part of the imperialists, the Soviet government declared in a telegram of greetings to the new republics, could "save them from the inevitable triumph of communism"²⁴.

The Hungarian revolution represented a different, "more human" path to Soviet power than Russia, one that might be more appealing to workers in the West. In this, Lenin considered, was the "decisive significance" of the revolution in Hungary²⁵. In Russia, he admitted, there were a "lot of shortcomings", but he believed that "in Hungary, Soviet power will be better than here". In this cultured country, the experience of the Russian revolution had been taken into account, and the cause of socialism was being advanced in a well-planned, peaceful and successful manner²⁶. The Hungarian revolution, he thought, would "probably play a larger role in history than the Russian revolution"²⁷.

Zinoviev, writing in the first issue of Communist International on 'The Perspectives of the Proletarian Revolution', noted that at the time of writing, the Third International had as its main base three Soviet republics: in Russia, Hungary and Bavaria. But "nobody would be surprised", he thought, "if by the time these lines had appeared in print we had not three, but six or more Soviet republics"²⁸. The victory of communism throughout Germany was "completely inevitable"; the final victory might come "in the next few months, perhaps even weeks". In a year's time, he forecast, they would "already be begining to forget that in Europe there was a struggle for communism, for in a year all Europe will be communist"²⁹. He conceded only that capitalism might last for another year in America and in England: but this would be "beside a wholly Communist European continent"³⁰.

This was more than an invocation. The Soviet Russian government was styled simply a 'workers' and peasants' government', not the government of a particular country. In the Brest-Litovsk treaty³¹, Lenin noted, they had placed "the world dictatorship of the proletariat and world revolution higher than any national sacrifice, however heavy.."³¹. Steps were taken in early agreements, notably in the Treaty with Finland, to make provision for supra-national economic organs and planning³².

The Soviet republics in Hungary and Bavaria, however, foundered; and by the end of the year while Lenin expressed his "firm belief" in victory, he drew attention to the "difficulties and sacrifices" which had been experienced³³. Zinoviev admitted that they had been 'over-enthusiastic': it was now likely that "two or even three years" would be required

before the whole of Europe became Soviet³⁴. Communist International noted later in the year that it had been a "year of difficult struggle.. we suffered a considerable number of heavy defeats"³⁵.

In the first period of the revolution, Lenin wrote, many had hoped that in Western Europe the socialist revolution would begin immediately on the conclusion of the imperialist war, "since when the masses were armed the revolution could develop with the maximum of success in several countries of the West". The leaders of labour, however, in his opinion, had "saved the bourgeoisie at the last minute"³⁶. The whole course of development which had taken place in Russia between 1905 and 1917 would now have to be completed³⁶. In 1919 it had seemed to them, Zinoviev recalled, that straightaway, on a year or two, they would manage to overthrow the bourgeoisie in a whole series of capitalist countries. There was a time, indeed "when we considered that only a few days or even hours remained before the inevitable revolutionary upsurge"³⁷.

In September Pravda wrote that Italy, where the factories had been taken over in Turin, was on the "eve of revolution". Yet the boundaries of socialism were extended neither there nor in Poland (where Zinoviev noted that the tactics of the Communist International would have been other than they were had the Red Army taken Warsaw). Their forecasts, Lenin conceded, had not been realised³⁸. The speed and the tempo of revolution in capitalist countries in western Europe was much slower than in Russia; and they could not "gamble that it will accelerate" (Lenin had always insisted that it was easier for Russia to begin the revolution, in view of the situation of 'cultural slavery' in which the proletariat of the western countries found itself)³⁹. It was impossible to hide from themselves, Zinoviev admitted, that when the Communist International had been founded they had all counted upon a much quicker tempo of international revolution than had in fact occurred. The "stormy revolutionary unrest" of the masses at the end of the war, not only in the belligerent countries but in "such neutral and rich bourgeois countries" as Switzerland and Holland allowed them to hope for an extremely rapid unfolding of events. "Not only us, but our worst enemies were at that time convinced that socialist revolution on a world scale was going to develop at a mad gallop"⁴⁰.

The Third Congress of the Communist International, which met in June and July of 1921, had to reckon with the failure of the 'March action' in Germany and with the introduction of the New Economic Policy in Russia, which, Zinoviev stated, was a "political setback for the whole workers' movement.. that slowed down the tempo of the proletarian revolution". The reverse, however, was also true: the setback ~~whith~~ the proletariat of the western European countries had suffered between 1919 and 1921 had also influenced the policy of the first proletarian state, and slowed down the tempo in Russia⁴¹. The Congress had to "reckon with a slower tempo of international proletarian revolution than the First Congress had done"⁴². It was realised, Trotsky wrote, that the postwar revolutionary ferment was over. It was time to turn to "winning the masses" with a united front tactic, that was, "organising the masses on a programme of transitional demands"⁴³. No fixed time or tempo could be forecast for the development of the revolutionary movement⁴⁴. It was perhaps understandable that, as Zinoviev complained, "some of our friends and enemies" should "interpret the new tactic of the Comintern- ~~that~~ tactic of the united front - as a denial of the hope of world revolution"⁴⁵.

This was to overlook the possibility that events in western Europe might yet develop in a radical direction. The "German October" in 1923 seemed briefly to suggest such an outcome. Zinoviev, writing in Pravda on 12 October 1923, declared that the course which the Russian revolution had followed from 1906 to 1917 was being reflected in the course of German developments from 1918 to 1923. The proletarian revolution was "knocking at the door in Germany; one would have to be blind not to see it". A turning-point was optimistically forecast in the history not only of Germany, but of all humanity. This proved not to be the case. It did, however, seem possible that events outside Europe, and in particular in the colonial countries in Asia, might compensate for a period (it appeared) of relative stability in Europe. While the European working class remained central to the achievement of socialism, Lenin wrote, the Bolsheviks should support the "democratic and revolutionary movement in all countries generally, especially in the colonies and in dependent (countries)"⁴⁶.

Lenin was in fact pre-eminent among the Bolshevik leaders (and contemporary socialists) in the extent of his appreciation of the revolut-

ionary significance of the East. The delegates at the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International, where the delegates failed to condemn colonialism in principle (under a socialist government, it was thought, a colonial policy could play a 'civilizing' role)? ~~was~~ ~~ATTENDED~~ by Lenin. The voting struck him as of "very great importance", revealing a "particular negative feature in the European workers' movement, one capable of doing no small damage to the cause of the proletariat and, for that ~~max~~ reason, worth serious attention". The economic and material basis had in some cases been created, he thought, for "infecting the proletariat of one country or another with colonial chauvinism"⁴⁷. It was a theme to which we would return in his book on 'Imperialism'.

In an article of 1908, entitled 'Inflammable Material in World Politics', he noted the "sharpening of the revolutionary-democratic movement in Asia", which gave the Russian revolution a "great international ally both in Europe and in Asia", and which gave it, at the same time and for the same reason, "not only a national, Russian enemy but also an international enemy"⁴⁸. In 'Backward Europe and Advanced Asia', he wrote that "throughout Asia, a mighty democratic movement is growing, spreading and gaining in strength.. Hundreds of millions of people are awakening into life, light and freedom". They had a loyal ally in the proletariat of the western countries, whose victory would liberate "both the peoples of Europe and the peoples of Asia"⁴⁹. Socialists must demand not only the "unconditional, irreversible and immediate liberation of the colonies": they must also give "resolute support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements of national liberation in these countries". There was "no doubt" that the victory of the Russian proletariat would create "unusually favourable conditions for the development of revolution in both Asia and Europe"⁵⁰.

Among the first legislative acts of the Soviet government were the 'Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia', which provided for the self-determination and free cultural expression of the peoples of Russia, and the appeal 'To the Moslem Toilers of Russia and the East', which noted that "even far-off India" had "raised the standard of revolt" and was "calling the peoples of the East to the struggle for liberation"⁵¹. Moslem customs, beliefs and institutions were declared free and inviolate;

and the new government formally renounced the agreements concerning the annexation of Constantinople by Russia, the division of Persia and of Turkey. Enslavement need not be feared from the revolutionary Government, but from the "bandits of European imperialism". On their banners the Bolsheviks carried the cause of the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the world; their sympathy and support in return was invited⁵².

Such appeals were at this stage, no doubt, largely declaratory: the Soviet government was hardly in control of the main cities in Russia, let alone of the outlying provinces of the former Russian Empire. The 'Appeal to the Toiling Muslims' was, however, printed in "millions of copies in all the Moslem languages", by the decision of the government; and Buchanan was reported to have been "particularly disturbed" by it⁵³. In a telegram to the Foreign Office, Buchanan noted that Lenin was "openly inciting our Indian subjects to revolt". He and Trotsky had "singled us out for his (sic) attacks"⁵⁴. The India Office were "greatly exercised" about the matter, and desired, as "suppression is clearly impossible, to issue a counter blast"⁵⁵. The Intelligence Bureau, in a 'Short Memorandum' on the appeal, described it as "another indication of the ultimate Bolshevik policy.. a campaign of universal sabotage, designed to overthrow the existing order all over the world". The Foreign Office with "unusual diligence" attempted to ensure that the appeal was suppressed in all the Allied countries⁵⁶.

The slogans of the October revolution, however, a Soviet observer conceded, "did not at once become the property of the popular masses of the East". Soviet Russia was concerned in the first years with the struggle against the Whites and foreign interventionists, and was cut off from the countries of the East⁵⁷. The elaboration of decrees to implement the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia was the responsibility of the Commissariat of Nationalities⁵⁸. The geographical sections into which the Commissariat was divided, however, showed a concentration on the nationalities either in the immediate west of Soviet Russia (Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia) or in the Caucasus. Of eighteen sections, virtually the only exception was the Muslim section. Its activity, however, was concentrated within the borders of Soviet Russia, and its headquarters from April 1919 was no nearer the East than Kazan⁵⁹. A Turkestan Commiss-

ariat existed from November 1918; but it experienced "preliminary organisational difficulties", technical problems, a lack of activists and of a link with the centre. Having the Moslems of Turkestan behind them, Zhizn' Natsional'nostei declared in an editorial, meant that "we would have Afghanistan and Persia, and from there... a path for further influence on India and Mongolia". But the millions of Turkestanis had been to that time "completely cut off from Soviet construction, or only insignificantly affected by it". The task of strengthening Soviet influence must be undertaken "more urgently"⁶⁰.

An article written by Stalin in November 1918 urged "Don't forget the East". The East was the reserve and base of imperialism, its source of well-being and of troops. The task of communism, he declared, was to "infect these peoples with the liberating spirit of revolution, to raise them to struggle with imperialism.. He who wishes the triumph of socialism cannot forget the East"⁶¹. A "socio-political ferment" was declared in April 1919 to extend to "almost all countries of the East". The Russian revolution and the establishment of Soviet power had no doubt "played a great role". Soviet power slogans had been raised in Egypt and Turkey; a "mass movement" against world capitalism was developing, whence it would receive a "fatal blow"⁶².

Despite the isolation of Soviet Russia from the countries of the East, the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs reported to the Seventh Congress of Soviets in December 1919 that the ideas of the October Revolution (it appeared from the press) had had "enormous influence" on the minds of the peoples of the East⁶³. Delegations of "almost all revolutionary organizations" had succeeded in making their way to Moscow, at "great risk". Links were being maintained "if not with governments, then at least with progressive groups of the East", despite "all the cordons of the Entente"⁶⁴. At the same time, however, it was felt necessary to resolve at the Second Congress of the Moslem Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East that the Bolshevik Party should proceed to "concrete real measures to revolutionize the East". There was declared to be a need "urgently to proceed to the most serious and broad activity in the organization of party work in the East". Further reports continued to emphasize the need for contact between the Communist organizations of

the peoples of the East. Information was still reaching the centre "very poorly"⁶⁵.

The defeat of the interventionary forces and the extension of the authority of the Soviet government throughout the area of the former Russian Empire during 1920 improved contact with the countries of the East. At the same time the anti-colonial movement in these countries was extending and becoming increasingly radical, while apparently receding in western Europe. This development promised more than the emancipation of the countries of the East, and their close association with Soviet Russia: it would undermine equally the structure of world imperialism, and in particular threaten the position of Britain, the greatest imperialist power, through her possession of India. Turkestan had a key role in such a strategy. It was directly contiguous, it was pointed out, with the Moslem countries of the East: Persia, Afghanistan, Khiva and Bukhara, and extended across the Pamirs to the "pearl of the English crown", India. Turkestan was "as if by nature required to play the role of realising the tasks raised by the Russian revolution". It should become the "forward post of the liberation movement of the East"; the Himalayas should be held by the Russian proletarian Moslem, "coming to the aid of his brother in Persia, India, Afghanistan"⁶⁶.

Marx, it was argued, had foreseen that communist revolution must be preceded by a number of national revolutions of the oppressed peoples, and first of all India and the peoples of the East. The extension of control over Russian Turkestan in September 1919 offset the loss of the Ukraine: for the Soviet border now bordered on Afghanistan and "from Afghanistan the road leads to Hindustan, the possible key to world revolution"⁶⁷. Nobody could build a bridge more quickly, Stalin explained, between the West and the East than Russia's Islamic peoples. "This is because a door is opened for you to Persia, India, Afghanistan and China. The liberation of the peoples of these countries from the yoke of the imperialists would.. undermine imperialism at its very foundation"⁶⁸. The establishment of correct relations with the peoples of Turkestan, Lenin declared, could be said, without exaggerating, to have a "gigantic, world-historical" importance. For all Asia and all the colonies of the world, for "thousands

and millions of people, the relations of the Russian workers' and peasants' republic with weak, previously exploited people will have have practical significance"⁶⁹.

The Russian working masses, Lenin told the Indian Revolutionary Association in a message of greetings, followed with "unflagging attention the awakening of the Indian worker and peasant". He wished an extension of this movement to "all the workers of the East": for "only when the Indian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Persian and Turkish workers and peasant stretch out their hands to each other and advance to the general cause of liberation, only then is a decisive victory guaranteed over the exploiters"⁷⁰. Soviet Russia should not "limit herself to Platonic sympathy and understanding, but (should) render her active assistance", it was urged in Zhizn' Natsional'nostei. India was the "citadel of English imperialism, the one place where she can be dealt a fatal blow"⁷¹. Another writer, in the official journal of NKID, declared that India was "afame with revolution". Serious unrest there might herald the beginning of revolution; and India might play a "most important role in the task of winning international victory over imperialism"⁷².

Any setback to Britain in Turkey, Turkestan, Persia, or Afghanistan would "to a major degree", wrote Radek, threaten her position in India and Egypt. The Near East might "become one of the most important fields of conflict between socialism and imperialism"⁷³. Britain, moreover, was "only an Empire so long as she holds India"⁷⁴. If India were taken away, she would become a "small island kingdom". India was the foundation of the British Empire; if revolution broke out there, it would lead to "enormous changes in the history of mankind". British imperialism was "going through a critical period"; the Russian revolution could have a "decisive influence upon the fate of India, if her leaders grasp its sense, meaning and content". India was the most profitable of the British colonies, noted Kerzhentsev in 1919; its liberation would deprive Britain of a "huge revenue"; and more than that, it would be the signal for a "whole series of Asian countries to take up the struggle against imperialism"⁷⁵. The British government had "always been the enemy of a strong Russia", noted Pavlovich; and Soviet Russia was "even more dreadful". As much as 10% of the Indian national income, it was calculated, had to be surrendered

to Britain⁷⁶.

If the natural enemy of the Asian countries was Britain, their natural ally, urged Chicherin, was Soviet Russia. The Russian proletariat was the "protagonist, pointing the way to the working masses of purely Asian countries, which instinctively feel a basic unity, linking them by the very nature of their economic position with the revolutionary working masses of Russia", whose revolutionizing influence upon the Asian toiling masses was "immensely deep"⁷⁷. Not only economic position, but Russia's position as an Asian as well as a European power established a basis for association. The Russian proletariat, Chicherin noted, was the first European, but equally the first Asian proletariat to reject the capitalist yoke. On this basis, he thought, might develop a "joint united revolutionary struggle against the international yoke of imperialist oligarchy, for world socialism"⁷⁸.

The Bolsheviks now spoke, said Lenin in December 1920, "not only as representatives of the proletarians, but also as representatives of the oppressed people". The slogan 'proletarians of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite' had been criticized, and it was certainly incorrect from the point of view of the 'Communist Manifesto': but the Manifesto had been written under "completely different circumstances", and from the point of view of contemporary conditions the slogan was a correct one. "All Asia is in ferment.. In India a revolutionary movement is forming". The Entente had made Russia the "direct representative of the whole mass of the oppressed population of the world.. We speak as the representatives of 70% of the population of the world"⁷⁹. The West was "digging its own grave in the East"⁸⁰.

In his speech to the Congress of the Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East, Lenin outlined the attitude that Bolsheviks, and subsequently the Communist International, were to adopt towards the revolutionary movement in the East. There was to be close association: the revolutionary movement of the Eastern peoples could "successfully develop.. only in direct contact with the revolutionary struggle of our Soviet Republic against international imperialism". But socialist revolution in the East

would "not be only or mainly a struggle of revolutionary proletarians in each country against its bourgeoisie": rather, it would be a "struggle of colonies and countries oppressed by imperialism, of all dependent countries against international imperialism": the novel task of a struggle "not against capital, but against medieval survivals"⁸¹.

The question was considered at greater length by the Second Congress of the Communist International, which met in Moscow in July and August 1920. The uniting of the revolutionary proletarians of the capitalist, advanced countries with the revolutionary masses of those countries where there was no (or almost no) proletariat, with the oppressed masses of the colonial, eastern countries, was "taking place at the present Congress", it was declared. World imperialism must fall when the "revolutionary onslaught of exploited and oppressed workers inside each country.. unites with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of mankind, which heretofore have stood outside history, considered only as its object"⁸².

One of the main tasks of the Congress would be to work out "how to lay the basis for the organization of the Soviet movement in non-capitalist countries". Soviets were possible there; but they would not be workers', but "peasant Soviets or Soviets of the toilers". The understanding of the role and meaning of Soviets had spread to the East; a beginning to the movement had been made "throughout the East, throughout Asia, among all the colonial peoples". The main task of the Congress would be to work out a "practical basis so that the work which until now has been carried on among hundreds of millions of people in a disorganized manner should be carried on in a united, organized and systematic way". If in Russia they were forced to make compromises and to gain time, since they were weaker than the international imperialists, they knew however that a "milliard and a quarter of people represented that mass whose interests we are defending": they represented and defended, in fact, "this 70% of the population of the world, this mass of the toiling and oppressed"⁸³.

Discussion of the National and Colonial question at the Congress, however, provoked some disagreement with Lenin's views. Reporting on behalf of the Commission on this question to the Congress, Lenin announced that agreement had been reached, following their adoption of some amendments

to the original theses, and of additional theses proposed by M.N. Roy, the Indian delegate⁸⁴. The "main idea" of the theses was the difference between the oppressed and oppressor nations. The question of the "bourgeois-democratic movement" in backward countries had given rise to some disagreement. There was some opposition to the proposal that the communists should support it; and it had, accordingly, been decided unanimously to refer not to the "bourgeois-democratic" but to the "national-revolutionary movement". There could, however, be not the slightest doubt that any nationalist movement could only be bourgeois-democratic, since the main mass of the population in the backward countries was the peasantry. Communist parties could advance their cause only in support of such peasant movements (while they could not extend their support to reactionary leaders, who did not allow the education and organization of the peasantry in a communist spirit). Granted the support of Soviet Russia and active propaganda, the capitalist phase of development was not an inevitable one for the backward countries. The theses, Lenin thought, would aid the development of "genuinely revolutionary work in national and colonial questions, in which consists our main task"⁸⁵.

Roy, in his address to the Congress, emphasised the changes which had occurred during the war in British India, Dutch India, China and elsewhere in the colonial world. A mass movement was developing which argued that fewer concessions needed to be made to non-proletarian elements⁸⁶. Serrati, who intervened later in the debate, opposed any aid whatever to bourgeois "national-revolutionary" parties. The theses might, he considered, be counter-revolutionary⁸⁷. The theses were nevertheless accepted, with three abstentions⁸⁸. Thesis 4 called for "closer union between the proletarians and the toiling masses of all nations and countries for joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the landlords and the bourgeoisie" to be made the "cornerstone of the Communist International's policy on the national and colonial questions". Thesis 9 called for the "direct assistance of all Communist Parties to revolutionary movements in dependent or unequal countries (for instance, in Ireland, and among the negroes of America and so on) and in the colonies"⁸⁹. The conditions of admission to the Communist International, adopted by the Congress on 6 August, required a "particularly

explicit and clear attitude" on the question of the colonies and oppressed peoples from parties in countries with colonial possessions; colonial liberation movements must be supported "not merely in words but in deeds", and a "genuinely fraternal attitude" inculcated towards the working people of the colonies and oppressed nations⁹⁰. The jingoistic labour aristocracy of Britain and America, Lenin noted, represented a "most serious challenge to socialism", and a major source of strength to the Second International, none of whose members appeared to be prepared to assist the colonial struggle⁹¹.

Moscow and Petrograd, it was urged at the Congress, should become a "new Mecca for the East". Concluding the Congress, Zinoviev dwelt on the "gigantic importance" of the fact that among the delegates were "quite a few" representatives of the workers and poor peasants of the East. The national movements of the East, he declared, would "unite with the European and American movement and will deal a final blow to capitalism"⁹². British capitalism, Radek stated, could not be overcome only in London, Sheffield, Manchester and Glasgow: "it must be broken in the colonies. There is its Achilles heel..⁹³. The peoples of the Near and Far East represented a "source of new strength for the Communist International"; and all Communists, wrote Pavlovich, had "become Asians, i.e. simply allies of the whole struggling colonial and semi-colonial world"⁹⁴.

The work of the Congress was continued at the First Congress of the Peoples of the East at Baku in September 1920. The decision to hold the Congress was taken at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International at the end of June, together with the delegates to the Second Congress; and an appeal was issued "to the enslaved popular masses of Persia, Armenia and Turkey" to discuss "how to unite the efforts of the European proletariat with yours for struggle against the common enemy"⁹⁵. It was summoned as a "supplement to the Second Congress", or, as Zinoviev told the meeting in his address, as its "second half"⁹⁶. He considered the Congress a "major historical event" since it demonstrated that not only were the advanced workers and toiling peasants of Europe and America awake, but they had "all lived to see the awakening no longer of isolated individuals but of tens, hundreds of thousands, even millions of workers of the peoples of the East, who constitute the greater part of the world's

population and are therefore alone capable of finally settling the tussle between labour and capital.." China, India, Turkey, Persia and Armenia "can and should.. begin a direct struggle to establish a Soviet system". Where there were no urban workers, "states of peasant toilers' Soviets" could be established. When the East started to move, "not only Russia but the whole of Europe" would seem "but a small corner in the vast panorama". There was a need to "open a new page in our history when the oppressed peoples of the East will no longer be slaves, when they will not allow English officers shamelessly to rob Indians and Persians"⁹⁷.

He proposed the declaration of "holy war against the English and French robber capitalists". On behalf of the Communist International he declared: "Brothers, we call you to a holy war above all against English imperialism". The remark was greeted with "stormy applause"; the delegates stood, shook their weapons and replied "we vow it". Might the declaration be heard in London, Paris and in all the cities where capitalists were still in power, said Zinoviev. "Long live the fraternal alliance of the peoples of the East with the Communist International! May capitalism perish! Long live the empire of labour!" Applause rang out; and the delegates replied (according, at least, to the official report) "Long live the unifiers of the East, our honoured leaders, our beloved Red Army"⁹⁸.

Radek, who also attended the Congress on behalf of the Comintern, anticipated criticism of the Soviet government's motives. Its eastern policy, he emphasized, was "no diplomatic manoeuvre, no pushing forward of the peoples of the East into the firing-line in order, by betraying them, to win advantages for the Soviet republic.. We are bound to you by a common destiny: either we unite with the peoples of the East and hasten the victory of the western European proletariat, or we shall perish and you will be slaves"⁹⁹. The struggle against a common enemy, wrote Pravda, turned the "proletarians of the West and the peasants of the East into close allies". The powerful revolutionary movement in the East heralded the "fall of imperialism and the triumph of the world socialist revolution". The meeting was a "major event in the history, not only of the East, but in the history of world revolution"¹⁰⁰.

The Congress, certainly, appeared not to have passed unnoticed by those against whom it was directed. British patrol boats covered the

northern Turkish coast in order to prevent the departure of the Turkish delegates to the Congress. A storm arose, however, which caused the ships to put into Istanbul, and the delegates, at great risk to their lives, crossed the Black Sea. The delegates from Persia were less fortunate: while crossing the Caspian Sea they were bombarded by a British aeroplane, and two delegates were killed and several wounded¹⁰¹.

A manifesto was adopted at the conclusion of the Congress which called for the "liberation of mankind from the yoke of capitalist and imperialist slavery.. In their holy war all the revolutionary workers and oppressed peasants of the West will be with you. They will help you, they will struggle and die with you.. Long live..the uniting of all workers, all the oppressed and exploited", of "all peasants and workers of East and West"¹⁰². It was also thought necessary, however, to appeal more particularly to the "workers of Europe, America and Japan", since "although formally you pronounce us equal, in fact we are for you people of a lower race"¹⁰³.

Pavlovich, who attended the Congress on behalf of the Comintern, wrote subsequently that it had succeeded in making the "first breach in the Chinese wall which separated hitherto the peoples of the East, first, from each other, and second, from the revolutionary West"¹⁰⁴. The Congress has indeed termed the "starting point of (the) process of calling in the East to redress the unfavourable balance of the West". The full recognition of the importance of the role of the East might be said to date from the winter of 1920-1¹⁰⁵. The Congress, however, had been no more successful in elaborating a consistent and effective eastern policy for the Communist International than the Second Congress had been. In all the countries of the East, Pavlovich suggested, there were present the "prerequisites for social revolution". In the first stages of its existence, the revolution in the colonies would not be a communist revolution; but "if from the very beginning a communist vanguard stands at its head, the revolutionary masses will be led to the correct path for achieving their aims by means of the gradual acquisition of revolutionary experience". There could be "no doubt" that the Congress of the Peoples of the East would play a "major historical role in the speeding up of the process of the separation of

the 'colonies' from the metropolitan countries", and in the "downfall of the capitalist order throughout the world"¹⁰⁶.

This left at least two problems unresolved. The strength of tradition, religion and custom among the eastern peoples might be such that a revolutionary organization seeking to win their support might be forced to make significant, perhaps even strategic concessions to precisely that obscurantism from which they wished to emancipate the eastern peoples. More important, arguably, was the problem of an anti-colonial movement which, while struggling against western imperialism, the main threat to the continued existence of the Soviet state, and welcoming close diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia, nevertheless conducted a reactionary policy in its own country, involving the persecution of developing communist and revolutionary organizations. The composition of the Congress itself revealed the heterogeneous nature of anti-imperialist forces in the East, and the relative weakness among them of committed communists. It was announced that 1891 delegates had attended the Congress (an examination of the lists of delegates and mandates revealed an attendance, in fact, of 2050¹⁰⁷). Thirty-two nationalities were represented; but the heaviest representation was from the Caucasus and Central Asian territories of the former Russian Empire, and there were only 7 Chinese delegates, and 14 Indians in attendance. Only half the delegates, moreover, described themselves as communists, the remainder including non-party groups, anarchists, and others; and there were only 40 women delegates¹⁰⁸.

Zinoviev's speech reflected these considerations. They were appealing, he told the Congress, "not only to those who are of communist persuasion, but also to non-party people". For this reason the Bolsheviks would "support groups that are not yet atone with us and on certain issues are even against us". They must "respect the religious disposition of the masses"; to overcome it would require "many years of work". They should in general "approach with caution the religious beliefs of the working masses of the East and of other countries". The policy pursued by the Kemalist government in Turkey, for instance, was "not our policy"; yet they were "prepared to assist every revolutionary struggle against the British government". The national movement's aim, he suggested, was to "help the East to rid itself of British imperialism". In the Communist

International, however, they had a "no less important aim of our own, which is to help the workers of the East in their struggle against the rich, to help them here and now to build their communist organizations, to explain to them what communism is, to prepare them for the real workers' revolution"¹⁰⁹.

The East was "utterly different from the West" and its interests were different, one of the delegates stated; rigid application of the ideas of communism would "meet with resistance" in the East. If Moslems were to adopt the Soviet system, "some special criterion will have to be applied in their case". Those from Turkestan had not previously seen Zinoviev or Radek or the other leaders of the revolution. He asked them to "remove your colonisers, working behind the mask of communism"¹¹⁰. In the East, added another delegate, they "certainly could not count on having a purely communist movement"; the movement in the East would assume a petty-bourgeois character, and would be a "movement for national self-determination and for unification of the East", led by "supporters of petty-bourgeois revolution and democracy". The Third International and the Communist Party must support this movement; at the same time, however, it "must be said that it is not this movement that will finally liberate the working masses", which could come about "only through social revolution"¹¹¹. The logic of this argument was apparent in a statement made somewhat later by Stalin: despite the monarchist views of the Emir of Afghanistan and of his associates, his struggle for independence was "objectively a revolutionary struggle.. since it weakens, disunites and undermines imperialism"¹¹². A movement might be revolutionary, he added, though lacking a proletarian element, a revolutionary or republican programme, or a democratic basis. If the argument were extended further, a regime might be considered 'objectively revolutionary' even if its programme was not simply not a socialist, but in fact an anti-socialist one. Such a conclusion, clearly, could offer little comfort to the embryonic communist movement in the East.

The Congress elected a Council of Propaganda and Action of 48 members, charged with the publication of a journal of propaganda, the issuing of pamphlets, and the rendering of assistance to revolutionary movements. A Presidium of seven was formed, two of whom should represent the Comintern executive; and the Council as a whole was to operate under the overall control of the Comintern¹¹³. Only one issue of the journal 'Peoples of the East' was

in fact issued¹¹⁴. A decision to establish a university of the social sciences for the East did, however, lead to the establishment in the autumn of 1920 of an Institute of Eastern Languages, whose function was to provide instruction for "those preparing themselves for practical activity in the East or in connection with the East"¹¹⁵.

While it seems clear that an over-optimistic view had been taken of the possibilities of revolution in the East, it does not appear to be correct to state that there is no record that the Council of Propaganda and Action ever, in fact, met¹¹⁶. It is first recorded as having met, indeed, on the day following its election, to arrange for publication of the report of the Congress and other technical matters¹¹⁷. On 2 November 'shock courses' were instituted, the first graduates emerging in January 1921. A further meeting of the Council was reported in February 1921. Baku, it emerged, had not been found an adequate base; and two further Councils had been established at Tashkent and in the Far East, although it was not yet clear whether these Councils should be under the control of Baku or of the Comintern directly. A delegation had been sent to Persia and another to Turkey. A joint technical bureau for the Councils had been attached to the executive of the Comintern¹¹⁸. The Council was disbanded early in 1921 (Zinoviev reported for the Comintern executive to the Third Congress that it was "working actively" but that statement almost certainly erred on the side of diplomacy¹¹⁹, but its effective existence, it has been stated, "ended long before that"¹²⁰. In a report to the Comintern executive in April 1921, the relative lack of results was blamed on a lack of workers and resources; but the situation itself had been misjudged. The Comintern executive, in its circular of the agenda of the Third Congress, announced the "first successes in work among the Eastern peoples". The Baku Congress, it stated, was of "great and undoubted historical importance". The forthcoming Congress was nevertheless ascribed the task of dealing with the Eastern question "not only theoretically.. but as a practical matter"¹²¹.

By this time the trade agreement, with its conditions governing propaganda and revolutionary activity in the East, had been signed. It has been suggested that the Bolshevik leaders accordingly virtually abandoned revolutionary work in the East, since they had "no desire to

endanger the hope of a provisional *modus vivendi* with the western Powers¹²². A school for the training of revolutionaries in Tashkent, to which exception had been taken by the British government, was indeed closed down, and its students transferred to the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, which had been established in April¹²³. Instructions to ensure that their action conformed with the provisions of the Agreement were sent to the Soviet representatives in Teheran and Kabul¹²⁴. Decisive in the Comintern strategy, however, as has been suggested, was the overall struggle against imperialism; the internal policy of an anti-imperialist regime, and communist work there, was ultimately of secondary importance. An important question of revolutionary theory and practice was in any case involved; and it had already become apparent, before the trade agreement was signed, that directly communist and revolutionary propaganda in many eastern countries might be premature.

The episode of the 'Ghilan Soviet republic' was perhaps the most instructive example. Following the seizure by Bolshevik forces of the port of Enzeli on the Caspian Sea, on 18 May 1920, and the occupation of Resht, a Soviet republic was established there headed by the "Persian democrat", Kutchuk Khan¹²⁵. Kutchuk despatched a message to Lenin, calling on him and "all the socialists belonging to the Third International for help in liberating us and all weak and oppressed nations from the yoke of Persian and English oppressors.. We have a firm faith that all the world will be governed by the ideal system of the Third International"¹²⁶. A Persian Communist Party was founded on 23 July at Enzeli, dedicated to a "struggle against British imperialism, against the Shah's government, and against all who support them"¹²⁷.

The attempt to introduce a purely communist policy in Ghilan, however, as Chicherin reported, "did not lead to successful results". A dispute developed between Kutchuk and the Azerbaidjani forces, which ended in the overthrow of Kutchuk's government on 31 July and his flight¹²⁸. The Central Committee of the Iranian Communist Party on 22 October adopted a resolution which admitted the "necessity for the revolution in Persia to pass through a bourgeois phase"¹²⁹. The Skatchko theses, which were published the following year, drew attention to the Persian social structure, and to the lack in particular of an industrial proletariat. The Ghilan adventure had "raised the ~~threat~~ of Russian domination and thus

weakened the anti-English movement"; and any further armed intervention from Russia would harm the interests of the revolution. The Iranian Communist Party moreover should "refrain from the immediate introduction of purely communist measures" and attempt to form a coalition ranging from the middle bourgeoisie to the "left democratic petty bourgeois intelligentsia". The "impossibility of the early appearance of communism in Persia" should be recognized; and communist measures, and the expropriation of large landowners, must be postponed until victory had been secured over foreign imperialists.¹³⁰ The party's delegate at the 1922 Congress of the Comintern admitted that membership had fallen sharply. His response, however, was to express the "hope that with the growth of an industrial proletariat the party's prospects would improve"¹³¹.

While it would be wrong, therefore, entirely to discount those tactical considerations which followed the establishment of diplomatic links with the western powers, it would be equally mistaken to overlook the extent to which the reduction of propaganda and revolutionary activity in the East sprang from a realization, after the experience of Ghilan and elsewhere, that such tactics might be premature, and that greater concessions might have for the present to be made to the strength of traditional forms of religion and authority. This was not to say that the East had been assigned a less important role in the strategy of world revolution. In the East, wrote Lenin to the contrary, the revolutionary movement was growing with notable strength, compared with a "certain unexpected stability" in western Europe. On the introduction to political life of the working masses of the East "depended to an enormous degree the fate of the whole western civilisation". British India in particular would have a "most revolutionary role in the next phase of world revolution"¹³². In his last published article, he contrasted the slowness with which the western countries were "completing their development towards socialism" with the fact that the East had "finally entered the revolutionary movement"; and reflected that "Russia, India, China etc. constitute a gigantic majority of the population of the world"¹³³.

The influence of Soviet Russia on the East, wrote a Soviet observer, though refraining from the conduct of official propaganda or action

against British interests in Afghanistan or India, was nevertheless "constantly growing". This was a consequence of Soviet foreign policy, of the refusal to act as an imperialist power, and could not be eliminated¹³⁴. Some significant successes were indeed secured in the field of diplomatic relations with Persia, Afghanistan and Turkey. The "stormy period of the Russian revolution" of late 1917 until 1920, when Soviet Russia was obliged to defend her independence against imperialist intervention and domestic counter-revolution, "significantly hindered the establishment of normal relations" between Soviet Russia and Persia¹³⁵. The Soviet government had, however, declared the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 which had divided Persia into spheres of influence null and void; and a subsequent communication confirmed this decision and declared no longer in effect any other agreement which might limit or infringe the "rights of the Persian people to free and independent existence"¹³⁶. A further note of June 1919 announced a series of measures in compensation for the damage which Tsarist Russia had inflicted upon the Persian state, and expressed the hope that corresponding compensation might be secured from the "imperialist government of England". All Persian debts to the Tsarist government were abolished; Russian interference in Persian customs, telegraph and postal revenues was ended "once for all"; the Caspian sea was to be declared free for navigation for Persian ships; the Russo-Persian border would be adjusted in accordance with the wishes of the local population; all Russian concessions in Persia lost their validity; and the Russian Bank in Persia, with its lands and branches, was declared the property of the Persian people. Roads, railway lines and port equipment belonging to Russia were transferred to Persian ownership. It was hoped that the initiative would "open a new era in the history of relations between Russia and Persia", and would assist the Persian people to "throw off the yoke of the English and Allied imperialists" and join the ranks of free nations¹³⁷.

The withdrawal of British troops from northern Persia allowed the Persian government to propose the despatch of a mission to Moscow, in the belief that the Soviet government would honour its declarations concerning the Tsarist treaties, with a view to the opening of communications and the development of trade. The decision was welcomed by the Soviet government¹³⁸. Events in Enzeli and Gilan however, led to the postponing of the negot-

iations until the following November; and an agreement was signed on 26 February 1921, at the same time announcing the abrogation of the 1919 agreement with Britain. Soviet Russia formally renounced again the forcible policy of the imperialist government of Russia towards Persia, and related treaties and conventions, and agreements with third parties to the detriment of Persian interests. Both sides agreed to respect the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, and to forbid the organization on their territory of groups with aims hostile to the other party. The Soviet government was granted the right to send forces into Persia should a third party (again, undoubtedly, Britain) attempt to use Persia as a base for attacks upon Soviet Russia. The Soviet government renounced all claims arising out of loans made to Persia under the Tsarist regime, and made over to the Persian people the property and all the assets of the Russian Bank in Persia, in accordance with its declared policy of opposition to the colonial policy of capitalism. Provision was made for the development of trade and the establishment of postal and telegraphic communications, and for diplomatic representation¹³⁹.

Rothstein was nominated as Soviet representative in Persia in January 1921, and he arrived there on 6 April. While the Persian people were reported to have welcomed his arrival, it was nevertheless a commentary upon Soviet relations with 'progressive' eastern regimes that the agreement was strongly championed by the merchants of Teheran¹⁴⁰.

In Afghanistan, Amanullah shortly after his accession to the throne addressed a message to his "great and noble friend", his "Excellency" the President of Soviet Russia, who had declared the dedication of his state to peace and the well-being of mankind and the freedom and equality of states and peoples, on behalf of the Afghan people, "striving for progress". The message was welcomed by Lenin and Kalinin, who proposed the establishment of diplomatic relations as a form of mutual insurance against "foreign robbers"¹⁴¹. Diplomatic relations were eventually opened in October 1919. The Afghan ambassador was received by the Foreign Affairs Commissariat, and Chicherin remarked on the "special importance" which was attached to friendly relations with Afghanistan, in view of her geographical position and the "military ability of her heroic people". Lenin welcomed the representative of a people "struggling against the imperialist yoke" in Moscow; and the consul replied that he hoped the

Russian people would "help the whole East to liberate itself from the yoke of European imperialism". The hour was near, he thought, when the whole world would see that there was no place for European imperialism in the East¹⁴².

The gift followed of a telegraph station, equipped "according to the last word of technology", to the "great and famous Emir"¹⁴³. British dissuasion delayed, but did not ultimately prevent the conclusion of a treaty on 28 February 1921. The agreement provided that neither party should enter a political or military agreement to the detriment of the interests of the other; and for the opening of consulates, with the normal diplomatic privileges, on the territory of either party. Both parties subscribed to the principle of the "freedom of the nations of the East on the basis of independence"; and the Soviet Russian government agreed in addition to return to Afghanistan some land on the border, in accordance with the wishes of the local population, and to render "financial and other material assistance"¹⁴⁴. Thus had been laid, wrote Chicherin to the Afghan Foreign Minister, a "firm basis for the joint work of Russia and Afghanistan, before whom stood the task of freeing the peoples of the East from the imperialists of western Europe"¹⁴⁵. The ratification of the agreement was recommended to the Afghan parliament in August: an assembly composed of popular representatives and of "landlords, big merchants, and the senior figures of the Moslem church"¹⁴⁶.

Both in the case of Iran and Afghanistan, then, the agreements with Soviet Russia included provisions for the development of trade and commerce; and received the support of local mercantile and business interests which, while evidently influential, could not be expected to sponsor radical social change in their respective countries. Trade with Afghanistan developed slowly; but that with Iran increased much more rapidly, from virtually nothing in 1919 to 5,725,000 roubles in 1921, over eight million roubles in 1921/2, and over a hundred million roubles in 1923/4, over three-quarters of which was accounted for by Soviet imports from Iran¹⁴⁷. The merchant section, at least, appeared to benefit from Soviet support of 'objectively progressive' regimes. It was by no means clear, however, that the interests of workers and peasants were being comparably advanced.

This emerged perhaps most clearly in the case of Soviet relations

with Kemalist Turkey. The Turkist revolution was declared by Izvestiya to constitute a counterpart to and prolongation of the October revolution.¹⁴⁸ In September Chicherin addressed an appeal to the 'Workers and Peasants of Turkey' calling for their co-operation in a joint effort to "throw out the European bandits"¹⁴⁹. In April 1920, however, Kemal Ataturk founded his revolutionary government, and approached the Soviet Russian government with a proposal for diplomatic and military co-operation. Chicherin's reply noted the "most lively interest" with which the "heroic struggle which the Turkish people (was) conducting for its independence and sovereignty" was being watched in Moscow, and wished its further success.¹⁵⁰

A Turkish delegation arrived in Moscow the following month to begin negotiations. The talks encountered difficulty in deciding upon the Armenian situation; but in November Kemal addressed a note to the Soviet government sympathising with the "greatness of the sacrifice the Russian nation has made in order to save humanity". He was "deeply convinced", as were the Turkish people, that "on the day when the toilers of the West and the oppressed peoples of Asia and Africa realise that international capital is using them in order to enslave and destroy them..; on the day when the realisation of the criminality of the colonial policy reaches the hearts of the toiling masses of the world - the rule of the bourgeoisie will be over"¹⁵¹. The negotiations concluded on 16 March 1921 with the signature of an agreement. The treaty noted the "solidarity in the struggle against imperialism" of its parties. A number of territorial disputes were resolved and defined. In view of the association between the national struggle for liberation of the countries of the East and the "struggle of Russian workers for a new social order", the right was endorsed of all nations to freedom and independence, and to a form of rule in accordance with their wishes. The international status of the Straits was left to a conference of the littoral states, provided its decisions did not threaten the security of Constantinople or Turkish sovereignty. All previous treaties which did not correspond with the interests of both parties were abrogated; and in particular Turkey was freed from financial or other obligations dating from Tsarist times. It was agreed to undertake the improvement of postal and telegraph communications, and the free exchange

of goods and movement of people.¹⁵² Considerable financial assistance followed for Kemal's regime¹⁵³; and military assistance in the war with Greece followed from the visit of Frunze to Turkey in November 1921, whose activities, formally limited to the conclusion of an agreement with the Ukrainian government, "extended far beyond the bounds of Turko-Ukrainian relations"¹⁵⁴.

A success, it might appear, had been recorded on the diplomatic field: and again at the expense of British interests in particular (whose forces obtained, perhaps, some consolation from the arrest of eighteen members of the Russian Trade Delegation in Constantinople in June. Their offices were searched and a revolutionary plot reportedly discovered¹⁵⁵). Kemal, however, left no doubt that the principles of his movement were "not Bolshevik principles". They had "never attempted.. to have our nation accept Bolshevik principles"¹⁵⁶. There was, he stated, "no room whatever in our country for this doctrine, our religion and customs as well as our social organization being entirely unfavourable to its implantation"¹⁵⁷. Not simply were communist theories "irreconcilable with our way of life"; it was moreover "evident that we must oppose them". The government, he declared, would be "absolutely right in taking measures against those who would wish to apply these theories to practice". In relations with Soviet Russia, the "question of the principles of capitalism and communism" was excluded¹⁵⁸.

Kemal was as good as his word. The Turkish Communist leader Subhi, who returned to the country at the end of 1920, was seized at Trabzon along with fourteen associates and drowned. Local jealousies appear to have been more directly responsible than Kemal's government itself¹⁵⁹. The government was, however, directly responsible for a legal and 'official' Communist party, which denied the need for violent revolution, and served, Safarov noted, as a "pretext for the persecution of genuine communists, not provided with official 'recognition'"¹⁶⁰. It was pointed out by a Turkish delegate at the Third Congress of the Comintern that while the Ankara government was fighting the Entente for the independence of Turkey, it was fighting, on the other hand, against any communist movement. The communist party founded by Kemal had the "provocative aim" of attempting to "end any communist influence in Turkey"; and he was conducting a "vigor-

ous struggle against Communists". Suleiman nevertheless professed to accept the need to continue to support the independence movement, since it was anti-imperialist, and the defeat of imperialism was the beginning of the world revolution¹⁶¹.

Radek wrote in Izvestiya that it was "imperative for the Ankara government to understand that it can save Turkey only if it realizes that there is no other ~~poli~~ for Turkey to pursue except the policy of unification with the proletarian revolution". A "true liberation" was possible for her "only in a union with Soviet Russia"¹⁶². In October 1922 an armistice was negotiated in the war with Greece, however, and further Soviet diplomatic support became less important for Kemal. The Congress of the Turkish Communist Party was dispersed by the police, and more than two hundred communists arrested throughout the country¹⁶³. The Soviet authorities were ordered to close the offices of the trade mission; and the Soviet diplomatic courier was harried and on one occasion was forced to give up his diplomatic bag¹⁶⁴. The question of the straits, moreover, was to be discussed at Lausanne by the western Powers as well as by the states around the Black Sea coast.

The Turkish communists were still advised to follow the leadership of the Turkish middle class, which was considered to be progressive in character¹⁶⁵. Radek conceded at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern that not only were the eastern peoples not led by communists, in most cases they were "not even led by bourgeois revolutionaries", but by "representatives of the dying feudal cliques, in the person of officers and functionaries". The "first duty" of Turkish communists nevertheless remained the support of the national ~~liberation~~ movement. "The whole future of the Turkish people is at stake. It is a question of whether the latter can free itself, or whether it will become the slave of world capitalism". In spite of the repression to which they had been subjected, Turkish communists should "not forget the near future behind the present. The task of the defence of Turkish independence, which is of great revolutionary importance, is not yet finished. You must defend yourselves against repression.. but you must also understand that the time has not yet come for the final struggle for emancipation, and that you have still a long road to travel side by side with the revolutionary bourgeois elements"¹⁶⁶.

Further arrests of Turkish communists took place in May 1923, on

the charge of having "wished to propagate subversive ideas of communism throughout the land and to modify the form of government"¹⁶⁷. Two labour organizations were forbidden to carry out any agitation or propaganda; First of May demonstrations were prohibited; and the organ of the International Union of Workers was suppressed¹⁶⁸. Surits, the Soviet envoy, told the press subsequently that Soviet relations with Turkey were "defined at the present time by the struggle for national independence which is still being waged by Turkey, and cannot yet be regarded as completed"¹⁶⁹. The Fifth Congress of the Comintern, however, which met in the summer of 1924, suggested that the decision to offer support to Kemal was being reconsidered. Manuilsky, speaking on the national and colonial question on behalf of the executive, noted that the Second Congress had defined the attitude of the eastern Communist parties towards the national liberation movement of a bourgeoisie which was "attempting to gain power". In Turkey, the bourgeoisie had now been "carried into power by a popular movement". The Turkish communists nevertheless continued to support native against foreign capital: a "serious error of tactics". Directives should be agreed upon which would "preserve our young parties from the repetition of the same errors"¹⁷⁰. (A recent Soviet study has noted that in attempting an analysis of the social structure of the colonial countries, the Communist International was confronted with problems of "gigantic difficulty". Few marxist studies of the question existed; marxist theory required not application so much as development¹⁷¹ -

The problem was not confined to Turkey. In Egypt, Roy noted at the same meeting, Zaghloul Pasha had expressed himself in "revolutionary phrases" and had been accepted as leader by the Egyptian people. He had taken power, however, by exploiting the nationalist movement; and the whole of the Central Committee of the Egyptian Communist Party had been put in prison and "horribly maltreated". A nationalist government, evidently, could come to power "without any national liberation taking place"¹⁷².

In India, probably the most important country from the point of view of British imperial interests, an attitude had to be taken to the mass anti-colonial movement under the leadership of Gandhi, a popular and courageous figure but incorrigibly backward-looking and non-violent in his views. Initially he was given the benefit of the doubt. The

Congress Party was "slowly feeling ~~its~~ way towards popular trust, securing for itself strong support from the people". Gandhi himself was stated to have "consciously selected the only path open to Indian patriots under the present regime of oppression"¹⁷³. In India there was a "wide-spread consciousness of national solidarity" and a "desire to finish with the existing government order: all this heralds an intensification of the struggle". Bolshevik spokesmen were not unaware of the pacifism of Gandhi's views, and of his atavistic social attitudes. But the movement which he led was held to represent a "major stage in the course of the liberation struggle of the Indian people": it was a "recognition of the necessity of the unity and solidarity of the Indian people against English domination", a "growing protest against the imperialist capitalism of the United Kingdom"¹⁷⁴. While the middle class leadership of the Congress was not a thorough-going one, wrote another commentator, class antagonisms were emerging, as they had in the course of the Russian revolution. "In the process of national revolution class contradictions develop"; and they were "already making themselves felt in Indian society". At this point the Indian proletariat and the peasantry would "raise the question of the social liberation of India"¹⁷⁵.

Later in the year it was announced that India had "definitely entered the phase of social struggle with the participation of the broad working-class and peasant masses". The slogan of national independence already did "not reflect the tendencies of her development" from a bourgeois into a social revolution¹⁷⁶.

Communist and working-class organizations, however, remained weak; the wave of strikes of 1918-22 died away; and Gandhi called off the non-co-operation policy. Gandhi, wrote Roy, had reduced the movement to impotence and inactivity. The Congress had "committed suicide by repudiating the revolutionary action of (its) own followers. A powerful revolutionary movement had been sacrificed on the altar of Gandhism"¹⁷⁷. The Comintern executive, in a message to the Congress in December 1922, urged that Gandhi's methods could not be successful: "British rule can and will be overthrown only by a violent revolution"¹⁷⁸. In 1920 and 1921, Roy told the Fifth Comintern Congress, the nationalist movement had "put terror into the hearts of the British imperialists"; but that period had now passed. The petty bourgeoisie was "ready to compromise with imperialism

for peace and money"; while the national bourgeoisie supported the Empire and had "even asked that the army and foreign relations remain the responsibility of the British government". It knew that the discontent with which it was confronted was an "economic discontent", and wished to be protected against it¹⁷⁹.

Reporting to the Congress, Manuilsky noted that the Commission on the National and Colonial question had had to consider "several deviations", among them that of Roy, who had "exaggerated the social movement in the colonies at the expense of the national movement". The class struggle was "relatively advanced" in India; but this was not the case elsewhere.¹⁸⁰ A 'Manifesto to the Peoples of the East', however, which was issued by the Congress, while affirming the need for an "anti-imperialist united front" against the "rapacious international bourgeoisie", specifically extended greeting to the "young communist parties of the East" which, it noted, were "working and fighting in conditions of extreme difficulty, economic backwardness, feudal survivals, and barbaric torture". The struggle was one against "native feudalists" as well as foreign imperialists; and every "honest expression" of the national liberation movement should be supported¹⁸¹.

Relations with the countries of the East encountered organizational as well as doctrinal difficulties. At the Third Comintern Congress in the summer of 1921, Zinoviev told delegates that the "first successes in work among the peoples of the East" had been secured. He added however that the Congress would have to approach the Eastern question "not only theoretically, as during the Second Congress, but practically". Without victory in Asia there could be no victory of the world proletarian revolution: this should become the guideline of every communist¹⁸². An article written before the Fourth Congress, however, a year later, repeated the call for a "practical approach" to questions which the Second Congress had considered "in a general and purely theoretical way". The Congress should attempt to "find a way leading to the close organizational union of the national revolutionary movements of the East with the struggle of the advanced proletariat". In particular, it should work out "concrete forms of co-ordinated action between the communist ~~parties~~ of the oppressing countries and the oppressed masses of the East". There was a need for a "shift from declarations" to action¹⁸³.

Manuilsky nevertheless found it necessary to tell the Fifth Congress that, while there was no need to reconsider the decision of the Second Congress, the meeting should devote its attention to the "means of their better application in the given concrete circumstances". The Second Congress had been "unable to indicate concrete means of realising a united working-class front between proletarians and colonies"¹⁸⁴. The first five years of activity of the Comintern, Zinoviev wrote, had seen "only a beginning.. to serious revolutionary work" in the colonies and semi-colonies. The following five years, he suggested, should be dedicated to work in just this area. There was a need for "more, far more attention to the East, to colonial and semi-colonial countries"¹⁸⁵.

In the East the revolutionary movement should aim "above all at English imperialism", added Zinoviev. When the English workers under communist leadership joined ~~with~~ the national liberation struggle of the peoples of the East, "then the proletarian revolution will be victorious in the East and throughout Europe"¹⁸⁶. The Communist International differed from previous Internationals in its claim to be a world, not simply a European organization¹⁸⁷. It remained clear, however, that the support of the anti-colonial movement on the part of the workers, or even Communist party members, of the metropolitan countries would not always be clear and unequivocal. It had been claimed, for instance, that "from the first foundation" of the British Communist Party that party had taken up a "clear stand against British imperialism" and had "carried out continuous activity in support of the national liberation movements"¹⁸⁸. Quelch, however, one of the British delegates at the Second Congress (and subsequently a member of the Central Committee of the British party) had pointed out that the average British worker would regard it as treason to support the colonial resistance to English rule¹⁸⁹.

The British party's introduction to its edition of the Theses of the Second Congress did call upon its supporters to "initiate and help small Communist groups within the subject countries preparatory for the future struggle, and (to) keep these in close touch with the Communist Party at home"¹⁹⁰. The Theses adopted by the Fourth Congress, however, drew attention to the "quasi-socialist tendencies towards colonialism of some categories of well-paid European workers". In particular, the creation of separate European communist organizations in the colonies (in Egypt

and in Algeirs) was, it was declared, a "concealed form of colonialism" which only helped imperialist interests¹⁹¹. Manuilsky, at the Fifth Congress, announced that he had "found no document in which the English comrades (had) clearly and unambiguously demanded the separation of the colonies from the British Empire". The French party had gone so far as to omit sections of Comintern documents, and one section had even condemned the International for appealing to people of a different race. The British comrades, he added, were "even more deserving of reproach for their passivity in the matter of colonial propaganda"¹⁹².

There was, then, little reason to doubt the concern of the Communist International to secure the overthrow of world, and especially of British imperialism. It was equally apparent that a number of serious difficulties were frustrating its attempt to do so. The disguised colonialism of the Second International parties seemed only incompletely to have been eliminated from the very heart of the movement, the western European Communist parties; and major organizational and technical problems remained. More crucially, no answer had yet been found to the problem of mounting an effective and united challenge to the imperialist Powers, through close fraternal links with anti-imperialist governments in Asia, without at the same time sacrificing the (often opposed) interests of developing communist and working-class organizations in the same countries. The policy of helping the bourgeoisie of the Eastern countries to "erect a strong barrier against the imperialist designs of the British and other capitalists" might, Chicherin admitted, "to those of us who are not capable of a dialectical argument.. appear a betrayal of communist principles". The "bourgeoisie-oriented stand taken by the Workers' and Peasants' Government", in particular, while it appeared likely to strengthen the "struggle against imperialism, irrespective of what form it takes"¹⁹³, appeared likely to do so often at the expense of the developing communist and revolutionary movement in the eastern countries.

It was this latter aspect of the question, the impact of the Bolshevik revolution and revolutionary principles upon the Asian peoples and emerging political elites, and the development of marxist parties, which particularly concerned the British government. Yet it appeared that those who were to be centrally involved in the struggle against Western

colonialism applied a nationalist rather than a revolutionary interpretation to events in Russia. In the case, for instance, of Ho Chi Minh, one of the hundred thousand Vietnamese in France during the war, so strongly patriotic were his views that it has been considered an open question where he would have stood politically had any French political party other than the Communist party espoused a deliberate policy of eventual independence for the colonies^{193a}. He has himself related that at the time he supported the October revolution "only instinctively.. I loved and admired Lenin because he was a great patriot who liberated his countrymen". At first "patriotism, and not communism" had led him to Lenin and the Communist International. The most important question had been which International supported the colonial peoples' struggle. He was read Lenin's theses on the national and colonial question, and "although the political terms were 'very difficult to understand", the answer seemed clear. "From that moment I completely supported Lenin and the Third International"¹⁹⁴. Writing in Pravda in 1924 on 'Lenin and the Colonial Peoples', he admitted that the black and yellow peoples did not know who Lenin was, or where Russia was situated; but they had heard that in that country the exploiters had been expelled, and the people ruled their own country "without.. Governor Generals". They had learned that Lenin was appealing to white people to help black and yellow people to "liberate themselves from the oppression of all foreign oppressors: Residents, Governor Generals and the like"¹⁹⁵. A new programme, it has been noted, against colonial rule had been provided for the nationalist-minded Vietnamese intellectuals and workers. In South-East Asia as a whole during the 1920s, the "major ingredients" of marxism were "nationalism and anti-imperialism"¹⁹⁶.

The Bolshevik revolution, according to Mao Tse Tung, brought Marxism to China¹⁹⁷ (while it was true that portions of the Communist Manifesto had been translated into Chinese as early as 1906). Within a year or two, the debate on China's future was "completely altered", and interest in the Russian revolution "gradually deepened throughout the Chinese intelligentsia"¹⁹⁸. Mao's thinking, however, continued to find a place for traditional Chinese themes and anarchism besides marxism; and Li Ta Chao, who in November 1918 had drawn attention in an article

to the 'Victory of Bolshevism', offered in a discussion of his 'marxist views' "something less than a wholehearted endorsement" of marxism¹⁹⁹. Popular unrest in China began after the war as a movement in defence of the principles of self-determination, betrayed by the decision of the Versailles Conference to cede Shantung province to Japan. The radical nationalism of the May 4th Movement counterposed itself to imperialism; but it was not revolutionary. Lenin was first translated into Chinese in 1919²⁰⁰. Li believed that the October revolution should be commemorated by "all the people of the national states which, like China, are victims of oppression.." He regarded Lenin as the "liberator of the oppressed peoples of the world"; his death was the "greatest loss" especially to the oppressed nations of the East, like China. Lenin, however, if a revolutionary hero, appeared not a marxist theorist but one who sympathised with Chinese national aspirations²⁰¹.

The Russian revolution was noted by the Cabinet on 29 June 1917 as among the factors which had "affected political feeling in India materially". Balfour noted on 5 July the "increased mental turmoil engendered by the Russian revolution"; and Montagu argued, in a Cabinet paper, that it was among the factors which suggested the expediency of a substantial reform in that country's constitutional position²⁰². The Indian press, it was remarked, was "full of articles and notes on the Revolution". The editor of the 'Modern Review' of Calcutta declared that "all men and women of India who have heard of the revolution in Russia understand its meaning and know what a vast range of peoples it will affect for the better; they will have their minds filled with longings for political betterment and with a conviction that they themselves are not unfit ~~for~~ exercise political power and rights". The editor deprecated the suggestion that there could or "ought to be a revolution in India like the one which has taken place in Russia". It formed, nevertheless, a reminder to British statesmen that the right of nations to free political institutions applied as much to India as to Russia, Belgium and Serbia²⁰³. The government's Report on Indian constitutional changes, which was published in 1918, commented: "The Revolution in Russia and its beginning was regarded in India as a triumph over despotism, notwithstanding the fact that it has involved that unhappy country in anarchy and dismember-

ment; it has given an impetus to Indian political aspirations"²⁰⁴.

It appeared to be nationalist ideas, however, rather than revolutionary ones which had thus been stimulated in that section of Indian opinion which stood in opposition to colonial rule. Their ideas of Bolshevism, confessed the Bombay Chronicle, were "very vague"; although it was clear that their programme "took into consideration the necessities of the peasants". The Calcutta Bengalee considered that the movement was "comprehensively national"; the "result of a unity of patriotic outlook and sentiment which.. had begun to manifest itself for some time". Even the murders, the unrest, the spoliation and the disregard of laws, wrote the Madras Hindu, were "symptomatic of the apotheosis of a nation. The Bolsheviks, wrote the Modern Review, were "striving to make Russia better and nobler than anything she has ever been"²⁰⁵.

It was indeed "paradoxical" that while the Revolution was well received in India and affected the political life of the country, the revolution's socialist principles "appeared to the Indian leaders as something foreign to their country"²⁰⁶. Jawaharlal Nehru, who made a visit to Soviet Russia at about this time, noted the extent of interest in India regarding developments there. This was, he thought, because its example might help them to "find some solution for the great problems which face the world today", the more so since conditions in Russia were not very dissimilar to conditions in India. His impressions were "very favourable": indeed to be in a Russian prison, he suggested, might be "far preferable than to be a worker in an Indian factory". They had grown up in the tradition, carefully nurtured by Britain, of hostility to Russia. While, however, there was intense antagonism between British imperial policy and Soviet Russia, Russia, he thought, "above everything.. desires peace", and ordinarily should form the "best of neighbours" to India. The age-long rivalry of Britain and Russia was "based on the greed and covetousness of British imperialism", which Indian interests surely lay in ending. India herself had "nothing to fear from Russia"²⁰⁷.

On the question of the rights of nations and self-determination, British policy compared very badly with Soviet. It was, indeed, noted at an early stage by the nationalist press that unlike Britain, Soviet Russia not only promised but implemented the principle of self-determination²⁰⁸.

The President of the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, which was held in December 1917, drew attention to India's new "free and self-ruling neighbours across the northern frontier". In future, he declared, unless India won self-government, she would "enviously look at her self-governing neighbours and the contrast will intensify her interest". The parallel suggested itself continually between Tsarist rule in ~~Russia~~ and British imperial rule in India²⁰⁹. What was particularly appealing to Nehru, also, was the "great progress made by the backward regions of Central Asia under the Soviet regime", whose problems appeared similar to those of India. The Russian revolution appeared, he later recalled, to have succeeded in "bringing up the underdog and.. equalizing people". It was also welcomed as a "counter-poise" to Britain²¹⁰.

The Indian nationalists' sympathies, however, were "very much with Lenin and the others, ~~but~~ ^{with} knowing much about Marxism". He himself had not read anything about Marxism by then. While all in favour of Russia, it would be, he thought, "absurd to copy blindly what had taken place in ~~Russia~~"; and he was "very far from being a communist"²¹¹. This was even less true of Gandhi himself: who wrote that "hardly ever" had he known anybody to cherish such loyalty as he had done himself for the British constitution. With "careful perseverance", he had learned the tune of the National Anthem, and he "joined in the singing whenever it was sung". He held that India could achieve her complete emancipation only within and through the British Empire; and vigorously assisted the recruiting campaign during the war. The repressive legislation introduced by the government after the war altered his attitude; and in particular, the Amritsar shooting demonstrated to him what "inhumanities and barbarisms" the British government was "capable of perpetrating in order to maintain its power"²¹². Yet his views on violence, and his dislike of revolutionary methods, remained unchanged; nor did he espouse Bolshevism. India, he wrote at this time, "does not want Bolshevism. The people are too peaceful to stand anarchy.. Let us recognize the Indian psychology. The average Musselman of India is quite different from the average Musselman of other parts of the world.. The Parsis and Christians love peace more than strife"²¹³.

In the movement as a whole there was "marked ignorance" about Bolshevism; and in no way, it has been asserted, was Russian influence

reflected in the nationalist programme of action²¹⁴. Subsequent members of the Indian Communist Party, certainly, have recorded the "very superficial" character of their knowledge of Marxism, and the lack of Marxist texts. Lenin was even seen as divine providence. "Lenin is the instrument of God's will", declared the father of one subsequent member. The trials of Indian Communists, ironically, helped to clarify the political issues involved²¹⁵. Even the leaders of the emerging Indian labour movement tended to assign a spiritual task to the unions. Lala Lajpat Rai, who presided over the inaugural session of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1920, declared that "foreign capitalism must be opposed in common by all workers because the interest of workers all over the world is one and the same". At the same time, however, he repudiated marxism, since it would bring to India, a land of "mighty spirititualism, the evils of expiring industrial civilisation"²¹⁶.

The anti-colonial movement, admittedly, appeared both to be widening and to be becoming increasingly radical. The Indian National Congress, which Nehru found in 1912 to be "very much an English-knowing upper class affair where morning coats and well-pressed trousers were greatly in evidence", a "social gathering" rather than a political session, became after the war a mass movement²¹⁷. The trade union movement developed rapidly; in 1920 the All India Trade Union Congress was formed. Gandhi's first big civil disobedience campaign was inaugurated, being suspended in February 1922 when excesses occurred "at a moment when it might have become a full-scale revolution"²¹⁸.

The Congress was pledged to 'swaraj'; but while this meant political independence and democracy to the younger men, this was not necessarily true of all the leaders. The motive force of the movement remained, according to Nehru, "nationalism pure and simple". Gandhi was "continually laying stress on the religious and spiritual side of the movement", which "took on a revivalist character so far as the masses were concerned"²¹⁹.

A number of Communist-aligned groups existed at this time, generally in exile and often, it appears, enjoying some Soviet subsidy. Roy, the most prominent figure, published a paper called originally Vanguard of Indian Independence from 1922, copies of which, and of Roy's book 'India in Transition', were soon reaching India²²⁰. A number of emissaries

maintained contact with western Europe, and with Moscow. Attempts, however, to build up an Indian Communist Party continued to be frustrated by personal jealousies and antagonisms. Radek told the Fourth Comintern Congress that "one must.. see things as they are". In India, in the "great trade union movement.., in this great wave of strikes, we play no roles yet.. We have not yet taken the first step as a real workers' party"²²¹. The attempt, moreover, to win over the Congress to a more radical position were decisively rebuffed at the Gaya Congress at the end of 1922, a "clear defeat" for the Communists; and the attempt to secure the election of Das in place of Gandhi was unsuccessful, despite Das's repudiation of violence and his adoption of an "anti-Bolshevik tone"²²².

The government nevertheless continued to consider non-violence a "cloak" to cover some vast secret design which would burst forth in violent upheaval one day. The Rowlatt sedition had followed the appointment in 1918 of a commission to inquire into the "criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movements"²²³. The Russian revolution, the Viceroy declared, had been "seized upon as a pretext on which to base claims to sweeping changes". Addressing the budget session of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1919. Lord Chelmsford again warned the country of the menace of Bolshevism to India. He informed the Council of the establishment of a special staff to deal with the danger of Bolshevik agents and propaganda. The official report for the year noted that areas of Central Asia had been "disturbed by the pioneers of intrigues and agents of disintegration.. To the German arms there succeeded the more formidable menace of Bolshevik ideas"²²⁴. The Times declared that its view had "always been.. that the tentacles of conspiracy extended far beyond India and that.. the secret leaders were in touch with (the) Russian Bolshevik movement"²²⁵.

Government intelligence seems, however, to have remained more than equal to this - apparently - serious threat. Roy's journals were discovered in transit, and many emissaries arrested. In 1923 censorship was tightened, copies of the Vanguard were seized, and surveillance was increased. The movement was left "crippled and disorganized"²²⁶. The Peshawar Conspiracy Case of May 1923 dealt a "severe, almost paralysing blow", it has been stated, to Indian Communism. The Cawnpore Conspiracy

trial led to the imposition of four-year sentences upon those leaders who appeared as defendants, and had a further disruptive effect upon the movement. The communist, however, as distinct from the nationalist movement in India had never begun seriously to threaten the British position. The appeal judges in the Cawnpore case concluded that the conspiracy was "absurd and unbelievable", and had at no time been a serious threat to the state²²⁷.

Yet the concern of the imperial Power was ultimately understandable. While there was abundant historical precedent for Anglo-Russian rivalry in the area, Britain's "stupendous and vital interests" in Asia were now, in the words of the British ambassador in Berlin of the time, "menaced by a danger graver than any which existed in the time of the old Imperialistic regime in Russia". The Bolsheviks now had the "weapons of class-revolt propaganda, appealing to the proletariat of the world, and the quasi-religious fanaticism of Lenin"²²⁸. The imperial Power faced, in a colonial world alive with revolt, an adversary which combined an historically challenging role with teachings of class revolt and colonial liberation which attracted support not only in India and in the colonial countries, but in Britain itself. It was, in the circumstances, almost beside the point that the radical and working-class movement remained in a tiny minority within the broader nationalist movement. The implicit threat was, and was recognized to be, a very real one.

- 1 Pravda 24 September 1921
- 2 Pravda 24,25,27 September 1921
- 3 Pravda 18 November 1921. Hodgson communicated Radek's original article to the Foreign Office. It was described as "scandalous" in a minute; but Radek, it was added, was "not popular with Chicherin and the Soviet Foreign Office, who regard him as a meddler" (Hodgson to F.O., F.O. 371.6855.N11138, 5 October 1921; Evans minute, 6 October). A further despatch contained translations of Radek's articles, and photocopies of the source to which he had referred, Ostinformation (F.O. 371.6855.N11336, received 11 October 1921).
- 4 Vestnik NKID No 2 13 August 1919
- 5 Chicherin: Vneshnyaya Politika za Dva Goda (Moscow 1920) p29; Kamenev: Tretyi Internatsional: populyarny ocherk (Prague 1920) p27
- 6 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional No 6, November 1919, cols 825,826
- 7 Trotsky: Mein Leben (Berlin 1930) p327, cited in The Diplomats, ed. G.A. Craig and F. Gilbert (N.J. 1953; 1965 ed., N.Y.) Vol 1 p235
- 8 Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 15(133) 1922, 7 November, pp51,53. A recent account of the organization of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs is Vygodskii, S. Yu.: U Istokov Sovetskoi Diplomatii (Moscow 1965) esp. p30f. A more anecdotal account by Ivan Maisky is in his Vneshnyaya Politika RSFSR 1917-1922 (Moscow 1922) pp19-26. In January 1918, he recalled, there were about 200 on the staff. The Vice Commissar Zalkind had to evict Whites from the building with revolver in hand, and always went around carrying a large Mauser. Machineguns were placed at strategic points in the building; and the guards occasionally started shooting to relieve their boredom. Late one evening, according to Maisky, Leo Karakhan was seated working at his desk when machinegun fire broke out in the corridor outside. Alarmed, he rushed out of his office, to be told by the guard that he had just received a new machinegun, and was "just trying it out".
- 9 The Diplomats op.cit. 1 p248: Von Laue: Soviet Diplomacy: Chicherin
- 10 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional: 1 Raschirenniy Plenum 21 February-4 March 1922, Russkii Vopros; Poretsky: Our Own People (London 1969) p79
- 11 Zinoviev: Report to the Second World Congress (Amsterdam 1920) p376, cited in Kendall: Revolutionary Movement in Britain p396 note 1
- 12 Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 15(133) 7 November 1922, 'Za Pyat' Let' p3-4

- 13 cited in The Diplomats op.cit.p244 note 14
- 14 cited in Baykov: Development of the Soviet Economic System (London 1946) pp47-8
- 15 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 36 pp35,36
- 16 ibid Vol 35 p170 (14 December 1917), p247 (7 January 1918)
- 17 ibid Vol 37 p73 (24 August 1918), p 131 (3 November 1918)
- 18 ibid Vol 37 p440, January 1919
- 19 ibid Vol 37 p24 (1 August 1918), p74 (24 August 1918), p97 (3 October 1918)
- 20 ibid Vol 37 pp99,113; Vol 38 p246
- 21 ibid Vol 37 pp520,511 (7 March 1919)
- 22 ibid Vol 39 p89 (16 July 1919)
- 23 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional No 1 1919, 'Long live 1 May', col 28
- 24 Klyuchnikov i Sabanin ii No 170 pp237-8, 9 April 1919
- 25 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 38 p262
- 26 ibid Vol 38 p294,318,384
- 27 ibid Vol 38 p318, 18 April 1919
- 28 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional No 1, 1919, col 38
- 29 ibid col 42
- 30 ibid col 44
- 31 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 38 p133, 18 March 1919
- 32 Klyuchnikov i Sabanin ii p120, Treaty of Friendship with the Finnish Socialist Workers' Republic, 1 March 1918 (reprinted with omissions in Degras: Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy Vol 1 1917-1924 (London 1951) pp47-8 (not in DVPSSSR Vol i)
- 33 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 40 p31
- 34 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional: II Kongress: stenograficheskii otchet (2nd ed., Moscow 1934) p11
- 35 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional No 10 1920, col 1445
- 36 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 40, pp203,204, 6 March 1920
- 37 Zinoviev: Pyat' Let Kominterna, 1 March 1924, Sochineniya Vol 15 p280
- 38 Pravda 22 September 1920; Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 42 p20.
The Russo-Polish war, according to Litvinov's later account, was a "great struggle between world revolution and counter-revolution". In mid-August the Russian proletariat a "broad world horizon", lit with the glow of the victorious European revolution". The urban proletariat had passed partly to the Soviet position, but "in the mass" it had

remained "faithful to social patriotism and the P.P.S." (the Polish Socialist party). The Bolsheviks had overestimated the political 'ripeness' of the Polish proletariat and peasantry (Tanin (Litvinov): *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika SSSR 1917-1924* (Moscow 1925) pp.87,86).

- 39 Lenin: *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii* Vol. 42 p.59, Vol. 36 p.440
- 40 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional No. 1, 1924, Cols. 142,143.
- 41 Zinoviev at meeting of IKKI, February 1922, cited by Degras: *United Front Tactics in the Comintern: St. Antony's 'Papers IX* (London 1960) p.10.
- 42 Pravda 13 November 1921.
- 43 cited in Degras: *The Communist International Vol. 1 1917-1922* (London 1956) p.224.
- 44 Lenin: *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii* Vol. 43 p.19.
- 45 Zinoviev, 'Further on the Tactic of the United Front', Kommunisticheskii International No. 20, 1922, Col. 5149.
- 46 Pravda 12 October 1923; Lenin; *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii* Vol. 36 p. 76.
- 47 Lenin: *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii* Vol. 16, pp. 67-71.
- 48 ibid Vol. 17, pp.174-83.
- 49 ibid Vol. 23 p. 167.
- 50 ibid Vol. 27 pp. 252-66; cited according to Carrere d'Encausse and Schram: *Marxism and Asia* (London 1969) pp. 135-40; and Sochineniya (4th edition) Vol. 21 p.368
- 51 Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, *DVPSSSR* Vol. i No. 3 pp. 14-15, 15 November 1917; To the Moslem Toilers of Russia and the East, *DVPSSSR* Vol. i No. 18 pp.34-5, 3 December 1917.
- 52 To the Moslem Toilers of Russia and the East, ibid, pp.34-5.
- 53 Soviet archival source, cited in Kharlamov (ed) *Leninskaya Vneshnyaya Politika Sovetskoi Strany* (Moscow 1969) p. 133; Warth: *The Allies and the Russian Revolution* (N.C. 1954) p.199.
- 54 Buchanan to F.O., F.O. 371. 3017, 232519, 5 December 1917.
- 55 F.O. 361.3020.231931, 6 December 1917.
- 56 Memorandum, F.O. 371.3020.236313, 6 December 1917; Warth op.cit. p.200
- 57 Osetrov, Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 15(133) 7 November 1922 p.33. In December 1919, Zinoviev discussed the situation of foreign Communist Parties at the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets. He referred to those in Europe, America, the Balkans and Scandinavia; but not to those of the East: to discuss other countries, he excused

himself, would "make my report too lengthy" (RSFSR: Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets, 5-9 December 1919 (Moscow 1920) pl16). A statement of the "pressing problems of the international working-class movement" in June 1920 devoted a single paragraph to the East. Only the "first tongues of flame" of the revolutionary fire had ignited there; it was only a "weak beginning" (Zinoviev: Nabolevshye Voprosy mezhdunarodnogo rabocheho dvizheniya (Moscow 1920) pl25).

