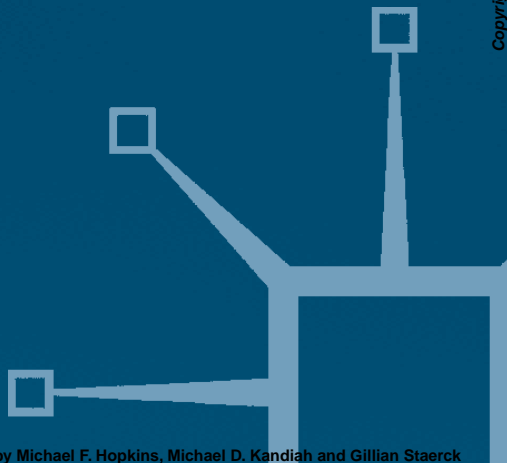


Cold War Britain 1945-1964

New Perspectives

Edited by Michael F. Hopkins,
Michael D. Kandiah and Gillian Staerck



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Cold War Britain, 1945–1964

New Perspectives

Edited by

Michael F. Hopkins

Michael D. Kandiah

and

Gillian Staerck

palgrave
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MICHAEL F. HOPKINS
MICHAEL D. KANDIAH
GILLIAN STAERCK

Introduction

Michael F. Hopkins, Michael D. Kandiah and Gillian Staerck

For a generation and more after the Second World War the scholarly debate on the emergence and course of the Cold War was dominated by the image of a Soviet-American confrontation – ‘two big dogs chewing a bone’.¹ However, Donald Cameron Watt’s seminal article in 1978 initiated the serious academic exploration of Britain’s role in these events.² Since then numerous studies have sought to explore that role.³ For example, Anne Deighton and others have constructed a persuasive interpretation of the importance of the British contribution in the origins of the Cold War. They have suggested that, very early on, Britain took the lead in a strong line against the Soviet Union; that she preceded the Americans in proposing the Bizone for West Germany; that her withdrawal from Greece and Turkey in 1947 prompted the Truman Doctrine; that she was a vital booster of the plan for Marshall Aid; and that she was a crucial moving force in the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty. According to these commentators, the Korean War might be regarded as the apogee of this policy – with the common enemy now identified as the ‘communist menace’. Others, however, have suggested that such claims overstate Britain’s role in shaping world events. Geoffrey Warner has challenged the argument that Britain’s influence was as crucial as some had claimed. For instance, he has pointed out that the decision to merge the British and American zones in Germany owed as much to independent US conclusions about its value as it did to British advice.⁴

If both the scale and nature of the United Kingdom’s role in the birth of East–West confrontation war remain the subject of lively debate, there can be no doubt that successive British governments have placed the Cold War at the centre of their policy-making agenda. A sense of the priority given to this issue is revealed in a Foreign Office Planning Staff paper written in 1959–60:

The ultimate aim of any Government in the United Kingdom must always remain the security of these islands from foreign domination or attack, the prosperity of the British people and the protection of our individual freedom and liberty ...

2 Introduction

In order to fulfil our ultimate aims we must strive:

- (a) to play a full part in the free world's efforts to counter the growing power of the Sino-Soviet bloc;
- (b) to maintain the strength of sterling and to further our trading interests throughout the world;
- (c) to preserve and strengthen the cohesion of the Commonwealth. Whether we like it or not, our interests are inextricably linked with those of the whole free world. We cannot hope to preserve them by our own independent action, and we are much too important a part of the free world to be able to retreat into a passive role like Sweden or Switzerland. Our duties and responsibilities will be very different in the future from what they have been in the past, but they will be no less onerous and no less demanding of our highest efforts.⁵

A preoccupation with the Cold War pervaded the thinking of all policy-makers and politicians. When surveying recent international developments in 1962 the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, declared to his Australian counterpart, Sir Robert Menzies, that the Cold War 'really dominates everything'.⁶

This volume, which is derived from papers presented to the July 1997 ICBH conference on Britain and the Cold War, looks at UK policy-making during the crucial early Cold War years. The chapters have benefited from access to a wide range of the newly available archival documents since the end of the Cold War; from time to reflect on the large amount of research undertaken since its demise; and from the greater distance from events. Additionally, this volume reflects the broadening of approaches scholars have begun to take in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War. It is increasingly being seen in the context of longer-term developments. Erik Goldstein's opening chapter surveys Anglo-Soviet relations from a vantage point that extends all the way back to the nineteenth century and locates Britain's response to the Cold War in the framework of early Anglo-Russian rivalry at the height of the Age of Empire. He reminds us that British policy-makers believed right up until the first few years of the twentieth century that Russia was the British Empire's most dangerous enemy. Following the overthrow of Tsarist Russia and the establishment of the Soviet Union, Britain did not shift in this view but, instead, found that she had new reasons for believing in its validity.

