

Lachinbauer

CANADA AND THE SOVIET EXPERIMENT

Essays on Canadian Encounters with
Russia and the Soviet Union,
1900-1991

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Introduction:

Canadian-Soviet Relations in Historical Perspective

David Davies

The essays in this book offer historical perspectives on Canadian encounters with Russia and the Soviet Union throughout the twentieth century. An historical assessment at this time is particularly appropriate because the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its ruling Communist Party has brought to a close a 75-year era in the history of Russia and its adjoining territories and is transforming the relationships between them and the countries of the rest of the world, including Canada. While historians are not privileged to know precisely what these new relationships will mean for Canada (nor, it could be added, is anyone else) it is especially timely for them to review what the past relationship has been. Now that the "Soviet experiment" is complete, historians can begin to provide an assessment of Canada's experience with that regime throughout its entire existence and, in so doing, provide a historical perspective for an understanding of present issues. The relationship between Canada and the republics of the former Soviet Union, though much transformed, constitutes an on-going process still rooted in the past, in which elements of continuity will continue to co-exist with elements of change.

Thus certain patterns and themes that have recurred throughout the previous hundred years may well endure into the future. One such example is the complex issue of Canadian perceptions (and misperceptions) of a part of the world seemingly so familiar yet in fundamental ways contrasting with the Canadian experience. Russia and the Soviet Union have been viewed by Canadians both as a threat and as an opportunity. Issues of northern development, of trade, of immigration, as well as of security, have persisted in various forms since Canada's "discovery" of Russia one hundred years ago.

Some of these themes, which derive from important milestones in the relationship between Canada and its immense northern neighbour, are appropriate to commemorate at the present time. 1991 marked the centenary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, which was followed by subsequent waves of Eastern European emigration to the point where one in seven Canadians

now claims ancestry from that part of the world. 1992 marked the fiftieth anniversary of formal diplomatic recognition between Canada and the Soviet Union, though representation in each country traces further back to the establishment of Russian consulates in Montreal, Halifax and Vancouver in 1900 and the residency of Canadian Trade Commissioners in St. Petersburg and Omsk in the next decade. And, of course, 1992 was the twentieth anniversary of the memorable 1972 Canada-USSR hockey series, itself a revealing indicator of possibilities of change and detente in the very middle of the Cold War period. These quite different events – one social, one political and one cultural – representing as they do different levels of interaction between Canada and territory in Eastern Europe under Russian rule, further call attention to the ongoing historical record that constitutes the subject of this volume.

Canadian-Russian interaction has occurred predominantly since 1917, and therefore within a Soviet context. However, the roots of Canadian awareness of Russia can be traced to the late nineteenth century and, in particular, to the last years of the tsarist regime (1900-17), during which time many of the themes that would characterize later Canadian-Soviet relations emerged. Of course, it is true that in this earlier period Canada did not have an independent foreign policy. Nevertheless, it would be quite erroneous to conclude that the absence of official diplomatic relations with foreign powers implied an absence of international contact or activity on the part of Canada. As a participant alongside Britain, and on a less formal basis than that associated with full diplomatic status, Canada had external connections long before she had an office designated to handle them.¹

Canadian-Russian Relations before 1900

The pre-1917 contacts between the Russian Empire and an emerging Canadian state were limited by the fact that the very year of Canadian Confederation, 1867, also marked Russia's departure from North America, with the sale of Russian America (Alaska) to the United States. Moreover, Canadian awareness of Russia in the nineteenth century was decidedly negative, with Anglo-Canadians undoubtedly sharing the deep-seated British distrust of that "rude and barbarous kingdom," whose competing empire clashed with British interest throughout the world.² The Russian-American Company had been a rival to the Hudson's Bay Company down to 1867. Russian threats to the Ottoman Empire led to war with Britain in the Crimea during 1854-56. In 1878, when Britain considered blocking Russia's advance on Constantinople during the Russo-Turkish War, Canada discussed contributing a division of 10,000 men and strengthened coastal defences against possible Russian naval attack.³ In a dispute over sealing rights, Russia seized four Vancouver schooners in the Bering Sea in 1892.

These clashes with "official Russia" were further coloured by Canadian contact with what has been termed "unofficial Russia" in the same period, that

is with persecuted minorities emigrating from the Russian Empire, and with political exiles forming an emigre oppositional intelligentsia. Viewed through the prism of Mennonites, Ukrainians, Poles, Finns, Jews, and Doukhobors who migrated to Canada, "Russia" took on a particular colouring, as indeed it did in the presentations of intelligentsia critics of the tsarist regime. In 1903 Paul Miliukov, a prominent historian and political activist from Russia, lectured in Chicago on the dichotomy between official and unofficial Russia: "there exist two Russias, one quite different from the other, and what pleases one is quite sure to displease the other ... Were I to label these two Russias, I would designate the one as the Russia of Leo Tolstoy, the great writer; and the other as that of Plehve, the late minister of the interior ... One is the Russia of the future ... the other is an anachronism, deeply rooted in the past, and defended in the present by an omnipotent bureaucracy. The one spells liberty, the other despotism."⁴

In Canada, the Doukhobor issue dominated thinking about Russia at the very end of the nineteenth century and, consequently, the name "Tolstoy" loomed much larger in the minds of Canadians than did the name "Plehve" or even "Nicholas II."⁵ When the first boatload of what would eventually become over 7000 Russian Doukhobor immigrants arrived in Halifax on 24 January 1899, the official welcome included this statement from one of the Canadians: "I do not know the name of your emperor, but the name of your patron and friend, Count Tolstoy, is as well known in Canada as in Russia ... I welcome you to Canada and bid you God-speed."⁶ The very qualities of Doukhobor behaviour that engendered persecution from the tsarist government – their refusal to bear arms and to swear allegiance to the state – were the ones that attracted Tolstoy to them. He and his followers called attention to their plight and assisted them logistically in their emigration. Tolstoy also donated the royalties from his novel *Resurrection* to help pay their expenses.

It is noteworthy that the Doukhobor emigration did not involve direct negotiation or even contact between the Canadian and Russian governments, but was instead facilitated by private initiatives on both sides of the Atlantic. The tsarist ministry's role in the affair was simply the decision, in 1897, to allow Doukhobors, "except those of military age and those who have not completed military service," to leave Russia; in no way did it participate in the search for a suitable new homeland. The Doukhobors were represented not by any Russian officials but by two disciples of Tolstoy, who assumed, in the words of one of them, "the role and responsibilities of plenipotentiaries."⁷ Initially, despite its policy of seeking immigrants, the Canadian government was also not actively engaged in bringing Doukhobors to Canada. The main Canadian contact was Professor James Mavor, who had taken the chair of political economy at the University of Toronto in 1892 and was one of the first "Russian experts" in North America.⁸ Mavor wrote to Tolstoy in 1898 to inquire about the Doukhobors and also approached Clifford Sifton, the

Canadian minister of the interior, to determine if settlement compatible with Doukhobor views on military service, land tenure, and education was possible.⁹ In 1899 he contributed a preface to the Canadian edition of Vladimir Chertkov's *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, a book which publicized the Doukhobors' situation and contained a chapter by Tolstoy.¹⁰

In addition to Tolstoy and his followers, the other crucial Russian contribution was made by Peter Kropotkin, the famous exiled "anarchist prince." Mavor had known Kropotkin in England and invited him to a conference in Toronto in 1897. At its conclusion, a trip to the west coast was arranged by the Canadian Pacific Railway promoting the new immigration policies of Canada.¹¹ On this journey Kropotkin observed how successfully Mennonite communities had been transplanted from Russia, as well as the wide opportunities for additional settlement in western Canada. He was also powerfully struck by the many geographic similarities between Canada and his Russian homeland. Kropotkin's views were published in the British journal, *Nineteenth Century*, and are worth quoting here not only because it was this article that first brought Canada to the attention of the Doukhobors (prior to its appearance they had been considering Manchuria, Chinese Turkestan, Cyprus, and Texas), but also because it is an early example of a predominant theme in later Canadian-Russian relations: the parallel setting and developmental tasks of both countries, particularly in Siberia and western Canada. Kropotkin remarks on the general geographic similarity that unfolds at 50 degrees latitude travelling west-to-east through Russia and east-to-west through Canada. Encountering the "boundless low prairies of Manitoba," he felt that "the illusion was complete" of Russian land lying before him: "I might as well believe myself entering the low 'black earth' prairies of South Tobolsk at the foot of the Urals. The same general aspect, same soil, same desiccating lakes, same character of climate, same position with regard to the highlands, and, very probably, the same lacustrine origin in both cases." Further on, Kropotkin was struck by the resemblance of the "higher, sub-arid 'rolling prairie'" to the Siberian Steppe: "I could easily imagine myself amidst the higher level Steppes which the Siberian railway enters beyond Tomsk ... while the small East Siberian towns of Krainsk, Achinsk, and Krasnoyarsk could be described as sister-growths to Medicine Hat, Calgary and Regina."¹²

Canadian - Russian Relations, 1900-1914

At the beginning of the twentieth century the context of Canadian-Russian relations changed significantly as a result of three related developments. The first was the dramatic transformation, at the level of diplomacy, of relations between Britain and Russia, leading to a growing mutual esteem that culminated in wartime partnership by 1914. The second was at the cultural level – an emerging awareness, throughout the English-speaking world, of recent Russian artistic and intellectual achievements, and a corresponding upswing of public

interest in Russia. The third development was at the institutional level and resulted in direct contacts between Canada and Russia through their own representatives and agents.

The change in Anglo-Russian relations was part of a major realignment among the European powers at the turn of the century. Antagonism between Russia and Britain gave way to co-operation and even developing friendship, despite a lack of British sympathy for the Russian government during the Russo-Japanese War and the revolution of 1905. The primary expression of this transformation, at least retrospectively, was the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. While it is true that this settlement was limited to the outer edges of the two empires in South Asia – and that it did not even work particularly well in those places – it is also true that growing fear of Germany gradually converted the convention into a firmer co-operative relationship in Europe.¹³ The image of Russia in the British press improved markedly after 1906; similarly, Britain was treated more and more favourably in Russian newspapers. An exchange of royal visits further emphasized cordial relations. King Edward and his entourage sailed to Russia in June 1908, and Tsar Nicholas, along with Peter Stolypin, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Alexander Izvol'sky, the foreign minister, returned the favour in 1909.¹⁴ In June 1914 the First Battle Cruiser Squadron of the British Navy sailed to Russia. On the 26th, a thousand British sailors were treated to a banquet and the opera *Prince Igor* in St. Petersburg; on the 28th, Tsar Nicholas boarded Admiral Beatty's flagship at Kronstadt, where he was made an honorary admiral of the British fleet and received a thirty-one gun salute. That same day Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, was assassinated in Sarajevo.¹⁵

Of no less importance, at another level, was the dramatic impact of Russian culture on British taste and fashion in the same period. Good translations of Russian literature into English began to appear in the late 1890s – for example, those of Constance Garnett – and works by Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, and Tolstoy made a strong impression on critics such as Virginia Woolf and the wider reading public.¹⁶ Sympathetic travel accounts, such as those by Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace and W.T. Stead, portrayed Russia as fascinating and exotic rather than simply rude and barbarous.¹⁷ Bernard Pares and Maurice Baring informed English readers about events in Russia, and the Russian language, as well as history and political economy, became subjects worthy of serious study. In what has been called the "Edwardian discovery of Russia," attention was directed as never before towards the deep interior of Europe.¹⁸ Russia was not always viewed favourably, but the lure of "Russianness" was evident even in less sympathetic works such as Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* (1911).

The new Russian consular offices in Montreal, Halifax, and Vancouver were in part a reflection of these wider trends. They did not, of course, constitute full diplomatic relations between Canada and Russia. These were not

legations, and their location, at points of debarkation and entry into Canada, suggests that a primary function was to deal with goods and people arriving from Russia rather than to maintain continuous contact with the government in Ottawa. Nevertheless, with time, a Montreal-Ottawa link became more frequent as operations expanded into fuller relations; correspondingly, the Consul-General's office on Durocher Street moved to larger quarters on St. James and finally to St. Nicholas. From the beginning, however, the consulates were concerned with immigration.¹⁹ In this area, there was a major difference between Canadian and Russian aims. The Canadian government wished to attract permanent settlers from abroad to Canada in order to populate its vacant territories. The Russian government, however, was primarily interested in gaining admission for migrants into Canada on a temporary basis to participate in the Canadian work force as Russian subjects who would eventually return home.

From its inception in 1896, the Laurier government had placed the highest priority on fostering immigration into Canada. Clifford Sifton's vision of a populated western Canada included his much quoted belief that "peasants in sheep-skin coats" from Eastern Europe would be ideal settlers to develop prairie agriculture; consequently, immigration policy during his tenure as minister of the interior aimed at attracting rural peoples from the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires.²⁰

Such a policy would seem, at first glance, to fit Russia's needs as well. In the last half of the nineteenth century, the Russian Empire had experienced the highest population growth of any country in Europe, expanding from 73 million at the time of the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 to over 125 million in the 1897 census.²¹ Some of the additional population migrated to cities and towns, but rural overcrowding in the more densely settled regions of Russia – and the consequent reduction in the average size of peasant allotments – was a major source of the agrarian crisis that Russia experienced so sharply at the beginning of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the Russian government continued to apply its traditional emigration laws, which were the most restrictive in Europe. In part, this reflected a deeply entrenched attitude which regarded people primarily as a resource of the state, as "human capital" necessary for development. Russia itself had pursued a policy of attracting foreign settlement a century earlier in an effort to populate the "new lands" in southern Russia extending to the Black Sea.²²

There was also a more immediate reason for Russian reluctance to release its population. The development of western Siberia began shortly after the opening of western Canada and, at least in numbers involved, was of comparable historical significance.²³ Although not speaking for St. Petersburg, Kropotkin ended his 1898 article by elaborating the parallel potential of the two areas for human settlement in terms that the Russian government also endorsed: "In the eastern hemisphere, the geographical counterpart of Canada

– Siberia – stands in exactly the same position. It has the same millions of acres of unoccupied prairies; the same rivers teeming with salmon on the Pacific border; the same inexhaustible mining resources – The fact is that, after having roamed over big countries like Canada and Siberia, we begin to realise how uninhabited our globe is up to the present date."²⁴

The Trans-Siberian Railway, which was begun in 1892, provided the same impetus to growth that the Canadian Pacific had in Canada. Knowing that western Canada's development was ahead of Siberia's, Peter Stolypin, who led the Russian government between 1906 and 1911, had studied the Canadian experience; he concluded that Sifton's migration and settlement policies were instructive for Russia.²⁵ The government was clearly committed to Siberian settlement not only for its own sake, but also "to populate a region susceptible to Chinese pressure."²⁶

For these reasons, Russian emigration continued to be hemmed in by restrictive laws during this period. Requests from Canadian companies to the Russian consul-general in Montreal to intercede with Russian emigration officials so that workers could be brought permanently to Canada were met with the reply that it was not in Russia's interest to do so.²⁷ In 1904 *The Times* reported that "according to existing laws, Russians leaving their country without permits commit a capital offence and authority to emigrate is only obtained with great difficulty." Illegal emigration was considerable, with estimates running as high as 50,000 a year.²⁸ But the overall effectiveness of Russian emigration restrictions is indicated by evidence that 97 per cent of the Ukrainians leaving Europe in this period came from western Ukraine – that is, from the Ukrainian provinces under Austro-Hungaria control – whereas, despite similar conditions, only 3 per cent came from eastern Ukraine under Russian jurisdiction. Between 1906 and 1912 nearly one million Ukrainians migrated to Siberia.²⁹

If the Russian government vigilantly guarded against outright emigration, it nevertheless actively pursued opportunities to secure employment outside its borders for Russian subjects on temporary exist visas, with the expectation that much of the earnings would be sent back to Russia. The Second Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in St. Petersburg was often in touch with its consul-general in Montreal regarding "this dispatch of Russian subjects [*ruskie poddannye*] to Canada for work," imploring him to be alert to any relaxation in Canadian immigration restrictions and to make sure that Russia secured any advantages granted to other countries.³⁰

A good example of the way in which Russian and Canadian policies sometimes were at cross-purposes in this area is provided by the negotiations to bring 10,000 Russians over as construction workers for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. The westward extension of this railway was, of course, a major issue in Canadian history down to (and beyond) its completion in 1914. The project was chronically short of labour,³¹ a situation certainly not helped

by the bad relations that existed between the Grand Trunk's management and the unions. The exclusion of Orientals deprived the railway of one possible major source of additional labour; consequently, it was desperate for an alternative. Thus, when its president, Charles Hays, was contacted by the Russian consul-general, N.B. Struve, in September 1906, he responded affirmatively to the "opportunity for obtaining an unlimited number of highly skilled workmen from Russia." In the subsequent negotiations, Struve portrayed these Russians in ever more glowing terms, emphasizing, for example, that they provided their own tools – extra-large pick axes and mattocks "which are in conformity with the strength and stature of the people" – and that they consisted of village groups (*artels*) "such as exist perhaps but in Russia," whose acquired skills came from generations of practice in their trades.³²

After negotiating with the Grand Trunk, Struve recommended the scheme to Stolypin, pointing out that "the workingmen ... will have to deal with one of the mightiest railway companies in the world," and difficulties might be encountered with work stoppages and food shipments to remote construction sites. But he concluded that "Russian workmen will be called upon to work under climate conditions that correspond entirely to their physical constitution and their habits," and that, at the end of the two years, they would return to Russia with considerable savings. Such an arrangement would have fit in nicely with Russia's aims, but it was contrary to Canadian policy that sought a "definitive immigration," in which savings from construction wages would be used to "facilitate their settlement in [Canada]."³³ When this difference became evident, Struve wrote to break off the negotiations on the grounds that "a definitive immigration upon a large scale cannot possibly correspond to the views of the [Russian] Imperial Government."³⁴ Talks were resumed somewhat later and, according to G.R. Stevens, Russian "moujiks from Siberia" were at work on the Grand Trunk in 1910. But this particular large-scale emigration project does not seem to have reached fruition.³⁵

In 1918 the last consul-general in Montreal, A. S. Likhachev, prepared a report on Russians in Canada which provides a good summary of the overall experience.³⁶ Likhachev stressed that "the Russian immigration movement to Canada began in our century not for settlement but for temporary work" [*vremennye zarabotki*]. He claimed that in 1911 there were 100,971 "Russians" in Canada (90 per cent from Russia and 10 per cent from Finland) and that between 1911 and 1917, 121,242 more persons arrived. By nationality they were comprised of Russians and Ukrainians, 55 per cent; Jews, 25 per cent; Poles and Lithuanians, 12 per cent; Finns, 8 per cent. Most of them came from the southwestern provinces of Russia, or from Bessarabia, Poland-Lithuania, and Finland. In Canada, 75 per cent of them had gone to the industrial regions in Ontario and Quebec, and 20 per cent to the prairies. They ranged in age between eighteen and fifty, were mainly bachelors, or without their families, and their stay in Canada lasted usually from two to five years. As a

consequence, a "lack of settled element" characterized this immigration. Even the larger communities in Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg lacked cohesiveness because of the constant turnover. Likhachev stated that "translation officers play a big role" in the lives of the Russian immigrants, and that they remained somewhat isolated from the rest of society because of this language barrier.

Nevertheless, despite difficult social conditions and the frequent need to find new work, Likhachev reported, perhaps too optimistically, that the typical Russian could earn \$1000-1400 a year, of which \$500-600 could be saved. "There is no doubt," he wrote, "that these immigrants who left a few years ago as paupers and return to the motherland today as rich men, relatively speaking, will be the very best advertisement for migration to Canada." He expected that when the war ended, and the sea-routes were reopened, that Russian migration to Canada would continue to be substantial. Consequently, the report concludes with a recommendation for wider Russian consular representation in Canada and for the establishment of more direct shipping between Canada and Russia.

Even before the war, the possibility of increased trade with Russia in general – and Siberia in particular – had begun to exert a certain fascination upon the Canadian mind. This was in part an outgrowth of the improved context of Anglo-Russian relations. At the time of King Edward's visit to Russia in 1908, Stolypin had suggested that "a rapprochement between the two countries was naturally desirable, not only in the sphere of conventions, but in the domain of trade, manufacture and commerce."³⁷ In the next few years there was increasing talk of a "commercial rapprochement" and considerable activity on the part of the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce to promote it. Exhibitions were planned to display the products of each country in the other; and an expansion of regular steamship service between the two countries was projected. British investment in Russia more than tripled between 1910 and 1914.³⁸ It is important to note, however, that Germany continued to be Russia's most important trading partner by a good margin in the prewar period. The gradual increase in Canadian-Russian ties from the beginning of the century, as well as warmer relations, contributed to a Canadian awareness of Russia that had not been present previously. Reference has already been made about the perceived similarities between western Canada and Siberia. With the Canadian "discovery" of Russia, the idea began to take hold that Siberia presented to Canadians a particular opportunity. It was an idea that would briefly dominate Canadian policy during the Allied intervention in Russia's Civil War in 1918, but its roots were clearly prewar.

In 1909 a series of articles on Siberian development and commercial opportunities appeared in the *Bankers Journal*, suggesting possible Canadian advantages in this market. The Montreal consulate soon began receiving inquiries from various Canadians – entrepreneurs, visionaries, quacks – trying

to ascertain Russian views on particular ventures: Would the Russian government allow the export of ores from Trans-Baikalia? Were there any Russian plans for a direct line between Vladivostok and Vancouver? Did Vladivostok's duty-free port allow goods to be sent duty-free through it as far as Omsk? In 1913 direct steamship service was established between Vladivostok and Vancouver. At the same time, the Russian government sent an official representative to Canada ostensibly to promote trade. Professor Joseph Goldstein, a political economist at Moscow University, and an expert on wheat, arrived in Canada to acquaint himself with virtually all aspects of the Canadian economy. Borden co-operated by giving him access to the ministers of trade and commerce, agriculture, interior, railways and canals, and public works. Goldstein travelled the breadth of Canada, granting interviews and making speeches asserting that Russia did not want to be so dependent on German trade. Canadian products – for example, agricultural machinery – could gain a bigger share of the Russian market. He suggested that the opening of the Panama Canal would bring major changes in ocean commerce and that Canada should appoint commercial agents in Russia to exploit these opportunities. At the same time, Goldstein seemed to be particularly interested in Canadian grain technology – the use of grain elevators, methods of handling and transporting wheat, of grading and marketing – with the apparent purpose of adapting it to Russia. One gets the impression that Goldstein's primary mission was to learn from the Canadians rather than to trade with them.

Canadian - Russian Relations, 1914-1917

Canada and Russia entered the Great War in 1914 as allies. If the grounds for this partnership had been laid in the previous few years, the more traditional Canadian awareness of the repressive features of the tsarist regime had not entirely disappeared. Some Canadians wondered about the long-term compatibility of their interests with those of the Russian Empire. Russia projected itself as a friend during the war, but to Canadians it also loomed as a question mark, an unknown which still had to be determined.

Something of this attitude is conveyed in the title of an article which appeared in the *Canadian Magazine* in June 1915: "The Fear of Russia." However, the author, Professor A.W. Crawford of the University of Manitoba, was reassuring. He began by noting the "considerable uneasiness" that some people felt "lest we may possibly be aiding ... the greatest foe of liberty." An allied victory would undoubtedly "extend the sway of Russia over all of old Poland" as well as make the Russian state – already disproportionately large – "still greater and more powerful." He also noted Russia's reputation for being the most "barbaric" state in Europe. However, Crawford then went on to argue that, while Russia was less civilized than Germany, it was at least progressing, whereas Germany was retrogressing. Russia had produced Tolstoy, "the apostle of peace"; Germany gave birth to Treitschke, the apologist for blood and

iron. As examples of progress, he pointed to the role of Nicholas II in the two Hague peace conferences before the war; the creation of a Russian legislative Duma, comprised of elected representatives; and the tsarist decree prohibiting the sale of vodka. In Crawford's view, there was little doubt that Russia was a worthy ally, with whom Canadians could fight shoulder to shoulder.³⁹

Some of them literally did. Russian subjects living abroad had the same military obligations as Russians living at home. Since nine out of ten in Canada were adult males, most of whom were of conscription age, the Russian consul-general in Montreal had an important role to play in helping to assure the compliance of those called-up. By 1915 the consulate was being bombarded by instructions from the Russian Embassy in London ordering the conscription of recruits [*ratniki*]. It was becoming clear by then that the war would be both taxing and of long duration; consequently, the full mobilization of Russians reached out across the ocean into Canada. However, the obstacles to reuniting these overseas recruits with their homeland were also becoming considerable.⁴⁰

A Canadian alternative was already emerging. Russian subjects appeared in recruiting offices throughout Canada volunteering for service in the Canadian Army. According to the *Montreal Star*, the numbers were such that consideration was being given by the Militia Department in Ottawa to forming two or more Russian battalions within the next Canadian contingent. A Canadian officer was quoted as saying that "these men would make splendid soldiers." The language barrier would apparently be solved by attaching bilingual officers after arrival in Europe.⁴¹

To all of this, the Russian consul-general in Montreal took firm exception. Likhachev had already previously written to Joseph Pope, the undersecretary of state for external affairs, pointing out that "Russian reservists, or any men subject to military service, are not allowed to enlist in the contingents of the Canadian militia." He stressed the "seriousness" of this question and claimed that it had "already created complications."⁴² At issue, from the Russian point of view, was a concern that Russian subjects in Canada might end up serving other than against Russia's immediate enemies. The solution was to allow them to enlist only in the Canadian Expeditionary Force for overseas duty. In a letter to a recruiting officer in Saskatchewan, the consul-general explained that the Russian War Ministry "allows Russian subjects to enter the regular *European Armies of the Allies* and forbids them to enter any others."⁴³ It was also agreed that the Russian Consulate would issue certificates of identification to Russians applying for enlistment, in order to meet a Canadian concern to distinguish between legitimate enlistees from the allied Russian Empire and Slavic enemy aliens from the Austro-Hungarian Empire who claimed to be Russian subjects in order to avoid internment. Likhachev and his staff were kept busy verifying the identity papers of recruits or – in cases where these had been lost – attempting to acquire new ones from the person's native province

in Russia.⁴⁴ A year after the war started, *The Times* reported that "Already there are many Russians in the 77th Regiment at Ottawa, and in the 59th at Kingston." It also stated that "Many Austrians are also seeking to enlist ... but great vigilance to prevent this is being exerted at the recruiting offices."⁴⁵ Sir Robert Borden later praised Likhachev effusively for his help in resolving this issue.⁴⁶

In February 1917, less than a month before the end of the tsarist regime, Likhachev telegraphed Pope that his government had granted "adjournment of mobilization call" to Russians working in Canadian munition plants and mines. That some people could contribute more to victory by not enlisting in the armed forces was a comparatively new idea, reflecting the growing industrial basis of warfare, and the tsarist government had been particularly slow to adopt it. There were many instances in Russia of shortages of labour in critical war industries caused by indiscriminate conscription regulations that mobilized an army of over fifteen million. Likhachev recognized the value of Russians employed in the Canadian war economy and, when Pope requested that the exemptions be broadened to include other sectors such as ship-building and transport, the consul-general was persuaded. He cabled the Ministry of Foreign Affairs his support, "since Canada being now biggest supplier for British Government suffers from shortage of labour." The approval that followed, in effect, granted temporary exemption to nearly all Russian subjects still in Canada.⁴⁷

Borden had placed the highest priority on gaining for the Canadian economy a substantial role in the war effort, particularly since the depression that began soon after he took office in 1911 grew worse following August 1914. Consequently, he was eager that Canada be a "supplier for British Government" and for the other allies – Russia and France – as well. Throughout the war, Borden was often infuriated by the number of Russian contracts made with American producers in the neutral United States "for articles which could be supplied of equal quality at the same or lower prices and with equal promptitude in this country."⁴⁸ On numerous occasions, Borden urged Likhachev to inform Petrograd about Canada's industrial capacity and sent him lists of Canadian products that went well beyond munitions, including military clothing, boots, shovels, rubber hoses, barbed wire, electrical generators, and railway cars. But munitions, particularly shells, were the main staple he pushed. In May 1916 the prime minister suggested that Russia might wish to purchase three-inch shells which Canada was now producing in quantities beyond that required by the British and Canadian armies. Likhachev sent an encouraging reply, agreeing that he would do all he could to facilitate the transaction. The consul-general was also contacted by F. Perry, a member of the Imperial Munitions Board, to visit munition plants throughout the entire Montreal area. His requests for specific information about other plants throughout Canada were answered promptly by Perry, and soon he had a detailed understanding of the full range of Canadian wartime production.⁴⁹

As the war expanded, the tsarist government began to place more substantial orders in Canada. Submarines destined for Russia were constructed in Montreal and Vancouver – though in both cases the components, and some of the labour force, came from the United States. As well, Russia did purchase shells and other munitions in considerable quantities. One difficulty that developed in Canadian-Russian relations in this area, however, was Russia's insistence that its own inspectors be present at the production sites in order to guarantee quality. Sir Joseph Flavelle, the chairman of the Imperial Munitions Board, explained to Likhachev that these inspectors were causing "a situation that is a grave menace to the free delivery of munitions ordered by your Government." In particular, he mentioned inconsistencies in the standards of the inspectors, irregularities in their gauges and measuring instruments, and a general level of incompetence. Instead of established allowable tolerances within the specifications, each inspector could arbitrarily impose an absolute and impossible demand for perfection. According to Flavelle, they often displayed a nervousness, as if thinking "we may be shot when we go back if these shells have not a nice polish on them." As a result, production schedules for the Russian orders were well behind the even larger orders for Great Britain.⁵⁰

Another aspect of Canadian-Russian relations in this period was wartime censorship of anti-Russian material in media throughout Canada. The Russian consul-general tended to take a very restrictive view in this area, no doubt reflecting the more traditional attitudes of Russian officials for whom strong censorship was a usual state prerogative. In particular, E.J. Chambers, Canada's chief press censor, was besieged with complaints from Likhachev regarding allegedly anti-Russian newspaper stories. Occasionally Likhachev brought these matters to Pope's attention or even contacted the prime minister directly. Chambers and other Canadian officials expressed sympathy and even cooperated with the Russians; but they also pointed out that Canada's censorship, even in wartime, differed from that of tsarist Russia. When Likhachev asserted that an editorial in the *Montreal Gazette*, entitled "A New Poland,"⁵¹ was "penetrated with a strong anti-Russian spirit," Chambers diplomatically indicated that it was based on facts and contained a fair, balanced conclusion. He also explained to Likhachev that, except in extreme cases, "press censorship, as administered in Canada, depends upon a voluntary agreement entered into between the Government of Canada ... and the Editors and Publishers of Canadian Periodicals."⁵² Another time, when the Russian consul-general tried to prevent the circulation in Montreal of a Russian language publication imported from the United States, Pope indicated that there were no real grounds for objecting to its content, and cited a treaty between the United States and Canada "whereby mail circulating in one country is entitled to all advantages of free circulation in the other."⁵³

Still, the Canadian government took seriously any depiction of Russia likely to undermine Allied solidarity. When Likhachev complained, in a night

letter to Pope, about a play in Montreal in which "His Majesty, the Russian Emperor, is represented on the stage in a most caricatural and insulting way," Pope took action that very day to see that the objectionable features were removed.⁵⁴ In another case, R.C. Newman, the Ontario inspector of moving picture theatres, censored a film entitled "The Sowers," after Likhachev had complained to him, and to Sir Robert Borden personally, that it depicted Russia in "a false and hostile light." The consul-general urged "more severity from the censors in cases of films which are clearly anti-Russian." Pope assured him that letters had been sent to the lieutenant-governors of all the provinces to prevent objectionable moving pictures from being shown.⁵⁵

Chambers even took steps to have his censors caution newspaper editors against printing stories about social unrest in Russia, after an account of impending revolution had appeared in the *Vancouver Daily Province* in 1916. He suggested that such stories ought to be discounted as likely emanating from German sources aiming to upset Russia and create confusion among her allies. Such advice, if followed, no doubt affected initial Canadian reportage of the Russian Revolution itself. It should be emphasized, however, that many Canadian publications printed articles depicting Russia in a very favourable light. Comparisons with the War of 1812 were often evoked to reassure Canadians that the retreating Russian armies were but a likely prelude to victory; or that the Russian soldier still embodied traditional qualities of endurance and "uncomplaining fortitude." Chambers sometimes forwarded such articles to Likhachev.⁵⁶

There is no doubt that, as a wartime ally, Russia's image in Canada grew more and more positive. And this was not simply a matter of media management. At the more popular level, there was a pronounced increase of interest in Russia and the Russian language, not only due to immediate wartime preoccupations, but also because of longer-term expectations. In 1916 the Toronto Board of Education Management Committee recommended teaching Russian in Toronto high schools, having been persuaded that postwar links with Russia, especially trade, would become stronger.⁵⁷

Even Stephen Leacock, who had worried about too much Eastern European immigration into Canada before the war, wrote in the *Toronto Star* warmly advocating long-term friendship with Russia, "and for that we must have the [Russian] language" ... "We must learn Russian. They say it has forty-five letters in its alphabet. Bring them on! We will not flinch. Letter by letter we will tackle that alphabet till we beat it down. And when we have conquered it we shall find it the key to one of the noblest and most inspiring literatures that ever adorned the annals of mankind – a literature that embodies not the mumblings of the past, but the hopes of the rising future." Leacock argued that trade with Russia would be very important in the coming century. "Come! A Chair of Russian language and literature at the University of Toronto." The long-term pay-off would be considerable.⁵⁸

Canadian exports to Russia, which had been negligible at the beginning of the century, were becoming more important in the last years before the war, and increased to nearly \$7 million in 1916. By that time, Canada had a resident trade commissioner in Petrograd, C.F. Just, who had been appointed the previous November after spending several months in Russia learning as much as possible about the economy. Just became the foremost advocate of expanded trade with Russia and of hopes for a strong Canadian presence in Russian markets after the war. In a series of articles published in the *Weekly Bulletin* of the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, he advanced the argument that Germany's dominant position in Russia's foreign trade was irrevocably lost, and that Canada was potentially well positioned to make tremendous gains at the expense of Germany. He believed that "the successful participation of Canada in the [war] contracts of the Russian government ... has created a lively interest in Russian official, banking and commercial circles, and should prove an excellent advertisement of the capabilities of the Canadian industrial system."⁵⁹

Just's enthusiasm was shared by his superiors. George E. Foster, the minister of trade and commerce, believed that trade opportunities with Russia were such that he appointed a second trade commissioner, L.D. Wilgress, in Omsk. (Wilgress would later become Canada's first ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1943.) Sir Robert Borden looked beyond immediate munitions contracts to expanding long-term trade relations with Russia. He openly discussed these possibilities with the Russian consul-general in Montreal. Likhachev responded with diplomatic skill: "I have come to Canada with an object in view: to promote ... closer commercial relations between this beautiful country and my native land ... After a long study of conditions, and being now acquainted with your splendid country, I did not hesitate to become one of her most ardent admirers, and do sincerely hope that my efforts which have in view the fullest development of commercial and industrial relations between both countries in the nearest future, be crowned with success."⁶⁰

It is instructive to note, however, that Likhachev had more serious private reservations. In a long letter to his superior, he did indeed suggest that Canada could be very competitive in a variety of specialized manufactured goods, that there would likely be even closer ties after the war, and that Russia should therefore consider sending an English-speaking agent from the Ministry of Trade and Industry. But he had read the published reports of C.F. Just, with their more expansive conclusions about the prospects for Russo-Canadian trade, and he was not impressed with either the writings or the man. He believed that Just was superficial and lacked seriousness. And he displayed "a characteristic trait of Canadians, namely, self-delusion to the point of being laughable [*dokhodiashchee do smeshnogo samoobol'shchenie*]. In this respect the present war might be doing them a disservice. Not understanding the reasons and conditions compelling the Allied Powers to turn to them with orders, they have already dreamed about the possibility of flooding Europe in general

and Russia in particular with their manufactured goods after the War. Many are already building castles in the air about grabbing the former considerable German imports to Russia."⁶¹

Here we get a glimpse of some possible underlying differences in Canadian and Russian expectations. To be sure, there was genuine co-operation during the war and undoubtedly common interests that transcended the war. But this harmony produced a euphoria, not unlike what has periodically occurred since, which tended to project onto the Russians attitudes fully congruent with Canadian hopes and aims. However, it was probable that the Russian perception of future Canadian-Russian relations reflected their own differing premises, just as it had earlier over issues of immigration/migration and trade/technology.

Just was not the only Canadian to arrive in Russia in 1915 with high hopes. Mention should also be made of the nearly 500 Canadians who, on 26 October, disembarked from the SS *Czar* on the forlorn shores of the Kola Peninsula, not far from present-day Murmansk. They had been recruited from various cities across Canada by the British firm Pauling & Company as a labour contingent to help construct the northernmost section of the Murman War Emergency Railway, along which munitions were to be transported from the ice-free Kola inlet to Petrograd.⁶² These men, mostly bachelors in their thirties or forties and from diverse occupational backgrounds,⁶³ could be regarded as the Canadian counterpart to the 10,000 Russians who never materialized (at least in those numbers) to help build the Grand Trunk Pacific. They soon wished that they had not shown up as well.

Though conditions were not quite as bad as a *New York Times* headline suggested after their return – “LANDED IN RUSSIA, THEY FACED FAMINE”⁶⁴ – they were not much better. Certainly food and shelter were inadequate, and this in a region where the daytime temperatures soon dipped to minus 15 Fahrenheit. Some of the Canadians were required to live in the bathhouse, from whence they were periodically evicted when the Russians would use it. Barracks were finally acquired, but at the end of November the Canadians were again ejected when a Russian labour force arrived from Archangel.

In general, there was disharmony between the Canadians and the Russian administrators. According to a report made by one of the Canadian supervisors, “unpreparedness on the part of the [Russian] officials to properly take care of the men after landing” was followed by “a policy of interference” in all other areas.⁶⁵ When the Canadians attempted to secure their own firewood for warmth, they were accused by the Russians of cutting timber without permission. And, when a strike soon materialized over working conditions, the Russian officials claimed that the Canadians were shirking and failing to fulfil their contracts. There was considerable clash during the railway construction itself between the Canadian supervisors and the “malicious” engineer,

Pavlovsky. All in all it was a sobering experience for Canadian-Russian relations in which the two cultures were unable to interact successfully, albeit in difficult conditions. When the workers were assembled at the end of the year and asked to renew their contracts under direct Russian supervision, they chose, to a man, to return home instead.

Conclusion

The year 1917 was obviously a watershed in Russian history; it marked a significant development in Canada's identity as well. Granted, the participation of the Canadian prime minister in the British Imperial War Cabinet and the Imperial War Conference was not an event of the same magnitude as the Russian Revolution; still, the adoption of Resolution IX on 16 April 1917, as proposed by Sir Robert Borden, recognized “the Dominions as autonomous nations” and proclaimed their right “to an adequate voice in foreign policy.”⁶⁶ If 1917 witnessed the end of the old Russian Empire and the birth of a new Soviet regime, it also saw the transformation of the old British Empire into a new Commonwealth of Nations and the emergence of a Canada able to participate in international affairs in a new way.

Yet, as these two countries encountered each other and moved towards a new era of relations, a certain legacy from the old relationship remained. The most obvious roots are those affecting Canada's initial response to Soviet power. Because of the close wartime co-operation, Canada was naturally ill-disposed towards a new regime of questionable legitimacy that had unilaterally taken Russia out of the alliance. And, because Canada looked to Siberia as such a promising area of future involvement, it was easily persuaded that active intervention could safeguard Canada's interests.

An overall assessment of the pre-1917 roots of Canadian-Soviet relations should include wider considerations. At the very beginning of the twentieth century, Russia did not figure much in Canadian awareness. It was remote, largely irrelevant to Canadian interests, and little understood. Therefore, the basic point to make about Canadian-Russian relations between 1900 and 1917 pertains to the Canadian “discovery” of Russia. In this period Russia came into view for Canadians and, from then on, like Mt. Everest, it has been “there.” Large not only in territory, it has projected itself to Canadians both as an opportunity and a threat. Canadian external policy from before 1917 included the need to evaluate Russian intentions and capabilities. In World War I, as in World War II, there was already concern that a victorious Russia would dominate Eastern Europe and be a problematic power in the world; but there was also hope that in their postwar relations Canada would continue to find a community of interests with its other northern neighbour.

At a more concrete level, issues of immigration and trade dominated the agenda of discussions before 1917 as they do now when one in seven Canadians has Eastern European ancestors. Restrictive emigration policies did

not begin with the Soviet Union, and Soviet interest in Canadian technology and techniques continued a pre-1917 Russian interest. The parallel problems and possibilities of northern development have preoccupied both countries then and now. Of course there are differences, and post-1917 change may well be more important to note than pre-1917 continuity. Trade discussions now centre on the export of Canadian wheat to a country that, before 1917, was itself a grain exporter. And the Soviet Union, with its system of labour camps, had a source of labour power in developing its north that was unavailable to Canada.

Though strikingly similar geographically, and in close proximity to each other, Canada and the Soviet Union were considerably distanced by differences in their respective histories, institutions and political cultures. Nevertheless, their interaction took place in a common global context. Indeed, it can be argued that both countries emerged on the wider world stage at the same time – though in quite different ways – during the First World War. Subsequently, both Canada and the Soviet Union entered more widely into international affairs in the 1930s, Canada via the Statute of Westminster in 1931 allowing for an independent foreign policy, the Soviet Union ending isolation soon thereafter and joining the League of Nations in 1934. Diplomatic recognition and an exchange of ambassadors occurred within the context of the Second World War when both countries were allies. Their contrasting postwar relationship developed within the global context of the Cold War and the East-West divisions that have characterized the past 45 years of world politics.

Though taking place in a global context, Canadian and Russian/Soviet relations throughout the century have of course also been determined by the changing domestic contexts in both countries. At this level the considerable differences between them belie any effort to suggest the kind of common history present at the global level. For example, there was no Canadian counterpart to the Great Terror that the Soviet Union experienced in the 1930s, and no Soviet counterpart to the Great Depression experienced in that decade by Canadians. Nevertheless, it is instructive to juxtapose the changing leadership throughout the century in both countries in order to gain a sense of who the contemporaries were at any given time.

Thus, it should be noted that the period of Liberal government under Sir Wilfrid Laurier beginning in 1896 was contemporary with the reign of the last Russian tsar, Nicholas II. The Conservative government of Sir Robert Borden (1911 - 1917) coincided with the more reactionary final years of Nicholas II's Russian Empire, which ended in war and revolution. Borden's subsequent Union government (1917 - 1920) corresponded to the victory of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the revolution and Civil War (1917 - 1921). The 1920s in Canada, dominated by Mackenzie King's Liberal government, were contemporary with Lenin's New Economic Policy and the struggle for power among the Communist leadership following Lenin's death. R.B. Bennett's Conservative

government (1930 - 1935) was contemporary with Stalin's unchallenged authority, directed towards the collectivization of agriculture and pressure to overfulfill the industrial goals of the first two five-year plans. Mackenzie King's second run of Liberal governments from 1935 to 1948 began simultaneous with the period of the purges in the Soviet Union (usually dated from the assassination of Kirov at the end of 1934) and continued throughout the war into the Cold War and the repressions of later Stalinism. St. Laurent's Liberal government (1948 - 1957) occurred during the transition from Stalin to Khrushchev, and John Diefenbaker's Conservative government (1957 - 1963) overlapped with most of the Khrushchev period (1956 - 1964). The subsequent Liberal era of Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau corresponds neatly with the nearly two-decade period of Brezhnev's leadership in the Soviet Union (1964 - 1982), and the Conservative governments of Brian Mulroney span the Gorbachev era which brought the Soviet Union to a close.

Although they do not constitute a full history of contacts between Canada and the Soviet Union, the ten essays in this volume range over the entire century, highlighting important issues in each decade. They have been arranged chronologically.