58 DVPSSSR Vol i pl5

59 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 13, 16 February 1919, 21, 13 April 1919

60 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 20(28) 1 June 1919

61 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 3, 24 November 1918

62 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 15(23), 27 April 1919

63 NKID: Godovoi Otchet VII S~~8~~ezdy Sovetov , 1918-1919 (Moscow 1919), cited according to DVPSSSR Vol ii p620

64 NKID: Godovoi Otchet VII S''ezdy Sovetov ibid p27 (omitted from DVPSSSR Vol ii)

65 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 46, 7 December 1919

66 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 19(27), 25 May 1919

67 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 26 May 1919, 21 September 1919; cited according to Eudin and North: Soviet Russia and the East 1920-1927 (Stanford 1957) pl61

68 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 24 November 1918 (omitted from his Sochineniya)

69 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 39 p304 (November 1919)

70 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 41 pl22, 20 May 1920

71 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 14, 10 May 1920

72 Vestnik NKID No3-4, 15 May 1921, p24-5, cited in Eudin and North, op. cit. p76

73 Vestnik NKID No 3 1920, 27 February 1920, pl3

74 Vestnik NKID No 8, 15 October 1920

75

76 Pavlovich, 'Angliya i Rossiya', Vestnik NKID 1-3, 1922 p33; Stein, Revolutsionny Vostok 4-5, 1928, pl73. The latter question was also dealt with by Reisner in Novy Vostok 1, 1922, ppl19-32

77 Vestnik NKID No 2, 1919, 13 August 1919 p7

78 Chicherin: Voprosy Vneshnei Politiki: Vypusk 1: Doklady i Noty (Saratov 1920) p21

79 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 42 p71,72

- 80 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 41 p133, June 1920
- 81 ibid Vol 39 pp318,327,329
- 82 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional: II Kongress: stenograficheskie otchet (2nd ed., Moscow 1934)p27, Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 41 p233. Most of the relevant documents, together with a substantial introduction, have been collected in Shirinya, K.K. et.al.(ed.): V.I. Lenin i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional (Moscow 1970).
- 83 Kongress ibid pp28-9, Lenin ibid 234-5
- 84 Kongress ibid p99, Lenin ibid p241. This question is dealt with in Haithcox, J.P.: The Roy-Lenin debate on colonial policy Journal of Asian Studies Vol 23(1), November 1962 pp93-101; and in Whiting, A. S.: Soviet Politics in China 1917-1924 (Stanford 1953).
- 85 Kongress ibid pp99,101,103; Lenin ibid pp242-7
- 86 Kongress ibid p106
- 87 ibid p155
- 88 ibid p161. Serrati's remarks aroused some indignation.
- 89 ibid p492,493
- 90 V.I. Lenin i Kommunisticheskii Internatsional p250f
- 91 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 41 p247
- 92 Maring, Kongress op.cit. p139; Zinoviev, ibid p458
- 93 ibid p114
- 94 Narody Dal'nego Vostoka No 2, June 1921, col 113; Pavlovich, Novy Vostok No 5, 1924 p3
- 95 Sorkin, G.Z.: I S'ezd Narodov Vostoka (Moscow 1961) p15; Kommunisticheskii Internatsional 12, 1920, cols 2261-2
- 96 Narody Vostoka No 1, October 1920 p4, p15
- 97 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional i Osvobozhdenie Vostoka: Pervyi S'ezd Narodov Vostoka: 1-8 Sentyabrya 1920 g.: stenograficheskie otchety (Petrograd 1920); excerpts cited in Carrere d'Encausse and Schram: Marxism in Asia pp170-178
- 98 ibid
- 99 ibid p70
- 100 Pravda 8 September 1920
- 101 Sorkin op.cit. pp20,21; Pravda 16 September 1920. References were made (as has been noted above) to the Congress in British diplomatic notes of the period immediately following.

- 102 Narody Vostoka pp57-61, October 1920
- 103 cited in Sorkin op.cit. p41
- 104 Narody Vostoka October 1920 p9
- 105 Carr, E.H.: The Bolshevik Revolution Vol 3 (London 1953; 1966ed)p271
- 106 Pavlovich, Narody Vostoka pp8-10
- 107 Pervyi S''ezd Narodov Vostoka p5, Izvestiya 21 September 1920, Tivel' i Kheimo: Desiat' Let Kominterna v resheniyakh i tsifrakh (Moscow-Leningrad 1929) p373; the revised figure is cited in Sorkin op.cit p21
- 108 Sorkin op.cit p40, 22; Degras: Communist International Vol i p105. According to the report in Pervyi S''ezd.. p5, thirty-seven nationalities were represented (including eight Chinese) and altogether 55 women were present (not all in the capacity of delegates).
- 109 Pervyi S''ezd ibid
- 110 ibid
- 111 ibid; Carrere d'Encausse and Schram op.cit ppl71-77
- 112 Stalin: Sochineniya Vol 6 ppl42-5, d'Encausse and Schram p186
- 113 Sorkin op.cit.p39; Tivel' i Kheimo: Desiat' Let Kominterna.. add that the Council's membership was divided into 35 Communists and 13 non-party members (but they found the Congress to have been attended by only 29 Eastern nationalities; p373).
- 114 Narody Vostoka (Baku), October 1920. Its publication was intended in Russian, Turkish, Persian and Arabic; the Russian version only has been examined. Carr: Bolshevik Revolution Vol iii p269 note 5 was unable to trace any copies of the journal.
- 115 Novy Vostok L, 1922, p456, Carr: Bolshevik Revolution iii p270
- 116 Degras: Communist International i p106
- 117 Sorkin op.cit.p117 43
- 118 Izvestiya 18 February 1920
- 119 Protokolle des III Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale p 211, cited in d'Encausse and Schram: Marxism and Asia p41
- 120 Sorkin op.cit. p44
- 121 Kommunisticheskii Internatsional No 17, June 1921 col 4031, Degras: Communist International i p223
- 122 d'Encausse and Schram: Marxism and Asia p41
- 123 cited in Eudin and North: Soviet Russia and the East pp84,85. The Foreign Office received a report on the Communist University of the

Toilers of the East on 11 October 1921, based on a report in Izvestiya 12 August 1921. By July of that year, 522 students had been enrolled, including thirty-two nationalities of the East, among them 72 Persians. The Persians and Chinese were reported to be a "considerably higher cultural level than the Turkmens and Caucasian Ingush mountaineers". There was a shortage of lecturers, and interpreters had to be used to translate the lectures. The aim was stated to be the formation of a "laboratory for the East", to give the East "hundreds of educated and trained Communists" (F.O. 371.6845. N11362, 11 October 1921). A subsequent report was more reassuring. The students, Hodgson told Curzon, were believed to be "of a low social category"; and there were now no Indians present. Efforts had been made to use English as a language of instruction, but "as neither (the) students nor (the) professors are familiar with the language, I understand nothing but confusion results". He attached "no serious importance" to the body. Harvey appended a minute: "Not a very promising institution" (F.O. 371.6845.N13143, 29 November 1921).

124 quoted in Chapter Four above; DVPSSSR Vol iv No 166, Kommunist 18, 1956
 125 NKID: Godovoi Otchet VIII S'ezdy Sovetov 1919-20 gg (Moscow 1921) p111
 p72; this passage has been omitted from the version in DVPSSSR Vol ii.
 126 Novy Vostok 29, 1930, pp106-7, cited in Eudin and North p97, Carr p245
 127 Pravda 8 August 1920; Kommunisticheskie International Nos 13, 14,
 1920 cols 2551-2, 2889-92, cited in Carr: Bolshevik Revolution iii p246
 128 NKID: Godovoi Otchet VIII S'ezdy Sovetov p72. The Persian government, on the initiative of the Soviet government, agreed to allow the departure from Persia of the insurgents: NKID: Godovoi Otchet IX S'ezdy Sovetov za 1920-1921 gg (Moscow 1921) p125 (omitted from the version reprinted in DVPSSSR Vol iv).

129 NKID: Godovoi Otchet VIII S'ezdy Sovetov p73
 130 Zhizn' Natsional'nostei 7(105), 17 March 1921. The adoption of the 22 October resolution, Chicherin considered, had "put an end to the attempts to introduce a communist order in Persia", and had recognized that a bourgeois revolution must first be accomplished (Izvestiya 6 November 1921, and in Chicherin: Stat'i i Rechi po voprosam mezhdunarodnoi politiki (Moscow 1961) p198. Safarov, in a study of

the 'Problems of the East', wrote that the support which had been extended to Kutchuk Khan reflected an "over-estimate of the real relation of forces", which had benefitted only world imperialism. Where working-class organizations were weak, there was a need to avoid "revolutionary adventurism". A NEP period, a "long transitional period", was "necessary also for the Eastern countries. One could not hope, for instance, immediately to close the bazaars, and to end the strength of Islam and tribal affiliations (Safarov: Problemy Vostoka (Petrograd 1922) p171,1676,179

- 131 cited in Zabih: The Communist Movement in Iran (Berkeley 1966) p52
- 132 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 44 p1,292,282,38; Sochineniya
- 133 (3rd edition) Vol 27 pp415-7
- 1334 Krotkov, Angliya i Rossiya, Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 15(133) 7 November 1922
135 Novy Vostok 3, 1923, p95
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- 164 DVPSSSR Vol v p635,24 October 1922, and p650, 1 November 1922
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- 166 cited according to d'Encausse and Schram: Marxism and Asia ppl93-4. The Theses adopted by the Congress noted,however, that "only a thoroughly revolutionary line, based on the bringing into active struggle of the working masses, and on a conclusive break with all support of agreements with imperialism in the interests of its own class rule", would be "capable of bringing the exploited masses to victory" (Theses of the Fourth Congress, contained in Kun, B (ed.) Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh (Moscow 1933))
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- 193 Politicus (?Chicherin): My i Vostok Kommunisticheskaya Revolyutsiya Nos 13-14 (52-53), 15 July-1 August 1923, in Eudin and North pp195-6
- 193a Ho Chi Minh: On Revolution, ed. B. Fall (London 1967, 1968 ed) px. His adopted name at this time, Nguyen Ai Quoc, meant 'Nguyen loves his country'.
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- 197 Mao Tse Tung: Selected Works Vol iv p413, Schram: Mao Tse Tung (London 1966; 1967 ed.) p47
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- 202 Cabinet Minutes 29 June, 5 July 1917, and Montagu's paper G.T. 1615, in WC 214 Appendix i, Cab 23/3
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- 205 cited in Imam, 'The Effects of the Russian Revolution on India', St Antony's Papers ^{Vol. 18} pp76,77
- 206 ibid p96
- 207 Nehru, J. : Soviet Russia (Allahabad 1928) pp2-3,87,142-7
- 208 ibid p97; Bombay Chronicle 20 October 1920, cited in Imam art.cit. ^{p81}
- 209 Imam art.cit. pp81,91
- 210 Nehru: Autobiography (London 1936; 1942 ed) p362; Nehru: the first Sixty Years (London 1965, 2 vols, ed. D. Woodman) i p57. Das (The Political Philosophy of Nehru (London 1961) p125) agrees that "what in ~~famam~~ made Russia to appealing to Nehru was the progress which the Soviet regime was making ^{even} in the backward regions of the country".
- 211 Nehru ibid pp362,591. Das (op.cit. p105) agrees that Nehru had "developed a certain amount of goodwill towards Communism from an early age, though it was not a doctrinal adherence of any kind.."
- 212 Gandhi, M.K.: An Autobiography (London 1949; 1966 ed) ppl42,143, 179, 398
- 213 Gandhi: Young India Vol i p279, in Imam art.cit. p92
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- 215 Ahmad, M: The Communist Party of India: Years of Formation 1921-33 (Calcutta 1959) p8; A. Gupta (ed) India and Lenin (Delhi 1960) p29,28,30
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- 218 Windmiller, R. and Overstreet: Communism in India (Berkeley 1960)p38
- 219 Nehru: Autobiography pp76,66,72

- 220 Windmiller and Overstreet op.cit p41f
- 221 Radek, cited in D'Encausse and Schram: Marxism and Asia p194. The Communist Party of India was formally constituted in Moscow in 1921, but no Central Committee existed before December 1925 (Ahmad op.cit.p14)
- 222 Windmiller and Overstreet p84
- 223 Nehru: Autobiography p70, Imam art.cit. p87
- 224 Times 7 September 1918, 20 March 1920
- 225 Times 16 December 1919. A secret Bolshevik circular was printed by the paper on 1 January 1923 (the terms of which, admittedly ,revealed a "very unsatisfactory state of affairs". The propaganda schools were reportedly "practically useless, and "no results whatsoever" had been derived from the work of agents).
- 226 Windmiller and Overstreet: Communism in India pp42,43,66
- 227 Sinha, L.P. : The Left-wing in India (1919-1947) p118 (who agrees that a "tiny minority of radical youth" was attracted to the Russian revolution, but had "no clear conception of the ideals of the Russian Revolution, nor of the principles of Marxism" ibid p58. They were first attracted to the Revolution on "purely national grounds").
- Windmiller and Overstreet: Communism in India p68
- 228 d'Abernon: An Ambassador of Peace (London 1929-30) Vol i p24

Chapter Seven: Conferences

For the greater part of 1922 relations with the Bolshevik regime nevertheless remained within a European framework. This reflected in part the pre-eminence of Lloyd George, whose concern with European affairs was the inverse of Curzon's Asian preoccupations; and it reflected also the important role which Lloyd George's personal staff, the much-abused "Garden suburb", had assumed in the making of foreign policy. There was Parliamentary criticism of this "pseudo Foreign Office", and of the almost Presidential position with which it appeared to invest the Prime Minister¹. A more important factor, perhaps, was the accumulation of evidence in apparent support of the view, which no Cabinet member seriously doubted, that Bolshevism was impossible as a basis of society, and that while some verbal concessions remained necessary to the doctrinaire and intransigent section of the Soviet leadership, the 'realists' under Lenin's direction were in fact abandoning it. In such circumstances it appeared to at least a section of the Cabinet that significant, indeed crucial concessions might be gained through direct negotiation with the Soviet leaders. It required simply to be put to them that the economic restoration of Russia could not be accomplished without the participation of foreign industrial and commercial enterprises. While western businessmen, moreover, were of course in no sense concerned with 'political' questions, they would undoubtedly require 'adequate guarantees' for the security of their property, and an assurance of 'impartial treatment' in the courts of law. While presented as a 'practical' matter requiring simply a business-like and non-political discussion, it could nevertheless not be overlooked that the implementation of such principles would require the radical modification, at the very least, of many of what were considered to be the fundamental principles of the Bolshevik regime.

There had, admittedly, been no shortage of forecasts of the imminent downfall of Bolshevism. If nothing else, wrote the Review of Reviews at the end of 1917, starvation and cold were "sure to bring about the fall of Lenin's Government at no distant date". The question was only whether the new regime would be a constitutional government or a restoration of autocratic monarchy². A year after the Bolshevik revolution, it

stoutly maintained that the government had lost the support of "all sections of the Russian people, even of the most ignorant workmen and peasants". It was relying only on the "bayonets of a motley crowd of armed cosmopolitan hirelings whom they call the International Red Army"; and its collapse was expected within "weeks, if not days"³. Despite the failure of such prophecies, Bonar Law told the House of Commons that he remained of the opinion that a "Communist government is impossible, and cannot last"⁴.

The Soviet government continued to confound such forecasts. It did appear to be the case, however, that while the the government itself had not been overthrown, the principles upon which it ruled had been reluctantly abandoned under the force of circumstances. By late 1920 it had become clear, wrote one journal, that the Bolshevik system had "completely broken down", and was "quite incapable of reconstructing the ordinary life of the country"⁵. The introduction of the New Economic Policy the following spring (which effectively de-nationalized small-scale trade and industry and agriculture) appeared to suggest that the Bolshevik leadership itself shared these views. The Tenth Party congress, which endorsed the new Policy, was declared to have resulted in a "unanimous resolution in favour of the abandonment of Communism"⁶.

The Communistic experiment, reported the New Statesman, had failed, as all in Russia acknowledged save a "handful of desperate doctrinaires". Lenin himself was "driving the Russian State furiously back on the road to capitalism". The moneylenders, it concluded, had "returned to the Temple"⁷. In well-informed quarters, the Times noted, the belief existed that Lenin was persuaded of the failure of Bolshevism, and that it was "only a matter of hitting on a suitable formula to re-introduce the capitalistic system into Russia".⁸ The Foreign Office was informed by Peters from Moscow that the two previous months had been marked by a "complete change in the Soviet internal economic situation". The Soviet government was now "consciously encouraging the growth of capitalism"⁹. Russian share prices improved on the Stock Exchange. The abolition of private enterprise and private commerce had been admitted a "disastrous fiasco", wrote the Economist; and there were now signs that the "more moderate members" of the leadership, such as Lenin and Krasin, had won their way. It added delicately that "from a business point of view" there were "undoubtedly big possibilities"¹⁰.

Lloyd George, then, was not alone in finding "indications of a

complete change of attitude in Russia". A speech delivered by Lenin on 1 November, to which he directed the attention of the House of Commons, was an admission of the "complete failure of the Communist system". Lenin admitted that they had "been wrong, he admits they have been beaten". It amounted to a "condemnation of the doctrines of Socialism": a "very remarkable condemnation and exposure of the doctrines of Karl Marx by.. the only man who has ever tried honestly to put these doctrines into operation"¹¹. Lenin, he informed the Cabinet, "was moving away from communism". The government should accordingly "support the anti-communistic elements in Russia"¹².

The impression of Bolshevik weakness was reinforced by the famine which affected the Volga area in 1921-22, following an exceptional drought and compounded by the loss of stock and equipment in the civil war period. About fifteen million people were threatened with starvation. On 21 July an All-Russian Committee for Aid to the Hungry was set up under the presidency of Kalinin; and the Comintern executive appealed to workers in the West for assistance both in July and in December.¹³ In August agreements were signed with representatives of the American Relief Administration, and with Frijhof Nansen, representing a Red Cross Conference¹⁴. The British response was less generous. "Obviously", the National Review pointed out, "we can't trust the regime which ^{has} produced the famine to relieve it, because Bolshevik mentality is incapable of dealing fairly between the different classes". The Times added that relief would mean "maintaining the Bolsheviks in power at the moment when their misdeeds have wrought themselves out in their inevitable consequences and are threatening the collapse of the whole hateful and criminal system. To any such attempt we are most emphatically and resolutely opposed"¹⁵. Some assistance was in fact provided through the agency of private bodies such as the Imperial War Relief Fund, the Save the Children Fund, the Friends' Emergency and War Victims Relief Committee, and the Workers' International Famine Relief Committee¹⁶.

It was pointed out that the "menace of Bolshevism to our own civilisation" might be "disarmed by generosity"; and that if the effects were allowed to run their course without adequate relief from outside, the result might be "incalculably disastrous throughout vast portions of Europe and Asia". It was, Lloyd George urged, "so appalling a disaster that it ought to sweep every prejudice out of one's mind and only appeal to one

emotion - pity and human sympathy". He nevertheless held that it must be a principle of Allied assistance that the administration of relief should be controlled by those who provided it; and that the Soviet government should, in addition, be pressed to recognize all its financial obligations as a condition of such assistance¹⁷. Gregory noted in a minute on a paper by Leeper on 'Political Aspects of the Russian Famine' that the Soviet government was "not one with which we can deal as an agency for relief", despite an "insidious and indirect pro-Bolshevik propaganda" in "fairly reputable sections of the press" in favour of Nansen's proposals. The Soviet government moreover was "virtually anarchy itself. Its disappearance would therefore alter little from that point of view, whilst from every other it would relieve Europe of a nightmare". The government of India had urged, in fact, that "complete anarchy in Russia would be preferable to the existing regime"¹⁸.

A meeting took place between Lloyd George and Berzin, the Russian representative, on 5 August 1921, at the latter's request. Lloyd George raised the question of debts and propaganda; and a further meeting took place the following day at the Board of Trade¹⁹. The matter was dealt with by a Commission appointed by the Supreme Council of the Entente on 10 August, whose task was to "consider the possibility of aiding the starving population of Russia", under the chairmanship of the former French ambassador Noulens. It adopted a number of resolutions on 1 September; and a note was communicated to the Soviet government on 4 September along the same lines²⁰. The Commission declared it "essential" to despatch a "committee of experts" to Russia to examine the problem on the spot. The Commission was to be composed of thirty members representing the five Powers, and permission was sought for its journey to Russia²¹. Chicherin in reply objected to the inclusion of Noulens, who had been among the most "hostile and treacherous" enemies of the Bolshevik government when previously in Russia, and had openly called for armed intervention. As one of the most active organizers of the blockade he was, in fact, held responsible to a considerable degree for the famine itself. His appointment was a "programme in itself". The Commission in any case was attempting to substitute a long and complex investigation for direct and immediate assistance. Neither the American body nor Nansen had found such a study necessary. The proposal was a "mockery of the millions who were starving and dying"²².

The International Commission decided to meet further at Brussels on 6 October; and a conference was held there between 6 and 8 October 1921²³. The furnishing of credits by western governments was made dependent upon the despatch to Russia of the Commission of Inquiry; and the granting of credits and help for the general economic recovery of Russia was made dependent upon the recognition by the Russian government of its debts and other obligations, and upon the provision of guarantees for future credits. Lloyd George, the Soviet Foreign Ministry pointed out in its annual Report, had described the attempt to use the famine to force the Russian government to recognize the Tsarist debts as a "diabolical plan"; but he had nevertheless added that only such a concession could create the "atmosphere of confidence essential in business circles"²⁴.

The conclusions of the Conference led the New Statesman to declare that "no more contemptible document" had been published in the two previous years. The decision amounted, in fact, to a "refusal on the part of our governments.. to help Russia". The proposal for the recognition of debts as a condition of assistance had apparently been put forward by the British representative at the Conference, despite the fact that the Trade Agreement expressly reserved this question to a future peace settlement (as Krasin noted in a letter to Moscow on 11 October, and in the *press*²⁵). If the Soviet government was not assisted from abroad, it would be strengthened, not weakened. Britain, in any case, needed the trade which a prosperous Soviet Russia could provide. In the circumstances the "shameful recommendations" of Brussels amounted to "incredibly stupidity": a crime "not only against the Russian people, but against both the honour and the material interests of the British people"²⁶. The government did eventually provide some assistance to the Red Cross for Russia: but the medical goods, clothing and food supplied were surplus stores, valued at only £100,000²⁷. The Foreign Office also permitted the export to Russia of a gift of sacramental wine for the Russian Church²⁸. Beyond this, explained Lloyd-Greame, the "only way" in which the necessary confidence could be restored was by "establishing those conditions upon which alone credit can be given and maintained in all civilized commercial communities"²⁹.

The Conference's did at least, the Economist noted, succeed in drawing a "very limited recognition of its liabilities from the Soviet Government"³⁰. Chicherin, in fact, had originally proposed a declaration

accepting the Tsarist debts, in view of what he considered to be an unfavourable international situation. Lenin replied the following day, however, disagreeing both with this estimate and with the proposed initiative³¹. An announcement on the question of debts, based on a text written by Chicherin with Lenin's amendments, was endorsed by the Politburo on 27 October, and published the following day. Agreement in principle to recognize pre-war Tsarist debts (but not other categories of debt) was linked with the proposal to call an international conference which should discuss reciprocal claims and matters of dispute³². The text, as communicated to the Foreign Office, declared that the Soviet government would recognize the old debts under certain circumstances "corresponding with its own intentions at the moment". The Soviet government had always "declared its intention of assuring an adequate return to foreign capitalists who would assist in developing the natural wealth of Russia and in re-establishing her economic machinery". It was "absolutely essential", however, that a definite peace should be concluded between Russia and the western states. No people, it held, could be bound to pay the "price of chains fastened upon it for centuries", in the form of Tsarist debts. It was, nevertheless, prepared to make several "highly important concessions" on the question. It was prepared to meet the claims of the numerous small holders of bonds, especially in France, for whom recognition of the debts was a matter of "vital importance"; and to recognize also the obligations towards other states and their citizens which arose from state loans concluded by the Tsarist government before 1914, provided that "special conditions and facilities" were devised to enable it to do so. The western powers, for their part, must conclude a "definite and general peace" with the Soviet government, and extend to it their official recognition. The questions which remained in need of discussion might best be resolved by an international conference, which alone could resolve the claims of both sides and achieve a general peace settlement³³.

Curzon's reply to Krasin sought "further information" on the question of the loans which had been made to the Tsarist government after 1914, and concerning compensation for the seized property of foreign nationals. The Soviet reply stated, however, that these questions were "so complicated and to such an extent interconnected" with the problems of the economic restoration of Russia and of Europe that they could be

resolved only at the proposed international conference. All discussion of such problems in dispute among the powers should be postponed and considered only at the conference³⁴.

The famine, meanwhile, stretched into 1922. Following a lecture by Nansen, demonstrating the "wildernesses" into which the Russian corn lands had been turned, the New Statesman returned to the point that for Britain it was "to put it brutally - a question not simply of the lives of peasant children on the Volga, but of food and trade and employment for our own people". They did not know of a better investment than the British government could make than a loan of a million, or half a million pounds to Russia. There were Englishmen walking the streets unemployed, it added, because of the Volga famine³⁵.

The Cabinet in March considered making a grant of a quarter of a million pounds to match a similar sum subscribed by the public. Churchill objected. The famine, he stated, was "mainly due to the inconceivable wickedness of the Soviet government, who could greatly mitigate its ravages if they diverted for that end money they were now spending on maintaining a huge Red Army, purchasing arms and equipment, and organizing propaganda against civilized states". Curzon admitted that this was true, but nevertheless supported the grant on humanitarian grounds. The Secretary of State for India opposed the grant in view of the "Soviet's unmitigated war on civilization"³⁶. Lloyd George, for whose benefit a decision was postponed, "deeply deplored" but was unable to change the Cabinet's attitude³⁷. A supplementary estimate for £100,000 was introduced into the House of Commons on 17 March. The money, it was announced, would be handed over to the British Red Cross "to be distributed by their agents in Russia" in conjunction with the other British voluntary organizations³⁸. The decision was widely attacked as a niggardly one. After all, Maclean pointed out in the House of Commons, if it were maintained that Bolshevik maladministration had been responsible for the famine, it might equally be maintained that the famines in India bore some relation to British government policy. The government, it was remarked, would have insulted the public's humanity and intelligence less had it "frankly refused to give a penny". On the lowest estimate, the country could "not really refuse not to relieve Russia: for it is to our material interest that the Russian corn-lands and those who work them should be kept in existence"³⁹.

It was also, admittedly, to the material interest of British investors to secure the recognition of the sums which they had invested in Russia before the revolution, and of the debts incurred by the Tsarist and Provisional governments. Here the British stake was smaller than that of France: while France stood first among investing countries in Russia before 1914, Britain stood third⁴⁰. A detailed Soviet investigation reckoned the share of total foreign capital invested in Russia by French nationals at 32%, and the British share at 22.6%⁴¹. The extent to which the Russian state was in debt to the British was stated to amount to over £560 millions at the end of March 1921; and this excluded the interest due since the end of 1918⁴².

British investment, however, was more strongly concentrated in a number of areas and sectors of the economy. Nearly two-thirds of the total British investment was in mining and oil extraction; and there were considerable sums invested in the textile industry⁴³. In oil, the North Caucasian enterprise, acquired by Shell Petroleum during the war, with a capital of nearly £900,000 and property in the Grosny Oilfields, had fallen into Bolshevik hands and was believed to have suffered considerable damage; and no dividend had been declared since 1915. The Ural Caspian had over a million pounds invested in a refinery and pipelines, and had declared a dividend of 9% in 1914-5. The Baku Consolidated Oilfields embraced four enterprises with a capital of a similar sum⁴⁴. The Russian General Oil Concern had about two and a half million pounds invested near Baku; the Anglo-Maikop Corporation had somewhat less than half a million pounds invested; and the Spies Petroleum company, with property at Grosny, had over a million pounds invested, and had declared a 7½% dividend in 1914. No recent information was available concerning these properties, the Economist noted; in particular it was not known to what extent they had suffered damage. Share purchasers were, it considered, even at low prices "taking very much for granted"⁴⁵.

The investors and creditors themselves had suffered their misfortunes with some fortitude. The Council of Foreign Bondholders set up a Russian Committee in March 1918 whose purpose was to "represent British financial and mining interests in Russia", and to "watch the interests of the holders of Russian securities"⁴⁶. A public meeting was held on 21 June to deal with "Russia's financial obligations and the ways and means of

safeguarding the interests of foreign holders of Russian State Bonds and other securities". The circumstances, the chairman admitted, were "as unpleasant as they were unparalleled". It was "impossible", however, to believe that a country like Russia could remain permanently without credit, and unable to borrow a penny on the money markets of the world. Russia was a country which "urgently required capital for the development of its vast resources", and it was "quite incredible that she is going indefinitely to bar the door to its introduction". Another speaker thought it "self-evident" that the "first step that the next Russian Government would take was the resumption of her liabilities as a State debtor". The Russian Committee was officially constituted⁴⁷.

The Spies Petroleum Company regained control of its property in February 1919, but was forced to withdraw again at the end of 1920. Its chairman nevertheless expressed confidence that "when commerce goes on between Russia and this country, our property will come back to us"⁴⁸. The general meeting of the Russian Mining Corporation was told that "unfortunately, for many reasons", the Kolchak regime had failed in its efforts, and the Bolsheviks had secured control of the country. It was believed, however, that the properties had not been nationalized; and the enormous natural resources of Russia, it was declared, would only ultimately be developed by a combination which included and recognized the "rights of property, the need for intellectual employment of capital and the employment of trained technical and scientific brains to direct not only that capital but labour itself"⁴⁹. The Bolshevik declarations would last "exactly as long as the Bolshevik rule itself, and not a day longer" declared Russia, a journal "in the interests of Anglo-Russian trade", at the end of 1917. The nadir of Bolshevik rule, it added, had been reached in the regime's "attempt to 'nationalize' banking, industry and commerce". Russian property owners, its readers were assured, would "not tolerate wild Socialistic experiments"⁵⁰.

Many former factory owners in Russia, the House of Commons was told, were meanwhile in a "state of destitution". "Many who (had) occupied good positions", added Sir H. Cowan, might be "compelled to enter the workhouses"⁵¹. It was to attend to the interests of this group that the Russian Committee had been formed, composed of men "active in Anglo-Russian business"; and a committee of bondholders was also established, with a

with a number of banks and issuing houses as members. The committees, it was thought, could be sure of "every consideration and whole-hearted co-operation from both the coming government and the financial community of Russia", whose interests were expected to be "identical with those which they set out to safeguard"⁵². An Association of British Creditors was formed in September 1921 to supplement these efforts. It was hoped to bring influence to bear in the right quarters, in order to compel recognition of the debts to British creditors of Russia, and thus to bring about a resumption of commercial relations on the right lines.. The Association was stated to represent directly or indirectly 350,000 British investors, traders and industrialists interested in Russia, whose total claims against the Soviet government amounted to £300 million. The Soviet economy required capital; that capital would necessarily come from outside the country; and adequate guarantees of its safety were required. Its policy included the restoration of all property, 'freedom of labour', free disposal of products on the home and foreign markets, and full recognition of the inviolability of the person and the rights of private property⁵³.

Among the more prominent figures associated with the Anglo-Russian Committee, and subsequently the President of the Association of British Creditors of Russia, was Leslie Urquhart. Urquhart was president of the Russo-Asiatic United Society, an amalgamation of enterprises which had extensive interests in copper, coal, silver and other minerals in Siberia. Urquhart himself, a mining engineer, had worked in Russia for twenty-five years, where he had been a partner in various industrial enterprises and several St Petersburg banks. During the rule of Kolchak in Siberia, the enterprises over which Urquhart presided were re-opened⁵⁴. Urquhart himself had no doubt that the Bolsheviks did "not represent Russia and the Russian people"; and that Russia would eventually re-establish "freedom and that discipline and that sanity of mind which together form the only basis of real progress"⁵⁵.

At a meeting in April 1918 of the debenture holders of the Irtysh Corporation (one of the bodies amalgamated the following year into the Russo-Asiatic Corporation) Urquhart declared that the "so-called nationalization of individual enterprises by special decrees of the self-appointed Bolshevik government, to be worked by ignorant workmen for their benefit only", was "impossible of fulfilment". Property-owners would undoubtedly

have their property restored to them sooner or later; and the "signs were not wanting that a reaction towards reason was taking place"⁵⁶. The Corporation had discovered gold ore in Siberia, and "but for the present events in Russia" would be making "large profits". Although two thousand miles from Petrograd, however, a "reflex of these anarchist influences" did reach and seriously affect the discipline of the Russian workmen, the relations between workmen and management, and the "normal operation of our business". The proletariat and peasantry, however, were "too ignorant for industrial political life"; and the "present anarchist or Bolshevik government (was) artificial and cannot last", assuredly not beyond the 1917-18 winter⁵⁷. No damage had been suffered to the Corporation's properties, he reported at the end of 1918, as a result of Bolshevik control; and when the Czecho-Slovaks took control of Siberia coal and coke production had been re-started. The managing director of the mines, Feodosiev, had joined a committee of the Siberian government under Kolchak, "a good friend of mine". Urquhart urged Allied intervention ("military assistance") in European Russia⁵⁸.

The Irtysk Corporation, together with the Tanalyk and the Kyshtim Corporations, were amalgamated in October 1919 into the Russo-Asiatic Corporation⁵⁹. The new Corporation controlled capital assets of twelve million pounds, and lay claim to two and a half million acres of land in the Urals and West Siberia, with freehold and leasehold mining rights, agricultural and forest land, and concessions, and much equipment. Profits were estimated at nearly two and a half million pounds a year⁶⁰. At the meeting at which the amalgamation was agreed in December, Urquhart drew attention to the "enormous resources" which existed of metals; and to the fact that the plant was largely undamaged. Bolshevism, he remained convinced, was "nearing its end"⁶¹. He deprecated negotiations with the Soviet Russian government before it had acknowledged its debts; and announced that he would not let one poond of Russian gold leave Britain without attempting to arrest it, since his companies were owed a total of £56 million by the Soviet government⁶². There was reason to believe, wrote Krasin, that attempts to attach the property of the Soviet government at this time by legal process "did not take place without some form of participation of Urquhart"⁶³.

Following the signature of the trade agreement, however, and the

legal decisions which derived from it, and not uninfluenced, no doubt, by changes within Soviet Russia and an apparent readiness to invite the co-operation of foreign capital, Urquhart contacted Krasin and suggested a businesslike conversation. The offer was accepted⁶⁴. The belief that negotiations were to begin inspired a "marked revival of speculative activity" on the Stock Exchange. It was rumored that the nationalized properties might be returned, including the oil interests, and that the export of 70% of the produce would be allowed. The Russo-Asiatic Corporation was "by far the most important" of the Russian mining enterprises in which Britain was interested, the Economist noted; but there were several others⁶⁵.

The conclusion of an agreement, however, had clearly been anticipated. Urquhart wished to discover whether it might be possible to resume work under the conditions which now existed; and Krasin replied with a "detailed and honest exposition of the conditions in which Russian industry worked following the end of the blockade and up to the present"⁶⁶. Some serious impediments to an agreement were found to exist. Urquhart nevertheless reported to the first Annual General Meeting of Russo-Asiatic Consolidated that the discussions had been of a "practical, helpful and very friendly nature". The £56 million figure for compensation claimed had been queried, but he regarded it as a "very conservative one", from which certain very important assets had been entirely omitted. The discussions with Krasin, he informed the meeting, had been inaugurated "after discussions with and on the advice of the Board of Trade". He quickly found common ground with Krasin in their joint desire for the "resuscitation of the economic life, peace and prosperity of Russia". A number of difficulties remained, which he hoped would be settled very shortly to their satisfaction. The agreement with the Soviet government might, he thought, provide a "firm basis on which foreign capital may re-enter Russia": while he was also at pains to point out that they had "no concern, as foreigners, with the politics of Russia". His optimism was evidently founded in part on a form of 'historical inevitability': a belief that the "laws of Nature govern the political economy of the universe which no government, however powerful, can contend against". Communism as a system of state economy had failed completely, and a "considerable change" had taken place "in the direction of bourgeois ideas", which marked the beginning of the re-establishment of

of favourable conditions for capital in Russia. It was a process which could "not be checked": "there is no economic system but the capitalist"⁶⁷.

Krasin, communicating the substance of the negotiations to Moscow, noted the influential position of Urquhart in relation to British policy (Curzon, for instance, was one of the trustees of his Society), and reported his belief that the mines could be working at their pre-war capacity within a year⁶⁸. A reply was received, which was favourable in principle, and Urquhart arrived in Moscow to begin more detailed negotiations on 20 August 1921⁶⁹.

The negotiations in Moscow continued until 12 September. Writing in the same month, Krasin, a member of the special commission appointed by the Soviet government to consider the draft agreement with Urquhart, admitted that the differences between them were "still too large, and maybe negotiations this time will not reach a favourable conclusion"⁷⁰. Urquhart continued to insist upon a concession for ninety-nine years, upon the right to export production free of duty for this period, and upon the return of all his enterprises in the condition in which they had been before their nationalization⁷¹. Urquhart returned without an agreement, and called upon Krasin in the middle of October to inform him that current "politico-economic conditions in Russia" were such that the negotiations would not be continued⁷². A copy of Urquhart's statement to his shareholders was sent to the Foreign Office on 12 October; and the following day a telegram was despatched to Moscow informing the Soviet authorities of the breakdown of the negotiations⁷³. In a meeting with a Foreign Office official, Urquhart expressed the view that the Bolshevik regime would "come to an end when the growing hatred of the Jews will culminate in their massacre, as in his opinion the Jews represented what is efficient in the present Russian regime"⁷⁴.

There had appeared "every prospect", wrote the Economist, that the negotiations with the Soviet government for the return of the Russo-Asiatic Society's properties would be carried to a successful conclusion. A "lively little gamble in shares" had ensued. The news of the rupture of the negotiations "came distinctly in the nature of a surprise". Share prices had fallen sharply. It had nevertheless, the paper thought, been the correct course to return to the position of a claimant against the Bolshevik government. "Sooner or later" Russia would "return to sanity"⁷⁵.

Urquhart explained his decision in a letter to Krasin on 11 October 1921, on behalf of his board, which was subsequently made public. Of the twenty-seven clauses of the draft agreement, nine remained obstacles to agreement. The measure of disagreement with the Soviet government on "vital points" of the draft contract was so great, and the attitude of the Soviet government and prevailing economic conditions were such, that the Society could "not see our way at present to continue negotiations for the return of our properties". The Society refused to consider an excess profits tax; and demanded that its workmen, natives as well as foreign nationals, be exempt from the normal labour regulations. A concession for 99 years was demanded, rather than the 72 year period which had been offered; the right of purchase by the government after a period of years was not accepted; and in cases of arbitration a foreign expert should adjudicate, rather than members of the Revolutionary Courts who were "not of too high intelligence" and were all members of the Communist Party. An agreement with trade union representatives, attached to the main agreement, was not acceptable (the Economist agreed that the conditions which had been made were "hopelessly impracticable, as to render operations out of the question. In the union executive "the extremists" were, it thought, "in control"⁷⁶). Urquhart concluded with a number of stern references to the Cheka, whose power had now "eclipsed that of the Soviet government", and to the "subversive efforts against the institutions of the capitalistic countries" of the Third International, which confirmed the company's decision⁷⁷.

Urquhart, commented Pravda, had misunderstood N.E.P.⁷⁸. He had assured Krasin that the members of his company were "not concerned, as foreigners, with the politics of Russia"⁷⁹. The Russo-Asiatic proposals, however, concerning the judicial system and labour legislation of Soviet Russia undoubtedly involved in their turn radical changes in the social system which had been established after the Bolshevik revolution. The policy of granting concessions to foreign capitalists, indeed, had already aroused considerable concern in party and especially in trade union circles. At the Fourth All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, held in March 1921, a total of 150 questions were sent to the platform on this question alone. It was officially admitted that the question of granting concessions to foreign capitalists was "provoking disquiet in party circles". As Radek pointed out, "there must not in future be two sets of laws in Russian

territory, laws for free workers working in Soviet enterprises and laws for slaves working for foreign capital"⁸⁰.

The New Statesman was inclined to attach "small credence" to the "tale of woe put about" by Urquhart⁸¹. Another approach to the 'Russian problem', indeed, began to emerge towards the end of the year. A consortium should be formed composed of financiers and industrialists of ~~for~~ countries, France, America, Britain and Germany. The major role should be played by German interests; and it was envisaged that German repayment of reparations might thereby be facilitated⁸². Krasin was summoned to Downing Street on 16 December, and together with Sir Robert Horne was informed of Lloyd George's opinion that the restoration of Russian railways, agriculture and industry "might most effectively be accomplished by a syndicate of private financiers from England, France and Germany". German agents, "in view of their greater acquaintance with Russia", would undertake the major part of the work on the spot. In the course of a meeting with Stinnes, they had come to the conclusion that the control of some Russian railways might serve as a guarantee (Lloyd George told the Cabinet the same day that foreign control of the Soviet customs was also under consideration for this purpose⁸³).

Krasin replied that foreign undertakers might find it difficult to cope with the "peculiar conditions" of the work of the Russian railways; but apart from this, the Soviet government refused in principle to consider transferring even the control of railways to private syndicates. The main difficulty in the way of the further development of trade with Russia lay rather, he thought, in the lack of recognition of the Soviet government and of a peace treaty. There was a possibility that, in the absence of stable and peaceful relations with the western powers, the railways might be utilized to organize opposition to the government. The support of the western, and in particular of the British, governments was necessary, otherwise the efforts of the financiers would not be sufficient⁸⁴.

The proposal was considered further at a meeting on 30 December in Paris, attended by bankers, financiers and government ministers from Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. It approved a British proposal that an international private financial consortium be set up, charged with assisting the restoration of the railways, ports and commerce of eastern

Europe, especially of Austria, Poland and Russia. The initial capital of £20 million would be provided by the member states, and the profits accruing to the German partner would be devoted to the repayment of reparations⁸⁵.

The Supreme Council, in the course of the meeting at Cannes at which it was decided to summon an international economic conference at Genoa the following March, adopted a resolution on 10 January dealing with the international consortium. The resolution, in accordance with the decisions of the earlier meeting with regard to the formation of an international consortium, approved the establishment of an "International Corporation with affiliated National Corporations for the purpose of the economic reconstruction of Europe and the co-operation of all nations in the restoration of normal prosperity". A Committee was set up to examine the project in greater detail, and to proceed with the organisation of the Corporation⁸⁶.

The Committee, which met in London from 21 to 25 February 1922, decided upon the establishment of a central corporation with a capital of £2 millions, and of associated national corporations with a capital of £20 millions, in which not only the founder-states should participate but also America, Japan, Denmark and Czechoslovakia. The earlier proposal had declared that no prosperity was possible "unless private property is respected and law and order maintained": a provision which, it was noted, clearly applied chiefly to Soviet Russia⁸⁷. The Committee decided that the consortium should have no dealings with states which did not recognize all their previous debts and obligations, and compensate all foreign nationals for the loss of their property; and which did not establish a legal system which would "comprehensively guarantee and encourage commercial activity"⁸⁸.

The proposal, however, scarcely advanced beyond this point. American participation was not forthcoming; and more importantly, the project aroused considerable opposition within Germany. It was argued that the more or less colonial character of the agreement would meet with resistance within Soviet Russia; and that it might be more advantageous to attempt to develop bilateral relations. Stinnes, and to a considerable extent Rathenau, revised their attitudes towards the consortium. The consortium proposal did, however, bear a close relation to many of the economic plans which the Genoa Conference considered.⁸⁹

Business circles, indeed, offered considerable support to the proposed Genoa Conference. Manufacturers and merchants, it was pointed out, wanted trade with Russia "far more than they want.. the restoration of the emigres, or the payment of the Tsarist bondholders"⁹⁰. The National Provincial Bank's chairman told its annual meeting in January 1922 that while some business had been done with central Europe, the situation was still "far from satisfactory". He expressed their hope that the forthcoming conference would arrange for the "regeneration and reorganization of that part of the world and the subsequent resumption of trade on a more normal basis". The chairman of Martins' Bank was also inclined to "welcome the approaching International Conference at Genoa". McKenna, the chairman of the Midland Bank (and a former Chancellor of the Exchequer) noted that the country's trade could not recover its pre-war level while "so many countries continue in their present broken-down condition"⁹¹. At Barclays Bank, Goodenough declared that it was "essential to make a determined effort to restore the financial stability of Europe as a first step towards better markets"; and he thought that England should "take the lead" at Genoa. The Westminster Bank's chairman added that until the country's export trade was regained, the outlook "must remain far from cheering". What they needed most was the restoration of the markets of central Europe and Russia⁹². "Most far-seeing financiers and industrialists," the Economist considered, also realized that the "effective co-operation of the present rulers in Moscow" was "essential to the solution of Russia's economic problem". Full political recognition it thought an "essential preliminary to any programme of economic reconstruction"⁹³.

Such a clear perception of the country's economic interests was not, however, shared by all members of the Cabinet. Not merely the possibility of full recognition of the Soviet government, but even the notion of dealing with them in conference at all, aroused deep misgivings. This was in part a reaction to what was termed the "conference craze" and Lloyd George's "love of international limelight". There were no votes to be collected in Genoa, the National Review pointed out, "not even Bolshevik votes". The conference was seen as a "talismán to restore the falling fortunes of the Coalition"⁹⁴. The early part of 1922, indeed, provided much evidence of Conservative unwillingness to continue to support the

Coalition. Thomas Jones was told in March that three-quarters of the Cabinet were disloyal to the Prime Minister. There was a fear that Lloyd George might return from Genoa with lots of "'resolutions' and try to run another election on false hopes like that of December 1918"⁹⁵. The prospect of success at Genoa, indeed, appeared to the Economist the "one influence" which bound Lloyd George to office⁹⁶.

Within the government, however, Curzon for one viewed with "grave misgiving and with a strong personal dislike" Lloyd George's tendency to seek a rapprochement with Russia, whose government he found "deplorable" and "detestable as much in its principles and in much of its practice". He was concerned by the prospect of a possible de jure recognition of Soviet Russia. Unable to attend the Conference himself through ill-health (if for no other reason), he wrote to Chamberlain that he could not accept the recognition by Britain alone of the Soviet government. The trade resulting from the Trade Agreement had been a "farce"; while the propaganda had continued and was continuing unabated⁹⁷. Churchill wrote to him that he was also "concerned about this Genoa business". The course taken by the Prime Minister, he thought, had left the Foreign Office "very little chance of bringing its special aptitudes into play". Lloyd George's great objective, it seemed to him, was Moscow: to make Britain the country "in the closest possible relations with the Bolsheviks, and to be their protectors and sponsors before Europe". He himself was "unable to discern any British advantage, however slight, in this"⁹⁸.

Moreover, on what was largely a Russian issue the government was, he thought, being "driven into something perilously near a complete break with France". The price of boycotting Russia, however, was beginning to be realized, noted the Review of Reviews. The sense that Russia was necessary to world recovery had become "too strong and general for French opposition to block the way"⁹⁹. Lloyd George outlined the position to Benes in London in February. Britain was an industrial nation, dependent to a great extent on markets for the sale of industrial production. International trade was vital for Britain. As it was, two million people were unemployed, at a cost to the exchequer of £100 million a year. He wished to go forward with France; but it would be "very foolish for France to drive us to go forward with Russia and Germany for economic reasons", for he was "determined to have peace"¹⁰⁰. The meeting at Genoa with 'Boches and Bolsheviks', Wilson

was told by Worthington-Evans, would "take place whether the French agree to it or not"¹⁰¹.

The Prime Minister was nevertheless obliged to make a number of concessions with regard to the Conference to secure at least the acquiescence of the Cabinet and the French government. These concessions go far, in fact, to explain its ultimate failure. The Supreme Council's resolution, adopted on 6 January, provided for an Economic and Financial Conference to be held in February or early March, to which all the European powers, including Germany, Austria, Russia, Hungary and Bulgaria should be invited. Such a conference was regarded as an "urgent and essential step" towards the economic reconstruction of Central and Eastern Europe, a necessary part of the relief of the wide-spread suffering of the European peoples. The removal of all obstacles in the way of trade, the provision of substantial credits for the weaker countries and the co-operation of all nations in the restoration of normal prosperity were envisaged. Certain "fundamental conditions" were stated: no nation could have dictated to it any particular "system of ownership, internal economy and government"; but before foreign investors would provide capital, they must be assured that their property was secure and that their rights would be respected and the "fruits of their enterprise secured to them". This sense of security could not be re-established unless the governments of countries desiring foreign credits undertook to "recognize all public debts and obligations" and accepted the "obligation to restore or compensate all foreign interests for loss or damage caused to them when property has been confiscated or withheld". They must also establish a legal and judicial system which sanctioned and enforced commercial and other contracts with "impartiality". All nations, further (again, clearly, with particular reference to the Soviet government), should "undertake to refrain from propaganda subversive of order and the established political system in other countries than their own", and "refrain from aggression against their neighbours". The Soviet government could receive official recognition only upon acceptance of these stipulations. An official invitation to the Soviet government was approved on 13 January¹⁰². Already, however, the agenda and basis of the Conference, on French insistence, had been framed so as virtually to exclude the possibility of a significant advance.

The fall of Briand and his replacement by Poincare made French

participation even more problematical. At the beginning of February a lengthy memorandum was received from the French government, noting that it could refuse to take part in the conference were it to be held under conditions which would "compromise the French government's rights or threaten their interests". If, in particular, it appeared that the Soviet government did not accept completely and in advance the conditions agreed upon on 6 January, the French government would not be prepared to send delegates to the Conference. It was "indispensable" that the invited Powers announce, before any discussion, their "complete agreement on the fundamental principles recognized as the necessary basis of their collaboration and the essential condition of their meeting". It was also necessary to make clear, regarding the peace treaties of which a number of the states to be represented at Genoa had not been signatories, that the French government could "not in any circumstances agree that any of the clauses of these treaties should be discussed". It might, also, be necessary to "envisage international stipulations providing special elements of security" regarding the rights of property; and to place foreign citizens under their own national jurisdiction, where the law governing private contracts in a country proved unsatisfactory. The establishment of a new order - "or rather, the re-establishment of a whole old order in economics" - appeared to be required in the Russian case. The nature of the preparatory work was such that "three months at least" should elapse before the Conference met¹⁰³.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in discussion of the memorandum with the French Ambassador, expressed the opinion that it might mean either of two things: legitimate doubts concerning the meaning of the resolutions adopted at Cannes, or an attempt to prevent the Conference from taking place. The former, the Ambassador hastened to assure him, was the correct interpretation. The British government, however, was not inclined to regard a postponement as sine die, and would not accept the proposal. The Italian government, responsible for convening the Conference, did not wish its postponement. A team of French technical representatives, it was suggested, should visit Britain for discussions¹⁰⁴. A note embodying this proposal was sent to the French government on 11 February¹⁰⁵.

There could be no question, however, Kraskin informed Wise, of "preliminary conditions". Berzin, the deputy Soviet representative in

London, wrote to Litvinov that in his opinion the Soviet delegation at Genoa would have to give a direct reply to the question of whether or not they accepted the Cannes conditions. There was nothing, in his personal opinion, absolutely unacceptable in the conditions: although they were admittedly worse than those which Wise had earlier outlined. They should avoid a binding answer before the Conference met; but they might be accepted as a "basis for discussion at the Conference"¹⁰⁶.

Krasin, in the course of a meeting with Lloyd George and Curzon, informed them that the Soviet government could not accept the Cannes conditions nor sign them, since they were one-sided in their application and the formulation of many paragraphs was unacceptable for many reasons¹⁰⁷. Lloyd George replied that the Cannes Conference had regarded the agreement of the Soviet government to participate in the Genoa conference as in itself evidence of agreement with the principles embodied in the Cannes resolutions. If the Soviet government refused to recognize the conditions, the Conference might be prejudiced; certainly, it would be made easier for Poincare to refuse to take part. The Soviet government should announce its acceptance of the Cannes resolutions, and its willingness to consider their practical application. Here the Soviet government could defend its point of view. The Cannes conditions were, after all, "only the conditions on which every civilized government conducted its affairs". Until the Russian government acknowledged (but not necessarily paid) its debts, he feared that the business community could not be brought whole-heartedly to accept any arrangements with Russia. He hoped for an unqualified answer. Krasin (who was aware of Lloyd George's concern to improve his political position through a successful initiative in the foreign policy field¹⁰⁸), continued to object to the signature of conditions before attendance, which would amount to a contract, with no guarantee of reciprocity¹⁰⁹. Lloyd George was able to give the House of Commons no greater satisfaction on this point than that Russia had accepted the invitation of the Italian Prime Minister, in which special attention had been drawn to several of the paragraphs of the resolutions agreed upon at Cannes. The Soviet government's acceptance had been "without any protest or qualification in respect of those conditions paragraphs"¹¹⁰.

It remained to convince the government. A Conference of Ministers on 27 March was told of the need to re-start European trade.

No results had followed from the Brussels Conference the previous year. It was essential that not simply experts, but the "political representatives of Governments should meet and endeavour to arrange something to re-establish the trade of Europe". Some members of the Cabinet, he wrote to Chamberlain three days earlier, did "not realise how grave the trade situation is! He had been making inquiries for some time among men whose judgement and knowledge of business he trusted as to the trade prospects. The replies had been "invariably not merely gloomy, but seriously pessimistic"¹¹¹.

Owing to the attitude of the French government, reparations would not be under discussion. There remained, however, the important questions of the exchange, transit arrangements and reconstruction of parts of Europe, especially of Austria and Russia. Russia, in fact, was the "most difficult question" with which the Conference would have to deal. It was necessary to have a "clear and definite" acceptance of the Cannes conditions from the Soviet government. In the event of their acceptance, the question would arise of the recognition, for a probationary period, of the Soviet government. The Allies, Lloyd George suggested, should take their decision according to the view they formed from the conduct of the Soviet delegation "as to whether they had ^{practically} abandoned Communistic principles in dealing with foreign Powers, or not". There were two parties in Russia, "one entirely communistic, and the other prepared to abandon Communism in dealing with foreign countries. He did not know which was on top at present". If it were the latter, however, he thought it would be a "mistake to send them away with a refusal to do business". As he put it in a letter to Chamberlain, if the Communist Party was ascendant in Moscow, there could be no question of recognition. If however, the "party that is prepared to surrender its Bolshevism and to make terms with the Western capitalists has captured the Soviet authority, then it would be folly not to help Russia to return to the community of civilized nations"¹¹².

It would, Lloyd George insisted, be "useless" to go to Genoa with instructions that in no circumstances could recognition be granted. He understood that there was a strong feeling among his colleagues and in the House of Commons against recognition. He was personally "prepared to respect the view taken by several of his colleagues, and "very anxious that they should march together on this question". It was clear that it was impossible to trade with Russia unless the traders had some status in the

Courts; and it was even more important - indeed, essential - to trade to have peace in Europe. "At present there was no peace". Were a pact signed, it was his idea that Allied agents, consuls and so forth should enter Russia and that all Allied subjects should have a status in the courts. Russia, similarly, should have agents and representatives in Allied countries. It was proposed to take the Cannes resolutions as the basis, and to add to it a European Pact of Peace, which would have the effect of guaranteeing peace in eastern Europe. Full diplomatic recognition of the Russian government should be postponed until the Allies were sure of its bona fides. Until that time Russia would be represented only by an unofficial Charge d'Affaires, with access to the Foreign Office, but not to the Court¹¹³.

The Cabinet, Churchill objected, had not been consulted about the Cannes resolutions. He expected a reference back before any decision was taken. He expressed the "gravest doubt as to whether the Soviet could carry out those (Cannes) conditions". The Russian government, judging from Krasin's meeting with the Prime Minister, had been willing to agree to no more than that the Cannes resolutions might be the 'basis of possible agreement'. The French government had reserved its right to refuse to give de jure recognition at Genoa, whether the Cannes conditions were accepted or not. Lloyd George drew the Cabinet's attention to the "frightful prospect of international trade. In any event these prospects were sufficiently bad for any government, but they were hopeless unless peace could be established in Europe. Despite the Lord Chancellor's advice that the discretion granted to the British delegates at Genoa was "limited and guarded", allowing at most a limited recognition to facilitate business, Churchill continued to refuse to take "sides" against Russia as a whole in favour of a band of dastardly criminals".¹¹⁴

The matter was taken up again the following day. It would first be necessary at Genoa to decide, Lloyd George suggested, whether it was possible to do any business at all with the Soviet representatives; but he felt that the British representatives should have the authority to proceed as he had indicated. Curzon said that he understood the proposal; but his idea was not, nevertheless, to give recognition. His "main idea" was that "on no account should the British government act alone in this matter". With this the Prime Minister agreed. Even a qualified recognition, Curzon noted,

would amount to de jure recognition. Lloyd George did not, however, even in the event of the acceptance of the "necessary, but somewhat humiliating" Cannes conditions by the Bolsheviks, contemplate their 'ceremonial recognition'. He read an extract from a letter sent to him by the Home Secretary, "indicating that M. Lenin was abandoning his Communistic principles. If ~~this~~ were the case, by recognizing him we should be supporting those in Russia who were in favour of moderation". He had, in fact, already told Benes that in his opinion European help was "absolutely essential to the Bolsheviks and that they could not do without it. For this reason he thought the Bolsheviks would give any terms that the western Powers asked. If Lenin came back from Genoa with nothing in his hands, he would be overthrown"¹¹⁵.

There were two questions to be considered, Lloyd George told the Cabinet. The first was the economic conditions under which British traders could be induced to undertake trade in Russia; and the second the "larger question at the base of our economic troubles, the unrest in eastern Europe, which disturbed the trader and made him suspicious. There was a state of "something like menace along the Russian frontier"; half of Europe, in fact, was "living under a condition of ~~menace~~ of war". The first objective of the Genoa Conference, he thought, should be to establish a pact among all the nations of Europe against aggression. Russia must undertake not to attack Roumania, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland and vice versa. "Until some such condition of peace was established there would not be an effective revival of trade". The President of the Board of Trade had prepared a paper, in consultation with leading businessmen, which indicated serious industrial and commercial prospects for at least two years to come. Very little diminution of unemployment, in particular, was foreseen, "owing in part to the international situation". As far as Russia was concerned, efforts to restore trading relations had been "only partially successful", and the Soviet government had failed to carry out the conditions as strictly as they had a right to expect; but the fact remained that Russia was still outside the comity of nations, and "until that fact was changed the full restoration of trade would be difficult". The first objective should be ~~peace~~, and the second to "establish complete commercial relations with Russia. Some degree of recognition was necessary, in order to allow access to the courts of law. Britain should not act alone; but equally, to refuse to recognize Russia until all had been agreed would allow countries which stood "least in need

of Russian trade" to prevent any agreement.

The recent interview of a major figure in Russian trading circles suggested that "Lenin personally was largely responsible for the promulgation of the recent economic laws", which amounted to an "abandonment of communism". If the Russian delegation came to Genoa having "practically surrendered their Communistic principles and willing to enter into negotiation with Capitalistic communities", they ought to give "all necessary support to the anti-Communistic elements in Russia, and declare that if Communistic principles are abolished we are ready to assist" in what he described as the "economic development of Russia". Full diplomatic and ceremonial recognition would not, however, be granted until the Powers had "had an opportunity of satisfying themselves that a genuine attempt had been made to carry out the decisions reached at Genoa". The Lord Privy Seal added that preliminary to any form of recognition was full acceptance in substance of the Cannes conditions, and recognition would not include the right of representation at Court. Full recognition would be granted subsequently only by decision of the Cabinet.

Curzon thought that it was impossible, at that stage, to be more precise than to affirm the desirability of acting with Europe as a whole. No-one knew the degree of Russia's acceptance of the Cannes conditions. Only in its later stages would the Conference be in a position to come to a decision upon the question of recognition. In his view, by that time the Russian delegates would have established a claim to recognition, or they would not have done so. It would be "ridiculous" for the British delegates to stand out either for or against recognition if the great majority of the European powers were opposed. He attached "more importance to acting with Europe than to any other point". Churchill, again, found even this position difficult to accept. The Cabinet, he thought, should be consulted again. The Trade Agreement had been made on the understanding that if its terms were violated it would be terminated. Those terms had since been "repeatedly broken". The Cabinet, nevertheless, was being asked to go still further to meet the Soviet government. He thought that the prospect of increased trade was not likely to be a matter of consequence in the following two or three years; while the only aim of the Soviet government in attending the Conference was to gain prestige in order to "rivet their shackles even more closely on the ignorant peasants". He was bitterly sorrowful.

that at a time of a strong Conservative majority, "in a country", moreover, "deeply devoted to the monarchy", it was proposed to accord this favour to the Bolsheviks. He hoped that the Prime Minister intended to take only such practical steps as were necessary for the resumption of trade.

Lloyd George said that he would tell the House of Commons that the government was definitely disappointed with the actions of the Russian government, and must be assured at Genoa that there was a bona fide acceptance of the conditions laid down. Chamberlain clarified the proposal: the British representatives would not act in isolation or without a general consensus of opinion; no advance would be made in British diplomatic relations with the Soviet government unless that government accepted the substance of the Cannes conditions; and in the event of their acceptance, believed to be bona fide, the British delegates should grant "that diplomatic recognition which is required to make the agreement a success", but would "not give full ceremonial recognition beyond that involved in the appointment of a Charge d'Affaires". Lloyd George pointed out that these were "tremendous restrictions"; but the Cannes conditions must "in substance.. be accepted". Payment of debts incurred by governments, for example, was "at the root of civilized government". Full recognition should not be granted, the Cabinet ruled, until experience had shown that the agreement had been loyally observed by the Soviet government; and the results of the Conference should be subject to the approval of Parliament. The proposal, as outlined by Chamberlain, was approved.¹¹⁶

The Prime Minister outlined before the Cabinet on 2 April the substance of the speech he intended to make the following day dealing with the Conference. During the probationary period, before the granting of full ceremonial recognition, the Soviet government should have to show that they not only intended themselves, but had "established sufficient control over powerful and extreme Communistic organizations in their midst, to enable them to honour their engagements"¹¹⁷. Nor, despite the acknowledgement at Cannes that forms of government and economic systems were matters for the countries concerned and not for others to dictate to them, did it appear that even the constitution of the Soviet state would be allowed to remain inviolate. As at present framed, Harmsworth informed the House of Commons, it offered "no judicial protection, in the sense usually understood, for the rights or property of British subjects."¹¹⁸

The Conference had been called, Lloyd George told the House of Commons, to consider the "problem of the reconstruction of economic Europe, devastated and broken into fragments by the devastating agency of war". International trade was "disorganized", currency exchange "unworkable", and "vast areas", upon which Europe had hitherto depended for a large proportion of its food supplies and raw material, had been "completely destroyed for all purposes of commerce". The revision of existing treaties, and the question of boundaries and reparations, was not possible¹¹⁹. The "main theme" of the Conference was rather the establishment of peace, confidence and credit, currency, exchange, transport, the machinery of international trade. Britain depended more, probably, on international trade than any other country in the world: the problem was "of the most vital importance to the population of this country".

Russia, he noted, was the most controversial matter which would come before the Conference. Yet he believed that trade, business and employment would not be restored in Europe until peace was established: the danger of "hordes of savage revolutionaries to be let loose upon Europe" was "not without some foundation". This would reduce Europe to the "terrible condition of famine, pestilence and desolation in which Russia is". Trade would introduce elements of rationality and stability: for once introduced, it "would be in the interests of the country itself to retain it". Europe, besides, needed what Russia could supply. Russia before the war had supplied a quarter of the world's exported wheat, and two-thirds of its hemp; two-thirds of Europe's flax, and half of Britain's timber. Russia, in fact, was the greatest underdeveloped country in the world. It had labour, and needed capital; and this would not be forthcoming "without security, confidence and peace, internal as well as external". Germany, moreover, would be unable to pay the full demand of reparation until Russia was restored¹²⁰.

Acceptance of the Cannes conditions meant in substance that Russia must "recognize all the conditions imposed and accepted by civilized communities, as the test of fitness for entering into the comity of nations". Debts, for instance, must be recognized, if not settled immediately: "a country that repudiates her obligations because she changes her government is a country you cannot deal with - certainly not in these days when governments change so often". The property of foreign nationals

where it had not been destroyed must be restored, and compensation paid. "Impartial tribunals" must be set up which were not the "creatures of the Executive". A complete cessation of attacks upon the institutions of other countries must be made. Lenin, he believed, had made an "admission of the complete failure of the Communist system". If this represented a "real determination" on the part of the Soviet government in its dealings with the West to honour the principles of "respect for private property, respect for the rights of individuals, fair play to those who make investments there, acknowledgement of honourable debts", then there was a "real basis upon which we can treat". Access to the courts, and some form of representation, would then follow; but not full recognition until the Soviet government had given "actual proof.. of her bona fides"¹²¹.

Bonar Law welcomed this assurance, while prepared to "let them try" to reach a worthwhile agreement at Genoa. Recognition, he thought, ought not to be given to the Soviet government: this might "strengthen that government against a possible change from within", which was bound ultimately to materialize. Whatever the Soviet government promised, "if the system in its own country is that there is no private property, then trading with Russians is a contradiction in terms. It cannot be done"; and he had no belief in any other kind of trading that might be proposed. If the conditions proposed to the Soviet government were carried out, not simply accepted in principle, then he would recognize that government the following day: but he was "bound to say" that he believed that "these conditions are impossible under this kind of government" (a kind of government described by another Member as an "asiatic barbarism that destroys everything it touches"¹²²).

Chamberlain warned that the Conference was "not going to create a new world", even if it succeeded. "Extravagant expectations" were "wholly misleading". The question of unemployment could not be solved by a single conference, nor even by a single government. Under the most favourable conditions, it would take a long time for its solution". All that the government hoped of the Conference was that it might enable the world to "take one step forward"¹²³. This was the more unlikely, as Wedgwood noted, in view of the prior exclusion of the related questions of reparations and the revision of the Peace Treaties¹²⁴.

The expectations aroused by the summoning of the Conference were

based, equally, upon an inaccurate estimate of the strength (and consequent capacity to resist pressure) of the Soviet government. While N.E.P. did represent a setback for the Soviet regime, the Observer's Moscow correspondent pointed out, it was far from the restoration of capitalism which British liberals had always confidently forecast. It was a mistake to think that the Bolsheviks were going to accept any scheme which the European powers proposed without a fight. European public opinion would be "surprised not only by the shrewdness and sagacity of the Bolshevik spokesmen, but still more by the stiffness of their settled conviction of Russia's ability to assist European peace and economic revival, and not merely be helped by Europe".¹²⁵

As early as December 1921, Krasin had in fact urged the extreme necessity of preparing for the forthcoming European conference, collecting documentation, and nominating representatives¹²⁶. At a session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on 27 January Chicherin's acceptance of the Genoa invitation was approved, and a delegation was nominated, led, as had been requested, by Lenin, but under the deputy leadership of Chicherin, who was invested with "all the powers of Chairman should circumstances prevent the attendance of comrade Lenin at the Conference" (as proved to be the case¹²⁷). The other members of the delegation included Litvinov, Krasin, Ioffe, Vorovsky and Rakovsky; altogether it numbered sixty-three¹²⁸.

They wished for economic co-operation, Chicherin told the meeting, "but we will struggle against economic co-operation taking the form of the economic domination of Russia"¹²⁹. The text of the Cannes resolutions which was forwarded to Chicherin by the Italian Foreign Minister on 13 January did in fact contain a significant omission: while it was stated that no country had the right to dictate to another its economic order or form of government, the right to its own system of ownership was not mentioned, although it had been included in the resolution to which the Supreme Council had given its approval.¹³⁰ Lenin wrote to Chicherin on 26 January 1922 requesting him to obtain a copy of the resolutions in the language in which they had been framed. In the draft directives which he produced at the beginning of February, he urged that the delegates should quote "particularly often" the first point of the Cannes resolutions in its original form, which, it had become clear, provided for the right

of a state to regulate its own system of property¹³¹.

The counter-claims presented by the Soviet delegates at the Conference represented more than two years' work on the part of state and scientific institutes into the question of the losses which Soviet Russia had suffered as a result of the period of foreign intervention and blockade¹³². The work was directed by a special commission under the auspices of the Commissariat of Finance by V.G. Groman¹³³. It was emphasized that the sum of damages for which the Allies were held responsible, amounting to 39 million gold roubles, was in fact an under-estimate, since only claims which could readily be quantified were taken into account¹³⁴.

A more important factor, perhaps, in allowing Lenin to maintain that "we will not make an agreement which is not advantageous for us", was the development of economic relations with Germany¹³⁵. A proposal by Krupp to establish an armaments factory in Russia was endorsed by Lenin in January 1922. Its acceptance was necessary, he thought, "right now, before the Genoa Conference. For us it would be endlessly important to conclude at least one, and preferably several concession contracts with German firms in particular"¹³⁶. Relations with the German government and with German industrialists developed to such a point that a draft treaty, on the lines of that subsequently signed at Rapallo, was ready for signature in Berlin in April, when the Soviet delegates were stopping over in the course of their journey to Genoa¹³⁷. More than rhetoric, in fact, informed Chicherin's assurance to the press on the eve of the delegation's departure that it would defend the inviolability of the Soviet system and the sovereign rights of the Soviet state. If an agreement were not reached at Genoa, it would be reached at some later date¹³⁸.

The conference, it was noted, was officially designated an 'international economic conference': but this did "not prevent its organisers from forming a political combination and raising political questions"¹³⁹. It was, in fact, precisely the patently political character of the meeting on which the American government based its refusal of the invitation to participate¹⁴⁰. The question of the acceptance or not of the Cannes resolutions was negotiated at the opening session of the Conference, on 10 April, by the chairman's formula that he had declared that the programme of the conference

would be based upon the decisions taken at Cannes, and that he regarded his proposal approved in the absence of objections¹⁴¹. Chicherin had stated in his opening address that his government "noted and approved in principle the substance of the Cannes resolutions", while reserving the right to amend and make additions to them". More contentious, however, proved a proposal that in order to strengthen peace "so far as that is possible within the limits of the political and social order existing in the majority of the countries" a general reduction of arms should be agreed, and a lessening of the load of militarism through the reduction of armed forces and the banning of poisonous gases and other forms of war. This question, the head of the French delegation pointed out, was not on the agenda; and attempt to discuss it would meet a final and categorical refusal on the part of his delegation¹⁴². The raising of such questions by the Soviet delegation was, however, largely tactical: Lenin had pointed out, in draft directives for the delegation, that "one of the main, if not the main political task" at Genoa was to attempt to isolate the pacifist section of the opposing side, and reach not only a trading but a political agreement with it¹⁴³. The proposal was accordingly withdrawn. It had already become apparent that, as Litvinov had written to Chicherin, the "main, if not the only question at Genoa will be the Russian one"¹⁴⁴.

Serious discussion, however, devolved upon the four Commissions into which the Conference at this point divided itself. Three Commissions examined respectively financial, economic and commercial, and transport matters, in accordance with articles 4, 5 and 6 of the programme agreed at Cannes; but most attention centred upon the first, Political Commission, which was charged with discussion of the first three articles of the Cannes programme, but which was in effect "entirely devoted to the Russian question"¹⁴⁵. While all states were represented at the plenary sessions, not all had the right to participate in the work of the commissions and sub-commissions: and the influence of those excluded was in fact "extremely limited"¹⁴⁶.

Germany and Russia were represented, as well as the five 'inviting' powers, on all four Commissions: but neither they nor the other participating states had participated in the drawing up of the Experts' Memorandum, which had been discussed and approved at a meeting in London from 20-28 March, and which was used by the five inviting powers as the basis of their proposed resolutions¹⁴⁷. The first section of this document, the

"restoration of Russia", specifically excluded from its scope as 'political' the questions of legislative measures to give effect to its content, the relation of such acts to existing trade agreements, and "several others". This consideration did not, however, appear to have inhibited discussion of a number of other principles, apparently designed to secure (in the words of the secretary of the Soviet delegation) that "foreign capital should feel at home" in Russia¹⁴⁸. Russia's economic restoration was stated to depend "to a significant degree" upon the assistance of foreign enterprises and foreign capital. Foreign businessmen, however, would refuse to render such assistance "without a major alteration in existing conditions". Fundamental was the inviolability of the right of ownership of land and the distribution of the harvest; once this was established, foreign assistance in the form of equipment and credits would not be slow to materialize. In industry "definite measures" were necessary to provide for the freedom of activity of the foreign entrepreneur and of his staff, the security of their industrial operations and fixed capital, and their right to import necessary articles and distribute their production. The Soviet government must accept all the financial obligations of its predecessors, and accept responsibility for all damages suffered by foreign nationals.

Considerable changes were also required in the judicial system: it must be separated from the executive, the supreme court must be run by professional judges not liable to dismissal, the law must be equal to all, and guarantee the foreigner against arbitrary arrest and the infringement of the inviolability of his home. Foreign nationals in Russia must have the right of free entry and exit; they must be exempted from forced labour obligations or loans; and not subject to discrimination. Foreign industrial enterprises should have the right of import of equipment and produce; the entrepreneur's home could not be searched, and in the event of his arrest the appropriate Consul must be informed; and enterprises owned or run by foreigners must have "complete freedom" including the right to hire and fire workers, and to earn a "normal profit". The memorandum, the Soviet delegation replied in a further communication, despite its expressed concern for 'justice' and the economic restoration of Russia, amounted to a proposal for "not simply the exploitation, but the enslavement of the

working population of Russia by foreign capital", while nevertheless avoiding the basic question of the means of securing the restoration of the Russian economy¹⁴⁹.

The following section of the Experts' Memorandum concerning the "restoration of Europe", and its provisions relating to the work of the Brussels, Porto Rosa and Barcelona international conferences (at which Soviet Russia had not been represented), formed the basis of the work of the financial, economic and transport commissions. The work of these commissions concluded respectively on 29 April, 5 May and 26 April¹⁵⁰. The solution of the problems before them, however, as the Financial Commission noted, "depended upon the solution of major political problems". Their "main attention", the Italian representative noted, should be devoted to the political side of the question. Balanced budgets and many other matters depended upon the "general and political position of each country"; the the Commission's work should be considered as an "introduction to the political work we must carry out"¹⁵¹.

The main emphasis of the Conference accordingly focused upon the work of the Political Commission, and upon the informal negotiation which take parallel with (and often to greater effect than) the conference-hall discussion¹⁵². The other Commissions, Chicherin wrote, were "only decoration"¹⁵³. The First (Political) Commission was divided in turn into two sub-commissions, the first of which met on the same day, 11 April¹⁵⁴. More important negotiations followed, however, three days later at Lloyd George's headquarters at the Villa d'Albertis. These, Chicherin is reported to have stated, were the "only thing that happened at Genoa"¹⁵⁵. Lloyd George opened with a criticism of the Soviet counter-claims, which had just been received. He had himself a proposition. Russian war debts could perhaps be set off against the Russian claims; the prewar debts could be repaid after a long moratorium, of ten or even fifteen years; but the government could not negotiate on behalf of the private creditors, who must be repaid, or the private claimants, to whom their property must be restored. At a second meeting Lloyd George offered to reduce the war debt, but again insisted that the claims of private citizens be satisfied, by the restoration of their property and the payment of their debts. Again, however, it was not found possible to reach an agreement. There was a

precedent, Chicherin claimed, for the Russian counterclaims in the "Alabama" case; the restoration of factories was not possible (some had in any case been absorbed by others); and the working class would oppose any such move. Soviet Russia was ready to consider western claims, but not, it appeared, vice versa¹⁵⁶.

The Soviet delegation nevertheless communicated the substance of the Allied proposal to Moscow, where it was considered by the Politburo¹⁵⁷. On 20 April Chicherin wrote to Lloyd George suggesting that Russia's economic position was such that that the country should not be required to pay in full its foreign debts and obligations. The delegation was prepared, however, to accept the Allied terms on all points other than that concerning the right of foreign nationals to the restitution of their property, provided that a number of points were conceded in return: the annulment of the war debts and interest payments; and "sufficient financial assistance" to allow the country to emerge as quickly as possible from its existing economic situation. In the absence of such assistance, no point was seen in accepting financial obligations which it would be impossible to meet; nor could the Soviet government reasonably be expected to repay the debts of its predecessors while it remained without official recognition¹⁵⁹.

It was pointed out to the Soviet delegates by Lloyd George and Worthington-Evans that even the right of former owners to prior consideration in the granting of concessions would be unacceptable to the French and Belgian delegates, and that without them the Political Commission could not resume work. It was eventually agreed that the former owners should be given the use of their property, or agreed compensation; and this was included in Chicherin's letter of 20 April¹⁶⁰. This concession was opposed by a number of members of the Soviet delegation, and it was not in fact endorsed by the Politburo. Chicherin stated in a letter, however, that it had been accepted tactically, in order to avoid a total breakdown in negotiations¹⁶¹.

The sub-commission, nevertheless, failed to reach agreement, and a committee of experts was set up to examine Chicherin's letter in detail. The question of the granting of credits to Russia was discussed on 29 April, but no decision was reached¹⁶². The possibility of agreement had in any case been sharply reduced by the announcement of the signature of the Rapallo treaty between the Soviet and German delegations on 16 April¹⁶³.

The treaty, which was published on 18 April, "disturbed the whole Conference for several days". Its publication had the effect of a "bomb"¹⁶⁴. The British delegation, Gregory wrote to Curzon, was "very much disturbed.. It was at once realised that the whole situation was transformed". The existence of a secret military convention was also suspected¹⁶⁵.