One of the advantages of the post-Cold War perspective is that it allows us to see beyond the Cold War and to investigate the extent to which many of the policies pursued in that era were more traditional than was claimed at the time. Many now suggest that national interests were just as influential in shaping foreign policy as the ideological struggle against communism; and that states often adopted a Cold War outlook as much to promote their distinctive national interests as to resist international and domestic communism. In this regard, Spencer Mawby has emphasised the

extent to which worries about Germany persisted in preoccupying British policy-makers at a time when they were supposed to be principally concerned with the Soviet Union. In addition, Peter Busch, Martin Longden, Ian Jackson and Gillian Staerck each has suggested that foreign-policy-making must be understood in terms of British policy-makers' pursuit of national interest and their desire to maintain Britain's place at the 'top table' in international affairs. The rise of the two superpowers and their Cold War confrontation did not end British policy-makers' belief in their country's international status. Instead, Cold War considerations were incorporated into the traditional perspectives of the governing elites.

Many of the chapters cover aspects that have hitherto been little examined in British Cold War writing. Juhana Aunesluoma discusses the Anglo-Scandinavian 'Special Relationship' in the early post-war years and examines the extent to which the Cold War shaped this relationship. Wayne Reynolds discusses Britain's relationship with her Old Dominion allies in the development of her global nuclear strategy. John Jenks looks at the Attlee Government's responses to the World Peace Council as the Cold War was unfolding and draws important parallels between the British and the American experience. The differences between the British and American Cold War policies and the economic realities that shaped British policies are elucidated in Ian Jackson's chapter on the diplomacy pursued by Western powers. As Ian Jackson shows, economic measures were extensively utilised as weapons in East-West confrontation. Sean Greenwood also highlights important economic considerations. He regards the issue of Ruhr coal as a microcosm of the dilemmas facing the British Government at the start of the Cold War and an indication of their motives in responding to them. British policy also embraced other less material but equally significant activities. Much of the Cold War centred on the fight for support, the struggle for hearts and minds.⁷ In an era where the masses had greater access to information and where the mass media were expanding their reach, it was natural that the Cold War should be conducted via publicity, public relations and propaganda. This was pursued abroad but also, just as importantly, at home. John Jenks adumbrates these issues in his exploration of the response to the World Peace Council. In addition, Michael Kandiah's chapter examines how the Cold War shaped and modernised British home politics. Michael Hopkins looks at features of the domestic and international activities of Herbert Morrison, a neglected figure in the Labour Government of 1945–51.

The Cold War was conducted in a wider number of ways than sometimes realised. It was of importance in regions that have been ignored or have been given limited attention. Juhana Aunesluoma's chapter seeks to redress this imbalance by examining British policy towards Scandinavia, especially Swedish neutrality, in the early Cold War. The British recognised the economic and strategic importance of the area as a whole and worried about the threat from the Soviet Union. The Scandinavians considered Britain

their most important partner in political, economic and military cooperation. Nevertheless, no account of Britain and the Cold War can avoid placing the Anglo–American relationship at its centre. Each of the chapters addresses this matter to varying degrees. But three of them put the partnership at the centre of their analysis. Michael Hopkins seeks to understand the role of Herbert Morrison in the Attlee Government’s pursuit of a Cold War special relationship. He was a pivotal member of the Attlee Government, playing important roles in both domestic and foreign policy. Yet he has received limited, and generally unfavourable, treatment. Stephen Blackwell and Gillian Staerck consider aspects of Anglo–American strategic and diplomatic relations concerning, respectively, North Africa and the Middle East, and North Africa, NATO and de Gaulle.