Notes

- ¹ In this less restrictive sense, one can even speak of Canadian external relations before Confederation. Claude F. Thibault's fine bibliography traces Canadian external affairs back to 1600. See his "Canada's External Relations, 1600-1969: A Bibliography." (Ph.D. thesis, University of Rochester, 1973). 'Canadian'-Russian relations before 1967 include the Anglo-Russian Treaty of St. Petersburg, which demarcated the boundary between British and Russian holdings in North America in 1825. Ambiguous wording in this treaty was one source of the subsequent Alaskan boundary dispute with the United States between 1898 and 1903, a circumstance which led the Canadian side into grappling with the Russian text in preparing its case; D.J. Hall, *Clifford Sifton, vol. 2: A Lonely Eminence, 1901-1929* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985), 116. On the Treaty see Mykhaylo Huculak, *When Russia was in America: The Alaska Boundary Treaty Negotiations, 1824-25, and the Role of Pierre de Poletica* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1971).
- ² This phrase, which originated in English travellers' accounts in the sixteenth century – and is itself representative of their prevailing judgment – continued to echo into the twentieth century. Sir Arthur Nicolson, the British ambassador in St. Petersburg between 1906 and 1910, observed that, among his colleagues, Russia was still often "regarded as a ruthless and barbarous autocratic State"; Harold Nicolson, Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart., *First Lord Carnock: A Study in the Old Diplomacy* (London: Constable Press, 1930), 207. See also Robert O. Crumme and Lloyd Eason Berry, eds., *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth Century English Voyagers* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968).
- ³ C.P. Stacey regards this event as the "first such occasion" when "troubles on other continents broke in upon the colonial isolation of Canada." C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict* (Toronto: MacMillan Ltd., 1977), 41.
- ⁴ Paul Miliukov, *Russia and its Crisis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 14-15. Tolstoy's moral position in Russia at this time was such that he came to be regarded as almost a second government – an example of the force which Russian writers have, on more than one occasion, exerted in political life.

- ⁵ One account of Russia in circulation in Canada at this time was Will Reason and Jonas Stadling's *In the Land of Tolstoy* (London: J. Clarke Ltd., 1897).
- ⁶ Quoted in George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), 141.
- ⁷ Woodcock and Avakumovic, *Doukhobors*, 136.
- ⁸ James Mavor, *My Windows on the Street of the World I* (London: Dent Ltd., 1923), 309. Mavor published his classic *Economic History of Russia* in 1914, based on a knowledge of Russia built up over many years. He twice made trips to Russia, had met with Tolstoy, and carried on extensive correspondence from Toronto with many other Russian scholars and political exiles. His home was a refuge for numerous Russian travellers and exiles. See Alan Franklin Bowker, "Truly Useful Men: Maurice Hutton, George Wrong, James Mavor and the University of Toronto, 1880-1927," (Ph.D., University of Toronto, 1975), 138-9.
- ⁹ Woodcock and Avakumovic, *Doukhobors*, 131-2.
- ¹⁰ Vladimir Chertkov, *Christian Martyrdom in Russia* (Toronto: G.N. Morang Ltd., 1899). Chertkov was a disciple of Tolstoy and an energetic publicist whose writings on the Doukhobor question resulted in his expatriation from Russia in 1897.
- ¹¹ Mavor, *Windows*, I, 371-2.
- ¹² Peter Kropotkin, "Some of the Resources of Canada," *Nineteenth Century* XLIII (London: S. Low, Marston and Co. Ltd., 1898), 495-6. Mavor also saw Manitoba in Russian terms: "a large area of the land consists of rich black soil comparable only with the so-called black soil zone in Russia"; *Windows*, I, 339. This geographical similarity is a major reason why the United States tested the guidance system of cruise missiles in Canada.
- ¹³ The standard treatment is Rogers Platt Churchill, *The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1972). See also Robert Dean Becker, "Anglo-Russian Relations, 1898-1910" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1972), and Thomas F. Boyd, "Anglo-Russian Colonial Relations, 1907-1914," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Tennessee, 1973).
- ¹⁴ According to Sir Arthur Nicolson, Izvol'sky, with whom he negotiated, "had a great admiration for English institutions, a marvelously intimate acquaintance with English literature and history, and a perfect knowledge of the English language"; Nicolson, *Sir Arthur Nicolson* (London: Constable, 1930), 217. On the royal visits see *ibid.*, 270-5, 315-17. Regarding the first royal visit at Reval Russia, *The Times*, 10 June 1908, reported: "For the first time in history the standards of Russia and England floated today from one masthead ... symbolical of the new chapter in the history of the two nations."
- ¹⁵ The two stories appear side by side in *The Times*, 29 June 1914.
- ¹⁶ Dorothy Brewster, *East-West Passage: A Study in Literary Relationships* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1954), 110-75.
- ¹⁷ Wallace first published his *Russia* in 1877, but a much expanded edition came out in 1905. Stead's *Truth About Russia* (London: Cassel Ltd., 1888) takes issue with the idea, "which dominates the English Foreign Office and English society," that Russia is a menace to Europe. On Stead see Joseph O. Baylen, *The Tsar's Lecturer-General: W.T. Stead and the Russian Revolution of 1905* (Atlanta, 1969).
- ¹⁸ See Lea Halpern Honigwachs, "The Edwardian Discovery of Russia, 1900-1917," (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1977).
- ¹⁹ The archives of these consulates are now housed in the National Archives of Canada (NAC). They are named the LI-RA-MA Collection, which stands for the initial letters of the surnames of the Russian consuls at the time of the revolution: A.S. Likhachev, the consul-general in Montreal; plus K. Ragosin and H.I. Mathers, the two vice-consuls in Vancouver and Halifax. I wish to thank Myron Momryk of the Manuscript Division for his help in using these archives. For a brief account of the LI-RA-MA Collection see E.W. Laine, "On Documenting the Russian Presence in Canada," in T.F. Jeletzky, ed., *Russian Canadians: Their Past and Present* (Nepean: Borealis Press, 1983), pp. xvii-xxiii.

- ²⁰ D.J. Hall, *Clifford Sifton, II: The Young Napoleon* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1981), 254-69.
- ²¹ Though partly due to territorial gains by Central Asia, the major source of this increase was internal. By 1917, the estimated population was 170 million.
- ²² Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital: The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia, 1762-1809* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). In this earlier period, Mennonites had been induced to Russia with a *Privilegium* that exempted them from all military service. When this agreement was undermined by a major military reform in 1873 – making all male citizens of conscription age equally obligated to serve – many Mennonites began to search for an alternative homeland and nearly 9000 eventually emigrated to Canada in the 1870s. But such an outcome was exceptional in Russian policy. Official talks were conducted through the British consul in Berdyańsk. When Mennonite advance parties went to Canada to consider moving there, "the Canadian government was severely criticized for negotiating with the prospective immigrants without the 'sanction of the Russian government.'" Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Toronto: MacMillan Ltd., 1974), 194.
- ²³ Donald W. Treadgold, *The Great Siberian Migration* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 13. For a contemporary Russian account extolling the potentialities of Siberia see *Aziatskaia Rossiia. Izdanie pereselencheskago upravleniia glavnago upravleniia zemleustroistva i zemledeliiia*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1914).
- ²⁴ Kropotkin, "Some of the Resources of Canada," 513. Kropotkin was certainly not alone in recognizing the parallel at that time, as evidenced by this comment from M.A. Czaplicka in *My Siberian Year* (London: Clarendon Press, n.d.), 305-6; "Perhaps Siberia may yet become what she is potentially already – the Canada of the East." Quoted in Treadgold, *The Great Siberian Migration*, 239.
- ²⁵ Mary Schaeffer Conroy, *Peter Arkad' evich Stolypin* (Boulder, Col., 1976), 47. After touring Siberia in 1910, Philips Price, of the (British) Royal Geographic Society, concluded that "Siberia is now where Canada was a generation ago." Quoted in Treadgold, *The Great Siberian Migration*, 221.
- ²⁶ "Prince Vashchikoff on Siberian Colonization," *The Times*, 25 Dec. 1907, 7.
- ²⁷ LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 3, file 91, correspondence between Russian consul-general N.B. Struve and the Canadian Copper Cliff Co., Sept. 1907.
- ²⁸ "Russian Emigration," *The Times*, 6 Sept. 1904, 4.
- ²⁹ Michael H. Marunchak, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History* (Winnipeg, 1970), 22. Opportunities in Canada were well known to eastern Ukrainians in Russia at least from 1908 when the Kiev Provitva Society published *Pro Kanadu*, an information booklet about Ukrainian immigrants in Canada. See John C. Lehr, "Propaganda and Belief: Ukrainian Emigrant Views of the Canadian West," in *New Soil-Old Roots: The Ukrainian Experience in Canada* (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1983), 6-7.
- ³⁰ LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 3, file 94, *Vtoroi Departament, Ministerstvo Innostranikh Del to Imperatorskoe Rossiiskoe Konsul'stvo v Monreal*, 4 Dec. 1912. According to Canadian immigration regulations, foreign workers had to indicate their Canadian employer and meet a certain monetary qualification (\$50 in 1913) before gaining entrance into the country. When severe labour shortages existed, these requirements were sometimes temporarily waived.
- ³¹ "Canadian Demand for Railway Construction Labour," *The Times*, 9 Feb. 1907, 12. See also A.W. Currie, *The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 409.
- ³² LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 20, files 649-50. The actual negotiations were carried on with Frank W. Morse, the general manager of the Grand Trunk Pacific.
- ³³ *Ibid.* According to Mabel F. Timlin, "Sifton used the Alien Labour Act to curb the entry of railway construction workers ... on government subsidized projects. The aim was to preserve these employment opportunities for those potential settlers who needed funds for their successful establishment on the land." These provisions had been incorporated into the construction contracts between the Canadian government and the railways; "Canada's Immigration Policy, 1896-1910," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XXVI (1960), 519.

- ³⁴ LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 20, file 649, Struve to Morse, 6 Nov. 1906.
- ³⁵ G.R. Stevens, *Canadian National Railways, III: Towards the Inevitable, 1896-1922* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 226-7.
- ³⁶ LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 21, file 712. On Likhachev, who first presented his credentials to Pope on 14 May 1914, see NAC, Department of External Affairs, RG 25, G 1, vol. 1135, file 1070.
- ³⁷ "Message from the Russian Premier," *The Times*, 8 June 1908, 3.
- ³⁸ John P. MacKay, *Pioneers for Profit: Foreign Entrepreneurship and Russian Industrialization, 1885-1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 31.
- ³⁹ A.W. Crawford, "The Fear of Russia," *Canadian Magazine*, XLV (June 1915), 93-9.
- ⁴⁰ LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 11, file 339.
- ⁴¹ *Montreal Star*, 24 March 1915.
- ⁴² LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 11, file 391, Likhachev to Pope, 25 Oct. 1914.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, vol. 11, file 341. A decree from Nicholas II dated 5/18 June 1915 further clarified this decision, specifying that "Russian reservists and territorials (privates and non-commissioned officers only) residing in Canada are allowed to enlist in the C.E.F." *Ibid.*, XI, file 344.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 11, file 344. A large portion of the LI-RA-MA Collection consists of records pertaining to these identifications.
- ⁴⁵ "Russians for Canadian Regiments," *The Times*, 5 Aug. 1915, 5.
- ⁴⁶ LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 15, file 482, Borden to Likhachev, 19 May 1916.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 15, file 481, Likhachev to Pope, 13 Feb. 1917; Likhachev to *Ministersvo innostrannykh Del*, 14 March 1917.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 15, file 482, Borden to Likhachev, 6 Nov. 1915. One reason for this situation was that Russia had a purchasing commission in the United States, through which its North American orders were usually channeled. Borden strenuously urged Great Britain to secure a separate Russian purchasing commission for Canada, but British support was hedged. A commission finally was appointed after the February Revolution. Department of External Affairs, *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, I, 72-5.
- ⁴⁹ LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 15, file 482.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 15, file 481, Flavelle to Likhachev, 6 May 1916. See also Michael Bliss, *A Canadian Millionaire: The Life and Business Times of Sir Joseph Flavelle, Bart. 1858-1939* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1978), 265.
- ⁵¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 10 Nov. 1916.
- ⁵² LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 16, file 507, Chambers to Likhachev, 14 Nov. 1916.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. 16, file 504, Pope to Likhachev, 4 June 1915.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 16, file 521, Likhachev to Pope, 27 Oct. 1914; Pope to Likhachev, 27 Oct. 1914. According to an article in the *Montreal Journal of Commerce*, the comedy "Some General" was staged twice daily at the Gayety Theatre. It included a scene in which a clown played the Russian tsar wearing mock robes and a cuspidor for a crown.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 16, file 506.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 16, file 507. See for example, "Vilna in 1812 and 1915," *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 Sept. 1915.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 21, file 710. One (non-Slavic) trustee said that Russian "should have the premier place" among languages in the curriculum.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 21, file 704, Leacock's article appeared in an issue of the *Toronto Star* in September 1916. His pre-war attitude towards East European immigration is expressed in "Canada and the Immigration Problem," *National and English Review*, (1911), 316-27; reprinted in Howard Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Vancouver: Copp Clark, 1975), 46-51.
- ⁵⁹ C.F. Just, *Reprint of Articles dealing with Russian Trade* (Ottawa: Government Print Office, 1916), 14.
- ⁶⁰ LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 15, file 484, Likhachev to Borden, 29 May 1916.

- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 18, file 594, Likhachev to Bentkovsky, 15 July 1915.
- ⁶² This project is mentioned, but not elaborated, in Roy MacLaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), 37-8. A contemporary account, which, however, does not mention the Canadian contribution, is Alfred Knox, *With the Russian Army, 1914-1917 II* (London: Arno Press, 1921), 509-11. The recruitment of Canadian workers had the full support of Borden. Likhachev actively assisted in facilitating their entry into Russia. LI-RA-MA Collection, XV, file 486, Likhachev to Borden, 22 Sept. 1915; Fergusson to Likhachev, 30 Sept. 1915.
- ⁶³ The ship's manifest listed their occupations, which ran from the expected labourers, carpenters, bridge-builders, and machinists to florists, waiters, hotel clerks, chauffeurs – and a comedian! LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 15, file 488.
- ⁶⁴ *New York Times*, 14 March 1916, 3. The subheadline read: "Canadian Construction Gang of 570 [sic] Men Left to Rough it. Fought for Scant Meal."
- ⁶⁵ LI-RA-MA Collection, vol. 15, file 488, W.E. MacLean to A.L. Lawley, "Report on Construction of Semeonovo to Kola Section of Murman Railway," 15 Jan. 1916. On the other hand, a report from the Second Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs refers to the "drunkenness and repeated disorderly behaviour" of the Canadians. George W. Buchanan, the British ambassador in Petrograd, wrote to Sir Edward Grey: "There is no doubt that a serious blow has been dealt to our reputation for efficiency in this country." NA, Department of External Affairs, RG25, G 1, vol. 1167, file 2047.
- ⁶⁶ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 213-14. For a documentation and analysis of Borden's key role in framing this resolution see R. Craig Brown and Robert Bothwell, "The 'Canadian Resolution,'" in Michael Cross and Robert Bothwell, eds., *Policy by Other Means* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin Ltd., 1972), 163-78.

Borden and the Bolsheviks

Robert Bothwell

The year 1917 was supposed to be "the climax of the war" for the allies. That it was not was a testament to the resourcefulness of the German army, the folly of allied strategy and tactics, the impact of the German submarine campaign in the North Atlantic, and, not least, Russia's impending departure from the war.

That departure was heralded by a note circulated by the Bolshevik government to the allied ambassadors in Petrograd in December 1917, expressing "the profound respect of the Soviet Government for the people of your country, who ... cannot do otherwise than ardently desire peace."¹

It was obviously not in the allies' interest to encourage Russia's peace-making, and not just because peace in the East would release hundreds of thousands of German troops to fight in the west. As Lloyd George would argue in June 1918, a victorious peace for Germany in the East "would leave her strong; would leave her triumphant;" and would make a new war inevitable.²

War-driven governments were bound to weigh the Bolsheviks' influence not only on the balance of international power, but on their own domestic political equilibrium, where so much depended on achieving something like total victory over the Germans. Russian policy was not therefore formulated or pursued in an atmosphere of calm reflection or long-term planning. Insofar as other interests were represented in allied, and particularly British, policy, they were traditional ones, like the danger to India, the road to the east and the menace of the Turk. It was in this context that Lord Balfour uttered his celebrated logical contradiction, several times repeated during 1918: "Internal affairs in Russia are no concern of ours. We only consider them insofar as they affect the war." For internal affairs anywhere to be divorced from the war would have been a remarkable achievement; far from preaching a doctrine of abstention, Balfour was in fact prescribing a formula for interference and, ultimately, intervention.³

Intervention followed, by stages, over the first half of 1918. An early initiative, "Dunsterforce" in the Caucasus, was the occasion for the first Canadian participation in Britain's Russian policy. The British asked the London-based Minister of Overseas Forces, Sir Edward Kemp, for a draft of Canadian officers and NCOs for Dunsterforce. Kemp obliged, informing but not consulting his colleagues in Ottawa. Forty Canadians arrived in Basra in March, and served in and around Baku until Dunsterforce was withdrawn in September.⁴

It was not uncommon for individual Canadians to take detached service with British units and even to roam farther afield, if occasion demanded and opportunity were provided. One Canadian major, for example, actually acted as financial adviser to a Red Army unit on the opposite side of the Caucasus from Dunsterforce; another acted as the confidant of Queen Marie of Romania and would later, in that capacity, be invited to Buckingham Palace.

Other forces, training missions known as "Elope" and "Syren", were constituted between May and July; again, Kemp was asked for officers and NCOs, and again he was accommodating. "Elope" was destined for Archangel in north Russia, and "Syren" for the Arctic port of Murmansk; besides assisting in administration, its members were to train "the local forces raised in that theatre." Canadians, because of their Arctic upbringing, were considered peculiarly suitable for northern service. "Consequently," one survivor wrote, "there was hardly a mess in the whole [Archangel] area in which it was not possible to find a Canadian."⁵

None of this required any large policy decisions from the responsible Canadian authorities. In the absence of policy, routine took precedence. Given the chaos obtaining in Russia in the winter of 1917 and spring of 1918, some confusion on the part of Canadian commanders and politicians was pardonable. The German offensive in March and April 1918 gave them plenty to think about; the conclusions they drew were melancholy. If the allies could not defence prepared positions against a numerically equal German army, what hope did they have for ultimate victory? Though the front was stabilized later in the spring, just as the Imperial War Cabinet assembled in London for its annual meeting, there appeared to be little prospect for victorious action in the west for the balance of the year. Instead, in May and June, thoughts turned to planning the next year's campaign. "[U]nless the Russian front is reconstituted," the Imperial War Cabinet was informed, "there is no reasonable probability of such a superiority over the enemy being concentrated by the Allies as will ensure victory on the Western front in 1919."⁶

Just as the assembled first ministers pondered this dictum, some good news arrived: there was a viable fighting force loose in Russia, and it favoured the allies. It was the Czechoslovak Corps, which was fighting its way along the Trans-Siberian Railway towards Vladivostok, the open sea, and transport for Europe.

Sir Robert Borden, as Canadian prime minister, was not especially attracted to Russia as a field of action, but he listened dutifully as the Foreign Secretary, Lord Balfour, explained the bases of his policy. Russia and its institutions, Balfour revealed, were "low on the scale of civilisation." It was "totally without inherent and internal vigour" and had never yet produced "a great man." But Russia's institutions were for that country to decide; nevertheless, Balfour added, if "we find anybody who is willing to fight Germans we back him."⁷

Borden listened attentively; as the shorthand notes of Balfour's speech show, he did not question the Foreign Secretary's assumptions. Indeed, he went along with Balfour's bid to secure American help for an expedition to Siberia, where the Japanese had already landed. On 25 June he also absorbed what he called "a very clear and cogent exposition of the Eastern situation" from Lord Curzon; in it, Curzon predicted that the Germans and Turks would sweep across central Asia, "covering and menacing the whole of the northern flank of India." At the end of June, in the committee of prime ministers, Borden helped draft a British resolution for the allied Supreme War Council, asking for "immediate Allied armed assistance to Russia."⁸

Allied pressure was successful; American president Wilson accepted the landing of a Siberian force, even though he insisted that its field of operations be limited to the Far East. The British took what they could get, hoping for more later. On 22 July the War Cabinet, with the dominion prime ministers in attendance, approved intervention in Siberia.⁹

Borden had already begun to confront the consequences of the British decision to intervene. Early in July he turned back a request for a Canadian battalion for north Russia; but later that month he found it far more difficult to resist a call for a brigade. It would serve in Siberia, where it would form the major part of the British contingent. After discussing the matter with General Sydney Mewburn, his minister of militia and defence, Borden referred the matter to the cabinet in Ottawa, which on 28 July approved "in principle."¹⁰

Borden's initial decision was made on the basis of information available in London: reports from local agents reprinted for the War Cabinet, and the larger pictures that Balfour and Curzon so much liked to draw. Differences of attitude and intention existed, but were not stressed. To Lloyd George, for example, intervention with allied troops created "a rallying point close at hand for all liberal and democratic forces in Russia." But speed was imperative, "to save Russia from falling under German domination."¹¹

The precise moment of Borden's decision to put principle into practice and send troops is debatable; but by 7 August he was telegraphing Ottawa to make haste in despatching forces to Siberia. The previous day he had discussed the mission with its prospective commander, General Elmsley, and was closeted with the other prime ministers to consider Lloyd George's public justification of the intervention.¹²

Characteristically, Borden added some pragmatic considerations in a letter to General Mewburn: "Intimate relations with that rapidly developing country [Siberia] will be of great advantage to Canada in the future. Other nations will make very vigorous and determined efforts to obtain a foothold and our interposition with a small military force would tend to bring Canada into favourable notice by the strongest elements in that great community." Borden seems to have been thinking of trade and development: at the very least he seems to have had in mind preventing Siberia falling under the domination or

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pragmatic

influence of some other power, presumably Japan or the United States. What he omitted from his justification is just as interesting: there is no mention of Bolshevism, or the dangers that the Bolshevik ideology posed for international relations.¹³ With rather less fuss, the Canadian authorities in London also approved, in September, the despatch of a field artillery brigade to north Russia (it consisted of two batteries of six guns each and totalled 497 soldiers).¹⁴

Borden did not consider, and may not have believed to be important, the differences of opinion that existed between the British and Americans on the proper form of intervention. The British had in mind an advance from the Pacific along the Trans-Siberian Railway to the Urals, the Americans something much more limited. Borden's secretary, back in Ottawa, asked which design the Canadians were to adopt. Mewburn asked the same question: when the Canadians got to Siberia, how far should they go? Borden temporized. The decision could be left to the commander on the spot.¹⁵

Next Mewburn asked the Americans what they intended, only to find that nobody he could ask in Washington seemed to know. His report makes interesting reading: "There is little doubt that until recently certain persons who have had the ear of the President had a sneaking sympathy with some aspects of Bolshevism. [Some State Department officials] take the view held by the British Government ... [and] are of the opinion that the force of circumstances in all probability ultimately will compel the United States Government to go further in the matter. "The US military, on the other hand, wanted no diversion of effort from the Western Front, and were strongly opposed to the State Department's forward policy."¹⁶

Arrangements had to be made with the British for the proper command of the Canadian brigade. As in France, the Canadians had the right to communicate with their home government. Nevertheless, although, General Elmsley was the senior serving officer, General Knox, the British general on the spot, was the senior staff officer. Elmsley had the right, if not the positive duty, to vet all British orders as they applied to his troops; and those troops included two British battalions. It was not a situation made for harmony.¹⁷

What, actually, were the Siberia-bound troops to do? It is quite possible that the British regarded their presence as symbolic; staff papers composed in London assumed that the Americans and the Japanese would do the bulk of any actual fighting. The Japanese seemed ready to oblige, eventually pouring 70,000 troops into eastern Siberia; but their aims differed widely from those of the British. Japan, like the United States, was unwilling to underwrite a march to the Urals in support of the antediluvian hopes of British strategists.¹⁸

The most prominent of these was General Alfred Knox, the former military attaché in Petrograd. Knox, with the revolution just behind him, was as much determined to eradicate Bolshevism as he was to re-establish the Eastern Front. "Civilisation," he wrote, "demands that we should intervene to prevent the horrors now committed every day in Russia." Knox had moved his base

thousands of miles inland to be closer to the real action. General Elmsley, with his more limited background; would not find himself in automatic agreement with the War Office's man in Omsk.¹⁹

The Canadian contingent set sail from Vancouver on 11 October 1918, and began to arrive in Siberia just as the war in the West was ending. Several snags had developed even before it set sail. Borden had contemplated a volunteer force. Siberia, however, was not an attractive destination, and it became necessary to use conscripts. It had occurred to the military authorities that a knowledge of the local language might be useful, and so a call was sent out for Russian-speaking soldiers. A fair number reported. Unluckily, many of these on closer inspection proved to be would-be Bolsheviks looking for a free ride home. And, finally, the war ended.²⁰

It was at about this time that it occurred to the cabinet that Canadian troops might be fighting in a new war after the original one was finished. Anguished telegrams pursued the prime minister across the Atlantic asking what could now be done. Worse still, just as the war ended on the Western Front on 11 November, a Canadian artillery battery was pounding away at the Bolsheviks just outside a north Russian town called Tulgas, outside Archangel.²¹

With the end of the war, the major justification for allied intervention – the re-establishment of the Eastern Front – disappeared. Those who had believed in that chimaera were now free to examine the equally irrational premises of those who proposed to fight a new war for civilization in the heart of the steppes. By October the latter were regrouping around new positions. The intervention, now that allied troops were actually on the ground, had become a matter of "prestige." Balfour argued the point to the War Cabinet on 18 October, adding that withdrawal would also mean "letting down our friends." Lord Robert Cecil, Balfour's assistant, was blunter: he called for "a crusade against Bolshevism."²²

This point of view was not well represented in Canadian councils. Borden, like everyone else, knew that he was living through dangerous, turbulent times. As a serving politician who had risked much for a total war effort, he was conscious of the limits of politics, more so than some of his British colleagues. One day in mid-November, while Borden was talking to Lloyd George, "Churchill came in. Discussed basis of society." On 1 December, Borden told his diary that he was "struck with the progress of Bolshevism in European countries."²³

There were some Canadians who sympathized with Lord Robert Cecil and Winston Churchill in their desire to strangle Bolshevism in its cradle. Colonel Joe Boyle, a Klondike veteran who had attached himself to the Romanian court, told Borden that the "triumph of Bolshevism in Russia means that it will overrun Germany and that Germany and Russia will overrun the world or reduce organized society to anarchy. He insists that it must be put

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down or worse will come and declares that an army of a million men can do it." Whatever his deficiencies as a prophet, Boyle was right about the size of an effective counter-revolutionary army. Borden may even have taken the point; but of course he could do nothing to implement Boyle's grand design.²⁴

The weather postponed some of Borden's problems. Archangel froze up for the winter and would not re-thaw until May. The British commanders in Archangel and Murmansk (which, though unfrozen, flanked Archangel and acted as a strategic extension of the other city) could therefore run their little northern war without danger of immediately effective interference from home. By spring the tiny allied northern army, with its Canadian artillery, was halfway to Petrograd, and had stood off several offensives reputedly directed by Trotsky himself. Archangel's strategic isolation was, however, unique.

Not so Siberia. By November 1918 Siberia had become the centre of allied efforts to crush Bolshevism. The favoured candidate for leadership of a renovated, non-Bolshevik Russia, Admiral Kolchak, had migrated there: "honest, patriotic and capable," Kolchak was General Knox's particular favourite. In their more optimistic moments, the anti-Bolsheviks saw Kolchak leading his troops across the Urals to join up with the White Russian forces north and south of Moscow, thereby trapping and crushing Lenin, Trotsky and company. In the meantime, Knox and his civilian counterpart, Sir Charles Eliot, were prepared to tolerate Kolchak's suppression of any and all dissent in his territories.

Canadian soldiers were scattered around the periphery of the conflict, but except for the troops in Archangel and Siberia they were under British direct command and not amenable to instructions from Ottawa.²⁵ Among the troops it is possible to discern a difference of opinion or attitude. Volunteers approached their task with enthusiasm; the north Russian force accepted its fate uncomplainingly for the duration of the winter; and the conscripts in Siberia regarded their mission with distaste.

What was their mission, now that the war was over? The Imperial General Staff and the British cabinet decided on support, meaning equipment and training, for all anti-Bolshevik governments in Russia, and for the maintenance of the existing British forces in north Russia and Siberia. No increase in those forces was contemplated.²⁶ It was a haphazard and purely temporary solution; to perceptive observers on the spot, the real alternatives were either a march by the allies themselves on Moscow, or the total abandonment of intervention and, consequently, of the White Russians.²⁷ Borden, when he arrived in England on 17 November, was urged by telegram from his cabinet colleagues in Ottawa to choose abandonment. Public opinion as well as their own, the Canadian cabinet told their prime minister, demanded withdrawal "as soon as situation will permit." In the meantime no further troops should be sent.²⁸

Borden, after consulting the War Office and listening to arguments in the Imperial War Cabinet, demurred. There seemed to be a chance that the

Bolsheviks might yet be overthrown, and the need to protect ordinary people (in the Baltic, for example) from the Bolsheviks was great. The prime minister therefore decided to tell General Mewburn to send new drafts of troops to Siberia. He told Sir Thomas White, the acting prime minister, that Canadian troops in Siberia were helping to stabilize "the situation" there; moreover, the cabinet should not forget "economic considerations which are manifest." Borden's emphasis on stability reflects the advice given him by the British War Office, which argued that: "The rise of any Government from anarchy depends on breathing space assured by armed forces."²⁹ The cabinet in Ottawa was not convinced. It remained seriously divided on intervention, with T.A. Crerar, a farmers' minister from Manitoba, leading the opposition. More practically, Sir Thomas White reminded the prime minister that reinforcements for the Siberian brigade would have to be drafted from conscripts since volunteers were hard to find.³⁰

Borden referred White's objections to three ministers who had accompanied him to London. With their support, he remained adamant. "In my judgment," he wrote, "we shall stand in an unfortunate position unless we proceed with Siberia expedition. We made definite arrangements with British Government on which they have relied. They could reasonably hold us responsible for great inevitable delay in making other arrangements. Canada's present position and prestige would be singularly impaired by deliberate withdrawal." Borden, after all, was endeavouring to persuade the British that Canada merited inclusion at the forthcoming Paris Peace Conference. His arguments had little to do with Siberia *per se*, and much to do with adding to the British government's sense of obligation to their imperial junior partner.³¹

The cabinet was appeased if not convinced. It began to screw up its courage to announce that further troops would be sent to Siberia, with the proviso that they would be back by the end of the summer of 1919. All they asked was that someone send them an official explanation of and justification for the Canadian brigade. This was promised. Borden, ironically, now began to get cold feet. Perhaps, in the face of public resentment, it was advisable to limit the Canadian commitment in Siberia to General Elmsley and a training mission. Elmsley himself urged Borden to continue as agreed; without the presence of a sizeable force the Czechoslovak Legion fighting for Kolchak in the interior would lose heart and without the Czechs, the Whites could not hope to prevail. And so the policy remained as before.³²

British joy was short-lived. The Canadians would come, but only to Vladivostok or its immediate environs. They were not to go up-country and particularly not as far as Omsk. That, however, was where General Knox wanted them. When it became apparent that the Canadians were obdurate, the War Office reacted quickly. The two British battalions that had gone to the interior were to be withdrawn, and the Canadians sent home.³³

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concerns

Borden by this point was becoming testy about the drain that Siberia represented on his time, time which he had hoped to spend on the more important question of peace terms for Germany. He instructed White to stop bothering him for information that had already been sent, adding that if the Siberian expedition really posed such insuperable problems then it should be cancelled.³⁴

While the British military had a clear idea of what they required in Russia, the politicians had not yet decided. Lloyd George, by the beginning of December, was veering to at least talking to the Bolsheviks, and when the Imperial War Cabinet finally took up the question on 23 December the British prime minister vigorously questioned whether continued intervention was either logical or practicable. Winston Churchill took the opposite tack, and various ministers joined in. When Borden came to speak he adopted a middle (and somewhat muddled) position.

According to Borden, "we should not continue to fight in Russia," but should make an arrangement with the Bolsheviks permitting the withdrawal of "our own troops" (meaning British) and the Czechs, while "safeguarding the people who had co-operated with us." He did suggest that withdrawal should be used to extort recognition by the Bolsheviks of "their debts," that is, those of the previous imperial government. In any case, Borden added, "he did not think that opinion would tolerate [the Canadians] remaining in Russia after navigation opened in the spring." It is not clear whether the prime minister was thinking of Archangel, which was icebound, or believed that Vladivostok was hemmed in by ice-floes.³⁵

With such divergent opinions, the cabinet discussion was inconclusive; but it was indicative. The Bolsheviks were no longer entirely beyond the pale. Contact with them was resumed. The War Office no longer had as free a hand as previously in defining British policy on the ground in Russia. And Borden, having suggested negotiating withdrawal with the Bolsheviks, went one step further on 30 December to propose summoning the several governments, White and Red, in Russia to attend the Paris Peace Conference, there to reason together with the allies, and to produce stability under the auspices of the future League of Nations.

In making his proposal for a Russian annex to the peace conference, Borden was also hoping to defuse the opposing trends of British and American policy in the area; any Canadian leader was likely to be alarmed by too great a divergence between Canada's two principal partners. Such a split would upset the equilibrium on which Canadian domestic as well as external policy was based. Lloyd George found Borden's approach attractive, and on 31 December he summed up: "In conclusion," the British prime minister stated, "he hoped that the Cabinet would agree to support him in refusing to countenance any military intervention, and in inviting the representatives of all sections of Russia to appear before the Peace Conference, as Sir Robert Borden had

suggested, with a view to composing their differences. "Though some nuances were added (attacks on British clients, such as Romania or Poland, by the Bolsheviks were not to be countenanced), the Imperial War Cabinet "endorsed the general policy with regard to Russia outlined by Mr. Lloyd George."³⁶

Borden, the reputed author of it all, must have been rather surprised. In his diary for 30 December, he mentioned those parts of his speech that dealt with the United States, but made no mention at all of Russia. The next day he soberly noted that "L.G. agreed with me as to our attitude towards Russia." It is probable that at this point Borden simply hoped to clear Canadian troops out of Russia in the spring, as he had suggested. In the meantime he was willing to wait, and resisted a suggestion by General Knox that the Canadians be replaced by Indian troops; all this, he said was "pending a definite decision on Allied policy in Russia."³⁷ The British undertook to procure such a decision, and after some resistance from the French carried the proposal in discussion in Paris in mid-January 1919. "The Borden proposal" (Arno Mayer's term) could now go forward.³⁸

The convolutions that followed need not detain us. "The Borden proposal" eventually turned into the idea of a conference on the island of Prinkipo in the Sea of Marmara. There the Byzantine emperors had exiled their deposed predecessors, tonsured or blinded, to nurse their vanished hopes and depressing memories; it was called from that circumstance "Princes Island" and it made an appropriate venue for the Whites and Reds, nursing vanished glories or dreaming vast fantasies about a working-class future.

Borden worked during the first part of January on more mundane subjects connected to Canadian representation at Paris, but he did not entirely escape the spell of Russia. Lord Beaverbrook brought him together with Churchill, Eddie Marsh, F.E. Smith and Andrew Bonar Law, and inevitably they discussed "reconstruction, Bolshevism, Russia's future" Inevitably, too, they reached no real conclusion.³⁹ On 23 January Russia reappeared in Borden's life. That day he attended the meeting of the British Empire Delegation (the continuation of the Imperial War Cabinet) in Paris, where "L.G. proposed that I should be chief British Delegate at proposed meeting with delegates of Russian Govts at Princes Island ... on 15th Feby." Borden, evidently flattered, told Lloyd George "I could hardly refuse to undertake any duty which it was thought I could fulfill but I must telegraph to my colleagues."⁴⁰

Borden would have been less pleased if he had known that he was Lloyd George's third choice for the job. At dinner on 22 January the British prime minister offered the task to Lord Hardinge, the permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, and then to Lord Robert Cecil. Finally, he turned to Borden, whom Ullman characterizes as "an enthusiastic proponent of the plan from its inception." Ullman's interpretation of Borden's enthusiasm is extravagant, since there is no apparent evidence that Borden gave the idea a second thought since his off-hand remarks on 30 December.⁴¹

Borden told the Canadian cabinet and the cabinet, which wanted its leader home again, predictably split on the issue. It would not matter, Borden wrote, for though it was an inescapable "duty" he was "very doubtful whether the Conference will take place." Nor did it, for though the Bolsheviks accepted the allied invitation, the various White factions indignantly rejected it.⁴² Borden did not let his disappointment show. By the end of January, he had quietly let the reinforcement troops intended for Siberia be disbanded. Those in Vladivostok could stay there in their barracks, but would leave "at an early date," later confirmed as April.⁴³

Borden's decision to pull out coincided with Winston Churchill's last great push for an effective form of intervention. Lloyd George, who did not share Churchill's enthusiasm for the project, nevertheless allowed him to argue it in Paris, perhaps because he had become convinced that Churchill would fail to win any converts to his point of view. Philip Kerr, Lloyd George's secretary, urged Borden to listen to the Secretary for War before making any final decision, but he failed to make any impression. "Russia," he told the British Empire Delegation on 17 February, "must work out her own salvation which may take years." He took comfort from the notion that "Bolshevist policy and action are becoming more moderate." Public opinion, not only in Canada but in the United States and Great Britain, would not stand for any further armed effort. The most he would concede was a special military investigating team to be sent to Russia, to make a quick study and report. Pending its report, he would delay the announcement of the Canadian withdrawal.⁴⁴

That was not quite the end. Though Churchill, reluctantly and with evident repugnance, conceded that the War Office could not stand in the way of the dominion's desire to withdraw its troops, the resumption of Kolchak's advance in the spring of 1919 excited his hopes once more. Early in April the War Office appealed for volunteers for two special brigades to serve in north Russia, and later that month Churchill toured British army encampments in Europe to sound the opinion of the soldiers themselves.

"Last night," he wrote to Borden on 1 May, "at a dinner of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade numbers of officers spoke to me of their desire to volunteer for service in Russia against the Bolsheviks, but they complained that the Canadian military authorities would force them to quit the Canadian service before joining any special unit of this character. Surely this is a little hard . . ." Appealing to a political comradeship that stretched back to 1912, Churchill begged Borden to "encourage volunteering." After all, he concluded, "If Canada takes the lead, Australia will be bound to follow."⁴⁵

Borden pondered Churchill's message and submitted it to his colleagues. Like Lloyd George, and unlike Churchill, he was by then more concerned with the dangers of internal Bolshevism than with the flourishing Russian variety. The Mount Hope Grain Growers (Saskatchewan) had joined The Working Class of Prince Rupert [in Meeting Assembled] and others to condemn

intervention "for the benefit of the capitalist," and no contrary opinion was discernible.⁴⁶

The withdrawal of Canadian troops from Siberia took place on schedule; no encouragement was given to Canadian military volunteers for Russia. If they went, they went as British soldiers. North Russia took more time to manage, but Borden was determined to manage that as quickly as possible. His information from north Russia showed Canadian troops suffering hardships for the benefit of unreliable if not mutinous White allies. This had caused "resentment" among the Canadians, and one artillery section had actually refused to obey orders.⁴⁷ The Canadians left Archangel on 11 June; the remaining British soldiers followed in September. The Canadians in Murmansk stayed until August, and were followed out by the British in October. By then Kolchak had been defeated, and the remaining White armies were in retreat. Though the Russian civil war lasted another year, the outcome was no longer in doubt.

There is a curious footnote to the story of Canadian intervention. The Czech corps, the occasion for the Vladivostok adventure, was evacuated to Europe via Canada. They would travel by railway, and no sooner had Canada's railway companies learned that the Czechs would be coming than they appealed to Borden to have them stay over for a summer's work. The Imperial government would be only too happy to help with arrangements, and it asked whether Canada would like some stray Hungarian and Austrian prisoners of war who were stranded in Vladivostok.⁴⁸

What had begun on a note of high moral concern and strategic necessity ended on a note of commercial farce. Intervention had always been a peculiar business. The prospect of reopening the Eastern Front, always remote, had justified the despatch, first of dribs and drabs of Canadian troops, and then of whole units. But not enough could ever be sent, and they were in any case too late to make any difference to the outcome of the war which was, after all, decided in the West and not the East.

Though Borden was repelled by Bolshevism, and as attracted as the next man by the prospect of its opportunistic destruction, his principal object in keeping Canadian troops in Russia was to create a counterweight in negotiations with the British. By the time he had secured a distinct Canadian presence at the Peace Conference, political opposition to intervention was mounting, at home and in Britain; Borden concluded from it that the costs of staying in Russia far outweighed the remaining advantages to be gleaned from an increasingly forlorn hope of displacing the Bolsheviks. It became an issue of practicality over ideology; as always when confronted by such a choice, Borden opted for the practical.

Notes

¹ Quoted in Richard H. Ullman, *Intervention and the War* (Princeton, 1961), 19.

² National Archives of Canada, R.L. Borden Papers, vol. 395, 2480, Imperial War Cabinet meeting 15 (IWC-15), 11 June 1918.

- ³ Quoted in Ullman, *Intervention*, 75.
- ⁴ J.A. Swettenham, *Allied Intervention in Russia* (London, 1967), 41-50. All Canadians in Dunsterforce were volunteers: Roy Maclaren, *Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919* (Toronto, 1976), 12-3.
- ⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, 44.
- ⁶ Borden Papers, vol. 395, IWC-22, 28 June 1918.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, IWC-19, 20 June 1918, shorthand notes, 25235ff.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, IWC-20, IWC-21 and IWC-22, 25, 27 and 28 June 1918; Borden Diary, 25 June 1918.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 22 July 1918.
- ¹⁰ Borden Papers, OC518 (1), Borden to Kemp, 17 July and 2 August 1918, Charles Doherty to Borden, 28 July 1918.
- ¹¹ Lloyd George to Lord Reading, 17 July 1918, quoted in Ullman, *Intervention*, 221-2.
- ¹² Borden diary, 6 August 1918.
- ¹³ Borden Papers, OC518(1)/56162, Borden to Mewburn, 13 August 1918.
- ¹⁴ Maclaren, *Canadians in Russia*, 53-4.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Blount to Borden, 9 August 1918, Mewburn to Borden, 13 August, Borden to Mewburn, 13 August 1918.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 56197-9, Mewburn to Borden, enclosing memorandum 16 September 1918. Borden by this point was back in Canada.
- ¹⁷ Swettenham, *Intervention*, 127-8; Borden Papers, OC518(1)/56190, Mewburn to Borden, 12 September 1918.
- ¹⁸ Ian H. Nish, *Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1908-1923* (London, 1972), 238-39.
- ¹⁹ Knox to War Office, 4 November 1918, quoted in R. Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War* (Princeton, 1968), 30.
- ²⁰ Borden Papers, OC518(1), 56209-10, S.D. Scott, Vancouver, to Borden, 22 October 1918; 56212, Borden to Mewburn, 28 October 1918, containing an assessment of Scott; 56214, Mewburn to Borden, 2 November 1918.
- ²¹ Swettenham, *Intervention*, 80ff.
- ²² Ullman, *Civil War*, 10.
- ²³ Borden diary, 17 November, 1 December 1918.
- ²⁴ Borden diary, 29 December 1918; on Boyle, see William Rodney, *Joe Boyle, King of the Klondike* (Toronto, 1974).
- ²⁵ See Maclaren, *Canadians in Russia*, 259-76.
- ²⁶ Ullman, *Civil War*, 11-2, 15.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17; R.B. Lockhart, the former British consul in Moscow, put the issue in terms of invasion or abandonment.
- ²⁸ Borden Papers, OC518(1)/56216, Sir T. White to Sir E. Kemp, 14 November 1918.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 395, IWC-37, 20 November 1918; Borden diary, 20 November 1918; OC518(1)/56221-2, Borden to White, 20 November 1918; *ibid.*, 56224-6, Col. A. Steel to Borden, 22 November 1918.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 56231-3, Crerar to White, 22 November 1918, and White to Borden, 22 November 1918; see also Swettenham, *Intervention*, 128.
- ³¹ Borden Papers, OC518(1)/56238, Borden to White, 24 November 1918 (my italics); see the judicious appraisal in R.C. Brown, *Robert Laird Borden*, II (Toronto, 1980), 148.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 56257, OC518(1)/56238, Borden to White, 27 November 1918, 56261-2, Newton Rowell to Borden, 28 November 1918, 56270-1, Elmsley to War Office, 29 November 1918, 56284, Borden to White, 5 December 1918.
- ³³ Borden Papers, vol. 395, IWC-48, 31 December 1918.
- ³⁴ Borden Papers, OC518(1)/56304, Borden to White, 9 December 1918.
- ³⁵ Borden Papers, vol. 395, IWC-45, 23 December 1918.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, IWC-47 and 48, 30 and 31 December 1918.

- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ Arno Mayer, *The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking* (New York, 1967), 427.
- ³⁹ Borden diary, January 1919.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 23 January 1919.
- ⁴¹ Ullman, *Civil War*, 110n.
- ⁴² Borden Papers, OC577/63316ff, Borden to White, 23 January, White to Borden, nd., and Borden to White, 24 January 1919.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, OC518(2)/56351ff, Borden to White, 28 January 1919, Borden to Mewburn, 13 February 1919.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 56404-5, Borden to White, 17 February 1919.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 56426-8, Churchill to Borden, 1 May 1919.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, OC518(1)/56239, OC518(2)/56457ff, for an appeal "on behalf of the Mothers and relatives [sic] of the boys in Northern Russia." See also the account by Tim Buck, later chairman of the Communist Party of Canada, *Canada and the Russian Revolution* (Toronto, 1967), 43-7, featuring good Leninist rhetoric.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Borden to Churchill, 18 May 1919, with copy to Lloyd George and "Precis of correspondence relative to North Russian Force," 17 May 1919, *ibid.*, 56455; see also E.M. Halliday, *The Ignorant Armies* (New York, 1961).
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 56495ff, Sir G. Perley to Sir G. Foster, 22 May 1920.

Optimism and Illusion: Canada and the Soviet Union in the 1920s

William Rodney

Before the Great War, indeed, until World War II, Canada's interest in and relations with Russia were limited, largely superficial, and sporadic.¹ Between Confederation and 1914 contacts between the Dominion and the Tsarist state, official and unofficial, were confined to commercial and immigration matters such as Clifford Sifton's and the Canadian Pacific Railway's efforts to settle sturdy sons of the soil in the Canadian west, or humanitarian actions such as providing sanctuary for the Doukhobors and Mennonites.² In the wider context of foreign and defence policies Canada, prior to 1914, regarded Russia in the same light as did Great Britain. Russia was London's bogey, particularly on India's Northwestern frontier, while the Dominion's most evident concern, paralleling that of the Royal Navy, focused intermittently upon the potential threat of Russian sails along the Northwest coast of British North America.³ Certainly, Canadian concerns about and contacts with Russia never reached a level of intensity sufficient to arouse Ottawa into considering amplifying relations with St. Petersburg. Moreover, such possibilities were discounted by the prevailing climate of opinion within the British Foreign, Colonial, and War Offices which handled official matters concerning the Dominion. Despite clear signals confirming Ottawa's desire to be an autonomous country in its own right, Canada before 1914 still tended to be regarded by London in colonial terms.

The Great War altered the situation dramatically. In April 1916 C.F. Just, a Department of Trade and Commerce officer, arrived in Petrograd with instructions to develop trade and commerce between Canada and Russia. He was followed by a second trade commissioner, L. Dana Wilgress, who took up his post in Omsk.⁴ The war quickly confirmed Russia's production incapacities, and soon forced Petrograd to look abroad for supplies. As a result, by 1916, Russian buyers were coming to Canada to purchase rolling stock, rails, and agricultural equipment, the bulk of which was shipped from Vancouver to Vladivostok.⁵ Despite the poor commercial climate and the growing political instability which characterized Russia in 1916-1917, Just and Wilgress remained at their stations until February 1918 when "the uncertainty of the political situation" in the country forced their withdrawal.⁶ Both, nevertheless,

returned to Canada convinced that Russia constituted a vast untapped market for Canadian manufactured goods, one that the Dominion's businessmen should attempt to exploit when conditions became more stable.⁷

In the short term little resulted from these early official commercial contacts. It was not until the significance of the Bolshevik Revolution began to impinge upon officials and politicians in Ottawa, and Prime Minister Robert Borden committed Canada to the Allied Intervention in Russia in 1918, that further serious consideration was given to that country.⁸ Although Borden's decision to send troops to Russia was based primarily upon the military arguments for rescuing the Czech legion and reactivating the Eastern Front following Russia's defection from the Allied war effort by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918, Canada's prime interest in the country remained firmly focused upon the possibilities of trade and commerce between the two countries. The renewed interest in Russia's market potential culminated in the Order-in-council of 21 October 1918 which established the Canadian Economic Commission (Siberia), and signalled Dana Wilgress' return to Russia.⁹

We were sent to Siberia, he recalled, because of the exaggerated hopes that people in Canada had for the possibilities of trade with the country. Everyone thought the Revolution was only temporary and would soon be put down, and after that there'd be great opportunities for trade."¹⁰

By then, however, events in Russia had already impinged upon Canada in an unobtrusive but nevertheless significant fashion.

Tsar Nicholas II's abdication on 15 March 1917 dramatically focused attention upon Russia. Canadian newspapers – the *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 March 1917, for example – in the main hailed the fall of the Romanov dynasty, and raised hopes that under the new provisional government Russia would at long last become a significant force in the war. Equally, the Tsar's downfall triggered a spontaneous reaction amongst Canadian socialist groups, which had been largely dormant throughout the war because of the 1914 War Measures Act forbidding illegal associations, causing them to renew their political activities. At the same time the Tsar's action sparked a strong desire amongst Russian emigres, particularly radicals scattered throughout the world, to return to their homeland. Some of them had never come to terms with the war, regarding it as further proof of capitalism's iniquities. To them Nicholas II's downfall simply marked the first step towards revolution, and signalled that it was time to renounce exile and return to Russia.¹¹

Canada was not exempted from this early manifestation of change in Russia. In 1917 the Dominion witnessed a flow of Russian radicals, most of them originating in the United States, who returned to their country through Canada. Most, because of the difficulties of obtaining passage aboard neutral

ships and the dangers posed by German submarines during Atlantic crossings, resorted to the longer Pacific route from Vancouver to Yokohama in Japan, and subsequent transfer from the Canadian Pacific Steamship vessels to other lines running to Vladivostok.¹² Of those who braved the Atlantic route, Leon Trotsky, paused briefly but for him, memorably, in Canada before reaching Russia to become the outstanding tactician of the subsequent Bolshevik takeover. Removed from a Norwegian freighter in Halifax harbour on 3 April 1917, and interned at Amherst, Nova Scotia until 29 April, the Canadian experience intensified Trotsky's hatred of capitalism, and in particular, all things English.¹³

Although Trotsky's brief stay in Canada made little impact upon the Canadian government or upon socialists in the Dominion, his detention coincided with the re-emergence of labour and socialist organizations which had been quiescent during the war. The events in Russia too, helped to renew and heighten interest in marxism. Discussion of and interest in Marx's writings, most of which emanated from United States sources, still focused upon the classical argument that economic power ultimately determined every aspect of society, and that complete control of the economy would solve all other problems. It was that aspect of Marx's thought which the several language variants of Canadian labour groups, the Social Democratic Party, and the International Workers of the World projected with increasing confidence and fervour as the war drew to a close. Lenin's re-interpretation of Marx, in which he envisioned a system of government based upon the complete organization of political power which, in turn, would ensure complete control of everything else, including the economy, was as yet little realized or understood in the West, let alone in Canada.¹⁴ Despite the spate of information from and about Russia following the Tsar's abdication, the Bolshevik Revolution, and Allied Intervention, the true nature of the new regime in Moscow remained obscured or ignored by governments – including the Canadian – as well as misunderstood by the majority of those who regarded developments in Russia as guides to bringing about social change in the west.

Attempts in early 1919 by Winston Churchill, then secretary of state for War in the British government, and men such as Lieutenant Colonel J.W. Boyle, whose experiences in Russia during and after the Revolution convinced him of the dangers posed by a triumphant Bolshevik regime, to persuade the prime minister, Robert Borden, to continue the Canadian presence in Russia, failed to move the Canadian government.¹⁵ Borden's indifference to the wider issues implicit in the advent of the new regime in Russia did not, however, prevent him from attempting, as already indicated, to develop trade relations with Russia, a policy to which every Canadian administration adhered throughout the twenties. In every other respect, however, Canada throughout that decade was content in its relations with Russia to be the cockleshell trailing in the wake of the British galleon.

advance progress & response to world events -

Although the momentous changes in Russia, together with the Allied Intervention in 1918-1919, increased Canadian public interest in that country, the real impact of the Russian Revolution made itself felt most dramatically and directly upon Canadian labour. Initially, the trade union movement in the Dominion noted events in Russia with guarded approval. After the Armistice, with the rise of the One Big Union (OBU) in Calgary in March 1919, labour tensions, exacerbated by trade union troubles in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, and the failure of the Winnipeg General Strike, in June, reached a level of intensity sufficient to warrant reconsideration of the labour movement's aims, organization, and operational activities.¹⁶ As a result, new socialist groups more extreme in their views and modelled upon what were thought to be the essential aspects of the successful Bolsheviks in Russia, quickly emerged in Canada.¹⁷ Under the direction of the newly established Third or Communist International (Comintern), which came into being in March 1919, the United Communist Party of America and the Communist Party of America, sections of which existed in the Dominion, were fused into a single unit, the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) at the end of May and early June 1921. That action brought into existence a political party whose unique relationship with the Soviet Union widened and deepened throughout the 1920s. In turn, the CPC's emergence increasingly commanded the attentions of established North American trade unions, as well as those elements of government most involved in monitoring the new party's activities, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Department of Labour, and the Department of External Affairs. "The Communism in the O.B.U." as G.P. de T. Glazebrook has noted, "reflected, of course, European [i.e. Russian] thought, and when that organization's hand was seen in the Winnipeg General Strike ... observers could not but be alarmed."¹⁸ It was the Canadian labour movement, however, that was most consistently and significantly influenced by the policies and practices of the CPC which, in the ultimate sense, stemmed from Moscow and the Third International.

Born in the midst of Civil War and the Allied Intervention, the Comintern's first Congress in March 1919 reflected the uncertainties of those turbulent days in Russia, as well as the Bolshevik leaders' ignorance of post-war developments in other countries.¹⁹ That first Congress also reflected the general confusion which characterized labour movements in the west as they began to regroup and reorganize themselves. It was the Second Comintern Congress in July 1920 at which the Twenty One conditions of membership and the Third Internationals' general thrust were laid down, which made the International "a nightmare for the world's ruling classes."²⁰ The Twenty One conditions for admission, 19 of which were written by Lenin, made it clear that illegal organizations were considered to be as important as overt bodies, and that every member communist party was expected to give unconditional support to any Soviet republic in its struggle against counter-revolutionary forces

(condition number 14).²¹ Lack of accurate information about the Comintern, together with the bitter legacies of Intervention and the wave of labour unrest which swept over Canada following the war, in which the hand of Moscow, including money for the "communist agitators and organizations" was discerned, considerably exercised the Borden and Meighen administrations.²² The birth of the CPC at a secret meeting held in Fred Farley's farm on the outskirts of Guelph on 31 May 1921, at which the Third International's representative, Charles E. Scott, acted as mid-wife, did little to increase Ottawa's confidence in the Bolshevik regime in Russia as reports from RCMP agents began to filter through the Ottawa bureaucratic echelons.²³ If the emergence of a Canadian affiliate of the Comintern did not markedly concern Mackenzie King, it certainly concerned the RCMP, the federal Labour Department, as well as organized labour in the Dominion.

Awareness of the underground Communist Party and its subsequent overt variation, the Worker's Party of Canada (WPC), also led to a growing view during the decade (one that was shared by other western governments) that the Comintern was little more than an unofficial extension of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (*Narodnyi Komissariat Inostrannykh Del or Narkomindel*), a perception that made the development of normal diplomatic and commercial relations more difficult.²⁴

In Lenin's view, the Comintern was not a federation of its constituent sections. It was a single world party, with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), buttressed by the Comintern's international bureaucracy established in Moscow, acting as the General Staff of an army bent upon achieving world revolution. National communist parties, in effect local detachments of that world army, were to be guided in their task of helping to bring about the world socialist revolution. If need be too, they would be disciplined by Moscow. That view, strongly subscribed to by Lenin and the Bolshevik leaders who made the revolution in Russia (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Radek, to list the most prominent), dominated the Comintern throughout much of the 1920s, until the old guard was eliminated by Stalin, and replaced by a new philosophy which held that it was possible to build socialism in Russia without having to rely upon external revolutions to ensure its success. In effect, when power in Russia was captured by Stalin and his supporters, they became the new leaders of the Third International. Since the supremacy and the authority accorded the CPSU was never challenged within the Comintern, it was not long before the new regime in Moscow insisted upon the Russian revolutionary experience as the only basis for determining policies for all Communist parties. Unquestioned conformity became the watchword, and from 1929 the Comintern bureaucracy was increasingly dominated by men and women subservient to the new leadership in Moscow. Their nominees in turn took over leadership of the major communist parties throughout the world.²⁵

Despite the problems of operating covertly and overtly during its first three years of existence, the CPC nevertheless strove to carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Comintern. During that time (1921-1924), despite its miniscule strength – the “Z”, or underground wing, numbered 650 while the overt WPC mustered approximately 3000 members – the Comintern directed the Party to organize a minority movement within Canadian trade unions, seek affiliation with the Canadian Labor Party, organize committees of the unemployed and a labour defence league, establish women’s and youth wings, initiate and guide immigrant cultural groups, and raise money for Soviet famine relief.²⁶ Dutifully, in February 1922 Jack MacDonald, the CPC’s leader, applied for affiliation to the CLP in Ontario, and the Party stepped up its trade union activities. As the decade progressed, the CPC became the dominant force within language affiliates such as the Finnish Organization of Canada (FOC) and the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association (ULFTA). Indeed, as a result of its efforts, the Canadian communist movement at the end of the twenties was, in effect, a largely immigrant organization led by a small group of English-speaking men and women: MacDonald, Tim Buck, Florence Custance, A.E. Smith, the Buhays (brother and sister), Maurice Spector, amongst the most prominent figures. The Canadian movement’s composition did not go unnoticed in Moscow, and drew a sharp rebuke from Comintern as the CPC rounded into the thirties.

While the Comintern, through the CPC, attempted to become a dominant force in the Dominion’s political and labour scene, the new regime in Russia also played a more conventional role in the fields of commercial relations and conventional diplomacy. Throughout the 1920s, but most evidently during the period before Lenin became too ill to exercise effective leadership of the CPSU, Soviet authorities attempted to foster normal diplomatic relations with the very governments the Comintern and national communist parties sought to overthrow.²⁷ This schizophrenic policy often caused the Soviets embarrassment and difficulties. Neither the Conservative nor the Labour governments in Britain during the 1920s, for example, accepted Moscow’s contention that the Comintern and the Soviet government were two separate, distinct, and independent entities, and that therefore the Third International’s activities could not be held accountable in relation to Soviet commercial and diplomatic activities. Much the same view was held by the Canadian government, although Prime Minister Mackenzie King, if he at all considered the Comintern’s actions as reflected by the CPC, did so in terms of displeasure about Soviet revolutionary propaganda within the British Empire.²⁸

The inherent contradictions of Soviet policies, however, did not prevent Russian overtures for greater contact with the West. Soon after the end of the Civil War in Russia, a *Trade Agreement and a Declaration of the Recognition of Claims* was signed on 16 March 1921 by Sir Robert Horne, president of the British Board of Trade, and Leonid Krassin, the Soviet representative in

London, on behalf of their respective countries.²⁹ Soviet justification for establishing commercial contacts with bourgeois governments was put down as a tactical expedient based upon what was considered to be a temporary stabilization of capitalism, a view that also accorded with the New Economic Policy (NEP) which, by 1923, was in full spate in Russia. With that agreement, Canada once again became interested in the possibilities of doing business with the Soviet regime. Initiated by Krassin, who was interested in Canadian farm machinery and manufactured goods, Ottawa in the course of negotiations through the British Foreign Office, proposed that Canadian representatives be attached to the British Trade Mission in Moscow. After various considerations, Colonel H.D. Mackie, Conservative member of Parliament for South Renfrew who earlier had put forward a number of schemes to develop Canadian-Russian trade, and L. Dana Wilgress were nominated by Canada.³⁰ However, neither Mackie nor Wilgress ever took up their posts in Russia. In turn, almost two years elapsed between Ottawa’s adherence to the Anglo-Soviet agreement on 3 July 1922, and the establishment of the Soviet Trade Delegation at 212 Drummond Street, Montreal.³¹

In terms of Canadian-Soviet relations and Canada’s adherence to the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement, that accord contained a clause by which the USSR agreed to refrain from carrying out revolutionary activities and propaganda within the British Empire. Although Canada since the Paris Peace Conference considered itself as autonomous in foreign affairs, it was still a member of the British Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth connection, with the United Kingdom as the vital link, remained the basis of the Dominion’s official position in the world. More significantly, however, when Canada in its own right signed the Versailles Treaty in 1919, its position as reflected in that document remained ambiguous. Instead of signing the Treaty in alphabetical order, Canada was grouped with the other Dominions (Australia, South Africa, New Zealand) under the designation “British Empire,” inferring that none of them were truly independent states.³² It was in that context of Empire that Mackenzie King assessed the Comintern and Russia in relation to Canadian interests.

More immediately, the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement and Canada’s participation in that accord did little to further material relations between Ottawa and Moscow. Soon after the Russian Trade Mission’s establishment in Montreal, leading Communist Party of Canada members were frequently observed visiting the Drummond Street offices, suggesting that the Mission was also engaged in activities other than those normally associated with trade and commerce.³³ Suspicion of Soviet activities, supplemented by the increasing activities of the CPC, was scarcely conducive to creating a climate of opinion within Canadian officialdom favourable to furthering relations with the USSR. Although only a miniscule part of the Canadian political spectrum, the CPC, its language affiliates and front organizations, attracted increasing attention of the

RCMP, whose reports, supplemented by information about the Comintern from British sources, were passed on to External Affairs and, when considered necessary, to other government departments.³⁴ The extent to which such information influenced the Canadian government or External Affairs officials is difficult to evaluate. There is little evidence, for example, that O.D. Skelton, who replaced Sir Joseph Pope as under-secretary in 1925, was particularly swayed by such reports, or that his knowledge of and interest in socialism made any significant difference in the way in which the Soviet Union was perceived within the Department.

In 1924, Prime Minister Mackenzie King's willingness to extend *de jure* recognition to the USSR (made public in Parliament on 23 March and conveyed to A. Yazikov, then head of the Russian trade delegation in Montreal, the next day) before Anglo-Soviet negotiations then underway were completed, reflected more King's reading of the Canadian political barometer than any particular desire to assert Canadian independence, or to broaden and deepen relations with Moscow.³⁵ He was quite content to leave matters of constitutional interpretation – whether Canada's action bound the British Empire, and specific questions such as settlement of Russia's pre-revolutionary indebtedness to the Dominion, or items relating to the functions and properties of Imperial Russian consul offices in Montreal, Halifax and Vancouver – to be finalized through consultation with the British Foreign Office. The question too, of Canada's stand on Wrangel Island, which pre-dated the war and which was complicated by the actions and views of Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the Arctic explorer, didn't significantly affect Canadian attitudes towards Russia or affect the outcome of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations.³⁶ Indeed, conclusion of the Anglo-Soviet accord on 8 August 1924, with its stipulation that the agreement did not apply to the other self-governing Dominions but nonetheless permitted them to negotiate their own trade arrangements with the USSR (while giving the Soviet Union the right to renounce any most-favoured-nation clauses accorded the Dominions), marked the apogee of formal Canadian-Soviet relations during the decade.

Canada's adherence to the Anglo-Soviet agreement did not provide a precedent for extending the Dominion's diplomatic representation, or mark a further assertion of the country's independence. Domestic political matters remained Prime Minister Mackenzie King's first priority until after the 1926 election when he at last undertook consideration of the question of additional representation abroad.³⁷ Russia certainly was not amongst the nations under consideration by Ottawa. Soon after, in May 1927, the British government broke off relations with the USSR following the seizure of incriminating documents by police when they raided the premises of the All-Russia Co-operative Society (Arcos) in London. British authorities immediately alerted Ottawa claiming "that Arcos has been used as a centre of military espionage and of Communist activities both in the United States, the Dominions and in this

country ..."³⁸ On the strength of the allegations and London's actions, Canada quickly followed the British lead. In the process Mackenzie King, who learned about the Arcos raid from his morning paper, revealed his feelings and something of the attitude towards the Soviet Union which then characterized the Department of External Affairs:

As soon as I read it [London's breaking off of the Trade Agreement with the USSR] I felt we should follow suit – never having trusted the agency in Canada and feeling certain public opinion would demand cancellation by Canada. I have wished to cancel all along and this gives a fine opportunity to do the right thing and help Britain and show the unity of the British Empire. I felt that Skelton would be hesitant, as he and I differed on the Russian office at Montreal, but I found he too was of opinion that it wd not be possible to continue the agreement. He did not contemplate immediate action, but I felt this was important, if action were to be taken at all. My thought is that in China the Souviets [sic] are operating adversely to Britain and we are not participating with Britain in China, to hold aloof now and not cancel the agreement wd be construed as siding with Russia as against Britain – also the propaganda of the Souviets is damnable – especially the anti-religious side. We do not want communism flourishing in our country.³⁹

In detailing his action, King confirms the basis of his thoughts about international relations in general, and about the Soviet Union in particular:

I went to the Council this afternoon [25 May 1927] determined that action should be quickly taken. I read them the despatches from London ... and found little difficulty of having the Cabinet with me. [C.A.] Dunning [Minister of Railways and Canals], [J.A.] Robb [Minister of Finance], [C.] Stewart [Minister of the Interior], [J.L.] Ralston [Minister of National Defence] were all for immediate action The one point Council seemed most concerned about was that we should act on our own and not because Britain had and also we should be careful about continuing trade as Britain had been So at 6:15 I called in the press At Skelton's instances I added [making it clear] that the Montreal Agency was not involved. The agreement itself makes clear we 'participated' with Britain, also that the condition was propaganda to cease in all parts of the British Empire. It was possible therefore to take action on the same grounds as the Br. Govt. It gave me real pleasure to feel that this stroke wd be helpful to Baldwin at a difficult moment.⁴⁰

When King subsequently interviewed L.F. Gerus, the head of the Russian mission in Montreal, he came away believing him to be "a sincere fellow – not at

all like [his predecessor] Yazilkoff [A.A. Yazikoff]." What the prime minister didn't tell Gerus is that he had earlier authorized a raid similar to the Arcos operation but that it was not carried out because of differences over operational procedures between the different police forces which would have been involved.⁴¹

The fact that King was prepared to take action against the Russian Mission points out the Canadian authorities' concern about the CPC's growing involvement in the Comintern's North American activities. Earlier problems over the Mission's importation of objectionable literature, and possible Soviet forgeries of Canadian bank notes in 1924-1925, together with the increasing frequency of contacts between CPC members and the Drummond Street offices, heightened the government's suspicions of the USSR's credibility.⁴² Certainly, Montreal, as an international port became an easy and convenient point of entry and exit for Comintern agents and representatives seconded to the North American communist parties, or proceeding on other missions elsewhere.⁴³ Until the Arcos raid, the CPC too played an important role in supplying Canadian passports and collecting information for the Comintern's use.⁴⁴ Although only a minority of the CPC was engaged in "confidential" activities, the responsibilities entrusted to the Party by Moscow reflected its growing importance in the Comintern's eyes.

As the decade drew to a close, Ottawa was again drawn into consideration of establishing closer relations with the USSR. As the Arcos raid and the abrogation of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement receded, the Soviet Union, as in 1920, again took the initiative, with the Soviet ambassador in London proposing to the British Foreign Office that, as a first step in renewing relations, exchange visits by junior representatives at diplomatic posts abroad should be sanctioned. London saw no objection to the suggestion, and a circular despatch authorizing such contacts was sent to British ambassadors at major posts throughout the world. The Canadian government too, was alerted to the possibility.⁴⁵ By then the Department of External Affairs had raised the status of the Canadian mission in Paris, and established a new legation in Tokyo, thus increasing the possibilities of social contacts with Soviet representatives. From the British Foreign Office's standpoint, the need for a common Commonwealth code of behaviour towards Soviet diplomats was, if not necessary, at least desirable.

"We note" ran a despatch from London to W.H. Clark, the British high commissioner in Ottawa,

from a recent telegram from Tokyo that the Canadian Legation there do not propose to open relations with the Soviet Embassy, and we have also heard privately that the Canadian Minister at Paris has no relations of any kind with the Soviet Embassy there. We do not know whether the Canadian Ministers at Paris and Tokyo are being guided in this attitude by

definite instructions from the Canadian Government enjoining them not to have any relations with the Soviet Representatives or are acting on their own initiative. In either event, it is most desirable to do all we can to ensure that the same procedure be followed by all His Majesty's Representatives and we shall appreciate anything you can do towards seeing that the Canadian Ministers at Paris and Tokyo receive instructions corresponding to those referred to in our despatch to the Canadian Government.⁴⁶

Clark, in his eventual reply, pointed out the difficulties inherent in any Canadian-Soviet *rapprochement*:

I feel sure that this is a most delicate matter on which to approach the Canadian Government at the present moment owing to the degree to which French-Canadian Roman Catholic sentiment has been aroused at the alleged persecutions in Russia while a distinctly anti-Soviet sentiment which is showing itself at present in some of the influential liberal newspapers in connection with the commercial *modus vivendi*, based mainly on fears of rivalry in the world's wheat markets, is also a fact to be reckoned with.⁴⁷

When, at an appropriate moment, Clark sounded out O.D. Skelton on the Foreign Office directive, he discovered that External Affairs had already acted on the matter:

Skelton said that instructions had already been issued to them [Canadian representatives in Paris and Tokyo] to place themselves in social relations with the Soviet Ministers on the same lines as the instructions which had been issued from the Foreign Office. Apparently Mr. Marler [the Canadian Minister in Tokyo] had raised the question ...⁴⁸

But, while conformity in the arts and graces of diplomatic social relations was sanctioned by Ottawa, there was no further attempt to transform Canadian-Soviet relations into more practical measures. Contemporary press accounts of the CPC's activities in trade union affairs, reports of the Comintern's presence in the Holy Land, items about developments in the USSR as the Soviet Union embarked upon collectivization, together with the dramatic downturn in the North American economy, militated against renewing commercial or diplomatic relations with Moscow. *The Toronto Globe*, 17 April 1930, while perhaps not wholly representative of Canadian public feeling about the USSR, summed up the current mood in unequivocal terms:

Arcos House has faded from memory Extension of diplomatic immunities to the [Soviet] trade representatives, in view of experiences, is an invitation to resume the work which led to the Arcos House raid.

While official contacts between Ottawa and Moscow waxed and waned during the 1920s, the connection between the Comintern and the CPC grew steadily stronger. During its early underground existence the Party obtained financial assistance which enabled it to offset organizational difficulties created by the dispersed membership and the very size of Canada.⁴⁹ An overt bulletin, *The Workers' Guard*, a forerunner of the CPC's principle organ, *The Worker*, appeared in the autumn of 1921, heralding the nature and thrust of the Party's papers offerings, and confirming the Party's compliance with the Comintern's stands.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, communications with Moscow, relayed by the Communist Party of the United States (later by the Soviet Trade Mission in Montreal) remained slow and difficult, making it hard for the Party to translate the Comintern's directions into Canadian practice. Despite the presence and guidance of a Third International representative during the first two years of the CPC's existence, and the establishment of an Anglo-American secretariat in Moscow to analyze problems and advise the Party, the arrangements were relatively ineffective. One result was that CPC leaders travelled to the USSR (as well as to Great Britain) with increasing frequency to get advice and instructions from the Comintern's leaders and bureaucrats, as well as a first hand taste of the Russian scene. During the decade CPC leaders attended the Third (22 June - 12 July 1921), Fourth (5 November - 5 December 1922), Fifth (17 June - 8 July 1924), and Sixth (17 July - 1 September 1928) Comintern Congresses, as well as the Third (12-23 June 1923), Fifth (21 March - 6 April), and Seventh (22 November - 16 December 1926) Plenums of the Comintern's executive Committee.⁵¹ In the same vein, accounts of the CPC's progress, and commentaries by leading Party members about Canadian political, economic, and social conditions began to appear with increasing frequency in the Comintern's publications.⁵² In addition, by the end of the decade, and in keeping with the CPC's growth and development, the Party began to despatch promising young members to the Comintern's Lenin School in Moscow for further education, training, and indoctrination. It was from amongst their numbers that the Canadian Party subsequently drew its leaders; Stewart Smith, Leslie Morris, Sam Carr, William Kashtan are notable examples.

At the Fourth Comintern Congress, Jack MacDonald, Maurice Spector, and Florence Custance were counselled first hand that, because the trade union movement in Canada was relatively large, it was the CPC's duty to create and lead a labour party based upon trade unions.⁵³ At the same Congress, in order to facilitate the Comintern's policy, the Canadian leaders were directed to establish a fully open and legal Party. As a result, on their return to the Dominion, the underground unit was amalgamated with an overt variation, the

Workers Party of Canada (WPC) which came into being at a convention held in Toronto on 22-25 February 1923.⁵⁴ Because administering and developing the covert and overt Party organizations was awkward and inefficient, the two wings were, on Comintern instructions, amalgamated, emerging publicly as the CPC on 18 April 1924.

In keeping with the Comintern's united front policy, the CPC was specifically instructed by Moscow to press affiliation with the Canadian Labor Party (CLP) which had been established in August 1921, and which modelled itself upon the British Labour Party.⁵⁵ At the time, CLP consisted of four loosely organized, provincially-based sections in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta, with additional units being established in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. Accordingly, CPC leaders attended CLP and Trades and Labour Congress conventions as fraternal delegates which gave them the right to speak, present resolutions, and stand for office.⁵⁶ Through attendance at CLP provincial conventions, by projecting revolutionary resolutions whose passages were engineered by minority groups of CPC members and left wing sympathizers acting in caucus, Canadian communists, in accordance with the Comintern's script, achieved considerable success in their attempts to create a united front of labour organizations.⁵⁷ Based upon the argument of labour's need to achieve working class political solidarity, the Party, through the efforts of its leaders, aimed at nothing less than obtaining complete control of the CLP.⁵⁸ Not surprisingly, in its zeal to advance the proletarian cause, the CPC soon alerted, and then antagonized, Canadian trade union leaders.⁵⁹ Led initially by James Simpson, a veteran Canadian trade unionist, a founding member of the CLP, and its national secretary-treasurer, and taken up by A.A. Heaps and J.S. Woodsworth of the Independent Labour Party in Manitoba, the counterattack against the CPC mounted steadily from its beginnings in 1926. Simpson resigned from the CLP, and in the succeeding turmoil (largely inspired by CPC actions) that organization quickly lost its potential for becoming a significant factor in Canadian labour.⁶⁰

The CPC's failure to transform the Canadian Labor Party into a mass communist-controlled trade union organization as desired and directed by the Comintern was profound for it, in effect, removed the Canadian communist movement from the mainstream of Canadian labour and political life. By the end of the decade, the initiative for establishing a socialist party in Canada with strong ties to the trade union movement shifted westwards to Manitoba, where it was taken up by the Independent Labour Party in that province, and by J.S. Woodsworth. Inevitably, the CPC's failure to transform itself into a significant factor in the Dominion's trade union movement rests with the Comintern. More fundamentally, it stems from the CPSU, which epitomized the new regime in Russia. After 1926 the leadership struggle within the CPSU affected the Comintern and impinged upon all communist parties the world over. That internal events in Russia coincided with the breaking off of

commercial relations between Canada and the USSR in 1927, was unexpected and unconnected with the CPC's domestic activities. What both developments did was to exacerbate Canadian suspicions of Russia, as well as increase Moscow's diplomatic isolation.

By 1928, the doctrinal differences between Trotsky, Stalin, Zinoviev, and Bukharin within the CPSU began to affect the CPC. At the Comintern's Sixth Congress the virus of Trotskyism infected Maurice Spector, eventually leading to his expulsion from the Canadian party. MacDonald followed in 1930, and with his exit the Stalinist takeover, paralleled in the major communist dominated language organizations, the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association, the Finnish Organization in Canada, and other groups, was complete. Whatever interest in Russia had been aroused in Canada by the CPC, the Comintern, and by the commercial connections between the Dominion and the USSR during the 1920s was overshadowed by the Great Depression which, before the end of the decade, had begun to stalk the land.

Notes

- ¹ See, for example, Department of External Affairs, *Documents on Canadian External Relations I-IV* (Ottawa, 1967, 1969, 1970, 1971). Russia and the U.S.S.R. are not listed as such in the indexes of vols. 3 and 4, although both include correspondence and other material concerning the Soviet Union. See also H. Gordon Skillings, *Canada's Representation Abroad: From Agency to Embassy* (Toronto, 1945); G.P. de T. Glazebrook, *A History of Canadian External Relations* (Toronto, 1950), including the revised Carleton Library edition; C.P. Stacey, *Canada in the Age of Conflict I & II* (Toronto, 1977 and 1981).
- ² George Woodcock and Ivan Avokumovic, *The Doukhobors* (Toronto, 1968); D.J. Hall, *Clifford Sifton, Vol. 1, The Young Napoleon* (Vancouver, 1981); and Jaroslav Petryshyn, *Peasants in the Promised Land: Canada and the Ukrainians 1891-1914* (Toronto, 1985).
- ³ This aspect of British concerns about Russia and the defence of the Pacific Northwest is covered in Glyn Barratt, *Russian Shadows on the British Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1890* (Vancouver, 1983).
- ⁴ Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, *Report of the Canadian Economic Commission (Siberia)* (Ottawa, 1919), 5-6. Also, L. Dana Wilgress, *Dana Wilgress Memoirs* (Toronto, 1967) for his very spare account of his experiences.
- ⁵ Eva S. Balogh, "Hesitant Encounters: Episodes From Early Russian-Canadian Trade Relations," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* VIII (1966), 227-229.
- ⁶ *Report ... Siberia*, 6.
- ⁷ That position is exemplified by the observations of A.D. Braithwaite, former Assistant General Manager of the Bank of Montreal, who was despatched to Siberia as the Canadian Economic Commission's financial expert. See William Rodney, "Siberia in 1919: A Canadian Banker's Impressions," *Queen's Quarterly* LXXIX, no. 3, 1972.
- ⁸ National Archives of Canada (NAC), Borden papers, O.C. 518(1), London, 11-12 July 1918. See also R. Craig Brown, *Robert Laird Borden: A Biography. Volume II: 1914-1937* (Toronto, 1980), 138-139.
- ⁹ *Report ... Siberia*, 5.
- ¹⁰ Interview, Ottawa, 23 June 1966.
- ¹¹ The most dramatic example of that attitude and action taken was, of course, Lenin's return to Russia aboard the "sealed" train provided by Imperial Germany. See, for example, Michael Pearson, *The Sealed Train* (Newton Abbot: 1975) amongst many accounts of the man and his times.

- ¹² William Rodney, "Russian Radicals in the Port of Vancouver, 1917," *B.C. Studies* no. 16 (1972-1973).
- ¹³ William Rodney, "Broken Journey: Trotsky in Canada, 1917," *Queen's Quarterly* LXXIV, no. 4, 1967.
- ¹⁴ For example, O.D. Skelton, who joined the Department of External Affairs in 1909, virtually overlooked Russia as a factor in the development of socialist thought, and failed to mention Lenin at all in his doctoral dissertation and subsequent book on socialism. See J.L. Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins, 1935-1957* (Toronto, 1982), 32ff.
- ¹⁵ NAC, Borden Papers, OC 518, Churchill to Borden, 17 March and 1 May 1919; Borden to Lloyd George, Ottawa, 18 May 1919. Boyle also, later failed in his attempts to resettle in Canada White Russian Officers who escaped from the Crimea with Baron Wrangels' forces in 1920. See RG76, vol. 51, Bucharest, 11 December 1920, and London, 23 December 1920.
- ¹⁶ See D.C. Masters, *The Winnipeg General Strike* (Toronto, 1950) and succeeding accounts of the strike and of that period.
- ¹⁷ Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada* (Montreal, 1981).
- ¹⁸ NAC, OC 515, A. Bowen Perry to Comptroller, RNWMP, Regina, 2 April 1919. G.P. de T. Glazebrook, *A Short History of Canada* (Toronto, 1948), 212. Also, NAC, Borden Papers, OC 559, White to Borden, Ottawa, 16 April 1919.
- ¹⁹ The call to attend the founding congress was written by Trotsky and first published in *Pravda*, 24 January 1919. Thirty-nine groups were initially invited, including two from the United States: the Socialist-Workers Party of America and the American Socialist Party, both forerunners of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA). No Canadian organizations were specified, and no Canadians were amongst the 52 delegates who managed to reach Moscow.
- ²⁰ M.N. Roy, *The Communist International* (Bombay, 1943), 7.
- ²¹ The most accessible transcription of the Twenty One conditions governing admission to the Comintern are in Jane Degras, ed., *The Communist International 1919-1943: Documents, vol. 1* (London, 1956), 171-172.
- ²² Henry Borden, ed., *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs, vol. 2* (Toronto, 1938), 972.
- ²³ The main aspects of the fusion of Canadian left wing groups, most notably the United Communist Party of America and the Communist Party of America has been covered in Ivan Avokumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada* (Toronto, 1975), 18-21; Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada* (Montreal, 1981), 66-72; and my own study, *Soldiers of the International: A History of the Communist Party of Canada 1919-1920* (Toronto, 1969). The CPC's spare version of its origins is projected in *Canada's Party of Socialism History of the Communist Party* (Toronto, 1982), and by Tim Buck, *Yours in the Struggle* (Toronto, 1977). Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto, 1988) refers briefly to the Party's secret founding convention.
- ²⁴ See, for example, E.H. Carr, *International Relations Between the Two World Wars (1919-1939)* (London, 1949), 72-73.
- ²⁵ This analysis is projected succinctly by E.H. Carr, *The Twilight of Comintern 1930-1935* (London, 1982) and touched upon in his earlier work *International Relations Between the Two World Wars (1939-1943)*, as well as by M.N. Roy in his various accounts about the Third International. It is also the basic argument in my study of the CPC during its first decade. In this respect it is worth noting that the leadership of the Communist Parties of Canada, Great Britain, and the United States changed in 1929-1930, all becoming Stalinist in the process.
- ²⁶ Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto, 1988), 73.
- ²⁷ This was the 1921-1923 period when Lenin seriously considered granting long term concessions to western companies such as Royal Dutch Shell. Lt. Col. J.W. Boyle, for example, was very much involved in efforts to get a concession for the Shell company. See William Rodney, *Joe Boyle, King of the Klondike* (Toronto, 1974), 33-39.

- ²⁸ *The Mackenzie King Diaries, 1893-1931* (Toronto, 1973), Wednesday, 25 May 1927, Fiche 59.
- ²⁹ NAC, RG7, series 21, vol. 637, London, 24 March 1921.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, Ottawa, 22 August 1921, and London, 25 and 29 August 1921. See also A. Balawyder, *Canadian-Soviet Relations Between the World Wars* (Toronto, 1972), 35-40.
- ³¹ NAC, MG7, series 21, vol. 637; Ottawa, 3 October and 20 December 1923; 15 February and 1 March 1924, and London, 24 September 1924. Also Balawyder, 40-45, and James Eayrs, *Northern Approaches: Canada and the Search for Peace* (Toronto, 1961), 125-126. The unacceptability of two proposed members of the Soviet delegation on grounds of their involvement in revolutionary activities points up the problem posed by the Comintern and orthodox Soviet diplomacy.
- ³² F.H. Soward, the *Department of External Affairs and Canadian Autonomy, 1899-1938* (Ottawa, 1956). Also, W.L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity* (Madison, 1961), 52-53. A contemporary article by Tim Buck, then the CPC's Industrial Director, entitled "Canada and the British Empire" which appeared in *us Workers Monthly*, 21 March 1925, argued that because the British North America Act could not be amended in Canada the Dominion was still a colony, "still a part of the Empire upon which the sun never sets."
- ³³ NAC, MG27-G21, vol. 637, 3 and 19 October 1923, and 24 September 1924; also vol. 638, London, 16 May 1927.
- ³⁴ See NAC, X4, File 1110, Box 265183, London, 9 October 1922, and Balawyder, 72-174. Christopher Andrew, *Her Majesty's Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (New York, 1986), 262-263, notes that the British were reading Krassin's signals to Moscow, and from time to time passed information to Canadian authorities. See also RG7, series 2, vol. 63, London, 5 March 1923, RG7, G21, London, 2 November 1923.
- ³⁵ Canada, *Debates of the House of Commons*, IV, 1924, 3503. See also Balawyder, 64-67.
- ³⁶ PRO, CO42, File 1043 deals with the Wrangel Island issue. See also NAC, RG7, series 1, vol. 63, File 34691, Ottawa, 24 September 1924 and London, 10 March 1925, and R.J. Diubaldo, "Wrangling over Wrangel Island" in *Canadian Historical Review*, XLVIII, 1967. See also W.R. Hunt, *Stef: A Biography of Vilhjalmur Stefansson* (Vancouver, 1986) for the Wrangel Island "disaster".
- ³⁷ G.P. de T. Glazebrook, *A History of Canada's External Relations* (Toronto, 1950), 382-386. At the time of the Anglo-Soviet accord Canada maintained a High Commissioner in London, an Advisory Officer to the League of Nations in Geneva, and a non-diplomatic representative in Paris. Despite the need to increase the size of the Department of External Affairs and modify the status of Canadian representatives abroad which became clearly evident during the Imperial conferences of 1923 and 1926, changes in the establishment were not made until 1927. Until then, the size of the Department of External Affairs remained pegged at three officers. The manner and basis upon which the Prime Minister took action tells much about Mackenzie King's assessment of Canada's status in the world. In an interview in London on 25 November 1927 with Senator Dandurand, Sir Austin Chamberlain, the British Foreign Secretary, noted the "particular circumstances" which led to the Canadian government's decision to establish diplomatic relations with countries other than the United States.
- Senator Dandurand added ... another reason At present the United States alone were represented [in Ottawa] and their Minister appeared at every public function next to the Prime Minister and was constantly making speeches at public banquets and on other occasions. The United States and the United States influence were in any case very present in Canada and the Canadian Government thought it undesirable that the position of the United States Minister should continue unique and consequently so conspicuous and almost overwhelming.
- PRO, DO35/24, London, 25 November 1927.
- ³⁸ Cmd., 2874. *Documents Illustrating the Hostile activities of the Soviet Union and the Third International Against Great Britain* (London, 1927), 20. Also, NAC, RG7, series 2, vol. 2, File 34691, London, 19 and 23 May 1927.