The French delegation left the committee of experts, and the German delegation was denied the right to participate further in the Conference. All commission meetings for that day were cancelled¹⁶⁶. A note was addressed by the Allies to the German delegation, accusing it of dealing with the Russian delegation on the matter of dispute behind the back of the Conference¹⁶⁷.. The continuation of the Conference itself was prejudiced: French participation became yet more grudging, and the Soviet government, having secured under article 2 of the Rapallo treaty the recognition of its nationalization of foreign property as well as a diplomatic and tactical coup, became even less concerned to satisfy the claims of Allied nationals¹⁶⁸. The Conference, Gregory recalled, was left to discussion of secondary questions which had no particular purpose, "or at least, none that would have justified the continuous session in foreign parts of so many of the leading politicians of Europe". Gregory and Litvinov (and, indeed, others) agreed in finding the Rapallo treaty the "only concrete achievement" of the Conference¹⁶⁹.

The reply which the Soviet delegation issued to the London memorandum on 24 April did offer to acknowledge prewar debts; but the right of foreign nationals to the use of property which they had formerly owned, and was not nationalized or requisitioned, was conceded only "where this was possible in view of the socio-economic system and basic laws of the Russian republic".¹⁷⁰ According to the secretary of the Soviet delegation, the meeting of the committee of experts on the same day had a "decisive character". In the course of questions and answers exchanged especially between the Belgian delegate Cattier and Rakovsky, it became clear that the "basic root difference" which was reflected in the essence of the two social systems, in the two world-outlooks and in the two attitudes to the Russian revolution, centred upon the third point of the London memorandum, which dealt with private claims. To one side the essence of the Russian revolution was the abolition of the private ownership of

capital; while the other side wanted its restoration¹⁷¹. The Russian delegates, as the Cabinet was told, were "proving very intractable and unreasonable"¹⁷².

It proved difficult to agree upon a further Allied memorandum, drafts of which were prepared by the British and by the French delegations; and the document which was transmitted to the Soviet delegation on 2 May was not, in fact, officially endorsed by either the French or the Belgian delegations¹⁷³. The restoration of the Russian economy, the Allied note stated, required the capital and expertise of the West. As soon as it was learned in the West that former owners could return to their former enterprises and lands, establish new ones, run them in security, and secure a reasonable profit, they would do so, and bring with them capital, labour and knowledge. This and the acknowledgement of debts would secure that "establishment of confidence" which in turn would guarantee the provision of such assistance from the West. The British Trade Facilities Act could be extended to Russia, guaranteeing the extension of private credits to the extent of £25 million; and analogous provision might be made in France, Italy and Japan. The Soviet government, in turn, must refrain from interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and from attempts to upset the political or territorial status quo in other countries; and must suppress any attempt to aid revolutionary movements originating within the country. The Soviet government must accept all debts and state obligations although payment would not immediately be demanded. No responsibility was accepted by the Allies for losses and damages in Russia after the revolution; although a reduction in the sum of debts would be made, in view of the economic position of Russia. Obligations towards private citizens must be accepted, and an agreement concluded with them within a year; failing agreement, arbitration should be accepted. The claims of foreign nationals must be returned, restored or, if this were not possible, they must be compensated, in order to "encourage the renewal of the economic activity of foreigners in Russia". Measures for the protection of persons, labour and property of foreigners should be taken; and the position of the residence of foreigners and of their trade in Russia, and the legal system, should be arranged as originally outlined in the Experts' Memorandum¹⁷⁴.

This memorandum , in the view of the Russian delegation, represented a step back even in comparison with the Experts' Memorandum, and showed little concern for the letter of the Cannes resolutions. Loans and credits were essential for Russia, the restoration of whose economy was in turn necessary for Europe itself. Guarantees were ready and also legislation, which would give security to foreigners wishing to work and to bring capital into Russia (a document was circulated at the Conference outlining the changes in Russian legislation relating to the person and to property in 1920-22¹⁷⁵). A list of concessions which it was proposed to grant to foreigners was also ready. The question, however, had hardly been considered: the recognition of state debts and of private claims had been made a prior condition. The future was being sacrificed to the past, and to small groups of people; and besides, Russia was not the only state represented at the Conference to have refused to recognize debts or to confiscate the property of foreigners. No credits for the Soviet government had been mentioned, but only for private citizens wishing to trade with Russia. This was useless if there were no funds with which to restore the transport system, as well as industry and agriculture. Concerning the suppression of revolutionary propaganda, the Soviet reply observed that this was to introduce a political question; but apart from this, could it be held to deny political party and trade union activity? Russia was ready to recognize the public debts, if the losses were recognized which had been suffered by Russia as a result of the intervention and blockade. The delegation had gone so far as to offer to recognize all public debts and obligations and to renounce all counter-claims on condition that satisfactory credits were placed at the disposal of the government. Of this latter point there was, however, nothing in the Memorandum; while the provisions with which it was sought to bind the Soviet government internally were contrary to the social system of Soviet Russia, and to the first point of the Cannes conditions. Difficult financial questions should not, the reply concluded, prevent agreement on other questions, facilitating the economic restoration of Europe and of Russia¹⁷⁶.

Little now remained to be discussed. The first sub-commission of the First (Political) Commission met on 16 and 17 May to consider a proposal to establish a committee to examine further the differences

between the two sides, under the headings of debts, private property and credits¹⁷⁷. The two sides, it was proposed, should meet at The Hague on 26 June for this purpose¹⁷⁸. Chicherin objected to the exclusion of the German government from the proposed representation, and to the choice of The Hague, where the Soviet government had no diplomatic representation. The Allied proposal was, however, finally adopted, after Lloyd George had defended the choice of location and the method of forming two commissions, Russian and Non-Russian, for the purposes of discussion. It was further agreed to refrain from any act of aggression or propaganda, not only in Europe but in general. As Lloyd George pointed out, Britain, having major interests in the East and in the Far East, was convinced of the need for the treaty to oblige Russia to refrain from any offensive or propaganda "not only towards the West, but also towards the East.. towards all those territories where England had her interests. If the obligation was interpreted as concerning only Europe, England could not sign it". The chairman noted that the agreement was as Lloyd George had interpreted it. The matter was further discussed at a fifth meeting of the sub-commission later in the day, where Lloyd George offered to provide evidence of hostile Soviet propaganda. Chicherin's sustained objection to The Hague as the location of a future meeting was overruled on a vote, but the Soviet delegation was assured of the same privileges as the other delegations¹⁷⁹.

The sub-commission's decisions were endorsed by the Political Commission on 18 May and by the Conference at its Third Plenary session on 19 May. The report of the Economic Commission was adopted, its chairman observing that "one of the most effective means of re-establishing a healthy stability in Europe" was the "equipping, encouragement and improvement of the peasant class". Dealing with the work of the First Commission, Lloyd George declared that the Soviet memorandum of 11 May had had a "fatal" effect. It had led to a reaction against the spirit of concession; and "if it were to be the last word of the Russian government, I would genuinely despair of the prospects of The Hague". Russia, he felt, needed the accumulation of wealth and experience which the world could place at her disposal; while the world needed the products which Russia could provide. He hoped that the Russian representatives at the Hague would make allowances for the "prejudices" of the West on business relations¹⁸⁰.

The non-aggression pact was a noteworthy achievement, said Lloyd

George; and the reports and recommendations of the Financial, Economic and Transport Commissions were "full of valuable suggestions" which could lead to the revival of the continent "if they were accepted and implemented" (which had not, however, been the case of the resolutions produced at the Barcelona and other international conferences which preceded Genoa, and whose work the three technical Commissions had essentially recapitulated¹⁸¹). The chairman of the final session noted rather more frankly that the Conference had "not perhaps achieved all that was hoped and expected of it"; and Chicherin added that its direct results had not satisfied the expectations which it had aroused among the peoples of all countries¹⁸². Nevertheless, noted the chairman, it had "opened the way to a new European policy"¹⁸³.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee, meeting two days before the Conference had formally concluded, approved the actions of the Soviet delegation. The delegation had "correctly carried out its tasks" and had given a "decisive rebuff to the efforts of foreign capitalists to re-establish private property in Russia". It had equally correctly reflected the interests of Russian workers in concluding the Rapallo treaty with Germany, on the basis of complete equality and reciprocity. At the same time, the extent of conflict among the western Powers, the strikes in Britain and Denmark, and the civil war in Ireland and the struggles in India, Egypt and Turkey against foreign capitalism demonstrated the continuing character of the "decline of the social-political system of capitalism"¹⁸⁴.

It was impossible, Maisky wrote, to deny that the Genoa Conference, considered by itself, was a failure. "Exactly nothing" had been done towards the solution of the problems which it had discussed; the revision of the Versailles settlement had been excluded by the Cannes resolutions; disarmament had been excluded as a result of the French attitude; and while the question of Russia had been discussed, "the character of the discussion was such that it not so much brought nearer, as put farther away its satisfactory solution". There could, in consequence, be no possibility of the economic restoration of Europe¹⁸⁵. The position of French and Belgian capital, he wrote, could be summarized in one brief word: "give. Russia should 'give' a great deal. In exchange capital promised us nothing"¹⁸⁶. It was not, noted another Soviet commentator, a meeting of merchants at Genoa so much as a clash between two world-outlooks, a "struggle between

proletarian socialism and bourgeois individualism". It was a continuation of the struggle of the civil war for the principles of 1917, against Russian and foreign capitalism. The central question had been that of private property; and Genoa represented "one of many.. steps to the new social order". That new order would be established, however, "not by the agreements of diplomatists but by the movement of the working class"¹⁸⁷.

The invitation to the Conference itself, however, whatever its results, was a "symbol of the political and moral victory of Russia". The Conference was the first opportunity which Soviet diplomacy had been offered for a "major intervention of an international character"¹⁸⁸. For the first time, after five years of separation, there had come together for the discussion of ^{major} political and economic questions the representatives of Russia, on the one hand, and the representatives of the other Powers of Europe, on the other. The discussion had for the time being concluded without result, wrote Maisky, but it would "inevitably be continued", in view of the "necessity to both sides of a minimum of business relations". If a modus vivendi were not worked out by the meetings at Genoa and The Hague, it would nevertheless eventually be found¹⁸⁹. Already, however, Russia had been listened to by thirty-three powers, and other claimants to represent the country had been excluded: which meant that the Soviet government had effectively been recognized. The conclusion of the Rapallo treaty, while it might have only a limited economic importance, had "enormous" political importance¹⁹⁰. Despite the conclusion of an agreement among the Powers not to enter separately into relations with the Soviet government, of which Litvinov informed the Foreign Affairs Commissariat, the existence of the Entente had become fictitious. Russia, moreover, a Pravda editorial declared, could for the meantime increase its production many times without a foreign loan¹⁹¹.

The Cabinet in Britain congratulated Lloyd George upon his conduct at the Conference.¹⁹² It proved more difficult to convince the House of Commons and the Public that Genoa had not been, as the Economist put it, "almost entirely barren of results, apart from the Russo-German Treaty": which was "if anything, a retrograde step". Genoa had not been a failure in the sense that nothing had been achieved, wrote the Contemporary Review; but that the Conference had succeeded in justifying initial hopes and beliefs it was "manifestly impossible to contend". A lack of united

purpose had made itself apparent from the first. While Lloyd George had been "pushing with 'almost fanatical' enthusiasm for a liberal settlement, the French representatives had been "thwarting his endeavours by every expedient and at every turn"¹⁹³. The net results of the Conference, wrote the Review of Reviews, were "nil", for whatever had been accomplished had been done outside it or in spite of it. In particular Rapallo had been the "turning point of the Conference.. its one permanent and tangible outcome. Whatever semblance ~~there~~ had been of unity and common endeavour was dispelled, never to be re-created. It appeared, the Economist noted, that "the extremist section holds more power in Russia than was assumed, and that the moderates probably (could) not carry whole-hearted recognition of private property rights", which were the "sine qua non of restored commercial intercourse" on anything other than a gold or barter basis¹⁹⁴.

The main purpose of the Conference, Lloyd George, told the House of Commons, had been the restoration of financial and trading relations, the improvement of diplomatic relations, and the removal of disputes which were endangering the peace of nations. Overall, as a result of the deliberations and recommendations of the Commissions, he hoped for a "great improvement"¹⁹⁵. "Great things" had been accomplished. The Russo-German treaty, admittedly, was a "great error in judgement"; but it showed equally the "sinister possibilities of leaving this question alone". As he told the Cabinet on 23 May, "the Russians were among the most incompetent people in Europe, whereas in some respects the Germans were the most competent. They would run their revolution in ways which would be much more attractive to our people..¹⁹⁶.

Without the assistance of ~~of~~ other nations, he thought, it would be impossible for Russia, whatever the form of its government, to "extricate itself from (its) pit of squalid misery". The Soviet government, at the same time, was clearly master of the situation for the present. The "treasures of Russia could not be unlocked to the outside world except through them". The policy of force "had been tried before, and had failed"; and at Genoa not even the most anti-Soviet representatives had suggested it. The British Empire delegation had accordingly concluded that in the interests of the peace of the world some arrangement with Russia was necessary in order to save the misery in Russia itself, to enable Russia

to make her contribution to the needs of the world, necessary in order to help in the swelling of that volume of trade upon which ~~some~~ many millions of people depended for their daily bread, necessary in order to give a sense of stability, necessary "above all, to avert those evils which lurk in the future if nothing is done to unravel this tangle of misunderstanding".

The Soviet delegation, however, had been seeking credits from those countries and nationals who had been dispossessed or whose earlier advances had been disavowed. Credits could be provided, but on condition of the "restoration of the confidence upon which credit is based". The Russian counter-claim was "one that we could not acknowledge". The Russian memorandum of ~~11~~ May, moreover, showed that "extreme theorists" had overawed the "practical statesmen of the Soviet system". Theorists, he complained, could "not realize the difference between a logical proposition and a business one". Most of their gold, however, had been exhausted, and major concessions had been offered. This and the question ~~of~~ credits would be considered carefully at The Hague; and Lloyd George was "very hopeful that when we come to an examination of the practical details, something may be achieved"¹⁹⁷.

Asquith found the results of the Conference "depressingly, and even distressingly meagre". The fault lay in the abstention of America, the half-hearted participation of France, and reparations, which were "at the root of the whole European situation", but had not been considered. Sir A. Shirley Benn, the President of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce and President of the Federation of British Industry, and a consultative member of the delegation at Genoa, noted however that with unemployment at the levels which then existed, "trade with every possible customer is absolutely essential to national prosperity". Russia's needs and resources were such that it was "impossible to set.. limits on its trade potentialities". The longer, he thought, the country delayed in reestablishing contact with Russia, "the less became the chance of saving out very considerable property and investments in Russia"¹⁹⁸.

The augury for the Hague Conference was not, however, a favourable one. The German government had not been invited; and the American government, which had, decided not to participate¹⁹⁹. The representatives of the states invited, moreover, had only powers ad referendum : they were 'experts'.

not plenipotentiaries, with the power only to refer proposals to their respective governments for a decision^{199a}. Nor could it be overlooked that many of the Allied representatives had an interest in the proceedings which was more than academic. The chairman of the French delegation, Alphand, was director of the department of state property of France and director of the bureau for the defence of the private property of French citizens in Russia; and another member of the delegation had formerly owned a rubber factory in Russia²⁰⁰. The chairman of the Belgian delegation was also the head of the Belgian bank which held most Russian bonds, and another member of the delegation was represented on the committee for the defence of Belgian interests in Russia. Andersen and Petersen, who represented Denmark, were also the director and the secretary respectively of the Danish society for the defence of claims in Russia²⁰¹.

The "real soul" of the British delegation, Maisky believed, was Leslie Urquhart, the President of the Association of British Creditors of Russia, who was acting, the government explained, to represent the interests of British bondholders at The Hague²⁰². Such people, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury explained, were the "truest friends of Russia and of Russian civilization". The "interests of bondholders and of property holders" were the "test of that confidence, that recognition of common obligations which must be accepted by the Russian government if it expects to restore its credit and to place itself once more in a position to take advantage of the assistance which can be given to it by the joint resources of Europe". The proceedings at Genoa and The Hague were, he thought, "steps which may lead the Russian government back from the clouds to the solid earth"²⁰³.

In the circumstances it was, perhaps, not surprising that the Hague Conference concerned itself with something which was hardly the "practical solution.. apart from political considerations" of the Russian question which the chairman of the British delegation suggested²⁰⁴. How, wondered Stein, had questions which were clearly political at Genoa, and had even been discussed in the Political Commission, now become technical at the Hague, in a "miraculous transformation". Writing from The Hague, he noted that it was "not in the least" the case that no political questions were discussed: the aim was rather to be able to "remove any awkward points.

points from the agenda, 'declaring' them 'political'"²⁰⁵.

More important, perhaps, was the relation between the Hague Conference and its predecessor. It had been made clear at Genoa that the Hague meeting should continue and complete its work. The chairman of the First Commission at Genoa summed up the proposal as the "continuation in The Hague of negotiations begun here in Genoa", for which purpose a commission of experts should be established to "continue in another place the work begun in Genoa". The chairman of the final plenary session, at which the proposal was formally adopted, observed that the Hague Conference would be "only the continuation, the outcome of efforts made here in Genoa"²⁰⁶.

At The Hague, however, the head of the French delegation protested that no such decision had been taken at Genoa, and that the meeting was "not the continuation of Genoa, but a completely separate business conference, which should begin work from the beginning". The British delegate, Hughes, declared that the Genoa Conference decisions could not be ignored, nor did he intend to do so, although the succeeding meeting had not been bound by any formal resolutions²⁰⁷. The British delegation, however, while initially it had been prepared to discuss the compensation of those who had formerly owned property in Russia, in the course of the Conference came closer to the French view that only restitution of confiscated property could be accepted. It was "perfectly plain to everybody", Lloyd Greame stated at a session on 12 July, that the "only effective form of compensation for seized property" which it was within the power of the Russian government to furnish for the time being was the "restitution of the property concerned wherever possible.. We came here to learn what could be restored"²⁰⁸. It was equally apparent that the Soviet government would "not agree", as Radek wrote on the eve of the Conference, "to the restitution of the private property of foreign capitalists". Most of the iron, coal and oil of the country would pass into the hands of foreigners; and the government would be left with no means of promoting the economic development of the country"²⁰⁹.

The very organization of the Hague Conference made a contribution to its lack of success in dealing with the problems with which it was confronted. The meeting was divided into two Commissions, the Russian and the Non-Russian; and the Non-Russian Commission, representing all the participating states with the exception of Soviet Russia, met at The Hague for ten days in advance of the arrival of the Russian delegates. It was decided to

set up three sub-commissions to deal respectively with private property, debts and credits; and the Russian delegation, which arrived on 26 June, announced that it would participate as a delegation in each sub-commission, rather than be divided into isolated pairs of representatives (as was evidently intended)²¹⁰.

The sub-commission meetings began on 27 June²¹¹. The chairman of the sub-commission on credits announced that it was a "conference of experts, empowered only to recommend certain measures to their governments 'ad referendum'", and that "political questions were excluded". Young, the British delegate, noted that capital would require the confidence to extend credits to Russia; but this was a question for the other commissions. The first stage of their work should be the collection of facts²¹². At the second session, accordingly, Litvinov indicated that the Soviet government estimated a need of foreign credit to an extent of over three thousand million gold roubles (about £330 million) over a period of three years. A "large part" of this sum would in turn be expended on foreign goods. It did not, however, include privately arranged credits for the development of concessions; and the figure was a "minimum". Sokol'nikov added that if the restoration of the Russian economy were not undertaken without delay, the "last hope, either financial or material, of Russian creditors securing a significant part of their claims will vanish". The matter was "not an exclusively Russian problem, but has an international financial importance". A further session provided the opportunity for questions to be put; but Krasin made it clear that concessions were not envisaged on the railway network²¹³.

At the session on 14 July, however, the loan which the Soviet delegates had sought was declared "impossible in the current economic and political situation of Europe". The most that could be done was the mobilization of private capital and its encouragement with guarantees. The recognition of debts, Young added, was essential in order to assure private capitalists that their investments were secure. Litvinov in reply pointed out that compared with its position at Genoa, the Soviet government was now prepared to accept the principle of compensation were a satisfactory overall arrangement made; and to accept a government guarantee, not a government loan. European industry was in need of markets, and glad to sell in Russia, but needed long or short-term credit. The Non-Russian delegations, however, had

provided not even a list of foreign property claims; and in contrast to their position at Genoa, now demanded restitution, not compensation, for foreign claimants. The only answer to their proposal had been general observations. Russia could not meet foreign obligations without a certain minimum of credits. They had received only "very interesting lectures on the meaning of confidence"²¹⁴.

The sub-commission of debts began with a similar disclaimer: those present were there as "experts, men of business, who consider real facts, not devoting their attention to any political questions". The distinction, it became apparent, was equally unreal. Succeeding sessions were devoted largely to questions addressed to the Russian delegation concerning the Soviet budget and other technical questions. At the fourth session, however, Sokol'nikov pointed out that the Soviet government was unable, even if it were willing, to accept the debts and interest payments of its predecessors. In order to do so, an economic agreement with the West was necessary, and a lengthy moratorium. The chairman, Alphand, considered that circumstances might force the Soviet government to "submit to the general law which governs relations between civilized states, and recognize the obligations accepted by preceding governments". Litvinov replied that the Soviet government would accept no obligations at all until "completely certain of her ability to fulfil them"; nor, it was added, would the recognition of debts be an action unilaterally performed by the Soviet government. The delegates, however, the chairman noted, were not the representatives of the private claimants (although many of them, as has been noted, combined this function with their formal responsibilities). Andersen thought that the "most convenient form of guarantee" would be the "transfer of the administration of all income of the Russian government to an International Commission. To the possible objection that this would be an infringement of the sovereignty of Russia he answered that states which were bankrupt could "not allow themselves the luxury of pride". It appeared difficult, also, to decide upon an acceptable form of arbitration in the event of disagreement between private creditors and the Soviet government²¹⁵. Agreement, in any case, depended upon the decisions of the sub-commission which was dealing with the question of ~~credits~~ private property.

The question of private property, in Stein's view, was "central" both at Genoa and again at The Hague. The "whole history of the Hague

Conference" was "essentially the history of the negotiations on private property²¹⁶. The chairman of the sub-commission of private property, Lloyd-Greame, suggested at their first meeting that the purpose of their deliberations was "not simply the question of the satisfaction of the claims of private owners; it is a problem of restoring Russian industry". Everyone knew, he thought, "what a major role foreign entrepreneurs played in Russia in the past". Their discussions, he urged, should be of a "practical and businesslike character", avoiding "general questions". The members of the Non-Russian Commission were "practical business people". The "whole question" was whether conditions could be guaranteed "capable of engaging the confidence of those who would have to invest their money in Russia", money which was evidently "outside the control of the government". A detailed list of claims against the Soviet government would not however be available, as Litvinov had requested; this would take "many months" to prepare²¹⁷.

Litvinov presented a list of concessions available to the third session. It was not, he noted, an exhaustive one²¹⁸. The general conditions applying to such concessions were specified according to current Soviet legislation: thus trade union membership would not be required of all employees of a foreign concessionaire. The chairman wished to know which enterprises on the list had formerly been owned by foreign nationals; and which formerly foreign-owned enterprises had been excluded. Their property was not, in fact, being returned, nor to the previous owners, Cattier declared. Litvinov replied that former owners should have precedence in view of the fact (if for no other reason) that their experience was greater; but they should not have an absolute right, if a better offer were made. The Russian delegation, he complained, after two weeks, was still being regarded as "some kind of central information bureau"²¹⁹.

The list was unsatisfactory, Lloyd-Greame pronounced at the fourth session, were it to be regarded as a final one. An "insignificant part" of formerly foreign-owned property was included; and it was not clear what compensation would be offered, and to what extent such essential principles would be satisfied as "non-interference of trade unions in the running of enterprises" and so on. The list conformed, Litvinov stated, with Soviet economic plans; and compensation could not be discussed until it became

clear what assistance would be forthcoming for the restoration of the economy. The Non-Russian Commission, as Krasin noted, insisted upon the restitution of private property; while the Russian delegation, while requiring foreign capital to assist in the restoration of the economy, based its proposals upon the economic needs of the country: concessions were being offered because they might be useful to Russia, not because the property had previously been owned by foreigners. The restoration of private property was a utopian notion: transport had been nationalized, and there had been other changes.²²⁰ The Soviet government, Cattier declared, appeared not to be prepared to advance any rule in accordance with which it would be prepared to return property to its former owners; nor was it necessarily prepared to provide compensation, failing the reaching of an agreement on credits. The list presented, said Lloyd-Greame, was limited and unsatisfactory; there was no guarantee of restitution; and there was no guarantee that the former owners would automatically receive concessions. The "only form of real compensation which the Russian government could give at the present time", he suggested, was "restitution of property in all cases where that is possible"²²¹.

The following day a resolution of the second sub-commission was forwarded to Litvinov by the chairman of the Non-Russian Commission, Paten, to the effect that the Commission "no longer found it appropriate to continue its negotiations with the Russian Commission". A similar resolution adopted by the third sub-commission had already been communicated to the Russian delegation²²². It was the "unanimous opinion of the chairman and members of the three sub-commissions" that should Litvinov make a declaration altering the previous position of the delegation then the "door to continuation of the negotiations would not be closed"²²³. Litvinov in reply suggested that the position was "mainly the result of the fact that so far there had not been a plenary meeting of both Commissions". None of the commissions, he pointed out in a further letter, could come to a final conclusion without being in possession of the final conclusions of the other sub-commissions²²⁴.

A plenary session of both Commissions accordingly took place on 19 July²²⁵. Litvinov in his address suggested the possibility of inquiring of the Soviet government whether it might be prepared to recognize the debts of previous Russian governments towards private citizens, even though credits might not immediately be forthcoming. Lloyd-Greame thought this

statement was "extraordinarily important", signifying a "new stage in their negotiations". Cattier, however, understood the proposal differently than had the British delegate: Litvinov had offered to submit a number of questions to his government, but had gone no further. He had, indeed, made it clear that no guarantee could be given as to what the government's response might be²²⁶. The Non-Russian Commission, in a resolution adopted subsequently, declared that it could "not find the basis of an agreement within the terms" of Litvinov's declaration. It did, however, consider that the "line of conduct indicated in this declaration" could, if "accepted by the Russian Government, and if it is loyally carried out, contribute to the re-establishment of the confidence which is necessary for the co-operation of Europe and the reconstruction of Europe". It was also "calculated to create a favourable atmosphere for such further negotiations as may be considered opportune by the governments here represented"²²⁷.

The Soviet delegation's report to the Soviet government stated that the announcement that no governmental or government-guaranteed private credits would be forthcoming had precluded a successful outcome for the Conference as a whole²²⁸. The main result, wrote Krasin, should be considered in the political field the "recognition of the fact that at present no general agreement is attainable between the capitalist powers and Soviet Russia. This was the consequence not of the position of the Soviet delegation, but of the "utopian position" of the French and Belgian governments compared with their "more moderate" counterparts in France and Italy. Soviet trade was nevertheless "steadily developing". Sooner or later, he forecast, an agreement with the foreign states would be concluded. This was likely to take the form, however, of "separate agreements.. differing in character"²²⁹.

The Hague, Stein considered, saw the "collapse of the idea of a general agreement with Russia"; while the "idea of separate agreements was born". Maisky agreed with Stein that the path ahead was not one of "one general agreement with the bourgeois world, but the path of separate agreements with individual countries and states". Beyond this, wrote another commentator, it was clear that for the immediate future the Soviet government would have to rely on "internal resources" for the development of the economy²³⁰.

The Conference had brought the minds of the Russian delegation,

thought the Economist, "nearer to the realities of the situation and to the level of practical commonsense"²³¹. Defending the Conference in the House of Commons, Lloyd-Greame declared that it had been a "long step forward on the path towards a Russian settlement". The "sole hope" of Russian industries lay in "bringing back the skill and experience of those who did so much to build them up in the past". In this respect the Russian delegation had shown a "complete misconception of facts and actual possibilities". The final phase of the Conference offered, however, "real hope of concrete results". The Russian delegation's proposal represented a "very distinct, indeed a remarkable advance", he thought, on their previous position²³². The guarantees required of Russia, considered Lord Robert Cecil, amounted to the "abandonment of the very foundation on which the whole of their economic system is based". Nothing would get better in Russia, however, Lloyd George replied sternly, and it was "no use pretending they will, until Russia falls in with the civilized world". Getting the western capitalist was "essential to Russia, to enable her to run her manufactures". The Soviet government, where it was possible, must "put back the owners of property into their former position", and provide inducements for investors in Russia: this, he insisted, was a "purely business proposition". Soviet experience had shown, he thought, "how impossible it is to govern a country on these disastrous principles"²³³.

The Non-Russian Commission at The Hague concluded its activity with the adoption of a resolution pointing to the "desirability of all Governments not assisting their nationals in attempting to acquire property in Russia which belonged to other foreign nationals and which was confiscated since November 1st 1917, without the consent of such foreign owners or concessionaires". It also noted with "satisfaction" the "complete unity" of its twenty-six members²³⁴.

It was no use disguising the fact, however, Clynes told the House of Commons, that Britain had "rather different interests from some of the Allies whose representatives so often act with us in these recurring Conferences". Nothing, in particular, was to be gained by pretending that the British point of view was identical with the French point of view²³⁵. The Conference, in fact, virtually brought to an end the attempt of the western Powers at "transplanting again the exotic plant of capital upon Russian soil" on a collective basis²³⁶. Other governments, thought the

Fortnightly Review's observer E.J. Dillion, might well follow "Germany's example and conclude separate agreements" with Soviet Russia²³⁷. More dangerous, even, than formal propaganda, thought the Times in an editorial, was the "temptation continually being held out to business men and to statesmen, with the object of committing them ostensibly to enterprises of doubtful profit in Russia and ultimately to involuntary collusion in the Bolshevik purpose of overthrowing the present European order"²³⁸.

The best that the British government could do, a Foreign Office memorandum argued in May, was to "put the whole subject of Russia to sleep, if we can., for six months..²³⁹. Less than two months after the Hague meeting had concluded, however, a preliminary agreement had been signed by Urquhart and Krasin in Berlin; and the Maikop group, despite the disapproval of the Foreign Office, was reported to be approaching the Soviet government with a view to negotiating a concession²⁴⁰. The agreement with Urquhart settled in his favour most of the points which had earlier been in dispute. All the properties previously owned by Russo-Asiatic were to be returned on a 99 year concession basis, with the right reserved for the Soviet government to buy them back after forty years had elapsed. The Soviet government, also, was required to offer material assistance to the concessionaires to an extent which was estimated by Urquhart himself to amount to the payment of half of the Society's claim for compensation²⁴¹. The Society had in addition been conceded the right to hire and fire its employees²⁴².

The agreement, wrote the Economist, represented "another Bolshevik compromise with 'capitalism'". Russo-Asiatic shares on the Stock Exchange were a "lively market, advancing sharply on the news of the agreement". Ratification seemed certain. Share prices dropped towards the end of the month, however, in view of the "fear that there may arise difficulties in the way of carrying out the agreement"²⁴³.

Krasin's views were, in fact, not representative of those of the party leadership. He was convinced that the swift restoration of the economy could not be accomplished without the participation of foreign capital, which argued in turn a 'realistic' foreign policy²⁴⁴. Lenin had already given his opinion, however, that the concession should be given only if a major loan were granted to the Soviet government; and he drew the attention of the Politburo to the report of the commission which had been established under I.M. Mikhailov, which had concluded that the damage to

to the properties was largely the result of the actions of the Urquhart company itself, and recommended that not all the formerly foreign-owned factories should be offered on concession²⁴⁵.

The agreement was discussed at three meetings of the Politburo in September and by the Central Committee on 5 October. On 6 October the agreement was formally turned down by the Soviet government²⁴⁶. While Lenin was clearly and indeed, understandably concerned lest the agreement serve as a precedent and lest it come to be regarded as a belated concession of that compensation which had been refused at Genoa and The Hague, the Soviet government explained its action in other terms²⁴⁷. It was impossible to endorse the agreement, the decree stated, despite the fact that in normal circumstances it would have been welcomed, in view of the absence of "friendly, stable and normalized relations" with the British government. This was particularly evident, it was thought, in the efforts of the British government to exclude the Soviet government from the equal discussion of matters which affected its interests in the Near East and Black Sea: a reference to the exclusion of a Soviet delegation from full participation in the forthcoming Lausanne Conference²⁴⁸.

This, thought the Economist, was "rather hard on the company and Mr Urquhart". It was, however, still "not yet clear that the moderates are in control in Soviet Russia"; and the idea of the rights of private property of the Soviet government and of foreign capitalists were, evidently, "by no means identical". The present disappointment, however, might be "fully compensated later on"²⁴⁹. The agreement, Urquhart told an annual general meeting of the Society on 23 October, might yet come to be "regarded as a milestone in the progress of Russia from a ruinous and unpracticable Communism towards a modified form of Capitalism". He regarded the agreement as "still in suspense. It failed to secure the necessary endorsement for reasons that had nothing whatever to do with its business aspects. They were political reasons".²⁵⁰ The Bolsheviks, the Times added the following day, were moving to the Right. But they had a "long way to travel yet before it will be possible to give full recognition to their Government. The Soviet Government's conversion to capitalism is only half-hearted"²⁵¹.

The agreement, however, Urquhart declared, would "before very long be duly ratified". There was simply "no other way in which the Soviet rulers can now hope to win the confidence of the British investing public and undo

the harm done by an act of precipitate stupidity". The temporary decrees and laws of the Soviet government, he was sure, could not long override the economic "laws of Nature" which were "above those made by human kind", and would not long tolerate "Communistic theories"²⁵².

- 1 Parliamentary Debates Vol 152 col 1054, 27 March 1922, and vol 155 col 24.
See also above, Chapter Eight.
- 2 Review of Reviews Vol lxi December 1917 p410, Vol lxii February 1918 p93
- 3 Review of Reviews Vol lxii October 1918 p202
- 4 Parliamentary Debates Vol 152 col 1940, 3 April 1922
- 5 Review of Reviews Vol lxii November 1920 p300
- 6 Review of Reviews Vol lxiii April 1921 p268
- 7 New Statesman 5 November 1921 pl26
- 8 Times 19 December 1921. The return of capitalism, wrote Krasin's wife, was the hope which the proclamation on N.E.P. aroused abroad.
"In many quarters in France, in Germany and in England, there was an idea that it would not be long before foreign capital would reassume, under modified conditions, its former prominent place in Russia"
(Krassin, Lubov: Leonid Krassin: his life and work (London 1929) pl56)
- 9 Memorandum by Mr Peters, 28 received 30 May 1921, F.O. 371.6878.N6216
- 10 Economist 19 November 1921 p890, where it was noted that the Soviet leaders had had to "compromise with capitalism"; ibid 26 November 1921 p940, 15 April 1922 p722
- 11 Parliamentary Debates Vol 152 cols 1899,1900,1901, 3 April 1922 (Lenin took the chair at a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars on 1 November, but no speech of this date is recorded in Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 44, esp pp685,716)
- 12 Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary Vol i (London 1969) pl96, entry for 28 March 1922. Jones added a note that this "misjudgement" was based on Lenin's speech to the Congress of Metal Workers on 6 March 1922 (re-produced in Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 45 ppl-16).
- 13 NKID: Godovoi Otchet IX S'ezdy Sovetov za 1920-21 gg (Moscow 1922), cited according to DVPSSSR Vol iv p674,675; Appeal of the Executive Committee of the Communist International for help for the Famine-stricken areas of Russia, Inprecorr i.39 p348, 22 December 1921, in Degras: Communist International i p301-3
- 14 NKID: Godovoi Otchet ibid DVPSSSR Vol iv p675. The agreement with the A.R.A. is in DVPSSSR Vol iv No 193 p281-6, and with Nansen in DVPSSSR Vol iv Nos 201 and 202, pp294-8 (both were published in translation in Russian Information and Review Vol i No 1, and Vol ii No s p31-2)

- 15 National Review Vol 78, September 1921 p27; Times 25 August 1921. A statement issued by the Information Department of the Russian Trade Delegation on the 'Famine in Russia' noted that the average rainfall in October 1920 to June 1921, which was the growth period of crops, had been not 14 but 2.75 inches. From fifteen to twenty-two million people were affected, in an area of eight hundred by five hundred square miles (Russian Trade Delegation Information Department: Famine in Russia: documents and statistics presented to the Brussels Conference (London 1921) pp5,6). Fisher's careful and near-contemporary study, based on the documentation and records of the A.R.A., felt it "necessary .. to show that the failure of the rain to fall in 1920 and 1921" could not be "attributed to the madness of Bolshevism, nor to the intervention of Providence to punish the blasphemous Communists for their sins". He concluded that "unquestionably" there would have been a very short crop in Russia in 1921, had there been no war, no revolution, no blockade, and no Bolshevik government (Fisher: The Famine in Soviet Russia 1919-1923 (Stanford 1927) p469)
- 16 Coates: History of Anglo-Soviet Relations p56; the General Secretary of the Quaker Relief Committee has provided an account: A. Ruth Fry: Three Visits to Russia (1922-5) (London 1942, new ed. 1960)
- 17 Review of Reviews Vol lxiv November 1921 p327; New Statesman 24 September 1921 p668; Coates op.cit p56; Parliamentary Debates Vol 146 cols 1240,1241, 16 August 1921
- 18 Leeper memorandum, 'Political Aspects of the Russian Famine', 12 September 1921, and Gregory minute of the same date, F.O. 371.6851.N10364, 13 September 1921
- 19 Note of an Interview between Lloyd George and Berzin, 5 August 1921, Cabinet Papers C.P. 3232 Cab 24/127, and MSS Notes of Meeting, Lloyd George Papers F/203/3/7; Meeting at the Board of Trade, 6 August 1921, in Lloyd George Papers F/203/3/8.
- 20 Note to the Soviet government, 4 September 1921, in DVPSSSR Vol iv p311f; International Commission, 30 August 1921, Report, by Lloyd-Greame, 3 September 1921, Cabinet Papers C.P. 3283, Cab 24/127 (the names of the proposed members of the Commission for Russian Relief are in ibid Appendix A, and the resolutions adopted on 1 September are in ibid Appendix B).

- 21 DVPSSSR Vol iv p312, note of 4 September 1921
- 22 Chicherin to the governments of Italy, Britain, France and Belgium, 7 September 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 209 p307f, pp307,8,9,311.
- 23 International Commission: Report on further proceedings, Lloyd-Greame 17 September 1921, Cabinet Papers C.P. 3321, Cab 24/128; Report on a Meeting of the International Commission for Russian Relief at Brussels, Lloyd-Greame 11 October 1921, Cabinet Papers C.P. 3398, Cab 24/128
- 24 NKID: Godovoi Otchet IX S''ezdy Sovetov za 1920~~1~~21 gg pp679,676. The resolution dealing with credits (and debts) is in the Report above.
- 25 New Statesman 15 October 1921 p36; Krasin to Chicherin, 11 October 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 258 p410
- 26 New Statesman 15 October 1921 p37
- 27 Parliamentary Debates Vol 147 col 1742, 2 November 1921, and Vol 149, col 289, 16 December 1921
- 28 F.O. 371.8208.N4124, 1 May 1922
- 29 Parliamentary Debates Vol 147 col 7, 18 October 1921
- 30 Economist 5 November 1921 p809
- 31 the correspondence was published in Leninsky Sbornik Vol 36, and discussed by N.N. Lyubimov (himself an economic advisor to the delegation) in Uchenye Zapiski Institut Mezhdunarodnykh Otnoshenii Vypusk 2, 1960, in an article entitled 'Deyatel'nost' V.I. Lenina v svyazi s Genuezskoi Konferentsiei 1922 g'; the reference is to p.70
- 32 Pravda 29 October 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 278 p445f, and p680
- 33 Krasin to Curzon, Parliamentary Papers 1921, Cmd 1546
- 34 Curzon to Krasin, 1 November 1921, in ibid, and Pravda 15 November 1921; Godovoi Otchet IX S''ezdy Sovetov i n DVPSSSR Vol iv p681; Chicherin to Krasin, 12 November 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 301 pp492-3 (communicated to the FO on 16th)
- 35 New Statesman 4 February 1922 p490, 4 March 1922 p613
- 36 Cabinet Minutes 6 March 1922, Cab 15(22)3, Cab 23/29
- 37 Cabinet Minutes 8 March 1922, Cab 16(22)5, Cab 23/29
- 38 Parliamentary Debates Vol 151 col 2545, 17 March 1922, and Vol 152 col 1827, 3 April 1922
- 39 ibid; New Statesman 25 March 1922 p690
- 40 Economist 18 November 1922 p938
- 41 Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 10(128) 18 July 1922, review of P.V. Ol': Inostrannye Kapitaly v Rossii (Petrograd 1922)

- 42 Young, Parliamentary Debates Vol 151 col 258, 28 February 1922
- 43 Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' article cited above
- 44 Economist 21 May 1922 p1021
- 45 ibid p1022. The Lena Goldfields were reported to have been seized by the Bolsheviks in June 1919. The Lena Goldfields Company had a subscribed capital in excess of £1.4 million, and operating results in 1916-1917 were in excess of £1.3 million (Times 10 June 1919)
- 46 Times 6 March 1918. The object of the Committee was stated to be to "safeguard the interests of British shareholders in mining and other industrial enterprises in Russia". Its membership included men "active in Anglo-Russian business" (Russia Vol ii No 4, February 1918 p4)
- 47 the meeting was reported in the Times 21 June 1918, and in Russia Vol iii No 1 June-July 1918 p31,32. The names of the Committee were published in July (Times 15 July 1918)
- 48 Economist 3 January 1920 p34, 11 December 1920 p1050
- 49 Economist 26 June 1920 pp1415,1416
- 50 Russia Vol ii No 2 December 1917 p4, and No 3 January 1918 p32
- 51 Parliamentary Debates Vol 147 cols 1033-4, and col 1543, November 1921
- 52 Russia Vol ii No 4 February 1918 p4
- 53 Times 27 September 1921, letter from Stafford Talbot, Chairman of the Executive Committee; Times 5 April 1922
- 54 Krasin: Vneshtorg i Vneshnaya Ekonomicheskaya Politika Sovetskogo Pravitel'stva (Petrograd 1921) p32
- 55 Glasgow Herald 9 November 1917
- 56 Times 10 April 1918
- 57 Times 12 December 1917
- 58 Times 17 December 1917. Urquhart himself was appointed agent for the British government in Siberia in 1918 (Times 7 July 1921)
- 59 The Russo-Asiatic Corporation had formerly had an interest in the Irtysh Corporation only (Times 12 December 1917). Descriptive articles on the Kishtym Estates, the Takhlyk and the Irtysh Corporations are in the British-Russian Chamber of Commerce Journal Vol i September, November and December 1919, pp175-6,213-4,234-5
- 60 Times 26 November 1919. The company was registered on 30 October 1919; it included also the Russo-Canadian Development Corporation (Stock Exchange Yearbook 1923 p2019). Other possessions included twenty

sawmills, 250 miles of railroad, and a fleet of river boats (ibid). A 78% interest was subsequently acquired in Compagnie des Mines de Villemagne, in southern France (ibid).

61 Russian Outlook 27 December 1919 p809; Times 16 December 1919

62 A more precise sum of £56,493,200 was made public (Times 20 November 1920). In January 1921 the company's claim was stated to comprise a claim for gold bullion stolen by the Bolsheviks from the works (£1,100,000) and the value of the properties and equipment at the time of their seizure (£60 million; letter from Urquhart to Times 8 January 1921). The properties, which had been derelict, had been developed into "one of the greatest self-contained mining and metallurgical industries the world has ever known" (ibid).

63 Krasin: Vneshtorg i Vneshnyaya Ekonicheskaya Politika .. p33

64 ibid

65 Economist 14 May 1921 p969. Other companies likely to be affected were the Lena Goldfields and the Russian Mining Corporation; the Spassky Copper Company, the Sissert Company, Omsk Goldfields, Siberian Proprietary Mines and Keeley Silver Mines (ibid p980).

66 Krasin: Vneshtorg i Vneshnyaya Ekonomicheskaya Politika.. p33-4

67 the meeting was reported in the Times 7 July 1921. A report issued by the Foreign Office suggested an explanation for the apparent accord between Urquhart and Krasin: Urquhart's temperament was "happily mercurial"; and their final conversations had taken place at a banquet in the Ritz (F.O. 371.6919.N7660, 5 July 1921, Minutes of Meeting between Krasin and Urquhart, Board of Trade, 29 June 1921). An earlier statement of Urquhart's economic ideas was contained in an article in the Nineteenth Century and After in December 1917, in which he asserted that the forces which had "brought about the present chaos" had done so by "grossly misinterpreting the laws of Nature which govern the political economy of the universe".(ibid Vol 82 p1101). He proposed to assist the operation of this beneficent mechanism, however, and called in a subsequent article for Allied intervention in Russia, noting that Britain was Russia's greatest creditor, with a "large stake in her commercial development" (ibid Vol 83 March 1918 p470).

68 Krasin to Chicherin, 20 June 1921, DVPSSSR vol iv No 126 pl83-6

69 Chicherin to Krasin, 3 July 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 137 pp202-3

- 70 Krasin: Vneshtorg i Vneshnyaya Ekonomicheskaya Politika.. p34
- 71 Soviet archival source, cited in Shishkin, V.A.: V.I.Lenin i kontsessiya Lesli Urkarta, in Fraiman, A.L. et al. (ed) V.I. Lenin v Oktyabre i v pervyi gody Sovetskoi vlasti (Leningrad 1970) pp340-1. Shishkin's account here differs only marginally from that in his study already noted above.
- 72 Krasin: Leonid Krasin pl88, Shishkin art.cit.p341
- 73 copy of Urquhart statement to Russo-Asiatic shareholders, with a covering letter, 12 October 1921, F.O. 371.6917.N11455, 13 October 1921; telegram to Moscow, 13 October 1921, in F.O. 371.6917.N11508, 15 October 1921
- 74 Tyrell, Memorandum of conversation with Leslie Urquhart, 20 September 1921, F.O. 371.6851.N10681, 21 September 1921. Lenin was still in power, Urquhart divulged, but Trotsky was "now a back number".
- 75 Economist 15 October 1921 p588,578
- 76 Urquhart's letter was printed in the Times 14 October 1921, in the Russian Economist Vol ii pp1522-8, and in Russian Life Vol ii-iii September -October 1921, pp79-83; Economist 15 October 1921 p577
- 77 Urquhart letter ibid
- 78 Pravda 19 October 1921
- 79 Urquhart letter, cited in note 76
- 80 cited in Carr: Bolshevik Revolution iii p284 note 2. Lenin "had problems" a recent study has remarked, "with the more unrealistic members of the Party, who refused to accept a return of foreign capital under any guise" (Sutton, A.C.: Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development 1917 to 1930 (Stanford 1968) p7).
- 81 New Statesman 5 November 1921 pl26
- 82 Shishkin: Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Strany Zapada v 1917-1923 gg (Leningrad 1969) p303
- ~~83 Krasin to Chicherin, 17 December 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 330 p579~~
- ~~84~~ Cabinet Minutes 16 December 1921, Cab 93(21)2, Cab 23/27
- 84 Krasin to Chicherin , 17 December 1921, above, DVPSSSR Vol iv pp579-81
- 85 Bulleten' NKID 112-1922, 30 January 1922, Shishkin op.cit. p304
- 86 Parliamentary Papers 1922, Cmd 1621, p5
- 87 Polish archives, cited in Shishkin op.cit.p305; Times 2 January 1922
- 88 Shishkin ibid
- 89 Shishkin ibid pp306-7

- 90 New Statesman 31 December 1921 p388
- 91 Economist 28 January 1922 ppl48,151,136. McKenna added a warning against "excessive taxation" which might tend to "deprive businessmen of the stimulus of a reasonable return for their labours", before passing on to declare a dividend of 18%.
- 92 Economist 28 January 1922 ppl41-2, 4 February 1922 ppl93,195
- 93 Economist 22 April 1922 p755
- 94 National Review Vol 79 May 1922 pp326,327
- 95 Jones: Whitehall Diary Vol i p197
- 96 Economist 18 March 1922 p529
- 97 Dundas, L.J. (Earl of Ronaldshay): Life of Lord Curzon (London 1928, 3 vols) iii 292,295; to Chamberlain 25 March and 13 May 1922, pp295,297
- 98 Churchill to Curzon 26 April 1922, Aftermath pp414-5
- 99 ibid p415; Review of Reviews Vol lxxv January 1922 pl1
- 100 Memorandum of conversation between Lloyd George and Benes, 16 February 1922 at 10 Downing Street, Cabinet S-42, Cab 23/36
- 101 Callwell: Wilson ii 321, 18 January 1922
- 102 Parliamentary Papers 1922, Cmd 1621, pp2,3; invitation to the Soviet government ibid pp3-4, DVPSSSR Vol v p57, NKID: Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii: polny stenograficheski otchet (Moscow 1922) p5
- 103 Parliamentary Papers 1922 Cmd 1742 p⁷₃, Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii p26f
- 104 Confefence of Ministers 10 February 1922, Cab 12(22) Appendix ii (1), Cab 23/29
- 105 Cabinet Minutes 21 February 1922, Cab 12(22)8, Cab 23/29, Materialy 28f
- 106 Krasin to Chicherin 17 January 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 18 p55; Berzin to Litvinov, 26 January 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 27 p64 (the reference is to Wise's conditions in DVPSSSR Vol iv No 339) and p65
- 107 Krasin to Chicherin, 13 February 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 56 p102, and Cabinet Papers S-39 , Cab 23/35
- 108 this view was expressed, at least, by Berzin in his letter above, DVPSSSR Vol v p64
- 109 references are to the report in Cabinet Papers S-39, Cab 23/35
- 110 Parliamentary Debates Vol 150 col 578, 13 February 1922. Lloyd George received an earnest warning from Philip Snowden against meeting the Bolshevik leaders: "these people are fanatics", and were "not to be

trusted" (Riddell: Diary of the Peace Conference and After pp 357,358, 18 February 1922). Lloyd George, Riddell noted, looked to the Conference to "restore his star to the zenith". He told Riddell that he "believed that Lenin and Co had seen the error of their ways", and were "anxious to approximate to normal economic methods". (ibid p368, March 1922)

111 Lloyd George to Chamberlain, 24 March 1922, Lloyd George Papers
F/7/5/23

112 Lloyd George to Chamberlain, 22 March 1922, Lloyd George Papers F/7/5/21

113 Conference of Ministers 27 March 1922, Cab 21(22) Appendix i(3), Cab 23/29

114 ibid

115 ibid Appendix ii, Conference of Ministers 28 March 1922 (11 a.m.); Memorandum of a meeting at 10 Downing Street, 20 February 1922, Cabinet Papers S-46, Cab 23/36

116 Cabinet Minutes 28 March 1922 (12 noon), Cab 21(22)3, Cab 23/29

117 Cabinet Minutes, Conference of Ministers 2 April 1922, Cab 21(22)
Appendix iii (1), Cab 23/29

118 Parliamentary Debates Vol 152 col 1570, 30 March 1922

119 Parliamentary Debates Vol 152 col 1886, 3 April 1922. To insist upon the payment of sums beyond the capacity of a war-exhausted country to pay them would "precipitate a crisis which would be by no means confined to Germany" (col 1889)

120 Parliamentary Debates Vol 152 cols 1890-8, 3 April 1922

121 ibid cols 1900-2

122 ibid cols 1938, 1940, 1941; Colonel Hoare, Col 1958

123 ibid cols 1982, 1001 (27 March 1922), 1982

124 ibid col 1959

125 Observer 15 January 1922, cited in Coates op.cit. p68

126 Krasin to Chicherin, 17 December 1921, DVPSSSR Vol iv No 330 p582

127 Chicherin to the Italian Prime Minister, 19 January 1922, DVPSSSR Vol. ▼ No 20 pp56-7; resolution of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, 27 January 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 28 p67, and Materialy Genuetskoi Konferentsii pp21-2

128 Lyubimov, N.N. i Erlich, G.K.: Genuetskaya Konferentsiya (Moscow 1963; the memoirs of two contemporaries) p34. Lyubimov and Erlich found it possible to write an extensive and detailed account of the work of the Conference without mentioning C.G. Rakovsky, a major member of the delegation (but subsequent Trotskyist). According, at

least, to the editors of DVPSSSR Vol v, the question of Lenin's departure to the Conference was "widely discussed by the workers of the Soviet republics", and "countless letters" expressed alarm for the life of Lenin should he go to Genoa. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party adopted a resolution which ruled that he should remain in Moscow (DVPSSSR Vol v note 16 pp716-7). The delegation arrived in Genoa with a number of large container drums, which excited speculation and in one case, according to Lyubimov and Erlich, the suggestion that Lenin might be inside one of them. They contained, in fact, a valuable collection of diplomatic books and treaties for the personal use of Chicherin: so valuable that he refused access to them by any other member of the delegation.

- 129 Chicherin at the Central Executive meeting, Materialy Genuzskoi Konferentsii p17
- 130 DVPSSSR Vol v No 20 p58; cf. Parliamentary Papers 1922 Cmd 1621 p2
- 131 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 44 pp371,376
- 132 DVPSSSR Vol v note 80 p739
- 133 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya No 7 1923, 19 February 1923 p21; its compiler was later stated to have been Professor Lyubimov (DVPSSSR Vol v p740).
- 134 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya 13(43) 2 April 1923
- 135 Leninsky Sbornik Vol 36 p455
- 136 Trotsky archives T726, cited in Fischer: Russia's Road from Peace to War (N.Y. and London 1969) p95
- 137 according to Fischer: The Soviets in World Affairs i 332; and Chicherin to NKID, DVPSSSR Vol v No 101 p181, 4 April 1922
- 138 Pravda 26 March 1922 (reprinted in Chicherin: Stat'i i Rechi po Voprosam Mezhdunarodnoi Politiki (Moscow 1961) pp205,206
- 139 Shtein, B.: Genuzskaya Konferentsiya (Moscow 1922) p35
- 140 U.S. Foreign Office to Italian Consul 8 March 1922, Materialy Genuzskoi Konferentsii pp35-7
- 141 Materialy Genuzskoi Konferentsii p88
- 142 DVPSSSR Vol v No 108 pp193,201. The 'Provisional Verbatim Record' of the First, Second and Third Plenary Sessions on 16 April, 3 and 19 May 1922 is in Cabinet Papers C.P. 3940,3959,3986, Cab 24/136
- 143 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 44 p407
- 144 DVPSSSR Vol v No 109 p200; Litvinov to Chicherin 5 April 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 105 p184

- 145 Parliamentary Papers 1922, Cmd 1621 p5, Materialy Genuevskoi Konferentsii p88; Shtein: Genuevskaya Konferentsia p36
- 146 Shtein: Genuevskaya Konferentsiya p31
- 147 Shtein op.cit. p34; Materialy Genuevskoyai Konferentsii pp92-114, DVPSSSR Vol v pp245-259, Experts' Report
- 148 DVPSSSR Vol v p246; Shtein op.cit. p12
- 149 DVPSSSR Vol v pp246-253; Memorandum of the Soviet delegation at the Genoa Conference, DVPSSSR Vol v No 126 pp232-245, Materialy Genuevskoi Konferentsii pp127-139, 20 April 1922
- 150 Shtein : Genuevskaya Konferentsiya p34
- 151 Second Plenary session 3 May 1922, Materialy Genuevskoi Konferentsii p330,341,342
- 152 Chicherin to NKID, 15 April 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 119 p217
- 152 "Practically the whole business at Genoa, such as it was", recalled J.D. Gregory, "was conducted in private and informal conversations at the Villa Albertis" (Gregory: On the Edge of Diplomacy (London 1928) pp195-6).
- 154 Materialy Genuevskoi Konferentsii pp121,152; the British government records of the Genoa Conference are in Cab 31, and the proceedings of the First Commission are in Cab 31/6 and 31/7.
- 155 the negotiations are discussed in Shtein op.cit. p51f, and in Lyubimov and Erlich op.cit. p51f; there is also an account in Fischer: ^{Thw} SovietsRussia in World Affairs i 355f, who reports Chicherin's remark (ibid i 355).
- 156 Lyubimov and Erlich: Genuevskaya Konferentsiya pp53,54,55; Shtein: Genuevskaya Konferantsiya pp52,53
- 157 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 45 p537 note 100
- 158 Chicherin to Lloyd George, 20 April 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 127 p259f, Materialy Genuevskoi Konferentsii pp168-9
- 159 Chicherin to Lloyd George, DVPSSSR above p260
- 160 ibid
- 161 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 45 pp163,164,538,539; the letter is in Shtein op.cit. pp62-3
- 162 Shtein: Genuevskaya Konferentsiya p63, Lyubimov and Erlich: Genuevskaya Konferentsiya p90,95
- 163 the Rapallo Treaty is in Materialy Genuevskoi Konferentsii pp303-4, and in DVPSSSR Vol v No 121 pp223-4

- 164 Shtein: Genuezskaya Konferentsiya p53
- 165 Gregory to Curzon, 17 April 1922, F.O. 418.57 No 86, N3583/646/38 No 43; and ibid No 90, N3583/646/38, No 14 Secret, 19 April 1922
- 166 Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii pl71, Shtein op.cit. p53
- 167 Note to the German delegation, F.O. 418.57 No 88, N3672/646/38, No 46, 18 April 1922, and in Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii pp306-8
- 168 article 2 of the Rapallo treaty is in DVPSSSR Vol v pp223-4 (Northedge refers incorrectly to article 3, which deals in fact with consular relations: Northedge: The Troubled Giant (London 1966) p217)
- 169 Gregory: On the Edge of Diplomacy p214; Tanin (Litvinov) : Desiat' Let Vneshnei Politiki SSSR 1917-27 (Moscow-Leningrad 1927) p109
- 170 Declaration of the Soviet delegation with regard to ppl-7 of the Experts' Memorandum, 24 April 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 135 p269
- 171 Shtein: Genuezskaya Konferentsiya p69; the meeting of the committee of experts, 24 April 1922, is in Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii pl86f; and Shtein: Genuezskaya Konferentsiya p71
- 172 Cabinet Minutes 27 April 1922, Cab 25(22)1, Cab 23/30
- 173 the drafts are in Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii p204f, 208f; Shtein: Genuezskaya Konferentsiya p75
- 174 Allied Memorandum of 2 May 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v p373-8, and Parliamentary Papers 1922 Cmd 1657, and Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii pp216-224
- 175 DVPSSSR Vol v p740 note 82
- 176 Memorandum of the Soviet delegation, 11 May 1922, Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii pp230-241, and DVPSSSR Vol v No 153 p361-72
- 177 DVPSSSR Vol v p390
- 178 Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii p244f, 258f
- 179 Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii pp249, 260, 275, 285-6, 292
- 180 Shtein: Genuezskaya Konferentsiya pp96-7; Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii p416; ibid pp445, 446
- 181 as the Transport Commission made clear in its report, Parliamentary Papers 1922 Cmd 1667 p82
- 182 Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii p454; Chicherin's speech at the Third Plenary session, DVPSSSR Vol v No 169 p410
- 183 Materialy Genuezskoi Konferentsii p454
- 184 Resolution of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, 17 May 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 159 p383-6

- 185 Maisky, introduction to NKID: Genuevskaya Konferentsiya: Materialy i Dokumenty: Stenograficheskie otchet Vypusk i (Moscow 1922) p5
- 186 Maisky, Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 8(126) 8 June 1922 p25 Iordansky,
- 187 Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 7(125) 22 May 1922 pl, 3-4
- 188 Maisky, Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 3(121) 3 April 1922 p3; NKID: Mezhdunarodnaya Politika v 1922 g : otchet NKID (Moscow 1923) p5
- 189 Maisky, Genuevskaya Konferentsiya: Materialy i Dokumenty p6
- 190 Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 8(126) 8 June 1922 p3
- 191 Litvinov to NKID, 15 May 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 157 p382,384; Pravda 9 June 1922
- 192 Cabinet Minutes 16 May 1922, Cab 27(22)2, Cab 23/30
- 193 Economist 20 May 1922 p941; Contemporary Review June 1922 p681,687
- 194 Review of Reviews lxv May 1922 p439; Contemporary Review June 1922 p686; Economist 13 May 1922 p890
- 195 Parliamentary Debates Vol 154 col 1451³, 25 May 1922
- 196 ibid col 1455; Cabinet Minutes 23 May 1922, Cab 29(22)2, Cab 23/30
- 197 Parliamentary Debates Vol 154 col 1454,1457,1460,1463,1464,1466,25 May 1922 "With the exception of Krasin, they are impossible people", he told
- 198 Parliamentary Debates Vol 154 col 1469, Riddell (Diary p370, May 1922) 1473; cols 1481,1483, 25 May 1922
- 199 Foreign Relations of the U.S., Vol ii p808,811, 15 May 1922, cited in Shishkin: Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Strany Zapada v 1917-1923 gg (Leningrad 1969) p316
- 199a as Litvinov noted, DVPSSSR Vol v No 217 p515, speech on 19 July 1922
- 200 Maisky: Sovetskaya Rossiya i Kapitalistichesky Mir (Moscow 1922) pp32,33
- 201 ibid p33; Shtein: Gaagskaya Konferentsiya (Moscow 1922) pl5
- 202 Maisky op.cit p32; Parliamentary Debates Vol 155 col 796, 19 June 1922. Urquhart had been summoned to Genoa by the British delegation. The British government, Lloyd-Greame noted, "owed much to the ripe experience of those who had been engaged in enterprises in Russia", and he "hoped that that help would be forthcoming during the Hague Conference" (Times 21 April 1922, 13 June 1922)
- 203 Parliamentary Debates Vol 157 cols 583,587,588, 26 July 1922
- 204 Parliamentary Debates Vol 157 col 492, 26 July 1922
- 205 Shtein: Gaagskaya Konferentsiya pl2; Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 7 July 1922

- 206 Materialy Genuevskoi Konferentsii 18 May pp298,299, 19 May p453
- 207 Communication of the press bureau of the Russian delegation at the
Hague Conference, 1 July 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 198 p475-7;p476
- 208 quoted by Fischer: The Soviet in World Affairs i 361
- 209 Pravda 17 June 1922
- 210 Shtein: Gaagskaya Konferentsiya p24. Hilton Young wrote to Curzon
from The Hague on 17 June that all had gone well, and would continue
to do so for the first stage, until the Russians arrived. "That will
of course be the first crisis. The auguries in the East are not very
favourable for it" (Curzon Papers, F.O. 800.157, pp105-6)
- 211 Northedge: The Troubled Giant p219 incorrectly states that the meeting
assembled in July.
- 212 NKID: Gaagskaya Konferentsiya: polny stenografichesky otchet (Materialy
i Dokumenty) (Moscow 1922) p125,128
- 213 ibid p133^{135,141,148}, and DVPSSSR Vol v No 195 p465f
- 214 ibid pp157,161,164,165,168
- 215 ibid p81, 27 June 1922, p112,114,117
- 216 Shtein: Gaagskaya Konferentsiya p25
- 217 Gaagskaya Konferentsiya: polny stenografichesky otchet pp17,20,25
- 218 ibid Appendix viii
- 219 ibid pp38,43
- 220 ibid pp50,52,57-8,58
- 221 ibid pp62,63,65,70-1
- 222 Paten to the Russian delegation, 15 July 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v p497
- 223 ibid
- 224 Litvinov to Paten, 16 July 1922, Gaagskaya Konferentsiya: otchet ppl76-
178, and DVPSSSR Vol v No 210 pp495-6; and 18 July 1922, ppl80-1 and
DVPSSSR No 213 pp503-4
- 225 Paten to Litvinov, 18 July 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v p505
- 226 Litvinov's first speech at the plenary session 19 July 1922, DVPSSSR
Vol v No 216 pp511-2;p514, Lloyd-Greame and Cattier
- 227 Gaagskaya Konferentsiya: polny stenografichesky otchet p199, Parlia-
mentary Papers 1922 Cmd 1724 p4
- 228 Gaagskaya Konferentsiya: polny stenografichesky otchet pp7-14, and
DVPSSSR Vol v No 218 pp515-21; p517
- 229 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn'8 August 1922

- 230 Shtein: Gaagskaya Konferentsiya p56; Vneshnyaya Torgovlya No 9, 1922, 31 July 1922; Maisky: Sovetskaya Rossiya i Kapitalistichesky Mir p52. Stein had indicated in a work written in 1921 that the hopes of Lloyd George and others of forcing crucial concessions in the economic field were not without foundation. "Nothing" had been done, Stein wrote, of the necessary preparatory work on foreign trade policy; and they had "no theoretical preparatory work". There was not even a body directing trade policy, in a supposedly planned economy. ~~Elements~~ "Neither the theory nor the practice of a socialist foreign trade" existed; and in consequence elements of "chance, of personal attitude" could exert an influence (Shtein: Sovetskaya Rossiya v kapitalisticheskom okruzhении (Moscow 1921) pp3,4,5,6)
- 231 Economist 29 July 1922 p190. The state had acquired a monopoly of the supply of spirits, which would be offered before long, it thought, as security for a foreign loan.
- 232 Parliamentary Debates Vol 157 cols 491,504,499,500,501, 26 July 1922
- 233 Parliamentary Debates Vol 157 cols 536,550,554, 26 July 1922
- 234 Gaagskaya Konferentsiya: polny stenografichesky otchet p200,199, and DVPSSSR Vol v pp752-3, note 126, and Parliamentary Papers 1922, Cmd 1724 p18,p5
- 235 Parliamentary Debates Vol 157 col 511, 26 July 1922
- 236 Report of the credits sub-commission, Cmd 1724 (above note 234) p14
- 237 Dillon, Fortnightly Review Vol 111 June 1922 p894
- 238 Times 2 August 1922
- 239 O'Malley memorandum, 8 May 1922, F.O. 371.8189.N4322. Curzon minuted on 10 May that there was a "great deal in Mr O'Malley's argument".
- 240 DVPSSSR Vol v p757-8, agreement signed on 9 September 1922; Times 26 September 1922. British capital might be employed in the Krüpps concession in the Don valley coalfields, the paper reported on 27 November 1922.
- 241 Torgovo-Promyshlennaya Gazeta 3 February 1922, cited in Shishkin op.cit. p334; Times 11 September 1922, where it was indicated that the value of the compensation would be in excess of £2 million.
- 242 according to a statement by Urquhart, Times 13 September 1922 p15
- 243 Economist 16 September 1922 p462,p475,p462; 30 September 1922 p553
- 244 Dvenadtsaty S'ezd RKP(B), pp118,143,174-5,176-7,352-4, Shishkin p334

- 245 Soviet archival source, cited in Shishkin op.cit. p333 and 341-2;
 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 54 pp177-8, 616-7, Vol 45 p205
- 246 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol.45 p554
- 247 Lenin: Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii Vol 54 p284-5, Shishkin p335
- 248 Decree of the Council of People's Commissars 6 October 1922, DVPSSSR
 Vol v No 273 pp608-9; Mezhdunarodnaya Politika v 1922g: otchet NKID p27
- 249 Economist 14 October 1922 p618, 619
- 250 Economist 28 October 1922 p822-3
- 251 Times 24 October 1922 editorial
- 252 Economist 24 October 1922 p823. Urquhart remained irreconcilable for a period, and played a significant role (or so it was believed in Moscow) in the crisis in Anglo-Soviet relations in the early part of 1923. Urquhart declared at a public meeting on 31 May 1923 that the country would be "better off without" the Trade Agreement, and that Bolshevism had "proved a failure and a tragedy" as an economic system (he sent a copy of the report to the Foreign Office: F.O. 371.9348. N 4961, 4 June 1923); ^{a resolution was adopted} approving the government's "firmness", and demanding that no conference with the Bolsheviks take place without prior acknowledgement of debts and restitution of property, or effective compensation. He later resigned as President of the Association of British Creditors of Russia (Times 2 November 1923), and opened what were described as "friendly negotiations" with Rakovsky and Krasin (Times 18 December 1923 p22). He wrote to Krasin in July 1924, urging that he represent Soviet Russia in Britain (Krasin: Leonid Krasin p233).

Chapter Eight: The Tories and Soviet Russia

The position of the Coalition steadily worsened throughout 1922. The Genoa Conference, Lloyd George's 'gambler's last throw', failed to improve his political fortunes: indeed, its effect was more probably the opposite. The Irish settlement placed a considerable strain upon the Coalition and upon the Conservative Party in particular, especially following the murder of Field Marshal Wilson in 1922 (June). The crisis at Chanak, in the Near East, at the end of September 1922 appeared to suggest that the country might have been plunged into war but for the presence of mind of the local military commander, General Harrington, who delayed delivery of the Cabinet's ultimatum until the need was past. Internally, there was the 'honours scandal' and the continued loss of by-elections. The Conservatives, meeting at the Carlton Club on 19 October, resolved to leave the Coalition. Lloyd George resigned, the King sent for Bonar Law, and Parliament was dissolved on 26 October. In the general election which took place on 15 November the Conservatives gained an overall majority of 88 seats; and a Conservative government, remarkably short of the more prominent and experienced members of the party, was formed.

The new government did, admittedly, include Lord Curzon; and he remained in the new as he had been in the outgoing government, Foreign Secretary. An important change was nevertheless effected in the conduct of foreign relations. Part of the charge against Lloyd George was that his powers were verging on the presidential; and in particular, that his personal secretariat was eclipsing the Foreign Office within the latter's proper sphere of activity. Curzon, complained the National Review, had been "one of our worst, because among our weakest Foreign Ministers". It was no means clear that he was capable of "retrieving British policy from 10 Downing Street"¹. Until the fall of the Coalition, indeed, Spender wrote, Curzon had been "scarcely more than a spectator of events"².

Lloyd George's taste for the international limelight, and the opportunity afforded him by the conference diplomacy which followed the conclusion of the war, accounted for part of the change. The 'garden suburb', which originated in 1916 as a personal staff for Lloyd George billeted in huts in St James' Park, accounted for another part. The proceedings of internat-

ional conferences were entrusted to the Cabinet staff, rather than the Foreign Office, until the formation of Bonar Law's government; and the 'garden suburb', equally handled League of Nations business until this time³. It naturally reflected Lloyd George's political enthusiasms; and where, as in the Near East, these proved to be an embarrassment to the government, the 'garden suburb' inevitably received a part of the blame. Much of the criticism of the government's foreign policy in Parliament, stated Colonel Wedgwood, was not "criticism of the Foreign Office so much as criticism of the pseudo-Foreign Office in the Garden City across the road. That is where most the ground for criticism has been, particularly in connection with the middle of the Near East"⁴.

The matter reached the point of a formal debate in the House of Commons in June⁵. The suburb was held to be ^{by} passing Parliament and the civil service, and giving Lloyd George almost presidential powers. Why, asked Maclean, was the suburb and not the Foreign Office handling international conferences and League of Nations business? Lord Robert Cecil noted that there had, for instance, been a British delegation of some ninety-one members at the Genoa Conference, only three or four of whom had been from the Foreign Office⁶. Austen Chamberlain assured the House of Commons that the Secretariat were "not themselves authorized to take the initiative in any matters of administration, in any matters of legislation, or in any matters of executive action". Over a hundred MPs nevertheless voted against the government on the issue, and the criticism continued. The Conservative election manifesto promised that the Cabinet Secretariat "in its present form" would be brought to an end, and that League of Nations business and the work associated with international conferences (even those which Bonar Law attended as Prime Minister) would be transferred to the Foreign Office⁷.

Following the election a reduced Cabinet Secretariat, under Hankey, was retained; but the 'garden suburb' was abolished⁸. The change of government, then, involved more than the substitution generally of Conservative policies for those of the Coalition; with reference to Foreign policy it carried with it a reassertion of the central position of the Foreign Office in the making and implementation of policy. The dominant influence was no longer Lloyd George, whose inclination was to seek to secure his ends with the Soviet government through 'businesslike' discussion

rather than through the despatch of threatening diplomatic notes; but Curzon, more inflexible in Russian affairs, and more concerned with the fate of the Empire, and of British possessions in Asia, to which, it has been suggested Soviet policy and propaganda were seen as a serious threat. These changes were directly reflected in British relations with Soviet Russia.

Asked whether the new government intended to continue its predecessor's policy in relation to Soviet Russia, McNeill, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, pointed out that the question of diplomatic recognition depended upon the conditions which the Soviet government was prepared to accept and implement. These conditions were, according to Bonar Law, the recognition of debts, the restitution of property or effective compensation, and cessation from political propaganda. No steps had been taken since the Hague Conference to "reopen negotiations with the Russian government on the questions there dealt with"⁹. The Foreign Office began regularly to refuse entry visas to Soviet trade officials¹⁰.

The change in policy towards Soviet Russia reflected in part a reaction against the supposedly overcordial policy which Lloyd George had promoted; and in part also, it reflected the disappointment of industrial and trading circles with the results of the 1921 Trade Agreement, and with the outcome of the negotiations of Urquhart with the Soviet authorities. Krasin, on his own request, was received by a Foreign Office official; but not, as had previously been the case, by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues¹¹. He wrote to Moscow on 25 January 1923: "Practically we have no political relations at all with England at the moment, and as I expected, Bonar Law and his Cabinet colleagues display no wish to meet or negotiate with us"¹².

The new position became clear in the arrangements made for a Conference on the Near East for the revision of the treaty of Sevres, to be held at Lausanne. It appeared to Berzin, the deputy official representative in London, from his meetings² with governmental spokesmen in September that it was intended not to invite Soviet Russia to the Conference. While Lloyd George was apparently in favour of their invitation, Curzon inclined against. No answer had yet been received to the Soviet notes of 12 and 24 September¹³. In a further note of 19 October, Chicherin again expressed concern that despite her special interest in securing a peaceful solution to the Near Eastern problem, no answer had been received to the Soviet

government's expression of a desire to participate in the Conference, which was to meet in the immediate future¹⁴. A note was eventually received on 27 October from the governments of Britain, France and Italy, recognizing that the question of the straits demanded particular discussion and the participation of states which had not been party to the recent hostilities. The Soviet government was accordingly invited to send delegates for the discussion of this question at the Conference¹⁵. Curzon explained to the Cabinet that he "anticipated nothing but hostility" from the Soviet representatives. Lloyd George had worked "indefatigably and sincerely" to reach an agreement with Soviet Russia, through the Trade Agreement, and at the Genoa and Hague Conferences. He Nevertheless believed the Soviet government "still to be in a position of special and inveterate hostility towards the British Empire". Their representatives would strongly oppose the British position at Lausanne. Their goal "had always been Constantinople"; the Bolsheviki were "Communists with wide Imperial aspirations". Any other solution of the problem of the straits than a Russian solution would be "incompatible with Soviet dreams"¹⁶.

Chicherin in reply declared "completely unjust and in no way justifiable" the exclusion of the Soviet representatives from the discussion of other questions. The Conference, clearly, was intended to discuss rather more than the revision of the treaty of Sevres. It had not been found appropriate, to invite Bulgaria, but Japan was to send representatives. Chicherin continued to insist upon the participation of Soviet representatives in the work of the Conference, upon an equal basis with the states also participating¹⁷. In a further note of 24 November, however, despite the refusal of the inviting powers to accept his earlier suggestion, Chicherin announced that a four-man déléation would represent Soviet Russia at the Conference. No official notification of the opening date of the Conference had been received; but it was apparent from reports in the press that the Conference had, in fact, already begun its work. The Russian delegation would leave "forthwith" for Lausanne¹⁸.

During the Chanak crisis the Naval Intelligence department had reported a "close association by the Soviet government with the Turkish nationalists, with strong indications of support"¹⁹. He would like, Curzon told the Cabinet, to "bring about a break between Turkey and her Soviet allies"²⁰. In this object he was largely successful. The Turkish represent-

atives , despite the obligation in the 1921 treaty with the Soviet state to consider the question of the straits the concern of the states which bordered the Black Sea, accepted the British rather than the Soviet draft convention on the straits question, and began separate negotiations on the basis of Curzon's draft. The Soviet delegation was not admitted to the second stage of the Conference's proceedings, which began on 23 April, on the grounds that the question of the straits was not on the agenda. On 24 July 1923 a peace treaty was signed with Turkey, and a convention on the straits question, based largely on Curzon's proposal, was accepted. The Lausanne convention was signed in Rome on 14 August; it was not, however, ratified by the Soviet government²¹.

Relations with the Soviet government, meanwhile, had become such that Kenworthy initiated a debate in the House of Commons on 29 March on the "present policy of this country with regard to Russia". British interests demanded, he thought, a "clear, settled and sagacious policy.. towards the Russian Republic". British policy should endeavour to support the "moderates, who are getting powerful, and not playing into the hands of the extremists". The government had nevertheless "gone out of its way to pin-prick and annoy the Russian government and people in every possible manner". In the Near East, the Soviet government had been "insulted and affronted"; at Lausanne, Curzon was believed to have attempted to "purposely humiliate the Russian representatives there"²². Krasin had requested an interview with the Foreign Secretary or his Under-Secretary after the change of government; but this had been refused. In Russia, British merchants and business men, and important business houses were doing business, "in spite of the government", and had found, "as a rule, that such little attention and assistance as they can look for to our indeterminate mission" was "diminishing". Business people, he thought, were suffering from the absence of regular relations between the British and the Soviet governments²³.