Effective security was vital to British Cold War strategy. Four chapters scrutinise different features of this field. Martin Longden turns to the evolution of British thinking and policy about how to protect Western Europe. He argues that it was an area vital to British strategic interests but one that they perceived to be wholly indefensible. Ian Speller considers the Royal Navy’s approach to a Cold War strategy in the nuclear era. Stephen Blackwell shows that Anglo–American Cold War solidarity did not mean that defence relations in the Middle East in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis would run smoothly. Wayne Reynolds points out that there was an imperial dimension to Britain’s early nuclear policy. Between 1943 and 1957 the British Empire played a crucial role in Britain’s atomic strategy: it was indispensable for provision of uranium, fissile material, scientific manpower and test sites for the UK Atomic Weapons programme. This relationship fell apart once Britain was able to get the McMahon Act repealed.

Taken together, the studies in this volume suggest three principal themes with regard to Britain and the Cold War. The first is that while the Cold War provided an over-arching framework for Britain’s foreign policy-making during the first two decades after the Second World War, its exigencies were not intentionally pursued at the expense of British national interest. Indeed, the opposite was true. Secondly, the Cold War did not alter the United Kingdom’s view of its position in the world: policy-makers continued to believe that the country remained a significant international power and that it had a right and deserved to remain a major global power. It proved possible to combine the threads of traditional British policy with the new circumstances of the Cold War in these two decades after the Second World War. Thirdly, notwithstanding the first two tendencies, the United Kingdom’s commitment to fighting the Cold War internationally and domestically was unreserved. British decision-makers were in general agreement that communism and collectivism posed the most serious danger to both Western security and civilisation.⁸ Additionally, they were willing and able to divert a significant portion of the country’s financial resources to fighting this battle across the globe.⁹ In this way the United Kingdom was the coldest – and the most international – of the Cold Warriors in Western Europe.

Part I

Prelude to the Cold War

1

Britain and the Origins of the Cold War

Erik Goldstein

The foreign policy of the United Kingdom towards the Soviet Union after the Second World War was rooted in Britain's traditional policy toward Russia, stretching back at least to the nineteenth century. Geo-politics even more than ideological rivalry have shaped British reactions to Russian intentions and other than during two brief periods of coalition with Russia in the two world wars, and only then in the face of a common enemy, the normal condition of Anglo-Russian relations has been one of rivalry, mutual distrust and suspicion. The British response has been to seek to contain the perceived threat emanating from Russia. Containment is usually associated with United States policy during the Cold War, but as a tactic of statecraft it is much older and was practised by Britain against Russia from the nineteenth century. The result has been an intermittent Anglo-Russian Cold War for over two centuries.

During these two centuries of rivalry, three schools of thought about how Britain should deal with any Russian menace, pre- or post-Bolshevik revolution, can be discerned:

- 1) The hard line school, with a willingness to use military action, if necessary, to block Russian ambitions, which conflicted with British interests. This approach was in the ascendant at the time of the Crimean war (1853–56), and briefly during the Intervention (1918–20).
- 2) The Cold War (or Proto-Cold War) school, which, while either wishing to avoid direct armed conflict, or acknowledging that public support might be insufficient, sought by all other means to contain Russia.
- 3) The soft line school, which sought warmer relations with Russia. Figures from this group include Lord Derby, who resigned as Foreign Secretary in 1878 over the Disraeli Government's tough policy towards Russia, and the Labour Government of 1924, which recognised the new Soviet regime and opened a brief period of diplomatic relations.

British perceptions of Russia have often been that of a country difficult to comprehend. Palmerston warned in 1835 that 'Russia has advanced

specially because nobody observed, watched and understood what she was doing.¹ Owen O'Malley of the Foreign Office, writing of the 1924 Anglo-Soviet conference commented of Russia, 'where so little is reasonably calculable and passions are so deeply involved.'² There is Churchill's famous observation that Russia 'is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.'³ Some public figures had simpler explanations. Aubrey Herbert, MP, wrote in 1922, 'It seems to me that the present Bolshevism may go on in Russia indefinitely, because the Rusk [*sic*] are a race of loonies.'⁴ Such views were reflected in the popular perception of Russia. One of the phenomena of nineteenth-century British politics was the rise of popular Russophobia.⁵ The popular image of Russia was best summed up by Rudyard Kipling in *Kim*, where he talks of 'the dread power of the North', and this linking of 'dread' with Russia appears frequently. Lord Derby in 1876 noted in his diary, 'Already in the newspapers I see that the old dread of Russia is regaining strength.'⁶