- ³⁹ *King Diaries*, Wednesday, 25 May 1927, 45.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.* See also Department of External Affairs, *Documents on Canadian External Relations, IV, 1926-1930* (Ottawa, 1971), 991-1000 for correspondence between London and Ottawa about the rupture, and between Gerus and External Affairs. Retrospectively the CPC has analysed King's actions not as an act of subservience to Britain "but as an act of imperialist class solidarity against the world's first and only 'workers and peasants' state." See *Canada's Party of Socialism History of the Communist Party of Canada 1921-1976* (Toronto, 1982), 61.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² Balawyder, 82-92.
- ⁴³ *Official Report of Proceedings Before the Subversive Control Board. Attorney General U.S.A. vs. Communist Party, U.S.A., 1951-1952* (Washington, 1952), 82-83.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Also, Benjamin Gitlow, *I Confess* (New York, 1939), 418-419. Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New York, 1960), notes the passage of Professor Valetski and Gusev (Green) through Canada while on missions for the Comintern. After the Arcos raid the CPC continued to provide information and documents to the Comintern's "passport factories" in Berlin and Moscow. The most notable example of such activities is the provision of passports and naturalization certificates for Canadian volunteers who served in Spain during the Civil War 1936-1939. One such passport, suitably altered, was used by Mercador del Rio, the Comintern agent who killed Leon Trotsky in Mexico City on 20 August 1940. See W. Rodney, "Passport to Murder," *The RCMP Quarterly*, LXX, no. 3, 1954.
- ⁴⁵ PRO, DO35-147/3, London, 3 April 1930. The despatch was signed by Lord Passfield. See also *Documents on Canadian External Relations, IV, 1926-1930* (Ottawa, 1971), 1002-1005 touching upon the question of resuming relations with the USSR.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, E. Harding to Clark.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Ottawa, 25 April 1930.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1 May 1930.
- ⁴⁹ Rex v. Buck et al.: *Transcript of Evidence Heard Before the Supreme Court of Ontario 2-12 November 1931* (Toronto, 1931), 130-131.
- ⁵⁰ Tim Buck, *Thirty Years 1922-1952* (Toronto, 1959), 26-27.
- ⁵¹ The dates and names of the Canadian party delegates (which are not listed) are drawn from the *Protokoll's of the Congresses and Executive Committee meetings and Internationale Presse Korrespondenz* (Imprekorr).
- ⁵² For example, between 1923 and 1928, 22 accounts, articles, and comments by leading CPC members appeared in *Internationale Presse Korrespondenz*. In addition, there were, in addition, similar contributions to the English edition of the bulletin, as well as to Comintern reports.
- ⁵³ *Bulletin of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International* (Moscow, [1923?]), 14 and no. 13, 23 November 1922, 4. Also, ECCI letter signed by Bukharin and Otto Kuusinen, Moscow, 29 January 1923, reprinted in *The Worker*, 15 March 1923.
- ⁵⁴ *Report of the Second Workers' Party of Canada Convention* (n.p., n.d.), 1.
- ⁵⁵ *Bericht über den IV Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (Hamburg, 1923), 12.
- ⁵⁶ *Labour Organization in Canada 1922* (Ottawa, 1923), 222; *Labour Organization in Canada 1924* (Ottawa, 1925), 49.
- ⁵⁷ *Labour Organization in Canada 1926* (Ottawa, 1927), 18.
- ⁵⁸ *The Worker*, 5 April 1924.
- ⁵⁹ *Labour Organization in Canada 1928* (Ottawa, 1929), 173-176.
- ⁶⁰ *Labour Organization in Canada 1927* (Ottawa, 1928), 221.

Canada and the "Godless Country," 1930-1939

Norman Hillmer

On Christmas Day 1933, Joseph Stalin received the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times*, using the opportunity to suggest that the Soviet Union might at last be willing to join the League of Nations.¹ The unhappy, from Stalin's point of view, recent circumstances of international politics provided context and explanation for this major shift in policy. Japan had subjugated neighbouring Manchuria; Germany was firmly in the grip of an anti-Soviet regime; the Disarmament Conference lay in ruins. Feeling menaced on two fronts by powers which were no longer part of the League, the Soviets began to look to the international body as part of a broad search for security against both Hitler and Japan. They got the League, but they did not get security.²

Canada had a part to play in the complicated series of diplomatic and procedural manoeuvres that brought the Soviet Union into the League of Nations in September 1934. The makers of Canada's foreign policy – all two of them – travelled to Geneva to attend the Fifteenth League Assembly where the final decision would be made; the press whispered that Prime Minister R.B. Bennett and O.D. Skelton, the country's senior diplomat, were reluctant suitors of the Soviet Union. They would probably cast Canada's vote against the USSR's entry into the League.³

When the Soviet candidature came before the League Assembly's Sixth Committee, Portugal led the opposition. France, Stalin's putative ally, stated the Soviet case with the support of Great Britain, Italy and others arguing the importance of the most representative League possible. In the prime minister's absence because of illness, Skelton spoke for the Canadian government.⁴ The undersecretary of state for external affairs was an authority on the socialist experiment. *Socialism: A Critical Analysis*, his University of Chicago doctoral thesis published in 1911, had helped secure a considerable international reputation.⁵ Lenin, it was said, had been dazzled by Skelton's work,⁶ but the Canadian was unimpressed by socialist theory and horrified by Soviet revolutionary practices. Lenin's regime, Skelton wrote in 1919, was characterized by "Ruthless repression of free speech, forced labour, compulsory military service, 'preferential feeding,' a huge bureaucracy saddled on the peoples' backs, spying, terrorism and ceaseless propaganda."⁷

Fifteen years had not changed or improved the situation. Skelton began Canada's Geneva speech with his liberal individualist's credo: "We are emphatic and unrepentant believers in freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, freedom of religious belief and worship, and the organization of industrial life on a basis of individual initiative controlled to bring it into harmony with the common good. These principles of liberty and tolerance and the institutions of parliamentary democracy which are their political complement are not the principles upon which the Soviet Union has been established." Nor was this all, because the Soviets were not content to keep their way of life to themselves. "We in Canada," said Skelton, "have not been free from serious interference in our internal affairs by representatives of the Third International, which it has frequently been difficult to distinguish from the Government of the Soviet Union." Skelton also voiced, at the behest of the head of a Canadian anti-Soviet organization,⁸ "the apprehension felt by many thousands in Canada who have relatives and friends in Russia" about "the sufferings and the famine which were reported in many districts of the Soviet Union last year and on previous occasions."

For each of Dr. Skelton's complaints, however, there was an 'on the other hand.' If the USSR did not conform to the ideals of liberty and democracy, that was true of other nations as well. If the Comintern's activities had given rise to tension between governments, the Soviet Union's "unreserved acceptance ... of the undertaking to observe all international obligations of the Covenant must necessarily involve a satisfactory attitude ... in the future." If there was suffering inside its borders, surely no good League member would be indifferent to the miseries of its own peoples. Despite its "substantial difficulties," therefore, the Canadian government gave its approval to the Soviet Union's entry into the League in the name of "present world circumstances" and the International Good. The overwhelming majority of Assembly members joined Bennett and Skelton in welcoming an injection of fresh blood and prestige at a low point in the life of the League.

Yet Bennett's administration was and remained as hostile to communism at home and the Soviet Union abroad – the two were inextricably linked in the official and public mind – as any government in the western world. The prime minister and his political allies shared what Jonathan Haslam has called the "unstated, instinctive and rooted aversion" to communism which pervaded "Western counsels of state."⁹ The Bennett Conservatives, moreover, embraced anti-communism as a convenient weapon with which to batter leftward-leaning opponents. In November 1932, using a phrase that stuck like flypaper, Bennett urged "true" Canadians "to put the iron heel of ruthlessness" on socialist-Communist propagandists who were "sowing their seeds everywhere ... We know that throughout Canada this propaganda is being put forward by organizations from foreign lands that seek to destroy our institutions."¹⁰ The Conservative premier of Ontario, George Henry, warned that the Depression

was creating a "vortex of disorder," fertile ground for "the doctrines of violence and disorder." He pointed particularly to "Russia, with its churches turned into factories and stables, a condition which the emissaries of Communism openly seek to establish here."¹¹

In 1931, Bennett's minister of justice, Hugh Guthrie, had written to Henry's attorney-general about the "active, concerted propaganda of a distinctly Communist type, which I fear has gained some foothold in Canada, more particularly during the past year and a half, while unemployment has been so general."¹² Guthrie declaimed against the background of recent Communist Party of Canada (CPC) activities, such as the formation of the Workers' Unity League and the National Unemployed Workers' Association (NUWA). These activities appeared formidable: the NUWA was then selling memberships (most to non-Communists) at a furious rate; 22,000 joined in the first few months of 1931 alone.¹³ Sensing Ottawa's desire "to take action against the Reds," the Ontario government began to prepare the ground for legal action. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police assisted, providing information on the "dictatorship" wielded over the CPC by the Comintern in Moscow. This was vital because, under Section 98 of the federal criminal code, it would be necessary to prove that the CPC advocated change through the violent overthrow of the governmental or economic system; that is, to demonstrate that the party in the USSR was attempting to pass on the revolution through its surrogate in Canada.¹⁴

In the summer of 1931, eight leading communists, including Tim Buck, the national secretary of the party, were rounded up and put in jail. Their trial and conviction, followed by an apparent attempt on Buck's life in Kingston Penitentiary, the outcry of communists and civil libertarians, and the early release of the group from prison, gave the Communist Party a prominence their numbers – 1,300 before the trial; 5,000 by the time of Buck's release – did not justify.¹⁵ In the federal election of 1935, his role as the "embattled underdog" assured, Buck addressed huge rallies in Winnipeg and Regina. Although neither he nor any of the other nine CPC candidates were elected, the party's labour agitation and campaign of public education continued.¹⁶

The domestic and foreign aspects of the Bennett government's unsophisticated anti-communism came together in its attitude and policy toward "Russian trade." The first Stalin Five Year Plan, described by the young diplomat L.B. Pearson as treating "150,000,000 people and 8,000,000 square miles, with all their unlimited resources, as if the whole thing were merely one large business concern, self-contained and self-sufficient,"¹⁷ had led to a resurgence of Soviet exporting capability and effort in the late 1920s. The capability, we now know, was meagre, having to be derived from "the painfully limited productive capacity of its primary-producing industries."¹⁸ The effort, substantial and systematic, was designed to provide the Five Year Plan with regular feedings of foreign currency to finance the importation of the machinery needed to

collectivize and industrialize the Soviet economy. Complaints began to be heard in the United States, Great Britain, France and other countries, as well as in Canada, that Soviet products were being produced with "forced labour" and "dumped" into Western markets. As the Depression deepened and prices plummeted, the Soviets had to wring yet more exports out of their economy. The bleats, naturally enough, grew louder.¹⁹ American historian Robert Browder's comment is relevant: the interaction of the Five Year Plan and the Depression multiplied the impact either might have produced on its own.²⁰

The Soviet export thrust focussed on products – timber, wheat, salmon and coal – which were extremely important to the Canadian economy.²¹ During the election campaign of 1930, the then opposition leader Bennett pledged that he would protect coal from unfair competition by banning Soviet imports. This promise was one of the main planks in the Conservative platform in the Maritimes. Once elected, Bennett asked for and received an undertaking from coal importers that only cargoes then afloat would be brought into the country during the fall and winter months, a period when the St. Lawrence River was in any case closed to navigation.²²

The pressure mounted on the Ottawa government, and reminders accumulated that much more had been promised. "In a city where nothing can be hidden," the British high commissioner in Ottawa stated, "it did not strain one's powers of observation to see that the most persistent lobbying of Ministers was going on."²³ The premier of Nova Scotia, Senator Lorne Webster and Sir Henry Thornton of the Canadian Pacific Railway each complained vociferously,²⁴ and less exalted Canadians also let their views be known. "I suppose," wrote W. Beaugard to the minister of trade and commerce, "that the influence of the people who are bringing this bloodstained coal into Canada proved to be stronger than the will of the people."²⁵ Other letters, originating mainly in Quebec and doubtless reflecting the public hostility of the Roman Catholic Church,²⁶ argued that trade with the "REDS" was bad for religion because the profits would ultimately be employed to tear down Russian churches and undermine the faith of Canadians. The flooding of markets was designed to produce the economic dislocation in which the "Agents of Revolution" thrived. The irony was that Canada's cash would fuel the effort to destroy its own institutions.²⁷

The campaign against Russian trade was not simply about coal and anti-communism. The provincial secretary moved a resolution in the Quebec legislature urging Bennett to prohibit *all* Soviet imports which competed with Canadian products. In his view, the asbestos, lumber and salmon-canning industries of Canada were all suffering from Soviet competition. The Canadian Furriers' Guild stated that the Soviets were out to destroy the world fur market in general and Canada's in particular, while the Canadian Forestry Association requested protection against lumber imports resulting from conscript labour in the Soviet Union.²⁸

In the United States, visited by former Conservative Prime Minister Arthur Meighen in November 1930 and by Bennett himself a little later, there had been a similar outcry (caused to some extent by the spectacular recent increases in Soviet-American trade) from aggrieved domestic producers and those fearful "that Russia may in the not very distant future be able to compete industrially with the United States, even in home markets."²⁹ During their discussion at the White House in the opening months of 1931, according to Drew Pearson of the *Baltimore Sun*, President Herbert Hoover and the Canadian prime minister formed a North American front to meet the "Russian problem." Pearson noted the appointment of W.D. Herridge, "one of Canada's most vigorous critics of Soviet Russia," as Bennett's minister to Washington.³⁰

There were those in Canada who argued the possibilities of Soviet trade. Chief among them was an energetic former Conservative member of parliament, Colonel Herbert J. Mackie, who made representations to the government frequently throughout the decade. In February 1931, claiming to act as the intermediary of the Soviet state, Mackie attempted to counter the anti-Soviet campaign by offering to buy \$10,000,000 worth of Canadian agricultural machinery in return for \$3,350,000 in Russian coal, the balance to be paid in gold. But the proposal simply aroused further opposition to truck or trade with the Bolsheviks, exciting "astonishment that a Canadian and an ex-member of Parliament should have the audacity to act as a mouthpiece for his country's most dangerous economic competitor." Nor did it help Mackie that his statement was issued on a day set aside by the Third International for unemployment demonstrations. It was a day marked by minor disorders and violence in several cities.³¹

The suggestion was made, by the president of the Royal Bank among others, that Mackie's plan would supply Moscow with the ammunition it needed to steal continental markets for wheat and lumber – the ammunition, in other words, to defeat capitalism. Nova Scotian mining interests and the importers of Welsh coal pleaded that Russian anthracite would compete ruinously with their products. The Maritimes, it was true, did not mine anthracite, but it was feared that the Soviets would overwhelm the market with a high grade of anthracite at a low price, displacing Maritime bituminous. Mackie, supported by the Liberal press, the president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and (not surprisingly) by agricultural implement manufacturers, made some effective counter-arguments on behalf of fair and normal trade. Their claims were swept aside.³²

The government had already decided to go in the opposite direction. Mackie's offer was unceremoniously rejected on February 27, 1931. That same day, an embargo was placed on the importation into Canada of coal, woodpulp, lumber and timber of all kinds, asbestos and furs.³³ On April 18, the USSR retaliated with a decree forbidding the placing of orders for any Canadian goods or the use of Canadian ships by Soviet importing

organizations or trade delegations.³⁴ Canadian direct imports from the USSR, which had consisted almost entirely of anthracite coal in 1931 (\$1,901,975 of \$1,917,652), all but ceased in 1932, rose briefly to \$539,419 in 1933 and fell again to \$104,960 in 1934. Exports to the Soviet Union dropped to \$568,100 in 1931 and \$55,197 in 1932 from the 1930 level of almost \$4 million. The Soviets did not, however, enforce their embargo absolutely, and wheat and aluminum deals made in 1932 brought their imports of Canadian products back up to \$1,776,946 in 1933. The next two years the figures were derisory – \$16,722 and \$21,712 respectively.³⁵

The government's press release on the embargo denounced "Communism, its creed and its fruits which we as a country oppose and must refuse to support by interchange of trade." The Soviet system controlled all employment and conditions of work, was capable of the most ruthless exploitation of labour and imposed a standard of living on its people "below any level conceived of in Canada."³⁶ The political and economic organization of that system therefore made it possible to do things that no capitalist country could or would wish to copy. A state monopoly allowed the Soviets to trade without regard to profit and loss, "and also directly to manipulate its foreign trade for political purposes in such a way as to make competition, on the part of those states whose trade was organized on a capitalistic and individualistic basis, impossible."³⁷

It was certainly possible to cast doubt, as did members of the Department of External Affairs, on the appropriateness of using Soviet labour conditions and export policies as grounds for excluding Russian trade. The government, indeed, seems to have understood that USSR trade practices did not constitute dumping in the technical sense. But could anyone deny that the Soviet Union practised dumping of a most detrimental character in fact? The Soviets surely admitted it themselves when they agreed that they forced their exports "to increase and strengthen the importation of the prime necessities for the industrialization of this country."³⁸

The popularity of the boycott was unquestionable. This was especially so in Quebec, where Bennett had made the first Conservative Party breakthrough since the First World War. As the British high commissioner reported to his government in London, "Mr. Bennett has taken a line which, in the opinion of competent observers with whom I have spoken, will command the support of over 90% of the country. Quebec and the Roman Catholic population generally will be well satisfied and the large puritanical element in the rest of the country, especially Ontario, is usually quick to respond to anything which creates or heightens the sense of moral rectitude."³⁹

The clash of Soviet and Canadian products in world markets, notably in the United Kingdom, was another important aspect of Canada-USSR trade relations. Dana Wilgress, the only Russian expert among government officials, wrote from his post as Canadian trade commissioner in Germany in the early

1930s that there was a real "threat to our trade inherent in the developments in Russia, since owing to similarity between the two countries Soviet Russia is best able to force the export of those products which come into direct competition with the staple exports of Canada."⁴⁰ At the Imperial Conference of 1930, Bennett demanded that something be done about Soviet wheat, and in the months that followed he had a great deal to say about Soviet timber, which by 1931 had captured one quarter of the British market. The prime minister suggested to the British high commissioner "that as Russian anthracite had been excluded from Canada greatly to our advantage, so Russian timber and wheat might be similarly excluded from the United Kingdom." Sir William Clark reported his strong impression that "*we shall hear more of this.*"⁴¹

Bennett had a point, and he pressed it hard at the Imperial Economic Conference of 1932 in Ottawa. The Russian issue was one of the most contentious of a notably difficult meeting; Bennett made its resolution the *sine qua non* of an Anglo-Canadian agreement. The Canadian leader even went so far as to demand a complete prohibition of Soviet timber imports. What he received, in addition to a new tariff on foreign wheat, was free entry for Canadian timber and a promise that the British would not reduce their duties on foreign timber. He also secured Article 21, a pledge that the parties to the Anglo-Canadian accord would take action if the aims of their agreement were frustrated "through state action on the part of any foreign country," a clear reference to the Soviet Union. For the rest of his years as prime minister, Bennett and his blustering high commissioner in London, G. Howard Ferguson, who believed that the Soviets were "going to destroy the whole economic structure of the world before they get through,"⁴² prodded Whitehall in the hope that Article 21 would be invoked against Soviet trade, particularly timber. In vain: although some tinkering took place, trade with USSR was too important for the British to put it at risk.⁴³

The Canadian federal general election of 1935 brought a new leader and a new policy towards the Soviet Union. The leader, with a huge majority in tow, came immediately. The policy would have to wait. Mackenzie King had always thought the embargo a mistake, robbing Canada of a trading partner when markets were scarce. The large surpluses of the late 1920s had disappeared, and the total volume of Canadian-Soviet trade had diminished to next to nothing.⁴⁴ King was committed, as he told the British in late 1935, to removal of the Bennett restriction.⁴⁵ The question was when. No formal pledge had been made during the election campaign, and in spite of pressure from the indefatigable Colonel Mackie and others, King moved (as he almost always did) deliberately.⁴⁶

One reason for caution was personal. King, who detested extremes, was fiercely anti-communist, and he did not like or trust the Soviets. Another was political. The prime minister lost no sleep worrying about the threat of communism in Canada, but he knew that many of his countrymen did, especially in

Quebec. When King George VI asked the prime minister during the Imperial Conference of 1937 "whether we had many 'Reds' in our country," the reply was "that there were not many, that in some of the Cities, there were groups; that the Catholic Church was very much afraid of communism, and I thought many of the politicians, for political reasons, were exploiting ideas of communism to a greater extent than was advisable."⁴⁷ In King's view, Quebec Premier Duplessis did just that with his infamous Padlock Law, "An Act Respecting Communist Propaganda," passed in March 1937. For anti-communists, Duplessis' action was in stark contrast with King's pusillanimous repeal the year before (over the protests of Bennett) of Section 98 of the criminal code of Canada, the basis upon which communist party leaders had been imprisoned in 1931.⁴⁸

King also wanted to re-examine the trading relationship with the British before dealing with the Soviets. The King Cabinet first considered the removal of the embargo and the promotion of a commercial treaty with the USSR in January 1936. Cabinet was divided, but the majority sided with King and the finance minister, Charles Dunning, in advocating that revisions in the 1932 Anglo-Canadian trade agreement be sought first. "If our next trade settlement was with Russia," King reasoned, "it might have the appearance of being a deliberate ignoring of British trade My feeling is we should be prepared to trade with all countries; but in all things consider first our relations within the empire."⁴⁹

The minister of trade and commerce forced the issue, and it was back before the Cabinet in early March. W.D. Euler was a longtime enemy of the embargo, which he denounced in the House of Commons in 1931 as "unbusiness-like, unethical, useless, injurious and provocative." Before complaining "about Russia being an ungodly nation, let us first clean our own doorstep. Are we acting as a Christian nation when we declare economic war against another country?"⁵⁰ This time Euler was able to convince most of his Cabinet colleagues that change was needed immediately. But not King. At the same time as continuing to counsel delay until after a negotiation with the British, the prime minister spoke about the Soviet Union in precisely the terms which Euler deplored:

Personally, I feel Russia is a dangerous country to trade with because of the way her labour is drafted for service – low wages, etc. etc. state monopoly in sales, danger of flooding the country with goods etc. also I feel that Russia is a 'Godless' country at present, that the ruthless way she is dealing with Christian countries and spreading her communist ideas naturally makes other countries antagonistic to her. She is dangerous from many points of view.⁵¹

Despite his leader's views, Euler was dispatched to Moscow with the director of commercial intelligence, Dana Wilgress, to discuss an end to the boycott. On the way the little delegation stopped in London, where concerns were again expressed that unrestricted imports of Soviet coal would jeopardize the Canadian market for anthracite from South Wales. Whitehall did concede, however, that it was "difficult if not impossible for Canada to remain almost the only country maintaining a complete embargo against Russian trade."⁵²

In the Soviet Union, where Euler and Wilgress spent three days with the commissar for foreign trade, the Canadians encountered keen resentment at the embargo and a demand that it be erased forthwith as an essential first step in any negotiation. Gradually the two sides came to an understanding that the restriction would be lifted in return for a Soviet commitment not to ship coal into the Maritimes, not to dump the stuff anywhere in the Canadian market, and not to send more than 250,000 tons annually. Sniffing around for export possibilities, Wilgress discovered an interest in raw materials such as nickel, livestock, machinery and machine tools. Euler meanwhile cast a fastidious Canadian eye over the Moscow's Hotel Metropole staff, Soviet service, and Russian food. The first spoke no English, the second was too slow, and the third he would not touch. His host, Commissar Rozengolts, soon to be a victim of one of Stalin's roundups, wanted a final accord immediately along the lines agreed, but one more trip to the Cabinet room in Ottawa would be necessary.⁵³

Euler put the bargain to his colleagues at the beginning of September 1936. Opposition continued to come from those representing the interests of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, "who fear competition in Coal & see nothing to be gained." The influential justice minister Ernest Lapointe, previously an opponent, was now on side: "He felt the danger in Quebec," King recalled, "but he said he would face and fight it."⁵⁴ And the prime minister too had become a convert:

It will hurt us in the maritimes & Quebec, because of coal competition, and communism, the R.C. Church, etc., but from point of view of our relations & relations of Br. Empire with Russia at present and later on, it would be a mistake for Canada to make an enemy of that one country, – ours the only country to embargo Russian goods – besides our policy to trade with all countries ready & willing to trade with us. – Also we held back because of England & while we were negotiating with England, she makes a fresh trading arrangement with Russia herself. I don't like the Communist feature, yet I feel the national friendliness essential, & that we need the trade. – So we agreed to remove the embargo.⁵⁵

The prime minister integrated the decision to lift the boycott into his rhetoric of international relations. Fair dealing and friendly feelings, he thought, would go a long way towards achieving peace and understanding

between nations. Economics were particularly crucial, because trade was the glue that held countries together. "We have performed," King enthused, "the act of friendship toward Russia in removing the embargo, – not being governed by prejudices, but good-will. This is our attitude, the Christian message of good-will to all nations & men: enmity towards none – race or creed or class."⁵⁶ As the Liberal leader prepared to depart for the Seventeenth Assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva, he told the press that the Soviet decision had removed the "last blot" from Canada's national escutcheon.⁵⁷ This desire for goodwill in international relations was sincerely felt, but there was another strong motive in Canadian external policy – the profit motive – to which King gave little attention in public. As he told his diary, Depression Canada needed Soviet trade.⁵⁸

King sallied forth to Europe with a clear conscience and lessons for peace. There was still a battle to be fought, however: the League of Nations must not be allowed to become an instrument of enforcement. King's first sight of the director of Soviet foreign policy was from afar, during a League of Nations Assembly committee meeting on 28 September 1936. The prime minister did not approve of the man or his message: "I do not like Litvinoff and cannot but feel that he is of dangerous influence."⁵⁹ "His purpose," King wrote, "is that [of] drawing all nations in at Russia's side in the event of she being attacked; the French have the same motive, and the British the same. They are all using the League as a means of ensuring action on the part of others in any conflict which may endanger themselves, unwilling themselves to take part in other conflicts in other continents where their own interests are not so immediately affected."⁶⁰ The Canadian wanted no part of an international organization with fangs, one capable of making decisions of war and peace threatening Canadian unity. If Europeans would only regulate their affairs as North Americans did, by conciliation and co-operation, the whole world could become a peaceful place.⁶¹

When King met Litvinoff for the first time a few days later, he immediately fell victim to the Russian's charm and flattery. Invited by the Soviet contingent to lunch along with a number of others, the Canadian received a seat of honour and most of the attention. Litvinoff won respect by taking on King's arch-enemy, R.B. Bennett: "He was surprised of the little knowledge that Bennett had of conditions in Russia and how completely ignorant he seemed to be [of] the most obvious facts . . . felt that he did not understand the country at all." Inevitably King talked to Litvinoff about his interest in labour problems, but the main subject was international affairs and the prospect of war. Litvinoff thought that Mussolini "still had some fighting to do," but not in the near term. Hitler, "a very autocratic, excitable person," was the real danger. The international divisions in France over the Spanish Civil War might be used by the German leader as a pretext for war in the west, but it was much more likely that Hitler would move to the east:

It was the expansion of Germany that he was after . . . She would try to get hold of Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary she already had, and would work her way around in that fashion toward Russia. He did not think she would attempt Russia for some time as the organization of her army was not sufficiently developed. She had called out the second lot of young men which meant that she was reorganizing her army. It would take her a year or two to get the army into shape. She knew the time Napoleon had trying to conquer Russia and she was not fool enough to begin a war against Russia for some time yet. It would take a long time for her to conquer the country. He believed, however, that war would come eventually between the two countries.⁶²

Litvinoff confirmed King's own belief that the war of the future would be between Germany and the Soviet Union. "I am more and more convinced," the prime minister wrote, "that the European situation arises out of Germany and Russia and their conflicting system of Government, one tending to Fascism and the other, to Communism."⁶³ King took comfort in that: "I question if Hitler is anxious to extend his power in the Western world, at present, at all events. If he becomes engaged in a great war in the East, [the] time may be indefinitely prolonged when he will make headway in the West."⁶⁴ This was to some extent rationalization – a war to the east would not involve Canada, he thought – but it also reflected a deeply-held view that a brooding, suspicious, untrustworthy Soviet Union was the key to the international situation. "I keep feeling," he wrote at the Imperial Conference of 1937, "that if Russia were out of the picture, difficulties would soon adjust themselves."⁶⁵

King's was not the common view. Canadians, to the degree they thought about it at all, tended in the era of Litvinoff to be less suspicious of Soviet power and more restrained in their assessments of Russia's importance. The Soviet Union was never the focus of assessments by King's professional advisers – bureaucrats or soldiers – and it was seldom the subject of scholarly analysis. Only occasionally was the USSR seen as a long-term menace. O.D. Skelton, King's closest adviser as he had been Bennett's, believed that the Soviet Union was no longer bent on "supporting its Communist experiment at home by stirring up Communist agitation against its capitalist enemies." Instead, in a period of reviving nationalism, its policy was "securing peace abroad in order to concentrate on its task of building up a semi-communist structure at home."⁶⁶ Even as the Stalinist purges reached their height in 1936-1938, profoundly (and negatively) influencing international opinion about the USSR's strength and stability, there seems to have been remarkably little Canadian discussion or re-examination of the Soviet Union's role in the world.⁶⁷

Both External Affairs and National Defence did watch the deteriorating political situation in the east, and continuing Russo-Japanese tensions, with

interest and some concern. The Soviet Union was usually cast in the role of a deterrent to Japan, Skelton seeing the Russians as having "checkmated" Japanese ambitions for Siberian expansion.⁶⁸ Canada's chief armed forces officers, eyeing the responsibilities of the national defence of a "Pacific power," worried exclusively about Japan in their formal appreciations of far eastern questions.⁶⁹ The editors of *Canadian Defence Quarterly* had welcomed the Soviet entry into the League in 1934. The Soviet Union had temporarily abandoned its aim of world revolution and "attained its true position as a political force in the Western World." In the east, where Japan was more stable, more predictable but also more dangerous, Soviet power would give Tokyo pause; in Europe, where a resurgent Germany threatened the peace, the combination of the USSR and France rendered Hitler "impotent" for the immediate future.⁷⁰ In October 1937 the *Quarterly* noted that the USSR was in a stronger position to deal with Japan "than at any other time since the inception of the present regime." The Soviets, however, did not want war with Japan or anyone else if they could help it.⁷¹

The few academic commentators who interested themselves in the problem generally concurred with these assessments, placing emphasis on the twin forces of political moderation and growing military strength in the USSR. F.R. Scott, a recent visitor to the Soviet Union who admired socialism but not totalitarianism, argued in 1936 that the Soviet Union must be "listed among the satisfied powers . . . Her domestic and foreign policy are solely concerned with domestic development." The Soviets, decreasing their volume of world trade, were no longer dumping cheap products on the world market. They had plenty of raw materials and so had no need to seek them elsewhere through aggression. They were "not contributing to the unsettlement of conditions in the Far East by the economic factors which are the most usual source of disturbance between other powers." The Soviet Union, in short, was a *status quo* power faced by an imperialist Japan which was unable to control its urges.⁷² A.R.M. Lower and K.W. Taylor argued that Russian peacefulness was sincere because it could not be otherwise: the less the political disturbance, the better for the regime. Only a Japanese landgrab in Mongolia or in the USSR itself might strain Moscow's forbearance to the breaking point.⁷³ It was left to the occasional dissenter to suggest that the Soviets might be biding their time before embarking on foreign conquest under the banner of evangelistic Communism.⁷⁴

The prime minister meanwhile retained his suspicions, but he did not put aside his belief in the importance of economic links. In September 1937 the government asked the Soviet ambassador in London to transmit a proposal to the commissar for foreign trade in Moscow. Canada would extend most-favoured nation (mfn) treatment to Soviet imports in return for a written guarantee that purchases of Canadian goods would amount to \$10 million over a twelve month period. This trade agreement would be based on an exchange of notes and could be extended for another year.⁷⁵ But the negotiations stalled,

and the parties were still trying – unsuccessfully – to work out the details in August 1938.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, the volume of Soviet-Canadian trade had increased, but the figures must have been profoundly disappointing to Ottawa: 1938 saw Soviet imports of \$627,419 and Canadian exports of only \$516,755, substantially below pre-embargo totals.⁷⁷ Not until 13 August 1939 was trade and commerce minister Euler finally on the verge of signing an agreement which would accord the USSR mfn status in exchange for Soviet purchases over one year of at least \$5 million.⁷⁸

Within days, however, any thought of such Soviet-Canadian co-operation was out of the question. On the evening of 21 August 1939, news of the negotiation of the Russo-German non-aggression pact reached Ottawa over the radio.⁷⁹ Despite hints over some months that something was afoot, including intelligence from an RCMP "Secret Agent . . . on good terms with certain leaders of the Nazi movement in Canada," the King government was no more prepared for the shock than the British.⁸⁰ The prime minister had had his suspicions of secret talks – "I have never trusted the Russians"⁸¹ – but he now felt, "curiously" he admitted, "an immense sense of relief, the first real relief I have had in days." War, it seemed, had been averted:

It is an appalling position . . . for England & France – but not so bad as to have begun a war and found themselves deserted by an ally before it was under way – This at least will help to bring both England & France to their senses in the matter of pledges made without knowledge of what others are prepared to do – also, I believe, it has come just in time to save them becoming irrevocably involved in war. Today they were to make a joint declaration as to their attitude towards Poland. They would have become more committed than ever. Now they will have to withdraw . . . I may be all wrong, but I have felt the danger of world war has been lessened a thousand fold by Russia & Germany coming out into the open as they have. Hitler will or may now extend further offers of non-aggression but on his own terms. They will be hard for Britain & France to accept, but will be better than destruction by war. Again, anything is better than war at present, with still a chance to work out peace even at considerable sacrifice.⁸²

Even after it became clear that Britain would still fight for Poland,⁸³ King remained hopeful. Twisting the international equation to meet the demands of his point of view, he saw the Soviet Union "out of the way" as an irritant dividing the British and Germans. Gone too was the "Russian-French manacle," the barrier all along to Anglo-German friendship. Japan had been made an enemy of Germany, and would seek the return of an Anglo-Japanese alliance against the USSR. King was critical of Whitehall diplomacy, and of British-French treatment of the Russians, but the Soviets had outdone the others, "playing the most treacherous game that has ever been played, I believe, by any nation."⁸⁴

During the years 1933-1934, in the events described at the beginning of this paper, the Soviet Union had stepped out into the world. The Nazi-Soviet pact symbolized the move away from the cosmopolitanism of Litvinoff back to the fortress mentality of Stalin, of "an outlook nurtured by the very isolation of the October revolution in an alien world."⁸⁵ For O.D. Skelton, who had reluctantly welcomed the USSR onto the international stage in September 1934, the Soviet Union had shown itself the master of power politics, "the most resolute and ruthless player of the game, unhampered by any conviction or ideology, faithful to no one, not even hating anyone consistently." Its only policy in the future would be expediency. Blackmail, pouncing on weakness, another switch of allegiance – all was possible.⁸⁶

Mackenzie King had been right. The Russians were capable of anything.

Notes

- ¹ F.P. Walters, *A History of the League of Nations* (London, 1969), 94, 265, 579-85. I am indebted to Joseph Ryan for his assistance in compiling the research for this paper, and to David Dilks, Gregory Donaghy, John Lewis Gaddis, J. King Gordon, and G.P. Hillmer for their comments on the first draft.
- ² Jonathan Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933-39* (New York, 1984), chs. 1-2; Jiri Hochman, *The Soviet Union and the Failure of Collective Security, 1934-1938* (Ithaca, New York, 1984), 39-40, 42, 47. See also Jane Degras, ed., *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, III: 1933-1941* (London, 1953), 89-96.
- ³ R.A. MacKay and E.B. Rogers, *Canada Looks Abroad* (Toronto, 1938), 175.
- ⁴ Memorandum of Skelton, 5 September 1936, National Archives of Canada (NAC), Records of the Department of External Affairs, RG 25 D1, vol. 732, file 107. For Skelton's speech, see *Report of the Canadian Delegates to the Fifteenth Assembly of the League of Nations, Geneva, September 10-27, 1934* (Ottawa, 1935), 21-2.
- ⁵ O.D. Skelton, *Socialism: A Critical Analysis* (Boston, 1911).
- ⁶ A widely-held contemporary belief was that Lenin had asked to be buried with a copy of Skelton's *Socialism* by his side. This is very unlikely. Neither the Institute of Marxist-Leninism nor the Lenin Apartment Museum in the Kremlin can find even a reference to the book in their extensive records and holdings. R.A.D. Ford (then Canadian ambassador to the Soviet Union) to the author, 14 December 1978.
- ⁷ O.D. Skelton, "The Russian Chaos," *Queen's Quarterly*, XXVII, 1 (July-September 1919), 114.
- ⁸ Memorandum of Skelton, 5 September 1936, External Affairs, RG 25 D1, vol. 732, file 107.
- ⁹ Haslam, *Struggle*, 231.
- ¹⁰ *Ottawa Journal*, 10 November 1932. See also John Herd Thompson with Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto, 1985), 226.
- ¹¹ Quoted in *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1933* (Toronto, 1934), 135.
- ¹² Quoted in Lita-Rose Betcherman, *The Little Band: The Clashes Between the Communists and the Political and Legal Establishment in Canada, 1928-1932* (Ottawa, n.d.), 161.
- ¹³ Thompson, 223-5.
- ¹⁴ Betcherman, 164-5, 203. See also Attorney General for Ontario, *Agents of Revolution* (n.p., n.d.). For contrasting views of the RCMP's response to Communism, see Ronald A. Adams, "The Anti-Communist Role of the RCMP," paper given to Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, 1978, and Lorne and Caroline Brown, *An Unauthorized History of the RCMP* (Toronto, 1978), ch. 6.

- ¹⁵ Betcherman, 183ff. See also Attorney General for Ontario, *The King vs Buck and Others* (n.p., n.d.). CPC membership figures are from Betcherman, 164 and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada: A History* (Toronto, 1975), 90; Andr e L evesque, *Virage   Gauche Interdit: Les communistes, les socialistes et leur ennemi au Qu ebec 1929-1939* (Montreal, 1984), 46, gives a 1930 figure of 1975 members. For a Communist view of the trial and its aftermath, see Rev. A.E. Smith, *All My Life* (Toronto, 1949), 130-81 and NAC, Communist Party of Canada Papers, MG 28 IV4, vol. 8, file 10.
- ¹⁶ Thompson, 229; *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1935 and 1936* (Toronto, 1939), 67; J. Petryshyn, "R.B. Bennett and the Communists: 1930-1935," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, IX, 4 (November 1974), 43-55.
- ¹⁷ Scrutator [L.B. Pearson], "The Five Year Plan," *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, VIII, 2 (January 1931), 172. See also L.B. Pearson, "Memorandum on the Question of Soviet Imports and Forced Labour," NAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 285, microfilm reel M-1031, folios 192372-86.
- ¹⁸ Ian M. Drummond, "Empire Trade and Russian Trade: Economic Diplomacy in the Nineteen Thirties," *Canadian Journal of Economics*, V, 1 (February 1972), 35.
- ¹⁹ Documents and clippings in NAC, Records of the Department of Trade and Commerce, RG 20, vol. 88, file 22320, vol. 2. See also Jonathan Haslam, *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1930-33: The Impact of the Depression* (London, 1983), 4-5. Haslam incorrectly states that Canada "forced" Britain to break off trade relations with the USSR in 1932.
- ²⁰ Robert Paul Browder, *The Origins of Soviet-American Diplomacy* (Princeton, 1953), 28.
- ²¹ Drummond, 35.
- ²² Aloysius Balawyder, *Canadian-Soviet Relations Between the World Wars* (Toronto, 1972), 129, 135; British high commissioner in Canada to Dominions Office, 2 March 1931, Public Record Office (PRO), Kew, England, Dominions Office (DO) 35/202/10.
- ²³ British high commissioner in Canada to Dominions Office, 2 March 1931, DO 35/202/10.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ Beauregard to H.H. Stevens, 4 June 1931, Sessional Paper no. 442 (a), NAC microfilm C-7581.
- ²⁶ *Canadian Gazette*, 5 March 1931, clipping in RG 20, vol. 88, file 22320, vol. 2.
- ²⁷ Balawyder, 136, 188.
- ²⁸ *Canadian Gazette*, 5 March 1931; Balawyder, 137-139.
- ²⁹ H.H. Wrong to Bennett, 22 August 1930, External Affairs, RG 25, vol. 1573, file 706, I; Browder, ch. 2. On the Meighen visit to the White House, see Wrong to Bennett, 11 November 1931, External Affairs, RG 25 D1, vol. 732, file 103. According to Wrong, Meighen told Hoover "that in his opinion one feature which differentiated the present depression from its predecessors and made recovery more difficult was the export policy of Soviet Russia . . ."
- ³⁰ *Baltimore Sun*, 10 March 1931. Despite the date of this article, the Hoover-Bennett meeting took place before the imposition of the embargo.
- ³¹ British high commissioner in Canada to Dominions Office, 2 March 1931, DO 35/202/10. The Soviets denied knowledge of the Mackie plan.
- ³² *Montreal Gazette*, 26 February 1931; *Canadian Gazette*, 5 March 1931. See also memorandum of Department of External Affairs, "Canada and Soviet Russia," [1933?], 18-19, External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1545, file 555, II. The memorandum has no clear author, but it contains a number of passages from the Pearson paper cited in reference 17.
- ³³ P.C. 463, 27 February 1931 (modified by P.C. 3029, 10 December 1931, removing undressed furs from the prohibited list).
- ³⁴ *Izvestia*, 20 April 1931, quoted in British ambassador in Moscow to Bennett, 20 April 1931, External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1574, file 706, II.
- ³⁵ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book 1936* (Ottawa, 1936), 594, 596; "Canada and the Soviet Union," 7, 16-17.

- ³⁶ Statement of minister of national revenue, 27 February 1931, quoted in "Canada and Soviet Russia," 12.
- ³⁷ "Canada and Soviet Russia," 8.
- ³⁸ *Izvestia*, 21 October 1930, quoted in "Canada and Soviet Russia," 8. See also *ibid.*, 7-14.
- ³⁹ British high commissioner in Canada to Dominion's Office, 2 March 1931, DO 35/202/10.
- ⁴⁰ Wilgress to director of commercial intelligence, 13 October 1931, Trade and Commerce, RG 20, vol. 88, file 22320, vol. 3. See also this file for the comments of other trade commissioners on Soviet competition.
- ⁴¹ Quoted in Drummond, 39. Clark's emphasis. See generally *ibid.*, 36-9.
- ⁴² Quoted in Peter Oliver, *G. Howard Ferguson: Ontario Tory* (Toronto, 1977), 390.
- ⁴³ "Canada and Soviet Russia," 20-2; Drummond, 39-45.
- ⁴⁴ King to A.C. March, NAC, King Papers, MG 26 J1, microfilm reel C-3674, folios 167840-3; Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book 1937* (Ottawa, 1937), 574-6.
- ⁴⁵ Skelton to British high commissioner in London, 10 November 1936, with attachment "Draft ...," External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1797, file 462.
- ⁴⁶ King Papers, MG 28 J13, Diary, 22 January 1936; Mackie to King, 27 December 1935, and other correspondence from Francis H. Clergue, in External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1545, file 555, III; Balawyder, 214-5.
- ⁴⁷ King Diary, 5 May 1937.
- ⁴⁸ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 19 June 1936; Bennett to J.N. Sturk, Bennett Papers, microfilm reel M-1474, folio 519062; H. Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King, III: 1932-1939, The Prism of Unity* (Toronto, 1976), 235-6, 267-8.
- ⁴⁹ King Diary, 22 January 1936.
- ⁵⁰ Canada, House of Commons *Debates*, 10 June 1932, 2494.
- ⁵¹ King Diary, 4 March 1936.
- ⁵² Canadian high commissioner in London (Vincent Massey) to King, 15 July 1936, External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1797, file 462.
- ⁵³ Euler to External Affairs, 23 July 1936, and King to Massey, 27 July 1936, External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1797, file 462; Dana Wilgress, *Memoirs* (Toronto, 1967), 103-4. The brief account in O: Mary Hill, *Canada's Salesman to the World: The Department of Trade and Commerce, 1892-1939* (Montreal, 1977), 550-2, contains a number of errors.
- ⁵⁴ Lapointe's stand on to the Quebec Padlock law was rather less bold. See Neatby, 235-6, 267-8.
- ⁵⁵ King Diary, 1 September 1936.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 13 September 1936.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 11 September 1936.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1 September 1936. See Angelika Sauer, "The Policy of Goodwill and Profit: Canadian Appeasement," a paper presented at "1939: A Fifty-Year Retrospective," a conference of the Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, Elora, Ontario, 4 November 1989, and Ian M. Drummond and Norman Hillmer, *Negotiating Freer Trade: The United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and the Trade Agreements of 1938* (Waterloo, 1989), ch. 3.
- ⁵⁹ King Diary, 28 September 1936.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 9 October 1936.
- ⁶¹ Norman Hillmer, "The Canadian Diplomatic Tradition," in A.F. Cooper, ed., *Canadian Culture: International Dimensions* (Waterloo and Toronto, 1985), 51-5; Robert Bothwell and Norman Hillmer, *The In-Between Time: Canadian External Policy in the 1930s* (Toronto, 1975), 104; King Diary, 5 March 1937.
- ⁶² King Diary, 5 October 1936. See also King to Litvinoff, 5 October 1936, and reply, 6 October 1936, King Papers, MG 26 J1, vol. 220, folios 189108-9.
- ⁶³ King Diary, 30 September 1936.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 29 September 1936. See also King to Joan Patteson, 9 October 1936, Appendix to 1936 King Diary.
- ⁶⁵ King Diary, 4 June 1937.

