

PREFACE



LIKE its predecessor, this second volume of what has now become a three-volume work comprises an account of how the British government dealt with the problems created by the fact that a communist administration, militantly hostile to the world of bourgeois states, had come to power in Russia during the last cataclysmic year of the World War. The first volume explored the making of British policy during that year, culminating in the beginnings of a military intervention whose implicit (if not avowed) purpose was the overthrow of the Soviet government in Moscow. The present volume commences with the Armistice which ended the war with Germany. It treats the making of British policy during the following fifteen months, the critical months of the Russian Civil War. Of all foreign governments, that of the United Kingdom was the one most heavily involved—both directly, through the use of its own military, naval, and air forces, and indirectly, through the provision of material assistance and advice—in the campaign to unseat the Bolshevik regime. By February 1920 this campaign, along with the hopes of the more realistic anti-Bolshevik Russians, had been almost entirely abandoned. Then it was the British government which led the effort to reach an accommodation between Russia and the West. That effort, made much more difficult by the Polish-Soviet War of 1920, will form the subject of the third and final volume of this study of British statecraft.

My aim in the pages that follow has been to focus quite precisely on the Russian Civil War as a problem for British policy makers, and to examine the process by which Great Britain's commitment to the anti-Bolshevik side was first enlarged and then liquidated during 1919 as the perceived costs of intervention, and still more the predictable costs of achieving any outcome that might have been labeled "success," became increasingly apparent. As in *Intervention and the War*, I have sought to place emphasis upon the making of policy within the government in London and the relationship to that process of the perceptions and actions of British

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public servants, military and civilian, in the field. Once again, I have not attempted systematically to describe the course of British domestic politics and the handling of other contemporaneous problems of foreign policy, or to trace in detail the development of British public opinion regarding Russia. Neither have I discussed any aspects of the Russian problem at the Paris Peace Conference other than those whose examination is necessary for an understanding of British policy. These several tasks would have vastly lengthened a long book and would only have gone over ground already very well covered by Arno J. Mayer in his remarkable work on the politics and diplomacy of 1918-19, or by John M. Thompson in his solid study of the Russian problem at the Peace Conference.¹ Grateful for their efforts, I refer readers to them. Where their concerns have seemed directly relevant to mine, I have of course encompassed them. But I have sought to run narrow and deep, rather than wide. My focus—I emphasize once again—is on the process by which the government of a Great Power extricated itself from a civil war in which it was the leading foreign participant, after it became clear that the war could not be won without the payment of a wholly unacceptable price.



As I indicated in the preface to *Intervention and the War*, my original intention was to complete this study in two volumes, the second describing both the liquidation of British intervention in the Russian Civil War and the process of accommodation which culminated in the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement of March 1921 and London's extension of *de facto* recognition to the Soviet government. By late 1965 I had finished what I thought was a final draft. But early in 1966 the government of Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced that it was departing from the previous "fifty-year rule" restricting access to official papers and, as a preliminary measure on the way towards an eventual thirty-year closed period, would allow access to all papers through 1922. Therefore, I suspended pub-

¹ Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918-1919*, New York, 1967; John M. Thompson, *Russia, Bolshevism, and the Versailles Peace*, Princeton, 1966. For a treatment of one important segment of British political life, see Stephen R. Graubard, *British Labour and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1924*, Cambridge, Mass., 1956.

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lication of the second volume and spent three summer months working at the Public Record Office in London and in private collections to which access also became possible due to the new government policy.²

Once I began, I realized that the new materials—particularly the Cabinet, Foreign Office, and War Office papers in the Public Record Office—would enable me to treat the making of British policy on a scale so different from that on which my earlier manuscript was written that minor revision would be impossible and that, indeed, a fundamentally different book would result. A glance at the footnotes of this volume will indicate the importance to my purposes of these new materials.³ Along with a decision to rewrite the original manuscript drastically came a decision to divide it in two. This seemed good sense, and not only because of the bulk of the rewritten work: in fact, the events with which it dealt had never fit easily together, and I had in any case divided the earlier manuscript into two parts, one treating the end of intervention, the other the process of reaching the Anglo-Soviet accord of March 1921. Now the two parts will be separate books, each one, like *Intervention and the War*, presuming to stand alone.



This book has been written in the interstices of a full-time teaching schedule at Harvard and at Princeton. Many individuals at both of these universities, and elsewhere, have assisted me in many ways. It is my pleasure to acknowledge these debts.

I am grateful to the Milton Fund of Harvard and the Center of International Studies and the University Research Fund of Princeton for enabling me to spend summers in England doing research. Mrs.

² The most valuable of these collections for the purposes of the present volume were the Curzon Papers and the Balfour Papers. Other collections, principally the Milner Papers, had previously been placed at my disposal without restriction. Two most important collections—those of Lloyd George and Churchill—remain unavailable for general scholarly use at the time of going to press for the present volume.

³ In citing materials from the Public Record Office I have used the standard Record Office notation system to indicate the department of origin: Cab. (Cabinet 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 at its own volition or by ministerial request) to members of the Cabinet. Because of the thoroughness with which the Cabinet Office went about the task of sifting departmental papers for wider circulation, I have not felt it necessary for the purposes of this study to use the files of additional departments, such as the Home Office and the Admiralty.

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Faith Henson and Mrs. Dorothy Rieger, my secretaries at Lowell House, Harvard, and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton, cheerfully did the bulk of the typing of the two successive versions of the manuscript. Robert Bunselmeyer, of Yale, came to my rescue by doing for me a piece of research which I had overlooked. Invaluable assistance with Russian translation was rendered by Alastair N. D. McAuley and my wife, Yoma Crosfield Ullman, who has also done much to see the manuscript through the press. Robert I. Rotberg and Paul M. Shupack read and criticized the earlier version of the manuscript; Ernest R. May and Arno J. Mayer brought their unrivaled knowledge of the politics and diplomacy of the First World War and its aftermath to the criticism of the present version. I am indebted to them all.

Crown-copyright material in the Public Record Office, London, is published here by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The overworked staff of the Record Office were unfailingly helpful to me during my work there in the summer of 1966; I am most grateful to them. Material from the Curzon Papers is published 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. During a previous summer's visit, Mariott, Lady Ironside, allowed me to use and to quote from the unpublished diaries of her late husband, Field-Marshal Lord Ironside; to her and to Colonel R. Macleod, who did much to facilitate my access to the diaries, I am much indebted. 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.

I should also like to express my indebtedness to the following:

- to Mr. Mark Bonham-Carter for permission to use and to quote from the Asquith Papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford;
- to the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to use and to quote from the Balfour Papers and those of Lord Robert Cecil;
- to the Library of the University of Birmingham for permission to use and to quote from the Austen Chamberlain Papers;
- to Viscount Davidson of Little Gaddesden for permission to use and to quote from his own papers;
- to the Warden and Fellows of New College, Oxford, for permis-

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sion to use and to quote from the Milner Papers now in the Bodleian Library;
and to the Library of Yale University for permission to use and to quote from the papers of Colonel E. M. House, Frank L. Polk, and Sir William Wiseman.

Princeton, New Jersey
June 1967

R.H.U.