Pre-1917 Proto-Cold War

British diplomacy in the nineteenth century was actively engaged in containing the threat of Russian expansion, and actions taken in the nineteenth century bear close resemblance to some of those of the Cold War. Anglo-Russian rivalry began to emerge as early as the 1790s when Pitt the Younger perceived that the two growing empires were heading towards possible confrontation, at this stage in the Near East. Ideological confrontation with Russia began after the defeat of Napoleon when Tsar Alexander I organised a conservative grouping of states, the Holy Alliance, to which Britain was opposed and which the foreign secretary, Castlereagh, actively moved to block. His successors, Canning and Palmerston, continued the policy of thwarting this Russian-led bloc of reactionary powers, as well as other efforts by Russia to extend her influence. Palmerston in the 1830s thought the build-up of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea and its ability to deploy in the Eastern Mediterranean one of the greatest threats to British interests, and this led to Britain enhancing her naval presence in that theatre.⁷ The Greek Rebellion (1821–32) became a matter of concern, lest it open the doors to an expansion of Russian influence, and as a result Britain felt obliged to intervene, just as she did in the Greek civil war from 1944. In time the two powers would come into serious conflict in the East Mediterranean, Central Asia and East Asia. The concerns caused by the extension of Russian power into areas of British interest are reflected in the publication of various cautionary books, such as George de Lacy Evans, *On the Designs of Russia* (1828) and Commander Henry Craufurd, *The Russian Fleet in the Baltic in 1836, with some Remarks Intended to Draw Attention to the Danger of Leaving Our Navy in Its Present Extremely Reduced State* (1837).

In the 1850s this Proto-Cold War became a real war, fought out in the Crimea. Russian ambitions towards the Ottoman Empire had now reached the stage where many British policy-makers were convinced that Russia intended a dramatic southward extension of her power. The Ottoman Empire was seen as the bulwark against Russia bursting upon the Eastern Mediterranean, and dominating the sea lanes and land routes between Europe and Asia. Lord John Russell, a moderate, became convinced of Russian intentions to control the Ottoman Empire, declaring in 1853, 'if we do not stop the Russians on the Danube, we shall have to stop them on the Indus.'⁸ Here was a distant echo of Cold War observations about the Rhine. The Crimean War of 1853–56 was about blocking Russian expansion to the south and into the Balkans. Lord Palmerston in explaining British actions observed that, 'The policy of Great Britain from first to last has been that of protecting Turkey with a view to the repulse of Russia from an exclusive and dangerous domination over the East of Europe.'⁹

In a similar crisis, the Russo–Ottoman War of 1877–78, when it seemed possible that Russia was intent on further expansion, Disraeli advised Queen Victoria that 'the Empress of India should order her armies to clear Central Asia of the Muscovites, and drive them into the Caspian.'¹⁰ Here was an early call for rollback. At the Congress of Berlin, which resolved the crisis, Disraeli succeeded in blocking Russian aspirations in the Balkans. This confrontation led to the coining of the term 'jingoism' from the contemporary music hall song:

We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do
We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too
We've fought the Bear before, and, while Britons true
The Russians shall not have Constantinopool [Constantinople]

British India at the same time was actively engaged in attempting to block Russian expansion into Central Asia, in what became known as the Great Game. Britain's precedent-shattering 1902 peacetime alliance with Japan was aimed at blocking Russian expansion in East Asia. In a later period, concern about Russia would lead Britain to alter her traditional view about collective security and support the creation of NATO.

1907–1917: interlude

Russia's stunning defeat by Japan in 1905, when she lost most of her navy, briefly removed Russia from the ranks of potential adversaries, a role Germany was now coming to fulfil. The German threat brought about the unlikely Triple Entente of France, Russia and Britain. It was, though, no more than a coalition against a common threat, and Britain's traditional suspicions of both her partners remained high. This brief wartime partnership was not

of sufficient duration to change perceptions, and the Bolshevik revolution and the defeat of Germany simply allowed older patterns of behaviour to reassert themselves. The ideology of the Russian regime might have changed, but the threat she could pose was very similar to that of the Tsarist period.