- ⁶⁶ Memorandum of Skelton, "Foreign Policy Discussions in London 1935," 15 April 1935, External Affairs, RG 25 D1, vol. 761, file 263.
- ⁶⁷ Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Co-existence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1967* (New York, 1971), 239-43; Don Myrehaug, "'The Gods Are Athirst' The Canadian Response to the Stalinist Purges 1934-1938," and "Canadian Media Reactions to the Soviet Purges," two Master of Arts research essays, Carleton University, 1988.
- ⁶⁸ Memorandum of Skelton, "Imperial Conference 1937," [April 1937], King Papers, MG 28 J4, vol. 174, folios 123278-85. On Russo-Japanese relations, see External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1867, file 255.
- ⁶⁹ See, for example, memorandum of Joint Staff Committee, 5 September 1936, Department of National Defence, Directorate of History 112.3M2.009 (D37).
- ⁷⁰ Editorials, *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, XI, 1 (October 1933), 8-15; XII, 1 (October 1934), 5-12.
- ⁷¹ "The Far East," *ibid.*, XV, 1 (October 1937), 8-10.
- ⁷² F.R. Scott, "The U.S.S.R. and the Far East," *Canadian Papers, Yosemite Conference, 1936* (Toronto, 1936), 49-53. See also Sandra Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination: A Life of F.R. Scott* (Toronto, 1987), 154-7, 162-4.
- ⁷³ A.R.M. Lower, "Canada and War in the Pacific," *Canadian Papers, Yosemite Conference*, 108; K.W. Taylor, "The Far East," in Violet Anderson, ed., *World Currents and Canada's Course* (Toronto, 1937), 33-4. Lower had visited the Soviet Union in 1933, concluding that it "was something like an overgrown Canada of the 1910s, a down-at-heel, pioneer country, but without the *élan* that Canada had possessed, and rather dirtier." A.R.M. Lower, *My First Seventy-Five Years* (Toronto, 1967), 188.
- ⁷⁴ G.F. Curtis, "Possibilities of Peaceful Adjustment of International Disputes in the Pacific," draft report of Canadian Institute of International Affairs Third Annual Study Conference, Ottawa, 23, 24 May 1936, in *Canadian Papers, Yosemite Conference*, 11. This document was revised and published by the CIA as G.F. Curtis, *Peaceful Adjustment of International Disputes in the Pacific* (Toronto, n.d. [1936]). The proceedings of the Yosemite conference itself, which was sponsored by the Institute of Pacific Relations, are in W.L. Holland and K.L. Mitchell, eds., *Problems of the Pacific, 1936* (London, 1937).
- ⁷⁵ King to Massey, 3 September 1937, External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1797, file 462.
- ⁷⁶ Euler to peoples' commissar for foreign trade, 9 August 1938, *ibid.*
- ⁷⁷ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book 1939* (Ottawa, 1939), 553-4.
- ⁷⁸ Euler to peoples' commissar for foreign trade, 13 August 1939, with attached draft agreement, External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1797, file 462. Aloysius Balawyder, ed., *Canadian-Soviet Relations 1939-1980* (Oakville, Ont., 1981), 212, claims incorrectly that a trade agreement was signed on 13 August 1939.
- ⁷⁹ British high commissioner in Canada to secretary of state for dominions affairs, 20 September 1939, /DO/35/586/688/127.
- ⁸⁰ Commissioner of the RCMP to Skelton, 16 August 1939, and reply, 22 August 1939, External Affairs, RG 25 G1, vol. 1910, file 703. See also Christopher Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London, 1985), 422-7.
- ⁸¹ King Diary, 21-2 August 1939.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 22 August 1939.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, 24 August 1939.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 21, 22, 28, 29 August 1939.
- ⁸⁵ Haslam, *Struggle*, 230.
- ⁸⁶ Memorandum of Skelton, 10 September 1939, External Affairs, RG 25 D1, vol. 726.

Changing Alliances: Canada and the Soviet Union, 1939-1945

J.L. Granatstein

Winston Smith, the protagonist of George Orwell's *1984*, was confused:

At this moment, for example ... Oceania was at war with Eurasia and in alliance with Eastasia. In no public or private utterance was it ever admitted that the three powers had at any time been grouped along different lines. Actually, as Winston well knew, it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with Eastasia and in alliance with Eurasia Officially the change of partners had never happened. Oceania was at war with Eurasia: therefore Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia. The enemy of the moment represented absolute evil, and it followed that any past or future agreement with him was impossible.¹

The past, in other words, could be erased and made to serve the needs of the present, and the state, with its control over the organs of propaganda (and through such Orwellian devices as the Two Minute Hate), could bring the proles to follow any course it chose.

To claim that the scenario of *1984* represents anything like the twisting course of Canada's relations with and attitudes to the Soviet Union from 1939 to 1945 would be a substantial overstatement. And yet, there are similarities. Under Stalin, the USSR had concluded a pact of convenience with Hitler in August 1939 that freed the Nazis to assault Poland and begin the Second World War. The Russians had gobbled up their share of the Polish spoils, they had invaded Finland, they were soon to swallow the Baltic Republics, and they provided the Nazis with the foods and raw materials they needed. With Britain in a desperate struggle for survival, with Canada as its ranking ally after the collapse of France, the Canadian people inevitably saw the USSR (and domestic Communists)² as the literal Antichrist. But the Nazi invasion of Russia in June 1941 turned perceptions around almost at once, and yesterday's devil became today's fighter for freedom. For four years, the Soviets bore the lion's share of the struggle against Hitler, and they received the wild adulation and genuine admiration to which they were entitled from the government and most of the people of Canada. That phase began to end with victory in Europe and

especially with the defection of Igor Gouzenko and the revelation that the Soviet Union was operating successful spy rings out of Ottawa. The transition from ally back to Antichrist was underway, and the Cold War had begun. This paper will briefly trace the events of the war years and attempt to show where and how the changes of direction took place.

"[T]he choice by the Soviet of this hour to announce the pact," Vincent Massey, the Canadian high commissioner in London said to Ottawa on 22 August 1939, "is very disquieting and makes it difficult to accept their good faith."³ That was Massey's response to the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact, and it was an entirely typical one. Less so was that of the under-secretary of state for External Affairs, O.D. Skelton, who, with his dark view of British motives, put the blame on Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain: "It is crushing condemnation of the handling of British foreign policy." London had made commitments to Poland that could not be carried out without the aid of Russia, and Britain's tactics had made it "practically impossible to secure Russian aid on any reasonable terms."⁴ The prime minister did not completely share the views of his closest adviser. Mackenzie King wrote in his diary that he felt an "immense" sense of relief that Britain and France had been relieved of the burden of being saddled with a potential ally, the Soviet Union, that would only have betrayed them. "I have never trusted the Russians," he wrote.⁵ They were a society in which "reliance has been placed upon force ... All power in hands of one or two men controlling the State and identified with same ... destruction of religion, defiance of agreement and contract."⁶

That attitude was reinforced when Stalin joined in the attack on Poland on 17 September, the Red Army streaming westward toward the advancing *Wehrmacht*. King noted that "we are fighting the forces of evil,"⁷ and Stalin's "ghastly bit of ruthless aggression" two months later when the Red Army crossed the Finnish border again confirmed his stark view of the Soviet Union.⁸ Individual Canadians donated money to help the Finns,⁹ but however much Soviet policy appalled the prime minister, his government was not prepared to do anything significant to assist Finland, the Cabinet confining itself to a gift of \$100,000 made on 18 January 1940 "for the purchase and transport of Canadian foodstuffs for the relief of the people of Finland."¹⁰

The prime minister, however, did intervene to block the sale of up to 1.25 million bushels of wheat to the Soviet Union in January 1940, the Cabinet War Committee accomplishing this by the simple expedient of requiring permits for export shipments to European neutrals contiguous to belligerents. Mackenzie King initially had thought of slapping a complete embargo on exports to the Soviet Union, a step that, he believed, might give the United States a reason to proceed with a moral embargo against the aggressor nations. But the prime minister was dissuaded from this course by concerns within the Department of External Affairs that a Canadian embargo on Moscow would make it difficult to refuse to impose one on Tokyo – and that, Norman Robertson told the prime minister, might lead to an alliance between the Soviet Union and Japan.¹¹

Ten months later, after the end of the Russo-Finnish war, King still took a principled position against the Soviets efforts to buy wheat from Canada:

Russia is ready to pay cash. I took strong exception to anything of the kind on the score that present strategy was blockade and ending the war by ending supplies to gangster nations ... I believe people would be incensed if we sold her wheat which might help to release their wheat for Germany ...¹²

But when London sounded out Ottawa on the possibility of a barter agreement with the Russians, the Department of External Affairs proposed to reply that if trade and political relations between the USSR, Britain and "other parts of the Empire" were put on a satisfactory footing, "we would be prepared to permit the sale ... for United States dollars or gold, of certain products for which export permits are currently being refused," most notably wheat. The prime minister agreed.¹³ If Britain could bring itself to deal with Stalin, then Canada would follow suit. Still, no one expected much, in trade or in any other way. At the end of May 1941, Norman Robertson, the acting under secretary in the Department of External Affairs, sent the prime minister a memorandum bemoaning that "British and Allied diplomacy had never shown much sympathy or imagination in the handling of Russian questions, but," he added, "I do not think there is very much to be salvaged now."¹⁴

The Nazi attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 changed almost everything – but not the way Britain regularly acted toward its Dominions overseas. Prime Minister Churchill broadcast his government's decision to "give whatever help we can to Russia and to the Russian people" without the courtesy of seeking Canadian concurrence, a slight that was eased only slightly by a telegram of regret to Ottawa.¹⁵ But in fact Mackenzie King had already issued a statement (to "give a lead to the editorial writers who were floundering," as Norman Robertson put it)¹⁶ that affirmed that "Everyone who engages our enemy advances our cause," a first step in turning public opinion around to the support of the Soviet Union. But as his tortured remarks and explanations suggested, it was obviously difficult for King – and many Canadians – to accept Moscow instantly as an ally:

Hitler's invasion of Russia is also an attempt to deceive and divide the people of the United States and the peoples of the British Commonwealth by trying to make it again appear that he is the enemy of Bolshevism. Whatever one's opinion may be about the philosophy of the Russian revolution, however strongly some of Russia's international activities may be condemned, the plain fact is today that, as Russia fights Germany, it is not Russia which is a threat to freedom and peace. That threat is Nazi Germany. Indeed one of the effects of Germany's attack on Russia should

be to put an end to Communistic activities on the part of Russian sympathizers in other lands.¹⁷

To Norman Robertson, the new alliance posed some problems for the government. As he told the American minister, Pierrepont Moffat, on 23 June, he was greatly interested in the reactions of Catholics, "who are desperately opposed to the Communists," of Ukrainians, "some of whom might see in the new situation an opportunity for furthering their ambitions for an autonomous Ukraine," and of Finns, "among whom there were more actual Communists than in any other racial group in Canada."¹⁸ But Robertson apparently had no fear of the Canadian elite who soon swung wholeheartedly behind the government's position and, indeed, into criticism of it for not doing enough to help Russia.¹⁹ Moffat wryly observed that, "The Bourbon stronghold of the Rideau Club has gone Bolshevik with a vengeance." The habitués of Ottawa's grandest gathering place denounced any who might suggest that there was little to choose between nazism and communism. "They said that at least Communism started from a basis of generosity which Nazism didn't, and in any event they claimed that world revolution was on a higher plane than that of world conquest."²⁰

But there was little expectation in government circles (perhaps because the purges of the officer corps during the late 1930s and the clumsy handling of the Red Army in the Finnish War had misled observers about its efficiency) that Russia would be able to resist the Wehrmacht's panzers for very long. Robertson and Moffat agreed that "Russia could not be expected to put up much of a military fight." The Canadian, however, suggested that Germany might find that "it would require a greater diversion of strength to organize Russian economy on a paying basis than they calculated." He also "wondered" if Russia might not abandon the war in a few days and accept German terms,²¹ thoughts that were widespread in Ottawa and elsewhere.

But the Russians, although suffering huge losses of men and equipment, continued the struggle as they retreated from the frontiers and toward Moscow. As a result, pressure on the King government to do more to help the Soviet Union and to establish closer relations with it increased markedly. Robertson in September told Moffat that "he felt the pressure acutely and that it came in British Canada from a curious alliance between extreme right and extreme left." The prime minister had not yet made up his mind what to do, but he, Robertson, "was still inclined to pussyfoot." He felt Canada should do more for Russia but could do it most effectively in a concealed manner, such as by letting the Joint Metals Board allocate a thousand tons at a time of aluminum for shipment to the U.S.S.R. This would "get the aluminum to Russia," Moffat noted, "without running the risk of so stirring the anti-Communist aluminum workers at Arvida that total production might be reduced. It was a delicate problem at best ... damned if you do and damned if you don't."²²

Supplies were one thing; diplomatic representation another. As early as July, the Soviet ambassador to the United States told a Canadian journalist that there should be direct Soviet representation in Canada. In October, the Soviet ambassador in London asked Vincent Massey if Canada would be willing to receive one or two consular officials, a proposal that Mackenzie King accepted at once,²³ although the agreement between the two countries was not signed until 5 February 1942.²⁴ By that time, however, the government in Ottawa had already decided that consular representation was insufficient and that legations should be exchanged, and the next month Moscow was approached. Acceptance followed before the end of March 1942, and the agreement on the establishment of direct diplomatic relations was signed on June 12.²⁵ And lest the Canadian government fear that an exchange of diplomats would lead to "agents of the Comintern ... conducting Communist propaganda in countries to which they were accredited," Novikov, the Counsellor at the Soviet Embassy in London assured George Ignatieff, a junior diplomat on the staff of the High Commission in London, that "nothing was further from the truth ..."²⁶

It is fair to say that the Canadian people as a whole were not convinced of this or of the *bona fides* of the Soviet Union or domestic Communists. Opinion polling at the time found serious divisions. In August 1942, although 57 percent of a national sample expected the Russians, British and Americans to make it possible for Europeans to choose their own forms of government, a rather large block of 27 percent expected the Soviets to try to spread communism throughout Europe. At the same time, an overwhelming number of Canadians – 62 percent – wanted the Communist party to remain banned in Canada while only 23 percent thought the party should be permitted to run candidates.²⁷ Why the divisions? The Wartime Information Board had no doubts as to the reasons. In a major survey of public attitudes in April 1943, the WIB admitted that the "general impressions of the Soviet system built up over the years" constituted a serious obstacle to closer relations and to Canadian acceptance of the USSR as an ally:

From 1917 onwards, the Soviet regime was widely pictured as synonymous with political slavery, savage cruelty, cynical atheism, destruction of the family and a universal lowering of the standard of living. These stereotypes have sunk deep, and are difficult to alter in the absence of real first-hand contact. They have also been reinforced by the activities and ideology of those who call themselves communists among us, and whose indiscriminating praise of all things Russian has provoked a strongly negative reaction.

The Survey then identified the groups in Canadian society "whose acceptance of friendly cooperation with Russia is likely to be slow and reluctant:" the

Catholic church; business and financial circles who fear a socialist government in Canada; Eastern Europeans keeping alive the fears of Bolshevik oppression current in their homelands; and fundamentalist Protestant sects such as the British Israelites whose prophecies include the destruction of Russia by an Anglo-American alliance. To deal with the "ambivalent and conflicting" attitudes, the authors of the Survey suggested that four main points be stressed to the public: first, that the Soviet Union had moved far from its Bolshevik origins in 1917 in such a way as the abandonment of atheism and the restoration of the family; second, that Russia had kept its wartime commitments; third, that the Russians were "people like ourselves;" and finally, that Russia's internal tolerance, its lack of racial or sectional discrimination, suggested external peacefulness.²⁸

There was more than a little wishful thinking in those suggested lines of approach, and just as tens of thousands of Canadians supported the Communist and Soviet call for a Second Front, similarly there was no doubt that Canadians increasingly looked forward to better relations with the USSR. A Gallup Poll in April 1943 found 47 percent who wanted to see Canada and Russia work closely together after the war and only 25 percent who did not. Every region, except Quebec, was strongly in favour of cooperation; in French Canada, however, 50 percent wanted no cooperation, the motivation being fear of communism in Canada and the paganism of the Soviet Union. In June, only 30 percent in Quebec believed that Russia could be trusted to cooperate with Canada after the war, compared to 51 percent in the national sample and 62 percent in Ontario. Hostility to cooperation, the Wartime Information Board said, "springs from ignorance and prejudice."²⁹ But three years later, after intensive propaganda and after the Red Army's victory over the German army, only 27 percent of French Canadians were confident about Canada's ability to get along with the USSR, compared to 51 percent outside Quebec.³⁰ Quebecois were also substantially more fearful of the prospect of another war.³¹

Certainly some in Canada were trying to help the Soviet Union directly. The Canadian government allocated substantial amounts of war production to the USSR under the Mutual Aid Act of 1943 or for payment – \$102 million worth to the end of 1942, (including a \$10 million credit for wheat), \$23 million worth in 1943-1944, and in all 6.8 percent of the total of Canadian Mutual Aid (or \$167 million) for the whole war.³² Substantial quantities of war material (including 1223 tanks and 1348 Bren carriers up to 31 March 1944) also went to the USSR from supplies sent by Canada to Britain, and additional quantities of food and clothing went to Russia as a Canadian contribution through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.³³ There was also some scientific information of a military nature that was freely given.³⁴ Unfortunately, there were problems at the end of the war when the Soviets cancelled orders for industrial equipment amounting to more than \$6 million.³⁵ The National Film Board did its bit with a 1942 film that, one senior

Liberal adviser complained to Brooke Claxton, M.P., "glorifies ... the communistic faith and is a very insidious piece of propaganda" The member of Parliament was not amused by the carping: "If the film about Russia shows Russia sympathetically, thank God for that! It is high time this country began to recognize that it is not decent to kick in the face the ally on whose courage and ability to make sacrifices our security depends."³⁶

Most important for its demonstration of public support was the Canadian Aid to Russia Fund, a body formed in mid-1942 as the successor to other, more transitory efforts.³⁷ CARF was a blue-ribbon operation, its patrons including all the lieutenant-governors, the Archbishop of Quebec and other leading churchmen, and the Chief Justice of Canada. Officers included J.S. McLean, Clifford Sifton, J.E. Atkinson, Sen. Rupert Davies, Samuel Bronfman, Sir Robert Falconer and Col. R.S. McLaughlin. With support like that, the Fund was extraordinarily successful in raising money; one campaign begun in November 1942 producing \$3.08 million by early February 1943, more than double expectations.³⁸ Moreover, the Fund's rallies drew such notables as Prime Minister King and Eleanor Roosevelt as speakers.³⁹ By mid-1943, another group was on the ground, the National Council for Canadian-Soviet Friendship, led by Sir Ellsworth Flavelle, John David Eaton and Malcolm Ross.⁴⁰ This group, to which the prime minister was "entirely sympathetic,"⁴¹ started its life with a mass rally in Toronto that was orchestrated down to the last detail.⁴² But for a variety of reasons, the Council did not succeed. There was a shortage of funds, primarily because Flavelle, described as "emotionally unbalanced and extremely difficult to work with," refused to approach wealthy friends for contributions. Moreover, the Council's aims – to popularize the Soviet Union, to give material assistance to it by having Canadian cities adopt Russian ones, and to exchange cultural materials – were so grandiose (and some so foolish as to invite ridicule, notably a project to have Canadian trade unionists write to Soviet workers) as to be beyond its scope.⁴³

Perhaps the Friendship Council's difficulties were a reflection of that ambivalence to the Soviet Union that still persisted, the brilliant military successes of the Red Army notwithstanding. Indeed, to some Ukrainian Canadians, the success of Soviet arms was a direct blow to their aspirations. One indication of this attitude came in an address in Parliament by Anthony Hlynka, an obscure Social Credit M.P. from Vegreville, Alberta on 2 February 1942. Hlynka spoke for Ukrainian self-determination and the formation of a government-in-exile, and he argued that the lands of the Ukraine could not be treated as booty because the Ukrainian people had the right to determine their own future.⁴⁴ Hlynka's remarks, undoubtedly heartfelt, were completely irrelevant to the political necessities of the day, however. In the spring of 1942, for example, Britain was apparently preparing to recognize Russia's post-war frontiers. Norman Robertson, discussing that pending step with the American minister, expressed the Canadian position: "Of course, the Polish frontiers

would be reserved, that nobody worried about Finland, and that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was a small price to pay to convince Russia of Britain's trust and earnestness.⁴⁵ In that atmosphere of *realpolitik*, one that the war situation fully justified, the claims of Ukrainian nationalists were certain to receive short shrift. The creation of an independent Ukraine, Hume Wrong, the associate under secretary in External Affairs, said flatly the next year, "is entirely out of the question ..."⁴⁶

Still, the Ukrainian irredentists did pose a problem for Canada's relations with Moscow, repeatedly drawing protests from the Soviet mission in Ottawa over their more extreme charges and claims. In May 1943, the Soviet minister to Canada had complained about Ukrainian Canadian newspapers' advocacy of an independent Ukraine, an attitude that he described as "pro-Fascist." In those days before multiculturalism, Norman Robertson had assured the minister that despite their numbers, the Ukrainians "were not a factor in influencing Canadian Government policy ..."⁴⁷ Similarly the rabid attacks of Dr. Watson Kirkconnell of McMaster University on the Soviet Union and communist elements among various ethnic groups also drew Soviet censure.⁴⁸ In May 1945, for example, the Soviet ambassador complained to the Department of External Affairs about press and radio attacks and, although Zaroubin claimed that one Kirkconnell article contravened the Defence of Canada Regulations, he was assured that "the principle of the freedom of the press did not permit us to interfere with the right of any individual to criticize a foreign government. "Such criticisms," J.E. Read of External Affairs said, "were not any more violent than criticism of the United States, United Kingdom or Canadian Governments in our press." As Kirkconnell had claimed to have in his possession a directive issued by the Soviet Government ordering the shooting of intellectuals in the Baltic States, that was a slight exaggeration.⁴⁹

As this Soviet complaint suggested, the formalities of diplomacy were being met between Canada and the USSR. Ministers had been named late in 1942, the first Soviet representative to Canada being Feodor Gusev and Canada's first minister to the Soviet Union (who arrived in Kuibyshev, the administrative capital while Moscow was threatened, several months after the Soviets had come to Ottawa) being Dana Wilgress, the former deputy minister of Trade and Commerce, an expert on Russian trade who was married to a Russian.⁵⁰ In November 1943, after a Canadian initiative, the two countries legations were raised to the status of embassies.⁵¹

But if there were now embassies in Ottawa and Kuibyshev, there was still relatively little work for the bored diplomatic staffs to do, the technicalities of Mutual Aid notwithstanding. Like all foreign diplomats of this period, Wilgress was kept away from the Russian people, his contacts severely limited. Only on rare occasions (as when his mission was upgraded from Legation to Embassy) did he see senior officials of the Soviet government,⁵² and most of his conversations were confined to his ambassadorial colleagues.⁵³ The

Russians in Ottawa, watched by their own people and the envoys of a paranoiac state, apparently felt similarly isolated, the only staff member who was able to talk freely being Pavlov who "is N.K.V.D.," as Charles Ritchie noted, "and so can say what he likes."⁵⁴ And as Ritchie's diary entry of a chat with Mrs. Zaroubin on 3 March 1945 suggested, there were certain cultural deprivations connected with service in Canada:

Sat next to the Soviet Ambassadress and asked her how she liked Ottawa after Moscow. She replied with animation, 'Moscow wonderful, concerts wonderful, ballet wonderful, opera wonderful, Moscow big city - Ottawa nothing *nichevo*) - cinema, cinema, cinema.'⁵⁵

Knowing the Russian people well and able to assess the great war-weariness of a society that had been devastated by the slaughter since June 1941, Wilgress' reports tended toward a position of firmness and fairness toward the USSR. General Maurice Pope, sharing similar views, observed simply that Wilgress was "not one who takes a pessimistic view of Russia's post-war policy."⁵⁶ In a despatch at the end of June 1944, for example, the ambassador wrote about

the desire of the Soviet Union for a long period of peace in order to recover from the ravages of the war and to strengthen further the economy of the country. The Soviet Union, however, will continue to represent a distinct social and economic system to that of the United States. This may lead in the more distant future to a conflict of interests if the system of collective security does not function effectively. Canada lies geographically between these two countries of immense potential power. The United States, therefore, may feel compelled to enter into close defence arrangements with Canada.⁵⁷

Ottawa, wrapped up in a Post-Hostilities Problems planning exercise, had been thinking on similar but more apocalyptic lines,⁵⁸ and the under secretary replied to Wilgress in slightly incredible terms:

We have not wanted to over-emphasize the danger of a clash between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Our fears have been based not so much on the prospect of an actual war over our territory between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. We did fear, however, that the U.S. military policy might be based to such an extent on preparation for a possible war with the Soviet Union, that pressure would be placed upon us to cooperate in defensive measures which the Russians would not consider to be friendly or neutral. Recently, however, there has been evidence of a decline in belief among American military men that a war with the Soviet Union was inevitable.⁵⁹

- ²⁵ Ibid., 44ff. The account in A. Balawyder, ed., *Canada-Soviet Relations 1939-1980* (Oakville, 1981), 4-5, is slightly garbled. See also Department of External Affairs, John Starnes Papers, Robertson's memoranda for the Prime Minister of 11, 23 December 1941, and 4 March 1942.
- ²⁶ Department of External Affairs, External Affairs Records, file 2462-40, Massey to Ottawa, 10 April 1942. The Comintern was declared dissolved in October 1943.
- ²⁷ *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Winter 1942), 655, 665.
- ²⁸ Wartime Information Board, "Public Attitudes: Canada and Soviet Russia," *Survey No. 8* 10 April 1943. Copy in the National Library, Ottawa. The WIB sounded very similar to CCF leader M.J. Coldwell. See House of Commons *Debates*, 23 February 1943, 633.
- ²⁹ Wartime Information Board, "Public Attitudes: Canadian-Russian Cooperation," *Survey No. 21* 9 October 1943. Copy in National Library, Ottawa.
- ³⁰ PAC, Wartime Information Board Records, IV, WIB Survey file, *Survey No. 63* 19 May 1945.
- ³¹ *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Summer 1945), 257.
- ³² King Papers, "Materials and Equipments ... to 31 December 1942," 12 January 1943, ff. C259001-2; *DCER*, IX, 437ff.; *Public Accounts* (1944), p. xxxi.
- ³³ *Report of the Canadian Mutual Aid Board*, 20 May 1943 to 31 March 1944 (Ottawa, 1944), 23; *Final Report*, 1946, Canadian Mutual Aid Board (Ottawa, n.d.), 38-39, 44-45.
- ³⁴ See Donald Avery, "Secrets Between Different Kinds of Friends: Canada's Wartime Exchange of Scientific Military Information with the United States and the USSR, 1940-1945," *Historical Papers 1986*, 251.
- ³⁵ Balawyder, 9.
- ³⁶ NAC, Brooke Claxton Papers, XLIV, H.E. Kidd to Claxton, 12 June 1942, and reply, 18 June 1942.
- ³⁷ The Canadian Aid to Russia Fund records are in the PAC. Earlier groups were apparently subject to investigation to determine if they were Communist-backed. See NAC, Department of National War Services Records, VII, Russian Relief file, E.W. Stapleford to J.T. Thorson, 20 October 1941 and *ibid.*, Russian Groups file, Thorson to M. Gould, 5 September 1942.
- ³⁸ King Papers, J2, vol. 369, file W-307-4, Interim Report of Canadian Aid to Russia Fund, 17 February 1943. Balawyder, 7, gives totals to 30 September 1945, as \$3.86 million in cash and \$3.3 million in clothing.
- ³⁹ King Papers, "Remarks by the Prime Minister ...," 19 January 1943, ff. C238067ff.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, National Council Labour Committee Bulletin, 3 January 1944, ff. C238133ff., lists the executive.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Memorandum for Council, 14 January 1943, f. C23078.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, "Canadian Soviet Friendship Council Rally - 22 June 1943," ff. C238089ff. King's remarks are in Wartime Information Board Papers, XIX, file 10.A.12.
- ⁴³ King Papers, Note for Mr. Wrong, 26 February 1944, ff. C238142-3.
- ⁴⁴ House of Commons *Debates*, 2 February 1942, 231-235. See Whitaker, 156-159; John Kolasky, *The Shattered Illusion* (Toronto, 1979); B. Kordan and L.Y. Luciuk, "Security, Loyalty and Nationbuilding: Ukrainian Canadians and the Politics of State, 1939-1945," a paper presented at the Canadian Committee on the History of the Second World War Conference, September 1986; and Samuel Nesdoly, "Changing Perspectives: The Ukrainian-Canadians Role in Canadian-Soviet Relations," in Balawyder, 111-112. See also Watson Kirkconnell, "The Ukrainian Canadians and the War," Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, (1940); his *Seven Pillars of Freedom* (Toronto, 1944), and his memoir, *A Slice of Canada* (Toronto, 1967), chap. 24.
- ⁴⁵ Moffat Papers, Memorandum, 13 April 1942.
- ⁴⁶ King Papers, "Restoration of Property of Ukrainian Farmer Labour Temples," 7 June 1943, ff. C231869-70.
- ⁴⁷ Kordan and Luciuk, *op. cit.*; *DCER*, IX, 1863-1865.
- ⁴⁸ E.g., *Globe and Mail*, 2 February 1943.

- ⁴⁹ King Papers, J4, vol. 414, file 3990, Memorandum for Prime Minister, 12 May 1945. See also William Christian, ed., *Innis on Russia* (Toronto, 1981), diary entry, 30 June 1945: "Attack of *Moscow News* on Kirkconnell illustrates lack of sense of proportion ... magnify Kirkconnell in Canada ..."
- ⁵⁰ See Wilgress' anodyne *Memoirs* (Toronto, 1967) and his article, "From Siberia to Kuibyshev: Reflections on Russia," *International Journal*, XXII (Summer 1967), 372ff. See also R.M. Macdonnell, "The Mission to Kuibyshev," *International Perspectives* (July/August 1973), 53ff.
- ⁵¹ *DCER*, IX, 76ff.; King Papers, Canadian Minister to USSR to Ottawa, 17 November 1943, ff. C238126-7 and *ibid.*, 4 March 1944, ff. C237691-2.
- ⁵² When Wilgress did see senior officials, his despatches to Ottawa were regularly sent to the British Foreign Office where they drew favourable comment. See docs. on PRO, Foreign Office Records, FO 371/43413, and PRO, Dominions Office Records, DO 35/1601, minutes. See also Don Page, "The Wilgress Despatches from Moscow, 1943-1946," a paper presented to the Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War Conference, 1977.
- ⁵³ Donald Page, "Getting to Know the Russians - 1943-1948," in Balawyder, 16.
- ⁵⁴ Charles Ritchie, *The Siren Years* (Toronto, 1974), 186. See also Ferns, *Reading From Left to Right*, 184ff.
- ⁵⁵ Ritchie, *The Siren Years*, 186.
- ⁵⁶ NAC, Maurice Pope Papers, I, Diary 1945, entry, 16 April 1945.
- ⁵⁷ Department of External Affairs, External Affairs Records, file 7-AB(s), "Wilgress to Ottawa," 30 June 1944.
- ⁵⁸ See James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence* (Toronto, 1972), 320ff., and generally D. Munton and D. Page, "Planning in the East Block: The Post-Hostilities Problems Committees in Canada 1943-1945," *International Journal*, XXXII (Autumn 1977), 687ff.
- ⁵⁹ Department of External Affairs, External Affairs Records, file 7AB(s), Robertson to Wilgress, 5 August 1944. See also FO 371/43413, Garner to Costar, 17 July 1944 and attached minutes.
- ⁶⁰ Donald Munton and Donald Page, "The Operations of the Post-War Hostilities Planning Group in Canada, 1943-1945," CHA paper, 1976, 31. This material did not appear in the published version of this paper, cited above.
- ⁶¹ Arnold Smith interview, 18 February 1978.
- ⁶² King Papers, Memorandum for the Prime Minister, 20 June 1945, ff. C237899ff. Smith's despatch and memos are on Department of External Affairs, External Affairs Records, file 2-AE(s).
- ⁶³ George Ignatieff, *The Making of a Peacemonger* (Toronto, 1985), 86.
- ⁶⁴ NAC, L.B. Pearson Papers, N8, vol. 2, San Francisco diary, 72. W.L. Morton took a surprisingly benign view: Russia, he said, "is going ahead and making its own arrangements in special areas on its borders ... This may be regrettable, but after all here is a chance that may not return and no Russian statesman can pass it up." "Behind Dumbarton Oaks," *Behind the Headlines V* (1945), 14.
- ⁶⁵ Department of External Affairs, External Affairs Records, file 8159-40C, Memorandum for the File, 9 September 1945.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 24 September 1945.
- ⁶⁷ *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Winter 1945-1946), 537. For a useful assessment of the information on the atomic bomb and other secret projects the Russian spy ring did secure, see Don Avery, *Historical Papers 1986* 245ff.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, (Summer 1946), 264-265.

“A People so Ruthless as the Soviets”: Canadian Images of the Cold War and the Soviet Union, 1946-1950¹

David J. Bercuson

In 1977 Donald Page and Donald Munton published an article in *International Journal* which sketched the opinions Canadian policymakers held of the Soviet Union in 1946 and 1947.² The article was based largely on Page and Munton's analysis of an August 1947 memorandum entitled, "The United States and the Soviet Union: A Study of the Possibility of War and Some of the Implications for Canadian Policy" prepared by Escott Reid, then assistant under-secretary of state for external affairs and head of the Second Political Division. Page and Munton saw Reid's analysis as "rather evenhanded."³ It appeared to them to draw little distinction between the basic imperatives behind both American and Soviet policy and it seemed to advance the notion that the Soviet Union should be treated firmly but fairly.

The Reid document was widely circulated inside the department and none of those who saw it appeared to attack what Page and Munton thought of as its basic moderation. Page and Munton were, therefore, convinced that the document provided "an excellent indication of the images of the Canadian policy community at a critical point during the onset of the Cold War"⁴ and they drew certain conclusions from it which have helped further the idea that "Canadians were a little more disposed than their allies to give the Russians the benefit of the doubt."⁵ They are worth quoting at length:

Canadian foreign policy-makers in 1946-1947 did perceive the Soviet Union as a threat, but Soviet policy was not seen as inherently aggressive or as stemming primarily from communist ideology. The prevailing image, in fact, was that the ideology was at most a secondary factor, that the prime factors behind Soviet policy were an historical imperialism and considerations of power, that its leaders were cautious and perhaps even realistic, and that its policies were politically expansionary but not militarily aggressive.⁶

It is always difficult, and somewhat risky, to summarize the views of a group as diverse as the Canadian policymakers in the Department of External Affairs. In fact, however, most of them were far more negative in their assessments of the Soviet Union than Page and Munton would have us believe. In general, they saw the USSR as inherently aggressive and driven by both historical imperative and Communist ideology to strive for world domination. They were convinced that the Soviet Union had caused the Cold War, that Soviet leaders were opportunistic and untrustworthy, that the Soviets respected only naked power, and that international peace could only be maintained if the United States was strong and held an atomic monopoly. If there was any moderation at all in their view of the Soviet Union, it came primarily from their belief that the USSR was not yet capable of launching World War III and that its leaders were likely to try to achieve world domination through other means unless that proved impossible or the USSR became strong enough to win a World War.

Canadian views of the Soviet Union and its role in the Cold War were remarkably fixed by the end of 1946. They had been moulded by a combination of factors including the Gouzenko Affair, Soviet behaviour in Eastern Europe, the belief that the USSR was breaking its wartime agreements with the Allies, and the increasingly obvious failure of the wartime allies to reach agreement on Germany – a failure that Canadian policymakers blamed on the Russians. From 1946 to 1949 the German question was a major yardstick by which growing world tensions and Soviet conduct were measured in Ottawa and Reid, for one, had already concluded by the spring of 1946 that Europe was being irrevocably divided along east-west lines and that the crux of the German question was how to prevent war between “the Soviet world and the Western world.” Reid believed that the Soviets aimed to prolong Germany’s “political and economic instability and insecurity” and his view paralleled that of Hume Wrong, then associate under secretary of state for External Affairs. In the summer of 1946 Wrong wrote that there existed “fundamental differences in outlook towards the rest of the world between Moscow and the western powers” and that the Soviets wanted to create “a troubled and uneasy world. He saw Soviet policy as essentially self-regarding and nationalistic ... supported by a crusading zeal for the spread of Communism. To him, Soviet leaders were “unmoved by ... humanitarian considerations. He did not fear imminent war, but only because of the relative military weakness of the Soviet Union. Should the USSR break the American atomic monopoly, he believed, “the danger may rapidly increase.”

Both Wrong and Reid saw the Soviet Union as the party responsible for the breakdown of international order and civility; neither held the US or Britain even partly to blame. This view was shared by Canada’s representative to the Allied Control Council in Berlin, Lt.-General Maurice Pope. Pope saw the Russians up close on an almost daily basis; he concluded that the

conventions of international diplomacy were ineffective when adopted towards a people so ruthless as the Soviets. He forecast as early as June of 1946 that four power control of post-war Germany would be impossible because of Soviet ambitions in central Europe.⁹ By the fall of 1946 he had concluded that the Potsdam Declaration was dead – killed by the Russians who were responsible for the division of Europe into two opposed camps.¹⁰

The man whose opinions of the Soviets counted most in Ottawa had reached the same harsh conclusions of Soviet actions and intentions even earlier in the spring of 1946. Canada’s ambassador to the Soviet Union, Dana Wilgress had spent decades in Russia before World War II and spoke Russian. When Canada established diplomatic relations with the USSR in 1942 he was appointed ambassador. He arrived in the Soviet Union in March 1943.

Wilgress’s despatches to Ottawa painted a dreary picture of life in the Soviet Union during wartime and emphasized the isolation of the western diplomatic community from Soviet society. He was not unsympathetic to the difficulties the Soviets were attempting to overcome both in fighting the Nazis and in trying to build their socialist society. He was generally critical of what he believed to be the hard-nosed attitude of US diplomats towards the Soviets and he attempted to “put the best face” on the Soviet regime.¹¹ It was easy for him to pass such judgments since he did not have to deal with Soviet leaders on sticky issues such as Poland, the second front, or Allied supply problems.¹² When United States ambassadors such as Laurence Steinhardt and Averell Harriman first arrived in Moscow during the war, they too were benignly disposed to the Soviet regime. Dealing with the Russians invariably changed their attitudes.

By the spring of 1946, however, Wilgress’s view of the Soviet regime had moved much closer to that of so-called “hard-line” Americans such as George F. Kennan, US charge d’affaires in Moscow. At that point, Wilgress sent a number of despatches to Ottawa which depicted the Soviet government as hard, opportunistic, and ready to take advantage of any sign of western weakness: “To a dictator with the upbringing of Stalin, the disunity of his western allies and the vagaries of their policies are circumstances that he just has to exploit,”¹³ Wilgress wrote in March 1946. When suggestions were made in Ottawa several weeks later that Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King visit Moscow, Wilgress was strongly opposed because he thought the Soviets would see such a visit as a sign of weakness.¹⁴ He saw the Soviets as constant fomenters of unrest throughout those parts of the world they did not dominate and he strongly urged that “the true nature of Soviet aggression ... be exposed” in the West.¹⁵ Wilgress departed not one iota from the view held by Pope, Wrong, and most of the American and British diplomatic community that it was the Russians who were responsible for the violation of the Potsdam agreements and who had caused the Cold War. “The Soviet Union is not interested in security through treaties” he wrote in June, 1946, “only in security through power.”¹⁶

Lester B. Pearson was, if anything, even more strident in his view of the Soviet Union. He thought of it as a state "organized on a police basis, governed by ruthless despots, inhabited by millions of fighting men to whom life is hard and cheap, and with a dynamic communist ideology." Without some "fundamental change" in the Soviet Union, Pearson forecast, in November, 1946, open conflict with the west was inevitable. This did not mean "war today or tomorrow," but it would mean war eventually.¹⁷

As important as Pearson was in the policymaking community, he was but one man. When his ideas are added to those of Escott Reid, Hume Wrong, and Dana Wilgress, however, a picture emerges of the way Ottawa's top diplomats viewed the USSR. They saw the Soviet Union as a country run by a brutal regime that practised internal repression and external opportunism and which operated by an entirely different set of rules than those followed in the west. Much of their perception was coloured by their distaste for Communism, but distaste for Communism was not the foundation for their views. Nowhere do they state that Soviet policy was exclusively based upon ideological considerations. They believed, instead, that a combination of factors were driving Soviet policy. Primary among these were the brutally autocratic nature of the Stalinist regime, traditional Russian foreign policy imperatives, and Communist ideology.¹⁸ Wrong, for example, thought there could be no working relationship with the USSR without a substantial modification of the Soviet regime¹⁹ while Wilgress was shocked by the "ferocious" Soviet attack on King following the Gouzenko affair and concluded that all totalitarian autocracies were pretty much the same.²⁰ At the same time George Kennan's assertion in the famous "long telegram" of February 1946 that it was not Communism but the "traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity" which motivated conduct²¹ was reflected in an internal External Affairs memorandum, probably composed in the fall of 1946. That document stated: "The Soviet Union [largely] pursues the same ends as ... the Czarist regime [but] it does not, like the latter, accept the traditional techniques of diplomacy."²² Canadian policymakers were not exactly certain – or agreed – as to specific Soviet intentions, or how to meet the Soviet challenge, but then neither was the US policymaking community.²³

The views held by Canadian policymakers were echoed by those of the Canadian military whose job it was to tell the diplomats what sort of a war the Soviets might eventually fight. The military did not question the notion that the Soviet Union was the world's chief international outlaw, but it did question the USSR's ability to wage war in the near future. In the spring of 1946 the Military Cooperation Committee, a joint American-Canadian military planning committee spun off from the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, submitted two documents to its political and military masters in Ottawa and Washington. The documents – an "Appreciation of the Requirements for Canadian-U.S. Security," and a "Joint Canadian-United States Basic Security Plan" – reflected the MCC's views of what sort of a military threat North America faced and what ought to be done about it.

The MCC believed that sometime after 1950 an "alignment of certain nations might overrun the European continent" and that such an alignment could not ignore the industrial capacity of North America or the British Commonwealth. It was, therefore, likely that North America would be subject to air attack including atomic bombardment. Although the chances of this type of an attack were slim in the near future, the MCC noted, "a vigorous program of economic and industrial development [on the part of the enemy] plus possession of the atomic bomb would change the picture."²⁴ At that point, in mid-1946, both Canada and the United States were completely vulnerable to air attack and the MCC eventually produced a grandiose air defence plan involving massive expenditures for the construction of a vast network of radar stations, fighter fields and air control installations.²⁵

The Canadian Chiefs of Staff Committee met to consider the two MCC documents on 15 July 1946 and agreed substantially with them even though they thought it "open to question" that a "potential enemy" would be capable of an atomic bombardment of North America within three to five years. They recommended that Cabinet Defence Committee approve the documents and authorize the Canadian representatives on the MCC to work with the Americans to prepare detailed defence schemes.²⁶ In making this recommendation the Chiefs of Staff Committee had virtually nothing to go on, as they admitted to the Cabinet Defence Committee: "Our Canadian intelligence organization is not sufficiently developed to be able to produce very much material from its own sources, nor is it yet capable of assessing the value of intelligence from other countries."²⁷ Their view of the threat to North America was, therefore, based solely on opinion, not on a different set of facts. Since the United States' own intelligence respecting future Soviet air-atomic capability was no better than that of Canada,²⁸ the blind were leading the blind.