McNeill, replying for the government, believed that "one of the most essential necessities of any government" was "some definite civilized legal system, especially one to which traders can look for the enforcement of contracts, since trade rests upon contracts, and for a definite civilized administration of justice". The four conditions with which the Soviet government was required to comply "remained unfulfilled". It was, moreover, the "greatest possible delusion" to think that propaganda had been stopped,

or that the promises of the Soviet government had proved effective in this regard. The Soviet government had, moreover, been "responsible for a series of "barbarities with which the whole civilized world is at present ~~did~~gusted and dismayed". So long as these policies continued to be pursued, the Soviet government could seek no greater degree of recognition than it had already received from the British government²⁴.

The succession of events which had so distressed McNeill, and which led directly to the presentation of an ultimatum to the Soviet government at the beginning of May, dated in the main to the previous year and earlier. Mr C.F. Davison, whose case the government now espoused, had been arrested as early as September 1919, and imprisoned for four months in Soviet Russia. He had been shot in January 1920. Failing a "full statement" concerning this "outrageous crime", wrote Curzon to Chicherin on 2 October 1920, the British government would be forced to conclude that murder in cold blood had been committed; and "full compensation" would be demanded²⁵. Chicherin replied that Davison had, in fact, been connected with a "notorious fuel scandal", part of the proceeds of which had been devoted to counter-revolutionary activity. He had been properly sentenced in accordance with prevailing legislation²⁶. Curzon, undaunted, returned to the charge on 3 January 1922. Davison's murder had been "nothing less than the judicial murder of a British subject under revolting circumstances upon trumped-up evidence". The government reserved "full liberty of action"; and should the evidence against Davison, having been examined, proved defective or insufficient, full compensation would be demanded. Failing this, "every publicity" would be given to this "scandalous case"²⁷.

The claim to examine the evidence of the case was not accepted by the Soviet government; moreover, the Soviet government might equally demand to examine the evidence against "innumerable Russian citizens executed by the British authorities prior to the signing of the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement", notably the "most scandalous" case of the execution of the twenty-six Baku commissars who had been killed in September 1918 with the "complicity" of the British military authorities²⁸. Litvinov was told in reply that a "careful examination" of the matter had led the British government to conclude that the charges were "baseless", and were founded upon "deliberate misstatements"²⁹. He continued to maintain, however, that it had been an

"undoubtedly premeditated crime", and in the absence of "conclusive evidence" the charges would not be withdrawn³⁰.

The case of Mrs Stan Harding was raised in the House of Commons on 23 March 1921. A British subject, reportedly "by no means anti-Soviet" in her views, she had gone to Soviet Russia in June 1920 as a correspondent of the New York World.³¹ She had been detained there for five months on the charge of being a member of the British Intelligence Department. The charge, Harmsworth declared for the government, was untrue.³² He added later that no application for redress of injuries would be made by the government, Mrs Harding having proceeded to Russia "on her own responsibility and with a safe conduct from the Bolsheviki at a time when it was known that His Majesty's Government refused to give passport facilities for Russia". Bertram Russell, who met her at Reval, concluded that the responsibility for her arrest "lay not so much with the Soviet government as with a certain Mrs Harrison", an American lady of good family, who had been longing to escape from Russia. She was in fact an American spy, employed also by the British government. Mrs Harding knew that she was a spy, and was accordingly denounced by Mrs Harrison in order to secure her arrest³³. Continued pressure in Parliament led, however, to the statement that she could lodge a claim, and that representations were being made on her behalf³⁴.

Curzon raised the matter in a communication on 3 September 1921. Mrs Harding's case, he wrote, was giving rise to "pressing questions" in the House of Commons; and the government considered that it was of "such a nature that the Soviet government should meet it by exceptional measures". Mrs Harding had been arrested, confined in a solitary cell, "containing a verminous plank bed", and accused of being the chief of the British secret service organization in Russia. Part of the evidence which had been offered in support of this charge was that she had assisted Mrs Harrison, then representing the Baltimore Sun in Moscow, knowing her to be a member of the secret service. After a prolonged period of arrest she had been allowed to leave Moscow on 26 November 1920. Hodgson was authorized to endorse Mrs Harding's statement that at no time had she been a member of the secret service; and to seek compensation "commensurate with her sufferings during imprisonment on a false charge whilst visiting Soviet Russia with the explicit approval of that government". A "very unfortunate impression" would be created, in view of the "wide notoreity" of the case, should the case

not be admitted³⁵.

His representations, however, Hodgson reported, had been "without success". Litvinov had pointed out that at that time a state of war had been in existence between the two countries; and that counter-claims might be made against the British government³⁶. Further British pressure led to the quotation in reply of the case of Babushkin, the Russian consul in Meshed, Persia, who had been arrested with his whole staff on 25 October 1918 by the British military authorities³⁷. Two months later, Lloyd-Greame announced for the government in the House of Commons that it did "not consider that any useful object would be attained by pursuing this matter further with the Soviet government". Mrs Harding's claim would be considered together with other private claims when these matters were finally resolved³⁸. It was, indeed, later urged that since Mrs Harding's imprisonment appeared to have been due to the actions of Mrs Harrison, an American citizen, who had agreed to act as an informer for the Soviet government, redress should be sought, in fact, from the American government³⁹.

The position of the church in Soviet Russia, equally, provided a source of dispute. The sale of church treasures to provide for famine relief, it was stated in the journal of the Trade Delegation in Britain, had first been proposed by a group of churchmen; and had been approved by "almost all" the clergy, and specifically, in a circular, by Patriarch Tikhon. There were precedents for such action: bells from certain churches, for example, had been melted down to make cannon for Peter the Great's army. The Central Executive Committee decreed that those treasures should be appropriated which were not used in religious services, and had no definite religious value. Local soviets were to collect such articles during the following month and hand them over to the Commissariat of Finance, on behalf of the Central Commission for Famine Relief. The details were to be published in the local press, and a religious representative was to be included on the body which reviewed and examined the appropriations.

This course of action had led in a few places to the "bitter opposition of a few fanatical clergy"; but church sentiment as a whole was stated to have supported the government's decision. Articles to a total value of twenty million gold roubles had been received by 4 April 1922. In some cases, however, church treasures had unaccountably disappeared

before the commissions arrived to collect them; and this had been met with "vigorous action"⁴⁰.

Patriarch Tikhon had issued an appeal on 28 February 1922 to remove valuables from the churches. He had in the past, noted Pravda, been involved in counter-revolutionary activity. On this occasion, following discussion with representatives of the clergy, he resigned⁴¹. He was brought to trial in May 1922, but discharged following his unconditional disavowal of counter-revolutionary activity⁴².

In a communication of 1 June from the Archbishops of York and Canterbury and other church figures in Britain, the "most serious protest" was made concerning what was stated to be an "attack on the Russian church in the person of Patriarch Tikhon". Public opinion and the conscience of Christians and of the "whole civilized world" could not silently witness such an injustice⁴³. Karakhan, replying on behalf of the Soviet government, noted that no attack upon the church as such had been made, but only the presentation of charges against some of its members, including the former Patriarch, of opposition to government decrees, which had themselves been designed, he pointed out, to "save the lives of tens of millions of men and children". In the dispute with the Patriarch the government had been opposed only by the more privileged elements of the church hierarchy, those who had been the most closely connected with the Tsarist nobility and with capital; and it was precisely this group, he noted, rather than the population as a whole or even the majority of the clergy, which was being supported by the British churchmen. They had not, evidently, found it necessary to protest against the blockade, which had been conducted by the British government at the expense of Russian workers, peasants and their children⁴⁴. British church leaders, suggested a writer in the Communist Review, were "not troubled about religious persecution in Russia". They were however "keenly sensitive to any working-class government weakening the property, the material basis, of the Church"⁴⁵.

Matters became worse when in March 1923 Cardinal Cieplak, Monsignor Butkevitch and a number of priests of the Polish Roman Catholic Church were brought to trial on the charge of espionage and other treasonable activities during the civil and Russo-Polish wars⁴⁶. The British agent in Moscow, McNeill told the House of Commons, had "unofficially represented to the Soviet Government, early in the proceedings, the lamentable impression

which would be caused on public opinion abroad by such action"; and he had that day been instructed to continue his efforts. The Russian Trade representatives had been "asked in a friendly way to do anything he (could) to avert a disastrous sentence"⁴⁷. The Times drew attention to the "wanton persecution of the Christian Faith" in Russia. "Thousands" had been executed "simply because they believed in God"⁴⁸. The clerics had in fact opposed decrees separating the church from the state, and the appropriation of superfluous Church valuables for famine relief; and Butkevitch had in addition been in touch with the Polish government during the hostilities of 1920⁴⁹. On 26 March Cardinal Cieplak was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment and Monsignor Butkevitch was given the death sentence. The British agent in Moscow, the House of Commons was told the following day, had "done all in his power", under "repeated instructions" from the London government to save the ecclesiastics from these "barbarities"⁵⁰.

The matter was subsequently raised with the Soviet government. The question of fishing rights and territorial waters also complicated relations between the two governments. In March 1922 a protest was made concerning the arrest of two British-owned vessels, the 'Magneta' and the 'St Hubert', by the Soviet authorities. The government had been informed, Harmsworth told the House of Commons, by the Russian Trade delegation that a twelve-mile territorial water limit had been claimed. The government had protested⁵¹.

The owners of the 'Magneta' claimed compensation from the Soviet government, but it was not possible for the government to "assume any special responsibility in this connection"⁵². The 'St Hubert' was seized on 3 March 1923 and taken to Murmansk, where it remained until June 1923⁵³. It appeared, however, that the vessel had been fourteen miles from shore at the time of its arrest, and further representations were made by the British agent in Moscow⁵⁴. It was noted that the 'Magneta' had been arrested between nine and ten miles from shore, and had not infringed the three-mile limit. While the Foreign Office was prepared to consider the elaboration of a convention to regulate fishing along the northern coast, it could not accept a territorial limit greater than three miles; and could not therefore accept, as had been stated, that the ships concerned had been fishing in Soviet territorial waters. The 'St Hubert' should be released forthwith,

and compensation paid to its owners and to those of the 'Magneta' and its crew⁵⁵.

The Soviet Foreign Commissariat, in its reply of 22 March 1923, pointed out that the position in international law was unclear: a three-mile limit was not generally recognized, and the British government had been willing to discuss the whole question in conference before the war. The Soviet government, it was suggested, was acting within its rights in claiming a twelve-mile limit on the northern coast in its decree of 24 May 1921, in accordance with which the British ships had been arrested, and which safeguarded what was in fact the sole means of livelihood in this area⁵⁶. This was not accepted in Hodgson's reply of 4 April. The British government could not agree that a twelve-mile limit constituted Russian territorial waters, or that the arrested vessels were fishing illegally. In the absence of an assurance that this course of action would not be repeated, it was announced that a British naval vessel would be despatched to these waters, the commander of which would be instructed to take such action as was necessary to protect British fishing vessels outside the three-mile limit⁵⁷. This amounted, as Karakhan pointed out, to an attempt forcibly to impose a three-mile limit upon the Soviet government. Retaliation was threatened⁵⁸.

The Soviet government had been responsible, it was stated in a British note of 19 December 1922, for the loss of the 'Magneŧa', which had sunk while in Soviet custody following its arrest. The vessel had been compelled to remain in a dangerous zone in consequence of its arrest, while other ships in the vicinity had been free to proceed elsewhere⁵⁹. The Soviet reply refused to accept either direct or indirect responsibility; and thought further correspondence inappropriate⁶⁰. All the British fishermen arrested by the Soviet authorities were released in February 1923⁶¹. On 31 March, however, a steam trawler, the 'James Johnson', was arrested off the Murman coast. "Immediate inquiries" were ordered in Moscow⁶².

It was, however, the religious issue which was taken up in Hodgson's letter to Chicherin of 30 March 1923. The sentence of death on Monsignor Butkevitch had been confirmed by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee. He made, however, an "earnest and final appeal" for a stay of execution. The implementation of the sentence could "not fail to produce throughout the civilized world a feeling of horror and indignation"⁶³. A

reply was received the following day, which noted with asperity that Russia was an "independent country and a sovereign state", and had the "undeniable right of passing sentences in conformity with its own legislation on people breaking the law of the country". Any attempt from outside to interfere with this right or to "protect spies and traitors in Russia" was considered an "unfriendly act and a renewal of the intervention which has been successfully repulsed by the Russian people". In view of the actions of the British government in Ireland, India and Egypt, moreover, appeals in the name of "humanity and the sacredness of life" were not considered "very convincing". Hodgson declined to receive the note. Weinstein nevertheless affirmed that the original communication had been an "entirely inadmissible attempt at interference in the internal affairs of the independent and sovereign RSFSR"; and suggested that other means would be found to acquaint the British government with the content of the note intended for it⁶⁴.

There was sufficient ground, thought the Daily Telegraph, to recall the British mission from Moscow, and in effect to annul the trade agreement⁶⁵. The question of the annulment of the trade agreement had not yet, Bonar Law wrote to Henderson, been discussed by the Cabinet. The prosecution of the churchmen, the arrest of the British trawlers and the violation of the conditions of the trade agreement were nevertheless "serious questions". If action were required the approval of the House of Commons would be sought⁶⁶. No trade could be carried on, wrote the journal of the Russian Trade mission, if the agreement were terminated. "There must.. be no mistake about the position: the ending of the Trade Agreement would mean the ending of all trade with Russia"⁶⁷.

Relations nevertheless continued to deteriorate. The Cabinet discussed the seizure of the 'James Johnson' on 25 April. It agreed that the Foreign Secretary should prepare, for the consideration of the Cabinet, a draft despatch to the Soviet government, quoting the "numerous recent incidents" of an "unsatisfactory and discourteous attitude" concerning the trawlers, the execution of Mr Davison, and the questions of "propaganda contrary to the Trade Agreement, the studied insolence of the replies of the Russian Soviet government to our representations regarding the trial of the Russian ecclesiastics, and any other similar cases". It should be pointed out that if an acceptable reply were not received within a certain

period of time, "our present de facto relations would be severed"⁶⁸.

The state of relations with Soviet Russia was discussed the same day in the House of Commons. McNeill referred to a "series of acts committed by the Russian Soviet government, of which British subjects (had) been the victims", which had "excited the profound indignation" of the government and of the country at large. These incidents testified to a condition of affairs which demanded, and was receiving, the "earnest attention" of the government. They could not be considered or treated separately, but were "parts of a whole directly affecting the relations between H.M.G. and the Soviet government". It was proposed to address a "serious communication" on the matter to the Soviet government. In the meantime, the British agent in Moscow would "not cease to exert his influence in the strongest possible manner" in the case of the trawler, where the action of the Soviet authorities was regarded as being "wholly without justification"⁶⁹.

On 28 April, accordingly, Hodgson communicated a note to Chicherin protesting at the seizure of the 'James Johnson'. The trawler had been engaged in fishing nine miles from the Murman coast, in waters which the British government could not accept as under Russian control. It must take a serious view of the situation thus created⁷⁰. The Soviet reply rehearsed the history of the dispute and the Soviet government's point of view; and noted that in accordance with a law of 1890, fishing was prohibited in the coastal waters of Ceylon to a distance of 6, and occasionally as far as 25 miles from shore. The three-mile limit, based upon the range of fire of coastal defence, had been pronounced obsolete by the Institute of International Law; and there could not be any objection to the regulation of the question by an international conference, or by bilateral negotiation. The Commissariat of Justice had meantime taken over the case of the 'James Johnson' and suspended the sentence originally imposed, which might now be annulled.⁷¹ The 'Lord Astor' and another British trawler were arrested subsequently at a distance of four miles from shore. In view of the decision of the Supreme Court, however, Chicherin told Hodgson, the ships might be expected to be released shortly⁷².

McNeill's 'serious communication' was discussed by the Cabinet on 2 May, with Curzon in the chair. The draft despatch to the Soviet government was approved with a number of amendments. The advantages of basing the published British case on "actual extracts from the despatches

which had passed between the Soviet government and its agents" outweighed the possible disclosure of the secret source from which the despatches had been obtained, "more especially as this was actually known to the Russian Soviet government". It was agreed to add to the end of the despatch a passage to show that if "satisfactory treatment was not given to the demands of H.M.G. the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement would be terminated under Article xiii of the Agreement and that not only would the British Trade Mission be withdrawn from Moscow, but the Russian Trade Mission would have to leave London".

The British agent in Moscow should be consulted concerning the position of British subjects in Russia in the event of a rupture of the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement, and should be authorised to "take such steps as he thought advisable to facilitate the departure of British subjects, and in any event to warn all British subjects in Russia confidentially that within ten days of the receipt of the despatch by the Russian Soviet government it was not improbably that the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement would come to an end". In this event the British agent would leave Moscow and British subjects would remain "at their own risk". It was agreed that the Home Secretary should keep the members of the Russian Trade Delegation in Britain under observation, "in order that if any attempt should be made to detain the British Trade Mission in Moscow or other British subjects as hostages, such corresponding actions might be taken here as should prove feasible". In the meantime steps should be taken to provide for the return of the captain and crew of the 'James Johnson'⁷³.

Curzon on the same day a copy of the memorandum which he was to communicate to the Soviet government. In the event of no reply being received after a period of ten days had elapsed, he was instructed to "return to this country with your whole mission"; and he should return "without further delay" if a "clearly unsatisfactory" reply was received⁷⁴. The memorandum itself, the 'Curzon note', was communicated to the Soviet authorities on 8 May. It objected to the "tone and character" of the notes recently received by the British agent in Moscow from the Soviet Foreign Affairs Commissariat, and considered it doubtful, with relation to these and a "large number of similar incidents", whether relations between the two countries could continue upon such a basis. The British government could no longer with "due self-respect continue to ignore the repeated

challenges" which the Soviet government had "thought it fit with apparent deliberation to throw out"; and a "definite conclusion" was now sought.

There had been a "series of outrages inflicted upon British subjects in the past few years, for which no apology had been offered and no compensation given", of which the "most conspicuous" concerned Mr Davison and Mrs Harding. The British government was "unable to allow the matter to be trifled with any longer": liability must be admitted and compensation paid. In contravention of generally accepted conventions of international law, moreover, a series of acts had been perpetrated by the Soviet authorities involving a "wholly indefensible interference with British shipping and acts of indignity against British subjects". The cases of the 'Magneta', the 'St Hubert' and the 'James Johnson' were recalled; and an assurance was sought that compensation would be paid, and that British fishing vessels would not in future be interfered with outside the three-mile limit.

In the case of the trial of the Soviet ecclesiastics, the British government had refrained from expressing an opinion upon the nature or validity of the charges brought against them, conceiving that this was a matter on which they were not called to pronounce. The prosecutions, however, were declared to form part of a "deliberate campaign undertaken by the Soviet government, with the definite object of destroying all religion in Russia, and enthroning the image of godlessness in its place". This had excited the "profound consternation and.. provoked the indignant remonstrance of the civilized world". The correspondence which had ensued had been "not merely inconsistent with that standard of courtesy which ordinarily prevails in the relations between governments, but (placed) the continuance of those relations in grave jeopardy"; and the withdrawal of Weinstein's two communications was accordingly demanded.

More important was the question of the observance of the obligation in the terms of the Trade Agreement to "refrain from hostile action or propaganda", an undertaking which while "loyally and scrupulously observed by H.M.G.", had been "consistently and flagrantly betrayed by the Soviet government". Following the correspondence of the autumn and winter of 1921, there had been "some slight curtailment" of the activities of Russian agents in Asia, the Soviet authorities "apparently realising that the Trade Agreement, from which they derived such substantial advantage, might

be imperilled by unduly rash conduct". These "pernicious activities" more recently, however, had been "vigorously resumed", especially in Persia, Afghanistan and the Indian border areas. In Persia, the Russian Minister at Teheran had been "tireless" in his activities; he had assisted Indian seditionists, and had attempted to stir up "anti-British movements and rebellion in that part of the world, with the sums of money which had been sent to him by the Soviet government for the purpose. In Afghanistan an "even more favourable base for enterprise" existed, owing to the proximity of the "turbulent tribes within the Indian border". Raskolnikov, the Soviet representative at Kabul, had "distinguished himself by exceptional zeal". Some two-thirds of the spending of the Legation had been devoted to this purpose (although it was, admittedly, noted that Raskolnikov had had occasion to complain to Moscow concerning an "insufficiency of funds", and apart from a sum of money, the effort of subversion in Waziristan had amounted to nothing more incriminating than ten boxes of cartridges).

The Soviet government, however, Curzon noted, had "not failed to carry its efforts further into India". Seven Indians, trained at Tashkent and Moscow as "Communist agitators", had been arrested in November 1922 on their arrival from Moscow; and a number of £100 banknotes, originally issued to an official of the Russian Trade Delegation in London, had been cashed in India "on behalf of a revolutionary Punjabi in touch with other Indian seditionaries who are known to have been closely associated with the Russian representative in Kabul". Again, admittedly, in an appeal to Moscow for funds for the support of Indian revolutionaries, Raskolnikov had declared that in the absence of a substantial sum, the existing organization would "collapse". Sums had, however, been allocated (it was charged) at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International for the assistance of the British and Indian Communist parties; and for the despatch to the countries of the East of sixty-two Oriental students "trained in propaganda schools under the Third International".

These were "but a few selected examples among many scores of similar incidents", relating to Egypt, Turkey, the British Dominions, "and even Great Britain". Unless these acts were repudiated and apologized for, and the officials responsible for them "disowned and recalled from the scene of their maleficent labours", it was "manifestly impossible" to continue with an agreement "so one-sided in its operation". Unless within ten days

of the receipt of the memorandum the Soviet government "fully and unconditionally" complied with its terms, the Trade Agreement would be regarded as terminated⁷⁵.

The note was warmly commended by the Association of British Creditors of Russia, by religious opinion, and by a large section of the press⁷⁶. The memorandum, the Economist considered, was "not a model of moderation". In some respects, indeed, it was "extremely controversial": the note was not justified in its assumption, for instance, that there was international agreement on the principle of the three-mile limit. The Foreign Office had undoubtedly made up its mind to bring the Trade Agreement to an end⁷⁷. The government should remain firm, urged the National Review, in "seeking redress for the outrages in Lord Curzon's powerful indictment". "However popular as a parliamentary performance", it noted, the "eating of one's own words is never an effective diplomatic operation"⁷⁸. As Gregory noted in a minute, the difficulty was that "if we once begin discussing with the Soviet government, we shall lose our chance of dealing with them in the way we had contemplated, as we can hardly impose a second ultimatum once a discussion has begun"⁷⁹.

The Soviet reply was in fact a moderate one. The British government, Chicherin told the Moscow Soviet on 12 May, was composed of "extreme reactionaries", who were badly informed concerning the situation in Russia, and believed that Lenin's illness had seriously weakened the Soviet state. The early hopes that N.E.P. represented a capitulation to capitalist forces had been disappointed; and a mood of disenchantment had set in. The prospect of a rift, however, was still opposed not only by the workers and the Liberals, but also by a section of the Conservatives⁸⁰. Litvinov's reply was calculated to strengthen their case. It noted that reaction had been increasing in strength in recent months. "accompanied as ever by a growing enmity towards the Soviet republics". The "sharp and unjustified hostility" of the British note had nevertheless come as a surprise. Ultimata and threats were not the way to settle "private and relatively unimportant misunderstandings between states". The British government had derived some benefit, as had the Soviet government, from the provisions of the Trade Agreement; and the establishment of peaceful relations with Soviet Russia was besides a "most necessary factor for peace and for the re-establishment of (the) economic

well-being of all (the) countries of Europe in which to no small extent Great Britain is interested". There had been, on the British side, not a few cases in the previous two years of actual challenges on the part of the British government, "not only to (the) Soviet government, but also to (the) whole Russian people", as manifested, for instance, in the disregard for the interests of Soviet Russia in the settlement of a large number of international questions". The Soviet government had not raised such questions as the "intense activity" of British agents in the Caucasus and elsewhere because it had "not lost hope of (a) general settlement of all questions in dispute and at issue"⁸¹.

The accusations contained in Curzon's note were a "combination of invention, with deciphered parts of telegrams tendentiously manipulated and arbitrarily extended"⁸². The British government must know better than anyone else, "if they are correctly informed, that (the) Soviet government seeks an establishment of friendly relations with (the) peoples of the East not by intrigues and gold, but by measures of real unselfishness and friendly feelings to them". The British note appeared to imply that the Soviet government "should have no policy of its own at all in the East, but should everywhere support English aspirations. (The) Russian government has taken no such obligation on itself". British demands had however at no point been specified, and no willingness had been shown to allow matters in dispute to be discussed.

An ultimatum had been sent threatening the ending of diplomatic relations based upon apparent infringements of the interests of private British citizens by the Soviet government; infringements which, moreover, with the exception of the cases involving British trawlers, had not taken place in the period in which the trade agreement had been in force. Compensation was offered if this treatment was extended also to analogous Soviet cases. The question of the territorial limit should be discussed at an international conference; but the British trawlers mentioned had meanwhile been released. The charge of persecution of religion was "baseless"; and the British government's apparent attempt to interfere in an internal Soviet matter had accounted for the "unusual tone" of Weinstein's first letter. It had however been returned and might be treated, together with his second letter, as "non-existing". The matters in dispute were in fact so insignificant in comparison with possible consequences of rupture that

their settlement might easily be arranged by means of a bilateral conference, which might also "regularize Anglo-Soviet relations in their full extent"^{82a}.

An effort was made, moreover, to mobilize public opinion "not only in the working class, but even in the liberal-bourgeois trade world" against the inflexible position taken up by Lord Curzon⁸³. Krasin, who gave an interview to the press on 13 May, declared that the rupture of relations would have "catastrophic consequences" which would be "impossible to foresee". There was no doubt, however, that all trade between the two countries would cease, in the absence of a legal foundation for commercial transactions; while there would be now no obligation upon the Soviet government to refrain from anti-British propaganda and action in the East. Such questions as had arisen could, however, be resolved only by means of discussion between the two sides⁸⁴. Only the trade agreement, the deputy representative, Berzin, told the press, made possible the existence of trade between the two countries; and if British businessmen considered that its annulment would not affect that trade, they were making a serious mistake⁸⁵. Such trade as was conducted with Russia, wrote the Economist, small though it was, would be much more difficult to undertake if a reversion occurred to the position which existed before the Trade Agreement had been negotiated. The rupture, it warned, would prove "most acceptable to certain Bolshevik extremists and would be a definite setback to the N.E.P.". The government should be "guided in this matter by the realities of the situation rather than by the dictates of passion and righteous indignation". The Stock Exchange, indeed, appeared already to have anticipated such an outcome: Russian shares, it was reported, had improved somewhat "on account of the political outlook being read as clearer"⁸⁶.

On 14 May Curzon informed the Cabinet of the "general tenor" of the Soviet reply⁸⁷; and the following day, the text having been circulated, he gave the Cabinet a detailed criticism of its contents, "exposing in each case the weakness of the argument and the lack of foundation to each of the counter-accusations against the British government, as well as pointing out that there was only one item in which the demands of the British government had been met, namely, the release of the captured trawlers and their captains and crews". Curzon was authorized, however, to grant an interview to Krasin upon request, in which he should continue to "insist upon acceptance of the

demands contained in the British note as a condition of the continuance of the Russian Trade Agreement". Krasin, moreover, should be allowed "a few days" in order to communicate with the Soviet government⁸⁸.

Replying to Parliamentary criticism later the same day, McNeill declared that "from the very first this question of the cessation of propaganda was part and parcel of the Agreement itself"; but the Soviet government had "never observed" its obligations in the matter. It was "out of the question" to provide proof of origin for the statements quoted in the British note such as would satisfy a court of law; but he insisted upon their "absolute trustworthiness". The Russian reply on the questions of propaganda, compensation for private citizens, and the trawlers had been "entirely unsatisfactory"; and to withdraw from the demands which had been made was "impossible"⁸⁹. There had been "instance after instance" of propaganda against British interests, stated Lloyd Greame, in Afghanistan and India, "encouraging insurrection against the British Dominions". In the meeting with Krasin, arranged for 17 May, the government would require satisfaction in "all the essential respects"⁹⁰.

Lloyd George, with whom Krasin had just had a lengthy meeting⁹¹, urged that "every caution" be taken, lest the "extremists" in Russia be encouraged. Sir Allen Smith added that the ending of the trade agreement would mean handing over the British position in Russia and the trading relations which might have continued to exist in future years to others. British traders would be "entirely separated from what might be our very best and most profitable market".⁹²

Sir E. Grigg, speaking on 17 May in the continuation of the debate, was also "very anxious that there should be no breach with Russia". The trade agreement was "not a small issue": the part of the country which he represented, Lancashire, was "deeply concerned in the possibilities of reviving markets in the East and the Near East at the present time". The government, he thought, should leave no stone unturned in the effort to avoid a breakdown in relations. Captain O'Grady had seen a Krupps locomotive in Russia; and Krupps was not, he remarked, a "sympathetic or philanthropic association". He wanted this work for his Leeds constituents. Baldwin, for the government, reserved the power to act as it saw fit; but clearly suggested that the government was not unmindful of the considerations suggested by its critics. He hoped, he told the House of Commons, that the

government would "find our demands are met fairly and reasonably, and that.. a rupture may ^{not} be ~~essential~~"⁹³.

This appeared the more likely when on 22 May Baldwin became Prime Minister, on the resignation of Bonar Law, and to the chagrin of Curzon, who had been taking the chair at meetings of the Cabinet in Bonar Law's absence. Baldwin represented, according to a Soviet commentary of the time, business circles which did not wish to "complicate their position by a conflict with us"⁹⁴. On 28 May he told Thomas Jones: "We must try to avoid a break with Russia.. Curzon will see Krasin and try to arrange the withdrawal by the Soviet Government of their Afghan propagandist agents"⁹⁵.

A further conciliatory memorandum followed from Krasin on 23 May⁹⁶. In the interests of avoiding a rupture new concessions were offered: a three-mile limit would be agreed with the British government until a conference had regulated the matter, and compensation would be paid; compensation ex gratia would be paid in the cases of Mr Davison and Mrs Harding; Weinstein's two letters would be taken back; and the question of propaganda in the East should be discussed independently⁹⁷. These concessions, noted the British reply of 29 May, "in large measure" satisfied the claims ~~which~~ had originally been made; and "no insuperable difficulties" appeared to remain. The question of fishing in northern waters appeared capable of settlement in the manner proposed; and the "moderate claims" of £3,000 and £10,000 were advanced on behalf respectively of Mrs Harding and Mrs Davison in the interests of a swift agreement. The "unqualified withdrawal" of Weinstein's letters was noted with satisfaction⁹⁸.

There remained, however, the "all-important question" of hostile propaganda carried out against the British Empire and British institutions. There had been "no satisfaction whatever" on this point, on which the fate of the Trade Agreement depended. An assurance must be given that the Soviet representatives against whom protests had been lodged, Shumiatsky and Rasko-
lnikov, would "within a reasonable space of time be transferred to some other areas where their duties will not bring them into contact with British interests", although their dismissal was not specifically required. A new declaration on propaganda was attached for the endorsement of the Soviet government, reiterating the obligations contained in the Trade Agreement, and undertaking "not to support with funds or in any other form persons or bodies or agencies or institutions whose aim is to spread discontent or to

foment rebellion in any part of the British Empire.. and to impress upon its officers and officials the full and continuous observance of these conditions"⁹⁹. This, the Cabinet agreed, was a "pivotal issue between Great Britain and Soviet Russia"¹⁰⁰.

The Soviet government expressed its "entire satisfaction" that a number of points in dispute appeared to have been resolved; and agreed to pay the sum of compensation which had been suggested by the British government in the cases of Mr Davison and Mrs Harding. It agreed, in response to the wishes of the British government, also to take the "extremely major step" of accepting also the new declaration of propaganda, despite the fact that it altered and extended the obligations originally contained in the Trade Agreement with regard both to the area to which it applied, and to the nature of the undertaking¹⁰¹.

The Soviet government, Curzon told the Cabinet, had now "given way on every point with one partial exception". The wider definition of propaganda had in particular been accepted. Agreement had not been reached on the Cabinet's original demand that the Russian representatives at Kabul and Teheran be transferred elsewhere: but it had been learned that the Russian representative at Kabul was in Moscow, and would not be returning to his post. Curzon was asked to note this fact in his reply; and to state that if the Soviet representative at Teheran became involved in further anti-British activity, the application of a general principle to bind both sides should apply, and "the delinquent should be expelled from the service"¹⁰².

Curzon communicated a memorandum on these lines to Krasin on 13 June; and with it the correspondence, it was suggested, might be "brought to a conclusion"¹⁰³. The question of the recall of Raskolnikov, Chicherin insisted, was an internal matter, which could not form the subject of discussion with another government; but it was not denied that he would not, in fact, be returning to his post, and it was stated that instructions would be given to Russian diplomatic representatives in accordance with the understanding which had been reached. The correspondence was considered closed¹⁰⁴. This, noted Litvinov, was the "final chord in all the music about Lord Curzon's 'notes'"¹⁰⁵. While the government did not consider, Baldwin told the House of Commons, that a conference with representatives of the Soviet government could at present usefully be convoked, agreement had at least been reached, McNeill told the House, upon certain specific issues¹⁰⁶.

The negotiations with regard to the Trade Agreement, the Cabinet noted with satisfaction on 20 June, "were now completed"¹⁰⁷.

Curzon was congratulated by Baldwin at the Cabinet's meeting on 11 June on the "highly successful issue of these difficult negotiations"¹⁰⁸. Curzon himself wrote to Lord Crewe that he thought he could "claim to have won a considerable victory over the Soviet government", and he expected them to "behave with more circumspection for some time to come"¹⁰⁹. The rupture of trade relations, noted the Economist, which had seemed probable, appeared now to have been definitely averted; and so far as they could be expected to go, "short of abject humiliation", the Moscow government had gone. The Times considered that a "very satisfactory measure of success" had been achieved. While not wholly breaking with the policy of the Coalition government, the Foreign Office had now "shown a refreshing vigour and resolution in dealing with a Government which (had) displayed special enmity towards the British Empire"¹¹⁰.

The question of diplomatic recognition, nevertheless, the Economist considered, would have to be "very seriously considered in the near future"¹¹¹. This was, perhaps, a measure of the extent to which the Soviet government had succeeded in securing the active support of public opinion in Britain, notably by alarming business and trading circles with regard to the prospect of trade between the two countries were the trade agreement annulled. The "cautious and conciliatory policy", it appeared to a contemporary Soviet observer, of the Soviet representatives had succeeded in averting the danger of a breaking-off of relations upon which the British government appeared to have decided¹¹².

Raskolnikov, stated the NKID official report, had sought to return to Moscow before the ultimatum had been delivered¹¹³. Hodgson, indeed, reported from Moscow on what he believed to be reliable authority that it had been decided to recall both Raskolnikov and Shumiatsky, following complaints regarding their activity from the Afghan government, before the British ultimatum had been received¹¹⁴. The Soviet government had not, in fact, recalled its representatives from Kabul and Teheran, Curzon's "essential demand"; and it was declared to have been "not a victory, but a defeat" for him¹¹⁵. Raskolnikov remained at Kabul until the end of the year, and Shumiatsky was still at Teheran the following year¹¹⁶. The assumption of the Prime Ministership by Baldwin, Chicherin considered, representing business circles

favouring relations with Soviet Russia, had forced Curzon to compromise. The Soviet government had yielded on a number of secondary points, but had refused to recall the two diplomatic representatives¹¹⁷.

It did not appear, either, that the main aim of the ultimatum, the humiliation of the Soviet government in the eyes of the East, had been achieved. Soviet relations with Afghanistan, it was represented, had actually improved as a result of the ultimatum; and the reaction of Iranian public opinion, and of traders and merchants, had been sharply critical of the ultimatum¹¹⁸. Trade negotiations between the two countries were actually in progress at this time, and a treaty was signed the following year¹¹⁹. The period following Curzon's ultimatum, Chicherin told Arthur Ransome, had seen not the deterioration, but the strengthening of relations with other countries and the conclusion of new and far-reaching agreements¹²⁰.

X

Following the transfer of Krasin to Paris, Rakovsky was appointed to take his place as Soviet representative in Britain. It was evidently too soon, however, to conclude that the crisis was over to the solution of which Krasin had applied his talents. Rakovsky was appointed to his new post on 23 July after the British representative in Moscow had informed the Foreign Ministry of the willingness of the British government to receive him¹²¹. A diplomatic passport had been issued and Rakovsky was ready to leave when on 1 August a polemical attack upon him appeared in the Morning Post, based apparently upon a report of a speech which he had made as reported by a Kharkhov newspaper. He was reported to have said that the highest point of the revolutionary movement was approaching in England, that the British Empire was in imminent danger of collapse, and that his official position could be used to spark off a revolution in Britain. Reference was also made to a brochure of his speeches, entitled 'England and Russia', which had recently appeared, containing a sharp attack upon British imperialism, and urging non-acceptance of the terms of Curzon's note¹²².

A question was asked about his appointment that day in the House of Commons; and on 2 August the Soviet Foreign Ministry was informed that the British government now refused to accept Rakovsky into the country¹²³. An urgent telegram was despatched to Hodgson, instructing him to make "immediate investigations" with regard to the Morning Post's allegations; and if the facts had been accurately reported, to inform the Soviet government that

the British government took so serious a view of the incident that their agreement must ~~be~~ withdrawn to receive in London a person "so unlikely to conduct the trade relations with their country in a loyal or acceptable manner". Rakovsky was to be warned not to leave until the matter had been cleared up; and on 3 August instructions were sent to the Home Office that Rakovsky was if necessary to be refused permission to land at the ports¹²⁴.

Chicherin wrote to the British representative on 9 August to protest against this decision: Rakovsky's speech had been misleadingly quoted, he insisted, and the speech which had been contained in the brochure had appeared at a critical time in Anglo-Soviet relations and before his appointment had been made¹²⁵. Hodgson reported to London that he had examined the papers in question, and had found "no expressions of Rakovsky in the least resembling those quoted by (the) Morning Post". It appeared that he had, on the contrary, expressed the view that he could not, as an official representative of the Soviet Russian government, interfere in British internal affairs. He had been unable to locate the pamphlet¹²⁶. Four days later he added that the pamphlet, which he had now examined, was being withdrawn, and he believed the Soviet government were "really unaware of its existence"¹²⁷. Leeper noted in a minute regarding the pamphlet, of which the Foreign Office had obtained a copy, that Rakovsky had spoken at a moment of crisis (following the murder of Vorovsky; the pamphlet had black borders) and when he had had no official responsibility. He believed that "if we really want to get rid of the very unsatisfactory Trade Agreement, then this incident is not quite big enough to afford the necessary leverage"¹²⁸.

Berzin, the deputy Soviet representative, wrote to the Morning Post on 10 August, and stated that its evidence appeared to have been derived from the Riga Poslednia Novosti of 28 July, a publication "notorious for its unscrupulousness and mendacity". A Foreign Office representative visited the Morning Post's editor and found the paper's explanation "very thin". It was "difficult to avoid the conclusion", Ovey noted, that the Morning Post had been "tricked and that they (had) no corroborating evidence". Rakovsky's visa should not, ^{Leeper} ~~be~~ thought, any longer be withdrawn, although the Morning Post was "still hopeful" that proof to sustain their charges would "eventually be found"¹²⁹. On 30 August the Foreign Office informed Peters in Moscow that the government was "prepared to accept Mr Rakovsky"¹³⁰.

Not once, however, in the three months following did Curzon receive him, on the tenuous ground that he was not the diplomatic representative of a fully recognized state¹³¹. The notification, indeed, that the RSFSR government had been merged into that of the USSR, with which other states should maintain official relations, was received with some scepticism in the Foreign Office. The "obvious propagandist element" in the change of name was noted; and it was proposed to ignore the new development by not acknowledging the note, and by continuing to address Moscow as the Russian Soviet government. Such communications as were addressed to Rakovsky were addressed to him as the representative of this government, not of that of the USSR¹³², a designation which was considered to have expansionist connotations. The Soviet government, moreover, McNeill told the House of Commons, had "not yet fully implemented all the undertakings given by it in the course of the correspondence which took place earlier in the year". The government intended not to relax their "efforts to obtain the full satisfaction promised at that time"¹³³.

Curzon, it seemed to Chicherin, had clearly played the major role in the despatch of the ultimatum. This representative of extreme reaction had shown his "irreconcilable hostility" towards the Soviet government at Lausanne, and had refused to consider any compromise whatever with it. The main role in the ultimatum was played by the East, where the British government had mistaken Russian secret agents for the process of historical development. "To this day", Chicherin believed, he remained "psychologically vice-Regent of India"¹³⁴. For the rest of his life, Beaverbrook agreed, Curzon had been "influenced by his sudden journey to heaven at the age of 39 (when he had been made Viceroy of India) and then by his sudden return seven years later to earth, for the remainder of his mortal existence"¹³⁵. Some consideration should be given at this point, then, to Curzon's experience and the assumptions which informed his conduct of foreign policy, a field which remained his responsibility in successive governments after the war, and in which he was able to exercise his authority in an increasingly personal fashion after the fall of the Coalition.

It was, it appears, a lecture given by James Fitzjames Stephen which Curzon attended as a schoolboy at Eton which first awoke his belief that in India lay the key to a new and dynamic imperial achievement. Stephen

had told the boys, he related to an audience of fellow Etonians on his appointment as Viceroy, that "there was in the Asian continent an empire more populous, more amazing, and more beneficent than that of Rome; that the rulers of that great dominion were drawn from the men of our own people; that some of them might perhaps in the future be taken from the ranks of the boys who were listening to his words". Ever since that day, said Curzon, the "fascination and... sacredness of India" had grown upon him¹³⁶. Stephen, the author of a celebrated attack upon Liberalism entitled 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', had acted as a member of the Legislative Council in India under Lord Mayo for over two years. India he described as for him, a second university education; and his book represented, he declared, "little more than the turning of an Indian lantern on European problems". India he found the "best corrective in existence to the fundamental fallacies of Liberalism"¹³⁷. British government there, he wrote, was "essentially an absolute government, founded, not on consent, but on conquest. It does not represent the native principles of life or of government, and it can never do so until it represents heathenism and barbarism"¹³⁸.

Stephen's arguments, it has been noted, supplied the educated classes with an intellectual argument in support of the continuance of autocratic rule in India, and for the maintenance of the political integrity of the Empire. They supplied one of the main intellectual contributions to the faith of English imperialism¹³⁹. Curzon was at one with Stephen in advocating for India an enlightened British autocracy, whose legitimacy derived not from the consent of the governed but from the government's dedication to the moral and material advancement of the subject people. It was from this source, rather than from the more pragmatic Henry Maine, that Curzon drew his inspiration¹⁴⁰. In contrast, moreover, to Oxford Idealism which was in the ascendant in Balliol College where Curzon was a student, and which might have appeared to "supply the most obvious links between political ideas and Empire", authoritarian Liberalism of the Stephen school had deeper historical roots, and "of much more importance,... an intellectual content which had a much closer bearing on practical affairs"¹⁴¹.

Curzon travelled extensively in the Middle and Far East, contributing articles to the Times and collecting material for a number of books which by 1895 had given him an "established reputation for knowing more about the East than any living politician"¹⁴². Appointed Viceroy in 1898, he

defined his mission as one to "preserve intact and secure, either from internal convulsion or external inroad, the boundaries of that great and Imperial dominion"¹⁴³. His term of office, devoted to the energetic pursuit of this object, ended unhappily in 1905 when Curzon resigned, following a disagreement with his political superiors in London. The fortunes of the Empire in the East, and especially of British India, nevertheless remained the dominating concern of his political life; and it was this consideration which, more than any other, underlay his conduct of policy when he became Foreign Secretary after the war. As Radek put it, Curzon "considered English policy and the world position from the terrace of the Indian Vice-regal palace"¹⁴⁴.

India provided, as Curzon pointed out, the "principal, indeed almost the only formidable element in our fighting strength", an army which was "capable of being hurled at a moment's notice upon any point ~~on~~ either of Asia or Africa" (any point, that was, "where native troops can properly be employed"¹⁴⁵). Elsewhere, he could envisage in Persia that the "nomad tribes of the south.. may one day stand in line with British redcoats"¹⁴⁶.

Of decisive importance, however, was the fact that India represented the "true fulcrum of dominion, the real touchstone of our Imperial greatness or failure"^{146a}. India was the "centre and secret of ~~our~~ Imperial dominion". India was "not only an important part of any Imperial organization in the future, but.. so important that without her the Empire could not continue to exist". India had been the determining influence in every considerable movement of British power at the East and South of the Mediterranean: a movement which had "converted us from a small island with trading and maritime interests into the greatest land Power of the world"¹⁴⁷. It was "obvious", Curzon considered, that the "master of India must, under modern conditions, be the greatest power in the Asiatic continent, and therefore, it may be added, in the world". Hence his belief that the "secret of the mastery of the world" was, "if they only knew it, in the possession of the British people"¹⁴⁸. The continued existence of Britain, he told his constituents in March 1893, was bound up in the maintenance, or "even in the extension of the British Empire". India was the "strength and greatness of Britain"; and "every nerve a man may strain, every energy he may put forward", could "not be devoted to a nobler purpose than keeping

tight the cords that hold India to ourselves"¹⁴⁹. As long as Britain ruled India, she was the "greatest power in the world". Should she lose possession of that country, she would "drop straight away to a third-rate power"¹⁵⁰.

The imperial connection, equally, was of benefit to the Indian population. It was, wrote Curzon, the Empire's "highest claim" to Indian gratitude to have "educated their character and emancipated their intelligence". This was at the same time, regrettably, the source of "many foolish things" and of "many vain aspirations", for the rule of India was "still, and must for as long as we can foresee, remain in British hands"¹⁵¹. The 'Advanced Natives', he wrote, desired a "larger control of the executive for which they are as yet profoundly unfitted and which they will never get from me". He wrote to Balfour about the "extraordinary inferiority, in character, honesty, and capacity" of the Indians. It was often said that a prominent 'native' should be made a member of the Executive Council. The answer, he told Balfour, was that "in the whole continent there is not an Indian fit for the post"¹⁵². The justification for British rule in India was not, in any case, that it was exercised with the consent of the governed: but that it represented (at least to those who exercised it) the necessary tutelage of an advanced civilization over a backward one. It expressed, simply, the "fundamental" difference between the "standard of living, the economic aptitudes, and the social and moral concerns of Asiatic races and of communities of European origin". On the whole his travels around the world had revealed to him a "satisfied and grateful acquiescence in our domination"¹⁵³.

For to Curzon there could be no doubt that the Empire represented the work of more than human hands. The Empire, he considered, was "under Providence, the greatest instrument for good that the world has ever seen"; it might still remain "one of the instruments through which He chooses to speak to mankind"¹⁵⁴. In Empire, Britain had found not merely the key to glory and wealth, but the call to duty, and the means of service to mankind¹⁵⁵. Curzon was not beyond amending the text of a hymn so as to exclude a verse which made reference to the passing away of earthly empires¹⁵⁶; yet he had no doubt that the British had come to India "in obedience to the decree of Providence and for the lasting benefit of millions of the human race". He

was, he declared, "an Imperialist heart and soul. Imperial expansion seems to me an inevitable necessity and carries a noble and majestic obligation"; and of British government abroad he stated his firm belief that there was "no government in the world that rests on so secure a moral basis, or is more fiercely animated by duty"¹⁵⁷.

Formal religion had little part in Curzon's life, and it appears that when comparatively young he found, although he had been brought up within it, that he could not accept the essentials of the Christian faith¹⁵⁸. Yet speaking at a banquet in February 1903, he declared that if he had thought "it were all for nothing, and that you and I, Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen in this country, were simply writing inscriptions on the sand to be washed away out by the next tide, if I left that we were not working here for the good of India in obedience to a higher law and a nobler aim, then I would see the link that holds England and India together severed with a sigh. But it is because I believe in the future of this country and the capacity of our own race to guide it forward to goals that it has never hitherto attained, that I keep courage and press forward"(it was in many ways ~~not~~ inappropriate that this lofty justification of imperialism was offered to a Chamber of Commerce meeting¹⁵⁹). The Almighty had placed the British hand on the "greatest of his ploughs, in whose furrow the nations of the world are germinating and taking shape"¹⁶⁰. Britain, it has been noted, "of all European countries in the nineteenth century made the most profession of Christianity, partly because it had the biggest empire"¹⁶¹. To Curzon and those who shared his views, it went without saying that what God had thus joined together, no subject people might break asunder.

Curzon had in any case little sympathy for either the peoples of the East or for their cultures. He wasted no time on the "sterile nonsense that passes for philosophy in the East"; Korea he found "one of the dirtiest and most repulsive countries in the world"; and while as Viceroy he devoted much effort to the preservation of India's past, for him, as for many others, Indian art and architecture were "really a matter of archeology, something dead"¹⁶². Throughout his period of office, he sought to identify the interests of India's traditional aristocracy, the princes and large landowners, with those of the British government: in the not unreasonable belief that the entrenched conservatism of the princes made them natural allies of the paramount power. The native chief, he wrote, had become an "integral part"

of the imperial organization of India; he had become a "colleague and a partner"¹⁶³. In general they were, he found, "enthusiastically attached to the British connection". The educated classes, however, were divided, with a "small section.. incurably hostile and disloyal". The masses, however, were interested only in "food and wages"¹⁶⁴. The masses in Persia he found generally favourably disposed towards British influence in their country: leading him generously to conclude that it was "no rare experience to find a very fair apercu of the political situation formulated by men in a comparatively humble station of life"¹⁶⁵. They were "very strange people, these natives", he reflected; there was "scarcely anything that they will not accept from their rulers"¹⁶⁶.

Generally, he found substantial loyalty to the person of the Sovereign; and as the spirit of nationality assumed "more active and insurgent forms" in India, he thought the feeling for the Crown might be "of increasing value". He was reluctant to subject it to any "hazard", such as the establishment of a royal residence in India; but in every residence or building of government and in Durbar Hall and Court House, Curzon arranged that a picture of the King should be "hung up in a prominent place. The little things", he explained, were "not thought greatly of at home - but they count for much in the East"¹⁶⁷. An elaborate and ceremonial Coronation Durbar took place in 1903. It was a means, he declared, of lifting an "entire people for a little space out of the rut of their narrow and parochial lives" and of letting them "catch a glimpse of a higher ideal, an appreciation of the hidden laws that regulate the march of nations and their destinies". A somewhat more straightforward means of attracting support and "bringing home to the masses of the Indian people the historical significance of the occasion", a remission of taxation, was overruled in London¹⁶⁸.

English people, he wrote, and still more English rulers, were in India in order to set an example. Every one of their actions should be open to inspection; each deed should be a duty. They could hold India only by their "superior standards of honour and virtue and by getting the Natives to recognize them as such". Truth had been given a high place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East, "where craftiness and diplomatic wile have always been held in much repute"¹⁶⁹. Part of this duty lay in ending the indifference with which the British authorities had habitually regarded what was delicately described as "carelessness

on the part of soldiers when out shooting". He ordered the issue of shooting passes to be limited in October 1900, following the "allegedly accidental deaths of a number of Indians at the hands of British soldiers turned sportsmen"¹⁷⁰. The natives, he explained to Lyttleton, were "crooked-minded and corrupt. We have therefore got to go on ruling them". They could do so with success, however, only "by being both kindly and virtuous". He might, he admitted, be "talking rather like a schoolmaster; but after all, the millions I have to manage are less than school children"¹⁷¹.

Curzon shared the disillusion of his menton Stephen with the extension of the franchise and other democratic reforms of the late nineteenth century (and, indeed, he showed no enthusiasm for the subsequent enfranchisement of women); and central to his imperialism was the belief that by this means a threat to the moral fibre of the nation might be averted. "As for the priceless asset of national character", he wrote, "without a world to conquer or duty to perform, it would rot to atrophy and inanition"¹⁷². Of the benefits of British rule in India to Britain, Curzon was inclined to mention less the material than what he called the "moral and educative ones". The Indian army he considered the "finest available school of manhood and arms". The Indian civil service was a "training-ground for British character that is not without its effect both upon the Empire and the race". Not only had India put money into their purses and extended the British imperial sway: it had, more importantly, "exalted and disciplined our character"¹⁷³.

This was not to suggest that Curzon was unaware of the economic importance to Britain of her imperial possessions. He was, indeed, for a year a member of the board of a short-lived company, the Persian Bank Mining Rights Corporation Limited; and in the course of his travels in Persia, he systematically noted the location of the oil wells which lay along his route. He was, also, for some time the chairman of the Imperial Bank of Persia¹⁷⁴. It was the prestige and wealth arising from her Asiatic position, he stated, which represented the "foundation stones of the British Empire"¹⁷⁵. India, he noted, was "one of the main fields for the employment of British capital.. She supplies to us in abundance the raw material of a great deal of our industry and much of the food on which we live, and.. she furnishes the richest market for our manufactures". India was the largest purchaser of British produce and manufactures, and notably of cotton goods;

and was the largest producer of food and raw material in the Empire, and the principal granary of Great Britain¹⁷⁶. The Indian radical, said Curzon, objected that the low level of the levy on imported cotton goods had been fixed in the interests of Lancashire : as indeed, he added, "it was"; and they objected also that the expatriation of the profits of British enterprises in India represented an economic loss. To Curzon, however, the profits of business were "the property of the owner, to do with as he pleases"¹⁷⁷.

Persia, he noted in his travels in that country, was a country "providing an extensive and profitable market for England and Anglo-Indian trade", with whose ruler a good understanding was consequently "in the highest degree desirable". Britain had an "inherited right", he thought, to a "commanding interest in Persian trade", and interest which was however entirely legitimate and certainly "no offspring of national cupidity or desire for material aggrandisement". Indeed, he found that the increasing movement of Englishmen and of English capital towards the shores of that country to be evidence of a "new-born, or at least re-aroused, concern for its welfare", and of a "consciousness that its ~~existence~~ is in a measure bound up with our own"¹⁷⁸ (a remark of the accuracy of which he was not, perhaps, entirely aware). The development of Persian resources by Persian means should meet, he urged, "not with suspicion, but with encouragement": provided, however, that British commerce was "not hampered". The loss of control over India, similarly, might lead to the loss of that country's "splendid and unfailing markets, shut against us by hostile tariffs"¹⁷⁹.

India was the lynchpin of this moral and material global edifice. That country had become the "strategic centre of the defensive position of the British Empire"; and its frontier was as "essential to the defence of the Empire as the defence of the Channel itself"¹⁸⁰. Curzon had no doubt that the country against whose influence the British position must be maintained was the "ever-swelling shadow" of Russia. Indeed the "basic idea of Curzon's foreign policy", as Radek noted, was and remained the weakening of Russia¹⁸¹. In Persia he found that the Russian presence, "witnessed with a sort of paralyzed quiescence by the native peoples", loomed like a "thunder-cloud over the land". In recent years Russia had made significant advances; and there was evidence that her ambitions fell as yet "short of realisation". Those ambitions were, he thought, "distinctly, and in parts avowedly, hostile"; and they extended to parts of Persia which he specified

in his study of ~~Persia~~ that country, and even to Korea and elsewhere¹⁸².

Russia, Curzon explained, "though a nation of no commercial aptitudes", had "conceived the ambition of controlling the markets of Central Asia". Her dark designs there were contrasted with the "indomitable gallantry" of British merchants, whose business there was "entirely legitimate". The passion for territorial aggrandizement was, he considered, a "dominating influence in the Russian mind". The local inhabitants, however, a "naturally craven race", "woefully deficient in patriotism", were inclined to regard a hypothetical Russian advance with "mingled resignation and respect"¹⁸³. If the Persians were unwilling or unable to defend themselves, others, evidently, must do so in their place. There could be no excuse, he thought, for "any supineness in developing.. Anglo-Indian influence". The "preservation.. of the integrity of Persia" must be considered a "cardinal precept of our Imperial creed". Persia was a country in the shaping of whose future the British nation had it "in their power to take a highly honourable lead". Curzon was in the circumstances understandably distressed by the tendency which the Persians appeared to display to "mistake interest for self-interest in others"¹⁸⁴.

In his period of office as Viceroy Curzon urged a definite policy to check the advance of Russia towards India through Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet; and authorized an expedition to Tibet in 1903-4 to assert British interests in the face of what Curzon believed to be a Russian threat¹⁸⁵. The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, dividing Persia into spheres of influence, aroused his deepest misgivings. An agreement with Russia, he had written, was "one of those sentimental hallucinations that.. it is impossible to remove from the British mind". The Convention itself, he charged in Parliament, had "thrown away to a large extent the efforts of our diplomacy and our trade for more than a century; and I do not feel at all sure that this treaty in its Persian aspect will conduce either to the security of India, to the independence of Persia or to the peace of Asia"¹⁸⁶.

Harcourt, reading his Russia in Central Asia, wrote to beg that the author would "not make war on Russia in my lifetime". Curzon did, at least, lay constant stress throughout the world war upon the Eastern Theatre; and sent British forces to Persia for the "very necessary duty of controlling the insurrectionary movement"¹⁸⁷. He vigorously championed the anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia inside the Cabinet, laying particular emphasis upon the

the bearing which the conflict had upon imperial interests in the Near East and Asia. At the end of the war he found it possible to tell the House of Commons that the British flag had never flown over a "more powerful or a more united Empire than now". He had conceded on the matter of Montagu's declaration on the advance of India towards self-government within the Empire; but he noted that the Cabinet was "really making concessions to India because of the free talk about liberty, democracy, nationality and self-government" which, he considered, had become the "common shibboleths of the Allies", and because (perhaps not unreasonably) they were being "expected to translate into practice in our own domestic household the sentiments which we have so enthusiastically preached"¹⁸⁸.

By September 1919, however, it had become clear to him that the world was "very troubled", and that while peace had supposedly been secured, active and murderous war was going on in at least a quarter of the recent areas of struggle. The task of the government in such circumstances was full of incident; and even fuller of disappointment and perplexity, he told Lord Lansdowne¹⁸⁹. The withdrawal of British forces from Persia was ultimately found necessary, although Curzon had opposed this "immoral, feeble and disastrous policy". The Anglo-Persian agreement, while it might go a long way, it was noted, towards meeting "some at least of what were believed to be Persian aspirations", included the appointment of a British head of the armed forces and of the country's finances, a necessity which was stated to have followed from the "huge financial interests which (Britain) now possessed in the country". It was not ratified, however, as has been noted above, and in February 1921 a treaty was signed with the Soviet government. There could now be little prospect of the realisation of Curzon's vision of a "rejuvenated Persia freed from the menace of Russian militarism on the North and supported by, and beholden to, Great Britain"¹⁹⁰. Persia appeared now to be "marching of its own accord", Curzon told the House of Lords, towards an end which he could "not attempt to forecast" but which could not, he thought, "be other than most unfortunate"¹⁹¹.

Curzon was understandably inclined to take issue with what he considered to be Lloyd George's excessively conciliatory attitude towards the Soviet government. Only with difficulty had he been induced to shake Krasin by the hand at the outset of the British-Soviet talks in the summer of 1920 in London. Wells, who visited Russia at this time, gave Curzon his opinion

that, whatever its imperfections, the Soviet government was then the only possible government in Russia, and that whatever the personal feelings of British ministers, it would be necessary to work out a modus vivendi with them. Curzon, Wells later told Maisky, "was simply unable to understand me. For him, Bolshevik Russia was simply a criminal, which had as quickly as possible to be destroyed"¹⁹².

It might appear inconsistent that he had given his support to the conclusion of the Trade Agreement in March 1921. Yet he had earlier argued that "no safeguard should be omitted" by which might be secured "in perpetuity" that "noblest achievement of the science of civil rule that mankind has yet bequeathed to man", the British Empire in the East¹⁹³. If, as became increasingly probable, the Bolsheviks remained in power, it might prove the least unsatisfactory arrangement to conclude an agreement with them, which should be essentially a bargain: the agreement itself, providing for the development of trade between the two countries (in which the Bolsheviks were believed to be extremely interested), should be signed in return for and upon the condition of a suspension of such aspects of their foreign policy, and of the activity of organizations under their direct or indirect control, which complicated the task of the imperial power in Asia. Little, it was thought, would be gained for the British side by such trade as might develop; and the Bolsheviks, equally, might not abide by the undertakings which they had given. Nothing, however, would be lost in this case; while there was at least a possibility that the existence of the agreement would constrain their anti-British and anti-colonial activity. Curzon expressed this view (which, as has been noted above, he shared with a section of the Cabinet) in a note to the Cabinet in May 1920. The Bolsheviks, he believed, were "threatened with complete economic disaster" and were willing to "pay almost any price for the assistance which we more than anyone else are in a position to give". The rendering of such assistance could hardly be contemplated without "exact[ing] our own price for it": which could best be paid through the "cessation of Bolshevik hostility in parts of the world of importance to us"¹⁹⁴. An undertaking upon both parties to refrain from activity or propaganda prejudicial to the institutions or interests of the other party, applying in particular to British possessions in Asia, was included in the trade agreement accordingly: it was the price of Curzon's support.

Baldwin allowed Curzon more independence in the conduct of foreign policy than had Lloyd George. Curzon was able, consequently, to draw attention to the contractual nature of the trade agreement with the May 1923 ultimatum. The agreement was conditional upon the cessation of Bolshevik propaganda in the East; and since little otherwise was to be gained from it, it would be terminated if that condition were consistently infringed. There was some justice, nevertheless, in Chicherin's view that an appreciable change had become apparent in British policy with the accession at this time of Baldwin to the Premiership. It was the general opinion of those who knew him, wrote the Manchester Guardian's London correspondent, that the new Prime Minister took "rather a more moderate line than Lord Curzon's on the Russian question", which he saw from "a rather different angle after his long experience of trade affairs"¹⁹⁵. Within the Conservative party, in fact, Curzon's views were representative of a traditionally important but now perhaps subsidiary section, connected with landed estates and imperial possessions. Curzon himself was described by Lord Davidson as an "ancient monument and constructed like one"¹⁹⁶. The Tories were "now a businessman's party", under the leadership from 1914 of a Glasgow-Canadian iron merchant (Bonar Law), followed by two Midland industrialists (Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain)¹⁹⁷. The interests of the latter group were better met by the maintenance of trade relations with Soviet Russia; and they argued, in turn, a more flexible line of conduct with the Soviet government.

The House of Commons which had been elected was best known, perhaps in Baldwin's remark about a lot of "hard-faced men who had done well out of the war". The "prevailing type", he noted early in the following year, was a "rather successful looking business type which is not very attractive"¹⁹⁸. Lord Davidson drew attention, in a letter to Lord Stamfordham, to the "high percentage of hard headed men, mostly on the make, who fill up the ranks of the Unionist Party. The old-fashioned country gentlemen, and even the higher ranks of the learned professions", were "scarcely represented at all". Lloyd George remarked that he had the impression of addressing not the House of Commons, but the T.U.C. on one side, and the Associated Chambers of Commerce on the other¹⁹⁹.

So far, certainly, as the Unionists were concerned, there was some substance to this observation. About 260 businessmen were represented

in the House of Commons, compared with an inter-war average of about 200. The Federation of British Industry, noted the Economist, took "no part in politics whatever". It did, however, happen in the "ordinary course of events" that between seventy and eighty MPs were connected with firms which were members of the F.B.I.²⁰⁰. It was calculated in 1923 that some 255 directors of public companies or landowners were represented in the House of Commons, and a further 272 in the House of Lords. About a fifth of the former represented firms involved in engineering, shipbuilding and metals, and a further fifth came from the world of finance, land and investment. The F.B.I. had a Parliamentary Committee, and a 'Liaison Department' was set up 1918. The connection was in no danger: 66 MPs, and 70 members of the House of Lords were known to be directors of companies belonging to the F.B.I.²⁰¹ Lloyd George's supporters in the House of Commons, the New Statesman reported, represented capital to an average sum of 51 million a head²⁰². A detailed examination concluded that the opposition to the Labour Party in Parliament resembled a "mass meeting of employers and shareholders, assisted by their legal representatives"²⁰³.

Directors of firms which were members of the F.B.I. were often prominently represented in government: Horne, Chamberlain, Lloyd-Greame and others. Sir Eric Geddes, formerly Minister of Transport, became President of the F.B.I. in November 1922²⁰⁴. The assumption of the party leadership by Bonar Law in 1911, indeed, has been seen as the "final open assumption of power by the party's capitalist wing". Bonar Law, noted Amery, had few interests outside business, "and politics when they became his business"²⁰⁵. Within the Cabinet he was a "business man for whom an agenda was something to which decisions were to be got as quickly as possible". Bonar Law saw himself as a "man at the head of the big business who allowed the work to be done by others and gives it general ^{supervises} inspection". Such was his conception of the role of the Prime Minister²⁰⁶.

Baldwin, thought the New Leader, represented big business; and with his success the F.B.I. had "definitely (assumed) the reins of power"²⁰⁷. It was, indeed, partly on this basis that Davidson had recommended his candidature in a memorandum written after Bonar Law's resignation. Baldwin, Davidson observed, had "the confidence of the City and the commercial world generally"²⁰⁸. Baldwin followed his father both into the old-established

family business and into the House of Commons (where his father had had the distinction, of no other, of having introduced cider to the Members' Bar²⁰⁹). The family business was already of major dimensions before the world war, and Baldwin left affairs largely in the hands of subordinates. He did, however, become Vice-Chairman of the company on the death of his father, and he became also a director of the Great Western Railways and of Lloyds Bank²¹⁰. In Parliament he gravitated naturally towards the Business Committee of Conservative MPs and to a series of positions in the government attached to the Treasury, the Board of Trade and the Treasury, eventually becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer. He brought to his conduct of affairs a consciousness of the family business, a place as he described it "where I knew and had known from childhood every man on the ground.. where I was able to talk with the men not only about the troubles in the work, but troubles at home and their wives". It was a place, moreover, where strikes and lock-outs were unknown²¹¹. His policy in social matters, it has been remarked, was the "straightforward expression of the benevolent but firm philosophy of the West Country employer, now translated to the supreme charge of the country's economy"²¹².

'Business', then, was increasingly^{the} origin of MPs, and especially of the Conservative party, after the war, at the expense of traditional landed sources of support. The accession to the leadership of the party of Bonar Law, and more particularly of Baldwin, argued that party leaders increasingly came from a business background, and tended to conduct the affairs of state, as of a large corporation, in a 'practical' and 'business-like' fashion. Traders, who had an occupational interest in the development of commercial relations with foreign countries, broadly favoured a firm but not inflexible attitude to relations with Soviet Russia; and both Bonar Law and Baldwin, indeed, inclined to the view that "business could be done" with the Soviet government. Curzon's background was a more traditional one, and he was an established political figure before Bonar Law had entered Parliament. He was, too, less willing to compromise with the Soviet government at the expense of imperial interests. Yet a rigid distinction between moderate 'business' and inflexible 'empire' would also be misleading. Curzon, as has been noted, had some involvement in commercial life; while Baldwin shared his concern (at the time of the ultimatum) that the Soviet government should withdraw its "Afghan propagandist agents", and Bonar Law, it has been noted,

"always put the greatness of the British Empire foremost among his aims", and was a strong advocate of imperial unity²¹³. A commitment to the maintenance of the Empire was, in fact, common to MPs of all parties, even when (as was not infrequently the case before the world war) the representatives of the colonial people couched their submissions for representative government and self-government in explicitly Gladstonian Liberal terms²¹⁴.

There was some material foundation for this solicitude for the position of the imperial power in the East. The British economy, it had been noted, developed a "characteristic and peculiar pattern of international relations. It relied heavily on foreign trade.." The internal market was a shallow one; and throughout the period from the 1870s to the 1920s domestic exports accounted for 16-20% of the national income²¹⁵. Profits from overseas raw materials provided an "exceedingly important part" of the total profits of the great combines that were formed in Britain in the 1920s. The huge scale of the total British investment in companies operating overseas gave a "heavy overseas emphasis to British capitalism"²¹⁶. The overseas market was especially important for major industries: cotton, iron and steel.

Within this framework, the position of developing countries, especially of the Dominions, was an important and increasingly important one. The export of capital, for instance, flowed in this direction to the extent of 68% of the total before the war; and by the late 1920s, this percentage had increased to 81%²¹⁷. The proportion of U.K. exports which went to the Empire was 32.2% in 1913; by 1922 it had increased to 40%. Between 1913 and 1927, the proportion of total British imports accounted for by the Empire increased from 20.5% to 27%, and the proportion of Empire imports accounted for by Britain increased correspondingly from 37.2% to 46%²¹⁸.

The part played by India was a particularly important one. Only 20% of that country's exports were sent to the U.K.; but the U.K. accounted for 70% of Indian imports²¹⁹. Since the war, India had taken a larger amount of imports from the U.K. than Canada, Australia and South Africa combined²²⁰. The Indian trading deficit with Britain ("politically established and maintained"), 'Home Charges' and interest payments on the Indian public debt operated to the advantage of British financial interests, and had made and continued to make an important contribution to the British balance of payments surplus²²¹. Much of British world shipping activity was based

upon the great export trade of bulky goods from India, and upon India's central position in the trade of the Far East. It was, moreover, "one of the great investment fields of British capital": by 1905 nearly £350 million or between a sixth and a seventh of total British investment overseas was in India²²². By 1914, 10% of the British national income was estimated to derive from overseas investment, of which half came from imperial possessions²²³.

The influence of these involvements upon the formulation of British policy was the more immediate in view of the more central role which the government now occupied in the economy. The short era of decontrol, it had been remarked, was followed by an "unprecedented era of state intervention in business", an intervention "obviously in favour of business". The British government had become part-owner or subsidiser of the Suez Canal, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (1914), the Cunard Steam Ship Company (1904), and the Marconi Radio Telegraph Company (1913). The state's role in telephones, air transport, radio communications, and broadcasting was greatly increased²²⁴. The government had assumed some form of interest in the running of businesses or even industries which were based at least in part outside Britain; and it had begun to assume responsibility for prices, employment and a range of aspects of the functioning of the economy which might often depend in their turn upon developments overseas. The strategic importance of imperial economic co-operation became apparent in the course of the world war, and it was consciously strengthened after it. The government's attitude to the fate of its colonial possessions could hardly, in the circumstances, be one of indifference: the threat which Soviet policy offered to the British imperial position might be exaggerated, but it could not be ~~ignored~~ disregarded.

- 1 National Review Vol 80 October 1922 pp170-1
- 2 Spender, Fortnightly Review Vol 115, 1 March 1924 p322
- 3 Parliamentary Debates Vol 155 col 217, and Taylor: English History 1914-1945 (Oxford 1965) p131
- 4 Parliamentary Debates Vol 152 col 1054, 27 March 1922
- 5 Parliamentary Debates Vol 155 col 213f, 13 June 1922
- 6 ibid cols 217,249
- 7 ibid col 225; Craig ed., British General Election Manifestos 1918-1966 (Chichester 1970) p10, Bonar Law's election manifesto
- 8 Hankey's struggle to preserve the Secretariat is recorded in Roskill, S.W.: Hankey: Man of Secrets Vol ii 1919-1931 (London 1972) pp304-20
- 9 Parliamentary Debates Vol 159 col 254, 29 November 1922; ibid col 6724; and ibid col 3136, 14 December 1922
- 10 Soviet archival source, cited in Shishkin: Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Strany Zapada p340
- 11 Parliamentary Debates Vol 161 col 1923, 15 March 1923
- 12 Soviet archival source, cited in Karpova, R.F.: L.B. Krasin - Sovetskii Diplomat (Moscow 1962) p148
- 13 Berzin to Karakhan, 27 September 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 267 p598; the Soviet notes of 12 and 24 September 1922 are in DVPSSSR Vol v Nos 249 and 264
- 14 Chicherin to the representatives of the RSFSR in Britain and Italy (to be communicated to their respective governments) DVPSSSR Vol v No 283 pp621-2
- 15 DVPSSSR Vol v No 301 p653
- 16 Cabinet Minutes 1 November 1922, Cab 64(22) Annex iv, Cab 23/32
- 17 Note from the government of the RSFSR to the governments of Britain, France and Italy, 2 November 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 301 pp650-3
- 18 Note from the government of the RSFSR to the governments of Britain, France and Italy, 24 November 1922, DVPSSSR Vol vi No 7 p18
- 19 Conference of Ministers 29 September 1922, Cab 52(22) Appendix vi, Cab 23/31
- 20 Cabinet Minutes 1 November 1922, Cab 64(22) Annex iv Cab 23/32
- 21 Istoriya Vneshnei Politiki SSSR Vol i 1917-1945 (Moscow 1966) pp175-6. The diplomacy of the Lausanne Conference is discussed in Nicolson, H: Curzon, the Last Phase (London 1934; 1937 ed) pp281-350; a lengthy 'Record of Proceedings' is in Parliamentary Papers 1923 Cmd 1814

- 22 Parliamentary Debates Vol 162 col 814f, 29 March 1923; col 816 (split infinitive in original)
- 23 ibid cols 817-8, 820
- 24 ibid cols 844,848
- 25 Curzon to Chicherin 2 October 1920, Parliamentary Papers 1923 Cmd 1846 p3
- 26 ibid p4
- 27 Curzon to Chicherin 3 January 1922, ibid pp5,6
- 28 Litvinov to Curzon 7 March 1922, ibid p7
- 29 Curzon to Litvinov 20 December 1922 ibid p11
- 30 Litvinov to Curzon 12 January 1923 ibid p12
- 31 Nineteenth Century and After Vol 92, July 1922 p2, Mrs Harding
- 32 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139 cols 2602-3, 23 March 1921
- 33 Parliamentary Debates Vol 144 col 1515, 14 July 1921; Russell: Autobiography Vol ii p109
- 34 Parliamentary Debates Vol 144 col 1759, Vol 146 col 1628
- 35 Curzon to Chicherin 3 September 1921, Parliamentary Papers 1922 Cmd 1602 pp3-6
- 36 Hodgson to Curzon 29 September 1921 ibid pp6,7; ibid p9,10 January 1922
- 37 ibid p9, 10 January 1922
- 38 Parliamentary Debates Vol 151 col 2154, 15 March 1922
- 39 Parliamentary Debates Vol 159 col 673, 29 November 1922, Sir B. Chadwick
- 40 Russian Information and Review Vol i No 16, 15 May 1922 pp364,365
- 41 Pravda 12 May 1922, 17 May 1922. Tikhon's proposal for the removal of valuables was described in a Pravda cartoon on 1 June 1922 as a 'New Kon-omic Policy'.
- 42 according to DVPSSSR Vol v p747 note 108
- 43 DVPSSSR Vol v p441
- 44 Karakhan to the RSFSR representatives in Britain, Austria, Germany and Italy, DVPSSSR Vol v No 179 , 4 June 1922, p440,441; and in Russian Information and Review Vol i No 18, 15 June 1922 p427
- 45 Communist Review Vol iv, 2 June 1923 p79, W. Paul
- 46 Times 28 March 1923
- 47 Parliamentary Debates Vol 161 col 1756, 15 March 1923
- 48 Times 4 April 1923, cited in Russian Information and Review Vol ii No 26 7 April 1923 p403; which also noted (No 29 28 April 1923 p450) that article 13 of the constitution, which specified freedom of religious and of anti-religious propaganda, had been stated by one British paper to have obliged every citizen to conduct anti-religious propaganda.