The first Cold War

The new, Bolshevised Russia was seen to be just as much a threat as nineteenth-century imperial Russia had been to Britain's idea of world order. Rex Leeper, the Russia expert of the Foreign Office Political Intelligence Department, who would later serve as ambassador to Athens during the Greek Civil War, advised in 1918 that Russia was 'a grave menace to civilisation'.¹¹ How to deal with this new regime was an early matter of concern for London. At a meeting of the War Cabinet on 7 December 1917 two possible courses of action were identified: 'a.) To recognise the Bolsheviks and make the best arrangements possible with them, or b.) To refuse to recognise them, and take open and energetic steps against them.'¹² These options would continue to confront British Governments in the decades, that followed.

For Lloyd George's Coalition Government the debate lay between intervention and confinement (containment). Figures such as Winston Churchill, then Secretary of State for War, warned Lloyd George in 1919 that if no action was taken to defeat the Bolsheviks, after they had consolidated control in the old Russian Empire, Britain would find:

their armies are menacing Persia and Afghanistan and their missionaries are at the gates of India, when one after another the Border States in the West have been undermined by want and propaganda or overborne by criminal violence, not only the League of Nations but the British Empire, with which we are particularly concerned, will wake up to the fact that Russia is not a negligible factor in world politics.¹³

Churchill wanted to use force to remove this new Russian threat. In this Churchill was supported by such Cabinet colleagues as Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, and one of the hard line anti-Bolsheviks, who believed that the Russians were pursuing 'by restless and subterranean activities ... no other purpose than the destruction of the British Empire'.¹⁴ Churchill would later explain, in the context of the Cold War, the necessity for showing the willingness to use force:

You have not only to convince the Soviet Government that you have superior force – that they are confronted by superior force – but that you are not restrained by any moral consideration if the case arose from using that force with complete material ruthlessness. And that is the greatest chance for peace, the surest road to peace.¹⁵

Most of the Cabinet agreed with the concept that a threat was being posed, but not all wanted to follow an interventionist policy. Lord Milner, who had had plenty of experience of such a policy from his role in the Boer War, stated that he was, 'quite opposed to aggressive action against Bolshevism but he did not wish the fire to spread; he wished to confine it to the area it had already ravaged'.¹⁶ Milner advocated what would later be called containment, suggesting that, 'He would come to terms with the Bolsheviks if they agreed to remain within their own boundaries'.¹⁷

Lloyd George, though, was concerned about his backbench Conservative coalition members, many of whom favoured a hard line, as well as the threat from Churchill to resign so that he could attack the government for lack of action.¹⁸ As a result, for a brief period, he sanctioned British support for the White forces in Russia. Lloyd George nonetheless was not convinced about the utility of force in toppling the Bolsheviks. In November 1919 he publicly admitted the failure of military measures, and by March 1920 all British forces had been evacuated.¹⁹ In late December 1918 Lloyd George informed the Imperial War Cabinet that he 'was definitely opposed to military intervention in any shape' and he went on to advise 'The best thing was to let Bolshevism fail of itself'.²⁰

Lloyd George now moved to lift the economic blockade imposed upon Russia by the Allies, and in February he signalled, in Parliament, his interest in renewing commercial relations: 'We have failed to restore Russia to sanity by force. I believe we can save her by trade. Commerce has a sobering influence in its operations'.²¹ He concluded that 'There is but one way – we must fight anarchy with abundance'.²² After months of negotiation, almost derailed by the Soviet–Polish War of 1920, a trade agreement was concluded, with Britain extending *de facto* recognition.²³ Lloyd George attempted to build on this at the Genoa Conference of 1922, where he hoped to settle the outstanding problem of the Russian debt to open the way to full relations with Russia.²⁴ In this he was defeated, largely through French intransigence.²⁵