Toward the end of October 1946, King travelled to Washington for discussions with President Harry S. Truman on a range of bi-lateral issues centering mostly on defence and security questions. Truman used the occasion to urge close cooperation between Canada and the United States on North American defence and it was agreed that the two governments would conduct high level talks to explore this request further. Before those talks began, King sought the advice of the Canadian Chiefs of Staff who were invited to a Cabinet Defence Committee meeting on November 13. There Chief of the Air Staff Robert Leckie took issue with the MCC's assessments. In his opinion, Soviet attacks on North America in a future war would be "of a diversionary nature" only.²⁹ Upon hearing this, Brooke Claxton, then minister of National Health and Welfare, but shortly to become minister of National Defence, concluded – wrongly – that there was a "fundamental difference" between Canadian and American military leaders.³⁰

There was no fundamental difference. In the United States few officials in the State Department or in the Pentagon took the MCC's recommendations

seriously. The MCC's documents were recognized for what they were – planning proposals designed as much to enhance the United States Air Force's budget as to provide for continental defence.³¹ The Canadians were not yet aware of this and recoiled in horror at what they thought the United States had in mind for the future of joint defence. But when they put forward a differing view of what the Soviets were likely to do, as Leckie had done in Ottawa, and as Hume Wrong, newly appointed Canadian Ambassador to the United States, did in Washington at about the same time,³² they too were playing budget games. Leckie and Wrong knew that it would be tremendously expensive, and not very cost effective, to concentrate Canada's defence effort on the manning of a Maginot Line in the sky. Claxton also soon realized this and strongly opposed it.³³ At a time when the Canadian defence budget was being cut to the bone it was obviously easier to plan for a small permanent peacetime force that could be expanded in time of war, than to think of massive air defence forces trying to hold back fleets of Soviet bombers. Since Canadian policymakers had no better idea than US policymakers did what World War III would be like, they tended to do what the Americans did – they designed it to fit their budget.

In mid-December 1946 representatives of the Canadian and American governments met in Ottawa for informal discussions designed to explore political issues arising out of joint Canadian-US defence planning. It was soon apparent that they held virtually identical views of the Soviet Union and its intentions. The Canadian delegation included Lester Pearson, Arnold Heeney, secretary to the cabinet, and Air Vice Marshall W.A. Curtis. The American delegation was headed by United States ambassador to Canada Ray Atherton and included Kennan, now with the State Department's Policy Planning Staff.

The discussions began with consideration of a working paper prepared in the Department of External Affairs. Its author(s) assumed that the Soviet Union was not, in the short run, capable of launching "another major war" especially when it did not possess atomic weapons. In the long run, however, there were "powerful forces at work" in the Soviet Union which could precipitate global conflict; there was a desire, based on Marxist ideology, to foment world revolution; a need to expand and perhaps even to seek "eventual world domination," and fear of the West. The working paper was permeated with extremely negative views of the USSR and its role in the Cold War: "It is perfectly obvious that the Soviet Union is an expanding power"; "there are no signs that the Soviet Government is willing to set bounds to its appetite for further expansion"; "the strategy of the Soviet Government seems to be emerging with increasing clarity. It is to undermine the position of the Western powers, and to weaken and divide them at every opportunity." This did not mean that Soviet leaders engaged in the kind of diplomacy which had "fascinated the reckless dictators of the thirties." Not at all. They were more likely to proceed with "a course of deliberate and cautious consolidation of positions already acquired together with a process of probing for the weak spots." The document

concluded in this way: "While the threat of immediate aggression seems slight, there is little prospect of sincere cooperation with the Soviet Union. A period of deteriorating relations between the Soviet union and the Western world is to be anticipated."³⁴

The Americans agreed with these views. Atherton thought the paper "a most able document,"³⁵ while Kennan used it as a starting point to explain his idea that the West should aim to contain Soviet expansionism by preventing the USSR from "attaining by aggressive policies those things it was essential to deny them."³⁶ Both men also agreed with the Canadian assessment of the USSR's war-making potential and with the Canadian military view that North America would not be a prime target in the opening round of the next war. The Americans made it clear that they did not favour "the enormous diversion of resources ... needed to provide one hundred percent protection for North America" and that they did not want to be regarded as "unduly continental-defence-minded." Major General Guy V. Henry, chairman of the American section of the PJBD, told the Canadians that he believed "the threat to the physical security of North America [was] slight" and that they need not worry about tying down their forces in continental defence.³⁷ Although some differences continued to separate some Canadian and American military leaders as to whether or not the Soviet Union would launch the next war with an air attack on North America,³⁸ the differences were purely theoretical; none of the responsible planners on either side of the border considered war imminent.³⁹

The difference between Canada's military assessment of the Soviet Union and that of the United States did not reflect a more moderate Canadian view of the Soviet system, of the Stalin regime, or of the Soviet Union's ultimate aims. Nor was there a greater Canadian willingness to give the Soviets more of the benefit of the doubt. It was, rather, based on two other factors. First, Canadian military planners were moulding their conception of the Soviet threat to fit their budgets, present and hoped-for. Second, the Canadian military was tiny compared to that of the US, and had no global responsibility. As Chief of the General Staff C.G. Foulkes pointed out in the fall of 1947: "[American] military authorities made plans based entirely on potential enemy capabilities, whereas it was the practise in Canada to take into consideration not only capabilities but probabilities."⁴⁰ This was a luxury Canadian military leaders could afford.

Escott Reid's August 1947 memorandum, "The United States and the Soviet Union," was neither moderate nor balanced in its assessment of the Soviet Union. Reid began it with an analysis of the causes of the Cold War in which he drew parallels between the fears and ambitions that motivated both the Soviet Union and the United States. Soviet rulers wanted to "expand the defence area of [their] system," he claimed, while the United States wanted to "expand the defence area of [its] system." Soviet leaders feared "armed attack and psychological warfare" from the West, he asserted, but the United States

feared "armed attack and psychological warfare" from the Soviet bloc. The need of both "the Soviet Union and the United States to expand their defence areas [brought] them into conflict in all the borderlands between their present defence areas from Korea to Finland," he concluded.

Reid *appeared* to make the point that the US and the USSR were acting from similar impulses but, in fact, he did *not* claim there was little to distinguish between the two societies. He described the US as democratic and capitalist, anxious "to maintain the existing system of democratic values and ... free enterprise," and determined to "retain the benefits of a free way of life." The USSR, on the other hand, was a "police state in which individual liberties and democratic methods ... can hardly be said to exist." In other words, parallels appeared to exist, but the moral imperatives which motivated the US and the USSR were very different. Reid was not, of course, blind to the desire of the Americans to see capitalism prevail over Communism, but he clearly believed that the Americans were defending political and moral values, if not also economic, that were far superior to those of the Soviet Union.

The remainder of Reid's memorandum was, in fact, strongly condemnatory of the Soviet Union: there could never be stability between Western and Soviet "defence areas" (he did not use the terms "bloc" or "spheres of influence" because the Soviet "defence area" was not merely geographical – Soviet leaders saw Soviet interests wherever "Soviet sympathizers" could be found in the Western world; the Soviets were deliberately, albeit cautiously, consolidating their position in the world while probing for weak spots on "political, military and economic planes"; Soviet strategy aimed to "undermine the position of the Western powers, and to weaken and divide them at every opportunity"; Soviet policies made "friendship or cooperation as we understand these terms" impossible. There was no hint of balance here. Nor was there moderation in Reid's prescription for avoiding a general war: "the Western powers [must] maintain an overwhelming balance of force relative to the Soviet Union, ... use the threat of this force to hold back further extensions of Soviet power, [and] not provoke the Soviet Union into any desperate gamble."⁴¹ Here were clear parallels with Kennan's view that "the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."⁴² If Reid can be considered moderate or balanced in his view of the USSR on the basis of this document, so too was George F. Kennan.

Canadian policymakers did not fundamentally change their analyses of the Soviet Union as a result of the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948. There was certainly anger, outrage, and fear of war following the Communist takeover, but Czechoslovakia, although internally democratic, had more or less followed the Soviet line since the end of the war anyway. As Pope wrote from Berlin: "While the submergence of Czechoslovakia did not leave us unmoved, for the ruthless extinction of the light of freedom must of

necessity produce gloom, the hard fact is that the composition of the Eastern and Western teams remains unchanged."⁴³ However, estimates about the probability of a Soviet-launched war were re-evaluated, while a greater sense of insecurity began to take hold in Ottawa and other Western capitals.⁴⁴ Political and military leaders began to conclude that Soviet expansionism had to be met by a firm western resolve. If not, the chances of war might very well increase. As a result, discussions were initiated between Canada, the United States and Britain which eventually led to the North Atlantic Treaty.⁴⁵

The Canadian view of the Soviet Union and the likelihood of a Soviet-launched general war was also unaltered by the Soviet blockade of Allied land access to Berlin, which began in early April 1948, and lasted until May 1949. At a Cabinet Defence Committee meeting on 2 June 1948, Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton observed that "on the basis of information received from all sources" it was reasonable to conclude that the USSR was "unlikely to provoke a planned war in the near future" even though the possibility of an accidental war always existed.⁴⁶ The following month Claxton repeated this assessment to top civil servants and military leaders at a meeting called to discuss economic defence planning and told them he did not think the Soviet Union would start a war "until the industrial capacity of the U.S.S.R. could adequately sustain [its] military effort." He did not think this would be the case "until 1953 at least."⁴⁷

As the Berlin blockade continued this view remained unchanged. Claxton was not alone. Hume Wrong reported from Washington that neither the Americans nor the British saw evidence the Soviets were deliberately planning a war⁴⁸ and John Holmes, Canadian charge d'affaires in Moscow, reported similar views among western diplomats there.⁴⁹ Holmes' evidence was somewhat suspect since he and other western diplomats in the Soviet capital had been cut off from Soviet officials⁵⁰ but it did fit the rest of the picture. When United States Secretary of Defence James V. Forrestal visited Ottawa and attended a special meeting of the Cabinet Defence Committee on 16 August, he agreed with Claxton that the Soviets would continue to try to achieve their ends "short of war."⁵¹ Thus at a time when the public in western Europe and North America was increasingly concerned about war,⁵² policymakers in Ottawa, Washington, and London,⁵³ still believed the USSR would try to achieve its ends without fighting.

The lifting of the Berlin Blockade in May 1949 did not soften Canadian views of the Soviet Union one bit. When Forrestal's successor, Louis Johnson, visited Ottawa in August 1949, Claxton told him that the Canadian government did not believe "there would be any significant change in the economic and political system of the Soviet Union which would tend to minimize" the Soviet threat to the West. Johnson agreed with this assessment and told the Canadians that the US Joint Chiefs of Staff thought the west's position was much better than it had been a year earlier. In Yugoslavia Marshall Tito had

broken with the USSR, while new estimates of Soviet progress in the development of an atomic bomb placed the Soviet Union one year farther behind than had earlier been thought.⁵⁴ One month later, the Soviets detonated that bomb.

Whatever the differences among some Canadian and American military leaders about Soviet intentions towards North America, there were, until September 1949, virtually no differences among high level policymakers. Both Forrestal and Johnson agreed with the Canadian view that North America was likely to be a secondary target in a new world conflict and that the major battles would be fought elsewhere, probably in Europe.⁵⁵ That began to change when Soviet possession of an atomic bomb became a reality. The United States Air Force quickly revised its appreciation of the threat of Soviet atomic attack on North America and sought funds from Congress for major improvements in what was still a rather shabby air defence system. The air force now claimed the Soviets could and probably would strike North America virtually without warning in an effort to destroy the war-making capacity of the United States at the very beginning of hostilities.⁵⁶

The USAF's new assessment of the Soviet threat was reflected in a Military Cooperation Committee Emergency Defence Plan submitted to the Canadian Chiefs of Staff Committee in June 1950. In this plan the MCC suggested that the enemy's "most probable course of action" should war break out sometime after July 1951, would be to open hostilities with a surprise atomic air offensive against North America utilizing from 25 to 45 bombs.⁵⁷ The Canadian Chiefs were reluctant to accept this notion. After all, if the MCC (and the United States Air Force) were right, current Canadian defence plans were useless. As Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs A.D.P. Heeney pointed out, "acceptance of the plan ... would involve considerable change in the overall organization and role of the Canadian Armed Forces."⁵⁸

Once again Canadian military planners disagreed with their American colleagues about the nature of the Soviet threat to North America, but not because of more moderate views of the USSR. The disagreement resulted from the need to ensure that Canadian assessments of Soviet capabilities and intentions grew out of, and were in line with, Canada's small defence budget. Since such assessments were little more than guesses, why not guess that the USSR would fight the sort of war that Canada was planning for rather than the war envisaged by the Pentagon which had many more dollars at its disposal and could be more creative in its guessing?

On 25 June 1950, Communist North Korea, utilizing Soviet supplied tanks and aircraft, and aided by Soviet advisors, invaded non-Communist South Korea. President Truman responded quickly; he despatched American troops to Korea and sought the aid of the UN in what was presented as a genuine exercise in collective security. The UN Security Council was able to agree to Truman's request because the Soviet representative was, at the time, boycotting the Council. US General Douglas MacArthur was named commander-

in-chief of the UN forces in which close to 6,000,000 troops eventually served. Canada sent a brigade-sized infantry force, an RCAF transport squadron, and three RCN destroyers.

At first the Communist forces scored great successes and pushed South Korean and UN troops into a small area around the southern port city of Pusan. MacArthur then mounted a flank attack at Inchon and pushed the North Koreans back into North Korea and close to the Korean-Chinese border. At that point, China intervened and by early December UN troops were in retreat across the isthmus. The American public anxiously watched the desperate struggle of the First Marine Division to escape "Frozen Chosin."

When the Korean War began, Canadian images of the Soviet Union were already firmly established and, at first, they changed very little. Despite the despatch of Canadian troops to Korea, diplomatic and military leaders were not particularly worried about a Soviet attack against North America or a general war.⁵⁹ The end of the year and the apparent defeat of the UN in Korea brought a dramatic change. Suddenly Canadian officials concluded that a major global conflict was possible "within a few weeks or a few months."⁶⁰ The same Escott Reid who had seemed to draw parallels between US and Soviet conduct in August 1947, now wrote that the USSR and China were "prepared to run great risks of precipitating a third world war" and that the free world was "in grave danger."⁶¹ He urged Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson to press a firm program of action upon the cabinet.

Reid was not alone in his alarm. Pearson, attending the General Assembly of the UN in New York, wired St. Laurent that "a general war [was] closer than ... any time since 1945" and that it would "be a miracle" if it were averted. He was "frightened" by the "fanatical conceit" he thought the Communists were showing at the UN.⁶² And from Washington came Hume Wrong's assessment that "the period of greatest danger ha[d] already begun."⁶³ His observations, set down in a two page memorandum, together with Reid's, became the basis for a joint memorandum submitted to the cabinet by Pearson and Claxton on 28 December 1950. This document noted: "Recent Communist successes disclose the stark possibility that, either in the course of a general war or as a result of piece-meal attrition, the whole of Asia and Europe, apart from the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal, might fall rapidly under Soviet domination. The position of North America would then be worse than in 1940." The only way to avoid this eventuality was a rapid build-up of the west's economic and military strength.⁶⁴ This view both reflected Canadian images of the Soviet Union and the Cold War as they had developed over the previous four years and set the tone for Canada's further Cold War involvement in the years ahead. It also marked the beginning of the greatest peace-time mobilization in Canadian history.

In the course of the Korean conflict Canadian diplomats tried to ensure that the United States did not turn a "police action," as US President Harry

Truman termed it, into a general Asian war. For example, they opposed MacArthur's crossing of the 38th parallel into North Korea in late October 1950, and his advance to the Yalu River.⁶⁵ It is simply wrong, however, to conclude that Canada, Britain and other US allies were any more concerned about widening the war than was Truman himself. From the very beginning of the conflict the US administration was careful to place restrictions on the scope of operations of American forces in this theatre. MacArthur was fired, for the most part, because of his advocacy of a wider war.⁶⁶

At one point in the fall of 1952 Canada also differed with the US over how to resolve the difficult POW question which was then the subject of much maneuvering at the UN in New York.⁶⁷ US Secretary of State Dean Acheson was both surprised and agitated by Canada's stance on this occasion, thinking that Canada had joined a "cabal" headed by India's foreign minister, V.K. Krishna Menon.⁶⁸ It can hardly be said, however, that Canadian "moderation" towards the USSR or China was the cause of the difference. It was, instead, rooted entirely in a disagreement about negotiating tactics, not overall objectives.⁶⁹

Canadian policymakers differed little from US policymakers in their views of the Soviet Union and its role in the Cold War in the period 1946 to 1950. In general the Canadian view of the USSR was just as negative and on-sided, its assessment of Soviet intentions just as alarmist, its remedies for dealing with the Soviets just as tough minded, as those of the State and Defense Departments in Washington. It is true that the American military was periodically more radical in its assessments of Soviet intentions than was the Canadian, but then the Canadian Chiefs of Staff could afford to be more conservative – they did not have the whole burden of defending the West on their shoulders. There was, however, almost nothing to distinguish the views of American diplomats as a group from their Canadian counterparts and whenever Canadians and Americans got together at the highest levels to discuss the USSR, the Cold War, or the threat to North America, they usually agreed on almost everything.

As others have pointed out, Canada would have found itself in the American camp no matter what the policymakers thought.⁷⁰ But the thoughts of those policymakers are nevertheless important for the light they shed on the true beginnings of Canada's Cold War involvement as opposed to the myths about that involvement that have crept in to some recent assessments of that period. There is a tendency for Canadians to see themselves as somehow more civilized and more balanced than Americans in their approach to international problems. This view was certainly held by some members of the Department of External Affairs in the late 1940s who inherited the British Foreign Office prejudice that the Americans were both inexperienced and impetuous in their conduct of foreign relations. This gave rise to some Department of External Affairs members self-proclaimed mission to "restrain" the Americans, in

Pope's words⁷¹ and, not coincidentally, to fulfill our other great self-appointed task of explaining them to our other major ally, the British. In later years that view led naturally to the notion that Canada had been more reasonable than the United States in its views of the Soviet Union and its conduct of the Cold War.

The evidence presented here shows that this Canadian view is based on myth. Any so-called moderation that can be found in Ottawa stemmed primarily from Canada's military weakness and its lack of military responsibilities in ensuring the security of the western world. There was no more balance or civility towards the Soviet Union among the leading policymakers in Ottawa in the period examined here than there was in Washington.

Notes

- 1 Research for this paper was generously supported by a Killam Fellowship awarded to me by the Canada Council and by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.
- 2 Don Page and Don Munton, "Canadian Images of the Cold War 1946-1947," *International Journal* (Summer 1977), 577-604.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 586.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 584.
- 5 John W. Holmes, *The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1943-1957*, II (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 17.
- 6 Page and Munton, *International Journal*, 599.
- 7 Department of External Affairs Records (DEAR), File 7-CA-14(s), "Canadian Policy on the German Settlement," 7 May 1946.
- 8 National Archives of Canada (NAC), Wrong Papers, IV, File 20, "The Possibility of War with the Soviet Union," 28 June 1946.
- 9 DEAR, File 7-CA-14(s), Pope to Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA), 11 June 1946.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 31 October 1946.
- 11 Denis Smith, *Diplomacy of Fear: Canada and the Cold War, 1941-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 36-42. The quotation is on p. 42.
- 12 See Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), 213.
- 13 Donald Page, ed., *Documents on Canadian External Relations 1946* (Henceforth DCER), (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1977), 2050.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 2054.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 2056.
- 16 DEAR, File 7-CA-14(s), Wilgress to SSEA, 17 June 1946.
- 17 Privy Council Office Records, Interim Box #12, vol. 246. Pearson, "Memorandum for the Prime Minister," 12 November 1946.
- 18 Privy Council Office Records, Interim Box #12, vol. 246, "Political Appreciation of the Objectives of Soviet Foreign Policy," 30 November 1946, attached to "Working papers for use in discussions with the United States."
- 19 DCER, 2052.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 2054.
- 21 George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," reprinted in Norman D. Graebner, ed., *The Cold War: Ideological Conflict or Power Struggle?* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1963), 34.
- 22 DCER, 2062.
- 23 Isaacson & Thomas, *The Wise Men* 347ff.
- 24 DCER, 1617ff.

- ²⁵ The full story of this episode is told in Joseph T. Jockel, "The Canada-United States Military Cooperation Committee and Continental Air Defence, 1946," *Canadian Historical Review* (September 1983), 352-377.
- ²⁶ DCER, 1638-1640.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1638.
- ²⁸ Gregg Herken, *The Winning Weapon: The Atomic Bomb in the Cold War, 1945-1950* (New York, 1980), 229-234.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1674.
- ³⁰ NAC, Claxton Papers, vol. 122, File "P.M. Joint Defence Policy," unsigned, unaddressed memo of 15 November 1946.
- ³¹ Joseph T. Jockel, "No Boundaries Upstairs: Canada, the United States and North American Air Defence, 1945-1958," unpublished ms. chap. 2, 26-30.
- ³² DCER, 1668.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 1668; PAC King Papers, series J1, vol. 422, Claxton to King, 7 January 1947. Claxton was the first to use the Maginot Line analogy.
- ³⁴ Privy Council Office Records, Interim Box #12, vol. 246, "Political Appreciation of the Objectives of Soviet Foreign Policy," 30 November 1946, attached to "Working papers for use in discussions with the United States."
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, "Memorandum of Canadian-United States Defense Conversations ... December 16 and 17, 1946." This is a United States-prepared summary of the meetings.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.* Summary of meetings of 16-17 December 1946 between representatives of the United States and Canada prepared by E.T. Gill, 21 December 1946. Kennan's views had first been laid out in the "long telegram" he sent to the State Department from Moscow in February 1946. They were subsequently published in his article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947).
- ³⁷ King papers, series J4, vol. 380, File "Defence 1946-1947, Vol. I," Pearson to King, 26 December 1946.
- ³⁸ See, for example, Cabinet Defence Committee minutes, 12 August 1947 and 4 November 1947.
- ³⁹ King Papers, series J4, File "3365 PJBD 1946-1948," Top Secret Memorandum by the Military Cooperation Committee, 23 July 1947; Privy Council Office Records, Interim Box #12, Vol. 246, Gill Memorandum for Mr. Johnson, 18 November 1947; Department of National Defence, Directorate of History, File 112.3M2 (565), memorandum for Cabinet Defence Committee, 7 October 1947.
- ⁴⁰ Directorate of History, File 112.3M2 (D215), "Extract from minutes of 37th meeting of Cabinet Defence Committee held 28 October 1947."
- ⁴¹ NAC, Reid Papers, vol. 13, File "US and the Soviet Union," Memorandum entitled, "The United States and the Soviet Union: A Study of the Possibility of War and Some of the Implications for Canadian Policy," 30 August 1947.
- ⁴² George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," reprinted in Norman D. Graebner, ed., *The Cold War: Ideological Conflict or Power Struggle?* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1963), 34.
- ⁴³ DEAR, File 7-CA-14(s), Pope to SSEA, 15 March 1948.
- ⁴⁴ Cabinet Defence Committee minutes, 2 June 1948.
- ⁴⁵ Escott Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North Atlantic Treaty, 1947-1949* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), 18-24.
- ⁴⁶ Cabinet Defence Committee minutes, 2 June 1948.
- ⁴⁷ Privy Council Office Records, vol. 74, File D-19-2 (January-September 1947-1948), Minutes of a meeting held 2 July 1948.
- ⁴⁸ DEAR, File 7-CA-14(s), Wrong to SSEA, 22 July 1948.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Holmes to Pearson, 23 July 1948.
- ⁵⁰ Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope*, 17.

- ⁵¹ Cabinet Defence Committee minutes, 16 August 1948; National Archives, Washington, D.C. (NA), RG 59, Records of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, File "Correspondence of PJBD," 1948, July-December, memorandum "Meeting-Defense Committee of Canadian Cabinet," 18 August 1948.
- ⁵² Reid, *Time of Fear and Hope* 22-24.
- ⁵³ DEAR, File 7-CA-14(s), Reid to Claxton, 2 October 1948.
- ⁵⁴ Cabinet Defence Committee minutes, 11 August 1949; Directorate of History, Cabinet Defence Committee papers, memorandum "Special Meeting Cabinet Defence Committee," 8 September 1949.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Cabinet Defence Committee minutes, 16 August 1948; NA, Records of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, File "Correspondence of PJBD," 1948, July-December, memorandum "Meeting-Defense Committee of Canadian Cabinet," 18 August 1948.
- ⁵⁶ Jockel, "No Boundaries," chap. 3, 11ff.
- ⁵⁷ Directorate of History, File 112.3M2 (565), Cabinet Defence Committee papers, Military Cooperation Committee, "Report by Joint Planning Committee to the Chiefs of Staff Committee," 12 September 1950.
- ⁵⁸ Directorate of History, File 193.003 (D53), Minutes of the 466th meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 20 & 21 June 1950.
- ⁵⁹ Cabinet Defence Committee minutes, 19 July 1950.
- ⁶⁰ DEAR, File 50069-D-40, "The International Crisis: Some Basic Considerations," 8 December 1950.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, "The Defeat in Korea ...," 8 December 1950.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, Pearson to St. Laurent, 18 December 1950.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, Wrong to Reid and Pearson, 19 December 1950.
- ⁶⁴ Directorate of History, Cabinet Defence Committee papers, Memorandum to the Cabinet, 28 December 1950.
- ⁶⁵ Denis Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint: Canada, the Korean War, and the United States* (Toronto, 1974), 92ff.
- ⁶⁶ Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War* (New York, 1982), 476ff.
- ⁶⁷ Stairs, *The Diplomacy of Constraint*, 263-271.
- ⁶⁸ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, 1969), 700.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 700-705.
- ⁷⁰ Holmes, *The Shaping of Peace*, 36.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

Lester Pearson Encounters the Enigma

John English

In the summer of 1955, the clouds of the cold war lifted when Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolay Bulganin met President Eisenhower in Geneva. Eisenhower made dramatic proposals designed to break the deadlock of Soviet-American diplomacy. The development of the hydrogen bomb and of longer range bombers had created in Eisenhower's mind the "clean conviction that as of now the world is racing toward catastrophe." Stalin had died in 1953, and the new Soviet leadership, uncertain as it was, seemed to recognize that "Stalinist military science" required revision in a thermonuclear age. In March 1954 two high-ranking Soviet leaders, A. L. Mikoyan and G. M. Malenkov, indicated such revision by suggesting that the hydrogen bomb had made the risk of war less by making war itself more catastrophic.¹

Lester Pearson, Canada's secretary of state for External Affairs, had been present at the centre of international negotiations since the cold war began. Twice a candidate for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations and twice vetoed by the Soviets, Pearson was widely regarded as a skilled negotiator with exceptional contacts among Western diplomats. Although the claim that Pearson was "the outstanding Western diplomat of the period" is debatable, there is little doubt that Pearson's skills and experience attracted attention and respect, even from the Soviets.² In June 1955 Pearson attended the tenth anniversary of the signing of United Nations Charter in San Francisco. Leaving one of the meetings, Pearson was suddenly surrounded by five Soviet representatives including Soviet Foreign Minister V.M. Molotov. He asked Pearson to join him in a private room where he invited him formally, with a curious little bow, to visit the Soviet Union.

Pearson discussed the invitation with Prime Minister St. Laurent on his return to Ottawa, and both agreed he should accept. Earlier that same year Fisheries Minister James Sinclair had agreed to attend an international whaling conference in Moscow. Moreover, the visit seemed opportune in light of international events, especially the thaw in the Cold War. The Soviets knew that Pearson had played a major part in the formation of NATO and that he had been a strong defender of the increase in the military strength of the alliance. He was no pacifist, and, as Professor Joseph Lewitt has pointed out, he was surprisingly doubtful about disarmament schemes.³ And yet he was among the most prominent Western voices calling for more contacts and understanding

between East and West. In short, it was worth an effort on the part of the Soviets to convince Pearson that post-Stalinist Soviet communism would have a more congenial face.

Apart from his contacts in international fora, Pearson had little acquaintance with the Soviet Union and its people. He had evinced an early interest in the Soviet Union, but his career had not allowed it to develop. In 1930, shortly after his entry into External Affairs, Pearson scrutinized Stalin's Five Year Plan. His prose was vivid: "The last war showed us conclusively enough what a state can do with our emotions. The Russian leaders are trying that on their own people and in, they say, a better and finer cause." That cause, of course, was communism: "To ensure reaching that objective the Communist generals are keeping the eyes of the rank and file on mounting chimneys, symbols of victory, so that they will not notice the empty larders, symbols of possible defeat." Farmers in the Peace River and loggers in Quebec would now have their fates "tangled up with the plans of a group of revolutionaries in a Moscow back office."⁴ In a memorandum written the following year, Pearson similarly claimed the St. Lawrence and the Volga were "now tributaries of the same river, the stream of world commerce."

This memorandum on Soviet imports and forced labour was written in response to a debate in the United States and the United Kingdom about the role of "forced labour" in the production of Soviet exports, notably timber. After examining British despatches on the subject, Pearson concluded forced labour was used. He failed to recognize adequately the degree to which "forced labour" was a form of political punishment, but he did see that "in the last analysis, the issue appears to be drawn, not between two types of labour but between two economic systems in which the duties, and rewards, of the worker are conceived in totally different terms. It is, indeed, a phase of the clash of two fundamentally different concepts of social, political, and economic organisation."⁵ These early memoranda illustrate enduring characteristics of Pearson's view of the Soviet Union. On the one hand, he regarded the Soviet system as "fundamentally different" from Anglo-American democracy. In this respect, his opinions came closer to those of R. B. Bennett than those of his Oxford friend and Canadian social reformer King Gordon, who returned to Canada from a Soviet trip with a more positive view of the democratic aspects of Soviet communism. On the other hand, Pearson emphasized the relevance of the Soviet experiment for Canada: The Soviet future could and should not be Canada's future but it would have a significant impact on Canadian development.

By 1938, Pearson's opinion of Soviet communism and of Stalin was much harsher. Embittered after Munich, Pearson wrote to a close friend that

God knows, I would be delighted to see the sub-human Nazis and the equally sub-human Bolsheviks batter themselves to pieces against each other, while the Anglo-Saxons held the ring.⁶

Events of the 1930s had sharpened the distinction between democracies and dictatorships in Pearson's mind, and the German-Soviet pact of 1939 only confirmed his opinions. He had come to believe that a state's use of violence in its own territories would affect its behaviour in the international system. Stalin's purges and Hitler's racist campaigns meant that one could not do business as usual with the Soviet Union or Germany. Nevertheless, Pearson did regard Hitler as the greater menace and welcomed Soviet intervention in Spain and the Soviet support for a common front against fascism.

Like most Canadians, Pearson's antipathy to stalinism almost disappeared as the Soviet Union held off the German advance at such tremendous cost and then began to push the Germans back. While serving in Washington after 1942, Pearson became irritated with the American assumption that they should lead the allies in war and into peace. He wrote in his diary on February 13, 1943: "How are the Americans going to pay back the Russians for the millions of lives lost in their defence? ..."

At a dinner party at the British first secretary's residence, Pearson and his British friends "all agreed that the Russians were winning the war for us and that the American organization in Washington and overseas was deplorable." When the possibility arose, Pearson asked to be considered as the first Canadian minister to Moscow, a request that was denied.⁷ He remained in Washington for the balance of the war and became increasingly worried about American "ham-handedness" in the treatment of the Soviet Union.⁸

Pearson's attitude towards the Soviet Union hardened in the last months of the war. As chairman of the Interim Commission on food and agriculture after 1943, Pearson found the Soviets uncooperative. Their hostility to the participation of smaller powers in the peacemaking process and their Eastern European policies intensified his suspicions. The Gouzeffko revelations, the Soviet attitude towards international control of atomic energy, and Soviet confrontational tactics in the United Nations and the council of foreign ministers made Pearson an early supporter of a strengthened "Western front" against what he regarded as the profound danger of Soviet communism.

And yet even when he sought to strengthen American resolve against Soviet communism, Pearson remained willing to deal with them. As American opposition to the Soviets assumed some trappings of a crusade, he became troubled. His colleague John Holmes later wrote that Pearson "agreed that Russian fears [about American anti-communist zeal] were paranoid but they were nevertheless real, facts of international life we dare not ignore."⁹ Lines of communication had to remain open; the possibility of compromise, which was becoming intolerable to some in the west, was real for Pearson. In April 1956 before the Standing Committee on External Affairs, he expressed the dilemma created by his strong anti-communism, on the one hand, and his commitment to negotiation and compromise on the other:

I am not sure whether we can constructively co-operate with any Communist regime to the benefit of the people of this planet ... [but] believing that living together with these people is impossible is to believe in the inevitability of war.¹⁰

Pearson therefore quickly accepted the serious invitation Molotov proffered to him at San Francisco. Apart from Pearson's eminence among western diplomats, several other factors may have prompted the invitation. In 1955 the Soviets issued a series of invitations to world leaders, the most prominent being Nehru and Adenauer. Moreover, the Soviet press in 1955 showed increasing interest in Canada. The hope for future trade appears to have been the principal reason for this new interest, but it is noteworthy that Soviet commentary on Canada was more favourable in its analysis of Canada's political scene. But perhaps the major reason for the invitation was Pearson's own interest in visiting Moscow. In November 1954 after he had spoken in Paris with John Watkins, Canada's ambassador in Moscow, Pearson wrote Watkins:

When will I be able to go to Moscow in disguise? I have been talking so much about co-existence these days I think I should examine it on the spot.

Watkins had established close contacts with Soviet officials, and it is highly probable that he reported Pearson's interest to them, although Robert Ford also claims to have made the approaches which made the visit possible.¹¹

In planning the visit, Pearson asked John Holmes, who had served in Moscow and spoke some Russian, and George Ignatieff, scion of one of the most distinguished families of Czarist times, to accompany him. Ignatieff warned Pearson that his ancestry might prove an embarrassment to the mission, but Pearson dismissed his worries saying "George, if you're any trouble I'll simply dump you."¹² In the course of planning the visit, the Soviets expressed their interest in discussing a potential trade agreement, but Pearson was reluctant to expand the agenda to include trade. Nevertheless, in deference to the Soviet request Mitchell Sharp, associate deputy minister of Trade and Commerce, was added to the Canadian delegation. Ray Crépault of External Affairs completed the official contingent. Among the journalists accompanying the officials were René Lévesque and Richard Needham. Maryon Pearson accompanied her husband as did two cases of Canadian liquor which, Crépault added, "should get them to Paris where it will be replenished."¹³

In preparing for the visit, Pearson let the Soviets present the agenda, which they did after considerable delay. He resisted, until the last moment, the Soviet interest in discussing a trade agreement. He finally agreed to discuss such an agreement, "over, say a three year period," but he told Watkins that he should not demonstrate "undue enthusiasm" for such an agreement. He was

also cautious in his expectations for the visit in general. Despite this caution, the Canadian government was none the less intrigued with the notion that the Soviet Union wanted trade, especially in wheat, and a stronger political linkage with Canada.¹⁴

On October 5, 1955 the Canadians stepped down from their plane at Moscow airport to be greeted by the Soviet dignitaries, headed by Molotov. To mark the occasion Moscow Radio broadcast a talk entitled "Common Interests of the Soviet and Canadian Peoples" that heralded the "noticeable improvement" in Soviet-Canadian relations that had occurred "lately". The improvement in relations apparently had not resulted in a better knowledge, for the announcer expressed the hope that *Prime Minister* Pearson's visit would be an important step in the further development of Soviet-Canadian relations.¹⁵ Certainly events of the next few days suggested that the Soviets did indeed attach great significance to the visit: The top Soviet officials came to the Canadian Embassy party; Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich gave their time freely and seemed well-briefed. Pearson remained cautious in his remarks and in his reaction. He hesitated when asked to sign a joint communiqué on the visit, responded to toasts calling for "peace" by toasting "peace and security" and questioned the need to sign a trade agreement. He wrote in his diary:

You don't, or you shouldn't, sign an agreement of this kind, especially with Russians, without a good deal of care and consideration.¹⁶

While suspicious of Soviet statements and statecraft, his skepticism vanished when he encountered the landscape and the people of the Soviet Union. Technical people, such as the director of the Agricultural Exhibition – "a wonderful, old, horny-handed farmer type" – impressed and charmed him. The miles of barren wreckage that he passed on his way to Peterhof outside Leningrad rekindled some of the warmth Russia's war effort had created in 1943. His discussions with "not high political communists, but administrators, artists, engineers, scientists, technicians, etc." revealed that they had a genuine fear of war and of "American designs" upon the Soviet Union. Yet he wondered whether the politicians were not using this genuine fear to gain support for their harsh policies.¹⁷

The visit has been described in considerable detail in the memoirs of Pearson and George Ignatieff, and in both cases the accounts are based mainly on contemporary diaries. Both accounts are colourful and informative as was the visit itself. Of historic importance was the agreement to begin the sale of Canadian grain to the Soviet Union. The most memorable event was the extraordinary drinking party that occurred when Pearson and his party visited Khrushchev and Bulganin at a luxurious mansion near Yalta in the Crimea. There in Government Villa No. 4, the former palace of the noble Yousoupov family, the most extraordinary personal encounter between Canada and the Soviet Union during the Cold War took place.

Accounts vary of the meeting but none deny that Khrushchev's deportment astonished the Canadians. There are several items of controversy which endure. The Canadian party was comprised of Pearson, Ignatieff, Ray Crépault and John Watkins. The evening began with a formal discussion of Germany and NATO in which Khrushchev lectured Pearson on that organization's many iniquities, the worst of which was its plan to rearm Germany. Pearson responded by arguing that NATO was purely a defensive alliance and that its military character was a response to Soviet troops throughout Eastern Europe. Years later René Lévesque, who thrust his microphone before Khrushchev, said that in this encounter Khrushchev clearly bested Pearson. He left Pearson "on the canvas," Lévesque claims. This reminiscence, however, may have been coloured by later political animosities between Lévesque and Pearson. Certainly contemporary press accounts based upon the tape of the encounter do not agree (nor do Pearson and Ignatieff.) Moreover, that is not what Lévesque reported in 1955. There is, however, no doubt that Khrushchev's bluster and roughness stunned Pearson and that it took him a few moments to regain his balance. Maintaining his balance became ever more difficult as the Soviets plied their guests with continuous shots of pure vodka.¹⁸

Another allegation, based upon a KGB defector's tale, is that Khrushchev taunted John Watkins about his homosexuality. The taunt certainly might have happened because Khrushchev was not beyond such crudeness, but the evidence suggests it was unlikely. Ignatieff denies he heard any such remark, and he understood Russian. Even if it were a casual slight that Ignatieff did not hear, and by his own admission, he did consume eighteen shots of vodka laced with hot pepper, it is certain that such a remark would have shaken Watkins. His account of the evening, however, does not suggest such concerns.

But Watkins was a homosexual, and he had been compromised. Recently Robert Ford, Canada's most distinguished ambassador to the Soviet Union, who in 1955 occupied the Soviet "desk" in External, has claimed that Watkins once entrapped became an "active collaborator," not a spy who transmitted documents but "an agent of influence." He does admit that "full knowledge" of "his secret died with [Watkins]." The leading students of Watkins' career are more cautious and do not suggest that Watkins was "a collaborator" at the time of Pearson's visit, although they agree that he had placed himself in a dangerous position. George Ignatieff claimed that he did not suspect Watkins at the time and that he saw no indication that Watkins was "disloyal" to his country.

Perhaps the KGB archives may eventually yield the truth. What concerns us here is the central role that Watkins' friend "Aloysha" played in the visit of the Canadians to Moscow. Aloysha, who Watkins described as an historian and his best Soviet informant was, in fact, Oleg Gribanov, one of the highest ranking and most ruthless KGB officers.

Watkins had met Aloysha in April 1955 and then formed a friendship in June after a weekend in the country with Aloysha and other acquaintances,

who reassured him that closer relationships could be formed between Western diplomats and Soviet citizens because the Soviet Union was now "opening up". By late July Watkins was reporting to Ottawa that Aloysha had "close contact with Mr. Molotov" and "Messrs Bulganin and Khrushchev" and he intended to cultivate this most valuable informant, an intention he certainly did not conceal from Ottawa. By early August, with the Pearson visit pending, Aloysha had become Watkins' main informant on Soviet perceptions of Pearson's visit. Typical was an August 18th despatch where Watkins indicated that "Aloysha said that he had been asked by somebody high in authority to let [him] know in confidence ... several topics which the Soviet Government would wish to raise ... " Blair Seaborn who received this despatch, wrote to Pearson that "the Russians have conveyed to Mr. Watkins, through a very odd channel, a list of some of the topics." Indeed, it was odd. During the visit "Aloysha", who was described as "Watkins' friend" by Pearson and whose sudden appearance at the Yousoupov Palace meeting was particularly noted by Ignatieff, kept Watkins informed of Soviet impressions of the Canadians. Watkins may not have thought Aloysha's presence strange, but the others there certainly did. In his original notes, for example, Ignatieff talks about an MVD person being present after the meeting and the reference seems to be to Aloysha.¹⁹

Watkins subsequently wrote a despatch explaining to the department how significant Aloysha was to Khrushchev, even suggesting, on February 24, 1956, that Aloysha had drafted parts of Khrushchev's speeches to the historic Twentieth Communist Party Congress. Earlier on February 3rd, Watkins had sent a long despatch in which he described another "supper" at Aloysha's apartment in which Aloysha and his colleague Anatoly were "obviously upset." Aloysha told Watkins

... in an outraged tone that Mr. Pearson had accused the Soviet Union of having aggressive aims in its foreign policy and of imperialism. He had tried to frighten the Canadian people by telling them that the Soviet Union would attack them across the North Pole. Surely he must have seen when he was here how eager the Soviet people were for peace after what they had come through and that the Soviet government had not the slightest intention of attacking anybody. I recalled that Mr. Pearson had remarked several times since his visit to the Soviet Union that he did not believe that this country desired war. That was true, Anatoly said. He had said many good things but why should he spoil them by accusing the Soviet Government in an important speech broadcast to millions of people from the Canadian Parliament of aggressiveness and imperialism. And the American papers, Aloysha interrupted, have come out with big headlines to say that the Canadian Foreign Minister, who has just returned from a visit to the Soviet Union, says that the Soviet government plans to attack Canada.

Surely he had not said that. Well, that was the implication; he had said that it was a threat to Canada. And it looked very much, he continued, as if these attacks had been timed to coincide with the arrival in Canada of the Soviet Trade Delegation, since they had appeared in the press on the very day of their arrival and seemed calculated, for some reason, to make their task as difficult as possible. I was sure that this was pure coincidence and that there was no desire to create difficulties for the Soviet Trade Delegation. Anatoly agreed that probably there was no such intention in the timing but thought that the effect must be the same.

But why should he accuse the Soviet Union of having aggressive aims and of imperialism? You could call it what you liked, I replied, but the fact was that the Soviet Union was a kind of large and powerful imperium which, by reason of its power and policy, dominated a large region even outside its own borders. Now I know you are going to come back to your favourite subject, [the 1948 Soviet-backed Communist takeover in] Czechoslovakia, Anatoly put in. Well, there are plenty of others, I laughed, for example, Poland, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria, Albania etc. But these countries had independent governments, Anatoly said. And surely I would not say that the Ukraine, for instance, was a colony in the old 19th century imperialistic sense. I certainly could not agree that the Ukraine was very independent in its foreign policy, for instance, or for that matter any of the others from any evidence I had of their voting in international assemblies, for instance. It was clear that they would not dare vote against the Soviet Union.

Aloysha then took the old familiar line that the reason they voted with the Soviet Union was because they agreed with its policy. There were a great many of these old stock arguments brought forth during the evening and they are certainly not worth reporting.