- 49 Russian Information and Review Vol ii No 26, 7 April 1923 p403
- 50 Parliamentary Debates Vol 162 col 270, 27 March 1923; Times 2 April 1923
- 51 Parliamentary Debates Vol 151 col 1754 13 March 1922, Vol 152 cols 429-30 22 March 1922. The information had in fact been circulated through the British Trawlers' Association ibid Vol 152 col 1879 3 April 1922
- 52 Parliamentary Debates Vol 152 col 1880, 3 April 1922. The 'Magenta' was arrested on 31 January 1922 nine miles from the Murman coast. It sank on the night of 1 February during a storm, and the British agent in Moscow was informed of this on 13 and 20 February in communications which, while they expressed regret at what had occurred, protested at the practice of ~~illegal~~ fishing in Soviet territorial waters and asked that those firms engaged in it be informed accordingly (DVPSSSR Vol v p727 note 49).
- 53 DVPSSSR Vol v p 727 note 49
- 54 Parliamentary Debates Vol 153 col 67 10 April 1922, Vol 153 col 960 1 May 1922. The Harebell was instructed to offer British fishing vessels the maximum protection of which it was capable, using force if necessary (instructions, issued 30 April 1922, F.O. 371.9332 N7848 No 24)
- 55 Grove to NKID 15 March 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v pp165-6
- 56 NKID to Grove 22 March 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 90 pp163-5
- 57 Hodgson to NKID 4 April 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 115 p213
- 58 Karakhan to Hodgson 13 April 1922, DVPSSSR Vol v No 115 pp212-3. Further correspondence is in ibid No 278 14 October 1922, pp615-6
- 59 Peters to NKID, 19 December 1922, F.O. 371.9332.N7848 No3, and DVPSSSR Vol vi No 54 p115 (and note 52 above) NKID to Peters, 26 December 1922 in F.O. ibid and DVPSSSR Vol vi No 54 pp113-4
- 60 Hodgson telegram 26 February 1923, Parliamentary Debates Vol 161 col 462 7 March 1923
- 62 Parliamentary Debates Vol 162 col 876, 9 April 1923
- 63 Hodgson to Chicherin 30 March 1923, Parliamentary Papers 1923 Cmd 1869^{p3}
- 64 Weinstein to Hodgson 31 March 1923, ibid p3,4; ibid 1 April 1923 p4, Hodgson; Weinstein to Hodgson ibid 4 April 1923 p4-5
- 65 Daily Telegraph 9 April 1923, cited in DVPSSSR Vol vi p616 note 59
- 66 19 April 1923, in ibid
- 67 Russian Information and Review Vol ii No 28 21 April 1923 p434
- 68 Cabinet Minutes 25 April 1923, Cab 21(23)2, Cab 23/45

- 69 Parliamentary Debates Vol 163 col 424, 25 April 1923
- 70 Hodgson to NKID, 28 April 1923, in F.O. 371.9332.N7848 No 22, and DVPSSSR Vol vi No 167 p284-5
- 71 Litvinov to Hodgson for H.M.G., DVPSSSR Vol vi No 167, 7 May 1923 p280-3
- 72 Chicherin to Hodgson 11 May 1923, DVPSSSR Vol vi No 171 p287; Hodgson to Curzon 11 received 12 May 1923, F.O. 371.9332.N7848 No 25
- 73 Cabinet Minutes 2 May 1923, Cab 23(23)2, Cab 23/45
- 74 Curzon to Hodgson 2 May 1923, Parliamentary Papers 1923 Cmd 1890 p5
- 75 DVPSSSR vi No 172 p297; the memorandum is in Cmd 1890 pp6-13, and in DVPSSSR Vol vi No 172 pp297-302; refs to official British text above
- 76 ~~76~~ The views of the Association of British Creditors were expressed in a letter of 9 May 1923 (in F.O. 371.9366.N4175 10 May 1923); a letter of 10 May in the Times reported that a meeting had given expression to its "warm appreciation" of the British note, and its "entire equanimity" regarding the possible breaking-off of relations with Soviet Russia. McNeill received a letter on 2 May 1923 from Rev. G.A. Piper, the Vicar of Nailsworth, containing a resolution of protest adopted by his parishioners with regard to religious persecution in Russia on 2 May 1923 (McNeill Papers, F.O. 800.227)
- 77 Economist 12 May 1923 p987. There had nevertheless been, it wrote, in the previous two years a "steady evolution in the internal organization of Russia and a marked progress.. towards a state of affairs in which it was increasingly possible for make contact with the new Russia".
- 78 National Review Vol 81 June 1923 p506
- 79 Gregory minute, 7 May 1923, on F.O. 371.9366.N4012, 7 May 1923
- 80 Chicherin DVPSSSR Vol vi No 175 12 May 1923 pp304-9
- 81 Litvinov to Hodgson, 11 May (transmitted 12 May) 1923, in F.O. 371.9369.N4526, 22 May 1923; and in DVPSSSR Vol vi No 172 pp288-96, and Parliamentary Papers 1923 Cmd 1874. A demonstration took place in Moscow on 12 May to protest against the Curzon ultimatum; but it is unlikely that that unduly concerned the Cabinet, for while Curzon had been hung in effigy, there was "little sign", according to Hodgson's report, of "active hostility to Great Britain.. except among the communistic youth" (Hodgson to Curzon 15 May 1923, including photographs, F.O. 371.9369.N4525, 22 May 1923).
- 82 Strang recorded in a minute of 12 May 1923 that the Secret Intelligence

- Service vouched for the reliability of their information, which had come from a 'trustworthy' agent with access to NKID files (F.O. 371.9366.N4499, 18 May 1923)
- 82a quoted according to the text in Cmd 1874 (note 81 above) pp2-8
- 83 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. (Moscow 1924) p37
- 84 Russian Information and Review Vol ii No 32 19 May 1923 p505-6, and DVPSSSR Vol vi No 176 pp309-311, 13 May 1923
- 85 Russian Information and Review Vol ii No 32 19 May 1923 p506, and DVPSSSR Vol vi No 182 p320
- 86 Economist 19 May 1923 p1042, and p1155
- 87 Cabinet Minutes 14 May 1923, Cab 26(23)2, Cab 23/45
- 88 Cabinet Minutes 15 May 1923, Cab 27(23)1, Cab 23/45
- 89 Parliamentary Debates Vol 164 cols 300,299,303,304,309,319, 15 May 1923
- 90 ibid cols 375,376,377,374. A report of the meeting between Curzon and Krasin on 17 May is in F.O. 371.9367.N4501, 19 May 1923. Krasin, it was agreed, would communicate with his government and a further meeting would take place. No statement was issued but the Times judged that the time limit would "not now be enforced" (18 May 1923). Krasin, his widow recalled, wore a top-hat and morning suit for the occasion, "judging, quite rightly, that Lord Curzon would appreciate this respect for ceremonial" (Krasin: Leonid Krasin p212)
- 91 according to Karpova: Krasin pp151,152; he also met a number of financiers and business people
- 92 Parliamentary Debates Vol 164 cols 320,323; col 364
- 93 Parliamentary Debates Vol 164 cols 772,779; cols 793 (O'Grady), 811
- 94 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. p38
- 95 according to Jones' diary, quoted in Middlemass and Barnes: Baldwin (London 1969) p207
- 96 Krasin memorandum 23 May 1923, F.O. 371.9369.N4675, 24 May 1923; and Parliamentary Papers 1923 Cmd 1890 pp3-4, DVPSSSR Vol vi No 188 pp325-7
- 97 ibid; also in Cabinet Paper C.P. 250(23), Cab 24/160
- 98 Parliamentary Papers 1923 Cmd 1890 pp4-9; -p9; and DVPSSSR Vol vi pp327-30 (Curzon to Chicherin 29 May 1923, F.O. 371.9369.N4839, 30 May 1923)
- 99 ibid, quoted according to Cmd 1890 pp6-9. The India Office prepared a draft formula on propaganda, which was sent to Gregory on 25 May 1923 (F.O. 371.9369.N5379, 15 June 1923)
- 100 Conference of Ministers 24 May 1923, Cab 29(23) Appendix Cab 23/46

- 101 Memorandum, 4 June 1923, Parliamentary Papers 1923 Cmd 1890 pp9-13, and DVPSSSR Vol vi No 194 pp334-8 (communicated to ^{Krasin}~~Hodgson~~ on 9 June 1923 with a covering letter for Curzon, and received by the Foreign Office on 11 June: F.O. 371.9368.N5244, 11 June 1923)
- 102 Cabinet Minutes 11 June 1923, Cab 30(23)2, Cab 23/46
- 103 Curzon to Krasin 13 June 1923, Cmd 1890 ppl3-4, DVPSSSR Vol vi No 194 pp 388-9
- 104 Chicherin to Curzon 18 June 1923, DVPSSSR Vol vi No 202 pp353-4
- 105 Tanin (Litvinov) : Mezhdunarodnaya Politika SSSR (1917-1924) p16
- 106 Parliamentary Debates Vol 165 cols 969,970, 18 June 1923
- 107 Cabinet Minutes 20 June 1920, Cab 32(23)7, Cab 23/46
- 108 Cabinet Minutes 11 June 1920, Cab 30(23)2, Cab 23/46
- 109 Rona**ld**shay: Curzon iii 356, letter of 13 June 1923
- 110 Economist 16 June 1923 pl334; Times editorial 14 ~~Hj~~une 1923
- 111 Economist ibid
- 112 Tanin (Litvinov): Mezhdunarodnaya Politika SSSR ppl6, 15
- 113 NKID: ~~Godovoi~~ Otchet za 1923 g. p39
- 114 Hodgson to the F.O., 7 June 1923, F.O. 371.9368.N5132, 8 June 1923. His communication was minuted in the Foreign Office on 8 June, and it was endorsed that the recall of Raskolnikov had been decided in March, since when he had been awaiting a successor; but queried the report with regard to ~~B~~humiatsky.
- 115 Ganetsky: Angliiskiy Imperializm i SSSR (Moscow 1927) p55
- 116 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. p41
- 117 Kratky Obzor Vneshnei Politiki za 1923 g., DVPSSSR Vol vi Appendix iv, 14 January 1924 p592
- 118 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. p7411
- 119 Yusupov: Ustanovlenie i Razvitie Sovetsko-Iranskykh Otnoshenii p171
- 120 Interview between Chicherin and Ransome, 'Manchester Guardian' Correspondent, 20 June 1923, DVPSSSR Vol vi No 206 pp357-60; p357-8
- 121 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. pl54, 100
- 122 Morning Post 1 August 1923, in F.O. 371.9356.N6617, 1 August 1923
- 123 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. pl01; Tanin op.cit. p27
- 124 F.O. to Peters, 1 August 1923, 'urgent'; F.O. 371.9356.N6617, 1 August 1923 and to Home Office, 3 August 1923, F.O. 371.9356.N6617. An earlier report had noted that Rakovsky was an "active, able and dangerous rev-

- olutionary", and instructed that he should not be granted a visa or allowed to land at a British port without further reference (F.O. 371.9332.N367, 12 January 1923, Secret).
- 125 according to NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. pl01; both this communication and the passage which has been cited in the Godovoi Otchet have been omitted from DVPSSSR Vol vi
- 126 Hodgson to F.O. 2 August received 3 August 1923, F.O. 371.9356.N6669, 3 August 1923
- 127 Hodgson to F.O. 6 received 7 August 1923, F.O. 371.9356.N6692
- 128 a copy of Rakovsky: Angliya i Rossiya (GosIzd. Ukrainy 1923, 40pp) is in F.O. 371.9356.N6767, 7 August 1923; Leeper's minute is in ibid 11 August 1923
- 129 Berzin to Editor, Morning Post 10 August 1923, in F.O. 371.9356.N7013, 12 August 1923; Ovey minute, 22 August, and Leeper minute, 28 August 1923, in ibid.
- 130 F.O. to Peters, 30 August 1923, F.O. 371.9356.N7013
- 131 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. ppl01-2, Tanin op.cit. pp27,28
- 132 Ovey to Hodgson, 12 ~~XX~~October 1923, F.O. 371.9356.N7652, 19 September 1923; F.O. to Rakovsky 27 October 1923, F.O. 371.9356.N8202, 17 October 1923
- 133 Parliamentary Debates Vol 168 col 181, 14 November 1923, McNeill styled him the "chief official agent appointed in succession to M.Krasin for the purposes of the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement".
- 134 Chicherin to the Moscow Soviet, 12 May 1923, DVPSSSR Vol vi No 175 p306
- 135 Beaverbrook: Men and Power 1917-1918 (London 1956) pxx
- 136 Curzon: Speeches on India (London 1904) I.iv, 'James Stephen'
- 137 Stephen, J.F. : Libefty, Equality Fraternity (1874, new ed. Cambridge 1967, ed. R.J. White) p25,pl,pll
- 138 quoted by Stokes: The English Utilitarians and India (Oxford 1959) p288
- 139 ibid p298
- 140 ibid p312. Maine is described as "another instance of a great formative intellect ^{evot} drawing part of his life to Indian affairs and later drawing his Indian experience into the main current of English thought".
- 141 Stokes: The Political Ideas of English Imperialism (Oxford 1960) ppl2,21
- 142 Edwardes, M : High Noon of Empire (London 1965) p35
- 143 quoted in ibid p64
- 144 Radek: Vneshnyaya Politika Sovetskoi Rossi (Moscow 1923) p57

- 145 Curzon: The place of India in the Empire (London 1909) pp13,12,27
- 146 Curzon: Persia and the Persian Question (London 1892, 2 v.) i 612
- 146a Ronaldshay: Life of Curzon i 315
- 147 Curzon: Place of India in the Empire pp89,10,11,12
- 148 ibid pl2; p xii, Problems of the Far East (London 1894)
- 149 quoted from Ronaldshay: Life of Curzon i 192
- 150 Curzon to Balfour, 31 March 1901, B.M. Add. Mss. 49732, cited in Judd, D. : Balfour and the British Empire (London 1964) p251
- 151 Curzon: Place of India in the Empire pp37,38,39
- 152 Curzon to Godley, 9 April 1901, quoted in Dilks,D: Curzon in India i: Achievement (London 1969) pl05; Curzon to Balfour,31 March 1901, B.M. Add.Mss.49732, cited in Judd: Balfour and the British Empire p251
- 153 Curzon: Place of India in the Empire p44; Ronaldshay: Life of Curzon i 133. Curzon, in fairness, had no greater faith in the political or executive capacity of women. He eventually accepted the admission of women as members of the Royal Geographical Society; but the extension of the franchise to them was, he thought, the "fashionable tomfoolery of the day", and he was for a time the President of the Anti-Suffrage League (Rose,K : Superior Person (London 1969) p74; Mosley,L: Curzon: The End of an Epoch (London 1960) pl97 (of American ed.). "Give me a girl", he wrote, "that knows a woman's place and does not yearn for trousers" (21 June 1893, in Mosley op.cit. p63). He accepted the Representation of the People Act, which enfranchised women, with some reluctance, and only following its approval by the House of Commons.
- 154 Curzon: Problems of the Far East p v; Stokes: English Utilitarians p311
- 155 quoted in Thornton: Imperial Idea and its Enemies p72
- 156 Ronaldshay: Life of Curzon ii 230
- 157 quoted by S. Gopal, 'Lord Curzon and Indian Nationalism 1898-1905', in St Antony's Papers 18 (South Asian Affairs 2) (London 1966) p67
- 158 Ronaldshay: Life of Curzon iii 390
- 159 ibid ii 418
- 160 ibid ii 424
- 161 Kiernan, V.G. : Lords of Human Kind (London 1969) p62
- 162 ibid pl39, quoted; Ronaldshay: Life of Curzon i 191; Edwardes: British India (London 1967; new ed. 1969) p205
- 163 Ronaldshay: Life of Lord Curzon ii 89, letter of 29 November 1899

- 164 Curzon: Place of India in the Empire p18
- 165 Curzon: Persia and the Persian Question ii 603
- 166 quoted in Gopal, S, Art.cit. p68
- 167 Curzon: Place of India in the Empire p18,19
- 168 Ronaldshay: Life of Curzon ii 233
- 169 quoted in Rose: Superior Person p344
- 170 Ronaldshay: Life of Curzon ii 244, and Judd: Balfour and the British Empire p230
- 171 Curzon to Lyttleton, 29 August 1900, in Rose: Superior Person p345
- 172 quoted by Stokes: Political Ideas of English Imperialism p25
- 173 Curzon: Place of India in the Empire p30
- 174 Rose; Superior Person pp232-3; Communist Review iv No 3 July 1923 p109
- 175 Curzon: Problems of the Far East p421
- 176 Curzon: Place of India in the Empire p28,29
- 177 ibid p39,41
- 178 Curzon: Persia and the Persian Question i 2,ii 554,ii 604
- 179 ibid ii 387; Place of India in the Empire p13
- 180 Curzon: Place of India in the Empire p14
- 181 Curzon? Persia and the Persian Question i 171; Radek: Vneshnyaya Politika Sovetskoi Rossii p57
- 182 Curzon: Persia and the Persian Question i 171,i 84,ii 589; Problems of the Far East p223
- 183 Curzon? Persia and the Persian Question i 205,206,216,220, ii 628,220. Curzon dwelt upon the problem further in memoranda which he compiled at this time dealing with the 'Power of Russia to operate against North Afghanistan'(1899), the 'Distribution of Russian military forces in Asia' (1902), and 'Twenty Years of Russian army reform and the present distribution of the Russian land forces' (1893); in Curzon Collection, India Office Library, MSS Eur. F 111 Vols 695,698,701 respectively.
- 184 Curzon: Persia and the Persian Question i 216,ii 605,ii 634,ii 631
- 185 Ronaldshay: Life of Lord Curzon ii 114; and Dilks op.cit.generally.
- 186 Curzon to Lord Selborne, 21 May 1903, and in Parliament, 6 February 1908, in Ronaldshay: Life of Lord Curzon ii 312-3, and iii 43
- 187 Ronaldshay: Life of Curzon i 296; ibid 209,213
- 188 ibid 18 November 1918, iii 199; iii 163-4, War Cabinet note June 1917
- 189 Curzon to Lord Lansdowne 21 September 1919, ibid iii 208

- 190 Curzon to Eastern Committee 30 December 1919, ibid iii 213; iii 215; iii 220
- 191 Curzon in the House of Lords 26 July 1921, ibid iii 223
- 192 Maisky, I.M.: B. Shou i Drugie (Moscow 1967) p74
- 193 Curzon: Persia and the Persian Question i 4
- 194 DBFP Vol vii p724
- 195 Manchester Guardian 23 May 1923
- 196 Davidson, J.C.C.: Memoirs of a Conservative pl48
- 197 Hobsbawm, E: Industry and Empire (London 1968) pl71
- 198 quoted by Taylor: English History 1914-1945 pl29; Middlemass and Barnes p72, 12 February 1919. Sir Leo Money calculated that, according to official figures, the number of people with incomes in excess of £5,000 "rather more than doubled between 1913 and 1920" as a result, in large part, of wartime profiteering (New Leader 4 January 1924)
- 199 quoted in Nicolson: King George V (London 1953) p333; Lloyd George to Riddell 16 February 1919, Diary of the Peace Conference and After p22
- 200 according to Taylor: English History 1914-1945 pl29; Economist 27 August 1921 p335
- 201 Labour Research Department: Labour and Capital in Parliament (London 1923) pp8,10,14,17
- 202 New Statesman 12 June 1920 p268
- 203 Labour Party local government, Parliamentary and international Bulletin Vol i No 12, 1920, pl49; the detailed results are on pp149-156
- 204 Labour Research Department: The F.B.I. (London 1923) pp17,16. Geddes, according to Beaverbrook, carried business principles even into his home: his telephone was a call-box one (Men and Power p xvii)
- 205 Amery: My Political Life ii 262; Kendall: Revolutionary Movement in Britain p24
- 206 Amery: My Political Life ii 246; Davidson: Memoirs of a Conservative pl39
- 207 New Leader 25 May 1923
- 208 Davidson: Memoirs of a Conservative pl54
- 209 Middlemass and Barnes: Baldwin p9
- 210 ibid pp55,43; Communist Review Vol iv No 3 July 1923 pl11
- 211 a speech of 1925, quoted in Middlemass and Barnes p9
- 212 ibid p209
- 213 ibid p207, Thomas Jones' Diary 28 May 1923; Blake: Unknown Prime Minister p506

- 214 this latter question ~~was~~ been examined in Moore, R.J.: Liberalism and Indian Politics 1872-1922 (London 1966). Gokhale, for instance, who identified himself with Gladstonianism and saw a community of interest between Indian reformers and the Liberal Party, met John Morley, a Secretary of State of advanced Liberal views, and was found "immensely interesting" by him. Morley nevertheless found himself involved in the curtailment of freedom of speech and press and of association; and told the House of Lords that he himself would have "nothing ^{at all} to do" with the "establishment of a Parliamentary system in India". Fifty years of Liberalism in Indian politics, Moore concludes, failed to "produce the constitutional machinery for that transfer of ~~author~~ authority and ~~pres~~ responsibility which Whigs, Gladstonians and radicals had always accepted as the object of British rule": there was an "inconsistency between liberal economic and constitutional theory and liberal economic practice" (ibid pp80,81,99,121,125). The relationship between the Indian reformers and the Labour Party, in many ways a parallel one, will be discussed in Chapter Ten below.
- 215 Hobsbawm: Industry and Empire (London 1968) pl11
- 216 Brown, M.B. : After Imperialism (London 1963) pp124,125
- 217 Hobsbawm: Industry and Empire pl22
- 218 Hancock: Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs ii 141,207,209
- 219 ibid pl46
- 220 Knowles: Economic Development of the British Overseas Empire (London 1924) p283
- 221 Hobsbawm: Industry and Empire pl23
- 222 Knowles op.cit. p263, Dilks op.cit. i 72
- 223 Edwardes, M: The West in Asia (London 1967) p201
- 224 Hobsbawm: Industry and Empire pp203-4

The Curzon note, McNeill told the House of Commons, had been approved by a great number of Chambers of Commerce throughout Britain. A majority of them, he added, and the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce besides, had "expressed the view that the Trade Agreement is of no value to British trade"¹. The following month he found it necessary to correct this impression of the opinion of the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce. Its resolution had not declared that the agreement was "of no value": it had in fact expressed the hope that the government would "put Russo-British trade upon a more normal and reciprocal footing"². The Chamber felt, McNeill reported, that the Agreement had "not advanced the interests of British trade in the manner anticipated". It was hoped that the government would take advantage of any negotiations to "secure equitable and reciprocal rights for British traders, together with preferential treatment"³.

What the Contemporary Review's commentator noted was that while "at the present time British diplomacy in its general aspect" was "dominated by the economic factor", there was "not a word" in Curzon's note which revealed any concern for British economic interests. He found "odd" the "entirely different standards of diplomacy towards Russia from those used in other cases". The state of unemployment was such, he added, that the volume of trade which would be lost in the event of the abrogation of the Agreement was "worth dwelling on"⁴.

Writing three months later, the same correspondent noted that while the "City, the industrial North and progressive opinion throughout the country" supported the government's policy in western Europe since it appeared to aim at the restoration of normal peace-time conditions and the recovery of trade, these same groups were "perplexed by the inconsistency of the Government in its dealings with Russia". The government's policy here was the "despair of all those realize the importance of the present opportunity for British markets in Russia". There was a danger, moreover, that this opportunity might be "lost, and that our competitors may forestall us"⁵. It will be the argument of this chapter that business and financial circles, which had broadly supported the the stern line of conduct which Lord Curzon had urged upon the government in the latter part of 1922 and the early part of 1923, thereafter came increasingly to favour the development of closer trading and commercial relations with

Soviet Russia, and to accept the diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government which this policy appeared to require. This change in attitude was largely paralleled by the changing orientation of the Conservative party, and the increasing pre-eminence within it of those who, such as Baldwin, had a business background and more directly espoused the interests of commercial and industrial circles. Baldwin, indeed, appears to have been not unimpressed by the evidence of the value and potential of the Russian trade which ~~was~~ made public by those who sought to preserve trading relations from the rupture which Curzon's ultimatum appeared to threaten. Yet with Curzon at the Foreign Office, it proved possible only to defend the Trade Agreement, not to advance beyond it, if necessary to the diplomatic recognition of the Soviet regime, in the direction traders and industrialists - if not all sections of the City - had now come to favour. It required, paradoxically, the election of a Labour government before these views were embodied in official state policy.

Economic and financial reforms in Russia encouraged the view that an awareness of economic rationality was returning - at last - to the conduct of trading and business relations in that country. The Russian financial reforms, the Economist commented, showed a "very strong desire to put the finances on a sound basis, similar to that existing in other countries". They represented a "great step forward"⁶. Five private banks, it was announced, had been established in Russia; and although much remained to be done, it was "gratifying to note", the Economist wrote, that the "first steps" had "already been taken in the return to a regime of free enterprise"⁷. The Soviet Russian cotton industry, it reported, had "really somewhat improved of late". Output was increasing and the productivity of labour was increasing⁸. More importantly, a new currency was announced for 1923, in which one old rouble should be the equivalent of a hundred old roubles. The introduction of the new currency, considered the journal's Russian correspondent, was an "achievement of the greatest importance", suggesting as it did the creation of a stable paper standard. The financial position of Russia towards the end of 1923 was "much better than a year ago". The system was a "great step forwards" in the direction of a return to normal and stable conditions⁹.

These forecasts were not without foundation. Production in heavy industry in Russia in 1923 rose to nearly 40% of the pre-war level, and to three times the volume that had been achieved in 1920. The area under crops reached 91.7

million hectares, compared with 77.7 million in the previous year. The harvest was approximately 70% of the pre-war level. Grain was now available for export. The broad gauge railway network now slightly exceeded the pre-war system in length, and the number of locomotives approached the pre-war figure. Exports from Soviet Russia in 1923 exceed by two and a half times those for 1922; and for the first time a favourable trade balance was achieved with the outside world¹⁰. With world trade remaining in depression, the interest of businessmen was understandable.

The major banks were similarly aware of the need to restore European trade, including that with Soviet Russia. Addressing the annual meeting of the Midland Bank at the beginning of the year, Reginald McKenna (himself a former Chancellor of the Exchequer) pointed out that foreign trade had such "exceptional importance" that anything which inhibited it must "deeply affect our national prosperity". In particular the situation in central and eastern Europe was "not only destructive of our markets there, but must also hamper our export trade more or less all the world over". The chairman of Martin's Bank noted that with the "disturbed state of Europe", and the "unsettled" nature of relations with Soviet Russia had "greatly interfered" with the machine tool industry and with other sections of the engineering industry¹¹. The National Provincial Bank's chairman declared that his greatest cause of concern was the state of foreign trade - "the very lifeblood of our industries" - but no improvement could be hoped for until "some settlement" had been effected in the "distressed countries of Europe". Russia as a potential buyer, he added, was "practically non-existent"¹². Some small beginnings, wrote the Economist, had been made in trade; but Russia remained "practically outside the orbit of the world's commerce, and that fact alone remained a very depressing influence"¹³.

Some sections of business, indeed, already found the Russian trade of such value that they were opposed to the ending of the Trade Agreement to which Curzon's ultimatum appeared likely to lead. At the height of the crisis the 'Becos' group, an amalgamation of engineering firms with a close interest in the Russian trade, with a share capital in excess of fifty million pounds, circulated among MPs a memorandum signed by its principal directors expressing the view that the break-off of relations with Russia would have an unfavourable effect upon British trade, and in particular upon the shipbuilding industry and shipping (about a hundred British vessels had been engaged by the Soviet

authorities in 1922), and upon those factories ~~where~~ Soviet orders had been placed¹⁴. Merrifield, Ziegler and Company, a "leading firm of cotton brokers and merchants" in Liverpool, wrote to their MP (who forwarded the letter to the Foreign Office on 11 May 1923) informing him that large contracts had been concluded, and asking him to use "all (his) influence to prevent a commercial rupture between this country and the Soviet Government"¹⁵. The views of business and of Chambers of Commerce which were submitted to the Foreign Office on 12 June by the Association of British Chambers of Commerce were largely approving of the government's action. Dundee Chamber, however, expressed the view that it "would give a great fillip to trade" were it possible to have commercial relations with Russia placed upon an "ordinary permanent basis". Ruston and Hornby, a Lincoln manufacturer of agricultural and other equipment, declared that anything which retarded the recovery of trade with Russia would be a "great deal to our detriment". They would lose certain substantial contracts "On the verge of maturity", and their business in general would suffer "definite and grave injury"¹⁶. A Foreign Office meeting on 11 May, which considered the implications of a rupture, was told by the Board of Trade representatives that were the Trade Delegation to be expelled, it was likely that British firms which had concluded contracts with it would "in some cases apply for special permission for members of Arcos to remain behind". The Board of Trade, a minute noted, did "not pretend to like" the possibility of an expulsion of the Russian delegation, but "recognized that political considerations must predominate"¹⁷.

The Manchester Guardian Commercial, in a survey of business opinion reported on 17 May, found a "definite body of opinion in favour of the retention of the Agreement". The times were such, it was considered, that even a relatively small volume of trade should not be lost; while trade with Russia was, in fact, likely to increase appreciably in the current year. It found that "many businessmen", on the other hand, believed that the loss of Russian orders at their existing level would "make little difference and would almost certainly not affect employment in this country"¹⁸. Business opinion generally, it reported the following month, was "for the most part, unfavourable to the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement"¹⁹.

Financial opinion was no more favourable. The Association of British Creditors of Russia wrote to the Foreign Office, on Leslie Urquhart's initiative, supporting what measures it might be found necessary to take against the Soviet government. Urquhart, Litvinov noted in a letter, had played "first violin" in

the campaign to have the Agreement denounced²⁰. A meeting convened by the Association, at which a representative of the Federation of British Industry had been present, was "unanimous in denouncing the existing agreement with Russia as an agreement which legalised the robbery of British nationals, which action has helped to finance the Bolshevik Government since the signing of the agreement"²¹. The attitude of City financial circles towards Russia, the Westminster Gazette reported, was "one of complete aloofness"²².

Trade with Soviet Russia had, nevertheless, developed considerably since the Agreement had been signed, notwithstanding the Morning Post's forecast that it would lead only to the export of stolen jewellery and human hair from Russia in exchange for arms²³. The signature of the Agreement, Lloyd George told the House of Commons, had had "substantial results", if not those which had been expected in some quarters. It was announced that imports and exports in the periods April-June and July-September following the Agreement were respectively £46,940 and £143,285, and £122,587 and £616,450²⁴. For the year 1921 imports from Russia were valued at £2,694,674 and exports at £2,181,007. These figures represented almost entirely transactions made after the end of March, upon the basis of the Trade Agreement²⁵.

In 1922 a further major advance was recorded. Imports to Britain rose by more than three times to a total value of £8,102,829, and exports increased nearly twofold to a figure of £3,640,624²⁶. Comparing the first three months of 1922 with the corresponding period of the previous year, it was apparent that imports from Russia had increased more than twofold in value; while exports and re-exports had increased by a much greater factor, as much as fourteen times, the trade delegation's journal calculated²⁷. In the following year British exports to Russia declined slightly (to £2,491,650), but imports increased by more than a million pounds (to £9,266,100)²⁸.

Trade with Soviet Russia remained a small part of British trade as a whole. In the year 1923, imports from Russia amounted to less than 1% by value of total imports, and exports to Russia formed an even smaller proportion of total exports²⁹. Trade with Finland and the Baltic states was separated from that with Soviet Russia in 1922 and 1923; if it were included, thus securing a closer comparison with trade with the former Russian Empire, and including entrepot trade, the figures were appreciably larger. Nearly 20% of all British imports in 1923, it was stated, came from Russia and Finland³⁰.

Trade with Britain formed a rather larger proportion of total Soviet

foreign trade. Nearly half of Soviet Russia's exports in 1921 went to Britain, and nearly a third of total Soviet ~~imports~~ came from there³¹. This accounted for 30.6% of all Soviet foreign trade, a greater proportion than was accounted for by either Germany (24.5%) or the U.S.A. (17.4%)³². In the following year, 1922, British trade dropped to 21.6% by value of total Soviet foreign trade, behind trade with Germany (29.3%). In the 1923-4 trading year, however, trade with Britain accounted 21.5% by value of all Soviet foreign trade, a greater proportion than was accounted for by either Soviet trade with Germany (18.5%) or with the U.S.A. (9.7%); and these relative positions were maintained in the following year³³.

The figures for the turnover of trade between the two countries, however, concealed ~~the~~ fact that Soviet exports to Britain accounted for an increasing part of the total. The turnover of trade with Britain increased in value from 30 million roubles in 1920 to 231 million roubles and then to 607 million roubles in successive trading years. While exports more than doubled from each year to the next, however, reaching 373 million roubles in 1923-4, imports rose rapidly until 1921-2, but thereafter declined to a lower figure in each of the two following years. In the three years to 1923-4, an unfavourable Soviet trade balance with Britain was converted into a favourable balance of 139 million roubles³⁴. While, therefore, the total value of trade between the two countries declined in 1922-3 compared with the previous year, this represented a drop in the value of British exports to Russia greater than the variation in the value of Russian exports to Britain, which had in fact increased³⁵.

The volume of Soviet imports in 1921-2 reflected the famine in the Volga area, which had led to the suspension of the plans for importing which had originally been made³⁶. In this year, the import of foodstuffs accounted for 35% of the value of all imports, compared with 13.3% in 1913. This figure declined sharply, however, in the following years to 12.3% and 8.5% respectively³⁷. Imports related to the industrial sector correspondingly rose in value from 19% (1922) to 74.3% (1923-4)³⁸. The proportion of Soviet imports from Britain accounted for by foodstuffs dropped from 22.7% by value in 1922 to 4.3% in 1923. Raw materials and semi-manufactures (71.8%) and manufactures (23.5%) accounted for the remainder³⁹.

The growth of Soviet exports followed the recovery of the economy; and in particular food supplies, which had formed 1.2% of total exports by value

in 1921-2, increased to 35.7% of the total in 1922-3⁴⁰. Agricultural produce increased from a third to more than a half of the total of Soviet exports by value in this year⁴¹. Almost all the export of food supplies in this year was accounted for by bread, the "significant export" of which began in February 1923⁴². Exports to Britain in 1922 were dominated by wood (32% by value), oil (25%), flax (12%) and related products⁴³. In the following year, however, the export of foodstuffs increased from 1.6% to 16.5% of the total, a significant rise⁴⁴. Only 2.3% of all bread exported in the 1922-3 trading year went to Britain; but over half of the weight of Soviet exports of wood and oil (52.6% and 50.1%) represented exports to Britain⁴⁵. Soviet Russian exports to Britain in 1923-4 totalled nearly three hundred million roubles, over 40% of which was accounted for by raw materials (largely sawn wood, timber and fur); followed by fuel, foodstuffs and grain⁴⁶.

The export of a number of commodities to Britain was already considerable, and increased notably in 1923-4. The import of wood and wood products increased in value from two and a half million pounds in 1922 to three and a half million pounds in 1923 to nearly five million pounds in 1924, an overall increase of from 6.5% to 9.3% of the total value of all British wood imports⁴⁷. The import into Britain of Russian barley increased from five thousand metric tons to more than twice this amount in the first half only of 1924⁴⁸; or in value from 826,000 roubles in 1922/3 to more than ten times this figure in 1923/4. The export of butter to Britain increased in value in the same period from five million to nearly fifty million roubles. The export of eggs increased approximately sixfold in the same period; while the export of wheat increased from a quarter of a million roubles to nearly ten million roubles. The export of foodstuffs as a category increased from seven to over sixty million roubles⁴⁹. While in many cases these figures amounted only to fractions of the corresponding figures for 1913, they were increasing rapidly and in the case of at least oil, textiles, wood and foodstuffs had come to hold a significant place in total British imports.

The development of Soviet trade with Britain was paralleled by an expansion of the operations of the Soviet trading apparatus in Britain, in particular of Arcos, the first Soviet export-import organization to be established abroad and "practically the only institution" trading in Britain in 1921⁵⁰. Considerable business, it was stated, had been conducted before the signature of the Trade Agreement. Buying operations began in October 1920 and nearly

two million pounds' worth of orders had been placed by the end of the year⁵¹. Purchases in 1921 had amounted to over four million pounds in value by the end of September; and purchases for the year totalled £4,777,918⁵². Sales were only "infinitesimal" before the conclusion of the Trade Agreement, but a "steadily increasing volume" of sales was recorded from May 1921, and "substantial" business, the Trade Delegation's journal reported, was done in the last quarter of the year. The most important article of sale was timber⁵³. Sales in Britain in 1921 amounted to one and ~~a~~^{three} quarter million pounds in value, of which two-thirds was accounted for by the sale of wood and oil⁵⁴. The total turnover of Arcos amounted to over nine million pounds in 1921, nearly fourteen million pounds in 1922, nine and three quarter million pounds in 1923 (sales increased but purchases were halved in value), and nearly six million pounds in the first half of 1924, representing an increase over the same period of the previous year of 10.3%⁵⁵.

Arcos, it was noted, "swiftly extended its activities beyond the borders of England", opening several offices and agencies in other countries and in the USSR: in Constantinople, Paris, New York, Riga, Moscow, Leningrad, Tiflis, Rostov and other cities⁵⁶. Thus of the four and a half million pounds' worth of purchases made by Arcos in the first half of 1924, about a million pounds represented purchases of other than British-manufactured goods; which were often, however, transported in British-owned shipping. A board was formed in January 1924 to exercise overall control over Arcos in London, which now comprised eleven separate sections, and over Arcos offices and agencies elsewhere⁵⁷.

The development of Arcos was apparent in the growth of its paid-up capital, which increased from an original £15,000 to ~~an~~ million pounds by January 1924⁵⁸. It was apparent also in the establishment of further more specialized joint-stock companies ~~for~~ the furthering of Soviet trade in Britain. Some, such as 'Kniga', established in November 1923 to cater for the import and export of books, were based on Russian share capital only⁵⁹. Arcos Bank, equally, was set up on 5 July 1923 with a fully paid-up capital of £250,000, charged with the issuing of travellers' cheques valid for Soviet Russia and generally facilitating trading operations⁶⁰. 'Rusangloles', however, set up in February 1922 to handle the export of wood, was a 'mixed' company, with a large (minority) British ownership of the share issue. Foreign (non-Russian) capital accounted for 14.5% of the total share capital of the twenty

trading companies set up in 1922, 1923 and 1924⁶¹. A number of these companies were concerned only with export to Britain; while on the other hand, Arcos itself had imported twice the value of the goods it had exported in the course of its activity from its foundation to the end of September 1924. The sales of Arcos in this period amounted to 45.2% of all sales of all Soviet trading bodies in Britain⁶². A clientele had been established among the "oldest, most eminent English firms"⁶³. Arcos was refused membership of the London Chamber of Commerce at the beginning of 1923; but indicative of the change in business opinion was the establishment of business relations between the Russian State Bank and Lloyds Bank the following October, and the moves to establish an Anglo-Russian Chamber of Commerce, for which purpose a committee of state organizations and business people was set up in Moscow⁶⁴. The move was suggested, it was reported, by the Business Club in England, and a meeting was held on 25 October which approved the formation of an eight-man organizational bureau⁶⁵.

A "definite improvement" in the economic and political relations of the two countries, noted the official report of NKID for 1923, took place from the summer onwards, when English trading and manufacturing circles became "more and more interested in the USSR". A "very major role" in this connection was played by the visit to Moscow in August of a group of prominent English financiers and industrialists on behalf of Becos Traders Ltd⁶⁶. The delegation included representatives of many of the leading British engineering firms: John Denny, a shipbuilder; a representative of the Manchester engineering works, Harley; Sir Charles Wright of Carter Shipyards; representatives of Brightside Foundry and Engineering Company of Sheffield, Crossley Brothers, oil and gas engine and plant manufacturers of Manchester, and others. It was headed by F.L. Baldwin, a cousin of the Prime Minister and a director of Baldwin and Company⁶⁷. Another leader of the delegation and director of Becos Traders, Mr A.G. Marshall, had been involved in the organization of Russian trade in 1918 on behalf of the British government, and submitted a number of memoranda on the question to the Foreign Office, where he was a familiar if not always a welcome figure⁶⁸. Becos Traders itself was an amalgamation of eighty-two member firms, including as well as those represented upon the Russian delegation such firms as Nobel Industries, Ferrodor and Ferranti. Becos was designed to "serve its Members as their co-operative

selling organization for Russia and the adjacent territories⁶⁹.

The delegation, whose purpose was to examine the "conditions in Russia and the possibilities of business between Russia and Great Britain, particularly as regards the Metal, Engineering and Hardware Trades", left London on 9 August and arrived in Moscow on 14 August. It conducted discussions with Krasin regarding Russia's economic needs, and Marshall, in a further interview on 15 August, considered a number of "concrete business proposals". The delegation also met Zhicherin, Dzherzhinsky and the Soviet government's Concessions Committee. Kamenev discussed the reform of the currency with the members of the delegation; and further more specific discussions took place with regard to possible orders and business proposals⁷⁰.

The delegation, the Manchester Guardian Commercial reported at the end of August, was "coming back disillusioned"⁷¹. The report issued by the delegation on its return did, indeed, concede that definite contracts had not been signed. It considered, however, that their signature was probably and might be expected to lead to "satisfactory business"; and its overall impressions were generally favourable. The condition of the country, it was stated, "has been and is still being improved very rapidly, and every effort that is possible in this respect is being made by the Government". State control of industrial activity had been "considerably reduced and will rapidly disappear", although some factories would probably remain nationalized. They approved the government's policy of balanced budgets, increased taxation and reduced government expenditure; and thought the currency reform so far successful. There was, above all, "no question in our minds as to the enormous market offered by Russia for British goods of all classes", provided that the means of financing the trade could be found. This demand was "confined to no one industry"; and Russia offered "not only an outlet for the sale of British Manufacturers, but very considerable opportunities for the purchase, at reasonably low prices, of raw materials from Russia required for this country's industries". The development of Russian trade should be "extremely rapid and most advantageous in connection with the unemployment difficulties in this country". They themselves had discussed proposals of an important nature and involving large sums, whose adoption would "result in considerable benefits to industry in this country". The delegation recommended the conclusion of a financial agreement between the two countries, and of a treaty which would include "full diplomatic relationships"⁷².

A Foreign Office official commented that the report had been "given a great deal of publicity in the papers, and was brought personally to the Prime Minister's attention by his cousin Mr F.L. Baldwin". He now understood "how it was", Curzon minuted, "that the Prime Minister made so enthusiastic a reference to the future of trade with Russia in a recent speech"⁷³. The Foreign Office was not disposed to be impressed. Business opinion was receptive, however, to the delegation's optimistic ^{conclu}impressions, and to the news that an office staff had been left behind in Moscow. Orders to a total value of £20 million had been received in Russia, it was later learned, subject to the availability of credits⁷⁴.

Interviews with individual members of the delegation reinforced this favourable impression. Mr J.M. Denny, deputy chairman of Denny and Brothers, Clydebank shipbuilders, expressed the view that the Soviet authorities had ~~been~~ "exceedingly anxious to do business with us". He had been "agreeably surprised.. to find that the churches all seemed to be well attended"; and generally he was "impressed with the great potentialities of Russia"⁷⁵. Mr J.J. Carter, the managing director of Crossley Brothers, told the Manchester Guardian Commercial that "business will be done shortly". If trade developed with the Soviet authorities, they were moreover "confident of a straight deal"⁷⁶. Baldwin and Marshall declared themselves ^{impressed} with the efforts to stabilize the Russian currency, and praised the organization of the State Bank and the efforts to balance the state budget⁷⁷. Baldwin, interviewed on the delegation's return, considered that "undoubtedly" there was a trade opening in Russia for agricultural machinery and for commodities connected with rail or road transport; and also for sawmill plant and mining equipment, and a "tremendous demand" besides for the "ordinary necessities of life". The Russians were looking, he thought, "to this country for their trade necessities". The general impression they had brought back as to the recovery of Russia was "one of hope"⁷⁸.

Marshall told the Evening Standard that Russia was "proceeding along lines that indicate a steady return to prosperous commercial relations from which Britain may benefit greatly". The delegation had returned "unanimously ~~optimistic~~ as regards the future"⁷⁹. He explained his views in more detail to the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce on 24 October. Speaking to a resolution calling upon the government to facilitate the development of trade with Russia, he declared that the Russian government's political views "had been tried out and had failed". The Bolsheviks had "gradually had to abandon the political

and social policies" adopted during the period of the revolution: "in other words, Communism was no longer existing in Russia". Concluding amid cheers, he expressed the hope that "political matters would not be allowed to interfere with their interests as manufacturers and as traders"⁸⁰. He prepared a 'Memorandum regarding Unemployment and Russia' on 5 November of which he sent copies to the Prime Minister, Lloyd-George, Chapman and other government figures, and to the Foreign Office. The expressed purpose of the memorandum was to "show that Russia at the present time, and the development of the Russian market, does offer a reasonable substitute" for Germany in foreign trade. The Russian trade could not be "classed as a mere palliative, but (was) actually in the nature of a remedy" for unemployment. No financial arrangement such as was proposed in the memorandum, however, would be possible without the "full diplomatic recognition" of the Soviet government⁸¹.

The delegation's report, it was remarked by the Trade Delegation, together with the "whole series of interviews" given by its members, had aroused "exceptional interest in both business and political circles" in Britain⁸². The group's reports on the economic position of Russia and on the possible acceptance in Russia of British capital produced a "great impression in English trading and manufacturing, and financial circles", reported the NKID, and marked a "definite change in their attitudes towards the USSR"⁸³. The delegation's initial statement reported its members "completely convinced" that "considerable opportunities" existed for British trade with Russia⁸⁴. This report and an interview with the members of the delegation were published by forty London and provincial newspapers, many of which commented upon the matter editorially and urged closer economic relations with Soviet Russia⁸⁵. The opinion of the responsible leaders of the business world, noted the Financial Times, could not but influence official circles. The Becos report might be expected significantly to stimulate British economic relations with Russia⁸⁶. In the space of only four days in November, no fewer than eighty-five articles in the British press were devoted to the question of economic relations with Russia⁸⁷.

The delegation's formal report was issued on 19 November 1923. In the summary of the Manchester Guardian, it indicated that the Soviet government was "not only accepted by the people but meets with their approval". Trade prospects with Britain were "extremely good", since the goods required by the

Soviet authorities were manufactured in Britain. Russia's "great difficulty", the absence of credit, did not appear insoluble⁸⁸. Marshall returned to Russia the following spring to continue discussions on behalf of Becos which, he pointed out, now embraced more than a hundred and twenty firms and more than two hundred factories and works in Britain. Their visit of the previous year, he noted, they rightly considered to have "significantly influenced the recognition of Soviet Russia by England"⁸⁹.

The Becos delegation was present on 19 August at the opening of the All-Union Agricultural and Handicrafts Exhibition in Moscow, visited it, and concluded that if nothing else it showed a "very considerable amount of organization"⁹⁰. The significance of the Exhibition, Marshall thought, was "very great". It "showed foreigners how enormous were the natural resources of Russia"⁹¹. The Exhibition's foreign section was opened on 26 August, in the delegation's presence. Both Marshall and Baldwin declared themselves "greatly impressed" by it⁹². The fair itself was intended to review the state of Soviet agriculture after the period of intervention and civil war had ended, and to undertake the pedagogic and propagandist role of promoting the best methods of cultivation and husbandry. In addition it was considered a "necessity" to have at the Exhibition a foreign section "in order to inform ourselves of the current state of their economy, and also to take account of their achievements in the field of agriculture". It offered equally the opportunity to foreign exhibitors to "evaluate us as a market and as a field for capital investment, of which we are in great need", and to display new types of seed and breeds of animal⁹³. There was a need, wrote Kaufman, to raise agricultural productivity and exports above the levels of the previous year, and to import foreign agricultural machinery. The Exhibition, he thought, should play an "enormous role in the strengthening of economic links between the USSR and European countries"; and it might also impress the major industrial groups of Europe and America with the economic potential of Russia, since they had not yet "realized that the Russian market is one of the most important factors in the economic stability of Europe"⁹⁴.

The main and basic aim, according to the Exhibition catalogue, which had led the Central Exhibition Committee to set up a separate Foreign Section, was the wish to show to the broad strata of the peasantry the achievements of Western European science and technology in perfecting the methods of cultivat-

ion. This aim, it was thought, had been achieved completely: not only were machines and equipment on view, but also the exhibitors had included scientific institutions, universities and institutes⁹⁵. It was intended also to re-establish an economic and scientific link between Russian agriculture and foreign agricultural industry and technology⁹⁶. Agriculture was the basic sector of the economy, accounting for up to 80% of the value of Russian exports. The Exhibition demonstrated, it was claimed, the "re-establishment" of Russian agriculture: it showed that the area of land under cultivation was increasing, that the harvest was growing, and that not only the natural resources, but the economic energies or "future economic possibilities" of the country were very great. The "beginning of the propaganda of exports" was considered to have been achieved⁹⁷.

The decision to hold the Exhibition in August 1923 was taken by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee on 20 October 1922⁹⁸. At the beginning of the following year regulations were approved for the participation of foreign exhibitors in the fair; and it was decided that they would be guaranteed all privileges accorded to Russian exhibitors, and transported ahead of turn. Local bureaux were set up in eighteen foreign countries, carrying out their work under the guidance of the Exhibition Committee and of NKID⁹⁹.

The regulations for foreign exhibitors were printed in the journal of the Trade Delegation in Britain in March¹⁰⁰. Manufacturers of agricultural equipment were urged "not to miss the opportunity of getting into touch with the Russian markets. There was an "immense and growing potential market for western manufactures" in Russian peasants¹⁰¹. An Exhibition Committee was formed in London in the middle of March, consisting of Klyshko as chairman, two associates and a secretary. Special cards were inserted in each letter despatched from the Trade Delegation office, and details were provided for the press. The project was regarded, however, without great enthusiasm, and the F.B.I. refused to organize a delegation¹⁰². Attempts were made to get in touch with English farms which might be willing to exhibit, but in view of the crisis in relations between the two countries the response was "not very satisfactory"¹⁰³.

In some places, the bulletin of the Central Exhibition noted, the work of the local committees had been "complicated and hindered due to difficulties in the international position of the USSR". This had particularly affected work in England, where orders had begun to be received "only recently"¹⁰⁴. Following the easing of the diplomatic situation, however, the London committee renewed

its contacts with possible exhibitors, and made further approaches. Visits were made to firms; an English edition of the Exhibition Almanac was published; and Fridrikhson, the chairman of the Central Exhibition Committee, spent two weeks in Britain at the beginning of July, and gave interviews to Reuter and to the Press Association. Segal, a representative of the local committee, was interviewed in a number of financial and radical papers, and information was printed in others¹⁰⁵.

"Some inquiries" had been received from British firms by the middle of April¹⁰⁶. In July, it was announced that British firms intending to take part included Saville and Company, makers of instruments, Turnicraft, and Scammell, manufacturers of lorries. The firms of Lowry and Holloway were later added¹⁰⁷. Reporting the opening of the Exhibition, Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' noted that the British firms represented included Vickers, Portland Cement and Ruston and Hornby, makers of agricultural machinery from Lincoln. British industry, it added, had shown a "great interest in the Exhibition"¹⁰⁸. This was perhaps to exaggerate somewhat. A total of 401 foreign firms participated in the Exhibition, from twenty foreign states; but of these 94 were from Germany alone, and there were more exhibitors from France, Austria, Czechoslovakia, America and Italy than from Britain, which provided fourteen. British exhibitors were not involved in the construction of the fourteen national or other pavilions in the Foreign Section¹⁰⁹. Among the British firms represented, moreover, were many which had already established a close connection with the Trade Delegation in London, and had supplied orders for Arcos, as Vickers and Ruston and Hornby, for instance, had done¹¹⁰. Frumkin, the Assistant Commissar for Foreign Trade, told an interviewer that British (and American) firms would be represented, "although not to the extent that could have been desired"¹¹¹.

The Exhibition was favourably commented upon, nevertheless, in July by at least twenty major British papers¹¹²; and there could be no doubt that the firms represented in Moscow, while many of them had already established a connection with the Russian market, were present for other than sentimental reasons. The position of the most significant of them, for instance, Vickers Metropolitan, was reported to have been "very bad" in 1921, and an improvement in the company's fortunes was declared by this chairman to depend upon a revival of trade. In the following year the company's trading profit was reduced; and not one of the company's departments had a good year. At the shipbuilding section in Barrow the commercial position was never worse than in 1922 and 1923.

Profits dropped in 1923 by nearly a third compared with the previous year, and no dividend was paid¹¹³.

The representative of one of the British exhibiting firms, quoted in the Manchester Guardian, expressed the view that life in Russia was "getting on to more normal lines". As a businessman, he had become "convinced that an extension of trade with this country is now possible". His own firm had done a "very satisfactory amount of business"¹¹⁴. A total of 456 trade contracts were signed in the Foreign Section in the course of the Exhibition and immediately after its conclusion; and the Exhibition produced a favourable impression upon the Becos delegation, upon the exhibitors themselves, and upon those who visited the Exhibition, a number of whom were British¹¹⁵. Moscow had been visited, the journal of the Trade Delegation noted, by the Becos group, by several merchants and by Members of Parliament in the course of the latter part of July and August. Moscow might be said to have become the "centre of interest for European and American traders, and for politicians and journalists concerned with economic revival and the renewal of friendly relations between peoples"¹¹⁶. As the Petrograd Chamber of Commerce's 'Directory for Russian and Foreign Businessmen' commented, the mere fact alone of having attracted such a number of foreign firms to the All-Union Exhibition served as the "best evidence of a near approaching intensive development of peaceful collaboration and intercourse between the Western Commercial and Industrial Circles and Soviet Russia"¹¹⁷.

The Soviet authorities were not unaware of what Krasin called the Exhibition's "moral effect" and the "great impression which the fact itself of holding the Exhibition had on all its visitors"¹¹⁸. In his speech at the opening of the Foreign Section, he expressed the hope that it might serve as the beginning of "yet further and closer economic relations" between Soviet Russia and those European countries whose tradesmen were participating in the Exhibition¹¹⁹. Speaking on the 'Importance of the Exhibition' three days before it opened, Chicherin declared that with every day the "colossal importance" for the whole international position of Soviet Russia was becoming clear, and the impression it was creating abroad was becoming deeper and more distinct. The Exhibition was a "revelation". The main cause of the strained relations with western states which had recently existed was their "economic disenchantment", the feeling in business circles that the development of trading relations was advancing too slowly and was not providing them with the opportunity of "receiving what they wanted". This situation had now changed "radically", to such an

extent, indeed, that it might not be too much to say that the Exhibition marked the "beginning of a new period in our ^{international} economic relations"¹²⁰. He re-emphasized the point in an interview after the Exhibition had closed¹²¹.

One of the "external manifestations" of the change in Anglo-Russian relations in the latter part of 1923, noted the Soviet Foreign Ministry's official report for the year, was the formation of the Russo-British Grain Exporting Company on 15 October¹²². The formation of the Company, Litvinov noted, created a "great impression not only in trading circles in England, but far beyond them"¹²³. Two major British firms of stockbrokers and steamship companies and other enterprises subscribed £50,000, or half the share capital of the new body. The company had four English directors, and credit to the extent of £1 million was extended to it by British banks¹²⁴. The announcement, it was reported, created a "sensation not only in directly interested circles, but throughout the English press". Approval of the venture was practically unanimous¹²⁵. Enquiries made in the City by the Pall Mall Gazette revealed "tremendous interest" in the announcement, which thus brought to an end a "long series of delicate and intricate negotiations". It was "confidently anticipated" that the agreement would have an "appreciable bearing upon the whole course of British trade"¹²⁶. It demonstrated, the Manchester Guardian commented, that the City was convinced of the possibility of doing trade with Russia¹²⁷.

This had more than commercial significance: in particular, as the Manchester Guardian Commercial put it, the formation of the new company raised "in a practical form the question of the present diplomatic relations between Russia and this country"¹²⁸. The Herald quoted a "well-known exporter" to the effect that it was an "amazing thing that - while everybody is coming to realize that Russia should be one of our most important markets - the Government still obstinately refuses ^{extend to} to Russian trade the provisions of the Trade Facilities Act". The new development, he hoped, would induce ministers to "change their minds, for it is preposterous that their political dislike of the Soviet Government should be allowed to hamper British trade"¹²⁹. The agreement, the Observer added, had "given a lead to the British Foreign Office. Full commercial relations with the new Russia have now been established, but full political relations still await establishment"¹³⁰.

According to Krasin, the new company's formation was considered the

main event since the conclusion of the Trade Agreement. The quality of the Russian bread and grain was excellent; and the company "aroused great interest in European business circles"¹³¹. By the end of March 1924 over a million pounds' worth of bread and grain had been sold on the British market; and by the end of September a further million and a half pounds' worth had been sold. Sales amounted to 14.5% of the value of all sales in Britain in the 1923-4 trading year¹³². The working masses, Krasin observed, saw before them the fact that the Soviet Union was "becoming the feeder of Europe"¹³³. The business world and the shipping companies had equal reason for satisfaction.

Business opinion had, in fact, already exerted its influence upon the government in this direction. Writing to Bonar Law on 22 December 1922 on behalf of the Industrial Group of the House of Commons, Sir Allen Smith, of the Engineering Employers' Federation, complained that the United States had "to our very great detriment succeeded in capturing a great deal of the Russian trade which should have come to us.. Whereas with the old diplomacy the pen was mightier than the sword, with the new diplomacy we have to recognize that the treasury note is and must be maintained of greater value than either the pen or the sword". The possibility of trading, he added, depended "in great measure on our national relations with Russia.. While we indulge in the old shibboleths of foreign diplomacy, other countries are reducing their unemployment and I am afraid for some months at least we will increase ours". His objection was to this "out-of-date diplomacy" through which "we are cutting our own throats in the matter of present and future trading". He had "no doubt these considerations (would) appeal not in the least degree to the Foreign Office, but I am perfectly satisfied.. (that) there is no salvation for this country until the Foreign Office is thoroughly commercialised". He concluded that, with Bonar Law's own knowledge of affairs, he would "appreciate that our diplomacy now must be made subservient to some extent to our commercial requirement"¹³⁴.

Following a meeting of the Industrial Group of the House of Commons in July 1923, Sir Allen Smith returned to the subject. In a letter to Baldwin on behalf of the Group, he pointed out that he had heard of no case where the Soviet authorities had not met their trading obligations. Orders of between two and three million pounds in value were pending, he stated, if the Export Credits Act were extended to trade with Russia. Failure to act, the Group believed, would "entail irreparable harm to the 'moral' of the workers, and a

grave menace to the social and economic stability of the country". Their views, he pointed out in a further letter of 3 August, carried the "imprimatur of the leading industrial, financial and economic brains of the country"¹³⁵.

Baldwin probably needed little persuasion. Another 'man of affairs', he had drawn attention in a speech at Glasgow the previous month to the fact that "in Russia, we have one of the largest potential markets in the world"¹³⁶. Curzon, however, considerably his senior within the Cabinet, and others in the government, and the Foreign Office as a whole, stood for the maintenance of what was existing government policy on the question of relations with Soviet Russia; and many in financial circles, as well as the creditors as a whole, stood similarly for the ^{prior} cessation of propaganda and the acknowledgement of debts and obligations before ^{full} diplomatic relations with the Soviet government were considered.

"A million tons of grain", the Russian Information and Review commented, was nevertheless a "powerful argument for converting stubbornly held political convictions"¹³⁷. Business opinion and the leading papers and journals had generally accepted it by the end of the year. There was no sense, Garvin wrote in the Observer on 7 October, in the present position. "We are sacrificing the interests of the Empire to etiquette, and the etiquette is as obsolete as the Bourbons.. Words cannot express the fantastic folly of allowing any removable hinderances to stand any longer between our workless masses and the Russian market. We ought to have given full recognition long ago"¹³⁸. On 17 December the paper regretted that the Conservatives had missed a most appropriate opportunity to further the restoration of Europe, having refused to recognize Soviet Russia. This would be a sensible decision and would find "warm support and approval in the country"; while the refusal to do so threatened the loss of major trading prospects¹³⁹.

There were regrets that the "concrete expression" by British business circles of confidence in the Russian Soviet government had "not yet been accompanied by an increased cordiality in official political circles". While business people had shown that they recognized and meant to take advantage of the "gaping opportunities" in Russia, wrote the Observer, Lord Curzon preferred to snub the new official Russian representative, Rakovsky¹⁴⁰. A "new note of friendliness", according to the Trade Delegation's journal, appeared in the press. The Spectator, a Conservative journal, found the grain agreement a "definite step forward". The government, it thought, must "seriously consider

putting the present rather anomalous state of half recognition of the Moscow government on a more definite basis. After all, the Bolshevik administration is now the senior Administration of Europe", and its hold on the country seemed "as firm as ever"¹⁴¹. It was time, wrote the Manchester Guardian, for British policy towards Russia to be "completely overhauled" if British traders were "not to come into the field too late"¹⁴². Reporting the negotiations between the Soviet and the Italian governments, the Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury urged that other countries could not be allowed to "overtake us in the renewal of trade with Russia"¹⁴³. During the latter half of December the British press was "almost unanimous", it was noted, "in urging the value of coming to an agreement". It was, "naturally enough, the plain feasibility of a rapid extension of Russo-British trade" which had "induced this more favourable disposition on the part of British writers"¹⁴⁴.

Indeed there was already evidence, the Trade Delegation journal observed, that the expected acceleration in the development of Anglo-Russian trade was taking place. The autumn of 1923 had seen the conclusion of contracts on a scale which would be "incredible without the fullest confidence of each of the contracting parties in the other". The formation of the Wheat Exporting Company, which had caused "no little stir in business and political circles", was followed by the conclusion of contracts with British firms for the supply of timber to the value of £300,000 or more, and the conclusion of agreements with British engineering firms for the supply of equipment for Soviet power stations¹⁴⁵. Only now, for the first time, was it being realised what "huge possibilities" were latent in the development of trade between Britain and Russia. Arcos sales and purchases increased greatly in September; and increased again in October to a value of over a million pounds¹⁴⁶.

In the previous two or three months, the Glasgow Herald reported on 26 October, a "great change (had) come over the attitude of British traders towards Russia as the result of the reports of several missions made by English and Scottish businessmen to that country recently"¹⁴⁷. The City and the Russian Trade delegation, the Observer added, had shown a "recognition of mutual interest and a readiness to wipe the slate clean of all past grievances" in order the more easily to reach an agreement. The City, impressed by the reports of observers (who were often quintessentially capitalist in their views¹⁴⁸), now showed a "distinct inclination to enlarge the scope of trade with Russia"¹⁴⁹. A financial expert was reported by the Westminster Gazette to be of the opinion

that British firms were extending their Russian trade, which offered, he believed, the "chief remedy for the present unemployment"¹⁵⁰.

The country's "most prominent business men", it was suggested, were indeed "wiser than the Government", and realised "both the opportunities and the importance of Russian trade"¹⁵¹. They should get away from the diffidence which had characterised their previous actions, wrote the Financial News, otherwise traders might discover that they had been "ousted from a political market of growing wealth". The possibilities of the Russian market were enormous; and it was "certainly not in the national interests - financial, commercial or economic - that we should see it fall into other hands"¹⁵². Even the journal of the Westminster Bank expressed the hope that a "general settlement to the interest of both countries" would "not long be delayed"¹⁵³.

The arguments, and their diplomatic implications, were summed up in the British Russian Trade Gazette and Trade Outlook, a journal which (perhaps not altogether fortuitously) made its first appearance at this time. The first issue, in October 1923, commented that "to the surprise, it must be admitted, of all British-Russian business men, the Soviet Government remains in power, and, as cannot be denied, appears now to be displaying a real and not always unpractical desire to maintain order, and to re-establish Russia's economic strength and her credit". The 'Die-hard' policy and views, it was felt, should accordingly be abandoned. Indeed the evidence was not lacking to suggest that the 'Die-hard' policy was "rapidly being compelled to yield to the policy of the 'get a move on' party of British-Russian Traders"¹⁵⁴.

The following December the journal expressed itself "sick of the purposeless, aimless policy of interminable indecision in the matter of Russia". The British industrialist and trader was beginning to find himself "diametrically at variance with the British politicians" on the Russian question. The wheat agreement, a recent Shipping Pact, and other understandings, negotiated and concluded with the Soviet government by some of the largest and most significant British business interests, demonstrated "beyond all argument.. that some of our ablest business men differ fundamentally in their views from those members of our recent Governments who have imposed upon us as a nation the same old worn-out policy of "wait and see" in regard to Russia". The clearly growing determination of the leaders of British trade and industry to "shake themselves free from the restraining shackles imposed upon them" by successive governments would, it was thought, "compel a complete change in the British

official attitude towards Russia". The earlyx resumption was hoped for of "full normal relations with Russia"¹⁵⁵.

For it was clear that (as the Financial Times pointed out) the extension of trade with Russia was being "hindered by lack of official facilities"¹⁵⁶. The Russian market was a most important one for British industry, since its requirements were those which British industry was best placed to supply, while Russia could in turn provide commodities which were urgently needed in Britain. Commercial relations between the two countries, however, could not develop normally in the absence of political agreement; and this explained the fact that the "question of recognition" had recently become one of "major importance"¹⁵⁷. It was impossible to hope, added the Manchester Guardian, that normal trade, even on a small scale, could be established between the two countries "so long as their political relations remain on the existing and highly precarious footing". It was "time our Russian policy were completely overhauled, if our traders are not to come into the field too late"¹⁵⁸. J.D. Gregory, in a minute on the Foreign Office file which contained this article, complained of a "persistent campaign" against the Foreign Office on the question of Russian trade¹⁵⁹. It was clear to both sides, evidently, that something more was at issue than simply the extension of ~~trade~~ commerce.

At the end of December a meeting of industrialists and merchants took place in the City of London. Marshall of Becos Traders was present. Members of the Association of Engineering Factories, representing more than 2500 enterprises, urged the necessity of developing trade with Russia; and they were supported by Sir Allan Smith¹⁶⁰. The Russo-British Chamber of Commerce, meeting at the beginning of January 1924, adopted a resolution which "taking into consideration certain evidences of improvement in the actual economic conditions prevailing in Russia", urged upon the government the "advisability of taking such steps as would enable trade between the two countries to be developed and extended as rapidly as possible". It was in particular pointed out that the absence of diplomatic relations and of consular services acted as "serious deterrants to the extending of credit facilities failing which the growth of trade between the two countries must be slow"¹⁶¹. The resolution was subsequently endorsed by the council of the British Association of Chambers of Commerce, and submitted by them to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the President of the Board of Trade, noting in conclusion the need for "immediate action"¹⁶².

The City, in fact, the acting head of the trade delegation told

Izvestiya, had "long ago recognized Soviet Russia", and in England this meant something¹⁶³. But despite the "obvious change in English business circles", Vneshnyaya Torgovlya commented, the Foreign Office "continued its old policy of hostile relations with Soviet Russia"¹⁶⁴. Writing to Moscow at the end of November, however, Rakovsky explained that while the question of credits for the Soviet economy was being postponed until after the general election had taken place in Britain, there appeared good reason to believe that thereafter whether the Conservatives remained in power or the Liberals came to power in coalition with either the Conservatives or the Labour Party, the question of Anglo-Russian relations would be considered afresh, and in particular the question of the extension of the export credits legislation to Russian trade¹⁶⁵. The legislative programme with which the Conservatives met the House of Commons in January 1924, however, following their electoral defeat, made no mention of relations with Soviet Russia¹⁶⁶. The ~~election~~ subsequent formation of a Labour government, it appeared, relatively less identified with imperial and financial interests which opposed the diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government, was required in order to implement the preferences of the manufacturers and traders¹⁶⁷.

Following Baldwin's surprise declaration in favour of protection, Parliament was dissolved on 16 November and a general election took place on 6 December 1923. The results left the Conservatives with the greatest number of seats (258 as against 346 in the outgoing Parliament); the Liberals had 158 seats; while the Labour Party, with only a few more candidates and 100,000 more votes, increased its number of seats from 142 in the outgoing Parliament to 191. Baldwin decided not to resign but to face Parliament when it met on 8 January. A censure motion was moved by the Labour Party on 17 January, and Asquith committed the Liberals to its support. The government was defeated on 21 January; and on the following day Baldwin resigned, and MacDonald formed his party's first government¹⁶⁸.

The Labour Party's manifesto in the general election had stated that the party would favour the "resumption of free economic and diplomatic relations with Russia"; and MacDonald assured the party's victory rally at the Albert Hall on 8 January 1924 that the "pompous folly of standing aloof from the Russian Government" would be ended¹⁶⁹. Baldwin's government was subsequently taken to task in the House of Commons by Tom Shaw for the "very significant omission" from the King's Speech of a proposal for the "proper recognition" of

Russia¹⁷⁰. It was nevertheless rumoured, following the formation of the Labour government, that recognition was to be delayed and the government's action was to become "more circumspect", as a Daily Telegraph correspondent forecast¹⁷¹. A commission of inquiry, it emerged, might have to be sent to Russia before recognition was granted; and Russia might first be required to enter the League of Nations. H.N. Brailsford confessed that he was "anxious"; but he had been officially assured that recognition would be unconditional¹⁷².

It has been suggested that MacDonald "by every kind of means obstructed the official recognition of the Soviet government", and that he was ultimately "compelled" to do so "only under the strongest pressure of the broad masses of the British proletariat"¹⁷³: that he "hesitated" but that pressure from the masses was "too strong"¹⁷⁴. The implementation of the electoral commitment to recognize the Soviet government, Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' maintained, "did not take place without hesitation and delay"¹⁷⁵. The charge is difficult to sustain. MacDonald had publicly committed the Labour government to recognition; and in a letter transmitted to Rakovsky on 3 January he declared that this should be done immediately, and "without any conditions", while he was at the same time interested to learn the attitude of the Soviet government to the questions of private claims, concessions and capital investment in Russia¹⁷⁶. Talk of the despatch of a commission of inquiry, wrote the Daily Herald's correspondent, might be "dismissed as ridiculous". No such step was intended, or indeed necessary: the question of recognition was "already decided"¹⁷⁷. The short delay before the official announcement of the recognition of the Soviet government appears to have been routine. Labour's supporters, Duff Cooper wrote in his diary on 29 January, could "not understand why there should be an hour's delay"¹⁷⁸.

It is difficult, moreover, to identify the source of that working-class pressure which is stated to have imposed recognition upon a reluctant government¹⁷⁹. The National Council of the I.L.P. demanded the immediate and unconditional recognition of the Soviet government on 25 January, a step which a Soviet commentator declared at the time had ended the government's hesitation¹⁷⁹. This could hardly be considered a body external to the government, however, and or distinctively working-class in composition. Beyond this, pressure appears to have been confined to a couple of letters in the Daily Herald. On 29 January Neil McLean MP wrote to complain about the "nonsense" which was circulating about a delay being necessary before recognition was granted to the Soviet government. This had not been necessary, he pointed out, in the case of the new Greek gov-

ernment¹⁸⁰. The following day Duncan Carmichael, the Secretary of the London Trades Council, wrote a further letter in which he declared that workers failed to understand why a delay should be necessary. If the Labour government were to "adopt the quibbles of the Conservative Cabinet" in such matters, it would, he thought, "disrupt the movement in the country for years"¹⁸¹. The statement that the Trades Council thereupon "began positive action", however, stands in need of correction: Carmichael had done no more, in fact, than provisionally to book a hall in central London for a meeting¹⁸². He was, moreover, in any case already a Vice-President of the National 'Hands off Russia' Committee, a body whose dominant aim was to secure the recognition of the Soviet government, and it is difficult, therefore, in this respect to consider his ~~his~~ ^{necessarily} views representative of working-class opinion as a whole¹⁸³. It seems unlikely, in any case, that either his action or McLean's letter can significantly have affected the timing or nature of the formal act of recognition, which took place two days later^{184a}.

More important, perhaps, is the objection that to attribute decisive importance to the intervention of the working-class movement is to obscure the extent to which the decision to recognize the Soviet government was one which commanded support not only in the Labour Party, but in the Liberals (whose election manifesto had advocated recognition), in business and newspaper circles, and beyond them. It was indeed opposition to recognition, and not its advocacy, which was the minority opinion. In recognizing Russia, the NKID report noted, MacDonald had the support not only of the Labour Party, but of the Liberals also; and "so popular" had the proposal become by the end of 1923 that "even several Conservative organs of the press" had declared in its favour¹⁸⁴. Carmichael, in fact, drew attention to precisely this point in his letter: why should there be a delay, he wrote, when "both Liberal and Labour candidates were pledged to the policy of recognition" and there was "no danger of a defeat in the House of Commons"¹⁸⁵.

This fact was noted by the Cabinet on 4 February, when the decision to recognize the Soviet government was approved. He had acted immediately and without calling a special meeting to consider the question, MacDonald stated, "in accordance with what he knew was the general viewpoint of the Cabinet". If he had delayed the matter for consultation with other Powers it would take three months; whereas if the decision were communicated to the Soviet government before the Second Congress of Soviets ended its meeting it would be possible to

secure its endorsement "not merely by M. Chicherin and the Foreign Office officials in Moscow, but by representatives of the Soviets of all the Russias", who had now, in fact, sent a "very cordial telegram of acceptance". The Cabinet offered its congratulations on the promptitude with which the matter had been accomplished¹⁸⁶. As a general rule, it was agreed, the government should submit large questions of foreign policy to Parliament before taking action. There were special grounds for speed, however; and in any case the matter was hardly one of party politics: "two political parties out of three had included the de jure recognition of Russia in their programme of electoral policy"¹⁸⁷.

The British note extended recognition to the Soviet government as the de jure government "in the territories of the former Russian Empire which acknowledge its authority". It remained necessary however to conclude a practical agreement concerning a series of related questions, such as the validity of existing treaties, the claims of the governments and nationals of either state against the other, and propaganda and subversion of institutions. The Soviet government was requested to send representatives to London as soon as possible to discuss these questions and reach a basis of agreement on them¹⁸⁸.

Recognition was acknowledged and the invitation to send a delegation to London was accepted by Rakovsky on 8 February¹⁸⁹. The Cabinet noted warily that Rakovsky's reply defined the territory over which the Soviet government claimed to exercise authority in terms different from those in which it had been recognized by the government; but it was agreed that "British recognition was as stated in the British note of February 1st". MacDonald informed the Cabinet that he intended to send Rakovsky a memorandum of the outstanding questions to be resolved between the two governments, with suggestions as to which should be dealt with by direct negotiation and which should be referred to the Joint Commission to meet in London¹⁹⁰. He wrote to Chicherin at the same time, expressing satisfaction that in so short a time the Labour government had been able to take the first step towards a resolution of the differences between the two sides; but for the time being, he indicated, the two governments should be represented at the level of charge d'affaires rather than ambassador¹⁹¹. Chicherin regretted this decision, pointing to the "moral significance" which would be attached to the appointment of ambassadors, but he agreed with MacDonald that those subsequently appointed must be figures of influence who would be acceptable in the other country¹⁹².

Recognition, wrote Krasin, was "undoubtedly an event of the first political importance". It would serve as the signal for corresponding action from a series of other states; the French government might be obliged to alter its inflexible attitude; and the decision might be expected to have an influence upon the American government. It would finally destroy the hopes of the counter-revolutionaries in exile, who would now move off to America, Brazil and elsewhere. Despite unemployment and a depressed foreign trade, England remained economically the most important country in Europe, and from the point of view of foreign trade the improvement of relations with that country was of "major significance". Even in the unfavourable circumstances which had existed since 1921, Britain had occupied the first place in Soviet foreign trade¹⁹³. The de jure recognition of the Soviet government, however, he added later, could in itself "certainly not remove all those difficulties and obstacles which he have in our economic relations with the capitalist West"¹⁹⁴. This note of caution, as the course of the London negotiations soon made apparent, was a judicious one.

