

PREFACE



THE third and final volume of this study of British policy making during the initial years of Anglo-Soviet relations is an account of how the two governments went about coming to terms with each other—a process which culminated in their signature on 16 March 1921 of a trade agreement and in the *de facto* recognition by Great Britain of the Bolshevik regime in Moscow. This process was vastly complicated by the Polish offensive against Russia in the spring of 1920 and by the Soviet counteroffensive, which nearly resulted in the sovietization of Poland; it was complicated still further by the recrudescence of the old Anglo-Russian rivalry in the East, a competition made even more venomous by the ideological gulf which now divided the two governments.

Even were it not for these other issues, however, the process of reaching a *modus vivendi* would have been difficult enough. The Soviet regime, after all, was very unlike other existing political systems. Its leaders had come to power in part by virtue of their hostility to those other systems. Their hostility was directed in particular at the rulers of the United Kingdom and the British Empire who themselves symbolized the capitalist social and economic structure which the Bolsheviks sought to overturn. Needless to say, that hostility was amply returned. Within the British government (as within the Soviet government) there were important figures who firmly believed that no rapprochement of any sort was possible between two such disparate systems, and who, indeed, developed a political stake in the continuation of open conflict between them. Thus the international competition *between* the two societies became—as such competitions almost always do—an element in the competition for power and influence *within* each of the rival political structures.

Like the two preceding volumes of this study, the pages which follow focus primarily on the politics of policy making within the British government and on the relationship to this political process of the perceptions and actions of British politicians, civil servants, and military and naval officers, both in London and in the field. Once again, I have attempted to treat the course of British domestic politics and the handling of other contemporaneous problems of foreign policy only in so far as such treatment is necessary to make

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sense of the politics of policy toward Russia. To a greater extent than with either *Intervention and the War* or *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, however, it has been necessary to treat such matters here. Both preceding volumes were concerned primarily with the politics of military policy during and in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. This was predominantly a "closed" politics, accessible for the most part only to those whose working roles caused them to be directly involved, and also a "narrow" politics, relatively unrelated to other problems of foreign (as distinguished from military) policy. By contrast, the present volume treats a period when the British Empire was no longer engaged in a major war, when military intervention in the Russian Civil War was almost completely finished, and when the great issue of policy toward Russia, was, indeed, the whole nature of the future relationship between the two societies.

This point deserves elaboration, for it also explains why I have presumed to impose on an already overburdened readership three volumes on a subject as seemingly circumscribed as the making of British policy towards Russia during only three and one-half years. They are—in my conception, at least—three quite separate books; although they are linked chronologically and by the common topic of British policy toward Russia, each is intended to stand alone as a study of the making of foreign and military policy in a quite distinct "policy environment."

Intervention and the War dealt with strategy making during the last terrible year of the First World War, from the Bolshevik seizure of power on 7 November 1917 until the armistice of 11 November 1918. The coming to power of Lenin and his colleagues in Russia would have seized the attention of policy makers in the West almost as little as had the overthrow of Tsardom seven months earlier except for the fact that the Bolsheviks immediately set about removing Russia from the war by making peace with Germany—something the Provisional Government never could bring itself to do. Some thirty-five divisions newly transferred from the now quiet Eastern Front augmented the German forces which, in March 1918, launched the great offensive which nearly won them Paris and the war. The spearhead of the German attack was directed at the British sector; during the first week the Fifth Army suffered 120,000 casualties, and the attrition continued at a high rate. The prob-

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lem presented by Russia during this period—particularly for the British government—was how to reconstitute some countervailing weight against Germany in the East. Thus formulated, the problem was predominantly one for military specialists who (presumably) could best weigh the military benefits of various solutions against the costs of the military resources necessary to bring them about. The solution elected in London—recruitment to the Allied cause of “loyal” Russians and the transportation across Siberia to join with them of massive Japanese forces which otherwise would not have seen service against Germany—was so attractive precisely because it was seemingly so low in incremental cost. This factor made hard-pressed military planners largely oblivious to the fact that the Japanese never had any intention of allowing their forces to be so used, and to the likelihood that by training and arming “loyal” Russians to fight the Germans the Western Allies would actually be creating the conditions for a bloody and costly civil war.

If *Intervention and the War* explored the origins of Allied intervention (which was preponderantly British intervention) in Russia as an aspect of the grand strategy of the First World War, *Britain and the Russian Civil War* examined the processes by which, after the armistice of 11 November 1918, that intervention was transformed into a campaign whose avowed aim was to unseat the Bolshevik regime in Moscow, and by which during 1919 the British commitment to the anti-Bolshevik side was first enlarged and then liquidated as the perceived costs of intervention, and still more the predictable costs of success, became unpalatably large. This again was a situation where military expertise was thought to be particularly applicable. Yet at the same time, because what seemed at stake was the political future of Russia and because, with no major war simultaneously in progress, the costs of intervention were more explicitly perceived throughout British society, the issue was one that was much more likely to involve the nonmilitary as well as the military departments of the bureaucracy and also to become a part of “open” parliamentary politics. Thus *Britain and the Russian Civil War* was a study of the processes by which the government of a Great Power extricated itself from a civil war in which it was the leading foreign participant, after it had become clear that the war could not be “won” except at what was felt to be a wholly unacceptable price.