Aloysha then claimed that Pearson had said in the Soviet Union that "he would not say nasty things any more." Watkins said he did not recall the comment and added that he thought the frankness between Khrushchev and Pearson had been useful. "Aloysha agreed, but said that it was one thing to talk across a table in private and another to attack the Soviet Union before a large audience."²⁰

The despatch annoyed Pearson, and it is important to examine the reason for his annoyance. Pearson had reported to the House of Commons of his Soviet trip on January 31, 1956, had made several public speeches, and had circulated his diary of his trip to Canadian and British officials. In all cases Pearson emphasized his continuing pessimism about the Soviet Union's aims. Indeed, in the House of Commons he criticized press reports that had omitted the word "professed" in discussing the Soviet leadership's declarations of peaceful intention. For him "the Russian regime, which embodies communist

imperialism is achieving a strength, a solidity, a dynamism that is impressive – indeed, it is frightening." The danger, if anything was greater because, for Soviets, "man is only material for management." The call for "peace" which he heard constantly might be genuine on the people's part,

but that is not important unless it can influence the policies of the leaders of the people and there is not so much evidence of that. Mr. Khrushchev's idea of peace, and he made no secret about it when he talked with me, is illustrated by his determination to break up NATO an aggressive organization, so he claimed, aimed at Russia and therefore a threat to peace.

The visit, Pearson admitted, brought trade advantages and possibly some advances in scientific, technical, and human exchanges, but the November 1955 foreign ministers' meeting had shown that "Soviet words differed from Soviet deeds" and that "not a single basic objective of Soviet policy" had changed. The fundamental objective, it remained clear "is security for the Soviet Union and the triumph of communist ideology in a world of communist states controlled and dominated by Moscow, ..."²¹

George Ignatieff was even stronger in his view that the Soviet Union under Khrushchev might be more dangerous than the Soviet Union under Stalin. In a conversation with a senior British diplomat, Ignatieff spoke of the "scathing terms" in which Khrushchev spoke about NATO. He also claimed that he thought Khrushchev was sincere when he expressed his belief that the West would not fight because, only Russians and Germans knew how to fight. Khrushchev's blunt, coarse behaviour appalled Ignatieff whom Khrushchev called "The Count". The son of the czar's former education minister told the British

that he was personally convinced that Khrushchev [sic] blunt and aggressive remarks represented his genuine convictions. He did not believe that they were to any degree put on as an 'act' for the purpose of frightening foreigners and making them readier to make concessions. Nor did he think that Khrushchev was conscious of the contradiction between his boasts of Soviet strength and depreciation of the West on the one hand, and his apprehension of Western aggressive intentions on the other hand.

So stern was Ignatieff's judgment that he asked that his remarks not be circulated widely, not even to Pearson. The British agreed, and Sir H.A. Caccia added that Ignatieff's request should be respected, not only for its own sake but also because of a "long-standing rule to be cautious in accepting the judgement of White Russians on the Bolsheviks of the U.S.S.R."²²

Both Pearson and Ignatieff did not share Watkins' view on the Soviet Union which was much more generous than their own. Ignatieff's account is marked by profound suspicion of those Soviet officials with whom he spoke, and he saw the secret police everywhere. Watkins, his despatches make clear, was much more trustful both of the individuals and the state which they served. When Watkins presented his "friend" Aloysha's views at such length in February 1956 – by which time Pearson had made clear his pessimistic evaluation of Soviet leaders' intentions – Pearson responded with unusual bluntness:

I do not recall making any unpleasant remarks about Russia or its people since my return, but I have criticized publicly and strongly some aspects of Russian Government policy. My visit did not reassure me in regard to the peaceful aims of that policy, but certainly did convince me that the people themselves, whatever might be the views of their rulers, did sincerely desire peace. You might tell your friend Aloysha one day that if he wants to convince me of the pacific intentions of his Politburo friends, he should explain why they find it necessary to have 400 modern submarines. A submarine is hardly a defensive weapon, especially when it is an ocean-going one capable of carrying atomic weapons.

As for the complaints about the "nasty" tone of his speeches, Pearson claimed that Khrushchev's recent remarks "could hardly have been nastier."²³

John Watkins was recalled apparently shortly after Pearson sent this despatch. Since External Affairs personnel records are now closed, historians are unable to date precisely when the decision was made to recall Watkins. Dean Beeby and William Kaplan have commented that it is "odd" that an ambassador should serve less than two years. It is certain that the department and the minister were not aware that Watkins had been confronted by Aloysha with the incriminating photographs of his homosexual liaison in Moscow. Even before Watkins was entrapped, his reporting on the Soviet Union reflected a much more sympathetic view of the Soviet Union and its system than was held by Lester Pearson, his minister or Robert Ford, who was the director of the European division which reported on the Soviet Union in Ottawa. Watkins returned to Ottawa to become an assistant under-secretary, but he made little impact upon the department or its policies.

Some recent literature has warned of the dangers of "summit diplomacy."²⁴ Lester Pearson's visit to the Soviet Union was hardly a "summit" meeting, for he stood much below the political peaks in 1956. Nevertheless, the visit did contain some of the theatricality that has marred summit diplomacy. Canada, in fact, did achieve a notable economic success with the trade agreement which created a long term market for Canadian wheat. Ironically, Canada had been most hesitant about entering into the trade agreement. The British ambassador to Moscow, the distinguished diplomat Sir William Hayter, report-

ed to London that Pearson told him that he was "not sure whether he [would] be able to resist" Soviet pressure to conclude a trade agreement. Publicly and privately, he was most reluctant to accept what later became the meeting's lasting achievement. Contemporaries assessing the meeting emphasized the importance of the personal contact, especially in establishing who held influence within the Kremlin. Certainly the visit left little doubt that Khrushchev was very much *primus inter pares*. The rough encounter in the Crimea raised doubts about Khrushchev's stability, ones which later events tended to justify. Robert Ford later wrote that it was possible that Malenkov might have "introduced the internal innovations of Khrushchev with less fanfare, and started on the road to détente with the West without the latter's often dangerous flamboyance."²⁵ Pearson and Ignatieff also were much more impressed with Malenkov than Khrushchev although they recognized the crude political skills that Khrushchev possessed. In short, the visit did not allay fears; it may have heightened them.

The British, reading reports on the visit, said there was little new except for the "colour," but it was the "colour" that permeated the fabric of Canadian policy after the visit. Nineteen fifty-six brought the chilling of the spirit of Geneva, the Twentieth Party Congress, the Soviet crushing of Imre Nagy's regime in Hungary, and the first knowledge of sophisticated new Soviet rocketry. John Watkins' diplomatic reporting, which had emphasized his contacts with the Soviet bureaucracy and the possibilities of human contacts across the ideological chasm, seemed less convincing after the visit. Pearson saw in the Soviet Union a power that would not soon crumble and a leadership that was vain and erratic. He returned more concerned, even fearful of the future and more certain that the Soviet experiment was cruel and anathema to all who cherished democratic and liberal principles. The Soviet Union seemed stronger than ever and was effectively harnessing education and science for its political purposes.²⁶ If the visit's aim was to allay fears, build confidence, and respect, it failed to do so. They came home knowing that the cold war would not soon lose its chill.

Notes

- ¹ Quoted in McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988), 295. Bundy gives the best description of "Open Skies" in *Danger and Survival*. On the transition in Soviet military thought in 1953, see David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race* 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 31ff. See also, Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little Brown, 1970), 392.
- ² The description of Pearson is found in John Watkins, *Moscow Despatches: Inside Cold War Russia* eds. Dean Beeby and William Kaplan (Toronto: Lorimer, 1987), 115. Also, L.B. Pearson, *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson Volume 2 1948-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 191.
- ³ The diary of Sinclair's trip is held in the Archives of the University of British Columbia. It yields few nuggets. Also Joseph Levitt, "Lester Pearson and Peaceful Coexistence with the

- Soviet Union," unpublished paper. An analysis of Pearson's attitude is found in Micheline Rondeau-Parent, *Lester B. Pearson and the Soviet Union: An Analysis (1948-1957)* (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1978).
- 4 L.B. Pearson, "Memorandum on the Five Year Plan," R. B. Bennett Papers, vol. 279 National Archives of Canada (NAC).
 - 5 L.B. Pearson, "Memorandum on the Question of Soviet Imports and Forced Labour," R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 285 (NAC).
 - 6 Pearson to H.D.G. Crerar, 30 Dec. 1938. Crerar Papers, MG30E154, vol. 10 (NAC).
 - 7 L.B. Pearson diary, 13 Feb. 1943. Pearson Papers, MG26N8, vol. 8 (NAC); and John English, *Shadow of Heaven: The Biography of Lester B. Pearson* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1989), 303.
 - 8 Pearson diary, 30 April 1945. Pearson Papers MG26N8, vol. 8 (NAC).
 - 9 John Holmes, "Lester Pearson: The Diplomacy of Partnership," Address at Victoria College, 25 Nov. 1987.
 - 10 Testimony before House of Commons Committee on External Affairs, 12 April 1956.
 - 11 Pearson to Watkins, 26 Nov. 1954. Pearson Papers, vol. 16 (NAC). Also, Albert Parry, "Russia's New Look at Canada, Theme and Variations," in J.L. Black and Norman Hillmer, eds., *Nearly Neighbours: Canada and the Soviet Union* (Kingston, 1989), 77-9.
 - 12 George Ignatieff, *The Making of a Peacemonger: The Memoirs of George Ignatieff* (Markham, 1987), 128.
 - 13 A.R. Crépault, "Memorandum for the Minister," 23 Sept. 1955. Ignatieff Papers, Trinity College Library (TCL), Box 7.
 - 14 George Ignatieff, "Memorandum for the Minister," 28 Sept. 1955. Ignatieff Papers, *ibid.*
 - 15 "Talk by Comrade Socherhatov," 10 Oct. 1955. Ignatieff Papers, *ibid.*
 - 16 "The Honourable L.B. Pearson's Diary of His Visit to the Soviet Union, South and Southeast Asia and the Middle East, 30 September to 15 November 1955," Pearson Papers, MG26N8, Diary 1953, vol. 1.
 - 17 *Ibid.*
 - 18 For full accounts, see Ignatieff, *The Making of a Peacemonger*, 140-47 and Pearson, *Mike*, II, 204-11. There are shorter accounts in René Lévesque, *Memoirs* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986); and Watkins, *Moscow Despatches*, 122-7. Pearson's secretary said that Lévesque's comments were "good". Mary Macdonald to Pearson, 12 Oct. 1955, Pearson Papers MG26N1, vol. 8 (NAC).
 - 19 The quotations and letters referred to are from Beeby and Kaplan, *Moscow Despatches*, 87-127. Also, George Ignatieff, "Minister's visit to the U.S.S.R. Oct. 5-12, 1955," 28 Oct. 1955 Ignatieff Papers, box 7 (Trinity College Archives). The Seaborn comments are in his "Memorandum for Minister," 29 August 1955, Ignatieff Papers, *ibid.*
 - 20 The letter is included almost in its entirety in Beeby and Kaplan, *Moscow Despatches*, 131-40. The original 5 page single-spaced letter is in Pearson Papers, MG26N1, vol. 16 (NAC).
 - 21 House of Commons *Debates*, 31 Jan. 1956, 711-6.
 - 22 Sir H.A. Caccia to Secretary of State, 20 Oct. 1955 FO371/16698/NS1063/69. Ignatieff had earlier said that visiting Khrushchev and Bulganin in the Crimea was like visiting Hitler at Berchtesgaden.
 - 23 Pearson to Watkins, 27 Feb. 1956, Pearson Papers, MG26N1, vol. 16 (NAC).
 - 24 Charles Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam* (New York: M. Evans, 1975), Hayter to Foreign Office, 10 Oct. 1955 FO371/16698/NS1063/3 (PRO).
 - 25 Ford, *Our Man in Moscow*, 32.
 - 26 In an interview with Edgar McInnes of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs Pearson responded to the question of positive results: "... that is very hard to tell ..." He added that "I got their point of view on all these controversial questions and that was, I suppose, helpful and in return I did my best to give them our point of view. Whether that was of assistance to them I don't know." Pearson Papers, MG26N1, vol. 16 (NAC).

A Handshake Across the Pole: Canadian-Soviet Relations During the Era of Detente

Leigh Sarty

In the mid-1960s, two decades of confrontation began to give way to an "era of negotiation" between East and West, a period of increased contact and diminished tensions known as "detente". Its birthplace was Europe, where DeGaulle's trip to Moscow in June 1966 and West German *Ostpolitik* provided the catalyst for a thaw welcomed on both sides of the divided continent.¹ By 1969 the initiative shifted to the superpowers, whose summitry between 1972 and 1974 and the bilateral agreements that resulted became the ultimate expression of detente. The achievement proved to be a tenuous one, however, because of basic differences in approach. To the United States, detente promised "containment by other means" in an era of strategic parity and reduced American international commitments; to the Soviets, detente meant recognition as the "other" superpower and American acceptance of a more assertive Soviet role in world affairs. Each side's failure to live up to the other's expectations seriously strained Soviet-American relations in the latter seventies, draining detente of both substance and appeal until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan signalled its formal demise.²

Although superpower relations were the most important component, detente was a more general phenomenon that grew out of efforts on both sides of the East-West divide to adjust to a world in which the ordering principles of the postwar era – American global predominance and unambiguous bipolarity – appeared to be losing validity. This perspective is particularly useful for understanding Canadian-Soviet relations during this period. A changing international environment and domestic developments in both countries led each to explore new directions in foreign policy that resulted in improved bilateral ties. The main impulse on the Soviet side was a desire to reap political benefits from strategic parity and stave off domestic pressures for economic reform through improved relations with the West which emphasized increased trade. On the Canadian side, improved relations with the Soviet Union fit nicely into the strategy launched during Trudeau's first term to "create counterweights" to an increasingly lopsided relationship with the United States. Although each

nation played a relatively minor role in the "grand design" of the other – the Soviets looked primarily to Western Europe and the United States, Canada to Western Europe, the United States and the Pacific Rim – the era of detente constitutes a unique and important episode in the history of relations between Canada and the Soviet Union.

Relations during this period evolved in three phases. A "courtship" phase lasted from about 1965 through 1970, during which relations benefitted from the Soviets' push for improved economic ties and Canada's more active pursuit of enlightened self-interest. The early 1970s marked a second phase – the height of Canadian-Soviet detente – when earlier initiatives culminated in an exchange of visits by the two Prime Ministers in 1971 and a series of agreements that seemed to bode well for the future. The final phase, which spanned the better part of the decade and drew to a close in 1979, saw the steady erosion of these expectations. Thus, Soviet-Canadian detente generally paralleled, but in some respects anticipated, developments elsewhere in the late 1960s and 1970s.

In the early 1970s Canadian analysts and policy makers traced the positive trends in relations with the USSR back to the mid-1960s, when a relationship that had been distant at best since 1945 began to show signs of vitality.³ The first Soviet-Canadian academic exchange took place in 1965, as did the first posting of Canadian newsmen to Moscow and the signing of a cooperative agreement between the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Soviet State Committee for Science and Technology. Developments the following year included an exchange of visits by the Soviet first deputy premier and the Canadian secretary of state for External Affairs, a major wheat deal, and an announcement of intention to negotiate an intergovernmental agreement on scientific, technical, and cultural exchanges. The period also saw the first steps toward cooperation in a field that for both sides has constituted, rhetorically at least, a key pillar of the bilateral relationship: the Arctic. In June 1965 the Canadian northern affairs minister Arthur Laing visited Siberia, which led to a return tour of the Canadian North by Soviet northern specialists. Thereafter, the image of Canada and the Soviet Union as "neighbours across the pole" would figure prominently in both Canadian and Soviet official pronouncements.

A number of factors account for this turn of events. Mitchell Sharp listed several in his assessment of Soviet-Canadian relations before the House of Commons in May 1971: the general improvement of the international climate following the Cuban missile crisis and the signing of the Test Ban Treaty, the precedent set by the first large scale Soviet purchases of Canadian wheat in 1963-1964, and the Soviets' growing need for Western technology.⁴ This last factor was probably the most important. The economic reforms launched in 1965 and incorporated into the Five Year Plan adopted in April 1966 included a requirement for increased imports that exerted a decisive influence on Soviet policy toward the West.⁵

Economics were not the sole driving force in Soviet-Canadian detente, however. From 1965, Canadian disenchantment with U.S. policy in Southeast Asia magnified concerns about U.S. activities closer to home, fueling nationalist sentiment in favour of a reduced U.S. role in the Canadian economy and greater independence in world affairs. Soviet analysts were quick to notice this trend. *Pravda's* correspondent reported from Ottawa in April 1965 that "heated discussions" were underway concerning Canada's ability to assert her national identity in the face of growing "Americanization."⁶ An article in the respected academic journal *World Economy and International Relations* on Canada's "Problems of the Jubilee" noted the growing opinion that Canada's economic difficulties could be solved only by reducing dependency on American capital, whose dominance had reached "threatening" proportions.⁷ The examples could be multiplied. Almost all Soviet writing on Canada during this period made reference to American economic penetration and the concerns this raised about Canada's ability to pursue independent policies. When Pierre Trudeau called for a re-evaluation of Canadian foreign policy in April 1968, Soviet commentators were not surprised. The "sharp necessity" for such a review, one noted, had been sensed "for some time."⁸

Nevertheless, items on Canadian policy toward the Vietnam conflict in the Soviet press and the journals *New Times* and *International Affairs* between 1966 and 1969 harshly denounced Canada's alleged involvement in the "dirty war." *Pravda*, it is true, reported Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson's call for a bombing halt in April 1965 – a dramatic indication of Canadian-American differences over the war.⁹ But such indications of independent thinking in Ottawa were consistently downplayed in pieces that depicted Canadian policy-makers as the willing puppets of American imperialism. Typical was an article on Canada's "middle power" status in the July 1967 issue of *International Affairs*, which contended that "Canada's claims to the role of peacemaker, independent mediator and even an 'almost neutral power' mirror her desire to influence the non-aligned nations and win their support for the aggressive foreign policy line of the United States." The very success of Canada's foreign policy, it concluded, "depends on her undeviating adherence to the U.S. foreign policy course."¹⁰ Canadian press revelations of arms shipments to the U.S. totalling \$300 million annually put an end, in the Soviets' view, to any pretension of Canadian neutrality. "[T]he Pearson Government," *Pravda* observed, "... for all practical purposes is a participant in the aggression of the USA in Vietnam."¹¹

Two tendencies are apparent in Soviet writing about Canada during this period. Alongside the belief that Canadian policy marched lock-step with American imperialism there emerged, in varying degrees, the guarded hope that pressures for greater independence fuelled by anti-American sentiment might shift Canadian foreign policy to more favourable directions. The question was to what extent Canada might truly distance herself from the United

States. The same *International Affairs* article that described Canada's "undeviating adherence" to U.S. policy admitted three pages later that Canadian policy toward the Soviet Union and the Socialist bloc "has more nuances than that of the United States ...".¹² Although an image of Canada as the stooge of American imperialism predominated, the Soviets gradually became receptive to and even hopeful about indications to the contrary.

Soviet authors have conceded in retrospect that Trudeau was an important "subjective factor" in the improvement of Soviet-Canadian relations after 1968.¹³ Evaluations made at the time were more cautious. Although *Pravda's* commentary after Trudeau won the Liberal Party leadership in April 1968 cited the *New York Times* to the effect that he planned "to pull Canada from London's and Washington's sphere of influence," it concluded that only time would tell whether Canadian foreign policy might be directed down new paths.¹⁴ One aspect of the "thorough and comprehensive review" of foreign policy proposed on 29 May 1968 appears to have impressed the Soviets immediately, however: the Canadian Government's declared intention to take a "hard look" at the nature and level of its military commitment to NATO.¹⁵

Generally speaking, NATO has figured in Soviet writings on Canada simply as one of the various means by which the United States exerts control over Canadian policy;¹⁶ the military significance of Canada's presence in Europe is never openly considered.¹⁷ The Canadian reassessment of its commitment in 1968 reinforced Soviet hopes, entertained since France's withdrawal from the military structure in 1966, that NATO might meet its demise before its 20th anniversary.¹⁸ As early as 1965, an article in *New Times* on "centrifugal trends" placed France in the forefront of the challenge to NATO but also cited a speech by Paul Martin in which he asserted that the time had come to "re-examine" the NATO partnership.¹⁹ It is not surprising that Canadian moves after 1968 were characterized as symptoms of NATO's "profound crisis." The NATO allies' argument that a Canadian withdrawal would set a bad example for others "openly" testified, in *Pravda's* view, to how far this "crisis" had gone. When it was announced in April 1969 that Canadian forces in Europe would only be reduced, not withdrawn completely, a commentator in *International Affairs* noted with satisfaction that "even this limited decision presents the USA with new difficulties in carrying out its global strategy, and with increased centrifugal tendencies within NATO."²⁰

The episode helps to illuminate Canada's place in Soviet thinking and policy. Canada itself was not an object of great Soviet concern, but the potential impact of its actions on the NATO alliance and the United States most certainly was. The same logic shaped Soviet calculations of the benefits of detente with Canada. Just as the removal of 5000 Canadian troops from Europe (hardly decisive militarily) was seen as contributing to larger Soviet objectives concerning the Atlantic Alliance, so improvements in Soviet-Canadian relations, however mundane, were valued for furthering global detente.

This evaluation reflected the Soviets' particular conception of detente. To the Soviets, the reduced tensions and other changes that characterized international politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s marked a decisive shift in what they term the global "correlation of forces" in favour of the Socialist camp. This meant, among other things, a growing recognition by the West of the USSR's co-equal superpower status, of the inevitability of "progressive" (pro-Soviet) change in the Third World, and of the irrelevance of "cold war" attitudes that inhibited mutually beneficial economic cooperation. In Soviet theory, this shift in the correlation of forces was inevitable, but in practice it requires a steady forward push to overcome the resistance of "reactionaries" in the Imperialist camp. As a result, detente has been depicted as a precarious and highly interconnected phenomenon that benefitted from advance along any East-West front, including Soviet-Canadian relations. This "global" dimension in Soviet thinking was an important element in the shaping of policy toward Canada through the rise and fall of East-West detente.

Andrei Gromyko's official visit to Ottawa in October 1969 marked an important step in the evolution of Soviet-Canadian relations that is best understood in its larger international context. The Soviets were in that year endeavouring to regain ground lost in the wake of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.²¹ It was therefore logical that in the midst of preparations for the opening of strategic arms talks with the United States and a busy schedule of contacts with Western statesmen during the opening of the U.N. in September, "feelers" were put out for an invitation for Gromyko to visit Ottawa.²² *Pravda's* account of the talks emphasized the contribution Soviet-Canadian cooperation made "to the strengthening of world peace."²³ An additional item of interest was Gromyko's assertion upon landing in Ottawa that the two nations' capacity for cooperation had been tested and proved in their joint struggle against Germany in World War II.²⁴ Such references opened the door to the argument that would later be used to justify Canadian participation in a conference on European security, signaling an end to earlier efforts to exclude North America from the enterprise. It was also during this visit that Gromyko extended an official invitation for Trudeau to visit the Soviet Union.²⁵

The Soviets were obviously sufficiently attuned to the Trudeau government's desire to assert more independence in world affairs to realize such an invitation would be looked on favourably. Clearer evidence came to light in June of 1970, with the long awaited publication of Trudeau's foreign policy review. Echoing many of the themes the prime minister had propounded since coming to office, the general review booklet criticized Canada's past preoccupation with "role" and "influence" and asserted that henceforth foreign policy should be "the extension abroad of national policies." In practical terms, this meant a more explicit emphasis on enhancing economic growth by expanding and diversifying Canadian export markets. It was also hoped that "[a]ctive

pursuit of trade diversification and technological cooperation with European and other developed countries" would "provide countervailing factors" that would lessen Canada's economic dependence on its southern neighbour.²⁶ Although this latter issue would not receive detailed treatment until the "3rd Option" paper of October 1972, it was this aspect of the 1970 review – its acknowledgement of "the complex problem of living distinct from but in harmony with the world's most powerful and dynamic nation, the United States" – that caught the Soviets' attention. In their view, an improved relationship with the Soviet Union was an obvious solution to Canada's problem.

Although the foreign policy review deliberately avoided detailed treatment of Canada's bilateral ties,²⁷ relations with the USSR were mentioned in the booklet on Europe. Canada, it was explained, had a "substantial interest" in the development of relations with the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, "not only because of the benefits of increased trade, scientific and technological cooperation and cultural exchanges with those countries," but also because of the "contribution" this made to detente. Prospects for such cooperation were said to be "particularly good" with respect to the Soviet Union, though the only elaboration offered was the fact that both nations were Arctic countries. Favourable mention was made of the "halting but significant" trend toward reform in the Soviet bloc, that even the invasion of Czechoslovakia had not destroyed "the widely-held conviction that there is no realistic, long-term alternative to detente," but there was little of substance to suggest how this conviction might be translated into practice. The review made it clear that for Canada, Europe's appeal lay in the "advanced and dynamic economies" of the West, not in their anemic counterparts to the East.²⁸

Soviet analysts chose to overlook this comparatively cautious assessment of Canada's relations with the Soviet bloc. A reasonably balanced assessment of the foreign policy review in the November 1970 issue of *International Affairs* asserted that "life itself" had set before Canada "the task of pursuing a more independent and multifaceted policy in the international arena." It was evident, the author concluded, that "some serious thought" was being given both to the problem of American influence and the "reality" of "the continued growth in the influence and significance of the Soviet Union and the whole socialist community in international affairs."²⁹

This interpretation was consistent with the Soviets' belief that the movement toward detente in international politics during the late 1960s and early 1970s was "no accident," but rather a product of dedicated and consistent Soviet statesmanship backed by decisive growth in the power of the socialist camp.³⁰ This growth contrasted with capitalism's continued decline – a crisis fostered, in the Soviet view, by uneven rates of postwar development that aggravated inter-Imperialist contradictions.³¹ A principal feature of this crisis was America's loss of the hegemony it had enjoyed at the height of the cold war and the emergence of Western Europe and Japan as powers in their own

right, prepared to assert a new degree of independence from the United States.³² As a result, by the spring of 1971 the Soviets could point to a number of achievements – the 1970 German agreements and the treaty with Poland, the October 1970 Protocol on Consultations with France, the ongoing Quadrapartite negotiations on Berlin and strategic arms talks with the United States – and note with some satisfaction a new sense of "realism" in the West that was beginning to make detente a fact of life in international politics. In this context, the new trends in Canadian policy assumed an increased significance for the Soviets.

Changes in the international climate had an impact on Canadian thinking as well. The foreign policy review had itself been, in part, a response to a "changing world," one in which "some of the safe assumptions of the post-war decades," including the world's division into "clearly identifiable ideological camps," were "crumbling away."³³ One Canadian political scientist has argued that the transformations taking place in the international community in the late 1960s and early 1970s would have led to a breakthrough in Soviet-Canadian relations no matter who had been prime minister at the time.³⁴

Still, Pierre Trudeau's personal impact should not be underestimated. Trudeau had always doubted that the Soviets harboured aggressive designs toward the West, an attitude borne out in his relatively calm response to the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.³⁵ And it was not every day the Soviets encountered a Western statesman who had visited their country during the height of McCarthyism,³⁶ or one of such temperament to compare Soviet jailings of Ukrainian nationalists with his own government's attitude toward the FLQ.³⁷ Despite his insistence that the Americans were "not only our neighbours and ally" but also "our friends," and that Canada had no desire "to weaken the [Western] alliance in any sense,"³⁸ the Soviets could be forgiven for believing a "new breed" had taken charge in Ottawa. In accordance with the Canadian government's new strategy of "diversification," Trudeau's state visit to the Soviet Union in May 1971 was "deliberately designed to forward specific Canadian bilateral interests."³⁹ The Prime Minister's speeches emphasized the two nations' common problems, challenges, and responsibilities in the Arctic, and his itinerary included visits to the great northern cities of Norilsk and Murmansk and a tour of the nuclear powered icebreaker "Lenin."⁴⁰ The Soviets, by contrast, gave greater weight to larger questions of international politics. Following a stereotyped assessment of favourable trends in Soviet-Canadian relations, Kosygin in his welcoming speech spoke of the movement toward detente in Europe and underlined the importance his government attached to Canadian participation in the preparatory discussions then underway toward the convocation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe [CSCE]. He expressed the hope that Canada's cooperation could be "counted on" in the latter's "speedy preparation and convocation,"⁴¹ betraying a belief in Canada's ability to influence and overcome Western opposition to

the CSCE that Trudeau probably sought to dispell. Kosygin also made no secret of the economic motives that drove his government's policy, pointing out that projected growth under the current five year plan would create opportunities for increased economic ties with all western countries, including Canada.⁴² It was an open invitation for Canada to join in making the laudable goals of the recently codified "Leninist Peace Program" a reality.

One of the more interesting results of the Trudeau visit was the "Soviet-Canadian Protocol on Consultations" signed on 19 May 1971. Trudeau told reporters during his return flight to Canada that he had been

a bit surprised at the tone in which [the Soviets] are willing to deal with us as a great power To compare [the Soviet-Canadian Protocol] to the protocol signed with France, for instance This is the kind of thing they wanted to see in our protocol and I kept saying no, you know, we're a modest power⁴³

Such modesty on Trudeau's part, reflecting a desire to compensate for Canada's past preoccupation (in his view) with role and status, arguably did Canada a disservice by passing up the opportunity to engage Brezhnev on issues like arms control and European security that Trudeau thought better left to the great powers.⁴⁴ But most interesting is the emphasis the Soviets themselves placed on the Protocol. The newspaper coverage of Trudeau's visit referred to it almost daily, and nearly a year later an *Izvestiia* report on Canadian-Soviet relations reminded readers of its "great importance."⁴⁵ And despite Trudeau's protests, direct links were drawn to the Protocol with France.⁴⁶

This emphasis, seemingly out of all proportion to Canada's "modest" place in the global power hierarchy, reflected a preoccupation with what the Soviets term the "legal-contractual" [dogovorno-pravovoe] foundation of detente, a product of the global dimension in their thinking mentioned earlier. A Soviet history of relations with the capitalist world in the 1970s contends that the "first task" in Soviet foreign policy's "colossal" effort to sweep away the last vestiges of the cold war was to secure the Western powers' "legal-contractual acceptance of the obligation [obiazatel'stvo] to construct relations firmly on the basis of peaceful coexistence."⁴⁷ There follows a detailed discussion of how a wide range of treaties and agreements, from the 12 August 1970 agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany to the joint Anglo-Soviet statement of 1975, helped to enshrine the principles of peaceful coexistence in relations between states with different social systems and thereby furthered the "relaxation of international tensions."⁴⁸ Detente, for the Soviets, was at best a tenuous phenomenon, constantly under seige by "hostile" forces and requiring reinforcement at every turn by formal agreements that would help to keep its opponents at bay. Even agreements with smaller powers like Canada were valued for the contribution they made to entrenching detente.

The Canadian-Soviet Protocol raised a small stir in Canada among Members of Parliament who thought the House should have been consulted. Mitchell Sharp responded that the agreement was "enabling in nature." It did not impose obligations on either side yet served the commitment of Canada and her NATO allies to detente and the promotion of "peace and stability in the world."⁴⁹ Trudeau justified the Protocol as "a natural manifestation" of the aims of the foreign policy review: to broaden Canadian relationships and contribute to world peace in the service of "basic Canadian values and interests."⁵⁰ There was no exaggeration of the document's importance, just a simple statement of national self-interest properly understood.

Soviet concern about continued opposition to detente was expressed in the two "post-mortems" on the Trudeau visit that appeared in *Pravda* in June. It was observed that despite this latest illustration of the Soviet Union's "unswerving" pursuit of peaceful coexistence and the cause of international security, "some organs of reactionary propaganda, above all in the USA" were attempting to "cast a shadow on" and "defame" the true purposes of the Soviet-Canadian summit.⁵¹ The analysis of the opposition within Canada is sufficiently colourful to warrant quotation in full:

Local champions of "Cold War," supported by all kinds of reactionary emigre rabble and unbeaten Hitlerite stooges still occupy imposing positions [in Canada]. Hearing the summoning call from the banks of the Potomac, they raised a malicious howl [against this latest step toward a relaxation of tensions].⁵²

The general tone of this piece, titled "A Handshake Across the Pole," was positive, however. Trudeau's visit to the USSR proved that his call for "new friends and trading partners to strengthen [Canada's] independence" was being put into practice. The "echoes of the Cold War" were no longer so loud in Ottawa. It was in this spirit that Kosygin – apparently to the Canadians' surprise⁵³ – had promptly accepted Trudeau's invitation to make a return visit to Canada.

Kosygin was to experience first hand those "anti-Soviet" forces that remained opposed to Canadian-Soviet detente. Warned by Trudeau in his 19 October welcoming speech that he would be exposed to the "strongly-held views" of certain Canadian "minorities,"⁵⁴ Kosygin got more than he bargained for when one of the protesters on Parliament Hill that day broke through security and attempted, as TASS put it, "to commit an act of hooliganism."⁵⁵ During his press conference the next day, Kosygin remarked that it was unfortunate that "anti-Soviet groups" had attempted to spoil his welcome.⁵⁶ It is noteworthy, however, that although *Pravda's* commentary on the eve of the visit had remarked on the existence in Canada of those who would hinder detente, it dismissed them as "people of a former day," implying that their

influence had waned.⁵⁷ This would appear to reflect a growing confidence on the Soviets' part, stemming from the momentum toward detente in their overall relations with the West during this period, that such forces could be overcome. As "peaceful coexistence" gradually became entrenched, relations with the Capitalist powers could be placed on a more durable and mutually-beneficial footing.

This kind of thinking characterized both Kosygin's speeches and Soviet press commentary during his stay in Canada. References were repeatedly made to the global importance of the XXIVth Congress Peace Program, the international implications of the "scientific-technological revolution," and above all to the common problems Canada and the Soviet Union shared, by virtue of geography and generous resource endowments, in the realm of economic development.⁵⁸ Favourable mention was made of the "Agreement on Cooperation in the Industrial Application of Science and Technology" signed the previous January,⁵⁹ while the final joint communique announced that the committees established under this agreement would be charged with examining ways to place bilateral economic and technical cooperation "on a long term basis." In conspicuously "Soviet" language, the communique added that this would further "exploitation of the advantages of the international division of labour."⁶⁰ Commentary in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* explicitly echoed these themes.⁶¹

Kosygin's emphasis on economic cooperation reflected a shift in policy. Soviet writings on this period repeatedly emphasize that the "relaxation of international tensions" opened "inexhaustible opportunities" to "strengthen and broaden" the "material basis" for global peace.⁶² Actually, the bottom line for the Soviets was increased East-West trade, a strategy Western economists have identified with decisions taken at the time of the XXIVth Party Congress to continue to rely on increased imports from the West rather than attempt fundamental reform of the domestic economy.⁶³ It would appear that by the time of Kosygin's visit to Ottawa, the Soviets assessed the benefits of detente with Canada primarily in terms of bilateral trade and technical cooperation that would further Soviet economic objectives.

This is not to say that the larger global dimension in Soviet thinking about Canada had vanished. Canada was – and still is – recognized as "one of the first Western countries" to put the "cold war" behind it and appreciate "the necessity of building relations between states with different social systems on the principles of peaceful coexistence."⁶⁴ Still, it would appear that after Soviet-American detente took flight during 1972 and the Soviets came to believe that "peaceful coexistence" was becoming a fact of international life, the relative importance of Canadian-Soviet detente in global terms declined. As Soviet-American relations began to falter mid-decade, however, relations with Canada regained prominence in the Soviet effort to stem the tide against detente.

The Soviet academic writings on Canada that began to appear more frequently in the early 1970s focused for the most part on problems in Canadian-American relations. This emphasis stemmed from a preoccupation with their principal rival that appears only to have increased with the growth of detente in Soviet-American relations. Specific events during this period served to accentuate this tendency. The Nixon Administration's suspension of the dollar's convertibility and imposition of a 10 percent import tax on 15 August 1971, an event of enormous consequence to Canada, held special interest for Soviet authors as further evidence of America's decline and centrifugal tendencies within the Western camp. Robert Legvold has shown how in the case of American-Western European relations under Nixon, Soviet analysts focused on the mounting Alliance tensions that resulted from European desires for independence commensurate with their growing strength, disenchantment over the war in Vietnam, and the impact of East-West detente. Nixon's response – his talk of "mature partnership" and a more even division of burdens – was, in the Soviet view, "merely intended to keep things as much as possible as before, only making the Europeans pay more."⁶⁵ Contemporary Soviet writings on Canadian-American tensions followed in much the same vein, with an emphasis on demonstrating the callousness of American attempts to preserve its hegemony at its allies' expense. Much was made, for example, of the U.S. demands for "concessions" in 1971 trade talks to reverse Canada's positive trade balance – despite the fact it had been negative for most of the century.⁶⁶ Canada's enormous dependence on trade with the U.S., one *Pravda* commentary noted, forced it to count on the latter's favour; the extraordinary measures of 15 August 1971 proved, however, that such sentiment was "unknown to the American imperialists," that their "greed and lack of ceremony know no bounds."⁶⁷ A journalist for *International Affairs* put it most bluntly: "Rapacious Uncle Sam seeks to take over everything he can in Canada ..."⁶⁸

This kind of rhetoric, echoing themes employed with respect to Western Europe, suggests that the opportunity for "wedge-driving" between the U.S. and an important ally was not lost upon those who framed Soviet policy toward Canada. Its significance should not be overestimated, however. The urge to split the U.S. from her allies – and thereby diminish the power of the opposing alliance – has usually been tempered in Soviet policy by recognition of the allies' potential to influence Washington favourably on questions of East-West relations.⁶⁹ Such logic would certainly have applied to Canada, whose advocacy of detente both anticipated and, in the mid-1970s, outlasted America's. This is not to say that Soviet delight over Canadian-American frictions lacked sincerity, for such tensions were viewed as a symptom of American decline that most definitely served Soviet interests. The point is that an emphasis on "wedge-driving" overlooks the other important – and at times, contradictory – considerations that shaped Soviet thinking about and policy toward Canada during this period.

In October 1972 the Canadian Government responded to the new challenges in Canadian-American relations with the "Third Option" policy. Instead of the status quo or increased integration with the United States, Canada would pursue "a comprehensive long-term strategy" of international economic "diversification."⁷⁰ Representing, in effect, the reassessment of relations with the United States that had been absent from the 1970 review, the "Third Option" gave a fresh boost to the policy of trade diversification and creation of "counterweights" advanced two years earlier. Soviet analysts welcomed it as a clear assertion of Canadian independence.⁷¹ In the Soviet journal *SShA* during 1973, Trudeau was praised for his "statesmanlike farsightedness" and "political courage," and a Canadian book on the prime minister was criticized for underestimating "the importance of the positive changes in Canada's foreign policy in recent years."⁷² The seeds of independence and "realism" in Canadian foreign policy, observed with cautious skepticism and growing interest since the mid-1960s, appeared to have germinated at last.

The Soviets not unnaturally hoped that trends toward trade diversification in Canadian policy would be to their advantage. As early as 1965, a prominent Canadian nationalist was cited in *Pravda* to the effect that trade with the USSR should be encouraged as one of the alternatives to dependence on the USA,⁷³ and we have seen the emphasis placed on economic ties in Soviet-Canadian relations ever since. It is therefore predictable that the Soviet response to the trade component of the "Third Option" was to describe the socialist countries as large "reserves" by means of which the Canadian goal of diversification might be achieved.⁷⁴ Whatever hopes the Soviets may have entertained in this regard were destined to be disappointed. The high hopes of the "Third Option" were placed, not on the socialist countries of Europe, but on the forging of a "contractual link" with the European Economic Community.⁷⁵

In this connection, Canada's participation in the CSCE took on added political importance.⁷⁶ Its significance for Canadian-Soviet relations lies in the prominence Canadian participants gave to the Soviets' record on human rights. From as early as 1966, the Soviets had pushed the idea of a European security conference as a means of gaining general acceptance of the territorial and political status quo in Central and Eastern Europe and reducing interstate barriers to improved East-West trade; they were, in Raymond Garthoff's words, "probably surprised and clearly unhappy" at Western insistence that human rights and the free movement of peoples and ideas be included on the agenda.⁷⁷ Canada stood in the front ranks of this charge, particularly with respect to family reunification. The issue had long been troublesome in Soviet-Canadian relations, nurtured on the Canadian side by vocal constituencies of Ukrainian, Baltic, and East European origin. During his May 1971 visit, Trudeau handed Kosygin a list of 291 outstanding cases of divided families, and the Canadian position is said to have produced some "frank and hard-hitting exchanges" during Mitchell Sharp's November 1973 visit to Moscow.⁷⁸ At the signing of the

CSCE's *Final Act* in Helsinki in the summer of 1975, the Canadian delegation was reportedly "highly enthusiastic" about the document's provisions on family reunification and other human rights issues,⁷⁹ but the Soviets' record during the latter part of the decade did not bear this out. Human rights remained a sore spot in Canada's relations with the USSR, fuelling the Soviets' later simplistic contention that the decline of Soviet-Canadian detente was due to the triumph of reactionary forces that had opposed it all along.

Whatever misgivings he may have felt over Canada's strong stand at the CSCE, when Gromyko arrived in Ottawa for talks with Canadian leaders in September 1975, he announced that the Soviet government was quite satisfied with the state of Soviet-Canadian relations. This satisfaction may have stemmed in large part from the contrast between these relations and those with Canada's southern neighbour, which had travelled a rocky road during the preceding two years and which stood to become more difficult as the 1976 Presidential campaign began to gather steam.⁸⁰ The most outstanding example of good relations was the Canadian Economic Development Corporation's extension in May 1975 of a \$500 million credit toward Soviet purchases of Canadian goods.⁸¹ Gromyko's arrival speech still included the standard admonition that "further forward movement" was possible in the usual spheres (scientific-technical and industrial cooperation, agriculture, etc.) but he added his hope that the Canadians shared his government's belief that the time was "ripe to build relations on a long-term basis."⁸² He struck a similar note the following day when he remarked how "important [it was] in the contemporary world to give international detente concrete material content, give it an irreversible character ..."⁸³

Here again is the image of detente under siege, requiring reinforcement through "irreversible" arrangements between East and West. In this connection the Soviets were delighted to find in Canada policy makers who, in contrast to their American neighbours, consciously chose not to remove the word "detente" from their political lexicon in 1976.⁸⁴ In recognition of this position Canada received special mention at the XXVth Party Congress. "Our relations with Canada are becoming all the richer in content," Brezhnev reported. "We consider their prospects quite good [neplokhie]."⁸⁵ The payoff came on 14 July 1976, with the signing in Ottawa of a Long Term (ten year) Agreement on Industrial, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation to replace the earlier agreement of January 1971. Long term economic agreements have been praised in one Soviet text on detente for introducing "concreteness" and "a kind of joint planning" to East-West economic cooperation, and the fourteen such agreements signed with Capitalist countries between 1971 and 1976 have been listed as major achievements in the implementation of the XXIVth Congress Peace Program.⁸⁶ The July 1976 Agreement was thus hailed as a significant forward step in Canadian-Soviet relations,⁸⁷ a welcome extra brick in the unsteady edifice of global detente.