- 1 Parliamentary Debates Vol 164 col 1255, 30 May 1923
- 2 Russian Information and Review Vol ii No 37, 23 June 1923, p579
- 3 Parliamentary Debates Vol 165 cols 988-9, 18 June 1923
- 4 Contemporary Review Vol 123, June 1923, p777
- 5 Contemporary Review Vol 124, September 1923, p384, p385
- 6 Economist 12 August 1922 p277
- 7 Economist 24 March 1923 p633
- 8 Economist 22 September 1923 p430
- 9 Economist 9 December 1922 p1076, 24 November 1923 p916. The New Economic Policy represented, the Glasgow Herald explained in a series of articles on 'Soviet Russian and Trade', an "entire change in what was considered the Soviet's fundamental conceptions with regard to Marxism". A "real evolution towards the re-establishment of a normal economic regime", it appeared, was taking place, "based on private initiative" (Glasgow Herald 7 November 1923, 4 December 1923)
- 10 the figures are summarised in Shishkin: Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Strany Zapade pp348-9. The Manchester Guardian Commercial's 'own correspondent' wrote from Moscow that the 1923 harvest was "expected to be above the average" (ibid 9 August 1923 p157).
- 11 Economist 27 January 1923 p158; ibid pp164,165
- 12 ibid 3 February 1923 p229
- 13 ibid 17 February 1923 p317
- 14 Soviet archival source, cited in Shishkin op.cit.p362
- 15 Merrifield, Ziegler and Company, Liverpool, forwarded to Foreign Office 11 May 1923, F.O. 371.9366 N4334, 15 May 1923
- 16 Association of British Chambers of Commerce to Foreign Office, 12 June 1923, F.O. 371.9368 N5314, 13 June 1923
- 17 O'Malley report of Foreign Office meeting, 11 May 1923; Leeper minute of 11 May 1923; both in F.O. 371.9366.N4253, 12 May 1923
- 18 Manchester Guardian Commercial 17 May 1923
- 19 ibid 14 June 1923
- 20 Karpova, R.F.: L.B. Krasin - Sovetsky Diplomat (Moscow 1962) p149
- 21 Federation of British Industry Organization and Management Committee minutes, D3762, Ref 340/B/7, 4 June 1923
- 22 Westminster Gazette 8 February 1923, quoted in Nailed to the Counter (anti-Soviet lies) (London 1923), with a preface by H.N. Brailsford, p10

- 23 quoted in the National Review Vol 79, March 1922, p163
- 24 Parliamentary Debates Vol 147 col 227, 20 October 1921; and ibid col 230, Baldwin
- 25 Statistical Abstract for 1912-1926, Parliamentary Papers 1928 Cmd 3084, table 208 p290X-1, and table 210 p298-9
- 26 ibid
- 27 Parliamentary Debates Vol 155 col 8, 12 June 1922 (the figures for imports were respectively £251,175 and £543,272; and for exports and re-exports £42,569 and £13,994 to £713,590 and £123,197); Russian Information and Review Vol i No 23, 1 September 1922 p545
- 28 Statistical Abstract as in note 25. The direct state of the Irish Free State with Soviet Russia was excluded from these calculations from April 1923 onwards.
- 29 ibid
- 30 Parliamentary Debates Vol 173 col 247, 6 May 1924
- 31 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za X Let: sbornik materialov (Moscow 1928), ed. A.I. Kutuzov pp302,303; and V.I. Frolova: Statistika Vneshnego Tovarobmena Rossii 1921-1923 gg (Moscow 1923) p62. Percentage figures of 39.6% and 26.1% are given in Sotsialisticheskoe Khoziastvo No 1, 1923, pp107-118
- 32 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za X Let pp306-7, expressed in 1913 prices
- 33 ibid
- 34 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za 1918-1940 gg (Moscow 1960) p13
- 35 ibid p21
- 36 see DVPSSSR Vol7 Appendix 17 p695
- 37 ibid Appendix v p674
- 38 ibid p676
- 39 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya No 4-5 (82-3) 10 February 1924 p6
- 40 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR (za 1923 god): sbornik (Moscow 1924) ed Groman p191
- 41 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za 1918-1940 gg p18
- 42 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR (za 1923 god) p191
- 43 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya No 13(43), 2 April 1923 p8
- 44 ibid No 4-5 (82-3) 10 February 1924 p6
- 45 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR (za 1923 god) p195
- 46 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za 1918-1940 p453f, expressed in 1950 roubles
- 47 Enciklopediya Russkogo Eksporta (Berlin 1924-5, 3 vols) iii 484
- 48 ibid ii 306

- 49 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za 1913-1940 gg. pp451,456,455, in 1913 prices
- 50 Entsiklopediya Russkogo Eksporta iii 467
- 51 Russian Information and Review Vol i No 1, 1 October 1921 p19 (a figure of £2,809,641, which may include purchases outside the U.K., is in Arcos Kommerchesky Byulleten' No 13, 15 November 1922)
- 52 Russian Information and Review Vol i No 4, 15 November 1921 p88 (in excess of the Board of Trade figures, which recorded only the actual despatch of goods, not their purchase as such); ibid Vol i No 8, 15 January 1921
- 53 ibid Vol i No 5, 1 December 1921, p112
- 54 Entsiklopediya Russkog Eksports iii 468 (a small percentage was accounted for by sales outside the U.K.).
- 55 Inostrannoe Torgovoe Obozrenie No 18, 1924, 1 September, p27
- 56 Entsiklopediya Russkogo Eksporta iii 465. The Paris office was closed in February 1924; the New York office was set up as 'Amtorg', an independent body, in June 1924.
- 57 Russian Information and Review Vol v No 30, August 1924, p138; Entsiklopediya Russkogo Eksporta iii 465. An Information Department, attached to the Trade Delegation, was one of the first sections to be set up. Originally run by one person (Andrew Rothstein, son of Theodore Rothstein) from December 1920, it undertook the publication of 'Russian Information and Review' from October of the following year (for which purpose an assistant, Emile Burns, was taken on), and was generally concerned with "answering falsehoods in the British press about Soviet Russia" (Andrew Rothstein, letter to author, 14 July 1972)
- 58 Inostrannoe Torgovoe Obozrenie No 18, 1 September 1924, p18
- 59 Entsiklopediya Russogo Eksporta iii 466
- 60 Inostrnnoc Torgovoe Obozrenie No 23, 5 November 1923, p5-6; Arcos Banking Corporation, Ltd., Balance Sheet (London, December 1923 sqq)
- 61 Entsiklopediya Russogo Eksporta iii 466 (£74,000 of the £150,000 share capital was British-owned); ibid
- 62 ibid pp467, 468
- 63 Arkos Kommerchesky Byulleten' No 15, 15 December 1922
- 64 Russian Information and Review Vol ii No 21, 24 February 1923 p324; ibid Vol iii No 14, 6 October 1923 p210; ibid Vol iii No 20, 17 November 1923 p317
- 65 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 25, 26 October 1923

- 66 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. (Moscow 1924) pl05
- 67 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 12 August 1923. In Istoriya Vneshnei Politiki i: 1917-1945 (Moscow 1965) it is incorrectly stated that the delegation was led by the Prime Minister (pl83); and McCarran incorrectly speaks of "two businesses, the Marshall and the Becos Companies", although Marshall was in fact rather the managing director of the latter company (McCarran: Fabianism in the Political Life of Britain 1919-1931 (London 1952) p287).
- 68 Marshall's operations in 'tovaro obmien' in 1918 are referred to in a letter from Gregory to Marshall, 19 November 1920, F.O. 371.5446.N2032, 8 November 1920. Amemorandum addressed to Gregory on the latter's request on 17 February 1919 is in F.O. 371.3956.27348; it stated that "the essential remedy is the introduction of compromise". Marshall submitted a memorandum on 7 December 1920 on behalf of Becos Traders dealing with the proposed formation of a Russian Trading Corporation, and sought an interview with Gregory upon it. Gregory however minuted: "for Goodness's Sake stave off this bore. He is intolerable" (F.O. 371.5434.3980, 9 December 1920; the memorandum is in ibid, and in Marshall: The Re-opening of Trade with Russia: 'The Russian Trading Corporation': a memorandum outlining a proposal for rendering possible the resumption of trade with Russia, after the conclusion of the Trade Agreement between that country and Great Britain: private and confidential (London, Becos Traders, n.d.)).
- 69 F.B.I. Yearbook and Export Register, 1922 ed., p272-3
- 70 Becos Traders: Report on the Visit to Russia of the Becos Mission (London September 1923, 'strictly private and confidential') pp2-6
- 71 Manchester Guardian Commercial 30 August 1923 p232
- 72 Becos Traders: Report pp7-8
- 73 O'Malley minute, 24 October 1923, and Report in tsx. in F.O. 371.9353. N9234, 19 October 1923; Curzon minute, 6 September 1923, in F.O. 371. 9352.N7387, 4 September 1923, which also contains Hodgson's report on the mission from Moscow, tel. No 666, 24 August 1923
- 74 Daily Herald 23 August 1923; Marshall announced the existence of a "concrete scheme" for Russian orders worth £20 million, if credits were available, in an interview in the Manchester Guardian Commercial 20 December 1923 p646, reported in the New Leader 28 December 1923. According to the Manchester Guardian Commercial (15 November 1923 p516) electro-technical goods might also be sold to the Ukrainian government.

- 75 Glasgow Herald 3 September 1923
- 76 Manchester Guardian Commercial 6 September 1923 p258 (filed by the Foreign Office in F.O. 371.9352.N7410, 6 September 1923)
- 77 Arkos Kommerchesky Byulleten' No 20, 1923, 24 September 1923, p6-7
- 78 Glasgow Herald 4 September 1923, Manchester Guardian 3 September 1923
- 79 Evening Standard 3 September 1923, in F.O. 371.9352.N7373, 4 September 1923
- 80 Sheffield Chamber of Commerce Journal Vol vi No 64, November 1923, pp99-100, reporting the Associated Chambers' meeting on 24 October 1923
- 81 **Marshall**: Memorandum regarding Unemployment and Russia (London, Becos Traders 5 November 1923, private and confidential) ppl-3; Marshall to Foreign Office 14 November 1923, enclosing the memorandum and reporting its circulation (F.O. 371.9353.N8955, 15 November 1923)
- 82 Arkos Kommerchesky Byulleten' No 20, 24 September 1923, p6
- 83 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 g. (Moscow 1924) pl06
- 84 Times 3, 4 September 1923
- 85 Soviet archival source, cited in Shishkin: Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Strany Zapada p353. Mr C. Birch Crisp, of the British Bank for Foreign Trade, was reported by the Daily News (5 September 1923) to be of the opinion that Russia was now "one of the brightest spots on the commercial horizon" (in F.O. 371.9352.N7410, 6 September 1923)
- 86 Financial Times 4 September 1923
- 87 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya 37-8, 1923, p20
- 88 Manchester Guardian 20 November 1923
- 89 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 11 March 1924
- 90 Becos Traders: Report p5
- 91 Arkos Kommerchesky Byulleten' No 20, 24 September 1923, p6-7
- 92 Russian Information and Review Vol iii No 9, 1 September 1923
- 93 Vserossiiskaya sel'skokhozyaistvennaya i kustarno-promyshnennaya Vystavka: Materialy i Dokumenty (Moscow 1922) p9
- 94 Kaufman, 'The All-Union Exhibition and Foreign Trade', Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 31 July 1923
- 95 Vsesoyuznaya... Vystavka: Obshchy Katalog (Moscow 1923) pp259-60
- 96 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya 33-4 (63-4), 23 September 1923 pl,2,4
- 96 Vsesoyuznaya... Vystavka: Obshchy Katalog (Moscow 1923) p260
- 98 Vserossiiskaya... Vystavka: Materialy i Dokumenty p5

- 99 decree of 23 January 1923, Byulleten' Glavnogo Komiteta Vsesoyuznoi..
Vystavki Vol i No 1, 10 February 1923, pp14-16; ibid No 17, 5 July 1923 p13
- 100 Russian Information and Review Vol ii, No 24, 17 March 1923 pp381-3
- 101 ibid p370; ibid Vol ii No 26, 7 April 1923, p404
- 102 Arkos Kommerchesky Byulleten' No 16, 30 July 1923, p10-11
- 103 Russian Information and Review Vol iii No 6, 11 August 1923 p86
- 104 Vsesoyuznaya.. Vystavka: Byulleten' Glavnogo Komiteta No 17, 5 July 1923 p14
- 105 Arkos Kommerchesky Byulleten' No 16, 30 July 1923, p11. An article by Segal on the Moscow Exhibition appeared, for instance, in the Westminster Gazette 12 July 1923.
- 106 Russian Information and Review Vol ii no. 27, 14 April 1923, p424
- 107 Vsesoyuznaya.. Vystavka: Byulleten' Glavnogo Komiteta No 17, 5 July 1923_{p23}
and No 20, 13 August 1923, p12
- 108 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 19 August 1923
- 109 Soviet archival source, quoted in Shishkin: Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Strany Zapada p349
- 110 Russian Information and Review Vol ii No 32, 19 May 1923, p508
- 111 ibid Vol iii No 6, 11 August 1923, p83
- 112 Soviet archival source, quoted in Shishkin op.cit. p352
- 113 Scott, J.D.: Vickers (London 1962) pp144,145,390
- 114 Manchester Guardian 27 November 1923, in F.O. 371.9353.N9230, 26 November 1923
- 115 Soviet archival source, quoted in Shishkin op.cit. p350; Vneshnyaya Torgovlya (No 37-8 (67-8) 13 October 1923 p28) noted that there had been ten English visitors by 20 September.
- 116 Russian Information and Review Vol iii No 9, 1 September 1923, p130
- 117 Chamber of Commerce for North-West Russia: Directory for Russian and Foreign Businessmen (Petrograd 1924, in English) p151
- 118 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 30 November 1923
- 119 ibid 28 August 1923, and Vneshnyaya Torgovlya No 33-4(63-4), 23 September 1923, p30
- 120 Chicherin, G.V.: Znachenie Vystavki (Moscow 1923) pp3,4,4-5
- 121 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 7 November 1923
- 122 NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 god (Moscow 1924) p106
- 123 Tanin (Litvinov): Mezhdunarodnaya Politika SSSR (1917-1924) (Moscow 1925)_{p28}
- 124 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 23 October 1923, Entsiklopediya Russkogo Eksporta iii p466. The Financial News, in an article entitled 'Trade with Russia: is it time for a change of policy?', pointed out that the banks were extend-

- ing credit to the new Company "on ordinary commercial lines, a proposition which they had previously refused to entertain" (7 November 1923). There was "little doubt", the paper considered, that despite the deadlock at the governmental level, trade between the two countries was "assuming greater proportions"; and the circumstances, if they had "not politically altered, have, nevertheless, commercially altered". "Nobody has a greater repugnance to the Soviet system of government than we have", the paper concluded, "but we would urge, on purely business reasons, that the facts must be faced. As a country whose welfare depends on the maintenance of an active export trade, we can ill afford to allow the Russian market to slip out of our grasp".
- 125 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya 44(74), 25 November 1923, p13
- 126 Pall Mall Gazette 18 October 1923, quoted in Coates, W.P.: Export Credit Schemes and Anglo-Russian Trade (National 'Hands off Russia' Committee, London, November 1923, with a preface by Arthur Ponsonby) p9
- 127 Manchester Guardian 18 October 1923, in F.O. 371.9353, N8254, 19 October 1923
- 128 Manchester Guardian Commercial 25 October 1923 p437
- 129 Daily Herald 18 October 1923; copy in Foreign Office files (see n.127)
- 130 Observer 21 October 1923
- 131 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 30 November 1923
- 132 Entsiklopediya Russkogo Eksporta iii p469
- 133 Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn' 1 January 1924
- 134 Sir Allen Smith to Bonar Law, 22 December 1922 (the file contains also an earlier letter to Bonar Law of 14 December, and Law's reply of 21 December), Bonar Law Papers 112/40/1-4
- 135 Sir Allen Smith to the Prime Minister, 24 July and 3 August 1923, Correspondence between the Prime Minister and the Industrial Group, House of Commons, Premier 1/30, Public Record Office. Baldwin replied on 3 August that he had passed the letter to the Cabinet Committee on Unemployment (ibid)
- 136 Baldwin speaking at the Conservative Club, Glasgow, 26 July 1923, quoted in Coates, W.P.: Why Russia should be Recognized (National 'Hands off Russia' Committee, London, January 1924, preface by Charles Trevelyan) p22
- 137 Russian Information and Review Vol iii No 25, 22 December 1923, p386
- 138 Observer 7 October 1923
- 139 Observer 21 December 1923
- 140 quoted in Russian Information and Review Vol iii No 17, 27 October 1923, p258

- 141 ibid No 18, 3 November 1923, p275
- 142 Manchester Guardian 5 December 1923
- 143 quoted in Vneshnyaya Torgovlya 1(79), 9 January 1924, p20
- 144 Russian Information and Review Vol iv, 5 January 1924, p2
- 145 ibid Vol iii No 17, 27 October 1923, p258; ibid No 16, 20 October 1923^{p242}
- 146 ibid Vol iii No 17, 23 October 1923, pp258,267, and No 20,17 November 1923, p307
- 147 Glasgow Herald 26 October 1923
- 148 Sir D. Mann, a Canadian railway magnate, who had paid a visit to Soviet Russia, was described as a "great capitalist who has always been a champion of individualism". It was nevertheless his view that Soviet Russia might be the first European country to recover from the effects of the war, a "surprise" after the newspaper reports he had read. A "wonderfully rich country", he thought it "only a question of time before Russia will be doing as much trade with foreign countries as before" (Manchester Guardian 27 August 1923)
- 149 Observer 14 October 1923; copy in F.O. 371.9370.N8221, 17 October 1923
- 150 Westminster Gazette quoted in Russian Information and Review Vol iii No 23, 8 December 1923, p355
- 151 ibid Vol iii No 17, 27 October 1923, p258. This interest often manifested itself in a practical fashion. A fund provided by Vickers Ltd. for the teaching of Russian at Sheffield University had come to an end in 1923. The Sheffield Chamber of Commerce nevertheless considered that "in view of the prospect of a renewal of trade with Russia, it was most desirable that the teaching of this language should be continued"; and funds were sought from its membership to continue the existing scheme for a further five years (Sheffield Chamber of Commerce Annual Report 1923 (Sheffield 1924) p35).
- 152 Financial News 7 November 1923
- 153 Westminster Bank Monthly Review November 1923 p6
- 154 British-Russian Gazette and Trade Outlook October 1923 pp4,5, Vol i No 3
- 155 ibid December 1923, Vol i No 3, pp33,34
- 156 quoted in Russian Information and Review Vol iv p3
- 157 Financial Times 26 December 1923, cited in Shishkin op.cit. p355
- 158 Manchester Guardian 5 December 1923
- 159 Gregory minute, 19 December 1923, in F.O. 371.9353.N9988, 24 December 1923

- 160 Daily Herald 1 January 1924, quoted in Volkov: Krakh Angliishol Politiki p543
- 161 Glasgow Herald 8 January 1924
- 162 Glasgow Herald 15 January 1924, Daily Herald 15 January 1924
- 163 Izvestiya 11 November 1923
- 164 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya 44(74) 25 November 1923, p1
- 165 Rakovsky to NKID, 27 November 1923, DVPSSSR Vol vi No 309 pp522-3
- 166 Parliamentary Debates Vol 169, cols 77-81, 15 January 1924
- 167 The evolution of labour policy with regard to Russia will be considered below, chapter 10. The Daily Herald's diplomatic correspondent noted on 21 January 1924 that the implementation of that policy would "provoke a remonstrance from a few 'die-hards'. But the wiser City men will be unfeignedly thankful..". Opinion in the City, he added, was "swinging very decidedly in favour of recognition" (Daily Herald 21, 24 January 1924). At a meeting of the Board of Trade Advisory Council on 6 February Sir A. Balfour (chairman and managing director of Balfour and Co., Sheffield steelworkers, the chairman of High Speed ~~Steel~~ Alloys Ltd and other companies, and the President of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce) expressed the opinion that "business interests generally.. felt that the recognition of the Russian Government was one step forward" (Trade Prospects, 12 February 1924, Cabinet Paper C.P. 101, Cab 24/165)
- 168 details in Mowat: Britain between the Wars (London 1955; 1968 ed.) pp 168,170,171
- 169 Labour Party 1923 general election manifesto, in Craig, F.W.S. (ed.): British General Election Manifestos 1918-1966 (Chichester 1970) p22; Times 9 January 1924, Daily Herald 9 January 1924
- 170 Parliamentary Debates Vol 169 col 159, 15 January 1924
- 171 Daily Telegraph 29 January 1924, quoted in Coates: History of Anglo-Soviet Relations p131
- 172 New Leader 1 February 1924
- 173 Maisky, I.M. : Puteshchestvie v Proshloe (Moscow 1960) p279
- 174 Taigin, I. (Maisky): Angliya i SSSR (Leningrad 1926) p28
- 175 Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 2-3, 1924, p195
- 176 Soviet archival source, Istoriya Vneshnei Politiki SSSR i (1917-1945) (Moscow 1965) p183-4; Fischer: Soviets in World Affairs ii 473
- 177 Daily Herald 30 January 1924. There was "no hitch whatever in the preparations" which were being made for the recognition of the Soviet

- 178** Government. A draft of the note of recognition was, in fact, already in the hands of the Education Minister, Charles Trevelyan, who urged that it should be sent and published "with the least possible delay! The quicker our action the finer the gesture!". He also considered that the reference to propaganda should be omitted: its inclusion was "ungracious", and there had besides been no "reasonable proof of official propaganda by the Soviet Government for a long time past". Snowden did express the opinion that some "preliminary understanding on the matter of trade debts and confiscated properties would have been desirable", to avoid the criticism of the former government and of the shareholders of former companies in Russia. He was writing however "wholly in the dark as to what has happened in the way of preliminary negotiations" (Trevelyan to MacDonald, 30 January 1924, and Snowden to MacDonald, 31 January 1924, in F.O. 371. 10465.N902, 2 February 1924). The question of the claims of British creditors had been stated by MacDonald as recently as the Albert Hall meeting, wrote the Workers' Dreadnought (Vol x No 46, 2 February 1924 p4-5), to be a matter for discussion subsequent to recognition. The Telegraph's wish, it thought, had probably been "father to the thought.. We imagine that all this is mere speculation".
- 178** Duff Cooper: Old Men Forget (London 1953) p123, entry for 29 January 1924. Cooper was Ponsonby's Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office.
- 179** ILP: 1924 Annual Conference Report Appendix 8, N.A.C. resolutions, p68; Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' 2-3, 1924, p195
- 180** Daily Herald 29 January 1924
- 181** Daily Herald 30 January 1924
- 182** Volkov: Krakh Angliiskoi Politiki.. p355; Coates: History p132
- 183** London Trades Council: 64th Annual Report 1923 (London 1924) p9
- 183a** it is not, certainly, the case that the meeting had actually taken place, as suggested in Istoriya Vneshnei Politiki SSSR i (1917-1945) p184; and n. 186 below
- 184** NKID: Godovoi Otchet za 1923 god (Moscow 1924) pp106, 6
- 185** Daily Herald 30 January 1924
- 186** Cabinet Minutes 4 February 1924, Cab 9(24)1, Cab 23/47. MacDonald had instructed the Secretary to the Cabinet on 23 January to place Russia on a list of questions for early consideration by the Cabinet; and at the following meeting of the Cabinet, before either of the letters had appeared in the Daily Herald, he informed ministers that the policy of

resuming relations with Russia was being "proceeded with as rapidly as circumstances permitted", and that the matter might be settled before Parliament assembled (Cabinet Minutes, Cab 7(24)19, 23 January 1924, Cab 23/47; Cab 8(24)10, 28 January 1924, Cab 23/47). The resolution adopted by the Second Congress of Soviets was remitted to the Foreign Office by Hodgson (3 received 4 January 1924, No 12, F.O. 371.10465.N911, 4 January 1924) and also by Rakovsky (3 received 4 January 1924, F.O. 371.10565.N978, 4 January 1924). It was printed in the Daily Herald (4 January 1924).

- 187 Cabinet Minutes 4 February 1924, Cab 9(24)2, Cab 23/47
- 188 Foreign Office to NKID, 1 February 1924, F.O. 371.10465.N902 2 February 1924, No 16 (and in DVPSSSR Vol vii No 30 pp53-4)
- 189 Rakovsky to Foreign Office, 8 January 1924, F.O. 371.10465.N1093, 8 February 1924 (and in DVPSSSR Vol vii No 30 pp54-5)
- 190 Cabinet Minutes 8 February 1924, Cab 11(24)1, Cab 23/47
- 191 MacDonald to Chicherin, 1 February 1924, F.O. 800.219, MacDonald Papers, pp198-200; and in F.O. 371.10465.N980, 4 February 1924 (and in DVPSSSR Vol vii No 47, 1 February 1924, pp99-100)
- 192 Chicherin to MacDonald, 13 February 1924, F.O. 800.219, MacDonald Papers, pp203-5 (and in DVPSSSR Vol vii No 47, 13 February 1924, pp98-9)
- 193 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya 4-5(82-3), 10 February 1924
- 194 Vneshnyaya Torgovlya 8(86) 2 March 1924 p8

Chapter Ten: Soviet Russia and Labourism

The most desirable outcome of the present situation, wrote the Economist following the general election, was that the Labour Party should form a government which should stay in power for a time with Liberal support, which would provide a guarantee against the introduction of revolutionary measures. The majority of proposals in the Labour Party election manifesto were in any case common to the Liberal manifesto. Business could contemplate such a prospect "without misgiving"; and there was, the journal considered, "no ground for panic"¹. Lloyd George wrote to C.P. Scott to support the Manchester Guardian's view that the Liberals should support a minority Labour government. "Quite a number of the important and influential", he wrote, "disliked this suggestion, but the party as a whole might be expected to support MacDonald in the promotion of an "advanced Radical programme". As to policy, he saw no difficulty. There was an ample field common to both parties; indeed the danger, to his mind, was "not that Labour would go too fast and far, but that it would not go fast and far enough and perish of inanition"². The National Review found the formation of the Labour government a "disagreeable, not to say painful" event, which would be the "cause of unholy joy to all our enemies from San Francisco to Moscow, from Berlin to Baghdad". Nevertheless, it concluded, it was surely preferable that Labour should come in as a minority government, existing on sufferance and "impotent for the larger mischief", than as a majority party. To deny the 'Democracy' its rights, moreover, might "place the Clyde Soviet in Downing Street"³.

It was nevertheless difficult, wrote Snowden, to convey an impression of the "sensation which was created in political circles, and indeed throughout the country, at the possibility of a Labour Government"⁴. For the first time in the country's history, commented the English Review, the party of revolution was approaching the helm of the state, "not only, as in the seventeenth century, for the purpose of overthrowing the Crown, or of altering the Constitution, but with the design of destroying the very basis of civilized life". The sun of England seemed "menaced with final eclipse"⁵. The installation of a "moderate subversive Government", warned the Patriot, had "always been the prelude to bloody revolution". A considerable number of "fierce Anarchist aliens" had been active in the election of this 'Kerensky government', a letter related,

and one canvasser for the Conservative party had had a "dark-skinned fist" shaken in his face, accompanied by forecasts of the overthrow of the existing organization of society. Another letter foresaw the Red Flag as the national emblem, the London Gazette suppressed and the Daily Herald made the Government organ in its place⁶. Snowden was rung up by a Countess, who asked him "frantically" if it was true that the "first thing the Labour Party would do would be to cut the throats of every aristocrat and steal all their property". "Consternation" reigned in aristocratic and financial circles⁷. Bayswater was "eagerly debating what the nationalisation of women would ^{really} be like"; and an old-established Sussex family, on receiving the news that Labour was to take office, packed all its plate and valuables and headed for the coast, "before the Bolsheviks closed the Channel ports"⁸. The Duke of Northumberland announced that the first duty and obligation of the Labour government would be to corrupt the Army, the Navy and the police force. Marriage would undoubtedly be abolished and free love introduced⁹. The church, public schools, even the Boy Scouts seemed threatened¹⁰.

Lt.-Col. Courthorpe MP, the deputy chairman of Ind Coope, admitted that the prospect of a Labour government "agitated" him. The Sunday Pictorial, indeed, predicted that within twenty-four hours of its formation there would take place a "financial panic the like of which the world has never yet known"¹¹. The announcement that Labour was prepared to form a government if called upon to do so did, in fact, lead to a bout of public selling, the Economist noted. Business, it reported at the end of the year, had fallen away to a "very low ebb". The stock market reported a "very severe depression in prices". The fear that the party might, as appeared possible, introduce its capital levy "influenced everything. People who held perfectly sound stocks and shares grew fidgety, and became increasingly nervous at the constant drop in prices"¹².

Political circles were not unaffected by the general dismay. Not all, admittedly, shared the view of Churchill that the "socialist party" constituted the most "dark and formidable menace" with which British civilization was confronted; but his judgement that the formation by that party of a government was a "national misfortune such as has usually befallen great states only on the morrow of defeat in war"¹³. Asquith, however, whose announcement in the House of Commons that his party would support the Labour motion of censure on a government had led directly to its fall and its replacement by a Labour administration, conceded that this meant "for the first time, the inst-

allation of a Socialist Government in the seats of the mighty". Few people, he added, who had had the "melancholy privilege" of reading his postbag for the previous month could be unaware of what this prospect meant to a "large and by no means negligible mass of our fellow subjects". He had "never come across more violent manifestations of an epidemic of political hysteria". He himself had been "cajoled, wheedled, almost addressed, taunted, threatened, brow-beaten, and all but blackmailed to step in as the 'saviour of society'". Both Liberals and Conservatives, however, would repudiate an alliance of this nature; and in any case, it was idle to talk of the "imminent dangers of a Socialistic regime" under a minority government dependent upon Liberal support, pledged in turn to "give no more countenance to Socialistic experiments than to a Protectionist experiment"¹⁴.

Sir F. Banbury, however, on his elevation to the House of Lords, drew attention to the danger that MacDonald, if defeated in the House of Commons, might refuse to resign. If MacDonald attempted "anything of that sort", he assured his audience, he himself would have "great pleasure in leading the Coldstream Guards into the House of Commons"¹⁵. The prospect of a Labour government, Davidson recorded, "threw many Conservatives (and probably the majority) into a panic"¹⁶. The City of London Conservative and Unionist Association wrote to Baldwin urging that the Conservatives support the Liberals in order to exclude the Labour party from government¹⁷. Baldwin was informed by important figures in the City of London that a Socialist government would be a financial disaster; and Balfour wrote to him urging that it would be a "serious danger if the Socialist Party is allowed to assume office at the present time". "Every means", if necessary an arrangement with Asquith, should be considered in order to avoid Parliamentary defeat¹⁸.

Baldwin remained unconvinced. This was not only, or even mainly, because the Conservative party was "largely composed of men brought up at public school -s" who were "unable to divest themselves from the idea that Parliament is a political cricket match in which one's side comes in to bat and, being fairly bowled, goes out again to field with great good humour"¹⁹. It was the case, firstly, as Asquith had pointed out, that the Labour government would be a minority one, dependent upon Liberal support. As the King put it to Davidson, "the Socialists would have an opportunity of learning their administrative duties and responsibilities under favourable conditions". In the second place, "a combination of the Liberal and Conservative parties, under whatever premier-

ship, to "deprive Labour of their constitutional rights" would be the "first step down the road to revolution". The election, Davidson told the King, might even be considered a "blessing in disguise", for had the Conservative government continued for a further eighteen months, the Socialists "might have come in with an overwhelming majority"²⁰. It would be "really dangerous", an 'eminent Conservative' told the Manchester Guardian, for the Conservatives and the Liberals to combine and keep Labour out. That "would be the way to revolution"²¹.

Beyond this, a backbencher wrote to Baldwin, the need was imperative to avoid an amalgamated "bourgeois bloc" which would leave the Socialists as the sole alternative. This had been Bonar Law's "greatest fear". An anti-Labour coalition, Baldwin rightly judged, could lead ultimately only to a major Labour victory²². For his government to be succeeded by a minority Labour administration was, in a very real sense, the lesser evil.

That such a government should extend diplomatic recognition to the Soviet government was not surprising. Indeed, on this estimate, nothing could be more appropriate than that the Socialists, in office, should express in this way their identity with the Socialists who held office in Soviet Russia. It has more recently been held that the party's foreign policy represented a "repudiation of traditional British foreign policy", replacing that policy of anti-

internationalism and selfish defence of national interests with a "militant socialist bias" (on the outbreak of the world war)²³. The party's policy, it has been represented, was characterised by "anti-imperialism", and by "ardent pro-Soviet sentiment". After 1918 the I.L.P.'s "systematic anti-capitalism.. was incorporated wholesale into Labour's foreign policy pronouncements"; and the party - it has been argued - had an "assumed identity of common status as underdogs" with the Soviet government, and an "instinctive sympathy with a workers' government"²⁴. It will be suggested below that this is fundamentally to misunderstand the nature of the Labour Party's foreign policy, and in particular its policy with regard to Soviet Russia. It will first be necessary, however, to devote some attention to the nature of the Labour Party in this period, and to the political thinking which informed the party's foreign policy;

A number of timorous old ladies, reported a commentator, sold all their government stocks when the Labour Party took office, only to repurchase them when they saw photographs of the King in session with MacDonald²⁵. Of MacDonald, at least, their fears had little justification. In the attempt to understand and

appreciate him, wrote his contemporary biographer, one was "again and again compelled to think of Gladstone"²⁶. MacDonald, indeed, entered politics as a Liberal, after serving for some time as the private secretary of Thomas Lough, the Liberal parliamentary candidate for West Islington²⁷. He left the Liberals for the I.L.P. in 1894, after his failure to secure adoption as the Liberal parliamentary candidate at Southampton. There "never was any dispute as to objects" between himself and the Liberals, he wrote to Hardie; but the failure of the local Liberal association at Attercliffe to adopt a well-known local working man as a candidate showed, he thought, that Liberalism and "more particularly local Liberal associations" had "definitely declared against Labour, and so I must accept the facts of the situation"²⁸. "We didn't leave the Liberals", he later wrote to Herbert Samuel; "they kicked us out and slammed the door in our faces"²⁹. The following year MacDonald stood as an I.L.P. parliamentary candidate; and a year later he was a member of the I.L.P.'s National Council³⁰.

The failure to secure adoption as a Liberal parliamentary candidate was common to Keir Hardie at Mid-Lanark in 1888 and to Arthur Henderson at Newcastle in 1895³¹. Henderson, who had entered politics as a Liberal agent, became a Labour candidate; but so far from undergoing a startling conversion, it has been observed, there was "no evidence that he was ruffled by the slightest spiritual or intellectual change"³². On becoming Secretary of the Labour Party in 1912, he joined the Fabian Society, and might appear with this act to have espoused the principles of (however moderate) socialism. It was the result, however, of the fact that with his election as Labour Party Secretary he had become ex officio British representative on the International Socialist Bureau: the members of which were required to belong to one of their country's socialist societies. To what extent his adhesion was a matter of conviction has been considered "perhaps doubtful"³³. He had come into the labour movement "largely", it was noted, "through his work as a lay preacher"³⁴. It was his objection to the Liberal Party, and that of several other early leaders of the Labour Party, that it had failed to adopt them as Liberal parliamentary candidates. This appears in turn to have been largely the consequence of the dominance in Liberal constituency associations of businessmen, professional men and clergy, who were reluctant to provide for the maintenance of a working-class representative, and whose interests might suffer from too active a prosecution of the 'labour question'³⁵.

Organizationally, the party owed its existence less to the promptings of socialism, from an official commitment to which the party kept aloof, than to the unwillingness of the Liberals to devote sufficient attention to the limited reforms required by the trade unions, in particular to the safeguarding of their funds from the consequences of the Taff Vale ^{judgement in 1901} ~~and Osborne cases~~. Trade union affiliation to the Labour Representation Committee (as the Party was then known) more than doubled in the two years following; and compared with the trade union members, those from the socialist societies represented a tiny fraction³⁶. In all but trade union questions, there was little to distinguish the Labour group in Parliament from the Liberals. It needed all the tact and patient persuasion of the leaders, wrote the Webbs, to convince the Socialists that their ideals and projects were "not being sacrificed.. (to) the political necessity of supporting the Liberal Party"³⁷.

Socialism MacDonald explained, could "not create for itself a political party founded on its dogmas"; it should rather attempt to become the "spirit" of another. In Britain - unlike the Continent where "theories and dogmas regarding the course of progress" dominated political life - parties did not "hold th principles as dogmas", a practice he described, charitably, as "not opportunism, but the experimental method"³⁸. What this might mean in practice was exemplified by the electoral pact which MacDonald, as secretary of the L.R.C., concluded with Herbert Gladstone on behalf of the Liberal Party in September 1904³, which provided for the exercise of influence on the part of the Liberals to prevent local Liberal opposition to any L.R.C. candidate who supported the "general objects of the Liberal Party", in return for which the L.R.C. was to "demonstrate friendliness" towards the Liberal candidate in any constituency in which it had influence. Although a general election did not take place in that year, as had been expected by those who had framed the pact, it remained in operation at the 1906 general election. Its existence, at either the local or national level, was firmly denied by MacDonald and by Hardie, who was probably the only other Labour leader to be aware of its existence³⁹. The two general elections of 1910, in the latter of which no Labour candidate had been successful in a three-cornered fight and only one at the expense of a Liberal opponent, led to a Parliamentary situation in which the Liberals required Labour support in order to remain in office. It was not surprising, perhaps, that discontent with the party's position developed both within and outside the party. Hardie himself admitted that the party had "ceased to count", and joined

the ranks of the critics of the parliamentary leadership⁴⁰.

Such equivocation appeared to have been ended with the adoption at the end of the war of a new and explicitly socialist programme, "Labour and the New Social Order". This was misleading. The programme, to the Webbs "from beginning to end essentially socialist in character", was equated by the French liberal historian and contemporary Halevy with the "old programme that half a century ago had been that of bourgeois liberalism in England, Peace and Plenty"⁴¹. The programme noted that "Lasting Degradation in the Standard of Life" was to be avoided only by "deliberate National Organization". Attempts by employers to reduce wages would lead to "embittered industrial strife.. in the highest degree detrimental to the national interests". The government of the day should take "all necessary steps to avert such a calamity". The tax measures which were proposed were, it was carefully pointed out, not "'class' measures", but ones which might promote the interests of the "clerk, the teacher, the doctor, the minister of religion, the average retail shopkeeper and trader". The "Democratic Control of Industry" to which the document committed the party amounted to the continuation of wartime controls over industry into peacetime. Even Churchill had been persuaded of the merits of socialism thus defined⁴².

In the case of the coalmines and the railways, Henderson explained, it had been "accidental circumstances and not abstract theory" which had led the party to the conclusion that they could not be organized as public services except under national ownership⁴³. Common ownership of the means of production, he wrote in 1918, meant no more than resistance to "every proposal to hand back to private capitalists the great industries and services" that had come under Government control during the war⁴⁴. His views were echoed by the President of the Nottingham party conference, W.F. Purdy. If during the war it had been found necessary "in the national interest" to control the railways, canals, mines, shipping and shipyards, then after the war the Labour Party should "insist on their being owned and controlled for the people as a whole". The strain of the war, reported the Executive Committee to the conference, had "broken down the competitive industrial system" and led to "national organization to a degree that (had) appeared practically impossible in the days of peace". The "more thoughtful of the community", it considered, had been led to consider proposals for national reorganization on "lines which were popular only in Labour circles before the war"⁴⁵. These proposals had, in fact, already

found expression in resolutions adopted at previous party conferences, of which the new programme was, to a considerable extent, simply a codification. The 1914 conference had adopted a resolution calling for the "abolition of capitalism"; and in this and in the previous year a proposal had been adopted calling for a minimum wage. The 1917 conference had opposed the return of the mines or the railways to private hands after the war⁴⁶. It was a question not of the introduction, but of the retention of the party's professed political objectives.

If the 1918 conference did, nevertheless, mark a significant turn in the party's development, this was less, perhaps, in the adoption of the new programme than in a number of other decisions less obviously related to the promotion of socialism. These decisions, and notably the constitutional change which opened the party to individual membership in place of membership through a trade union or socialist society, were designed, in Henderson's words, to "remove the idea that the (party) was the party of the manual wage-earners merely", and that its politics were "the politics of the trade-unions - a purely class-conscious demand for specific improvements in wages, hours, conditions of employment"⁴⁷. In particular, a place must be found in the party's ranks, and especially among its parliamentary candidates, for women, who for the first time were to receive voting rights, and for the middleclass in general. The party, Henderson explained, must transform itself from a federation of societies into a "national popular party". It must be so constituted as to be able to include within its ranks "unattached democrats with no acknowledged allegiance to any industrial or political movement": for "real political democracy" he held, could "not be organized on the basis of class interest". His aim was to change the "old conditions" in which the party had "seemed to be, although it never actually was, a class party"⁴⁸. Purdy told the party's conference in the summer of 1918 that with the new programme the party had adopted a "claim to be a National Party in its broadest and widest sense". Their aim should be "not to serve sectional interests alone, or to set class against class, but rather to secure that all classes, as far as possible, 'should come together'⁴⁹". The party's new constitution, Webb wrote, might well prove to be an "event of far-reaching political importance". Instead of a "sectional and somewhat narrow group", a party was now established into which it was hoped to "attract many men and women of the shopkeeping, manufacturing and professional classes", who were "dissatisfied with the old political parties"⁵⁰. The professional man, the schoolteacher, the doctor, the tradesman, the minister and the clerk, wrote

Henderson, who established relations with the rank and file of working-class members of the party, would "derive immediate spiritual benefit from the contact"⁵¹.

There was some concern at the party conference that Labour should grow "not by attracting every disgruntled Liberal and Tory they could find, but by attracting men and women who really believed in the Party"⁵². Henderson's criteria were somewhat more accommodating. The distinction between those who lived by working and those who lived upon the proceeds of wonsership, he wrote, did "not exclude the so-called capitalist from membership of the Party"⁵³. The new constitution did, indeed, largely justify the expectations of those who had framed it. Its adoption was followed, wrote the Webbs, by a "considerable accession of membership, largely from the professional and middle classes", which "steadily increased". The new members included in particular "many thousands of converts from the Liberal and Conservative Parties"⁵⁴. One of the most remarkable features of the 1918 election, indeed, wrote an observer, had been the "entry of the middle classes.. into the ranks of Labour"⁵⁵.

The change extended the phe party's parliamentary candidates. Several Liberal MPs, Henderson noted in a letter to C.P. Scott, had given notice to their constituents that they intended to stand as independents in the forthcoming elections. This meant, he thought, that they would probably join the Labour Party. "His policy was to enlarge the bounds of the Labour Party and bring in the intellectuals as cnadidates"⁵⁶. In the 1918 general election, the New Statesman noted, "something like a fourth of the Labour candidates" had been "from the professional and property-owning classes"⁵⁷. The Labour representatives on local authorities, it added at the beginning of 1920, were a "sufficient indication of the change which is coming about" in the party. Doctors, lawyers, architects, "professional men of every type", had been successful as well as trade unionists. In the next general election, it hoped, Labour's successful candidates would include fewer "middle-aged trade unionixxx officials" and more "men capable of effective Parliamentary work"; or in other words, a "respectable muster of the professions and the business men, who have thrown in their lot with Labour"⁵⁸.

The changes in the party, Snowden recalled, had had the "very desirable result" of securing the adoption of a "different class of cnadidate". The party's contingent in Parliament after the 1922 general election contained a "larger element of middle class people and professional men"⁵⁹. The only disturbing

feature of the new parliamentary Labour party, indeed, was the return of a number of radical I.L.P. members, "mostly from the submerged regions of Glasgow", the Review of Reviews explained, who interjected "guttural expletives" and made "explosive speeches in language which no man can understand"⁶⁰.

Revolution, Henderson declared, was a "word of evil omen". No "responsible person", however dedicated to the complete transformation of society, could "contemplate such a possibility without horror"; it was "enough to appal the stoutest heart". Revolution, moreover - at least revolution "in the continental sense" - was "alien to the British character". The prospect of social convulsion, however, might attract the support of "men of unstable temperament", as the "feverish industrial unrest" of the immediate postwar period had shown. The party's most effective contribution to the aversion of this danger might be to "rehabilitate Parliament in the eyes of the people"⁶¹. The party's manifesto in the 1918 election, accordingly, while declaring boldly that Labour's programme was to "build a New World", stressed that it was committed at the same time to building it "by constitutional means"⁶². The party's appeal to the electorate in 1922 went further. Democratic government, the manifesto claimed, could be made effective without bloodshed or violence. The party's proposal to bring about a more equitable distribution of the nation's wealth by constitutional means was "neither Bolshevism nor Communism, but common sense and justice". It formed "Labour's alternative to Reaction and Revolution". Labour's programme, indeed, the manifesto claimed, was the "best bulwark against violent upheaval and class war"⁶³.

Not all were satisfied with this trend in the party's evolution. F.W. Jowett, had attended the Geneva conference of socialist parties in 1920. He was driven to put a crucial question to the other members of the commission on socialisation, on which he served: was the commission "prepared to declare war here and now on the parasites who ~~live~~ on rent and interest", or was it content that socialism should "amble on through many weary years debating the precise method of socialisation which we should recommend "step-by-step" to a puzzled and weary electorate". The attacks on the old order, he wrote in an article on his return, "must now be open and direct, and the plan of it must be easy for ordinary people to understand". As chairman of the 1922 Labour party conference at Edinburgh, he used his opportunity to attack interest and rent increases whose function, he declared, would be to "enrich mainly the class which has already more to spend than it can usefully spend"; while for the minster's

wife, "trudging to the guardians for relief, it is tears all the way". The Daily Telegraph remarked that it had "never read a speech more saturated with class hatred"; and Lord Birkenhead in the House of Lords regretted its "inflammatory" character. He assured his audience, however, that it had not represented the delegates at the conference⁶⁴. From the other end of the political spectrum, writers in the Communist Review agreed that from the "International Labour standpoint, the British masses (were) the most apathetic at the present moment". It was "no use disguising the melancholy fact that British Labour today" was "impotent and lethargic"⁶⁵. Four generations of industrial capitalism, Willis wrote in the Communist, had bred a class "pathetically loyal to existing institutions", whose "stolid conservatism" must amaze every thinking capitalist, however much he might secretly rejoice⁶⁶.

Events were to bear out Lord Birkenhead's confidence. Delivering the Presidential address at the 1923 Labour conference, Sidney Webb noted that the party had "now attained the position of the Official Opposition, holding itself out to the electors as the alternative government". The party, he urged, "must remember this position, and rise to its responsibilities". The conference endorsed without opposition a resolution which declared the party's object to be the "supersession of Capitalism by the Co-operative Commonwealth", an object which was held to "distinguish the Labour Party fundamentally from both the Conservative and Liberal Parties". A delegate nevertheless felt obliged to remark upon a "certain amount of timidity" on the part of the Labour candidates at the previous general election in "standing up for the principles of socialism"⁶⁷. MacDonald, indeed, had written of his concern that the Observer consistently labelled Labour "the Socialist Party". Only by "persistent educational propaganda in the country", he wrote, and by "good debating in the House of Commons", were the "bogey words to be killed"⁶⁸.

On 20 March 1923, Snowden introduced a motion in the House of Commons calling for the establishment of an "industrial and social order based on the public ownership and democratic control of the instruments of production and distribution"⁶⁹. It was a private member's motion, not a party initiative, and on its introduction "nobody was more annoyed", it was reported, "than ^{Mr} MacDonald"⁷⁰. The motion was declared by Snowden to amount to a "direct challenge to the holders and defenders of the capitalist system". He had, however, always been an advocate of 'gradualism' in social progress, he wrote in his autobiography, and had "always opposed a revolutionary policy". Reform,

he noted approvingly, was the "surest preventive of revolution"⁷¹. In proposing his motion he was, accordingly, at pains to point out that he "proposed no revolution", and contemplated no confiscation. There was no analogy between socialism and bolshevism: they were antitheses. His recommendation was simply that the extension of government action and of municipal enterprise, which was in any case taking place, should become the "conscious policy of the government". No further step forward should be taken until the previous step had been "justified by its success"⁷². A 'criticism and restatement' of Labour's objectives, written by seven party members, appeared later in the year. It noted that Snowden's speech had been an attack upon the existing system without advocacy of any other; and it argued a "gradual watering down" of Labour policy from socialism to a "form of Radicalism"⁷³. Snowden, the Economist remarked, had "mellowed with the passing years"⁷⁴.

In moving from Official Opposition to Government, a writer in the Socialist Review calculated, the party would have to contest about a hundred middle class seats, which, if they were not contested and won, would form a "great handicap" to the attaining of a Parliamentary majority. There was "no reason, beyond prejudice", it was claimed (with some justice), why the Labour programme should not gain support in these areas. The party's "main propaganda efforts" should now be "largely directed to creating a better understanding of our position in middle class minds". The middle class voter had been led to believe that the party's policy was inimical to his interests: indeed on this point "our own people", he thought, had "sometimes given the wrong impression". It was now the time for a "bold and clear lead" to the middle class, and for an attempt to explain the party's policy "in terms which will appeal to them"⁷⁵. To a host of middle-class minds, it was pointed out in the Labour Magazine, 'Labour' was synonymous with 'strikes', and "while this impression remains the possibility of progress is and will be very limited". "Wild statements" did great and definite harm to the movement. Labour's case for seeking middle class support, it was concluded, was "overwhelming"; and provided it was presented with "greater regard for the instincts and traditions of those classes", it might look forward to widespread support from them⁷⁶. It was the weakness of the Labour Party, MacDonald agreed, that it represented a "'Red Terror' to the minds of large masses of people who know little about it"⁷⁷.

Sidney Webb told the 1923 party conference that if Labour continued to gather electoral support at the existing rate, it might expect to form a government within eight years. Whatever disagreement there might be with the accuracy

of his forecast in detail, it was not a matter of dispute that the objective of the party must be, to the virtual exclusion of other forms of political activity, the generation of electoral support and ultimately, the winning of a majority in the House of Commons. This required in turn of Labour MPs that they should observe the conventions and, in practice, that they should accept the norms of that assembly. These were political constraints. In the sheltered libraries, reading and dining room of the House of Commons, Lansbury wrote, it was "a little difficult to realise the class war and all these two words mean in moral, mental and material degradation to those who remain in the mental and material abyss from which we have, at least for a time, escaped". The Irish Parnellites had acted as "foreigners and strangers in an alien land". This was a policy, he thought, which it would have been "wise for the Labour Party to have adopted". Socialists in the House of Commons must always bear in mind that they were "engaged in a war against all the man-made evils of today", and that whoever was not with them was against them, however kind and good of heart⁷⁸. Aneurin Bevan, somewhat later, thought that the young MP's first impression might be that he was in church: vaulted roofs and stained glass windows, rows of statues, soft-footed attendants and whispered conversations contrasted "depressingly with the crowded meetings and the clang and clash of hot opinions" which he had left behind in his election campaign. It seemed that having arrived, a tribune of the people, ^{he} was "expected to worship; and the most conservative of all religions - ancestor worship"⁷⁹. Members came to the House, Wedgwood told the 1921 I.L.P. conference, "full of enthusiasm, and it was gradually killed. Any little initiative was regarded as revolution"⁸⁰.

Kirkwood, undaunted, told the House shortly after his election that he would "create a new atmosphere in this building", and "smash" that which prevailed. If the Prime Minister or anyone else thought that there would be "tranquillity in this House", or that he would "kow-tow ~~in~~ and bow down to all the symbols of this awful, accursed system", they had, he declared, "never made a bigger mistake in their lives"⁸¹. The mistake, it steadily became clearer, was Kirkwood's. When he arrived to the House, he recalled, he "hated them all...They represented an authority against which I was in revolt.. They and the world they represented were crushing my fellows down into poverty, misery, despair and death". Yet he found he had to shake himself as he found himself "moving about and talking with men whose names were household words"; and it was "more strange" to "find them all so simple and unaffected and friendly".

He had often been warned by his socialist friends against the "air" of the House of Commons; and he found the warning a necessary one. He was approached by T.P. O'Connor, in his time a Parnellite but now the "father of the House", about the unwritten but nevertheless firm "code" which governed its deliberations. The courtesy and intimacy among members, the later Lord Kirkwood recalled, he "learned to understand"⁸². The shop steward type, a writer in the Fortnightly Review remarked of the House of Commons, was "little to its liking". Mills, however, a Labour MP, had "toned down not a little since he entered the House"⁸³. The 'Wild Men' from the north, equally, wrote the National Review, who had "little respect for the Parliamentary game as understood and played by older Parties, and none for Parliamentary decorum", would assuredly "learn conduct before they can hope to serve their cause"⁸⁴.

The adaptation to the rules of the Parliamentary 'game' was a general and powerful, but not always a smooth process. James Maxton, another Clydeside 'rebel', accused the government of economising on the provision of infant welfare facilities at the expense of the lives of some of the children. This, he charged, was "murder", and a "fearful thing for any man to have on his soul - a cold, callous, deliberate crime to save money". Maxton refused to withdraw; and accordingly he, and three colleagues who repeated his charge, were suspended⁸⁵. MacDonald's reaction was reportedly one of despair⁸⁶. For Parliamentary work, he insisted, must be "conducted under restraint". Such outbursts were "no indication whatever of a mental attitude which must result in the frequent repetition of such proceedings". Their only redeeming feature was that they might help to "vitalise" Parliament and to "save it from a deadly sleeping sickness and the country from political chaos and from a condemnation of all politicians which has ever been the opening chapter of fruitless revolutions"⁸⁷. Nor did any of the 'rebels' appear inclined to launch an extra-parliamentary agitation.

Without suggesting a necessary connection, it was at least remarkable that the party's growing moderation was closely paralleled by the development of its central apparatus. The headquarters staff before the war had been eleven; by 1919, this number had increased to forty-seven⁸⁸. The work at headquarters was now divided into departments, and an Organizing Secretary for the Scottish area had been appointed. Arrangements were being made for the appointment of local agents. An increase in the subscription was sought, and obtained the following year⁸⁹. In 1920 the conference was informed that a new headquart-

ers building had been purchased at 34 Eccleston Square; and that a "big increase" would be found in the party's accounts under the heading of salaries and wages⁹⁰. The following year a "steady upbuilding of constituency organization all over the country" was reported. The country had been divided into nine organizing districts, each with its own District Organizer and Woman Organizer⁹¹, Organizational expenses, understandably, had "very largely increased" by the following year. Local organizations had expanded and developed. The National Agent drew attention to the fact, however, that unemployment had become a source of financial embarrassment to the local parties; and industrial disputes, he remarked sternly, had led to "serious interruptions" in organizational work⁹².

The Labour Party, to MacDonald, was the "hereditary heir of Liberalism"; and it retained "everything of permanent value that was in Liberalism"⁹³. Liberalism, it emerged, was a political philosophy whose permanent value he found very considerable indeed. The same could not be said, however, of the work of Marx, or for that matter of Hegel, whose dialectic MacDonald pronounced "too shallow for biological evolution". Its "contorting spectacles" had, moreover, the grave shortcoming that they could not be "dissociated from the ideas of catastrophe and revolution". Views of individual and social growth, he wrote, had been "profoundly modified" since Marx had begun his work; and his views - their largely English source of reference notwithstanding - he found "unfitted for our historical soil"⁹⁴.

Not simply Marx and Hegel, but a conception of society and societal change as the product of the relations between social classes was repudiated by the Labour leaders. The "'class war' idea", wrote MacDonald, belonged to the "pre-socialist and pre-scientific phase of the Labour Movement". Socialism could take no part in a "purely horizontal tug-of-war between the working and the capitalist class". He rejected the "crude notion of a class war". All "barrier phrases and sectional dogmas" must be removed from socialism: for socialism marked the "growth of Society, not the uprising of a class, and the consciousness which it sought to arouse was "not one of economic class solidarity, but one of social unity and growth towards organic wholeness"⁹⁵. The I.L.P. had never belonged, he wrote, to any "hard, dogmatic school like Marxism, with hard explanations, e.g. class war...". Indeed class conflict, he maintained in his "Socialism for Businessmen", was the "worst thing that can overtake society"⁹⁶!

He preferred the "wonderful tale" of biological evolutionism, for by the very nature of its subject matter it "had to reject explanations which assumed sudden changes or special creative fiats"⁹⁷. Organic change, he pointed out, was the "only true movement of conservation"; and it offered "increasing security against cataclysmic change, and a greater guarantee against revolution"⁹⁸.

To talk of revolution as a socialist method was in any case wrong, in MacDonald's view. It was to be regretted that in order to keep up an "honoured but antiquated phraseology, some Socialists use the word revolution to indicate what they have in mind"⁹⁹. The example of the Bolshevik revolution was, he admitted, "alluring"; but to plan a revolution in order to impose a new system on society was, he thought, "folly or worse"¹⁰⁰. Snowden shared his distaste for "experiments in theories and dogmas"¹⁰¹. British Bolsheviks were, he thought, few in number; but this was not in itself an "assurance of immunity from the danger of revolution in Great Britain", since such elements were "more dangerous than their mere numbers would suggest". There had been a "real danger" just before the world war that "blind ignorance" and "class hatred" might lead to conflict and "social convulsion"¹⁰². To imagine, nevertheless, that it was possible to overthrow a complicated system such as capitalism by "some revolutionary act" and in its place immediately to instal the Socialist Commonwealth was to "repudiate the whole of Socialist teaching upon economic and social evolution"¹⁰³.

He knew practically all of the railway managers personally, wrote J.H. Thomas; and he had "no hesitation" in saying that they were "gentlemen, not only of ability, but of character and courage". The same could not be said, however, of "extremists - little bodies of men who, in some part or other of the country, talk behind their hands one with another and create a false sense of antagonism and enmity to the ruling classes". They did not want "Russian methods" in the country; and class war was "not desirable", since it would lead to a "bloody upheaval"¹⁰⁴. A businessman was in any case a "desirable and useful citizen rendering a great service to the community". By all means let him receive a "reasonable return" upon his capital¹⁰⁵. He understandably was in common with MacDonald and Snowden in opposing "any too faithful adherence to economic dogma or political principle"¹⁰⁶.

MacDonald was concerned at the possible decline in the role of parliament, for he regarded the state "not as antagonistic", and was convinced of the need to defend it against "demagogues, cheap jacks and other types of perverters". It was people such as these who asserted that socialists who still believed in parliamentary action were, whether they knew it or not, the "supporters of the

capitalist system against their professed opinions". It was, in the circumstances, not surprising that he should find communism to have "presented very troublesome and unpleasant problems to the various Socialist governments established since the war"¹⁰⁷. To MacDonald, on the contrary, following the enfranchisement of the working classes, the state had become for the socialist "his ally, not his rival"; and the approach to socialism must be "by the parliamentary method"¹⁰⁸. A parliamentary election, he declared, would give the Labour party "all the power that Lenin had to get by a revolution"¹⁰⁹. This was not necessarily a defence of Parliament in its existing form. Indeed its reform was necessary precisely in order to "hold the field against revolutionary methods". It was essential to "amend and reconstruct" in order to bring Parliament "again into organic touch with national life"¹¹⁰. It was, indeed, to the Labour Party's credit that it might claim to have "revived the life of Parliament"¹¹¹.

MacDonald had little sympathy with unofficial strikes (or even with official ones). The union, he pointed out, provided the "proper way" for promoting a wage claim; and those who encouraged unofficial action were "only mischief-makers"¹¹². They could not allow "our British trade union movement" to be "damaged... by hot-headed industrialists"¹¹³. The responsible trade union leader did "not like strikes", wrote Snowden: nor did he himself. He urged the miners in the summer of 1920 to accept a settlement "without inflicting upon the community such a calamity as an entire stoppage of work"¹¹⁴. Clynes firmly opposed strikes "like wars"¹¹⁵. Thomas recalled that for as long as he could remember, he had not failed to disguise his antipathy to class warfare. "Constantly I urged these views on the railwaymen"; and no doubt in part as a result of his labours, there was, he thought, no industry in which the personal relations of employers and employed were more friendly than in the railway service¹¹⁶. The goodwill of the workers, he pointed out, was one of the most "tremendous assets in commerce". Their representation upon company boards would, he thought, allow them to see more of the employer's point of view, and "go an immense way towards obliterating the chances of friction". Special trains should equally be provided to take the workers and their families to the seaside. The diminution of unrest would in turn allow the trade unions to be given "greater responsibilities... to maintain discipline". He for one would have "nothing to do with wanton strikes"¹¹⁷. Even Bruce Glasier agreed that the strike should be only a "last resource", since it put the "whole

community, and chiefly the poor, under penalty". He urged rather an appeal through the ballot-box to the "inherent goodwill of the community of the nation"¹¹⁸. The employer, it appeared, notwithstanding the determined attack upon existing wage levels which was taking place at this time, was basically a good-hearted fellow, who might be persuaded to set aside his interests when informed of the suffering and misery to which they had given rise. It was not, perhaps, surprising that labour spokesmen indicated that their objectives and their achievements scrutinised might be fulfilled only in another, spiritual world¹¹⁹.

'Constructive socialism', in MacDonald's view, suggested an extension of state ownership, to be undertaken by a variety of methods; but none of them, he thought, could "be called confiscation with any justice". Indeed, so far from manifesting an antipathy towards private property, it was to him precisely "one of the gravest charges" to be brought against capitalism that the "majority of people can never acquire enough private property"¹²⁰. Thomas dedicated his book 'When Labour Rules' to the demonstration of the lack of foundation for the "instinctive antagonism of the average business man to the notion of Labour being in power". He sought for working people only a more reasonable share of the "decencies and comforts - not luxuries, note - of life". More than this would be "anarchy". There would be "no Bolshevism"; and in the matter of income tax the middle class man would, he predicted, "benefit considerably". King, constitution, Empire, and public schools had nothing to fear; and Labour rule would, he thought, "largely obliterate strikes", and provide industrial peace¹²¹.

Snowden outlines the policy of a future Labour government in a series of articles in the Morning Post, reprinted in a volume more diplomatically entitled "If Labour Rules". The majority of the electors would never vote for the Labour Party, he believed, unless assured that such a government would be controlled by common-sense and moderation. Snowden left his readers in little doubt that such would be the case. It would not be a "class government"; indeed, it would be less of a class government than any of its predecessors, and might be expected to be the "first government in this country wholly to subordinate class interests to national welfare". It would not be composed "merely of the manual labour class". A "considerable proportion of the party's members, in fact, were of middle class origins, and it had as members "manufacturers.. and even landed proprietors". A Labour government would "certainly contain many men of this type". It would pursue a constitutional course; and he would expect it to "err rather on the side of conservatism than of 'extremism'". The "sound

progressive policy" which he had outlined was not, he declared, extremism; on the contrary, such a policy represented the "best antidote to 'extremism'".¹²²

The party could not, moreover, reasonably be accused of indifference towards the British Empire, and accordingly ^{of being} little concerned about left-wing movements and Soviet policy in British possessions in Asia. The belief that the party had "no strong affection for the Empire, which it regarded as and product of commercial greed and Imperialist ambitions", and the fear that Empire and nation would be sacrificed in the name of Labour's ideal of internationalism, were, Snowden declared, "quite without substantial foundation". Party members had been the most patriotic of British citizens during the world war; and Snowden himself professed a "profound feeling" for the closeness of the tie which bound the "Anglo-Saxon Dominions to the Mother Land". A Labour government, he was certain, would be "as jealous of national honour, (and) as keenly alive to the great possibilities of Empire Development", as any British government of the past¹²³.

It was in any case misleading to consider the party's tradition to have been one of anti-imperialism. Hobson's study of 'Imperialism', it has been noted, was "not an expression of Labour sentiment". As late as 1943, the Labour Party was able to declare that "for a considerable time to come" the African colonies would "not be ready for self-government". Before 1914, the party "barely even mentioned the possibility"¹²⁴. The Fabians' manifesto "Fabianism and the Empire", which was issued in 1900 as a statement of the majority view on the issues raised by the Boer War, baldly stated that the notion that a nation had the right to do what it pleased with its own territory, without reference to the interests of the rest of the world, was "not tenable from the Internationalist Socialist point of view". The conduct of trade demanded a settled local government to preserve order; but when a native administration of this kind was impossible, "the foreign trading power must set one up". This "irresistible natural force" would lead sooner or later to the "imposition by the Powers of commercial civilization on all countries which are still refractory to us". The state which obstructed "international civilization", in short, would "have to go". Parliamentary institutions for the native races the report considered a "dream": they were "useless" to the natives, and in particular "impracticable in India"¹²⁵. MacDonald, an executive member of the Society for many years, expressed this point of view when he wrote of the

duty of a community to "spread the blessings of its civilization over the earth". The "compulsion to expand and to assume world responsibility", he wrote, was "worthy at its origin"¹²⁶.

Keir Hardie, who visited India in 1907, found abundant evidence that the position of the Indian peasant had worsened under British rule. He suggested as a reform the appointment as a secretary to the Viceroy of an "educated Indian gentleman"; and urged a start towards "opening up the way for the educated Indian to fill the higher and better paid positions". This was necessary, he pointed out, if India was to be kept "pacified and loyal to the British Raj": he was certainly "not arguing for the withdrawal of the British from India". The Congress movement, he argued, was "ultra-loyal"; but the denial of their legitimate aspirations would breed "disloyalty and discontent" and would "menace the safety of the Indian Empire". Repression would only intensify their determination to secure self-government, and might lead finally to the "loss of what has been described as the brightest jewel in the British crown"¹²⁷. MacDonald, writing at the same time, identified another (and equally contemporary) problem. "Native brethren", he urged, must be cared for so that they might "enjoy the blessings of the matured civilization of the West". The Empire had to face, in this connection, the problems of the 'native question' and of the 'immigration of other than white races into our self-governing Colonies'. "British liberty", however, he believed, had "never laid down the doctrine that free immigration was essential". A state desiring to "protect its racial purity" must have the "power to exclude undesirable immigrants" and to "classify whole races among these undesirables", without "in any way violating" the Imperial traditions which democrats would wish to preserve¹²⁸.

'Labour and the New Social Order' noted these "moral claims upon us of the non-adult races". The Labour Party stood, it stated, for the "maintenance and... progressive development of Empire", with a view to the formation of a "Britannic Alliance"¹²⁹. There was, Snowden insisted, "all the difference" between a policy of imperialism, carried out by methods of conquest and in the interests of commercialism, and a "policy of unselfish help to less advanced peoples to raise themselves in the scale of civilization"¹³⁰. The distinction was not always so apparent to the colonial peoples themselves.

The Labour Party made no demand for Indian independence, or even immediate self-government, before the war¹³¹. The 1918 general election manifesto, however, called for "freedom for Ireland and India", a status defined somewhat

arbitrarily as self-determination within what was now termed the "British Commonwealth of Free Nations"¹³² (Empire, MacDonald wrote, was an "unhappy word" for the "freest Commonwealth in the world"¹³³). The right of self-government for India was part of the 1922 election manifesto, although it was omitted in 1924¹³⁴. But reform, as the Labour Leader pointed out, was the "only preventive of revolution"; and that was what the British public should remember in connection with the problem of the government of India. They had as great a regard for the British Empire as the rest of the House of Commons, Clynes insisted; but they did differ as to the methods which might ensure its preservation and prosperity¹³⁵. Labour's methods, thought Clynes, were more likely to keep the Empire together, because it was realised that each of Britain's overseas possessions was "as independent in spirit as we are ourselves". So far from wishing to lose the colonies, the party was "trying to keep them". As Spoor pointed out, the judicious concession of a form of 'self-determination' within the Empire would retain a colony within the Empire, while it would at the same time undermine and isolate those "extremists" who sought separation from it¹³⁶. A policy of repression and coercion, on the other hand, was "the direction in which madness lies, and ultimately the disintegration and smash-up of our Empire"¹³⁷.

A resolution in favour of home rule for India as a British Dominion was carried at the 1918 party conference at Nottingham; but it was carried at the end of the meeting without debate, together with a number of other resolutions favouring, for instance, Esperanto¹³⁸. The party conference two years later discussed the question at greater length. A resolution was adopted calling for the application of the principle of "democratic self-determination" in India in such a way as to satisfy all the "legitimate aspirations" of the Indian people. Its proposer, Spoor, called for the continuation of agitation "along strictly constitutional lines"; and condemned the "unwise and mad" policy which the Amritsar shooting exemplified. Unless developments were "wisely dealt with", there was a danger of "permanent separation". They were in "much greater danger of losing India to the British Empire than the majority of people seemed to realise". The Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, was held ultimately responsible for the "tragic happenings" at Amritsar, and his recall was demanded. Every day that he remained in India, declared MacDonald, was "a disgrace to this country"¹³⁹. (Indian nationalists were naturally dismayed when he was included in MacDonald's Cabinet in 1924). Spoor drew the attention of the House of Commons to a "wave

of unrest that was full of dangerous possibilities" in India. Sir Micheel O'Dwyer, the Governor of the Punjab, and his type he considered the "greatest danger to the security of the Empire"¹⁴⁰. As the New Statesman pointed out, repression would spell calamity not only for India, but for Britain also. Unless there was a "radical change in our attitude and policy", the 'Labour Speaker's Handbook' added, India would be "lost to the British Commonwealth"¹⁴¹. Reform, and even self-government were preferable to this.

Labour's concern for parliamentary institutions extended to the colonial world; and party spokesmen were particularly distressed by the accumulating evidence that their views were not always shared by the colonial peoples. The 1919 Government of India Act, Wedgwood told the House of Commons, opened a "brighter future for the British Empire even than our history of the past has disclosed". "Very unfortunately", however, the non-co-operation movement was spreading in India. The Empire, he pointed out, could be preserved only with the co-operation of the Indians themselves. If they decided that they would take no part in the new constitution, and boycott its institutions, then it was "all up with the British Empire in India". He spoke, he stated with justice, not only for the Labour Party but for "thousands of Liberals"¹⁴². The National Joint Council of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. adopted a resolution on the situation in India in February 1922, which deplored the boycott in India of "those Parliamentary institutions recently conferred upon India, by means of which grievances should be ventilated and wrongs redressed"¹⁴³. The Indian National Congress, Wedgwood thought, should form a parliamentary opposition as the Labour Party had done, and serve its parliamentary apprenticeship in this way. He rejoiced that the Congress participated in the 1923 elections,¹⁴⁴ Let the Chief Secretary meet businessmen in India, he urged, especially those who were promoting Indians to the boards and to responsible positions in their companies. If the non-co-operators were induced to participate in elections, a large number of people classed as 'extremists' would be elected to the Council: and this offered an opportunity to "turn your poachers into gamekeepers"¹⁴⁵.

There was a similar concern to extend trade unionism on the British model to India. John Scurr suggested that the T.U.C. should despatch organizers to India, in order to minimise "rash actions" on the part of Indian trade unions. Indian workers were to be encouraged to discountenance communism and strikes¹⁴⁶. The New Statesman urged that the rights of Indian trade unions should be exten-

ded, provided, however, that they were not "perverted for political and seditious objects". It was, it pointed out, in the interests not only of Indian wage-earners, but of themselves, that a fully-organized and "responsible" trade union movement be set up there "as soon as possible"¹⁴⁷. The real answer to sedition, it added, was popular education and "trade union organization", which the government should encourage. Labour opposed political activity on the part of Indian unions. The All-India Trades Union Congress, however, resolved that workers and trade unions formed an integral part of the nationalist movement¹⁴⁸.

The exacerbation of British-Indian relations, Wedgwood told the House of Commons, would mean not merely a disaster to amicable relations between the two peoples: it would be "disastrous to British finance as well". About five hundred million pounds, and perhaps twice as much, of British capital was invested in India. Its security depended upon an eventual separation - if it took place at all - taking place upon amicable terms, between two "friendly people" who could "still co-operate together in business". It was for this reason, he stated, that those on the Labour benches were "particularly anxious" that during the present critical years friction between the two peoples should be minimised¹⁴⁹. C.R. Buxton urged his constituents to regard India as a "part of our Empire, in which we ought to show a deep and sympathetic interest": not as simply a "place to exploit in our own interests"¹⁵⁰. His injunction was not always heeded by party spokesmen, who drew attention to the British stake in the Indian economy, and urged that, while self-government must be conceded, it must be conferred "step by step, gradually", without risk, reaction, or above all "social disturbance"¹⁵¹. Eighty per cent of British cotton products, Shaw pointed out, had been exported to India before the war. That trade was now being affected by the "extremely grave" state of affairs there¹⁵². The question, Wedgwood declared, was that of "security for a great amount of British capital". He thought that British capitalists themselves would agree that their capital would be safer in a self-governing (and content) India than in one in which race hatred and anti-English sentiment were general¹⁵³.

The value of manufactured cotton goods sent to India from Britain, MacDonald calculated, had increased from £24 million to £40 million in the pre-war decade. The British government could "not, in its political interests, afford to neglect a stake such as that which these figures indicate". He was

concerned to deny the "ungenerous explanation" sometimes offered of the economic thinking reflected in government policy: it "happened to believe", he wrote, in "principles of international trade which coincided with Lancashire's interests". He did not consider, however, that a protective tariff would be in the best interests of India, although he admitted that Indian manufacturers found it "difficult" to appreciate this point. A tariff, he argued, would be a levy "in the interests of capital"; and it would increase the already "excessive influence of the rich classes of India engaged in commerce". The Indian National Congress, equally, was dominated by rich middle class and privileged groups. It was accordingly necessary that British control should remain dominant in at least the first stages of institutional change, in the professed interests of the Indian masses¹⁵⁴. It was noted even by Labour spokesmen, however, that the party was manifestly failing to defend the interests of the poor against those of the rich in India¹⁵⁵. It was, moreover, a "curious contradiction" that the party's gradualist and constitutionalist policy led to the formation of a "definite understanding and community of views" between Labour and Indian middle class moderates. The British Committee on Indian Affairs, indeed, a predominantly Labour body which was reconstituted in 1924 under Lansbury's chairmanship, and which tended to support moderate elements, appears to have received the bulk of its financial support from Indian trading and moneyed interests¹⁵⁶.

Party spokesmen were not unaware of the threat which Soviet policy, and radical political movements in general, offered to British possessions in Asia. The "great Socialist Russian State", wrote Morel, "half European, half Asiatic, the focus of a thought revolution", was a "deadly foe to the continuance of a British Empire in the Far East and the Middle East"¹⁵⁷. It made good sense, thought Shaw, to conclude a trade agreement with Russia; for Russia isolated from the rest of the world would be a "danger spot, and in no place on the globe quite the same danger as she is in the East". It would be good policy, and common sense, for the government to carry the agreement further and conclude a definite peace with Russia, "not only in the interests of Europe, but in the interests of our Empire in the East"¹⁵⁸.

While the party was opposed to the break-off in relations which appeared to be imminent following Curzon's ultimatum, the activities of the Russian consul at Kabul, wrote MacDonald, evidently "concealed acts of war done against us", and were "designed to promote civil war in India". A Labour

Foreign Minister, he affirmed, would object to hostile propaganda from Kabul "just as much as Lord Curzon"¹⁵⁹. If the evidence of plotting in the East were true, Brailsford added, it demanded an apology and the dismissal of all the guilty agents. It did seem clear, at least, that Russian representatives in Afghanistan were "plotting against us"¹⁶⁰. The ending of the trade agreement, at the same time, was no answer: were it denounced, "all restraint" would be removed¹⁶¹. The Labour government did, however, authorize the trial of six Indian communists at Cawnpore on the charge of "conspiracy to deprive the King of the sovereignty of British India". The accused, the House of Commons was told, were attempting to secure the "complete separation of India from Imperialist Britain", towards which end they had formed and attempted to use a Workers' and Peasants' Association¹⁶². To establish an association under the auspices of the Third International was not illegal in the west, the New Leader protested valiantly. While this "Empire of ours" claimed to be free, the preaching of communism and the organization of a Communist Party must be as lawful in India as in Britain¹⁶³. Four of the accused were sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment, a verdict the paper found "shocking". It was important, it pointed out, to prevent "resistance to tyranny" becoming linked with "nationalist fallacies"¹⁶⁴.

India, wrote Lajpat Ray, would be the "acid test" of the claim of the Labour Party to stand for international goodwill. Tilak, speaking at Glasgow, had declared his conviction that the British Labour Party was "out in the interest not only of the British labourer but of all the labourers throughout the world", and that "with its help the Indian people could, and would, win freedom"¹⁶⁵. The views of J.H. Thomas, who was to become Colonial Secretary in the Labour government, provided little encouragement. The Amritsar shootings he considered evidence of a "very genuine failure on the part of the governors", in needing "such a show of force" to impress their judgements upon those whom they ruled. India, he believed, should eventually become a self-governing dominion within the Commonwealth; but this "could not happen quickly". The party aimed, he suggested, not to destroy the Empire, but to "change its government so that there shall be no chance of uprising". Responsible government "could not", however, "be arranged just now"¹⁶⁶.

MacDonald issued a stern warning to Indian opinion on 6 January 1924, demanding constitutional action and making clear that Labour would not be moved by threats on the part of the nationalists. Olivier, the Indian Secretary,

made an unforthcoming statement of policy to the House of Lords on 26 February, which "fell upon India", a prominent nationalist told Forward, "like a wet blanket. It contained not a single pronouncement that a moderate Liberal could not have made". The longer the granting of home rule was delayed, the paper warned, the more radical would be the Indian demands; "complete rupture with the Empire" would "probably be the outcome of further delay"¹⁶⁷.

The Cabinet nevertheless concluded that, while committed to the (ultimate) introduction of Dominion Home Rule in India, the "whole situation should be thoroughly explored", and Indian nationalists should be urged not to attempt to put pressure upon the government to take "ill-considered or premature action" before the question had been examined in "all its details"¹⁶⁸. The government, Clynes announced, was "not at present prepared to make any proposals for action in the direction of an extension of home rule in India"¹⁶⁹. The Cabinet found less difficulty in authorising the introduction of coercive legislation to deal with conspiracies in Bengal, and in authorising the strengthening of police and security forces¹⁷⁰. Labour governed India, wrote the New Leader, "as Tories or Liberals might have governed it". The government had done nothing effective for Indian self-government; or even for the protection of Indian workers¹⁷¹. To the Indians, it was noted, Labour rule had meant no change; the difficulties of the question had now been increased by their consequent (and understandable) disillusionment¹⁷².

This was not to imply that the government had not devoted a great deal of attention to imperial matters. It had succeeded, indeed, Clynes declared, in securing a greater degree of imperial unity than the governments which had preceded it¹⁷³. A number of projects were associated with Thomas' tenure of the Colonial Office, among them the encouragement of cotton growing in Kenya and Uganda (it was, he noted, "peculiarly suited to the Lancashire trade") and of railway construction (designed, he told the House of Commons, to lead to "immediate orders at home"¹⁷⁴). An Empire Labour Conference was held in London in August, through which it was hoped to "cement the bonds of mutual service and kindly comradeship between the mother country and other parts of the Empire"¹⁷⁵. A Labour Commonwealth Group had been formed in the House of Commons after the 1923 general election, under the chairmanship of M.S. Royce and subsequently of Lansbury. "With increasing experience", it has been noted, "there grew automatically a greater sense of responsibility towards the Empire"¹⁷⁶.

The most important event, however, was the holding of the British

Empire Exhibition in the summer of 1924, into which Thomas threw a "whole-hearted enthusiasm" which was held to have been "without precedent in the annals of those who have held similar office"¹⁷⁷. Considerable sums were provided by the government for the purpose; and the government agreed to arrange for a Pageant of Empire to take place¹⁷⁸. The Cabinet decided to be represented "as fully as possible" at the Empire Thanksgiving Service held in connection with the Exhibition, and a formal viewing was arranged¹⁷⁹. The King was reported to have "set his heart on the Exhibition being a success", and his suggestions for its organization were often accepted. No-one made a bigger personal contribution than Thomas, however, who secured the cessation of a strike on the site in April by informing the workmen that their action had much distressed the King¹⁸⁰. An I.L.P. pamphlet, issued during 1924 and designed to illustrate the government's successful implementation of party policy on the colonial question, could find nothing more to which to refer than a constitutional reform in Jamaica¹⁸¹.