In 1922 Lloyd George's coalition fell, and was replaced by a Conservative administration. Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, now dominated foreign policy. Curzon had been worried since at least the 1880s about Russia using her position in Central Asia to threaten Britain's Indian Empire.²⁶ As Viceroy of India he intervened in Tibet to block a perceived Russian threat.²⁷ Curzon now argued that the Soviet Government was 'in a position of special and inveterate hostility towards the British Empire'.²⁸ He told the Cabinet that the regime in Moscow was 'Communists with wide Imperial aspirations'.²⁹ Curzon saw continuity between traditional Russian aspirations and Communist Russian desires. In the context of the Turkish crisis of 1922 Curzon concluded that Moscow's objective 'had always been Constantinople',³⁰ – an analysis which would equally have been at home in any nineteenth-century cabinet discussion. Indeed in 1926 Birkenhead was telling the Imperial conference that, 'The policy initiated by Peter the Great

of penetrating to the warm water has not changed with changing forms of government.³¹ One important aspect of Curzon's strategy at the Lausanne negotiations, which resolved the crisis, was to block Soviet influence in the new Turkey. Once again Britain was anxious to prevent any extension of Russian influence to the south.

In 1923 Curzon, together with others involved with foreign policy, became increasingly concerned about Soviet propaganda in Asia and the Near and Middle East. This led to the Curzon Note of May 1923, which threatened the breaking off of the existing *de facto* relations should the Soviet Union persist in these and other antagonistic policies.³² Hard-liners in the Foreign Office were delighted by the possibility of moving more fully to isolate Russia. J.D. Gregory, head of the Foreign Office's Northern Department, commented that this was a 'great opportunity for us who would like a break anyhow'.³³ At this critical juncture the rapidly ailing Prime Minister, Bonar Law, resigned and was replaced by Stanley Baldwin. The new Prime Minister, more concerned about possible trade benefits than high imperial policy, moved to avert a rupture, saying during his first week as Prime Minister, 'we must try to avoid a break with Russia'.³⁴ The Soviets moved to accommodate the British on most points, thus satisfying Baldwin and initiating an improvement in relations. Baldwin's chief rival for the premiership had been Curzon, and it seems possible to conclude that the advent of Baldwin derailed Curzon's slowly escalating hard-line policy. Curzon's personal position had been weakened by Baldwin's broader support within the Conservative Party. The new government, however, only lasted seven months, and any possible power struggle between Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary never had the opportunity to occur.

The first Labour Government, led by Ramsay MacDonald, took office in January 1924, with MacDonald also serving as Foreign Secretary. MacDonald said at his Party's victory celebration that he would end, 'The pompous folly of standing aloof from the Russian Government'.³⁵ He had earlier been critical of the Bolsheviks, largely because of their quashing of Georgian independence, but MacDonald now hastened the process of granting *de jure* recognition, partly out of concern that Italy might steal a march and become the first of the Allied states to open full relations with the Soviet Union.³⁶ MacDonald also negotiated an Anglo-Soviet treaty, intended to resolve and clarify a number of issues between the governments, which would allow for the normalisation of relations. Before the treaty could be ratified, however, MacDonald was forced to call new elections.³⁷

MacDonald's campaign was famously disrupted by the publication of the Zinoviev Letter, which probably played a role in Labour's defeat. The role of the Zinoviev Letter in the election campaign ensured that it would not soon be forgotten. A Committee of enquiry chaired by the new Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, pronounced it genuine.³⁸ As a result Chamberlain informed Parliament that normal diplomatic relations were out of the question, but that the policy would be one of 'wait and watch'.³⁹

Chamberlain observed in February 1925 that, 'Russia is an imponderable factor, curiously enough as frightened of other people as other people are of her, or so at least it seems to me'.⁴⁰ Chamberlain initiated a thorough policy review, and one important early memorandum in this process was a January 1925 overview of the situation in Europe, by Harold Nicolson, which divided the continent into three groups, victors, vanquished and Russia. The Russian problem was seen as 'that incessant though shapeless menace', with Nicolson concluding that 'Russia is not therefore in any sense a factor of stability: she is indeed the most menacing of all our uncertainties; and it must thus be in spite of Russia, perhaps even because of Russia, that a policy of security must be framed'.⁴¹ Sir William Tyrrell, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, commented that 'If we can build up a solid group of powers on the Continent we shall be providing ourselves with a most effective means of protection against the subversive methods of Soviet Russia'.⁴²