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The present volume, dealing with the period commencing in February 1920, when the civil war in Russia was all but over and when there was no longer any doubt that the Bolsheviks would for the foreseeable future retain control of most, if not all, of the territory of the former Russian Empire, is therefore a study of one aspect of peacetime policy making and of the adjustment of British politicians and policy-making officials to the markedly changed conditions of the postwar world. Though its focus is on the process of coming to terms with the new regime in Russia, its context is that of British foreign policy in general. And more than was the case with either of the preceding volumes, the processes of policy making it describes were a part of the "open" politics of British society as a whole.

Something of the same may be said for Soviet policy toward Great Britain during the same period. Before 1920 the Bolshevik regime was fighting for its very existence. Foreign policy was overwhelmingly dictated by the military exigencies of the Civil War. By 1920, however, when the regime's survival was no longer in doubt, alternative policies for dealing with the external world were to a much greater extent than before an issue for discussion and debate within a fairly wide circle of the Soviet leadership. Some of this debate is described in the following pages. Because of the utilization here for the first time of a uniquely important source—the telegraphic traffic between Moscow and the Soviet mission which sat in London for much of 1920—it has often been possible to relate this debate quite directly to the actual conduct of Soviet diplomacy towards Great Britain. But lest a reader should be led to expect more than he will find here, two cautionary notes are in order: First, even given the availability of this telegraphic traffic, the materials available for the elucidation of the politics of policy making within the Soviet government are still minuscule compared to the great wealth of those at the disposal of the student of British policy. And second, the primary concern of this volume, like that of both of its predecessors, is with the politics of policy making within the *British* government.



The appearance of this third volume has been delayed by a year spent in Washington as a member of the Staff of the National Security Council and of the Policy Planning Staff in the Office of

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the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, followed by three years of fairly taxing academic administration. I have no hesitation in saying that the former experience, at any rate, was contributive of more insights into the politics of policy making, and the political processes of large organizations in general, than any academic work I have undertaken. In a number of intangible ways it has made this a better book than it otherwise would have been.

It is once again my pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to a number of institutions and individuals for many different sorts of assistance. The Center of International Studies, the Woodrow Wilson School of Public Affairs, and the University Research Fund—all of Princeton University—helped make possible several trips to the United Kingdom to consult archival materials, and the secretarial staff of the Center of International Studies cheerfully typed the bulk of the manuscript. The Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research of the Johns Hopkins University provided a home for the last stages of writing. Laurence H. Scott and my wife, Yoma Crosfield Ullman, gave me invaluable help with Russian translation; my wife also took on the onerous task of reading the proofs. A.J.P. Taylor, the Director of the Beaverbrook Library and a historian of twentieth-century British and European politics to whom the rest of us will ever be in debt, considerably facilitated my work in the Lloyd George Papers and, in addition, made available to me the typescript of Frances Stevenson's diaries. Captain Stephen Roskill, of Churchill College, Cambridge, similarly facilitated my access to the Hankey Papers and allowed me to use a proof copy of the second volume of his biography of Hankey. Piotr S. Wandycz, of Yale University, brought his unrivaled knowledge of the early years of Soviet-Polish diplomacy to the criticism of an early draft of the book; other parts of that version were read by Robert I. Rotberg of M.I.T., and Stephen Arbogast of the Woodrow Wilson School and Leslie H. Gelb of the Brookings Institution carefully read and commented upon the final version. To all of them I am most grateful.

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here by permission of Viscount Scarsdale, who kindly allowed me to use them at Kedleston before their shipment to the India Office Library, where they are now housed. Similarly, the late Viscount Davidson of Little Gaddesden allowed me to use and quote from his papers before their deposit in the Beaverbrook Library. Mariott, Lady Ironside, allowed me to use and to quote from the unpublished diaries of her late husband, Field Marshal Lord Ironside, and Colonel R. Macleod gave me valuable assistance in so doing. Similarly, I wish to express my gratitude to Major Cyril J. Wilson, who allowed me to use and to quote from the unpublished diaries of his late uncle, Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson.

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and Cabinet Office), F.O. (Foreign Office), and W.O. (War Office). Cabinet papers, of course, include those from all departments, which the Cabinet Office circulated (either of its own volition or at ministerial request) to members of the Cabinet. Because of the thoroughness with which the Cabinet Office went about the task of procuring and circulating departmental papers, I have not felt it necessary for the purposes of this study to make use of the files of additional departments, such as the Home Office, India Office, and Admiralty. I did attempt to locate those portions of the Home Office and Admiralty files pertaining to the intelligence activities described in Chapter VII; they were, however, untraceable, and perhaps no longer exist.

² The only important private collection not utilized in writing this book is that of the papers of Sir Winston S. Churchill, which remained unaccessible for general scholarly use at the time of going to press. In my view this is a loss, but not a serious one: letters *from* Churchill abound in the other collections here cited, while the authors of letters *to* Churchill often kept copies.