Not all were convinced. The Labour Party, asserted the Duke of Northumberland, constituted the "cats'-paws of Germany, Russia and International Jewry", engaged in a "great conspiracy for the destruction of the British Empire". Their aims, he held, were "in reality the same as those of the Third International"¹⁸². A less extravagant modern verdict has been that the party was characterised by "ardent pro-Soviet sentiment", and that a "sense of class grievance and solidarity", and "horrid class animus", underlay Labour policy in foreign affairs, aligning it beside the Soviet government¹⁸³. Brailsford wrote in the New Leader that the new Labour government would "stand beside the Soviet's Executive as one of the only two Socialist Governments in the world"¹⁸⁴. It has been suggested above so far that Labour policy cannot adequately be described as socialist in this period, in any sense, at least, in which this description might have applied also to the policy of the Soviet government. Indeed so far from sharing political assumptions, MacDonald asserted at a meeting at the Aldwych Club (presided over by a major South Wales coalowner) that there was not in the Labour Party a thousand-millionth part of sympathy with Communism or Bolshevism¹⁸⁵. It is, in fact, the paradox with which we shall now concern ourselves that these years in which the Labour Party came with increasing vigour to champion the diplomatic recognition^{of} and establishment of close commercial relations with the Soviet government were precisely the years

the party conducted a militant and largely successful campaign against the corporate and individual membership of Communists, and against revolutionary socialism in the international field.

In this struggle MacDonald was, his biographer noted, "in the thick of the fight all the time"¹⁸⁶. It began, indeed, within that section of the socialist movement of which he was a leading member, the I.L.P. At the beginning of 1920 the ILP's Scottish Conference voted for affiliation to the Third International, a decision reached "amidst loud applause", according to the report in Forward¹⁸⁷, and matched by the party's Welsh section. MacDonald confessed himself "disappointed". He was, he made clear, an "opponent of the Third International"¹⁸⁸. "Let us stop all this romantic talk about revolution", he urged¹⁸⁹. The significance of the decision of the Scottish section remained unclear: the chairman of the Glasgow I.L.P. Federation, P.J. Dollan, felt that the decision in favour of affiliation might be "as much influenced by sympathy for the Socialists in Russia as by principle". The party's annual conference later in the year, however, while it declined to affiliate to the Third International, decided by a majority of nearly four to one to disaffiliate from the Second International¹⁹⁰. The Communist International Executive Committee's reply to the ILP's questions, formulated after discussions with Benin, Radek and others in May 1920, nevertheless left no room for sentimental support of the Soviet cause; and the I.L.P. Council condemned their "dogmatism"¹⁹¹. The 21 conditions of admission to the Communist International also caused concern. Some local sections of the party were evolving a revolutionary socialist position, and advocating the establishment of a Socialist Soviet Republic, rather than the party's existing objective of a Socialist Commonwealth¹⁹². The flirtation with revolution, however, went no further. The Scottish ILP Conference reversed its decision to affiliate to the Third International at the beginning of 1921; and the party conference at Southport the following Easter reaffirmed the decision not to affiliate, and rejected the 21 conditions by an overwhelming majority¹⁹³. The ILP 'Left Wing' thereupon seceded, and substantially committed itself to the Communist Party. They had talked in terms of thousands, it was recorded; but "in point of fact they.. only added one or two hundreds"¹⁹⁴.

An extended correspondence took place in the latter half of 1920 following the decision of the Communist Party to apply for membership of the Labour Party. At the 1921 party conference a resolution was moved in favour

their admission. The sooner, declared Duncan Carmichael, its seconder, they "got rid of the extreme Right members of the Executive and had a good fighting revolutionary party.. the better for the movement". Robert Williams added that he would "infinitely prefer" the dictatorship of the Miners' Federation to that of the government and the mineowners. Members of the Labour Party had taken the Privy Council oath, which might be "more damaging to the working-class movement even than the commitment to the Red International". The resolution was, nevertheless, rejected by the conference¹⁹⁵.

The application was repeated later the same month; but the Labour executive refused to ~~consider~~^{accept} it, and advised local Labour parties not to accept applications at that level. A meeting of representatives of both bodies took place in December 1921, following which a questionnaire was submitted to, and answered by the Communists. The 1922 Labour conference, nevertheless, adopted a new rule, proposed by Henderson, excluding Communists as delegates to national or local Labour conferences; and the executive's refusal to reverse its decision on affiliation, despite the attractive argument of one delegate that the Communist Party should be "brought under the discipline of organized control rather than left to itself", was overwhelmingly endorsed. Communists, Frank Hodges declared, were "the intellectual slaves of Moscow.. taking orders from the Asiatic mind"¹⁹⁶.

A further application was refused again the following year; and J.T. Walton Newbold, elected to the House of Commons for Motherwell as a Communist, applied for the Labour whip and was refused it¹⁹⁷. Newbold had received local Labour support, and in some cases at local level there was ~~xxxx~~^{considerable} support for Communist affiliation¹⁹⁸. The Labour leadership, no doubt, was often more vehement in its opposition to Communist affiliation than sections of the rank and file. Yet the majorities against affiliation in conference were far greater than executive influence could command; and a tone of unabashed xenophobia was rarely absent from even the speeches of militant labour leaders like Hodges, who were in other respects the executive's major opponents. The 1924 party conference again rejected the Communist application, by a majority this time of over sixteen to one. They were opposed, Jones declared, to a "certain number of gentlemen in Moscow with unpronounceable names and of very doubtful nationality", attempting to dictate British policy. Resolutions were also adopted, with smaller majorities, prohibiting ^{the endorsement of} a Communist as a Labour candidate for parliamentary or local authority elections, and prohibiting individual Communist membership of

the party¹⁹⁹. The following year it was resolved that no Communist could become or remain a member of any affiliated section of any local Labour party²⁰⁰. The thesis that the recognition of the Soviet regime was based upon political community is inconsistent with this record of determined, comprehensive and successful opposition to the Communist Party within the British labour movement.

The policy, moreover, was reproduced abroad, in the world of international socialist affairs. Indeed, British Labour was, on its own admission, "largely responsible" for the reconstruction of the Second International after the war, and it constituted, according to Zinoviev, that body's "main real strength"²⁰¹. It was the merit of the Second International, MacDonald wrote, that it was wholly "anti-Bolshevist". He thought it, in fact, the "only real bulwark against Bolshevism short of military executions"²⁰². Arthur Henderson was one of the three sponsors of the Berne Conference in January 1919, where the party's delegates voted in favour of the anti-Bolshevik motion of 'democracy and dictatorship', and he was a member of the three-man executive which was elected by the conference²⁰³. The Berne meeting was followed by conferences at Amsterdam (April 1919), Lucerne (August 1919) and Geneva (July 1920). Postgate described the Labour delegation at Geneva "perorating on the evil of Bolshevism before the awe-struck and slightly ridiculous tail of delegates from South America, the Balkans and Indo-China, who are inevitably included in any list of the constituents of the Second International"²⁰⁴.

Huysmans, the secretary of the Second International, addressed the 1920 Labour conference, and proposed that its secretariat be transferred to London. The British section was at that time, he declared, the "only international section" which was "worthy to be entrusted with the honour and fit to discharge this duty"²⁰⁵. The Geneva conference the following month resolved accordingly, and the decision was provisionally accepted by the Labour Party executive in September. The Secretariat was to be composed of three members, two of them British²⁰⁶. Henderson was chairman of its executive, and its Administrative Committee was entirely composed of party representatives with the addition of a foreign Joint Secretary²⁰⁷. MacDonald submitted the Second International's statement at the trilateral meeting of Internationals in Berlin in May 1922²⁰⁸; and the ambivalence of his position - since he remained a member of the I.L.P., which had become part of the 'Vienna Union' or 'Two and a half International' rather than join either the Second or the Third - was ended when the Union opted to merge with the Second International a year later.

The party's association with the International excited some alarm in Parliament. The International, Clarry declared, was a "conglomeration of Socialists and political fanatics"; and they were the Labour government's taskmasters²⁰⁹. The situation was if anything the reverse. The Hamburg conference, at which the adhesion of the Vienna Union was formalised, roundly condemned the "terroristic party dictatorship" in Russia, and offered support to the Bolsheviks' socialist opponents²¹⁰. British labour, the least affected, probably, by pro-Soviet and revolutionary sentiment within its ranks of any major European country, was precisely the most vigorous and organizationally effective opponent of Communism in international labour affairs.

The strategy of the new government was settled at a private meeting at Sidney Webb's house on the evening before the party's national executive was to meet²¹¹. It was agreed that the party would take office if called upon to do so; but that rather than introduce 'bold Socialist measures' which, some had urged, might lead to an election but also to re-election with a bigger majority, it should propose only those measures which were sure of a parliamentary majority. They must "show the country", Snowden held, that they were "not under the domination of the wild men". MacDonald expressed the view that they would have a "good deal of trouble with the extreme section", who would expect the government to "do all kinds of impossible things"²¹². In the circumstances, Wickham Steed suggested, MacDonald would "welcome the enforced moderation entailed by the position of Labour as a minority government"²¹³.

The King, entrusting him with the task of forming a government on 22 January, mentioned an "unfortunate incident" at the recent meeting at the Albert Hall, over which MacDonald had presided. He had in mind the singing of the 'Red Flag' and the 'Marseillaise'. MacDonald asked the King to bear in mind the "very difficult position he was in vis a vis his own extremists". Had he attempted to prevent the singing of the 'Red Flag' at that meeting, a riot, he thought, would certainly have taken place (Another observer, no more favourable to the socialist cause, found the meeting rather a "very tame show.. They sang hymns between the speeches, which were all about God"²¹⁴). The 'Red Flag' might even, MacDonald thought, be sung in the House of Commons. They had "got into the way of singing this song", he explained, and it would be only "by degrees that he (hoped) to break down this habit"²¹⁵.

Into Downing Street, wrote Forward's editorialist, would go men whose

ideas of politics were "fundamentally different from those who (had) gone there in the past". It was a change not merely in personnel: it was the succession of a "new social order"²¹⁶. It was, Kirkwood, declared, the "beginning of the end" for the ruling classes²¹⁷. It was therefore with some relief that business and Conservative figures found that the Cabinet included, in fact, a considerable representation from precisely those classes whose doom Kirkwood had predicted.

At the meeting in Webb's house it had been agreed to leave the decision regarding ministerial appointments to MacDonald²¹⁸. At Lossiemouth he drew up a list, in consultation with Lord Haldane, who joined the Cabinet himself as Lord Chancellor, on the acceptance by MacDonald of "certain conditions"²¹⁹. He had in fact written to Baldwin immediately after the election, urging that only he had the possibility of carrying on government successfully, but he had been asked by Baldwin to "join the Labour government and help them out". He had been moving towards Labour, he recalled, as the most idealistic of the three parties, but he "had not embraced and never did adopt" the party's specific proposals. He was, however, able to advise the Cabinet on constitutional matters and he "always had a spare cigar" for J.H. Thomas²²⁰.

It was generally felt, wrote Kirkwood, that Haldane had had "rather too much say" in the government's formation; and there was strong resentment in trade union circles, recalled Snowden, at the inclusion of "so many men who had had no record of service in the Labour movement"²²¹. MacDonald had, however, already decided to expose what he thought to be a popular misconception of the "hobnails and big vulgar teeth gripping the dagger" of a Labour front bench.²²² Accordingly Major C.B. Thompson, MacDonald's golfing companion at Lossiemouth, became Air Secretary; Lord Parmoor, formerly a Conservative, became Lord President of the Council; and H.P. Macmillan, a prominent Tory barrister, became Lord Advocate. There was the "greatest surprise" at the appointment of Lord Chelmsford, a life-long Tory and the former Viceroy of India, to the Admiralty. He had never, wrote Snowden, been associated in the "slightest degree" with the Labour Party in any way; nor, it appears, did he even trouble to become a member while in the government²²³. His appointment suggested to Amery, whom he was to succeed, that there would be "no violent change of policy"²²⁴. Labour members who were former Liberals appeared to have been better served than the I.L.P. wing of the party. Lansbury and Morel were not included, although the New Leader declared itself "particularly pleased" by the appointment of Wheatley

as Minister of Housing²²⁵. Sidney Olivier, who became Secretary for India, had served previous governments as Governor of Jamaica to their complete satisfaction, it appeared, in all but his failure regularly to attend church²²⁶. While a member of the Fabian Society, he had not taken any part in the Society's activities since its early days²²⁷. Stephen Walsh, appointed to the War Office, was "very popular" with the Army. He addressed the first meeting of the Army Council which he attended (according to Dalton) with the injunction: "Gentlemen, always remember that we must all be loyal to the King"²²⁸.

If there was a doubt about the Cabinet, the Review of Reviews commented, it was less about its acceptability to its Conservative and Liberal opponents than to some of its own supporters. By Liberals and Conservatives alike, it was noted, the Cabinet was well received²²⁹. The more timid Conservatives, Snowden recalled, and the more frightened capitalists "took heart in the presence in the Cabinet of men like Lord Parmoor, Lord Chelmsford and Lord Haldane". They - rightly - could "not believe that these men would be the instruments for carrying out the Socialist Revolution"²³⁰. The City in particular was "visibly impressed" by the Cabinet's composition. The Stock Exchange enjoyed a "sustained rally". "Sweeping rises" occurred in practically all the markets on the day the new Cabinet was announced²³¹.

One must proceed, clearly, beyond a putative 'socialism' to account for Labour's advocacy of closer relations with, and the diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government. The party's attitude - so far, at least, as this can be established from parliamentary debates, party statements, conference, the labour press and local Labour Party records - was characterised on the contrary by a militant and unyielding hostility to Soviet communism and revolutionary movements in general: an hostility to which there were some exceptions in 1920, but very few three or four years later, notwithstanding the fact that the party as a whole had become even more firmly committed to recognition of the Soviet government. It was characterised, also, by a corresponding solicitude for the institutions of ruling class power from the monarchy to the public schools, and for the Empire. This was appreciated in Moscow, if not always on the Conservative back benches. The Labour ~~government~~^{party} the Comintern executive declared in a resolution on the 'Labour Government and the C.P.G.B.', "resembled more a "bourgeois grouping than a party of proletarian class struggle"; and the government which it had formed was designed to "strengthen the bourgeois state

by means of reforms and class harmony rather than class struggle"²³². It was, according to Radek, a "coalition government from the representatives of the Labour Party and the representatives of the imperialist ^{ureaucracy} ~~bourgeoisie~~, representing the interests of finance capital". Its formation did "not mean the coming to power of the English working class". The party, Radek noted, didn't even call itself socialist; and its leaders were "very careful even in their phraseology"²³³. The British working class, Trotsky complained, had been "kept in terrible ideological backwardness by the bourgeoisie and its Fabian agents". The most radical elements were Irish or Scottish: with the notable exception of MacDonald²³⁴.

Labour, however, could not remain indifferent to the rapid increase in unemployment after 1920, and to the high level of unemployment which persisted thereafter. The belief was widespread in Liberal and banking and trading circles, as well as within the Labour Party, that the source of the unemployment lay in the decline of Britain's foreign trade; but that there were considerable possibilities of increasing that trade with Soviet Russia, whose needs were admitted to be enormous, and of a nature for which British industry appeared well equipped to cater. The development of trading relations on a major scale, however, appeared to require that relations between the two countries be placed on a 'normal' and more stable footing: "Russian treaties" meant "British orders". The party's spokesmen did not abandon their ideological hostility in seeking closer trading relations with Soviet Russia. N.E.P., MacDonald wrote, was the retreat of Bolshevism "back to the economic basis of a capitalist-private property-Socialist compromise"; and the development of trade with Soviet Russia, Snowden told the House of Commons, might compel the "throwing away of the last shreds of Bolshevism and Communism by which (that country was) presently fettered". The closer the commercial relations between Britain and Soviet Russia, the "more the economic system of Russia (would) approximate to the economic and commercial conditions of the countries with which she is in relation"²³⁵. The Labour executive, in response to "many representations" on the subject of "political persecution in Russia", had approached the Trade Delegation and expressed its hope that "very soon" there would be opportunities for the "free and unfettered expression of minority thought" (in other words, of anti-Bolshevik political activity)²³⁶. The relief of unemployment, however, must come first; and if recognition de jure of the Soviet government was the price, it must be paid.

Serious though the present unemployment was, the Economist declared at the beginning of 1921, the "sudden contrast" with the boom conditions which had preceded it had perhaps led to a tendency to regard it "too gloomily"²³⁷. Unemployment in the previous month, December 1920, had reached a level of 7.8% of the insured population, a very considerable increase in a matter of months. The optimism of the Economist, moreover, proved misplaced. The number of people out of work increased rapidly, and by May 1921 nearly one in four was unemployed. Throughout 1921, 1922 and 1923 the number of those out of work never fell below 10% of the insured population, and it was often substantially higher²³⁸. The number of applicants for employment at labour exchanges in the United Kingdom exceeded a million in January 1921, and in the period up to the end of 1923 the number was never lower than 1,200,000. The number of persons on poor relief reached about a million and a half; and an average of 170 persons per 10,000 of the population were on relief in 1921. The total in 1922 was more than twice as great, and that figure was in turn exceeded in 1923²³⁹. Unemployment was considerably higher than even these unprecedented levels in certain industries, such as shipbuilding, engineering, mining and metal-working, which were often precisely those which appeared most likely to gain from Russian orders. The percentage of all union members included in government returns as unemployed was 15.2% in 1922 and 11.3% in 1923. In the engineering, shipbuilding and metal industries, however, the corresponding figures were 27% and 20.6%²⁴⁰. Skilled workers within these industries, again, were less likely to be unemployed than the unskilled or semi-skilled men²⁴¹.

This could not but be a serious matter for Labour, so many of whose parliamentary representatives continued to come from the ranks of the unions themselves²⁴². It was a serious matter in other ways also. As MacDonald noted, the unemployed man's "membership of thrift clubs lapses, he acquires bad habits..." He might even follow the "allurements of intemperance or... the temple of Fortune"²⁴³. Gambling in its turn led to "moral and intellectual unsettlement"²⁴⁴ and an "impatience against the slow processes of legitimate accumulation"²⁴⁴.

"One of the most marvellous things in the world", MacDonald wrote, was the "docility" of the unemployed²⁴⁵. Capitalism, he conceded, was ultimately to blame; but unlike G.D.H. Cole, who saw no solution within the bounds of that system, MacDonald urged that the "only way to deal with the problem at its roots" was to "back the Parliamentary work" of the Labour Party²⁴⁶. He deplored in particular "vain and futile demonstrations"; and warned that the

I.L.P. should not allow the unemployed agitation to pass out of its hands, and that the Labour Party should not be "stampeded into demands which have no relation to sound policy"²⁴⁷. The function of speaking on behalf of the unemployed, the New Statesman pointed out, had in consequence been "allowed to fall into the hands of the Communists"²⁴⁸. To reduce unemployment was to diminish their influence and that of the radical unemployed movement as a whole.

Unemployment, again, was associated with a fall in the number of trade unions and in total trade union membership. In 1921 213 unions were affiliated to the T.U.C.; but by 1923 the number had dropped to 194. The total membership of affiliated unions dropped in the same period from nearly six and a half million to less than four and a half million²⁴⁹. The total membership of all unions in the United Kingdom dropped from over eight million to over five million²⁵⁰. In 1920 122 unions with a membership of rather more than four million were affiliated to the Labour Party; but by 1923 both figures had fallen, the latter by more than a quarter²⁵¹. This was a matter of rather more than statistical significance. Labour's income derived overwhelmingly from the unions, in particular from major bodies such as the miners', engineers' iron and steel workers' and textile workers' unions²⁵². The unions' funds, however, fell sharply, in consequence of their declining membership and the greater need to find strike pay. Their 'management and other expenses' dropped by a quarter between 1921 and 1923²⁵³. Union officials and the Labour organization were both affected. Grants to local agents, it was announced, were to be ended. The Glasgow I.L.P. Federation noted in its Annual Report that the economic depression had reduced the party's paying membership. The decline in income was "due to unemployment"²⁵⁴. The previous year, the ILP's National Council reported to the 1922 conference, had been one of "exceptional industrial depression, and consequently of great difficulty for all political organizations..." Unemployment had affected income "seriously". The party's Reserve Fund had to be drawn upon; affiliation fees were reduced by a quarter; and as many as one-third of the party's members had been unemployed at one time²⁵⁵. Reactionary attitudes might, with varying degrees of validity, be ascribed to party and union leaders. Yet once the connection between unemployment and foreign trade was established, it was, clearly, in their organizational interest that trading relations with Soviet Russia should be developed, and that the Soviet government should, accordingly, be formally recognized.

Concern with the contribution which trade with Russia could make to the relief of unemployment became manifest from the latter part of 1920: although as early as July 1919 the New Statesman had predicted that the question would "very soon become acute"²⁵⁶. As unemployment increased in Britain, it was noted in the Labour Leader, the importance to British workers of re-opening trade with Russia became more urgent. Peace with Russia was "now clearly an industrial and not merely a political question"²⁵⁷. The opening up of trade with Russia would do more than anything else, thought Snowden, to improve the state of British trade. It was also the "best way to kill Bolshevism": even if some of the men in power survived, their methods would not outlast the "opening up of intercourse with the rest of the world"²⁵⁸. Not only, declared E.D. Morel, were they helping to "destroy the body and soul of the Russian people": they were preventing the Russians sending goods to Britain of which their own people were in need. If a market was closed which contained 150 million people who wished to buy British goods, then unemployment was "going to come", and the price of food supplies, equally, would increase²⁵⁹.

In view of the steadily rising number of workless, the Labour executive allowed an emergency resolution to go forward at the special party conference on Ireland on 29 December 1920. The resolution, which was carried unanimously, noted that the growing volume of unemployment and underemployment in Britain was "'due in large measure to the interruption in world trading following on the war and defective peace treaties, in addition to the folly of British and Allied policy in relation to the Soviet government of Russia". It condemned the government for the "unwarrantable delay in securing peace and opening trade relations with the Russian government". There was, it concluded, an "imperative need for dealing with the permanent causes and conditions of unemployment"²⁶⁰.

The Labour Party executive and the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. formed a Joint Committee of Inquiry into Unemployment, and prepared a report, "Unemployment - a Labour Policy", which was presented to a Special National Joint Conference in London on 27 January 1921. The conference adopted the report and reaffirmed the 27 December resolution, declaring that the growing volume of unemployment was "largely due to the failure of the government to secure the resumption of trade with Russia and Central Europe"; and declared in favour of the "immediate adoption of the policy of unobstructed trade with

Russia", and for a programme of public works²⁶¹. A special Congress of the Scottish T.U.C. on 15 January, the proceedings of which were communicated to the T.U.C., adopted a resolution similarly viewing "with alarm" existing levels of unemployment, and declaring that the only immediate remedy was the ending of military involvements on the Continent and in Ireland, and a decision to "open up trade with Central Europe and Russia"²⁶². A joint Labour-T.U.C. manifesto was issued on 17 February, which held that the causes of the industrial crisis through which Britain was passing lay "for the most part, abroad", and that unemployment was the "direct outcome of a suicidal foreign policy"; and called for a "reversal of the whole line of the Allies' conduct towards Central Europe and Russia", and for the "conclusion of a sincere peace with Russia"²⁶³.

This analysis of the high level of unemployment was not unchallenged within the labour movement: an 'underconsumptionist' view had some influence, according to which the solution lay not in the expansion of foreign trade but rather in 'expansionist' domestic policies, and it had a champion in Wheatley. Yet it was a minority view; and in any case it was not directed against the developing of foreign trade relations, but simply against placing the greatest emphasis upon this aspect of the problem. It did not seriously disturb the majority view which the two Labour conferences had clearly outlined. As a party publication, 'Unemployment, Peace and the Indemnity', put it, it was clear that "no internal remedies (could) do much to cope with the present crisis of unemployment". Russia, in this connection, was the "clearest illustration of the wanton loss and suffering which the policy of our rulers has caused, both to the Russian working class and to our own". The effect of the development of trading with Soviet Russia upon unemployment in Britain would, it considered, "be instantaneous"²⁶⁴. The conclusion of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement was welcomed; and the party's Advisory Committee on International Questions recommended that trade should be encouraged through the extension to Soviet Russia of export credit legislation, and the full recognition of the Soviet government.²⁶⁵

This implied no support for the principles upon which that government was based. Given peace and the opportunity to rebuild their own economy, the party's 'Appeal to the British Nation' suggested, without interference from outside, the Russian people would "speedily come to terms with its own Government". If the Soviet system were indeed the tyranny it was reputed to be,

it "would not long survive"²⁶⁶.

The famine in the Volga area, C.R. Buxton declared, had "deeply moved the British people", and "in particular the Labour movement". Labour had "never yet been deaf to the cry of starving children", Jowett told the 1922 party conference²⁶⁷. The Labour executive decided that the "most appropriate and effective action" in response to a request to co-operate in securing relief for the Russian peasants in the famine area would be to "urge the British government to grant relief credits on a more considerable scale". The Prime Minister, however, refused to meet a deputation; and "unfortunately", the executive reported, the government "failed to put forward any proposal calculated to minimise to any considerable extent" the misery and starvation in Russia²⁶⁸. The I.L.P. was somewhat more forthcoming: although conditions in Britain were admitted to be bad some support came from local branches (although there were objections that there was distress nearer home, and that no grant should be made²⁶⁹); and towards the end of August 1921 the I.L.P. executive reported that some £200 pounds had been received by Head Office. The money was communicated to the Friends' Relief Committee²⁷⁰, which was the first British relief body in the field. A Russian Famine Appeal launched by the I.L.P. in Glasgow, however, grew very slowly; and an appeal fund announced by the Labour Leader was quietly forgotten. The Communist Party directed an appeal to British workers, and carried the appeal of the Comintern executive in the Communist²⁷¹. The Russian Famine Fund which it launched reached £2,900 by late November, and exceeded £5,000 in March 1922²⁷². It eventually merged into the International Famine Relief Committee. Its British representative, however, Edgar Whitehead, was calling for greater efforts in April 1922, to match the contributions of the European and American working class²⁷³.

The reaction of the main section of the British labour movements, however, the trade unions, was likely to be of the greatest import. On 14 August 1921 the International Federation of Trade Unions decided that a fund should be raised for the relief of the Russian famine²⁷⁴. On 29 August the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. agreed to open a fund on behalf of British unionists, and contributed £1000 as an initial donation. The money would be sent to Russia through the Amsterdam Trade Union Federation. While this was an anti-Bolshevik body, the gesture was a magnanimous one²⁷⁵.

On 15 September the T.U.C. decision was embodied in a circular to

member bodies.²⁷⁶ The response, however, was less than gratifying. Liverpool Trades Council sent a "strong resolution" to the Prime Minister in February 1922 on the question, but appears to have declined to make a more tangible contribution to Russian famine relief²⁷⁷. Glasgow Trades Council resolved that in the circumstances of unemployment prevailing in Britain, it was "not practicable to render support" and recommended that an appeal be made to the British government²⁷⁸. By 3 November, just over £2500 had been received in response to the T.U.C. initiative, and this included the £1000 from the T.U.C.'s own funds. The Congress was "convinced" that this did "not fairly represent the degree of goodwill towards Russia existing in trade union organizations". A "little sacrifice", it thought, on the part of the rank and file of the trade union movement, could "safely be made"²⁷⁹.

On 8 November 1921 the Parliamentary Committee sent a further circular to member bodies enquiring whether the balance of the Council of Action levy raised the previous year might be transferred to the fund for Russian relief. The response to the T.U.C. appeal, it pointed out, had "unfortunately" been "far from general". The executive of the Miners' Federation resolved, however, that the Council of Action levy balance should be returned to the unions in proportion to their contribution to it in order that they might individually decide upon its disposal. The Miners' balance of £750 was in fact transferred to the relief fund; but this was by no means always the case²⁸⁰. A total of £10,081/10/11 was transferred to the Secretariat of the International Federation of Trade Unions, the 1922 T.U.C. was told, a figure which included the balance paid from the Council of Action levy²⁸¹. The response, it was stated, had "not been satisfactory"²⁸².

Speaking in the House of Commons, J.H. Thomas denied that the recognition of debts, or political or other considerations should "enter in any way into the grave human appeal that is involved in the... famine"²⁸³. The distinction was not always scrupulously observed. If the famine continued, Clynes told the House of Commons, it would have an adverse effect upon the British economy and would contribute to further unemployment. He urged relief on the ground that although it might not "completely cure our unemployment problem", to withhold relief would certainly make it worse²⁸⁴. Burton drew attention to the connection between credits to Russia, which he urged the government to grant on a "substantial scale... for the relief of the famine area", and the "relief of unemployment at home". It was not only "our duty",

wrote another commentator, but "also to our interest to give Russia the help she needs"²⁸⁵. A generous response, Bob Williams argued, would prove "not only the hobblest of altruism, but in the long run.. to be enlightened self-interest"²⁸⁶.

There was another argument. As the Daily Herald declared, the time had come to "show to whom international working-class solidarity is a mere phrase and to whom ^{it} is deed and truth". The appeal should be answered "promptly and generously"²⁸⁷. The results were discussed the following spring by Edgar Whitehead, British representative on the Central Workers' International Famine Relief Committee. Writing in the Worker, he noted that the total relief had amounted in value to a farthing per organized worker per six months, a result which in his view indicated an "apathy" and "total indifference" which was "damning alike equally to leaders of various sections of the working class of this country as to the rank and file". British workers had contributed not the second-largest total of assistance, as their numbers would have suggested, but the ninth-largest, a figure which fell below the contributions of the organized workers in Holland, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland. Dutch workers alone had contributed three times as much as British workers. This, he concluded with some justice, was "not an enviable result for the workers of the proudest and richest country in the world"²⁸⁸.

It implied, however, no change in Labour's Russian policy, which continued to stress the importance of the development of trade with Soviet Russia for the relief of British unemployment, extending if necessary to the recognition of the Soviet government. A National Conference on Unemployment and the International Situation was held under the auspices of the National Joint Council of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. on 3 December 1921. A resolution was adopted which maintained that "our present ^{industrial} misfortunes" were largely the consequence of the government's international policy, "particularly as regards Russia and Central Europe", and demanded a "reversal of that policy, so as to include the recognition of the Russian Government,.. in the interests of the wage earners of this country". Assistance for the relief of the Russian famine and the re-opening of British export trade were called for, as "part of a policy to relieve our own ^{un}employed and restart industry"²⁸⁹.

The resolution was submitted to the Prime Minister on 15 December; and on his request it was followed by the submission of a more extended

memorandum dealing with 'Unemployment and the International Situation, Reparations and Russia'. The memorandum referred, with regard to Russia, to two basic facts: Russia, it declared, was "potentially Europe's largest granary and the greatest market in Europe for the purchase of manufactured articles"; and besides, all the European countries were economically inter-dependent. Germany could make no substantial payment of reparations until her trade with Russia had been re-established; and the maintenance of a regular and sufficient food supply to the United Kingdom would "depend more and more upon the prosperity of Russian agriculture". Since the Soviet government itself played the central role in commercial relations with the outside world, trade with Russia depended upon the "credit of the Russian government, and therefore upon recognition of the Russian government by other Governments and upon free and unrestricted co-operation and consultation with it". It was "essential" in the interests of British trade that normal relations should be "fully restored, both diplomatic and otherwise". Such risk as was involved in the extension of credit to the Soviet government must be taken in the interests of the development of trade. This action should be taken "immediately" since the pressure of unemployment was "dangerously insistent": credits, indeed, might prove the "cheapest form of unemployment relief"²⁹⁰.

They need not for the purposes of trade, Clynes observed, approve the governance of Soviet Russia, nor "excuse any of the evil occurrences which stand to the credit of Russia's governors". But this whole question was one for the Russian people to decide, he told the House of Commons; and it must be their task simply to "neglect no opportunity of doing business with the Russian people". Russian agriculture offered "great possibilities", he thought, for the manufacturers of agricultural implements. This kind of trade, however, was "impossible without credit arrangements and without recognition of, and consultation with, the Russian Government"²⁹¹. Shipping orders to the value of £15 million, added Hayday, would have been given to British shipbuilders had credit been available; and that would have absorbed a considerable amount of unemployment²⁹². A telegram despatched to Lloyd George at Cannes in January 1922 by thirty-seven labour spokesmen noted the "close connection" between the decay of British trade, and the consequent dangerous growth of unemployment and Russia's exclusion from the comity of nations; and urged the political recognition of the Soviet government by the British government and the Allies.

Its signatories ranged from Clynes, as chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Bertrand Russell and Ben Spoor to Brailsford, Lansbury, Malone, Maclean, Robert Williams, on behalf of the Transport Workers' Federation, and McManus, the Communist Party leader²⁹³. The Labour Leader remarked that labour opinion had come to attribute to the peace treaties and the "Russian muddle" the "economic evils besetting the nation"²⁹⁴. The 1922 Labour conference accordingly declared ^{that} the blockade of Russia, the assistance given to the attacks upon that country's government and the refusal to accord political recognition to it had been and were "disastrous, not merely to the Russians, but to the peoples of all countries". The government was urged to "accord immediate political recognition to the Russian Government, and (to) take positive action to promote trade with Russia and other countries of Eastern and Central Europe"²⁹⁵.

Russians' economic needs were urgent, Clynes argued in the House of Commons; equally, unemployment in Britain made "urgent for us a settlement in Russian relations". The assistance which Britain could give to the restoration of Russian agriculture would be a "source of great trade and profit to this country, if it were given speedily and in the right degree"; and it would, he believed, be of "immediate and... sustained benefit to us in the improvement generally of our trade interests". To wait until the Russian government apologized, Wedgwood added, meant to "wait until more and more people in this country are on the brink of starvation"²⁹⁶. Labour demanded, said Rhys Davies, that people be employed under good conditions manufacturing goods required by other countries: "that in the main is our interest in Russian affairs". Trade with Russia might not cure unemployment, Maclean added; but trade and the "complete recognition" of Russia would "alleviate the distress in this country" and would "largely reduce the amount of unemployment which exists today"²⁹⁷. Unemployment, Henderson wrote, was "primarily the result of an international policy blind to economic realities". The government had "achieved the miracle of separating the hungry buyer abroad from the needy worker at home"²⁹⁸. It would be wiser and cheaper and better for Britain and the world, Brailsford wrote in regard to credits, to "use our resources in paying men to make ploughs and locomotives for Russia, instead of keeping them idle and half alive on doles". The economic case for the full recognition and restoration of Russia was "overwhelming"²⁹⁹.

The common sense of the situation, MacDonald told the House of

Commons, would compel the government eventually to recognise Russia, as other countries had been recognized, "without in any way making ourselves responsible for what happens in those foreign countries"³⁰⁰. The New Economic Policy nevertheless gave Labour leaders some grounds for optimism in this respect. What was required in Russia, Clynes believed, was a "complete departure from the methods which for long she followed", and a recognition of the "methods by which the world is governed". There was evidence, however, that the Soviet position was changing; Bolshevik principles had been "enormously modified"; and there should be an effort to "encourage and nurse towards perfection tendencies of that kind"³⁰¹. Thus was clearly desirable: thus it was "intolerable", thought MacDonald, that religion could not be taught in Soviet schools. A policy should be adopted by the government, as by Labour, which would "let the revolutionary Government slip away out of its revolutionary frame of mind into its ordinary constitutional frame of mind, and then go on in its normal and proper way"³⁰².

The prospect of a break-off in relations following Curzon's ultimatum in May 1923 aroused considerable concern. MacDonald urged the government to "do nothing in connection with this controversy which would precipitate a position which would make continued negotiations impossible". Relations with Russia should be continued and expanded; the policy of hostility towards the Soviet government had, he pointed out, been an "unmitigated failure". The government must accept the Soviet government "as an objective fact, with which they have to come into relation, whether they like it or not". If diplomatic ~~recognition~~^{representation} had been given and proper diplomatic representation established, the questions indispute would have been dealt with in the ordinary way and would not have accumulated. The matter of propaganda could not be dismissed: if the Soviet government by means of agents or money had been "aiding and abetting revolution, disturbance and violence in the East, in India, in Afghanistan, or in Persia", this was wrong, and it was "absolutely impossible for us to take no notice". The evidence upon which the government was relying, however, did not appear to be unassailable. To tear up the trade agreement, moreover, would lead to a "state of incipient war", which would not contribute to a solution of the matters at issue, while it would rouse up the "old revolutionary animus" in Soviet Russia which would in turn react upon British trade, and upon the British position in other countries³⁰³.

The point was taken up by other Labour and Liberal speakers, many of

whom represented constituencies in industrial areas or on the sea coast which might be expected directly or indirectly to secure some benefit from the development of Russian trade. Captain O'Grady told the House of Commons that he had seen Krupps locomotives in Russia, and Krupps, he noted, was "not a sympathetic or philanthropic association". He wanted this kind of work for his Leeds constituents. Skilled fitters and engineers in Leeds, men and women, were languishing for orders³⁰⁴. Kenworthy defended the interests of his Hull fisherman and shipping constituents. Sir E. Grigg, despite his "loathing and contempt" for the Soviet government, noted that the trade agreement was "not a small issue". The area he represented, Oldham, was "deeply concerned in the possibilities of reviving markets in the East and Near East". There was much discussion in Lancashire on this subject³⁰⁵.

The General Council of the T.U.C., "in view of the abnormal unemployment prevailing for a long period", opposed any disruption of trade relations, and called rather for their extension and for the recognition of the Soviet government. The theme was repeated in a communication from the Scottish T.U.C. to all Scottish MPs on 12 June³⁰⁶. The Miners' Federation executive adopted a resolution on 29 May, which was unanimously endorsed at a special conference the following day, which called upon the government to maintain full trading relations with Russia. The coal trade in Britain, it pointed out, was "directly affected by Russian commerce, and any interference with existing relations would involve the mining industry in still further poverty"³⁰⁷.

The National Council of the ILP adopted a statement on 18 May, deploring the attitude of the government and urging that a conference to settle the points at issue should be held, as the Soviet government had suggested. A rupture of relations would "arouse the most vigorous resistance on the part of organized Labour". Branches were urged to prepare to make a "vigorous protest against the unconstitutional disregard of Parliament foreshadowed by the Under-Secretary". An ILP Manifesto stated that the party did not conceal its "disapproval of much that the Soviet government has done", but called upon the workers to "resist this attack by the common enemies of Labour at home and abroad. In our own interests and in those of the Russian people", it concluded, "we are not content with this resistance: we demand a full recognition..."³⁰⁸ The party held a protest meeting in Trafalgar Square on 13 May; and a number of branches wrote to the Foreign Office urging that the threatened rupture of relations be avoided. Of some two hundred resolutions which had

been received by the Foreign Office by 24 May, Strang noted in a minute, more than half had come from local branches of the ILP. The bulk of the remainder had come from branches of the Labour Party or the trade unions³⁰⁹.

The Labour-T.U.C. National Joint Council responded to the crisis on 11 May with the adoption of a statement which expressed the "strongest disapproval" of the terms of the government's note, and called for a conference or arbitration to settle the matters in dispute. A rupture of trade relations with Russia would "result not only in increased unemployment ~~which~~ here, but also in political unsettlement" which would "add to the danger of war"³¹⁰. Labour's opposition, it has been claimed, was so strong that the government had to back down³¹¹; and the ILP conference the following year was told that the "full strength" of the party had been "mobilized in protest". No more substantial opposition was indicated, however, than the holding of demonstrations and the making of statements and the issuing of a circular to MPs and "influential persons"³¹². The National Joint Council statement, equally, saw no need to extend its action beyond the bounds of the Parliamentary Labour Party, whose "prompt intervention" was applauded, and which was held to be capable in the situation of defending the "interests of our country and the needs of the working classes"³¹³. There was no suggestion that a Council of Action might be formed; and the only resistance to the government's plans which had been offered, noted the Communist Review, was a "series of resolutions". Official Labour, it considered, had reacted in a "most disgraceful manner"³¹⁴. Had the MacDonalds and Snowdens directed their "matchless gift ~~for~~ vitriolic invective" against the enemies of the British workers and not against the leaders of the Soviet government, Curzon "might have paused before thrusting a war upon the Soviet Republic". The ultimatum had "revealed the impotence of the British Labour movement"³¹⁵. When government action appeared calculated to disrupt trading relations with Soviet Russia, and thus to increase the number of workless, Labour offered firm, if constitutional resistance. There was no suggestion, however, that the movement should go further in explicit defence of the Soviet regime, and in forcing the recognition of its government.

The party did at least rehearse the arguments against the government's action. In the first place, as the Socialist Review noted, neither the interests of the country nor the peace of Europe would be secure until peace was made with Russia and her government recognized. Were the Trade Agreement revoked, MacDonald pointed out, it would "open the floodgates to propaganda

in the Near and Far East"³¹⁶. It would add to political unsettlement, the National Joint Council's statement maintained, and add to the danger of war³¹⁷. Peace with Ryssia, the Union for Democratic Control believed, was the only road to a secure settlement of "those Eastern questions which are essential to us here". Brailsford thought that following the fall of Lloyd George they might be "on the eve of a lapse into the Churchillian period once more". This threatened a "new period of civil and foreign strife"³¹⁸. Labour's objection here was not, however, to the firm defence of British imperial interests, but to the form which that defence had taken.

The economic argument appeared more compelling. There was an "enormous field for British trade and enterprise" in Russia, E.D. Morel told the House of Commons, provided stable relations were established. Millions of ploughs, harrows, axes, spades, rakes and every kind of agricultural implement were needed. The Liverpool Corn Exchange had pressed the importance of the Russian trade upon the government³¹⁹. Up to two million pounds a week was spent on the relief of the unemployed, and one-third of the workforce in Britain was ordinarily engaged in work for foreign markets. The country could "not exist, as we know it", without access to foreign markets and a supply of raw materials. There was an "overwhelming case" for attempting to recover the country's normal intercourse with one of the largest potential markets in the world³²⁰.

It was moreover a "complete fallacy" that non-recognition would not inhibit trade. Any businessman, Morel believed, would confirm his statement that the absence of normal diplomatic relations was a "great stumbling block to the granting of trade facilities"³²¹. Merchants, he wrote, were "disinclined to risk their goods; shipowners were reluctant to send their ships to Russian ports; crippling rates of insurance were exacted; bankers were unwilling to make advances; credit facilities and transactions were hampered; there was no Embassy or consulate to protect national interests;" in short, the whole machinery of commerce is semi-paralysed³²². Some business could take place upon the basis of short-term credits, but not the "very much bigger thing of great capital works", which were urgently needed in Russia, such as railways, transport in general, and power stations, involving thousands of millions of pounds, in which Britain could have a "very large share if only there were normal diplomatic relations established" between the two countries³²³.

Morel argued these views in a personal correspondence with McNeill

in December 1922 and January 1923. The absence of normal diplomatic relations, he wrote on 6 December 1922, was "in itself a palpable trade-detrant". The government's continued refusal to extend de jure recognition to the Soviet government and to re-establish normal relations with that country he thought a "serious impediment to the development of commercial relations" and a decision calculated to "aggravate the volume of unemployment in this country"³³⁴. In a letter to F.W. Galton of the Fabian Society on 31 January, enclosing the text of the correspondence, Morel pointed out that the "real gist of the matter viz.: the difficulties which the absence of normal diplomatic relations with Russia puts in the way of a full resumption of general Anglo-Russian trade" had not been dealt with by the Under-Secretary of State³³⁵.

Labour placed this view before the government in the form of an official letter from Henderson to Bonar Law, which stated the party's opinion to be that the annulment of the trade agreement would most seriously affect trade between the two countries, if it would not completely end it, and that British interests would be more seriously injured than Soviet thereby. The breaking-off of trading relations with Russia would "impede the restoration of British prosperity"; and the government, it was hoped, would oppose this step³³⁶.

The 1923 party conference endorsed this estimate of the consequences of a rupture in trade relations with Soviet Russia. The present foreign policy, Clynes declared in proposing a resolution on unemployment, was the "largest and the main cause of this great army of workless men and women in the land". The Parliamentary Report recorded a realization of the importance of maintaining and developing trade relations with Soviet Russia; and this view, it was stated, would be pressed "on every occasion when the necessity arises". A resolution on Russia, proposed by MacDonald, recorded the party's satisfaction that Labour's policy on Russia had been "adopted by the government" so far, at least, as the preservation of the Trade Agreement was concerned, and called for a joint meeting to settle outstanding points of difference. There could be "no complete agreement upon British and Russian international policies", it was held, "until this country accords full recognition to the Russian Government". Brownlie, who represented the A.E.U., voiced the union's concern with the number of unemployed in the metal industry. There would be no revival of trade, he believed, until the Ruhr and Russian questions were solved; and diplomatic relations with Russia should be re-established in the interests of the development of trade³³⁷. Indeed Russia was an illustration, Henderson wrote

of how "political considerations and prejudice" could blind the eyes of Allied diplomatists to "economic realities"³³⁸. Labour differed from them not in its attitude to the principles of the Soviet regime, but in a willingness to separate this attitude from the question of ^{the development of} trading relations with Russia, which other factors, above all unemployment, made imperative.

The Labour Party at this point, in fact, found itself a more effective spokesman of business opinion than the Conservatives, the traditional custodians of the interests of that group. Those who could not respond to the moral appeal, Arthur Ponsonby wrote, that Russia should be allowed without outside interference to "work out her salvation for herself in her own way", could now be "rallied by the practical, though more sordid consideration, that trading with Russia is good business." In the business world, he noted, there was "a change of opinion, and consequently a step in the right direction becomes possible"³³⁹. Labour articulated this view in political circles. The immense Russian population, Clynes pointed out, offered a "fine field for British trade if our commercial and political leaders face the problem with courage"³⁴⁰. Business reports of the prospects of Russian trade, MacDonald told the House of Commons, were increasingly favourable, as the report of the Becos Delegation for instance, had indicated. At any time in the previous twelve months, he believed, "any businessman who knew the situation of Russia from the inside" would have favoured the extension of the Export Credits Act to the Russian trade³⁴¹. The revocation of the trade agreement would have been a "serious handicap to British traders; and the majority of businessmen interested in the Russian trade, he thought, knew that it would have been a "bad blunder"³⁴².

MacDonald quoted to the House from a letter written to him by Ruston and Hornsby Ltd., makers of agricultural implements and oil and gas engines. In the previous year the firm had done £100,000 worth of business with the Soviet authorities, and it was hoped to increase this trade "greatly" in the current year. In general the business outlook was "distinctly hopeful". Every firm, he thought, which could do business with Russia "ought to be encouraged to do business with Russia"³⁴³. Defending recognition in the House of Commons, Clynes quoted authoritative business opinion to the effect that not a single instance had occurred in which the Russian government had failed to honour any arrangement of a commercial or financial nature. The reputation of the Soviet authorities in this respect was "without reproach". The Labour Government was "in no sense" in relation with the Soviet government in respect

of political outlook, method or principle, he pointed out. Indeed, the 'Die-hards' could hardly say things more extreme or more hostile against the Labour party than the leaders of that party expressed daily against the Soviet government. But "so far as British employers, British trading companies and British commercial men" could be "assisted through the agency of the government in relations with Russia", their view was that that support "should not be withheld from any who are anxious or willing to deal either with the Russian government or with Russian employers of labour"³⁴⁴.

While the recognition of Russia was right, Henderson declared in a speech shortly after the decision had been communicated to the Soviet government, it "was also expedient". He hoped for a diminution of unemployment, and for the "revival.. of our trade and commerce". There were "very influential people", he noted, "associated with trade and commerce who were exceedingly anxious that Russia should be recognized"³⁴⁵. Recognition, accordingly, the Fortnightly Review remarked, met with "considerable approval" even in circles which had no connection with the Labour Party. The commercial aspect of recognition appealed ^{in particular} to the businessman³⁴⁶. The decision was welcomed by the President of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce³⁴⁷; and by the Economist. The government, the journal considered, seemed "to have started in the right direction"³⁴⁷.

Nothing in Labour's foreign policy, it has so far been suggested, need be found peculiarly socialist. The principles, indeed, it has been noted, were shared by most Liberals"³⁴⁸. Before the world war, Attlee noted, the party "had no real constructive foreign policy, but shared the views which were traditional in radical circles"³⁴⁹; and during the world war, the 'pacifist' group was numerically Liberal rather than Labour. Many of the 'pacifist' Liberals, however, subsequently joined the Labour Party, bringing with them their experience and foreign policy expertise; and a series of elaborated proposals with regard to foreign affairs which came to form the core of 'Labour' foreign policy. A second determining factor, then, in the making of Labour foreign policy was the influence of the foreign policy programme formulated by radicals in the Liberal Party, and by the members of that group who joined the Labour Party towards or immediately after the end of the world war.

An important role was played by the bodies which united Labour and

as great as 650,000. Thirty ILP branches alone joined in September and October of that year³⁵⁵. By 1921 the adhesion of 350 labour organizations ~~and~~ with a membership of a million was reported³⁵⁶.

It would be too much, no doubt, to represent the process as one of straightforward conversion of the Labour Party by the UDC group. Labour spokesmen had ~~directed~~ their critical attention at, for instance, secret diplomacy before the outbreak of the war and the foundation of the UDC. In seeking an independent political course, especially after August 1917, nevertheless, British Labour did turn to the UDC for at least an "articulation of its views on foreign policy"³⁵⁷. The War Aims Memorandum of December 1917, which marked the party's bid for independence in the field of foreign policy, followed UDC proposals closely. Alsace-Lorraine would be returned to France only after a plebiscite had been held, as the UDC urged; and the section on the Balkans and Italy came to the same conclusion as two Liberal pacifists, Noel and C.R. Buxton, had done in their work on 'The War and the Balkans' in 1915. Morel's plan for Central Africa was adopted, according to which the European colonies should be administered as one unit by the League of Nations³⁵⁸. The statement as a whole was "indistinguishable", apart from a "few changes of phrase", from proposals which the UDC had made in July³⁵⁹. Its adoption was held to mark an "undoubted triumph for the ILP, UDC, NCCL group"³⁶⁰.

Their influence was not always a welcome one. Gilmore, representing the Miners, spoke out against a motion on UDC lines which Jowett proposed at the 1916 Labour conference. It "savoured to him somewhat of a combination of the ILP and the new Union of Democratic Control, a body which so far as he knew had up to the present not received the sanction of Labour", and whose object appeared to be to fight the government in connection with the war. The resolution was defeated³⁶¹. The UDC group, Brockway recalled, were "bourgeois to their finger-tips. They were suave, gracious, cultured. They might have been lifted out of any gathering of the gentlemen of England". They had, moreover, in his opinion given a "wrong twist to the ILP in England in war-time. We were not Revolutionary Socialists, We were democratic pacifists"³⁶².

It was, perhaps, precisely for this reason that the statement on War Aims won a wide measure of support, and in particular won the favour of many Liberals³⁶³. The endorsement of UDC views which it represented made possible the adhesion to the Labour Party of many who found it no longer possible to support the government, and who had been associated in the UDC with those who

now stood at the head of the Labour Party: MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas, Henderson and others³⁶⁴. As Trevelyan, who was one of this group, pointed out, the UDC thus "was in effect a link between the large volume of Radical opinion which no longer found guidance from the Liberal leaders, and the ILP.. Here was laid the foundation of the coalition between Radicalism and Labour" which was "now", in his opinion, "becoming a complete amalgamation"³⁶⁵.

It was not the case of any of these men, however, of a conversion to socialism³⁶⁶. H.B. Lees-Smith explained in an article on 'Why I have joined the ILP' that the lesson of the previous five years had been that the victory of social justice at home would be barren unless it was accompanied by the victory of internationalism abroad. He attacked the "Blind vindictiveness" of the peace terms imposed upon Germany. The "only hope of saving civilization" he saw in the election of governments committed to the revision of the Versailles settlement. There was "no hope" in the Liberals; he preferred the ILP, the "soul of the Labour movement", in view of its attitude to the war, the blockade, the terms of peace, and the "cry of the weaker peoples everywhere"³⁶⁷. A large number of advanced Radicals, he thought, were taking the same step. He made it clear, however, that his principles had "in no way changed": he had rather been "forced to the conclusion that I cannot look to any section of the Liberal party to carry them into effect"³⁶⁸.

Charles Roden Buxton was elected as a Liberal MP in 1910, and was reported to have been the "rising hope of Liberalism" in the parliament of that year³⁶⁹. In 1915 he became a member of the executive of the UDC, and in 1916 he was disowned by the Central Hackney Liberal association for his adoption of Labour views on the war. As the war advanced, he "turned more and more towards pacifism and Labour views". He joined the ILP in 1917, and contested the general election the following year as a Labour candidate³⁷⁰. The main reason he gave for severing his Liberal connection and joining the ILP, his biographer records, was that he was no longer in agreement with the Liberals over the conduct of foreign affairs. He "never rejected the Liberal ideal of freedom", however; and it was "axiomatic with him that politics could and should be informed by the Christian spirit"³⁷¹.

Charles Trevelyan was at school with both C.R. Buxton and Noel Burton (the brother of Charles Roden Buxton, and also a former Liberal MP who became disillusioned with the Liberals' foreign policy, and joined the ILP in 1919³⁷²). Trevelyan served as Private Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and

was elected as a Liberal MP in 1899, becoming Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education in 1908. He opposed the declaration of war, however, and resigned his office. He "went "out into the wilderness", he wrote, "with Ramsay MacDonald and a few others"; and was a founder-member of the UDC, and a member of the executive of that body from 1914 (The founding meeting, indeed, took place in his house). A letter in the Morning Post announcing the inauguration of the UDC appeared under his signature together with those of Morel, Angell and MacDonald. He joined the ILP in 1918, and contested the election of that year in the Labour interest³⁷³.

He had resigned, he told a meeting in March 1917 at the Labour Club in Brighouse, because he had wished to express his opposition to a policy which had been "carried on in secret for six years by a Liberal Government"³⁷⁴. The war had revealed that foreign policy was more important than domestic policy; and that it was entirely removed from the sphere of parliamentary discussion, "and even parliamentary influence". Neither before, during nor after the war, he wrote, which had condemned the world to a new era of national hatreds and armaments, had the Liberal leaders offered "one bleat of opposition to the forces of reaction"; their policy and action had been "indistinguishable from that of the imperialists and reactionaries". The truth was that by the end of the war, "Liberalism as a political force had ceased to function"³⁷⁵.

While it had been a rulers' war, however, it "ought at all events to be a people's peace". This was the reason for his involvement in the work of the UDC³⁷⁶. In the ILP, moreover, he found the "one organized political body with which (he) could co-operate in the struggle against the fatal and disastrous policy of the 'knock-out blow'"³⁷⁷. The union sacre of the future, he told a National Peace Congress in 1920, was that of the workers, and he urged peace societies to range themselves alongside the Labour movement. The workers were, he thought, the "greatest motive power of peace"³⁷⁸. He had been "really a Socialist", a Labour publication insisted, even before his formal adhesion to the movement³⁷⁹. Beatrice Webb had more accurately identified him with the "sentimental Whigs" who were now coming into "close communion" with the ILP.

Another member of this group, and another to have held an important position in Liberal circles, was Arthur Ponsonby³⁸⁰. Ponsonby had been Private Secretary to Campbell-Bannerman in 1906-8, and a Liberal MP from that time until the end of the war. He spent nine years in the Diplomatic Service, three in the Liberal Central Association and five as Page of Honour to Queen Victor-

ia³⁸¹. He was associated with the UDC and opposed the government's war policy. In 1918 he was rejected by the local Liberal association and stood as an independent Democrat. Following his defeat he joined the ILP³⁸².

There were other examples of "men and women of influence and reputation", as Snowden put it, "whose faith in the old political parties had been destroyed by the War", and who saw in membership of the ILP a means of identifying with a movement which "expressed the economic, political and international ideas.. of the age"³⁸³. Joseph King, a barrister of public school and Oxford origin, was a Liberal MP from 1910 until the end of the war, when he joined the ILP, a party which he declared had been his "spiritual home for a very long time"³⁸⁴, and whose attitude to the Russian Revolution and the League of Nations he found congenial³⁸⁵. His "biggest mistake", he thought, was to have "thought the men were sincere who told us at the start of the war that it was to end the rule of militarism and to establish freedom in the world". His reasons for joining the Labour Party were above all the "insincerity and even treachery towards Liberal principles of Liberal leaders", and the "change in Liberal policy from the international peaceful aims of Bright, Cobden, Gladstone and Campbell-Bannerman, to the nationalistic imperialism of Asquith, Lloyd-George, Churchill and the Coalitionists"³⁸⁶. His views, evidently, were close to those of Noel Buxton, who had similarly concluded that radical Liberal views, particularly on foreign policy matters, were better represented by the Labour Party than by the official Liberals.³⁸⁷ The Labour Party, to use an expression which arose in another context, were 'more Liberal than the Liberals themselves'.

J.C. Wedgwood was elected as a Liberal MP in 1906, and in 1918 was returned as an independent Radical. In the following year he joined the ILP and the Labour Party in the House of Commons. If the party's foreign policy had been right in the post-war years, the Labour Leader commented, much was due to his "first-hand knowledge"³⁸⁸. The change of party, however, he made clear in a letter to the Secretary of the ILP, would involve "no change in my Parliamentary activities, nor even in those colleagues with whom I work in the House of Commons"³⁸⁹. Pethwick-Lawrence and Seymour Cocks were others who moved from the Liberals to the ILP via the UDC; as was Norman Angell³⁹⁰.

The major figure in the group, however, was undoubtedly Morel, who had first won a reputation in his struggle against slavery in the Congo through the Congo Reform Association, and who became the secretary and prime mover of the UDC, and its most effective publicist. In 1913 he left the Liberal

Party, whose parliamentary candidate at Birkenhead he had been, and joined the ILP³⁹¹. He had never been a socialist, Snowden noted, nor had he taken any part in distinctively Labour propaganda³⁹². He had found, however, he wrote, that at UDC meetings the bulk of his audiences had been members of the ILP, and that their enthusiasm and organization had made the meetings possible. He was impressed above all with the ILP as an "ethical-~~political~~^{intellectual} force". Where in the world, he declared, other than in international labour, could one perceive "any organized force making for international righteousness and peace"³⁹³. His adhesion was, like that of the other members of the group, the product of disillusionment with the Liberal Party, which, he wrote to Ponsonby, he had thought a "force, a real tangible force making for righteousness in public affairs". He had subsequently discovered that "it was a fraud.. Nothing would induce me", he declared, "to stand in with any members of the gang which have brought the country to its present ~~passion~~"³⁹⁴.

The day that British Labour, he wrote, "realising the immensity of its power and the greatness of its opportunity, declared unequivocally for a policy of national disinterestedness; the day that British Labour takes that stand, it rallies round it the suffering masses in every European country - allied, neutral, enemy - in one insistent clamour and demand for peace". British Labour was "master of the situation"³⁹⁵. Labour, he believed, was "more than a mere political party - driving it onwards is a great inspiring force of human idealism. If it were not so, I for one would not be in it"³⁹⁶. His election address in 1922, in which he defeated Churchill at Dundee, announced him to be "not primarily.. a 'Party' man, but.. one who believed that certain fundamental changes in our industrial organization, and in the control and movement of our foreign policy", were necessary, and that the Labour party was the "political instrument through which these necessary and inevitable changes can be brought about safely and effectively". To effect a "real national control over foreign policy" was, he thought, the "most vital of all national issues"³⁹⁷.

Morel's pamphlet 'Morocco in Diplomacy', later issued as 'Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy', made a strong impression upon MacDonald, which he well remembered two years later. He "did not want to believe it", he wrote, yet its "facts were so authoritative and its conclusions so logical that I had to believe it". The "most strikingly dramatic part of its revelation" was in his opinion the demonstration that agreements publicly concluded "were good and made for peace", while those made secretly "were the cause of trouble, ill-

feeling and and war"³⁹⁸. From that time, MacDonald declared, he "suspected our diplomacy, and ceased to believe the assurances given by ministers in parliament or out of it"³⁹⁹. Snowden also acknowledged Morel's "great knowledge of and authority on international questions"⁴⁰⁰. Morel's exposure of Liberal policy before the war, a speaker remarked at the 1923 Labour conference, had "placed the whole of humanity in his debt"⁴⁰¹. If the world's problems were to be solved without war, MacDonald told a meeting in 1922, the people of Britain "must apply to them the principles enunciated by the UDC"⁴⁰².

The former Liberals, as has been noted, were not always welcome. A number of pacifist MPs, Snowden commented sourly, following their defeat at the 1918 general election as Liberals, had concluded that there "was no prospect of a political career in the Liberal party" and had joined Labour⁴⁰³. The party was likely to have a "few most undesirable persons" among its candidates at the 1918 election, Sexton warned the party conference in the summer of that year. "They had Outhwaites, Ponsonbys and Morels to whom he decidedly objected". But, thought Ponsonby, Independent Liberals were "coming over by the score, and they must be encouraged and welcomed". The transition was, he believed, a "most natural phenomenon", since Keir Hardie and Henderson and other Labour leaders had begun their political career as Liberals⁴⁰⁴. If Labour was wise, wrote a commentator in the Labour Leader, it would accept the new middle-class recruits and benefit from their money - "Not unneeded" - and from their "different and wider experience of life, particularly foreign affairs and finance"⁴⁰⁵. Many of the new recruits, indeed, had lived for lengthy periods abroad, and had travelled widely. Most of them would have shared Norman Angell's view that, in view of the association of Liberals and Conservatives with pre-war secret diplomacy, the conduct of the war and the illiberal peace settlement, Labour was the "one remaining instrument" through which the "re-casting of foreign policy" could be accomplished⁴⁰⁶. It was not, therefore, surprising that the contribution of the ex-Liberals to the formation of the Labour Party's foreign policy was an altogether disproportionate one.

This was in part a consequence of the lack of expertise in this field of the existing Labour members, a shortcoming cheerfully admitted by J.H. Thomas in the House of Commons⁴⁰⁷. The ignorant and often unselfconsciously chauvinist attitudes of the British working man in regard to foreign affairs were the source of some satisfaction for hostile commentators⁴⁰⁸. Lansbury recalled his experience of "many Labour leaders who, total abstainers in England, drank

wine and liqueurs on the Continent because they are afraid to drink the bad Continental water"⁴⁰⁹.

This insularity became less general after the war, partly as a result of international trade-union connections (Robert Williams and Bevin, for instance, were involved in the work of the International Transport Workers' Federation⁴¹⁰); and partly also through the work of such bodies as the Workers' Travel Association, founded in 1922⁴¹¹. The Association was set up by men and women, active in the labour movement, who believed in the "establishment and maintenance of international peace" and saw the "best means for achieving this in the growth of mutual understanding between the workers of all countries". Such an understanding, it was thought, was "only possible by actual contact, by interchange of visits, by the study of languages, and by an interest in the history, literature, art and social movements of other countries". The Association provided facilities for foreign travel, and organized lectures, study groups and language classes in the winter months. Tours were organized to the main European countries, and were patronised by seven hundred workers in their first year of operation, rising to well in excess of two thousand in 1924. A Russian tour was organized in 1924, with twenty participants. Reportedly the "first organized group to visit Russia since the Revolution", it was a considerable success and further groups were expected to travel there in 1925⁴¹². A factor of greater importance, however, in stimulating an interest in foreign affairs in labour circles was an appreciation of that fact that, as Morel put it, "foreign and domestic affairs were inextricably intertwined"⁴¹³. The European situation, it appeared, lay at the root of high prices and unemployment in Britain. Hence by 1922 and after, Lansbury recalled, insularity of outlook had "largely vanished". Instead the keenness with which Labour audiences listened to discussions of foreign affairs became notable, and their degree of knowledge increased in proportion⁴¹⁴.

A good many people, however, commented the Review of Reviews, believed that this "recently acquired and fragmentary information" could "hardly take the place of a comprehensive grasp of foreign policy", and it was in this area, it thought, that the Labour movement remained weakest⁴¹⁵. The Nineteenth Century and After agreed that the Labour Party would be "at a loss adequately to fill the Foreign Secretaryship"⁴¹⁶. C.P. Scott took up the matter of Labour's competence to man an administration, and particularly the Foreign Office, in correspondence with Henderson early in 1922. Henderson

replied that the party's resources were "much^h greater than was commonly supposed". His confidence was based upon the expertise of the ex-Liberals, few of whom were at this stage in the House of Commons⁴¹⁷.

For most of the Liberal Pacifists had been defeated in the 1913 general election. This, commented the Workers' Dreadnought, was on the whole as it should be: for although some of these candidates had a higher standard of morality than many of those who have never belonged to a party other than Labour, it was, nevertheless, "not the mission of the Labour Party to "provide a refuge for men who are neither workers nor Socialists, but who happen to have disagreed with the majority of the capitalist party to which they have hitherto been content to belong"⁴¹⁸. Their impact upon Labour's foreign policy statements was nevertheless considerable. A speaker who proposed (unsuccessfully) the establishment of a Labour diplomatic service at the 1921 party conference noted that at that time the party was "confined practically to two or three people who were in the nature of advisers to the Labour Party, people like Roden Buxton or Brailsford, who contributed tremendously to their knowledge of foreign affairs"⁴¹⁹. Beatrice Webb observed that the party outside Parliament was "quietly asserting itself as having a right to settle imperial and foreign affairs"⁴²⁰. There was no party in the country, Snowden wrote, which was so well informed on foreign affairs; and especially since the end of the war, thought Clynes, there was no party which had interested itself more in foreign affairs than the Labour party⁴²¹.

The British people, the National Review assured its readers, would "never swallow the Buxtons, the Trevelyan, the Ponsobys, the Morels and the rest of the anti-national gang", who were "sheer imposters as 'Labour' members"⁴²². All were, however, successfully elected. As Kenworthy recalled, the Labour intellectuals "returned in force"; pacifists and ex-Liberals "nearly all regained their seats"⁴²³. A "striking transformation", it was remarked, overtook the party's parliamentary representation, with the arrival of a "highly cultivated intelligentsia", of whom there had been only one or two representatives in the previous Parliament. In particular, the party could now claim three or four specialists in foreign policy⁴²⁴. The party's discussion of foreign affairs in the 1922-3 Parliament was accordingly dominated by the ILP group, and within them by the ex-Liberals. It became possible to claim, as did Noel Buxton, that Labour's special interest was not confined to home affairs or to immediate matters of wages, and that the party had, in fact,

been "distinguished from other parties by defining its position in much greater detail upon a multiplicity of foreign questions"⁴²⁵.

Many of those who had formerly been active in the UDC reached prominent positions within the Labour Party. Egerton Wake, for instance, who was one of them, was appointed the party's National Agent in 1919⁴²⁶. So far as foreign affairs were concerned, the Advisory Committee on International Questions played a particularly important part in formulating policy statements. Established in 1918, the Committee was, with its companion committees, called upon from time to time to furnish information to the Parliamentary Party, and its initiatives gave rise to many parliamentary questions. The committees also on many occasions gave advice and information to the party executive, and furnished many memoranda on questions of fact. In the view of the party executive, the committees were doing "extremely useful work"⁴²⁷. The "most active" of the committees was that on International Affairs, which had been called upon to advise the executive "in connection with all the various developments arising out of the Peace Treaties, the Russian war and other matters connected with the re-settlement of Europe"⁴²⁸.

The committees were reorganized in 1921 to "bring them into closer relations with the Parliamentary Party". Labour MPs were appointed as Chairmen, and Labour MPs each selected a committee to which he should belong. It was reported that the Committee on International Questions, now chaired by Tom Shaw MP, had been "actively employed in following the international situation", and had advised the party executive from time to time⁴²⁹. The Committees were recast and enlarged after the 1922 election, and they were now attached jointly to the Labour Party and the TUC. Tom Shaw remained Chairman of the International Committee, however, with Brailsford as Vice-Chairman and Leonard Woolf as Secretary⁴³⁰. From the following year Charles Roden Buxton acted as the Committee's chairman, and as Parliamentary Adviser to the Labour Party on Foreign Affairs and Imperial Questions, for which purpose he was granted a private room in the House of Commons⁴³¹.

The Committee's memoranda were often published as reports, and underlay probably the majority of the party's statements on foreign policy. Among the Committee's most notable characteristics was the very high proportion of the ex-Liberal group who served upon it⁴³². The Committee indeed seemed "almost a continuation of the UDC"⁴³³. Among the recruits who served upon it were the Buxtons, Angell, Dalton, G.L. Dickinson, Trevelyan, Ponsonby, Russell, Hobson,

Morel and Mrs Swanwick. If the main spokesmen for the party on foreign affairs continued to be the established leaders, the former Liberal-UDC group "very much dominated the positions of second rank"⁴³⁴. Nowhere did the present Labour leadership show such "intellectual slavery to middle class views", commented the Communist in disgust, as in international affairs. Labour had "no policy of its own in international affairs", which were "almost entirely left in the hands of a group of Liberal-minded intellectuals". "Drawn up by Liberals and based upon Liberal-Capitalist ideas", Labour's foreign policy was a "middle class Liberal and not a working class Socialist policy"⁴³⁵.

The Liberals' influence upon the party's foreign policy statements was soon evident. Labour and the UDC condemned the Versailles treaty in May 1919 in "exactly the same terms": the hand was the hand of Henderson, but the voice that of E.D. Morel⁴³⁶. The peace terms were condemned for a variety of reasons: one speaker at the 1920 party conference, for instance, objected to the use of black troops to occupy the Rhineland, many of whom, he believed, were "primitive savages", who were being used for the "deliberate purpose of humiliating the people of the Rhineland"⁴³⁷. Party spokesmen were particularly disillusioned with President Wilson, formerly acclaimed the "illustrious leader of World Democracy", whose principles, the National Joint Council had declared, commanded their "whole-hearted assent", and had laid at the basis of the Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist Conferences (Buxton acknowledged the "strangeness of a situation in which socialists and Labour .. are found supporting the head of a capitalist government". Maclean bluntly termed Wilson a "commercial traveller for American capitalism", and observed that socialists were in jail in the U.S.⁴³⁸). The treaty, declared the party's manifesto, was a "repudiation of the spirit and letter" of his declarations and of those of Lloyd George⁴³⁹. The party became committed to the UDC that the treaty was too harsh and anti-German in its provisions; and the 1919 conference declared in favour of the admission of Germany to the League of Nations, which body should undertake the "immediate revision" of the treaty's "harsh provisions" on grounds alike of honour and expediency⁴⁴⁰.

The party adopted other elements of the UDC case. A resolution was adopted at the 1921 party conference committing the party to the principle of ~~secret~~ ^{opposition to} diplomacy, and dissociating it from agreements and conventions with other states which had not been submitted to and approved by the House of Commons. Its proposer announced that they "owed a great deal to men like Morell (sic) and Brailsford, who had shewn them that what they were suffering

today was due to a small clique of people who had the foreign affairs of this country and of Europe generally in their hands"⁴⁴¹. Co-operation was suggested through a 'League of Peoples' in the establishment of international standards of labour conditions and free trade, and in reaching an agreement for the "limitation of armaments, with general disarmament as the goal"⁴⁴².

Trevelyan put forward an eight-point programme for possible adoption by the Labour Party in the summer of 1922. It followed his proposal of a four-point programme at the 1922 ILP conference, which should form the programme of the Labour Party were it elected to office at the next election, and the first point of which provided for the "immediate recognition of the Russian Government without asking the leave of France"⁴⁴³. The more extended version, which he outlined in the Socialist Review in July, similarly began with the "immediate recognition of the Soviet government of Russia and the granting of credits to it"⁴⁴⁴.

The ex-Liberal group, in fact, provided among the most effective advocates of the recognition of the Soviet government. Trevelyan's proposal was contrasted by the Communist Review with the "malignant hysteria which overwhelms Mr J.R. MacDonald when Bolshevism is mentioned". It was indeed one of the more ironic aspects of the ILP at this time that its "most courageous expounders of real internationalism"⁴⁴⁵ were the "sincere middle-class politicians who recently left the Liberal party". Clynes, for instance, with all his faults, had been "no hypocrite in his attitude towards Russia", of whose government he had always been a "straightforward, honest and consistent opponent". Were it not for "one or two honest Liberals in the ILP", it was added, like Trevelyan, Buxton, Ponsonby and Brailsford, it would be "difficult to convince many people that the old ILP leaders, like Snowden and MacDonald, were not mere pedlars of the anti-Bolshevik dope that appears in the Morning Post"⁴⁴⁶.

The point was not lost on Theodore Rothstein, who appears to have envisaged Morel as the Foreign Secretary of a post-revolutionary Britain, as he was "better than all the Socialists"⁴⁴⁷. Morel was in fact passed over for this position in the first Labour cabinet, perhaps to avoid offending French susceptibilities; but the UDC as a whole contributed no fewer than nine ministers to the government⁴⁴⁸. The diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government was consistent with this representation. Ponsonby, who wrote personally to Rakovsky to congratulate him, received a reply the following

day which drew attention to the "prominent part" which Ponsobny had "personally played in the prompt and satisfactory settlement of the question of recognition". He thanked Ponsobny "personally and in the name of the workers of the Soviet Union, for your sympathy and your efforts"⁴⁴⁹. Labour's advocacy of the recognition of the Soviet government, evidently, need have little to do with socialism.

MacDonald summed up party policy on foreign affairs in a work on 'The Foreign Policy of the Labour Party', which appeared shortly before the party took office. A Labour government, he wrote, would consider its own world policy "essentially akin to the spirit and purposes of America"; and such a government would pursue a policy of "consistent friendship and co-operation with the people of America". The policy of the UDC and of the Liberal recruits was evident in the statement that the League of Nations would form the "focus of our contacts with Europe"; that the government would support the principles of free trade; that it would modify its diplomatic style, and that it would bear in mind "our responsibility to Germany"⁴⁵⁰.

MacDonald left no doubt that the Bolshevik method was "not ours". They disagreed profoundly with Bolshevik methods; and he expressed a distaste characteristic of British Labourism for the Bolsheviks' adherence to "abstract theories and dogmas", such as the nationalisation of the property and investments of foreign nationals. A Labour government, nevertheless, would recognise the Soviet government "without delay". He noted that when the refusal to recognize a people carried with it a refusal to trade with them, the folly was "all the more expensive", and in the end "punishes those who would inflict chastisement more than the people chastised". One reason for a change in government policy, then, was that it was "foredoomed to failure" and had been "very damaging to our interests". Only in August 1923 a "responsible body of traders" (Becos) had been compelled to go to Moscow to make their own arrangements. A Labour government, MacDonald promised, would take "immediate steps" to develop trade with Russia by direct consulation with Moscow and by granting what assistance was legitimate, including export guarantees. This, it was thought, would hasten the conclusion of an agreement dealing with confiscated property⁴⁵¹.

In the second place, there was a need to prevent the possibility that Russia might unite with Germany to subvert the Versailles settlement. The victors in the world war had failed to make a "real peace"; and Russia was the

power that could "in time upset us", for it had enormous reserves of power and could upset treaties and working arrangements to which it had not assented. "Nobody but a madman", wrote MacDonald, could "contemplate without horror a combination of revengeful German economic power and hostile Russian material and human resources against the rest of Europe".

Thirdly, and revealingly, the Labour policy of diplomatic relations with Russia was - it was suggested - a more effective anti-Bolshevik policy than that of the existing and previous governments. Boycott, forgery and fake had formed nine-tenths of the anti-Bolshevik propaganda in both Britain and America; but this was, in fact, the "very worst defence". In contrast, the "firm and well informed opposition" of the Second International, between 1919 and 1922, inspired mainly by British Labour and by its colleagues in Germany and Scandinavia, had "borne the brunt of the fight against Bolshevism in its young vigorous days". It was, he believed, "only by a continuation of the same policy that the noxious weed is to be cleaned out"⁴⁵².

Recognition "in no way meant that our Labour movement agreed with that Government". Diplomatic relations were "in no sense a partnership", but rather a "channel for official communications", which were surely a necessity. A Labour government, however, would "stand no nonsense and no monkey tricks from Russian diplomatic representatives", who would be compelled to observe the "most scrupulously correct behaviour"⁴⁵³. "We Socialists", he had earlier written, when in office would indeed "have some reckonings to make with the Russian government". Recognition meant nothing beyond the fact that a certain government existed; while "Socialist co-operation" must be distinguished from it, implying as it did a willingness to share responsibility and a "considerable amount of agreement in method and aims"⁴⁵⁴. The Soviet government had been recognized, he told the 1924 party conference, "for exactly the same reason that Christian Foreign Secretaries have recognized Mohammedans and people whose religious persuasions were of somewhat more doubtful quality even than that"⁴⁵⁵.

When Baldwin's government met Parliament on 15 January 1924, Tom Shaw on behalf of the Labour Party pointed to a "very significant omission" from the King's Speech, the question of Russia. Russia was capable of producing "exactly the things we need in this country", he declared, and capable of taking in return the "machines and goods that our unemployed workers might be making". Better relations should be sought with the Soviet government: although he

hastened to make clear that he held "no brief" for its method of rule⁴⁵⁶. Britain needed the trade which full diplomatic relations with Russia might encourage, argued Clynes in proposing Labour's vote of censure. Their difficulties in regard to economic and trading conditions were such that they could not "afford not to trade even with an avowed enemy"⁴⁵⁷. The reports of the previous autumn's trading delegations indicated, Haden Guest suggested, that it would be "not only possible but highly desirable to conclude an immediate agreement with Russia". Labour, he felt sure, would "get something done"⁴⁵⁸.