Chamberlain's efforts to run an aloof but flexible foreign policy on this issue came under sustained attack from his die-hard Cabinet colleagues, such as Joynson-Hicks, Churchill and Birkenhead. The first issue relating to Russia which the new government confronted was the accusation by some hard-liners, such as the Home Secretary, Joynson-Hicks, that Russia were fomenting unrest in China, and thereby threatening British interests. Chamberlain's reaction was to be cool but proper to Moscow. He observed that 'it would be very inexpedient to provoke a controversy with the Soviet Gov[ernment] if it can be avoided, and that the less attention we pay to them the more anxious they will be to come to terms with us'.⁴³ He advised the cabinet that Britain's policy should be 'to keep the formal relations as distant as possible'.⁴⁴ Chamberlain's success at Locarno in 1925 helped to establish his ascendancy in foreign policy, and to diminish the influence of these die-hards. Chamberlain's intellectual vision of British foreign policy was based on a return to traditional British responses.⁴⁵ It is perhaps significant that Chamberlain installed a portrait of Castlereagh, who had conducted a similar policy, in the new Locarno Suite at the Foreign Office, as the presiding deity in British foreign affairs. The Locarno agreements were the result of the return of balance of power policy towards Western Europe. Eastern Europe was a much more distant concern, and it was hoped that region would remain quiescent and not cause disturbances which might affect Western Europe. Russia, though, was seen as one of those factors that might disrupt Eastern Europe. There had been concern in London since the 1922 Rapallo Treaty of a German-Soviet alliance, and it was hoped that the Locarno Pact would make such an alliance less attractive to Germany. Britain's intention is best summed up by Tyrrell, who observed that, 'One of the chief merits of the Locarno policy was to detach Germany from Russia and thus gradually unite up the block and thereby defeat the obvious tactics of Moscow which aim at splitting up Europe'.⁴⁶ It is sometimes suggested that Britain and France intended, by

the Locarno Pact, to turn any Germany revanchism to the East. There is no evidence of this in Chamberlain's thinking. He did contemplate further Locarnos, such as an Eastern or a Mediterranean Locarno, but the opportunities never arose. What Chamberlain's policy did, as it did in other spheres as well, was to return to the traditional statecraft of Britain, a policy which was continued with only minor variations by his successors. The result was a low-level Cold War with the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

As Russian power once again asserted itself as a major force in international affairs with the end of the Second World War, London did no more than adapt and evolve its traditional responses to such regular Russian manifestations. The underlying assumptions of Russian intentions remained unaltered. As Ernest Bevin said in 1946:

you have Russia ... who in foreign policy is quite clearly as imperialistic as the greatest of the Czars, Peter the Great or anybody else, and who is seeking to put around herself for security purposes whole groups of satellites in the south, east and west with the view of controlling every kind of place which is likely to come in contact with her. I think she has an inherent fear, quite unnecessarily, that the big Powers like us and America may some day or other attack her ... Therefore she adopts methods which are very much out of date.⁴⁷

The aftermath of the First World War saw London grappling with an attempt to grasp the nature of the change, if any, in the new Russian regime, and its impact on British interests. In part because of the necessities of the First World War, this led to a British military presence in Russia, which in turn made the transition to military intervention all too tempting. The failure of this option led the Lloyd George Government to oscillate to the other extreme and to seek to rapidly warm relations with Russia. After the brief interval of the Bonar Law and Baldwin governments, with the latter in effect continuing the Lloyd George line, MacDonald attempted to build upon this foundation with a full *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union. These tendencies though came to an end with the Zinoviev Letter, a view later affirmed by the Arcos Raid. This confirmed the growing belief in foreign policy circles that Russia was continuing her penetration of other, usually neighbouring states, and was being duplicitous in her actions. By the time of Locarno in 1925 British policy towards Russia had returned to her historic norm, a chilly aloofness, and, in the diplomatic parlance of the time, sought to erect a *cordon sanitaire* along Russia's borders. Russia was viewed as a state that was historically unreliable, diplomatically duplicitous, and possessed of inherent expansionist desires. The result was a low-level Cold War throughout the inter-war years, which laid the intellectual groundwork for a much frostier Cold War after 1945.

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