By the time the new government met Parliament on 12 February, something had indeed been done. The Soviet government had been recognized, MacDonald told the House of Commons, "without delay, and with the full approval of the Government". A number of questions remained to be settled between the two governments, covering debts, propaganda and treaties. The preliminary to their satisfactory resolution was, however, the diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government⁴⁵⁹. Recognition was not the last act in their relations with the Soviet government, Clynes added, but "really the first of many that have yet to be taken"⁴⁶⁰.

The announcement was greeted with "much satisfaction" by Asquith, as a "first step" which he was "very glad had been even tardily taken". Another Liberal spokesman, Stranger, welcomed recognition as a "step in the direction of bringing about good trade". It was a "wise and sensible step on the part of the Labour government of this country", he thought, "to recognize Russia, from the merchants' point of view"⁴⁶¹. Baldwin, Snowden recalled, was obliged as Leader of the Opposition to deplore the government's course of action; but he was "very lukewarm in his objection". All desired peaceful relations with Russia, he declared, and the development of trade. His criticism was simply that the time had not yet come when this object could be achieved⁴⁶².

The Labour government's decision to recognize the Soviet government, then, and the party's attitude towards the Soviet regime generally, had little about them which could be termed pro-Soviet or socialist in character. It was, indeed, more often suggested that recognition, and the development of trade, would more effectively undermine Bolshevism than Conservative government policy, which had if anything strengthened it. Recognition might, moreover, lead to a development of trade which would relieve unemployment in Britain, of

- 1 Economist 15 December 1923 p1040
- 2 The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott 1911-1928 (London 1970) pp 449, 27
December 1923, and p 452
- 3 National Review Vol 82, February 1924 pp797,809, January 1924 p663
- 4 Snowden: Autobiography ii 593
- 5 quoted in Chester, L. et.al.: The Zinoviev Letter (London 1967) p18
- 6 The Patriot January 1924 pp341,349
- 7 Snowden: Autobiography ii 607-8
- 8 Scanlan, J. : The Decline and Fall of the Labour Party (London n.d.(1932))
p62; Chester et.al.: The Zinoviev Letter p17
- 9 quoted in Parliamentary Debates Vol 169 col 423, 16 January 1924
- 10 according to the Sunday Times, quoted in Forward 12 January 1924
- 11 New Leader 28 December 1923; quoted by Forward 12 January 1924, which
commented editorially that if the advent of a Labour government did not
cause a panic among armament manufacturers, slum landlords and royalty
owners, it would have a short stay in office, "and deservedly so".
- 12 Economist 15 December 1923 p1061, p1097
- 13 statement of 17 January 1924, quoted by R.R.James: Churchill: a study in
Failure (London 1970) p151; Forward 27 March 1920, 19 March 1920
- 14 Parliamentary Debates Vol 169 cols 310,312,313,315. ^{17 January 1924} Asquith wrote in a
letter on 28 December 1923 of the "appeals, threats, prayers from all
parts, and from all sorts and conditions of men, women and lunatics", to
"step in and save the country from the horrors of Socialism and ~~Confusion~~
iscation". The City was "suffering from an acute attack of nerves at the
prospect of a Labour Government. One of the leading bankers came to see
me this morning with a message from the City Conservatives, that if only
I could set up an Asquith-Grey Government, all the solid people in the
country would support it through thick and thin". His objection to this
course of action was above all, his biographers noted, that it would be
"seriously harmful to the national interest and .. an incitement to class
antagonism for the two "middle-class" parties to combine together to
deprive Labour of an opportunity.." (Asquith, C. and Spender, J.A.: Life
of H.H. Asquith, Lord Oxford and Asquith (2 vols, London 1932) ii 343)
- 15 Economist 12 January 1924; which sharply commented that Banbury's proposal
was in fact calculated to increase, not diminish the danger he identified.
- 16 ed. James: Memoirs of a Conservative p189

- 17 Snowden: Autobiography ii 599
- 18 Barnes and Middlemas: Baldwin (London 1969) p252
- 19 Webster, N.H.: Surrender of an Empire (London 1931) p209. At the end of each innings, she added, "both elevens shake hands over drinks and smokes in the pavilion".
- 20 ed. James: Memoirs of a Conservative p189, entry for 21 January 1924 and for 12 December 1923
- 22 Barnes and Middlemas: Baldwin p252, letter from James Hope, and p253
- 21 Manchester Guardian 15 December 1923
- 23 Gordon, M.R. : Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914-1965 (Stanford 1969) pp1,13,18,20,24,27; Graubard, S.R.: British Labour and the Russian Revolution 1917-1924 (Camb. Mass. 1956) p242-3
- 24 Garratt, G.T.: The Mugwumps and the Labour Party (London 1932) p30
- 26 Hamilton, M.A. ('Iconoclast'): The Man of Tomorrow: J. Ramsay MacDonald (London 1923) p140
- 27 Elton, G.: Life of J.R. MacDonald (London 1939) pp65,68
- 28 Pelling, H.: Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900 (2 ed. London 1965) p165, Elton op.cit. p69; Labour Leader 28 July 1894
- 29 Samuel, H. : Memoirs p26, cited in Pelling op.cit. p234
- 30 Elton op.cit. pp73,88
- 31 Labour Leader 12 March 1914, in Pelling op.cit. p165; Hamilton, M.A.: Arthur Henderson (London 1938) p30
- 32 Elton op.cit. p135
- 33 McBriar, A.M.: Fabian Socialism and English Politics 1884-1918 (London 1962, n.e. 1966) p342, Elton op.cit. p191; Pelling, H. : Short History of the Labour Party (London 2 ed. 1965) p52
- 34 H.B. Lees-Smith ed.: Encyclopedia of the Labour Movement (London 1928, 3 vols.) ii 58
- 35 Pelling: Short History of the Labour Party pp4,3
- 36 the figures are in ibid Appendix A p134
- 37 Webb, S. and B. : History of Trade Unionism (rev. ed. London 1926) pp688-9
- 38 MacDonald, J.R.: Socialism and Society (London 1905) pp142,136,137
- 39 Bealey, F. and Pelling, H.: Labour and Politics 1900-1906 (London 1958) pp157,158
- 40 Snowden: Autobiography i 215, Labour Party: Report of the 1914 Annual Conference p32-3

- 41 Webb: History of Trade Unionism p698; Hulevy, E. : The Era of Tyrannies (London 1967) p159. Cole expresses the view that the programme represented a "radical break with the Labour Party's past", which "committed the Party to a definitely Socialist objective" (History of Socialist Theory: Communism and Social Democracy Vol. i (London 1958) p422)
- 42 'Labour and the New Social Order', in Henderson, A.: The Aims of Labour (London 1918) appendix, pp99,100,109; Churchill's view that his experience of the Ministry of Munitions during the world war as constituting the "greatest argument for State Socialism that has ever been produced" is quoted in Labour Party: Coalition on Trial (London n.d.) p2
- 43 Henderson: The character and policy of the British Labour Party: International Journal of Ethics January 1922 p122
- 44 Henderson: Aims of Labour p24
- 45 Labour Party: Seventeenth Annual Conference Report, January 1918, p97,p15
- 46 Bealey, F. ed.: The Social and Political Thought of the British Labour Party (London 1970) pp10,13
- 47 Contemporary Review Vol 113 February 1918 p122
- 48 Henderson: Aims of Labour p16,21,22
- 49 Labour Party: Eighteenth Annual Conference Report p25. The conference was treated to a "singularly imaginative exposition" by Ramsay MacDonald of the "Socialist theory of parks" (Hamilton: Arthur Henderson p181)
- 50 Webb, S. : The New Constitution of the Labour Party (London 1918) ppl,2
- 51 Herald 19 January 1918 p5
- 52 Labour Party: Seventeenth Annual Conference Report p104, Tom Shaw
- 53 Henderson, International Journal of Ethics January 1922 p120
- 54 Webb: History of Trade Unionism p697
- 55 Lynd, R.: The passion of Labour (London 1920) p8
- 56 Political Diaries of C.P.Scott p316, letter of 11 December 1917
- 57 New Statesman 4 January 1919 p273
- 58 ibid 17 January 1920 p425, 11 February 1922 p523, 17 January 1920 p426
- 59 Snowden: Autobiography ii 567,572
- 60 Review of Reviews Vol 66 December 1922 p567. "Something in the nature of a Revolution" had occurred, according to the Glasgow ILP Federation (Annual Report 1922-3)
- 61 Henderson: Aims of Labour pp57,58,59,62
- 62 Labour Party: 1919 Annual Conference Report Appendix v
- 63 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report Appendix iii, 'Labour's Call

- 64 Brockway, A.F.: Socialism over Sixty Years (London 1946) pp179-80,182,183
- 65 Communist Review Vol iii No 4, August 1922, p172, Vol iii No 2, June 1922, p63
- 66 Willis, Communist 17 June 1922 . The unsubstantiated view that labour leaders prevented the expression of the strong pro-Soviet sentiment of the rank and file is found in, for instance, V.G. Trukhanovsky: Uinston Chershill: politicheskaya biografiya (Moscow 1968) pp206,207,208
- 67 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report pp179,244
- 68 Socialist Review December 1922 p244
- 69 Parliamentary Debates Vol 161 col 2472, 20 March 1923
- 70 Scanlan: Rise and ~~Decline~~^{Fall} of the Labour Party p45
- 71 Parliamentary Debates as note 69; Snowden: Autobiography ii 541,542
- 72 Parliamentary Debates Vol 161 cols 2482,2484,2483, 20 March 1923
- 73 Seven Members of the Labour Party: The Labour Party's Aim: A Criticism and a Re-statement (London 1923) p10,p73
- 74 Economist 24 March 1923 p628
- 75 Socialist Review April 1923 p162
- 76 W.J. Brown, Labour Magazine Vol i No 7, November 1922, p331
- 77 Socialist Review June 1923 p242
- 78 Lansbury: My Life pp276,277
- 79 Foot, M.: Aneurin Bevan, a Biography Vol i 1897-1945 (London 1962; quoted from paperback ed.) p89, quoting from Bevan's 'On Place of Fear'
- 80 J.C. Wedgwood, ILP 1921 Annual Conference Report p132
- 81 Parliamentary Debates Vol 159 cols 133-4,23,11,22, 23 November 1922
- 82 Kirkwood,David: My Life of Revolt (London 1936) pp202,203
- 83 Fortnightly Review Vol 110 July 1921 pp52,51
- 84 National Review Vol 180 January 1923 p667
- 85 Brockway: Socialism over Sixty Years p198-9
- 86 Socialist Review January 1923 pp29,30,31
- 86 Paton, John: Left Turn (London 1936) p163
- 88 Labour Party: Report of the 1919 Annual Conference p44
- 89 Labour Party: Report of the 1919 Annual Conference p46; Report of the 1920 Annual Conference p122
- 90 Labour Party: 1920 Party Conference Report p11
- 91 Labour Party: 1921 Annual Conference Report pp33,34
- 92 Labour Party: 1922 Annual Conference Report pp48,50
- 93 MacDonald: Socialism and Society p164

- 94 ibid pp101,103,101,xxi. Snowden claimed that Marx had in any case "ridiculed the idea of a sudden overthrow of the capitalist system" and had been "opposed to the general strike" (Labour and the New World (London 1921) p44)
- 95 MacDonald: Socialism and Society pp122,278,128,130,127
- 96 MacDonald: The Story of the ILP and what it stands for (London 1924) p10; Socialism for Businessmen (London 1925) p5
- 97 MacDonald: Socialism and Society pp103,104
- 98 MacDonald, J.R.: Socialism: Critical and Constructive (2d ed. London 1924) p1; Socialism and Society p62
- 99 MacDonald, J.R.: The Socialist Movement (London 1911) p103,104
- 100 MacDonald, J.R.: Parliament and Revolution (London 1919) pp19,31
- 101 Labour Leader 23 December 1920
- 102 Snowden, P.: The Living Wage (London n.d. (1912)) p169; Labour and the New World p56. Snowden's criticism of Bolshevism, syndicalism and every kind of non-constitutional political activity, thought the Economist, would be "most valuable in its influence" (review of 'Labour and the New World', Economist 11 June 1921 p1282)
- 103 Labour Leader 23 December 1920
- 104 Thomas, J.H.: Red Light on the Railways (London 1921) pp7,63,134,136
- 105 Thomas, J.H.: When Labour Rules (London 1920) pp157,159
- 106 quoted by Clayton, J: Rise and Decline of Socialism 1884-1924 (London 1926) p188
- 107 MacDonald: Socialism and Society p127; Socialism: Critical and Constructive pp260,261
- 108 MacDonald: The Socialist Movement p106,112
- 109 MacDonald, J.R.: Parliament and Revolution p92
- 110 MacDonald, J.R.: Parliament and Democracy (London 1920) pp vi,vii,viii
- 111 Socialist Review January 1923 p25
- 112 ibid August 1923 p56
- 113 ibid Vol 18, January-March 1921 p14
- 114 Snowden: The Living Wage p89; Labour Leader 26 August 1920
- 115 Clynes, J.R.: Memoirs (2 vols., London 1937-8) i 318
- 116 Thomas, J.H.: My Story (London 1937) p88; Red Light on the Railways p7
- 117 Thomas: Red Light on the Railways pp66,69,76-7,71,95
- 118 Glasier, J. Bruce: Socialism and Strikes (London, new ed. 1920) p6
- 119 MacDonald described the world as a "great landscape of Divine purpose"

and Divine Creation", a spectacle of the "great Divine Idea struggling with the imperfect to become its master and recreate it". The force behind their movement, he declared, was "not material. It is spiritual". Its aim was to "enable us to live better, purer, quieter, more holy lives than we live now" (To the Workers of the World: an appeal for personal religion: by J.R. MacDonald and seven other Labour MPs (London 1913) pp81,83,84). A speaker at the 1915 ILP conference, proposing the adoption of Jowett's address, expressed the view that the letters in the Labour Leader, unlike those in the religious press, "breathe the very spirit of Christ Himself. . . She belonged to the most wonderful movement which had ever come on the earth". Jowett's address was termed "the finest peace sermon that had been preached that Easter-tide" (ILP: 1915 Annual Conference Report p48, Mrs Pallister, Mr Riley)

- 120 MacDonald: The Socialist Movement pp163, 128-9
- 121 Thomas: When Labour Rules pp155,203-4,156,45,157,87,63,204.
- 122 Snowden: If Labour Rules (London 1923) pp6,10,21,,11,12,,10,18,58
- 123 ibid pp46,47,49,47
- 124 Gordon: Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy talks of the party's "anti-imperialism" (p18); J.P. Mackintosh of Labour's "long established radical position; for example, half a century of support for colonial peoples' right to govern themselves" (New Society 27 July 1972 p200). References are to Porter,B: Critics of Empire (London 1968) p328
- 125 ed. Shaw, Bernard: Fabianism and the Empire: A Manifesto by the Fabian Society (London 1900) pp44-5,45,46,
- 126 MacDonald, J.R. : Labour and the Empire (London 1907) p99; Ethical Word 12 November 1898, quoted in Sacks: MacDonald p335
- 127 Hardie, J.K.: India (London 1909) pp90,78,79,84,103,124,126
- 128 MacDonald: Labour and the Empire pp52,33,61,63
- 129 Labour and the New Social Order, in Henderson: Aims of Labour pp110,111
- 130 Snowden: Labour and the New World p269
- 131 Fischer, G.: Le parti travailliste et la decolonisation de l'Inde (Paris 1966) p38
- 132 Labour Party: 1919 Annual Conference Report Appendix v
- 133 New Leader 5 October 1923
- 134 Fischer op.cit. 102. The 1922 election manifesto ('Labour's Call to the People', 1923 Annual Conference Report Appendix iii) advocated the

"recognition of the real independence of Egypt and self-government for India", and the "prompt and cordial recognition of the new constitution of the Irish Free State" (which republican forces were still resisting in the civil war). The New Statesman pointed out that they wanted not the disintegration of the Empire, which government policy appeared likely to bring about, but its "re-integration". Egypt, the journal suggested, should have a "status not unlike that of the 'client' kingdoms allied with the Roman Empire" (4 February 1922, p494)

- 135 Labour Leader 10 January 1918. The New Leader later thought that the "wiser course would be to hasten the pace of the inevitable concession of Dominion Home Rule" (28 December 1923). A "bold act", it was urged, "may be the most prudent policy" (Tracey, H. ed.: The book of the Labour Party (London 3 vols 1925) iii 81). It was the duty of the British labour movement to "assist, again with due regard to the self-government of the Union, the development of civilization of the natives" in South Africa. The black man, however, could "not share in government at present so largely as the whites.. No one.. wants the white civilization to be swamped by barbarism". A "real native civilization" might develop "side by side with the European". The "domination of one race over another" must be opposed: but not, apparently, a "distinction of civic status in certain districts" (Tracey: Book of the Labour Party iii 80). Clynes, Parliamentary Debates Vol 147, col 1462, 31 October 1921
- 136 Clynes: Memoirs ii 55; Fischer op.cit. p131
- 137 Spoor, Parliamentary Debates Vol 125, col 1396, 23 February 1920
- 138 Labour Party: Seventeenth Annual Conference Report p138
- 139 Labour Party: 1920 Annual Conference Report pp156,159,157,158
- 140 Parliamentary Debates Vol 131 col 1737,1740, 8 July 1920 4 February 1922 p490
- 141 Labour Party: Labour Speaker's Handbook (London 1922?) p130; New Statesman
- 142 Parliamentary Debates Vol 160 cols 1812,1811,^{1789,1790} 27 February 1923
- 143 Labour Party: 1922 Annual Conference Report p37
- 144 Parliamentary Debates Vol ¹⁵⁵ col 655, 15 June 1922 ; ^{Vol 165} col 1804, 14 June 1923
- 145 Parliamentary Debates Vol 155 cols 654,655, 15 June 1922
- 146 Fischer op.cit. p271
- 147 New Statesman 19 March 1921 p691
- 148 New Leader 28 March 1924; Fischer op.cit. p276,277
- 149 Parliamentary Debates Vol 165 cols 798-9, 14 June 1923
- 150 ibid Vol 166 col 750, 5 July 1923

- 151 Lees-Smith ed.: Encyclopedia of the Labour Movement ii 88 on 'India'
- 152 Parliamentary Debates Vol 150 col 493, 9 February 1922
- 153 ibid Vol 155 col 652, 15 June 1922. India was indeed the "brightest jewel in the British crown", Scurr remarked. He desired that it should "always be associated" with the British crown (ibid Vol 172 col 1278-9, 15 April 1924)
- 154 MacDonald, J.R. : The Government of India (London 1919) pp129,130,132, 133,20-3,52,73; Fischer op.cit. p261
- 155 New Dealer 12 January 1923 p9, Fischer op.cit. p202
- 156 Fischer op.cit. 254, 213,255
- 157 Labour Leader 19 August 1920
- 158 Parliamentary Debates Vol 139 col 2374, 24 March 1921
- 159 New Leader 8 June 1923
- 160 ibid 11 May 1923
- 161 ibid 18 May 1923
- 162 Parliamentary Debates Vol 173 col 943-4, 12 May 1924
- 163 New Leader 23 March 1924
- 164 ibid 11 July 1924, 25 April 1924
- 165 Forward 13 September 1919; New Leader 23 May 1924 (Ray)
- 166 Thomas: When Labour Rules pp126,138,139,157
- 167 Forward 10 May 1924
- 168 Cabinet Minutes 28 February 1924, Cab 17(24)13, Cab 23/47
- 169 Parliamentary Debates Vol 174 col 589, 29 May 1924
- 170 Cabinet Minutes 30 July 1924, Cab 45(24)2, Cab 23/48
- 171 New Leader 31 October 1924, 14 October 1924
- 172 Socialist Review December 1924 p196
- 173 Fischer op.cit. p134
- 174 Parliamentary Debates Vol 170 col 196, 25 February 1924
- 175 ibid Vol 174 col 559, 28 May 1924, Mr Lunn. The Conference met from 17 September 1924 (Tracey, H. ed.: The British Labour Party (London 1948) ii
- 176 Haden Guest, L. : The Labour Party and the Empire (London 1926) p24-5; ^{p278} Tracey ed.: The British Labour Party ii 278
- 177 Tracey ed.: The Book of the Labour Party iii 185
- 178 Parliamentary Debates Vol 169 col 1582, Vol 171 col 302,
- 179 Cabinet Minutes 21 May 1924, Cab 33(24)3, Cab 23/48, and ² July 1924, Cab 39(24)20, Cab 23/48
- 180 Clynes: Memoirs ii 54

- 181 ILP: Information Committee: Six Months of Labour Government (London 1924) ^{pp}
- 182 National Review July 1921 pp629,633
- 183 Gordon: Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy pp20,22
- 184 New Leader 11 January 1924
- 185 quoted by Newbold, Parliamentary Debates Vol 166 col 1978, 16 July 1923
- 186 Hamilton: MacDonald pl22
- 187 Forward 19 January 1920; the majority was 158 to 28 votes
- 188 Forward 17 January 1920, 10 April 1920
- 189 Forward 10 April 1920
- 190 Forward 17 January 1920; ILP: 1920 Annual Conference p36 (the votes were 529 for disaffiliation from the Second International, with 144 against; and 206 for affiliation to the Third, with 472 against).
- 191 ILP: The ILP and the Third International (London 1920) p7. See also Moscow's Reply to the ILP (Glasgow 1920).
- 192 ILP Attercliffe, Sheffield, branch minutes, 15 January 1919, MSS W.D. 3355(2), Sheffield Public Library. The next meeting passed on to a consideration of a new song book.
- 193 Forward 8 January 1921 (the voting was 93 against, and 57 in favour of affiliation to the Third International); ILP: 1921 Annual Conference Report pl24 (97 voted for the 21 Points, and 521 against them).
- 194 Bell, T. : Pioneering Days (London 1941) pl95. Some residual sympathy with Soviet Russia remained in the ILP, and opposition to what a delegate at the 1923 conference termed "eternal Amsterdamation" (their amendment was lost, however, by 265 votes to 52; ILP: 1923 Annual Conference Report p32, p36)
- 195 Labour Party: 1921 Annual Conference Report, Executive Committee Report pp18-22, recording the correspondence; ibid pp159,164,167
- 196 Labour Party: 1922 Annual Conference Report pp74,75,179,193,199,198
- 197 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report pp85,101,139
- 198 Sheffield Federated Trades and Labour Council Executive Committee minutes, 27 September 1920, urged the affiliation of the Communist Party; Glasgow Trades and Labour Council agreed to prepare a similar resolution for the Labour conference (but by a majority of only 65 to 54; Executive Committee minutes 1 December 1920)
- 199 Labour Party: 1924 Annual Conference Report pp131,128 (the votes were respectively 3,185,000 to 193,000; 2,456,000 to 654,000; and 1,804,000 to 1,540,000).

- 200 Labour Party: 1925 Annual Conference Report p181
- 201 Labour Year Book 1924, p10; Kommunistichesky Internatsional No 1, 1924, col 163. The re-creation of the Second International after the world war is the subject of S.A. Mogilevsky's monograph (Leningrad 1963).
- 202 (Forward 17 January 1920); Labour Leader 14 August 1919
- 203 Labour Party: 1919 Annual Conference Report pp12, 15, 16
- 204 Postgate, R.W.: The Workers' International (London 1920) p105
- 205 Labour Party: 1920 Annual Conference Report p174, p118
- 206 Labour Party: 1921 Annual Conference Report p4
- 207 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report p9-10; Tear Book of Labour 1924 p38
- 208 Labour Party: 1922 Annual Conference Report p24
- 209 Parliamentary Debates Vol 169 col 1134, 14 February 1924
- 210 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report p15. The February 1919 meeting at Berne, in the opinion of Brand, took place "owing largely to the persistence of the British party". The composition of the executive of the new body after the Hamburg conference left "no doubt as to which party would guide the International through its years of recovery" (Brand, C.F.: British Labour's Rise to Power (Stanford 1941) pp200,229. British trade unionists' efforts to secure the exclusion of Russian bodies from international trade union bodies are recorded in Labour Research Department: Labour International Year Book 1923 (London 1923).
- 211 Brockway: Socialism over Sixty Years p206-7, Snowden: Autobiography ii 594-6
- 212 Snowden: Autobiography ii 596
- 213 Review of Reviews Vol 69 January 1924 p33
- 214 Duff Cooper, A.: Old Men Forget (London 1953) p122, diary entry
- 215 Nicolson, H.: King George V (London 1953) p384. MacDonald, in fairness, had revealed his antipathy to the song before his meeting with the King. It was the "funeral dirge of our movement", he told Hugh Dalton on 8 December 1923 (Dalton, H.: Call Back Yesterday (London 1953) p143).
- 216 Forward 26 January 1924
- 217 quoted in Thomson, D.: England in the Twentieth Century (Harmondsworth 1965) p92
- 218 Snowden: Autobiography ii 597
- 219 Haldane, R.B.: An Autobiography (London 1929) pp319-324
- 220 ibid 312,328; Lyman, R.: The First Labour Government (London 1958) p101

- 221 Kirkwood: Mt Life of Revolt p221; Snowden: Autobiography ii 607
- 222 Socialist Review January 1924 p11
- 223 Snowden: Autobiography ii 607
- 224 Amery, L.S.: My Political Life (London 1953, 3 vols) ii 293
- 225 New Leader 25 January 1924
- 226 Radek, Kommunistichesky Internatsional No 2, 1924, col 63
- 227 Snowden: Autobiography ii 611
- 228 Aiklee, C. : As it Happened (London 1954) p62; Dalton: Call back Yesterday
- 229 Review of Reviews February 1924 p103; New Leader 25 January 1924 p147
- 230 Snowden: Autobiography ii 603
- 231 Economist 26 January 1924 pp128,137
- 232 Kommunistichesky Internatsional No 1, 1924, col 371
- 233 ibid No 2, 1924, col 64; No 1, 1924, col 67; No 21, 1922, col 5363
- 234 Trotsky, L.: Where is Britain going? (1926, rev. ed. 1926, London) p x, 44
- 235 Socialist Review Vol 18, October-December 1921, p292; Parliamentary Debates Vol 169, col 1084-5, 1922; Brand, C.: The British Labour Party (London 1964) p123, citing Parl. Debs Vol 202, cols 666-7
- 236 Labour Party: 1924 Annual Conference Report p63. Tom Shaw had acted for the Second International in informing Rakovsky of complaints received from the Russian socialist parties (ibid p65).
- 237 Economist 29 January 1921 p161
- 238 Eighteenth Abstract of Labour Statistics, Parliamentary Papers 1926 Cmd 2740, p51
- 239 ibid p90; Statistical Abstract, 71st issue, Parliamentary Papers 1928 Cmd 3084 p65 (for England and Wales).
- 240 Statistical Abstract Cmd 3084 (as above), table 73 p86
- 241 Routh, G.: Occupation and Pay in Great Britain 1906-60 (London 1965) p118
- 242 Cole, G.D.H.: History of the Labour Party since 1914 (London 1948) pp84, 128, 154 (for 1918, 1922 and 1923 figures)
- 243 MacDonald: The Socialist Movement p71; Socialism and Society p4
- 244 quoted in Sacks: J. Ramsay MacDonald in Thought and Action p154
- 245 Socialist Review December 1922 p245
- 246 Socialist Review October-December 1921 p300; Cole: Out of Work (London 1923) pp87,91; Socialist Review December 1922 p246
- 247 Socialist Review December 1922 p245; ibid October-December 1921 p300
- 248 New Statesman 26 November 1921 p214. The unemployed of London, noted the

British Trades Union Review (Vol ii No 6, January 1921 p2), had "already taken drastic action, and unless steps of a drastic character are taken to deal with the problem serious trouble will arise such as we have never known". Workers were "becoming more bitter and desperate daily".

- 249 Butler and Freeman: British Political Facts p219
- 250 Statistical Abstract, 71st number, Parliamentary Papers 1928, Cmd 3084, table 75 p87; British Labour Statistics table 196 p395 (marginally greater figures). p 42
- 251 Labour Party: 1925 Annual Conference Report, Executive Committee report,
- 252 ibid pp78-9
- 253 Statistical Abstract (as in note 250) table 76 pp88-9 (the drop was from 34,401,089 to 33,224,588)
- 254 ILP: Glasgow Federation: Annual Report for 1921-2
- 255 ILP: 1922 Annual Conference Report, N.A.C. Report, p9
- 256 New Statesman 12 July 1919 p558
- 257 Labour Leader 23 September 1920
- 258 ibid 11, 25 November 1920
- 259 Forward 30 October 1920
- 260 Labour Party: 1921 Annual Conference Report p26
- 261 ibid pp27-8
- 262 Scottish T.U.C., 1921, Parliamentary Committee Report p22
- 263 Labour Party: 1921 Annual Conference Report Appendix v
- 264 Labour Party: Unemployment, Peace and the Indemnity (London 1921) pp11,5,6
- 265 Graubard: British Labour-- and the Russian Revolution p224
- 266 Labour Party: Appeal to the British Nation (London 1920) p5
- 267 Labour Leader 1 December 1921; Labour Party: Report of the 1922 Annual Conference p170
- 268 Labour Party: 1922 Annual Conference Report p40
- 269 ILP: Glasgow Federation: Annual Report 1921-2, noted that "although conditions at home have been bad" some £160 had been sent for the relief of distress; Executive Council minutes, 5 August 1921, records that £5 was voted for Russian famine relief from a balance of over £10 from the Miners' Fund, not without opposition.
- 270 ILP: Executive Committee of N.A.C. minutes, 25 August 1921; Russian Information and Review Vol i No 4, 15 November 1921, p79. Information about the famine was made available in a publication of the Russian Trade Delegation Information Department: Famine in Russia: Documents

and statistics presented to the Brussels Conference (London 1921); and in a further publication: The Restoration of Agriculture in the Famine Areas of Russia (London 1922).

- 271 Communist 3 September 1921; and ibid 24 September 1921
- 272 Russian Information and Review Vol i No 5, 1 December 1921, p103;
Communist 18 March 1922
- 273 Klugmann: History of the Communist Party of Great Britain Vol i (London 1968) p135; Communist 1 April 1922
- 274 British Trades Union Review Vol iii No 4, November 1921, p1
- 275 T.U.C. Parliamentary Committee minutes, 29 August 1921
- 276 source as in note 274
- 277 Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party: 1st Annual Report
- 278 Glasgow Trades and Labour Council, Executive Committee minutes 4 October 1921
- 279 source as in note 274
- 280 Miners' Federation of Great Britain: Executive Council meeting, 8-9 December 1921, p12
- 281 Trades Union Congress, 1922, Report p110
- 282 British Trades Union Review Vol iii No 3, March 1922, p5
- 283 Parliamentary Debates Vol 146, col 1256, 16 August 1921
- 284 ibid Vol 147 col 105, and Vol 148 col 312, 3 November 1921
- 285 Labour Leader 1 December 1921 ; ibid 17 November 1921
- 286 Daily Herald 3 August 1921
- 287 ibid 3 August 1921
- 288 Worker 11 March 1922
- 289 Labour Party: 1922 Annual Conference Report p5
- 290 ibid p6; Appendix iii p249 (and in Labour Party: Memorandum on ~~the~~ Unemployment and the International Situation, Reparations and Russia (London 1921)). Mann reported that he had been asked on a number of occasions by members of the A.E.U. if there was "likely to be any demand for British mechanics in Russia" (A.E.U. Journal December 1921 p53)
- 291 Forward 23 September 1922; Parliamentary Debates Vol 150, col 381-3, 9 February 1922
- 292 ibid col 353-4
- 293 Times 6 January 1922
- 294 Labour Leader 30 March 1922
- 295 Labour Party: 1922 Annual Conference Report p193
- 296 Parliamentary Debates Vol 157 col 510, 509, 511, 557 (Wedgwood), 26 July 1922

- 297 ibid cols 563; Vol 154, col 1543, 25 May 1922
- 298 New Leader 6 October 1922; ibid 13 October 1922
- 299 ibid 3 November 1922; ibid 4 May 1923
- 300 Parliamentary Debates Vol 160, col 26, 13 February 1923
- 301 ibid Vol 157, cols 510, 511, 521, 26 July 1922
- 302 ibid Vol 154, col 290²⁸¹, 15 May 1923
- 303 ibid Vol 163, col 2667, 10 May 1923, and Vol 164, col 231²⁸⁴, 15²⁸⁴ May 1923
- 304 ibid Vol 164, col 793, 17 May 1923, and Forward 12 August 1922
- 305 ibid col 366; ibid cols 772, 778
- 306 Times 25 May 1923; Scottish Trades Union Congress, 1924, p56-7
- 307 Miners' Federation of Great Britain: Executive Council meeting, 29-30 May 1923 p16; Special Conference, 30 May 1923, Blackpool, p2
- 308 Times 19 May 1923; ILP: 1924 Annual Conference Report, Appendix v p59-60
- 309 Times 14 May 1923; Yorkshire ILP to Foreign Office, and minute by Strang, 24 May 1923, F.O. 371.9366.N4157, 9 May 1923. About fifty communications had also been received from private persons.
- 310 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report p19, Times 12 May 1923
- 311 Brockway: Socialism over Sixty Years p193
- 312 ILP: 1924 Annual Conference Report p16, 17
- 313 source as in note 310 above
- 314 Communist Review Vol iv No 3, July 1923, p101
- 315 ibid ; and ibid Vol iv No 2, June 1923, p54
- 316 Socialist Review March 1923 p104, and June 1923, p249
- 317 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report p19
- 318 New Leader 4 May 1923; Brailsford, 'The Plot against Russia', in ibid
- 319 Parliamentary Debates Vol 162 col 826, 29 March 1923, Morel
- 320 Socialist Review July 1923 p24
- 321 source as in note 319
- 322 Forward 27 January 1923
- 323 source as in note 319
- 324 Morel to McNeill, 6 December 1922, Morel-McNeill Correspondence, BLPES
- 325 Morel to F.W. Galton, Fabian Society, 31 January 1923, ibid
- 326 Henderson to Prime Minister, 17 April 1923, and reply 18 April 1923, in MacDonald Papers, F.O. 800.219, p192-3 (copies), printed in Daily Herald 21 April 1923. Henderson's evidence was based upon a letter to him from the Russian Trade Delegation (DVPSSSR Vol vi p252f).

- 337 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report pp225,111,224
- 338 Henderson, A.: Labour and Foreign Affairs (London 1922) p6
- 339 Ponsoby preface p5, in Coates, W.P.: Export Credit Schemes and Angle-Russian Trade (London 1923)
- 340 Forward 8 September 1923
- 341 Parliamentary Debates Vol 168 col 466 15 November 1923
- 342 Socialist Review June 1923 p249
- 343 Parliamentary Debates Vol 164 col 293, 15 May 1923
- 344 ibid Vol 169, cols 872,873, 13 February 1923
- 345 Times 11 February 1924
- 346 Fortnightly Review Vol 115, 1 May 1924, p629,635
- 347 Economist 16 February 1924 p281; Times 4 March 1924 (Sir A. Balfour)
- 348 Brand: The British Labour Party p75
- 349 Attlee: The Labour Party in Perspective (London 1957) p200
- 350 Taylor, A.J.P.: The Trouble-makers (London 1957; new ed. 1969) pp121,123
- 351 Cline, C.A.: Recruits to Labour: the British Labour Party 1914-1951 (Syracuse N.Y. 1963) p17; the composition of the Peace Negotiations Committee is noted in ILP: 1917 Annual Conference Report p7
- 352 Industrial Peace Vol i No 1, September 1917, p29
- 353 reprinted in Stansky, P. ed.: The Left and War: the British Labour Party and World War I (London and N.Y. 1969) p89. Earlier treatments of the UDC and its influence are those of C.P. Trevelyan and H.M. Swanwick; more recent treatments include those of Taylor: The Trouble-makers; Shartz, M.: The UDC in British Politics during the First World War (Oxford 1971); and an article by H. Hanak in the Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research Vol 36 (1963) p168f.
- 354 Trevelyan, C.P.: The UDC (London 1919) p5; the five points are on p4-5
- 355 Swanwick, H.M.: Builders of Peace (London 1924) pp51,52
- 356 Trevelyan, cited in Miller, K.E.: Socialism and Foreign Policy (Hague 1967) p56
- 357 Swartz: The UDC in British Politics p147
- 358 Cline: Recruits to Labour p21-2
- 359 Taylor: The Trouble-makers p140
- 360 Industrial Peace Vol i No 4, January 1918, p21
- 361 Labour Party: Fifteenth Annual Conference Report, 1916, p133
- 362 Brockway: Inside the Left p54,55
- 363 Brand: The British Labour Party p51
- 364 ibid p26

- 365 Trevelyan: The UDC p8
- 366 Clayton: Rise and Decline of Socialism p196; Shinwell, E.: The Labour Story
(London 1963) p111
- 367 Labour Leader 3 July 1919
- 368 Daily Herald 25 June 1919. Formerly a Liberal MP, Lees-Smith joined the
UDC and had been a member of its executive. He contested the 1918 election
as an Independent Radical, and joined the ILP in 1919 (Bracher, S.V.:
The Herald Book of Labour Members (London 1923) p107-8; Labour Leader
14 September 1922; Forward 21 February 1920, where he wrote that he had
been attracted first of all to the ILP because it was the "only powerful
political party.. that took a close and continuous interest in foreign
policy").
- 369 Bracher; Herald Book of Labour Members p24
- 370 ibid p24-5, Labour Leader 25 May 1922
- 371 V. De Bunsen: C.R. Burton, a Memoir (London 1948) pp76,78,83
- 372 Tracey ed.: Book of the Labour Party iii 227-230; M. Anderson: Noel
Buxton (London 1952) 115,105. It was "on his conception of Christianity
that he based his own interpretation of socialism" (ibid p115)
- 373 Tracey ed.: Book of the Labour Party iii 247-9; Labour Leader 25 May 1922
- 374 Trevelyan, C.: Speech of 3 March 1917, Labour Club, Brighouse, ELPES
- 375 Trevelyan, C.P.: From Liberalism to Labour (London 1921) p23,48,45. The
Labour Organiser, in a review of this book, noted that it brought the
reader "step by step, with at no point any serious jar to political
conscience", towards Labour. It would make an impression on the "well-
known number of those who are at present hovering on the brink" (ibid
No 11, July 1921, p4)
- 376 source as in note 374 above
- 377 New Leader 23 May 1924
- 378 Forward 26 June 1920
- 379 Bracher ed.: Herald Book of Labour Members p187
- 380 Webb, B.: Diaries 1912-1924 (London 1952) p33-4, entry for 5 May 1915
- 381 Lees-Smith: Encyclopedia of the Labour Movement iii 41
- 382 Bracher op.cit. p140, Labour Leader 1 June 1922
- 383 Snowden: Autobiography ii 484-5
- 384 Forward 22 February 1922
- 385 Labour Who's Who (London, 1924, 2d ed 1927) p123
- 386 Bradford Pioneer 4 April 1919; Leeds Weekly Citizen 5 March 1920
- 387 Anderson: Noel Buxton p103

- 388 Labour Leader 10 August 1922
- 389 Daily Herald 17 April 1919. His deepest faith, his biographer records, was "neither in a theoryⁿ or a cause" (C.V. Wedgwood: Last of the Radicals (London 1951) p10).
- 390 Angell, N. : After All (London 1951) recalls that after the outbreak of the world war he "turned, as the means nearest to hand, to co-operation with men whose bent was towards an internationalist policy. They happened to be men prominent in the politics of the Left.." (p227). He joined the Labour Party in 1920 (ibidp231)
- 391 Tracey: Book of the Labour Party iii 326-8
- 392 Snowden: Autobiography ii 578
- 393 Labour Leader 24 May 1917
- 394 Morel to Ponschby, n.d. (c. July 1917), Morel Papers F2.1, M473 (ts.)
- 395 Forward 27 July 1918
- 396 Morel, E.D.: Labour's National Ideal (London 1921) p12
- 397 Forward 2 December 1922
- 398 Morel, E.D.: Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy (London 1915), preface by J.R. MacDonald, p xiii, xiv
- 399 quoted in Taylor: The Trouble-makers p110
- 400 Snowden, introduction to Morel, E.D.: Truth and the War (London 1916) p ix
- 401 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report p227, Mr Ayles of the ILP
- 402 Labour Leader 15 June 1922
- 403 Snowden: Autobiography ii 533
- 404 Labour Party: Eighteenth Annual Conference Report p28; Labour Leader 7 April '21
- 405 Mrs Morden, Labour Leader 22 September 1921
- 406 Labour Party: 1921 Annual Conference Report p200
- 407 Parliamentary Debates Vol 121 col, 759, 17 November 1919 ("We on these benches have never yet been trained in foreign politics")
- 408 The British working man, Basil Thomson considered, "never really takes much interest in foreign affairs" (Queer People (London 1922) p301). The Englishman, another source declared, had a "traditional disinclination for concerning himself with foreign countries. He has been accustomed to sum up their national characteristics in a phrase - usually more or less offensive - and relegate them to their place on the map" (Raine and LuSoff: Bolshevik Russia (London 1920) p7).
- 409 Lansbury: My Life p134

- 410 Bullock, A.: The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin Vol i (London 1960) p232f
- 411 Gosling, H., MP (its chairman), Labour Magazine Vol ii No 3 p124, July 1923
- 412 Workers' Travel Association: Annual Report for the Year ending 31 December 1924 pp1,2,5,
- 413 Parliamentary Debates Vol 159 col 217, 24 November 1922
- 414 Lansbury: My Life p207-8
- 415 Review of Reviews Vol 62, July 1920, p4
- 416 Nineteenth Century and After Vol 87, January 1920, p24. Non-labour people, L.S. Woolf remarked, had "always maintained that the Labour Movement is incompetent to deal with foreign affairs as a government because they have no leaders who are competent actually to control the Foreign Office and to deal with negotiations" ('Labour and Foreign Affairs', in Hogue, R.W. ed.: British Labour Speaks (N.Y. 1924) p182).
- 417 The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott p413, 28 February 1922
- 418 Workers' Dreadnought Vol V No 41, 4 January 1919
- 419 Labour Party: 1921 Annual Conference Report p172
- 420 Diaries 1912-1924, p174, entry for 30 January 1920
- 421 Snowden: If Labour Rules p52; Forward 19 May 1923
- 422 National Review Vol 80, December 1922, p496
- 423 Kenworthy, J.M.: Soldiers, Sailors and Others (London 1933) p199
- 424 Fortnightly Review Vol 113, 1 January 1923, p3; Review of Reviews December 1922, Vol 66, p567
- 425 Maddox, W.P.: Foreign Relations in British Labour Politics (Camb. Mass. 1934) pp200-209; Cline: Recruits to Labour p70; Parliamentary Debates Vol 159 col 203 24 November 1922
- 426 Labour Year Book, 1916 ed. p361, and 1919 ed. p5
- 427 Labour Party: 1919 Annual Conference Report p9, Executive Committee
- 428 Labour Party: 1920 Annual Conference Report p39
- 429 Labour Party: 1921 Annual Conference Report pp35,56
- 430 Labour Party: 1923 Annual Conference Report p38
- 431 Labour Party: 1924 Annual Conference Report p52; V de Bunsen: C.R. Buxton
- 432 Labour Party ibid p 52 records that fourteen reports were prepared and submitted between July 1923 and July 1924; Maddox op.cit. p100 p82
- 433 Miller: Socialism and Foreign Policy p83
- 434 Cline: Recruits to Labour p70,69
- 435 Communist 22 July 1922
- 436 Taylor: The Trouble-makers p145

- 437 Labour Party: 1920 Annual Conference Report p134, Knoeshaw
- 438 Labour Party: 1919 Annual Conference Report p21,21-2; ibid p115; Labour Leader 2 January 1919
- 439 Labour Party ibid Appendices xiii,xiv
- 440 ibid p139
- 441 Labour Party: 1921 Annual Conference Report p206-7, 207
- 442 Labour Party: 1920 Annual Conference Report p132; 1923 Annual Conference Report Appendix iii, election manifesto
- 443 ILP: 1922 Annual Conference Report p75
- 444 Socialist Review July 1922 p17
- 445 Communist Review Vol. iii No 6, October 1922, p270
- 446 ibid Vol iii No 2, June 1923, p57
- 447 Panikurst Papers, quoted in Kendall: Revolutionary Movement in Britain p416 note 145
- 448 Vogel,R.: A Breviate of British Diplomatic Blue Books (Toronto 1963) p xii
- 449 Ponsonby to Rakovsky, 1 February 1924, and Rakovsky to Ponsonby, 2 February 1924, F.O. 371.10463.N902, 2 February 1924. Ponsonby wrote to Angell in April 1924, asking him to put the ILP point of view before MacDonald in a letter, encouraging from him a "more distinct pronouncement in general differentiating our attitude towards the whole international situation.. from that of the Tories" (After All p239)
- 450 MacDonald, J.R.: The Foreign Policy of the Labour Party (London 1923) pp 4,11,21,32-3,22
- 451 ibid pp45,43,45,46,45-6,46
- 452 ibid pp50,59,50
- 453 ibid 47,51
- 454 Forward 6 May 1922
- 455 Labour Party: 1924 Annual Conference p109, chairman's address
- 456 Parliamentary Debates Vol 169 col 159; and col 301f, 17 January 1924
- 457 ibid col 301,303, 17 January 1924
- 458 ibid cols 333, 334
- 459 ibid cols 768,769
- 460 ibid col 871
- 461 ibid col 857,809
- 462 ibid 851,856; Snowden: Autobiography id 621

Conclusion

The Labour government differed from its predecessor in regarding diplomatic recognition as preliminary to the attempt to reach an agreement with the Soviet government, rather than as a step to be taken only after the settlement of outstanding differences. These remained considerable: indeed, as the negotiations extended into the summer, they appeared at times insurmountable. The agreement which was eventually concluded on 6 August failed to secure Liberal support, and would not have been accepted by the House of Commons even had the Labour government survived to urge its endorsement. Yet formidable as the obstacles to an agreement remained, the government's lack of political will to remove them was hardly less striking. Its attitude, indeed, was, by design, one of uncompromising firmness throughout. Only the intervention of a number of Labour and Liberal backbenchers, when the negotiations appeared irreparably to have broken down, allowed an agreement to be made at all. That a 'communist scare' should have contributed to the government's downfall was indeed ironic.

The de jure recognition of the Soviet government, E.F. Wise wrote in the Socialist Review, was only a "first step", and "much more" remained to be done. At least three questions would need to be considered by the Anglo-Russian Conference. In the first place, a considerable number of political questions awaited discussion - none of outstanding importance - which had accumulated in past years, such as the validity of existing treaties between the two countries¹, territorial waters and so on. In the second place were matters arising from the war, the revolution and the peace treaties, such as the Russian war debts, the Russian counter-claims, and the Russian attitude to the League of Nations. Russian debts to the British government amounted, according to the Board of Trade, to some £656 million². The restoration of diplomatic property (even, it appeared, the silver plate from the British Embassy in Petrograd³) came into this category, and would be included on the agenda of the Conference.

The most intractable problem, however, was that of private claims. The failure to achieve a settlement on this point, Wise

considered, would significantly inhibit the further development of trade, and would make the raising of loans in the City of London or elsewhere "if not absolutely impossible, .. extremely difficult"⁴.

The general principle of responsibility for the claims of British nationals, Ponsonby told the House of Commons, the government considered to have been established with the signature of the Trade Agreement⁵. Claims had been registered with the Russian Claims Department of the Board of Trade for death, personal injury and imprisonment in Russia on behalf of 249 persons⁶. This was only a small proportion, however, of all private claims. A British claims register was opened in 1918. The original notice, made public on 5 September 1918, brought in about 20,000 claims, and a further notice on 1 June 1922 increased this figure appreciably⁷. Claims were examined when received to ascertain whether the claimant was a British subject, and whether, as presented, a prima facie claim against the Russian government appeared to exist. They were not investigated, however, to determine whether the amount of the claim had been correctly determined⁸.

Taken at their face value, however, claims against the Russian government in respect of pre-war bonds issued under its guarantee (State Loans and Guaranteed Railway Loans) amounted to over £25 million in sterling, and to further millions in roubles and other currencies, taking capital amounts, but not interest, into account. Claims registered with the Russian Claims Department expressed in sterling amounted to £56 million in bonds, in addition to £23 million in respect of claims for the restitution of industrial and commercial property. The value of property whose restoration was being claimed was estimated by the claimants to amount to £180 million⁹.

These were considerable sums in respect of claimants who, although not very numerous, had many influential connections in financial and Conservative circles; and the government treated them from the outset with great deference. No representatives of "private bodies", Ponsonby told the House of Commons, would take part in the negotiations, but he would be "glad to give careful consideration to any expression of views on the part of such bodies which they may be good enough to offer in the meantime". Sidney Webb added that he was in touch with the

representatives of firms and companies which had formerly been operating in Russia, and that any views which they put forward would "certainly be considered"¹⁰.

MacDonald told the House of Commons that he was in "close touch with persons having claims against the Soviet Government". He saw no reason, however, to investigate further the question of the British role in Allied intervention in Russia and the consequent damage caused in Russia¹¹. Other interests impressed their views upon him: the Association of British Creditors of Russia and the Federation of British Industries, which urged the importance of the Russian recognition of existing debts with interest, and sought representation at the Conference¹². A still more weighty document, the Bankers' Memorandum, was issued as the negotiations opened on 14 April. It called for the recognition of state and private debts, the restoration of the private property of foreigners, the introduction of a 'normal' civil code, guarantees against confiscation and the freedom to make business arrangements directly with Soviet enterprises rather than under governmental auspices¹³.

Rakovsky described the memorandum as an attempt to secure the rupture of the negotiations, and as an interference in the "very bases of the Soviet socialist state"¹⁴. MacDonald's speech at the opening of the Conference¹⁵ was, nevertheless, regarded in Moscow as "expressing in a modified form the same demands as the bankers' memorandum". The memorandum was considered unrepresentative in its demands of the British people as a whole, and even of British capitalism as a whole¹⁶. By the end of May, nonetheless, the Conference appeared to have reached a stalemate.

Rakovsky, writing to Ponsonby (who, in MacDonald's habitual absence, effectively headed the British delegation) on 31 May, expressed his dismay when the latest British offer reached him. No Soviet proposal had, he considered, been accepted; while the British position largely recapitulated that of the Allies at Genoa and the Hague, which even at that time had not been acceptable to the Soviet delegates. The whole amount of pre-war debts was sought; the bondholders' claims were to be satisfied up to February 1924, not just until 1917; and there was no reference to a loan, but only to the possibility of a moratorium.

On private property, the full value of all claims was demanded, with damages, and cases in dispute were to be referred to arbitration, thus removing them from the scope of Soviet legislation. The Russian delegates could not return with obligations alone, he insisted. The British position reflected less the merits of the case than "political pressure" from City banks and figures holding Russian securities¹⁷. Ponsonby, in a note he made of a conversation with Rakovsky at this point, recorded that he was at first "inclined to reject almost without discussion the articles we had sent him". The question of a loan must be re-considered, and property claims must depend upon its successful resolution. The Conference, Ponsonby observed, was in an "uncertain state"¹⁸.

The negotiations were suspended at this point to allow the Russian delegation to confer directly with the representatives of claimants and bondholders and with the City. Speaking in the House of Commons on 5 June, Ponsonby reported that it was "impossible" for him to indicate a date by which the work of the Conference was likely to be concluded¹⁹. It was difficult for anyone who had closely followed recent developments, wrote W.P. Coates, to "feel very hopeful at the moment". Brailsford described the atmosphere as "hopeful", but conceded that the difficulties in the way of a settlement remained "formidable". The negotiations, thought the Economist, were "doomed to be abortive"²⁰.

The Cabinet considered the state of the negotiations at the end of July. Ponsonby, in a note dated 18 July, urged that the government should guarantee a loan of perhaps £30 millions to Soviet Russia "in order to avoid an inevitable breakdown of the negotiations and the serious political consequences involved therein". Apart from drafting changes and one or two clauses of the treaty, he wrote, "substantial agreement" was in sight. Rakovsky's acceptance of the treaty had, however, been throughout dependent upon the raising of a loan. There was no doubt that a loan, without a government guarantee, would not be forthcoming in the City, or that without a loan the Soviet delegation would not conclude an agreement, and the negotiations would thus break down. This would have "serious political consequences": the chance of a general recovery in Europe would be lost, Russia might become the

"focus of dangerous activities in Eastern Europe", the failure would be "resented very bitterly by the Party, not only in the House of Commons but in the country", and a chance of obtaining work for the unemployed would have been lost. The guarantee by the government of a loan of perhaps £30 million could, he thought, be justified in Parliament and in the country. The Soviet delegation would be prepared to commit itself to spending not less than two-thirds of the money raised in Britain. Neither Conservative nor Liberal official opposition, he understood, was to be expected; and the Soviet delegation would in return concede the outstanding points of difference²¹. Legislation to provide for the guarantee of a loan would be introduced when the Soviet authorities had reached agreement with private claimants, and this settlement had been embodied in a subsequent treaty²².

Snowden circulated a memorandum objecting to the proposal to guarantee a loan on financial grounds²³; and discussion in the Cabinet centred mainly upon this point, and upon those articles which related to the claims of bondholders and property owners. It was made clear that the guarantee of a loan to the Soviet government would not be forthcoming unless and until an agreement had been reached in regard to the settlement of claims and compensation. By a majority vote, the Cabinet approved the proposal²⁴.

On 5 August, however, the Cabinet was informed that the negotiations had broken down on the question of compensation for nationalized property²⁵. The difficulty was swiftly resolved when - as Ponsonby put it - "certain members of Parliament.. offered their services as intermediaries", and a suitable form of words was found²⁶. The following day, 6 August, the House of Commons was informed that an agreement had been reached.

Two treaties, a commercial and a general treaty, had been signed²⁷. The former, Ponsonby explained to the House of Commons, followed the "usual lines of commercial treaties". 'Most-favoured-nation' treatment was reciprocally extended to goods and coastal trade. The extension to a small number of members of the Russian Trade Delegation of diplomatic immunity for themselves and for their existing office was admittedly a "new departure" which might provoke discussion, but it appeared justified, and had already been conceded by the German and

Italian governments in similar agreements. The general treaty reviewed existing treaties between the two countries, and provided for an agreement on fisheries. Debts and claims, naturally the main focus of attention, could be divided into the claims of the bondholders, miscellaneous claims, and property claims. There had been some difficulty in finding a body to represent all the bondholders. The treaty contained an admission of liability from the Soviet government, together with an assurance that negotiations with the bondholders would subsequently take place. Miscellaneous claims would be investigated and a lump sum agreed upon in payment. Property claims, in respect of which the "greatest difficulty" had been experienced, would be investigated by a joint committee which would resolve the question of compensation.

The principle had been "not to attempt to reach a settlement in figures on these classes of claims but, rather, to get a decision in principle and to get machinery set up with a view to reaching the necessary settlement". When agreement had been reached in all these categories, the decisions arrived at would be embodied in a subsequent treaty, and the government would ask Parliament to guarantee a loan to the Soviet government, the amount and conditions of which could then be decided. Governmental debts and the Russian claim for damages from intervention were to be set aside for the time being. A clause on propaganda had, however, been agreed upon which was "even more severe" than that embodied in the Trade Agreement²⁸.

The agreement found little favour in the House of Commons. McNeill thought the possible guarantee of a loan to the Soviet government the "most complete violation" of a Parliamentary pledge by MacDonald. He expressed "very great disappointment" that the result was so "invidious, and that it (was) so vague and uncertain in its manner and procedure". The circumstances in which the treaty had been signed argued "panic"; while the agreement as a whole was an "utter farce", and the proposal of a loan was a "scandal". On British debts, Lloyd George added, the agreement was "a fake. It is a contract in which the space for every essential figure is left blank"²⁹.

The treaties which, MacDonald indicated, would be submitted to the House of Commons for amendment, acceptance or rejection, appeared

most unlikely to survive, at least in the form in which they had been submitted, when Parliament was dissolved following the defeat of the government over the 'Campbell case', in which a prosecution had been withdrawn against J.R. Campbell, the editor of the 'Workers' Weekly', for allegedly seditious articles on 'The Army and Industrial Disputes' which had appeared in that journal³⁰.

Even allowing for electoral preoccupations, the treaties were badly received by most of the press and large sections of the public. The treaties were attacked by the Daily News, by Lloyd George, and by the Liberal Publications Department in a pamphlet entitled 'A Sham Treaty', although the Manchester Guardian thought that it was not clear that the agreement was opposed by the Liberal MPs as a whole³¹. The Economist declared against a "hasty and ill-considered agreement", concluded as a result of "backstairs diplomacy", and expressed the opinion that the House of Commons would not sanction a loan which would enable Russia to avoid abandoning socialism. There was "no real understanding or agreement, no single concrete fact on which the two Governments (could) honestly claim to be at one"³². The treaties were a 'face-saving' arrangement, the Review of Reviews considered, whose "worst feature" was that they had been "concluded under secret pressure"³³. The National Review thought that there was "small prospect of 'the Great Russian Fake' being swallowed, even by the present House of Commons"³⁴.

Labour spokesmen argued in reply that 'the Russian Loan means British Work'³⁵. An article in the Socialist Review reported the reply of Jean Berzin, the Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, to an inquiry from the I.L.P. as to the orders which the Soviet authorities might place in Britain were the agreement concluded. Major orders in shipbuilding, engineering, agricultural machinery and electrical goods were forecast³⁶. Marshall, the chairman of Becos Traders, argued for the "strongest possible economic links between the two countries" in the New Leader. Merchants disliked the Soviet foreign trade monopoly, but he thought it would not survive the increase of trade. "As a merchant and manufacturer" he supported the treaty, and believed that it would help to reduce unemployment in industry and transport³⁷.

Labour candidates on the whole, the Economist noted, did not make the Russian agreement "as important a plank in their platform as

might have been expected"³⁸. The treaties, however, and especially the manner of their conclusion, provided the essential background for the publication of the Zinoviev letter, which purported to indicate, among other things, that the Communist Party in Britain was actively forming cells within the armed forces³⁹. MacDonald's hesitancy in denouncing what was generally regarded as a clumsy forgery suggested that the letter should be taken more seriously than at first appeared appropriate. This impression was strengthened was the despatch of a sharp reprimand from the Foreign Office - whose role in the affair is unclear in detail but appears at the very least to have been indiscreet - to Rakovsky for this apparent "interference in the internal affairs of Great Britain"⁴⁰.

The publication was widely regarded in Labour circles as having been a decisive factor in the party's electoral defeat. If this had indeed been the case, it was more as a result of having increased the Conservative vote, Snowden thought, than of having increased Labour defections. Labour in fact lost relatively few seats, and less than 3% of its share of the total poll, while the Liberals were the real losers with a dramatic reduction in the number of their Parliamentary representatives from 158 to 40⁴¹.

There were, besides, more straightforward reasons for Labour's loss of seats. The government, Kirkwood recalled, "accomplished nothing and had challenged nothing"⁴². This estimate overlooks, notably, the Housing Act, which was the achievement of Wheatley, the Cabinet's lone radical. Yet there was little in the government's record to support the charge - which Labour's opponents hoped the Zinoviev letter would confirm - that Labour was prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice imperial and capitalist interests to radical and working-class demands. The contrary might have been a closer approximation. The government's foreign and imperial policies have been considered above, and there was certainly little about them that "could be termed specifically 'socialist' .. or that marked a sharp break with the policy of the Conservative government which preceded it"⁴³. MacDonald, indeed, was a professed advocate of 'continuity' in the country's foreign policy⁴⁴.

In domestic policy, the Cabinet dealt firmly with threatened strikes, deciding to call upon naval rating if required to

manage power stations⁴⁵, and refusing to reinstate the policemen who had taken strike action in 1919, despite the decision to this effect by the party's conference in 1922⁴⁶. It was considered "inexpedient for the government to commit themselves at the present stage definitely to the policy of nationalisation" of the coal industry⁴⁷.

Regarding the unions generally it was decided to deal "with accredited representatives of the Unions as a whole, rather than with Shop Stewards"⁴⁸. Communists, it was thought, might be at the bottom of many of the threatened or existing industrial disputes. (a view which even the Economist found improbable⁴⁹); and a Cabinet Committee was appointed to examine the question⁵⁰. The converse of this policy was the proposal to establish an Inquiry into Industry and Trade, under the chairmanship of a business magnate with a membership drawn from banking, shipbuilding, engineering and merchant interests as well as from the trade unions, charged with an examination of "methods of industrial remuneration, the main causes of unrest and disputes, and the methods of avoidance or settlement of disputes"⁵¹. Henderson, according to Sidney Webb, had declared that the epidemic of labour revolts reminded him of "what was happening in Russia in 1917 against the Kerensky Government. Those little bands of wrecking Communists are undoubtedly at work"⁵².

The more he heard the Prime Minister speak and the more he read of what he said, Lansbury wrote in a letter to Morel, "the more confused and stupid to me he appears". He was compelled to conclude that neither Gregory or Eyre Crowe of the Foreign Office might be responsible for the Zinoviev letter affair, but MacDonald himself. He could "not explain the business in any other way". It appeared to him that MacDonald wished the "British public to think that he was a strong man putting down Communism"⁵³. Viewed beside the government's record, it may appear improbable that confusion could be thought to exist between Labour policy and Communism. Considered together with Beatrice Webb's observations, however, it can be seen as part, at least, of an adequate explanation of MacDonald's behaviour, and of Labourism as a whole. MacDonald, she recorded, was "playing-up - without any kind of consultation with the majority of his colleagues or scruple or squeamishness about first

pronouncements - towards the formation of a Centre Party - far less definitely Socialist in home affairs, far less distinctly pacifist in foreign affairs.. MacDonald wants eight million votes behind him and means to get them even if this entails shedding the I.L.P., the idealistically revolutionary section who pushed him into power". His aim was to form a "revised version of reformist Conservatism embodied in the Labour Party machine"⁵⁴. If challenged, she thought, he would "drop the I.L.P. and rely on the ordinary citizen who seeks an alternative to a Conservative Government, just a shade more hardworking, publicspirited and progressive, and professing a more philanthropic and democratic creed than the old Liberal Party"⁵⁵.

This, certainly, would have been an adequate description of the first Labour government. Nor was it by any means clear that such a course would have caused widespread disaffection within the Party, or altered, other than superficially, the nature of Labourism. Four generations of industrial capitalism, commented a writer in the Communist, had bred a class "so pathetically loyal to existing institutions that almost any crime is regarded with less abhorrence than attacks upon the framework of society. Every thinking capitalist is amazed at this stolid Conservatism, however much he secretly rejoices. It is worth battalions of riflemen and parks of artillery to a governing class otherwise very shaky about its future prospects". The Labour Party was the "characteristic political expression of such a phase of workingclass thought"⁵⁶.

It was a judgement which recalled that of Engels many years previously. Writing to Marx on 7 October 1858, he commented that the English proletariat was "becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat alongside the bourgeoisie". This, for a "nation which exploits the whole world", was "to a certain extent justifiable". On colonial policy, he told Kautsky on 12 September 1882, the English workers thought "exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as the bourgeois think"⁵⁷. The examination of Labour attitudes and policy towards Soviet Russia which has been presented above tends, while not denying a certain amorphous sympathy and instances of passionate support

for the new regime, on the whole to confirm this analysis.

It is supported, also, by the fate of the Labour government's Russian settlement at the hands of its Conservative successor. The new government decided that before considering relations with the Soviet government, the authenticity of the Zinoviev letter should first be investigated. A committee was accordingly established under the chairmanship of Austen Chamberlain, the new Foreign Secretary. A week later the committee unanimously pronounced the letter genuine, and the Cabinet endorsed its conclusion⁵⁸. A note to Rakovsky was approved at a meeting the following day, which informed the Soviet government that the ratification of the treaties would not be recommended⁵⁹.

The diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government, however, was not revoked. Churchill urged this course of action in a letter to Baldwin after the new government had been formed⁶⁰. The traditional representatives of Conservatism, moreover, had rarely favoured dealings of any sort, still less diplomatic recognition, of the Soviet regime. These were variously defined as "very influential circles, mainly (composed of) landowners and the aristocracy", and as the "outspoken militarist elements and.. certain powerful families of the aristocracy, who have regarded the War Office, the Admiralty and the India Office for years past as their special preserve", together with "powerful interests in the City"⁶¹. Curzon, in particular, for all his official life, Newbold commented, had been "representative of those interests which looked away from the Dominions and the Democracy of the U.S. to the autocratic Empire in India"⁶².

These "reactionaries of an older period, guarding the property of the landed proprietors and the credit manipulators - expressing the point of view of the Court and the Services", were held to be the "strongest section of the capitalist class" early in 1922⁶³. Such "Conservative, mainly agrarian circles", in the view of the deputy Soviet trade representative in London, had played the leading part in the threatened rupture of relations in May 1923. Their action had, however, compelled "liberal circles of the industrial bourgeoisie" to defend commercial relations with Soviet Russia, from which they stood (often considerably) to gain.⁶⁴

Early in 1923, in Kenworthy's estimate, the former group

had exercised the dominant influence within the Cabinet. Bonar Law, however, he believed to favour the diplomatic recognition of Soviet Russia, since he was "too practical a man, and understood the advantages for England of such recognition"⁶⁵. The accession of Baldwin to the Premiership, and later of Austen Chamberlain to the Foreign Secretaryship, reversed the earlier position. The Cabinet was not prepared - any more than its Labour predecessor had been - to overlook a vigorous propaganda offensive under Soviet auspices in the colonies or, for that matter, within Britain itself. Unless such a campaign supervened, however, the increasing and by no means negligible benefits of commercial relations with Soviet Russia were likely to outweigh the party's traditional distaste for that country's (or any other's) socialist form of government. However temporary it might prove to be, the complex dialectic of class, party and foreign policy had reached a new equilibrium.

- 1 a list was given in Parliamentary Debates Vol 170 cols 15-21, 25 February 1924, of treaties concluded before 1917 between the British and the Russian governments which had not been abrogated or become obsolete.
- 2 Parliamentary Debates Vol 160 col 1523, 26 February 1923
- 3 ibid Vol 176 col 8, 14 July 1924, MacDonald
- 4 E.F. Wise: The Labour Government and Russia: Socialist Review February 1924 pp75,76,79,80. Wise added a fourth point: future relations. Both governments, he thought, had a "strong vested interest in the maintenance of peace and the creation of such world conditions that trade may flourish and war be impossible" (p82)
- 5 Parliamentary Debates Vol 170 col 2362, 12 March 1924
- 6 ibid Vol 171 col 208, 18 March 1924
- 7 ibid Vol 174 col 2096, 18 June 1924, MacDonald, and col 2458, 19 June 1924, Webb
- 8 ibid Vol 161 cols 1304-5, 13 March 1923
- 9 ibid Vol 161 col 18 and col 48, 5 March 1923. The nominal capital amounts of Russian obligations in respect of which claims had been made by British nationals were stated in July 1924 to amount to approximately £40 million and 250 million roubles. The value of industrial and manufacturing properties of which British subjects had been deprived was estimated by the claimants at about £180 million. Claims in respect of other property, debts etc. amounted to £35 million, or 800 million roubles. With regard to imprisonment and personal injury claims the amount claimed was often not stated, but the total was believed to be "comparatively small" (Parliamentary Debates Vol 175 col 1756, 7 July 1924)
- 10 ibid Vol 170 col 505, 27 February 1924, and col 1155, 4 March 1924
- 11 ibid Vol 173 col 453, 7 May 1924, and Vol 171 col 76, 17 March 1924
- 12 Times 21 February 1924
- 13 the Bankers' Memorandum is in DVPSSSR Vol 7 pp218-20
- 14 declaration of the Soviet charge d'affaires to the English press in connection with the Bankers' Memorandum, printed in the Financial News 26 April 1924, DVPSSSR Vol 7 document 112 p216
- 15 the Prime Minister's speech at the reception of the Russian delegates to the Anglo-Soviet Conference, 14 April 1924, is in F.O. 800.219

pp 209-219, and in DVPSSSR Vol 7 pp200-204. There was "nothing in his speech", commented the Economist (19 April 1924 p824), "to offend the bankers"; it was "quite unexceptionable". Rakovsky's speech in reply is in DVPSSSR Vol 7 document 104 pp193-200.

The proceedings of the Conference were not open to the press, but periodic communiques may be found in contemporary newspapers, some of which have been reprinted in DVPSSSR Vol 7. Contemporary Soviet accounts are in Mezhdunarodnaya Letopis' Nos 1 and 2, 1925, and in Karl Radek (intord.): Londonskaya Konferentsiya (Moscow, Kommunisticheskaya Akademiya 1925), of which I have been unable to locate a copy. More recent accounts are in Lyman, R.: The First Labour Government (London 1957) and (based largely upon Soviet archival sources) Volkov, F.D.: Anglo-Sovetskiye Otnosheniya 1924-1929 (Moscow 1958).

- 16 Russian Information and Review Vol iv No 17, 26 April 1924 p258
- 17 Rakovsky to Ponsonby, 31 May 1924, DVPSSSR Vol 7 document 161 p358-62. Ponsonby's letter of 30 May and the British proposals are in ibid pp362-4
- 18 F.O. 800.227, Ponsonby Papers, note of 2 June 1924
- 19 Parliamentary Debates Vol 174 col 1486, 5 June 1924
- 20 Coates, Forward 17 May 1924; Brailsford, New Leader 6 June 1924; Economist 12 July 1924 p50
- 21 Annex to Cabinet Minutes 30 July 1924, Cab 44(24), Cab 23/48
- 22 Memorandum covering the Anglo-Soviet draft treaty, containing the draft general and commercial treaties, B.D. 24, 28 July 1924, in ibid
- 23 Cabinet Paper C.P. 415(24), referred to in Cabinet Minutes ibid
- 24 Cabinet Minutes 30 July 1924, Cab 44(24)6, Cab 23/48
- 25 Cabinet Minutes 5 August 1924, Cab 47(24)20, Cab 23/48
- 26 Ponsonby: Russian Treaties in Lees-Smith ed.: Encyclopedia of the Labour Movement iii 118. Contemporary accounts include 'Diplomat': Anglo-Sovetsky Dogovor: Sotsialisticheskoe Khozyaistvo Kn. 4, 1924, pp5-23
- 27 the texts of the proposed commercial and general treaties are in Parliamentary Papers 1924 Cmd 2216 and 2215 respectively; the text of the general treaty as it stood when negotiations were suspended is in ibid Cmd 2253; and the treaties as signed (but not ratified) are in respectively ibid Cmd 2261 and 2260

- 28 Parliamentary Debates Vol 176 col 3012f, 6 August 1924
- 29 ibid cols 3025,3028,3029; col 3034
- 30 "That any Labour Minister should have dreamed of prosecuting a
workers' paper", commented the New Leader (15 August 1924), "for
calling on their troops to remember their duties to their class,
if they should be used in labour disputes, would have seemed
incredible before we took office". Campbell's own account of the
XX 'Campbell case' is in Labour Monthly No 11, 1924, p673f
- 31 New Leader 5 September 1924
- 32 Economist 13 September 1924 p407, 16 August 1924 p260
- 33 Review of Reviews Vol 70, September 1924, p199
- 34 National Review Vol 84, September 1924, p21. An article by Arthur
Steel-Maitland on the 'great Russian Fake' is in ibid p48f
- 35 the title of a pamphlet published by the ILP (London 1924), dealing
with the correspondence between the party and the Soviet Embassy;
see also A.A. Purcell and E.D. Morel: The Workers and the Anglo-
Russian Treaty (ILP Information Committee and Anglo-Russian Parlia-
mentary Committee, 1924), and two further ILP pamphlets: Support
the Russian Treaties, and The Labour Government's Loans to Russia (1924)
- 36 Socialist Review November 1924 p184. The New Leader (3 October 1924)
reported that the Soviet Embassy list amounted in value to £26 million.
- 37 New Leader 17 October 1924. Which was the riskier transaction, enqui-
red an editorial in the journal on 23 October: "£100 million to
fomenters of civil war without bond or promise, or (say) £30 million,
with security, lent to restore trade and provide work for our
hungry shipwrights and engineers?"
- 38 Economist 25 October 1924 p646
- 39 much has been written about the Zinoviev letter, including a book:
L. Chester et al.: The Zinoviev Letter (London 1967). Contemporary
treatments include A. MacManus: History of the Zinoviev Letter (CPGB,
London 1925), an article by Pavlovich in Krasnaya Nov' No 1, 1925,
and the conclusion of the Labour Party executive (Labour Party: 1925
Annual Conference Report p89) that the letter was probably a forgery.
- 40 the letter from Gregory to Rakovsky of 24 October 1924 is in DVPSSSR
Vol 7 p511; the full correspondence was published in P.P. 1928 Cmd 2895
- 41 Snowden: Autobiography ii 716; Craig (ed) British General Election
Statistics (Chichester, 2nd ed 1971) pp5.6
- XX Statistics (Chichester, 2nd ed 1971) pp5.6

- 42 Kirkwood: My Life of Revolt p228
- 43 Miller, K.E. : Socialism and Foreign Policy p142; see also Rothstein, Andrew: British Foreign Policy and its Critics (London 1969) p41-2
- 44 MacDonald, Continuity in Foreign Policy, Spectator 6 December 1924
- 45 Cabinet Minutes 27 March 1924, Cab 23(24)1, Cab 23/47, and 6 June 1924, Cab 37(24), Cab 23/48
- 46 Cabinet Minutes 7 April 1924, Cab 25(24)10, Cab 23/47; Labour Party: 1922 Annual Conference Report p237-8
- 47 Cabinet Minutes 15 May 1924, Cab 32(24)4, Cab 23/48
- 48 Cabinet Minutes 18 June 1924, Cab 38(24)5, Cab 23/48
- 49 Economist 5 July 1924 p5, where it was noted that there were "very few" Communists in the Labour Party, and "not very many even in the metal and mining unions"
- 50 Cabinet Minutes 15 April 1924, Cab 27(24)8, Cab 23/48
- 51 Cabinet Minutes 9 July 1924 Cab 40(24)7, Cab 23/48
- 52 Diaries of Beatrice Webb 1924-1932 (London 1956)p18, 3 April 1924
- 53 Lansbury to Morel, 10 November 1924, Morel Papers F
- 54 Beatrice Webb Diaries (as note 52) ppl3,14, 15 March 1924
- 55 ibid p23, 12 April 1924
- 56 Willis, Communist 17 June 1922
- 57 Engels to Marx, 7 October 1858, and to Kautsky, 12 September 1882, in Marx and Engels: Selected Correspondence (Moscow and London n.d.) ppl32-3, p422
- 58 Cabinet Minutes 12 November 1924, Cab 59(24)9, and 19 November 1924, Cab 60(24)9, Cab 23/49
- 59 Cabinet Minutes 20 November 1924, Cab 61(24)3, Cab 23/49; Austen Chamberlain's letter of 21 November to Rakovsky is in ibid App. 2, and in DVPSSSR Vol 7 p560
- 60 Churchill to Baldwin, 14 November 1924, Baldwin Papers Vol 113
- 61 Kenworthy in an interview in Izvestiya 27 February 1923 (the first MP from a bourgeois party to visit Soviet Russia'); M. Philips Price Communist 6 May 1922
- 62 Newbold Papers, Autobiographical, p28 of TSS
- 63 Communist 27 May 1922
- 64 Izvestiya 11 November 1923
- 65 Izvestiya 27 February 1923

A Note on Sources

The sources consulted in the preparation of this study are set out below. A number of standard works and works which proved to be of no relevance are omitted from the list of secondary authorities, but the bibliography is otherwise complete. Not all sources have been of equal value. A number of collections of private papers are disappointingly meagre (Lansbury's, admittedly, were raided by the police) and other archives which promised much, that of the Fabian Society for example, provided little of value. A particular effort, however, has been made to locate and examine local labour records, in the belief that a more accurate and revealing picture of labour politics in the period might be obtained from them than from national and Parliament-centred sources. These records are often incomplete, and sometimes virtually illegible when handwritten, but they provided a valuable perspective, many useful facts, and much entertainment. The study of the contemporary pamphlet and ephemeral literature had a similar value. Soviet monographs proved uneven in quality, and (until recently) almost invariably schematic; more recent studies, however, refer more frequently to otherwise inaccessible archive sources, and some (Shishkin's book, for instance) are by any standard impressive contributions.

Synopsis

A. Unpublished sources:

1. private papers
2. records of organizations
3. governmental records

B. Published sources

4. collections of documents
5. reports and documents of organizations
6. governmental (Parliamentary) publications

C. Interviews

D. Theses (unpublished)

E. Contemporary reference works, yearbooks and encyclopedias

F. Modern bibliography and reference works

G. Contemporary newspapers and journals

H. Memoirs and biographies

I. Contemporary pamphlets and other writings

J. Modern studies

K. Periodical articles

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Lansbury Papers MacDonald Collection

Passfield Papers

Morel Papers

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Baldwin Papers

Glasgow University Library:

Beady Collection

Manchester University Library:

Newbold Papers

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh:

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Maclean Papers

Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection:

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