Articles on Canadian-Soviet relations in *Pravda* and *SShA* during this period dealt almost exclusively with economic ties, documenting in tedious detail areas of progress, unexploited potential, and obstacles to further advances. A favourite theme was the success of joint Soviet-Canadian companies based in Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver. Growing sales of Soviet machine tools and local praise for Soviet tractors were cited as glowing examples, among others, of the successes and virtues of Soviet-Canadian economic cooperation.⁸⁸ At the same time, obstacles to further expansion were identified: the relatively recent character of Soviet-Canadian ties; each side's unfamiliarity with the other's methods, needs, and preferences; and above all, what the Soviets term the "inertness" of the Canadian businessman, the fact that it is easier for him to pick up the phone and deal with old friends in the United States than to try to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by the Soviet Union.⁸⁹

Canadians, for their part, had ample grounds for complaint. Dealings with the Soviet bureaucracy proved cumbersome and frustratingly slow. Soviet bureaucrats seemed to prefer "studies" to contracts,⁹⁰ and were slow even in taking up the Canadian credit offer of May 1975.⁹¹ Problems with visas, choosing business sites, and arranging accommodations further compounded the difficulties Canadian businessmen faced in their dealings with Moscow.⁹² Largely as a result of these factors, combined with the general downturn in world trade that followed the post-energy crisis recession of 1974-1975 and detente's diminishing appeal worldwide, Canadian-Soviet trade never lived up to the expectations generated on both sides earlier in the decade.⁹³

While Canadian-Soviet detente stalled in the economic sphere, it suffered a critical blow on the political front in February 1978 when thirteen staff members of the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa were expelled on espionage charges. Predictably, Soviet accounts of the episode made no effort to assess the charges on their merits or remark on the deteriorating international climate in which the events took place. Sergei Molochkov, the head of the political section of the Canadian Department in the Institute of the USA and Canada, portrayed the incident in simplistic morality-play terms that would challenge the credulity of even the most sympathetic Western reader: "the successful development of Soviet-Canadian relations did not suit influential right forces, opponents of a further relaxation of international tensions in Canada itself and beyond its frontiers, who only awaited a moment to launch an offensive against the Trudeau Government in this regard." That "moment," Molochkov contended, came with the embassy expulsions of February 1978, and was followed by an anti-Soviet campaign that "brought the further development of Canadian-Soviet relations to a halt."⁹⁴

In fact, Molochkov's dire prognosis was premature. Although delayed by the February spy scandal, both sides displayed a willingness to limit the damage by signing a Long Term Program of economic cooperation in Moscow the

following October.⁹⁵ The "final nail in the coffin" of Soviet-Canadian detente came only with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979.⁹⁶

Disappointment over the unfulfilled promise of Canadian foreign policy in the 1970s strongly coloured Soviet assessments of Canada's place in the world. Canada's failure to achieve a more marked and enduring independence from U.S. policy has been attributed to the sheer weight of the latter's influence, especially in the economic sphere. That influence, the Soviets contended, became irresistible by mid-decade, with the crisis atmosphere in Canada created by chronic unemployment, inflation, and the threat of Quebec separatism. Prosperity had been an essential condition for Canada's assertiveness towards her southern neighbour; under the difficult conditions of the mid-1970s closer integration with the United States seemed inescapable and even desirable.⁹⁷ In Soviet eyes, Canada in the mid-1980s was more closely tied to the United States than it was before the "Third Option" was launched in 1972.⁹⁸

Despite its unfulfilled promise and unhappy demise, for the Soviets detente with Canada had greater importance than our modest "middlepower" status might have led one to expect. Given their conception of detente as serving to shift the global correlation of forces in their favour, it would be misleading to assess the benefits of Soviet-Canadian detente from the Soviet perspective solely in terms of economics or conventional estimates of Canada's weight in world affairs. Because it contributed, in the Soviets' view, to the major foreign policy successes that they enjoyed when detente reigned in East-West relations, detente with Canada offered much more than drill bits and wheat.

Neither should the Canadian experience of detente be assessed only in economic terms. Soviet overtures provided an opportunity to put into practice the principles enunciated in the foreign policy review. Canada contributed to the reduction of East-West tensions in the late 1960s and 1970s, not as a "helpful fixer" serving the holy cause of internationalism, but through a more active relationship with the USSR designed above all to serve *Canadian* interests. Finally, despite their ultimate disappointment and recourse to simplistic formulations, Soviet analysts emerged from the experience of the late 1960s and 1970s with a more sophisticated understanding of Canada than in Stalin's day, when Canada was brusquely written off as a "patrimony [votchina] of American imperialism." The Soviets' appreciation of Canadian capacity – however circumscribed – for independent thought and action is an important legacy of Canadian-Soviet relations during the era of detente.

Notes

- 1 Raymond Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, D.C., 1985), ch. 4.
- 2 *Ibid.*, esp. chs. 2 and 29. See also Robert Legvold, "Containment Without Confrontation," *Foreign Policy*, XL (Fall 1980), 75-77. The clearest statement of the "containment by other means" argument is John Lewis Gaddis, "The Rise, Fall and Future of Detente," *Foreign Affairs*, LXII (Winter 1983/4).

- ³ See, for example, Mitchell Sharp's speech of 28 May 1971 in House of Commons, *Debates 1971*, VI, 6170, and Murray Goldblatt, "Soviet-Canadian Bilateral Ties: The Record and the Prospects," *International Perspectives*, (January/February 1972), 20.
- ⁴ House of Commons, *Debates 1971*, VI, 6170.
- ⁵ Carl H. McMillan, "Canada's Postwar Economic Relations with the USSR - An Appraisal," in *Canadian-Soviet Relations 1939-1980*, ed. Aloysius Balawyder (Oakville, 1981), 134.
- ⁶ "Kanadskie budni," *Pravda*, 14 April 1965, 5.
- ⁷ A. Borodaevskii and S. Dmitriev, "Kanada: problemy iubileinogo goda," *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otosheniia MEMO* no. 7 (1967), 119.
- ⁸ "Novye veianiia?," *Pravda*, 23 April 1968, 5.
- ⁹ "Obychnyi vizit," *Pravda*, 5 April 1965, 3. This was a tiny (perhaps 40 words) TASS dispatch from Washington, which reported Pearson had been received at Camp David in what was described as an "ordinary friendly visit," and concluded by noting that during a speech in Philadelphia the previous evening Pearson had suggested consideration of a bombing halt. It was left to the Soviet readers themselves to contemplate how "friendly" and "ordinary" a visit carried out under these circumstances may have been.
- ¹⁰ M. Baturin, "A Middle Power in International Affairs," *International Affairs*, no. 7 (1967), 45-48.
- ¹¹ "Independence in Question," *Pravda*, 22 February 1968, 5, translated in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* [hereafter cited as *CDSP*], XX, no. 8, 20. See also, "Peacemaker or Ammunition Bearer?," *Izvestiia*, 18 January 1968, 4, translated in *CDSP*, XX, no. 3, 20-21.
- ¹² Baturin, "Middle Power in International Affairs," 45, 48.
- ¹³ See, for example, O.S. Soroko-Tsiupa, *Istoriia Kanady* (Moskva, 1985), 283-284; S.F. Molochkov, "P'er Triudo ukhodit," *SSH A*, no. 6 (1984), esp. 73.
- ¹⁴ Konstantin Geivandov, "Kolonka kommentatura: novye veianiia?," *Pravda*, 23 April 1968, 5. Geivandov made the same evaluation four months later in his first report as *Pravda's* new Ottawa correspondent. See "Nad Kanadoi nebo khmuroe," *Pravda*, 3 September 1968, 5.
- ¹⁵ Cited in Bruce Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy: A Study in Decision-Making* (Toronto, 1972), 105-106.
- ¹⁶ The most blunt statement of this common theme can be found in "Po ubam li budet sendvich?: SSH A usilivaiut proniknovenie v Kanadu," *Krasnaia Zvezda*, 17 December 1969, 4; see also N.I. Agayants, "Canada and NORAD," *SSH A*, no. 4 (1975) translated in the *Joint Publications Research Service* [hereafter cited as *JPRS*] Report No. 94720 (8 May 1975), 73.
- ¹⁷ The Soviets might of course be forgiven such an oversight in light of the fact that discussions of NATO in the American press also consistently overlook Canada!
- ¹⁸ Robert Legvold, "France and Soviet Policy," in *Soviet Policy Toward Western Europe* ed. Herbert J. Ellison (Seattle, 1983), 68.
- ¹⁹ M. Korbin, "NATO: Centrifugal Trends," *New Times*, no. 31 (4 August 1965), 12.
- ²⁰ V. Kosyakov, "A Positive Step," *International Affairs*, no. 5 (1969), 105-106; "Kanada i NATO," *Pravda*, 10 October 1968, 5. See also V. Krasnov, "Canada and NATO," *New Times*, no. 3 (22 January 1969), and "Vopreki nazhimu partnerov," *Pravda*, 25 September 1969, 5.
- ²¹ Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation*, 72. For a critical view of the West's desire to put Czechoslovakia behind it, and how the Soviets sought to capitalize on this mood, see Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston, 1979), 132-145.
- ²² Admittedly, the only evidence I have at this time that the initiative for the visit came from the Soviets is an interview with Mr. C.F.W. Hooper, Director-General of Intelligence Analysis and Security for the Canadian Department of External Affairs, cited in Valerie Mitenko, "P.E. Trudeau and Canadian-Soviet Relations," (Carleton University, Ottawa: M.A. diss., 1980), 45. However, the assertion is consistent with my understanding of the general thrust of Soviet policy during this period.
- ²³ "Live Like Good Neighbors," *Pravda*, 5 October 1969, translated in the *CDSP*, XXI, no. 40, 19.

- ²⁴ "Vizit v Kanadu," *Pravda*, 3 October 1969, 5.
- ²⁵ Mitenko, "P.E. Trudeau and Canadian-Soviet Relations," 48.
- ²⁶ *Foreign Policy for Canadians* (Ottawa, 1970), 8-9, 23-24, 34-35.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.
- ²⁸ *Foreign Policy for Canadians: Europe* (Ottawa, 1970), 6, 10, 18-19.
- ²⁹ S. Volodin, "The Canadian Department of External Affairs' White Book," *International Affairs*, no. 11 (1970), 94, 97.
- ³⁰ For succinct versions of this widely held view see Gromyko's introduction to O.B. Borisov et al., *Sovremennaiia diplomatiia burzhuaznykh gosudarstv* (Moskva, 1981), 6, and G.L. Rozanov, *Politika Sotrudnichestva - Velenie Vremeni: SSSR i kapitalisticheskie strany 70-e gody* (Moskva, 1977), 57. For more detail see N.I. Lebedev, *Novyi etap mezhdunarodnykh otoshenii* (Moskva, 1976), ch. 2.
- ³¹ Erik P. Hoffmann and Robbin F. Laird, "The Scientific-Technical Revolution," and *Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York, 1982), 2.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 48-50; Rozanov, *Politika Sotrudnichestva*, 67-68.
- ³³ *Foreign Policy for Canadians*, 6-7.
- ³⁴ Denis Stairs, "Pierre Elliot Trudeau and the Politics of the Canadian Foreign Policy Review," *Australian Outlook*, XXVI, no. 3 (December 1972) cited in Mitenko, "P.E. Trudeau and Canadian-Soviet Relations," 51-52.
- ³⁵ Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, 67-68.
- ³⁶ Trudeau visited the Soviet Union in 1952.
- ³⁷ When asked by reporters about his attitude to the persecution of Ukrainians by the Soviet government, Trudeau replied that "anyone who breaks the law in order to assert his nationalism doesn't get much sympathy from me ... I didn't feel like bringing up any case [with Soviet leaders] which would have caused Mr. Brezhnev or Mr. Kosygin to say ... 'Why should you put your revolutionaries in jail and we shouldn't put ours?'" Needless to say, this caused an uproar in the Canadian Ukrainian community - no doubt much to the delight of Soviet observers, though this was never openly expressed. See Mitenko, "P.E. Trudeau and Canadian-Soviet Relations," 66-67; Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, 57; and Peter C. Dobell, *Canada's Search for New Roles: Foreign Policy in the Trudeau Era* (London, 1972), 16.
- ³⁸ Trudeau's remarks at his 28 May 1971 press conference (on the way home from the USSR) cited in Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, 67.
- ³⁹ Dobell, *Canada's Search for New Roles*, 30.
- ⁴⁰ See Trudeau's speech at a luncheon in his honour printed in *Pravda*, 19 May 1971, 4, and excerpted in Mitenko, "P.E. Trudeau and Canadian-Soviet Relations," 60-61; see also Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, 77-78; Dobell, *Canada's Search for New Roles*, 30.
- ⁴¹ *Pravda*, 19 May 1971, 4.
- ⁴² Speech by Kosygin at a Canadian Embassy breakfast 19 May 1971 printed in *Pravda*, 20 May 1971, 4.
- ⁴³ Transcript of Trudeau's 28 May 1971 press conference cited in Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, 68-69.
- ⁴⁴ This is the view of Peyton Lyon, cited in Mitenko, "P.E. Trudeau and Canadian-Soviet Relations," 62-63. On Trudeau's reluctance to appear as NATO's "intermediary" with respect to larger international issues such as the MBFR see also Dobell, *Canada's Search for New Roles*, 29.
- ⁴⁵ See *Pravda*, 21, 23, and 29 May 1971; 3 June 1971; and "Puti vzaimoponimaniia," *Izvestiia*, 27 April 1972, 4. Kosygin also emphasized the protocol's "great importance" during his October 1971 visit to Canada, as did the Soviet press commentary. See *Izvestiia*, 20 October 1971, 3, and *Pravda*, 27 October 1971, 4.
- ⁴⁶ See, for example, the citation of Brezhnev's 11 June 1971 speech in the Baumanski electoral district in F.P. Petrov, *Mezhdunarodnoe nauchno-tekhnicheskoe sotrudnichestvo: sostoianie, tseli i perspektivy* (Moskva, 1971), 284.

- ⁴⁷ Rozanov, *Politika sotrudnichestva*, 57-59.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 59-86.
- ⁴⁹ House of Commons, *Debates 1971*, VI, 6169-6170.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6183.
- ⁵¹ "Kolonka kommentatora: blagopriiatnye rezultaty," *Pravda*, 3 June 1971, 5.
- ⁵² "Rukopozhatie cherez polius," *Pravda*, 14 June 1971, 3.
- ⁵³ So argues Mitenko, on the basis of interviews with unnamed officials from External Affairs. See "P.E. Trudeau and Canadian-Soviet Relations," 75.
- ⁵⁴ Cited in *ibid.*, 77-78.
- ⁵⁵ See the brief TASS report in *Izvestiia*, 20 October 1971, 3.
- ⁵⁶ *Izvestiia*, 22 October 1971, 2.
- ⁵⁷ "Byt' dobrymi sosediami," *Pravda*, 19 October 1971, 5.
- ⁵⁸ See *Izvestiia*, 20 and 22 October 1971; *Pravda*, 26-27 October 1971.
- ⁵⁹ The signing of this Agreement is reported briefly in *Izvestiia*, 28 January 1971, 2, and translated in the *CDSP*, XXIII, no. 4, 22. As Carl McMillan points out, the Agreement reflected both sides' recognition "that while their two economies are competitive as producers and exporters of major industrial raw materials, similarities based on resource endowments and climatic conditions also give rise to complementary industrial objectives, which could be exploited as a basis for economic cooperation." "Economic Relations with the USSR," 136.
- ⁶⁰ "Sovetsko-Kanadskoe kommiunike," *Pravda*, 27 October 1971, 4.
- ⁶¹ "Sdelan vazhnyi shag," *Pravda*, 27 October 1971, 4; "Nash kommentarii: blagopriiatnye rezultaty," *Izvestiia*, 28 October 1971, 3.
- ⁶² See, for example, Lebedev, *Novyi etap mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii*, 143-166; Petrov, *Mezhdunarodnoe nauchnotekhnicheskoe sotrudnichestvo*, Section 4; Rozanov, *Politika Sotrudnichestva*, 108-118; and N.P. Shmelev, *Ekonomicheskie sviazi vostok-zapad: Problemy i vozmozhnosti* (Moskva, 1976), 8. For an excellent Western survey of these themes based on Soviet sources see Hoffmann and Laird, "The Scientific-Technological Revolution" and *Soviet Foreign Policy*.
- ⁶³ See Gregory Grossman, "An Economy at Middle Age," *Problems of Communism*, (March-April 1976), esp. 18-24, and the discussion in Hoffmann and Laird, "The Scientific-Technological Revolution" and *Soviet Foreign Policy*.
- ⁶⁴ L.A. Bagramov, "Vvedenie," in *Kanada na poroge 80-kh godov*, (Moskva, 1979), 7.
- ⁶⁵ Robert Legvold, "The Soviet Union and Western Europe," in *The Soviet Empire: Expansion and Detente*, ed. William E. Griffith (Lexington, 1976), 222-223.
- ⁶⁶ V.S. Guseva, "American-Canadian Contradictions," *SShA*, no. 7 (1972) translated in the *JPRS* Report no. 56756 (11 August 1972), 67.
- ⁶⁷ "Kanada: Grani obshchestvenogo mneniia," *Pravda*, 24 December 1971, 4.
- ⁶⁸ N. Agayants, "Canada Seeks a Way of Her Own," *International Affairs*, no. 8 (1972), 108.
- ⁶⁹ Legvold, "France and Soviet Policy," 80.
- ⁷⁰ Mitchell Sharp, "Canada-U.S. Relations: Options for the Future," *International Perspectives*, (Special Issue: Autumn 1972).
- ⁷¹ "Kanada pered vyborami," *Pravda*, 29 October 1972, 5; S.F. Molochkov, "Vneshniaia politika: sud'ba peresmotra," in *Kanada na poroge 80-kh godov*, 353-354.
- ⁷² "Books in Brief: 'Shrug: Trudeau in Power,'" *SShA*, no. 12 (1973) translated in the *JPRS* Report No. 60933 (8 January 1974); S.F. Molochkov, "Canada's New Roles," *SShA*, no. 9 (1973) translated in the *JPRS* Report No. 60287 (16 October 1973); V.G. Mikhaylov, "Canada's Problems in the 1970s," *SShA*, no. 7 (1973) translated in the *JPRS* Report No. 59896 (27 August 1973).
- ⁷³ "Kanadskie budni," *Pravda*, 14 April 1965, 3.
- ⁷⁴ V.B. Povolotskii, "V poiskakh novykh rynkov," in *Kanada na poroge 80-kh godov*, 325, 344.

- ⁷⁵ See Robert Bothwell, "'The Canadian Connection': Canada and Europe", in *A Foremost Nation: Canadian Foreign Policy and a Changing World* ed. Norman Hillmer and Garth Stevenson (Toronto, 1977).
- ⁷⁶ Donald Page, "Detente: High Hopes and Disappointing Realities," in *Canadian-Soviet Relations 1939-1980*, 69.
- ⁷⁷ Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation*, 475.
- ⁷⁸ Page, "Detente: High Hopes and Disappointing Realities," 70-71; Henry F. Heald, "Scanning the Broad Implications of Sharp's Trip to Soviet Union," *International Perspectives*, (January/February 1974), 17-18.
- ⁷⁹ John Best, "A Reporter's Eye View of Helsinki," *International Perspectives*, (September/October 1975), 20.
- ⁸⁰ See Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation*, chs. 11-16.
- ⁸¹ For favourable commentary see "SSSR-Kanada: Po puti dobrososedstva," *Pravda*, 24 September 1975, 5. In terms of the contrast the Soviets saw between such Canadian actions and the policies of its southern neighbour, it is interesting to note one contemporary Soviet text's description of such credit arrangements as "a particularly sensitive barometer of the political atmosphere;" after noting the existence of similar agreements with (in addition to Canada) France, Italy, England, and Japan, the author then engages in a ten page critique of the Jackson Amendment and American "reactionary circles!" See Lebedev, *Novyi etap mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii*, 156-166.
- ⁸² "A.A. Gromyko v Kanade," *Pravda*, 27 September 1975, 4.
- ⁸³ "Sovetsko-Kanadskie peregovory zaversheny," *Pravda*, 28 September 1975, 4.
- ⁸⁴ "Kanada-SSSR: perspektivy sotrudnichestva," *Pravda*, 26 March 1976, 4; Molochkov, "Vneshniaia politika: sud'ba peresmotra," 358.
- ⁸⁵ Cited in Bagramov, "Vvedenie," in *Kanada na poroge 80-kh godov*, 9. In typical Soviet fashion this citation can be found in almost any lengthy piece on Soviet-Canadian relations written after the Congress.
- ⁸⁶ Rozanov, *Politika sotrudnichestva*, 113-114.
- ⁸⁷ See the lavish praise in V.B. Povolotskii, "Ekonomicheskoe sotrudnichestvo s Kanadai razvivaetsia," *SShA*, no. 10 (1976), 65; see also "Pol'za oboiudnaia," *Izvestiia*, 9 December 1976, 5.
- ⁸⁸ "SSSR-Kanada: Po puti dobrososedstva," *Pravda*, 24 September 1975, 5; "Sovetskie stanki v Kanade," *Pravda*, 17 November 1975, 3; "Perspektivy sotrudnichestva," *Pravda*, 26 March 1976, 4; L.A. Bagramov, "Kanada ot okeana do okeana," *SShA*, no. 7 (1976), 68-70; and Povolotskii, "Ekonomicheskoe sotrudnichestvo s Kanadai," 67.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 70-71; Bagramov, "Kanada ot okeana do okeana," 71; Povolotskii, "V Poiskakh Novykh Rynkov," 330.
- ⁹⁰ See Mitchell Sharp's exasperated comment reported in Heald, "Sharp's Trip to Soviet Union," 22.
- ⁹¹ *The Globe and Mail*, 31 July 1975.
- ⁹² Page, "Detente: High Hopes and Disappointing Realities," 75.
- ⁹³ For a detailed discussion see McMillan, "Economic Relations with the USSR," 155-162.
- ⁹⁴ "Vneshniaia politika: sud'ba peresmotra," 382.
- ⁹⁵ Page, "Detente: High Hopes and Disappointing Realities," 78.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁷ See Molochkov, "Vneshniaia politika: sud'ba peresmotra," 362; L.A. Bagramov and V.V. Popov, "Osobennosti ekonomicheskogo razvitiia," in *Kanada na poroge 80-kh godov*, 41; A.D. Borodaevskii, *Kanada v sisteme mezhdunarodnykh ekonomicheskikh otnoshenii* (Moskva, 1985), 185.
- ⁹⁸ Borodaevskii, *Kanada v sisteme*, 185.

Canadian-Soviet Trade and Competition from the Revolution to 1986

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Until the mid-1960s Canadian-Soviet trade was of little importance to either country, except to some extent in wartime. Then, with the commencement of large and almost regular Soviet wheat purchases, it became an important element in the prosperity of Canada's prairie farmers, and perhaps a crucial element in the feeding of the Soviet people. An entirely new sort of peaceful co-existence and mutual dependence had come into existence, together with a monstrous bilateral trade imbalance. In the latter part of this paper we shall see why this imbalance seems to have caused no problems, and we shall guess about the future evolution of Canadian trade with the former Soviet Union. The first part of the paper is devoted to the much less interesting but nonetheless suggestive developments of the earlier decades. It also treats Canadian-Soviet competition in the markets of Britain and Western Europe. For Canadians during the 1930s, this was an important topic and a worrying one; for Canadians in the early 1960s it mattered a great deal less. The data on foreign trade are drawn, as appropriate, from the several Canadian statistical publications on the subject, and, in and after 1958, from *Vneshniaia torgovlia SSSR*.¹

During the years before World War II, Canada's imports from the USSR ranged from a low of \$850 in the fiscal year 1922-23 to a high of \$1,964,059 in 1930. When comparatively large, as in 1923-24 and 1928-30, our imports consisted almost entirely of furs and anthracite coal, the proportions varying somewhat from one year to another. In certain years, however, no coal was shipped, and no furs; thus in 1932 and 1933 our purchases consisted almost entirely of oil, while in 1934 Canada bought no coal and no oil, or imports consisting almost entirely of potash and heavy chemicals. The Bennett embargo² never ended our importations, but in 1931 these did fall to very low levels – only \$13,013, as against \$2 million, almost all coal, in 1930.

Canada's exports to the USSR, in these years, were equally eccentric and variable. In 1917-18 Canada shipped goods to the value of over \$4 million, almost entirely metals, vehicles, and vessels. Our shipments in 1918-19 were

larger still, reaching \$6.2 million. Then there was a sharp decline. Whether the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement of 1921, which established a *modus vivendi* for the resumption of trade, also stimulated trade between the Soviet Union and Canada will always be uncertain. Certainly our export trade continued, though at decreasing levels, through 1919-20 and 1920-1. During 1921-2 and 1922-3 the level was a good deal higher than in the preceding two years, though still very small in relation to our total export trade. More interesting was the first appearance of wheat, flour, and binder twine in the pattern of our sales to the USSR. In 1924-5 Canada shipped goods to the value of \$11.6 million, almost entirely wheat and flour. Sales of both commodities continued, though at much lower levels, in the late 1920s, at which time Canada also sold sizeable quantities of agricultural implements, ploughs, non-ferrous metals, and binder twine. The twine sales ended abruptly with the calendar year 1930; presumably a Soviet factory had begun operations. Similarly, agricultural implement exports vanished with the end of 1931, and in 1932 Canada sold only aluminum and wheat, while in 1933, 1934, and 1935, doubtless because of Soviet retaliation against our embargo, Canada sold almost nothing at all. In 1933, indeed, our total shipments to the USSR were valued at only \$242. With the end of the embargo there was a revival, so that in 1938 our exports were just under \$1 million – still less than one-eleventh of the 1924-5 figure. The composition of our exports, moreover, had changed entirely since the 1920s. In 1924-5 the Soviet Union was buying Canadian flour, and to some small extent Canadian wheat; in 1938 it was buying almost nothing but aluminum, a commodity that had also bulked large in 1937. Soviet exports to Canada, meanwhile, had by 1938 come to consist almost wholly of anthracite and furs – hardly the exports of a developed industrial state.

As Norman Hillmer shows, the trouble with Soviet anthracite in the early 1930s, from the Canadian government's viewpoint, was in part a moral one, and in part a matter of domestic political pressure, but it also had an important economic element. The Soviet product competed with British anthracite in the Quebec market, and to some extent in the Maritimes also. Thus the coal question was deeply involved with the complicated question of "imperial preference" – a topic that surfaced in a serious way thanks to the efforts of R.B. Bennett at the 1930 Imperial Conference, peaked at the Ottawa Conference of 1932, and remained a preoccupation for Canadian governments, whether Conservative or Liberal, for the rest of the decade, and, indeed, long afterward. Bennett and his government were serious about imperial preference, which Bennett was inclined to define as the reservation of the Canadian market for British goods in so far as the commodities in question were not produced in Canada. An embargo on Soviet anthracite, therefore, would cause Canada to buy roughly 10 per cent more anthracite from South Wales. Canada had long given a preferential tariff concession to British anthracite, much to the rage of the Americans, whose coal was charged the same duty as Soviet coal. But

Bennett seems to have realized that no preferential margin could price Soviet coal out of the Canadian market so long as the Soviet authorities were anxious to sell. The powers of arbitrary customs-valuation which Parliament gave the Bennett government in the early 1930s could, of course, be deployed to exclude Soviet coal. But an embargo was simpler, achieved the same end, and could be dressed in moralistic rhetoric. Soviet crude oil mattered much less. Britain produced no crude, the Empire's production could not meet Canada's needs, and the nation's domestic production could not supply the markets of Ontario and the more easterly provinces. Hence, perhaps, Bennett's willingness to tolerate imports of Soviet crude in 1932 and 1933.

If Soviet anthracite was a threat to imperial preference, so was Soviet lumber, for which the principal western European market had always been the United Kingdom. Indeed, the western flow of Russian softwood may be seen as a continuation of a pattern that stretches back to the eighteenth century, and even earlier. Great Britain has long depended, for most of its softwood, on the Baltic area, and Soviet forests; whether in the Baltic drainage basin or on the White Sea and Arctic slopes, these may properly be seen as extensions of this traditional supply area. There were, furthermore, long-lasting and well-established trading connections between Soviet timber authorities and British importers. Thus, although she was still sending less softwood than before the Great War, the Soviet Union was, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, shipping increasing amounts to Britain, so that in 1931 she supplied 25 per cent of the British market.³ On 21 February 1931, following strong representations from Canadian lumbering interests, Bennett embargoed not only Soviet coal but also Soviet pulpwood, wood pulp, timber, lumber, asbestos, and furs. But the Canadian embargo, of course, did nothing to keep Soviet timber out of the United Kingdom. Thus in January 1932 the Canadian High Commissioner asked the United Kingdom to ban the import of Soviet timber, impose a quota control, or, at least, denounce the most favoured nation (mfn) arrangement by which Soviet timber entered the United Kingdom. The third proposal made little sense because at that time Britain did not tax timber imports at all. With the passage of the Import Duties Act in February 1932, however, and with the prospect of an increasingly elaborate tariff system in the United Kingdom, the Canadian suggestion would come to have a certain plausibility. Bennett, however, really wanted more: in July and August 1932, at the Ottawa Conference, he pressed the British to ban Soviet timber, a proposal that the United Kingdom delegation was not prepared to consider.

Canada and Australia, furthermore, were worried about the prospect of Soviet wheat-dumping. The spectre was especially alarming for Bennett, who was obliged to cope with an enormous mass of unsold prairie grain, an inventory for which his government had assumed responsibility. Neither the Australians nor the Canadians, of course, knew just what was happening, or what would happen, on the wheat fields of the USSR. Their wheat concerns,

therefore, were added to Canada's lumber concerns, and the result was seen in several elements of the Ottawa pacts: not only a British duty on non-Empire wheat and a pledge of free entry for empire wheat and timber, but also Article 21 of the Anglo-Canadian Ottawa trade agreement. This article was general in form, referring to "creation or maintenance directly or indirectly of prices ... through state action on the part of any foreign country." But it was aimed at the USSR. And it committed not only the United Kingdom but also Canada to "exercise the powers which it now has or will hereafter take to prohibit the entry from such foreign country directly ... to make effective and to maintain the preference." In other words, if Soviet pricing practices were preventing Canada from selling timber in Britain, the United Kingdom would embargo Soviet timber. Or so it seemed.

Better protection, it might appear, could hardly be devised. And it was not long before Bennett was pressing for action under Article 21. The terms of Soviet timber marketing were negotiated each autumn between the Soviet White Sea Timber Trust and Timber Distributors Ltd., a consortium of British timber-marketing interests. The resulting contract, which contained a so-called "fall and rise clause" under which Soviet timber would always receive the market price, not the previously-contracted price, whenever the two might differ, always became public knowledge. And the "fall and rise" clause, the Canadians thought, was precisely the sort of state pricing at which Article 21 was aimed. Hence, when Howard Ferguson, Canada's high commissioner, learned that Timber Distributors were proposing to buy a very large quantity of Soviet timber on these terms, he and Canada's Lumber interests became very agitated. On November 15, Ferguson asked the UK authorities to regard the impending contract as a breach of Article 21.

Whitehall officials and politicians, however, were anything but anxious to oblige. Neville Chamberlain, the chancellor of the exchequer, had already told the Soviet Ambassador that the United Kingdom would never invoke Article 21 without first consulting the Soviet authorities. At the Board of Trade, officials feared that if Britain were to embargo Soviet timber, the USSR would default on the short-term credits that London financiers had extended to finance Soviet purchases of machinery. Even if there was no actual default, they thought, there would probably be a serious financial crisis, and an end to further Soviet ordering of British goods – no small matter in the depth of the Great Depression. An informal approach, therefore, was thought best.

The Board of Trade convinced Timber Distributors to buy less Soviet timber, and to pay a higher price. Admittedly the "fall and rise clause" was still included, but if the contract price actually did prevail, the Soviets would receive rather more sterling in exchange for much less timber. It is hardly surprising that Moscow acquiesced. What fools these capitalists be! The Board of Trade also tried, without success, to organize a buying consortium for British Columbia timber. The effort failed, in large part because the BC timber interests were too greedy.

Although the Bennett government continued its representations and its demands, the United Kingdom never did invoke Article 21, and when it did briefly embargo Soviet goods, in April, May, and June 1933, it was concerned to extract British subjects from Soviet prisons, not to placate the prime minister of Canada. The Board of Trade, meanwhile, continued to massage Timber Distributors Ltd., so that the consortium came to buy less and less Soviet timber, and to pay rather higher prices for it. The losers, as so often in economic diplomacy, were consumers – Britain's users of imported softwood.

When the Mackenzie King government took office in autumn 1935, Article 21 quickly dropped from sight. Ottawa complained no more about "unfair" Soviet competition, and in the new Anglo-Canadian trade agreement of February 1937 there was no such clause as Article 21 – nor, it would seem, was the King government anxious to retain it. In autumn 1936, indeed, King abolished Bennett's own embargo. The way was clear for Soviet furs, and for a controlled importation of Soviet coal. Both goods, as we have seen, promptly reappeared on Canada's import list. When war broke out, the Canadian government was on the brink of signing an Ottawa-Moscow trade agreement – the first such document – under which Canada would have bought still more Soviet anthracite. Thanks to the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, the agreement was never signed. Meanwhile, Canada still granted a preferential rate to British anthracite. Indeed, King's officials defended the arrangement with enthusiasm and vigour in the Canadian-American trade negotiations of 1938.⁴

Soviet competition, though certainly an exaggerated threat in Ottawa's official mind and in the thought of R.B. Bennett, was real enough. So as to earn the foreign exchange that its industrialization desperately required, the USSR would have to export, but it could not yet depend on the oil, gas, and gold that would later be its main means of earning hard currency. The staple Soviet exports, therefore, were direct competitors for Canadian goods and for Welsh coal. Canada's officials can hardly be criticized for failing to realize what Stalinist collectivization would do to the Soviet grain-growing capacity. But there was, as yet, no competition with respect to aluminum: indeed, as we saw above, in the late 1930s the Soviets were actually buying the white metal from Alcan. Competition would not come for another two decades.

The outbreak of war, at first, did not much disturb the course of Canadian-Soviet trade. Imports, almost wholly of furs and cotton rags, continued in 1939, while exports fell by nearly three-quarters to \$275 thousand. In 1940, however, Canada's exports collapsed to the impressive figure of \$591, and imports fell by more than three-quarters, a decline which continued to 1942, when a level of \$108 was reached. Imports then revived, reaching an average of \$1.6 million in 1945 and 1946, furs and chemicals predominating. Exports, however, exploded under the joint stimulus of Lend-Lease and Mutual Aid, reaching over \$103 million in 1944. After some decline in 1945, Canada's exports were still \$11 million in 1946. From 1941 on, Canada sold

perceptible quantities of wheat and flour, but the nation's most important wartime exports to the USSR were rails, motor vehicles, and other war materiel. Virtually all these wartime shipments were unrequited. Even in 1945, Canada's imports from the Soviet Union financed less than 3 per cent of its shipments to that country.

This wartime pattern naturally could not continue long after the end of hostilities, nor could it survive the onset of the Cold War. After 1946 Canadian-Soviet trade collapsed. In 1948 and 1949 our imports averaged \$5,000 per year, and in 1951, 1952, and 1953 Canada sold nothing to the Soviet Union. Such imports as did occur consisted almost entirely of furs, largely Persian lamb. It would have been reasonable for Ottawa, in these years, to suppose that the USSR, which had not joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, would never be of importance to Canada's trade, whether as buyer, seller, or competitor. But with Stalin's death things changed.

While continuing to send Canada little except furs, the USSR began in 1954 to buy in Canada, and in 1956, following Lester Pearson's visit to Moscow in 1955, it made its first post-war purchase of Canadian wheat. In 1956 through 1962, however, these purchases, though accounting for almost all of the exports from Canada to the Soviet Union, were small and intermittent – never more than \$24 million in value, and in 1960 and 1962, nonexistent. Canada's imports from the Soviet Union, though never balancing sales to that country, also expanded, and became somewhat more diversified, perhaps under the stimulus of the Canadian-Soviet trade agreement. This agreement, which has been often renewed but never significantly altered, provided mfn treatment for Soviet and Canadian goods. The arrangement could have been an important concession so far as Soviet exporters were concerned, because it placed them on the same footing, in the Canadian market, as any GATT signatory. For Canadian exporters the arrangement can have been of little value, because tariff-charges presumably have little influence on Soviet import-planning. Thus, although furs still bulked large, after 1957 Canada also bought sizeable quantities of Soviet chemicals and metals, including, in 1958, chrome ore. The trade, however, was still a trivially small item in Canada's international accounts. Even in 1961, when Canada sold the USSR \$24 million worth of goods, these exports were less than 0.5 per cent of Canada's total export sales, while Canada's imports of \$2.7 million from the Soviet Union were an insignificant item in an import bill of \$5.8 billion.

Things changed not when Canada signed a trade agreement but when, in 1963, the Soviet Union began to buy really large quantities of Canadian wheat. In a single year Canada's exports rose from \$3.3 million to \$150 million, almost wholly because wheat sales rose from zero to \$140 million. In 1969 and 1974, when little wheat went to the USSR, Canada's total export sales collapsed in parallel. Although fluctuating, sales showed an upward trend, and in some years they were very large indeed – 80 million cwt in 1972, 70 million in

1973, 98 million in 1980, 85 million in 1981, 154 million in 1984. In that year Canada earned \$2.1 billion, or 1.6 per cent of the nation's entire export earnings, by selling commodities to the Soviet Union. Of this amount, \$1.9 billion came from wheat sales. The USSR, indeed, emerged as one of Canada's two principal wheat markets, the other being not the United Kingdom but the People's Republic of China.

Canada's imports from the Soviet Union also grew, but much more slowly and, in terms of commodity composition, more erratically. In the 1960s furs remained important, joined in certain years by raw cotton, cotton textiles, sheet glass, penicillin, and metals. Watches and watch movements made their appearance, as did petroleum in certain years. After some small sales in earlier years, in 1974 Canada began to buy perceptible quantities of Soviet wheeled tractors. Soviet manufactures, indeed, gradually bulked larger in Canada's importation of Soviet goods. So far as consumers were concerned, this tendency culminated with the advent of the Lada motor car. But imports from the Soviet Union were still trivially small when compared with Canada's total import bill, or with the size of the Canadian economy. In 1984, when the Soviets sold Canada goods to the value of \$28.7 million, Canada's imports cost \$129.7 billion in total, and the nation's gross national product was \$420.9 billion.

If Soviet goods mattered little to Canadian buyers, and Soviet markets mattered chiefly to Canadian wheat farmers and to the Canadian Wheat Board, what of Soviet competition in the markets of western Europe? In Britain and on the Continent, Canadian-Soviet competition always revolved around the goods that since 1960 the Canadian statisticians have labelled "fabricated materials inedible," or FMI for short. These goods are comparatively simple manufactures – lumber, plywood, paper, aluminum, and other non-ferrous metals, but not ores or concentrates. In several of these commodities, including for the first time aluminum, Canadian exporters began to meet new Soviet competition during the late 1950s, and this competitive thrust continued into the 1960s.

Naturally the competition was especially noticeable in the United Kingdom, a comparatively open market that had traditionally imported most of its lumber and its aluminum. The competition was also perceptible, for the same reasons, in the Netherlands, but it was less of a concern in France, which had traditionally protected its own aluminum manufactures, or in the rapidly expanding economy of West Germany, even though the Soviet Union was sending large amounts of lumber there. The picture, however, was complicated by the growth of productive capacity within the west European economy and by the increasing integration of that economy, first into the separate EFTA and EEC blocs, and then, after 1973, into a single free trade area that linked an enlarged EEC with the remnants of EFTA. Aluminum, in particular, was affected by these intra-European developments. Hence it is no longer fruitful to

analyze competition in terms of single national markets, such as that of the United Kingdom; it is best to treat western Europe as a whole: Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Canadian trade data are arranged in this way, and from Soviet foreign trade year books we have extracted and rearranged precisely comparable data, generally in terms of physical quantities, for the same geographical area.

The period which began in the mid-1950s saw a considerable Soviet export drive in western Europe. In years of good crops the USSR even exported grain, although after the early 1960s western Europe bought no Soviet wheat. From the Canadian viewpoint, however, the export drive seemed to be concentrated on FMI, and especially on aluminum and softwood lumber. From 1957 to 1959, Soviet sales of aluminum to western Europe rose by 40 per cent, and to the United Kingdom, by 70 per cent, while the Canadian share decreased. Thereafter Soviet aluminum exports fluctuated, rising to much higher peaks in 1965 and 1966, then falling away, only to rise again in the mid-seventies. In 1974, when the USSR ceased to publish information on its exports of non-ferrous metals, the United Kingdom was buying just over twice as much Soviet aluminum as in 1957, while western Europe as a whole was buying 267 per cent as much as in that earlier year. Canadian sales of aluminum in this market, meanwhile, were barely 4 per cent in 1986 of what they had been in 1969. Soviet exports of logs to western Europe rose four-fold between 1957 and 1966. After some retrogression, growth was resumed in the early 1980s, so that in 1985 Soviet exports of logs were seven times what they had been in 1957. However, much of the increase in sales – 70 per cent of the increase from 1966 to 1985, and 56 per cent of the increase from 1957 to 1985 – consisted of new Finnish purchases. Japan too emerged as a field for Canadian-Soviet softwood competition: over the same period, Japanese log purchases rose from 163,000 cubic metres to 5.6 million. Soviet exports of sawn lumber also almost doubled between 1957 and 1965, and the expansion in sales was most marked, as in the 1930s, with respect to the United Kingdom, which had absorbed 39 per cent of the increased sales and which still, in 1965, was taking half of the Soviet total. Canada, meanwhile, was doing badly in the British timber market, although a rather better performance in the continental timber market was some compensation. As for plywood, from 1958 to 1970 Soviet sales rose by 77 per cent, only to stagnate thereafter, so that in 1984 and 1985 they were only a little higher than in 1970. Paper sales fell from small amounts in 1957-8 to nothing from 1964 to 1981, and in 1982-5 they were still smaller, on the average, than they had been in 1957-60.

Much more dramatic than the increase in Soviet sales of such "competitive" FMI goods, however, was the rush of Soviet oil into western Europe. In 1957 the USSR exported 426,000 tonnes of crude oil, entirely to Italy, and she also sold 3.6 million tonnes of refined products. By 1966 exports of crude oil

alone were 17.1 million tonnes, while by 1968, exports of crude oil and refined products had reached 37.7 million tonnes so far as western Europe was concerned, and exports to Japan had risen from zero in 1957 to 2.8 million tonnes. Since the price of oil hardly changed during this period, Soviet receipts of US dollars naturally rose *pari passu*. By 1975, following the dramatic oil-price increases of 1972-4, the USSR was selling 43.6 million tonnes of crude oil and refinery products, and another 7 billion cubic metres of natural gas, in western Europe. Oil sales to Japan had fallen somewhat, but were still well over a million tonnes a year in 1975. Soon thereafter the Soviet Union ceased to publish information about the volume of its petrocarbon exports. The value data, however, are still revealing: from western Europe, total receipts of 9.2 million rubles in 1980, and another 109 million from sales to Japan. By 1984 the western European figure was just under 16 billion rubles – substantially more than eight times the amount which the USSR was spending on Canadian wheat.

So far as Canada was concerned, the Soviet grain exports of the late 1950s were merely a temporary perturbation, and there was nothing to fear from Soviet plywood and paper exports. Aluminum, however, was another matter. Canadian exports to the United Kingdom fell by more than 50 per cent between 1955 and 1970, while Soviet aluminum exports rose markedly. Nevertheless, and in spite of troubles in the aluminum and lumber markets, during the 1960s the volume of Canada's exports of FMI to western Europe rose nearly 40 per cent to Britain, and a 62 per cent increase for western Europe as a whole. The relevant export price level, as reported in *Historical Statistics of Canada*⁵ rose 27 per cent. We cannot repeat the calculation for the late 1950s because all Canada's trade data were then reported in a different classification. This was a respectable performance, especially given the increasingly energetic competition from Norwegian aluminum producers⁶ and the Nordic softwood industries.

The picture for the 1970s and 1980s was less encouraging for Canadian exporters. So far as western Europe was concerned, the nation's shipments of FMI declined perceptibly in real terms, while, as we saw above, Soviet exports tended to increase. Thus, for instance, by 1986 Canada's transatlantic aluminum exports had become entirely inconsequential. Lumber exports did rather better, expanding perceptibly until the mid-1970s, but by 1986 Canada was selling less to Britain, France, and West Germany, even in terms of current prices, than she had sold in the period 1978-80. Similar patterns appeared in the lumber and aluminum trades to Italy and Benelux. The data on Soviet exportation do suggest that, in the 1970s, the Soviet authorities tried to increase their earnings of hard currency by sending more FMI, and of course more hydrocarbons, to the western European markets.

In the early 1960s Canadian exporters, echoing the voices of the 1930s, sometimes complained that Soviet competition was "unfair," that Soviet producers "did not know what their goods cost," or even that Soviet exporters

deliberately dumped commodities so as to disorganize world markets. These views were less frequently voiced as time passed, and indeed there can be little doubt that Soviet competition became less "unfair" with each succeeding year. Soviet producers and exporters certainly did know, in ruble terms, whether or not they were making a profit or a loss on each export transaction. Admittedly, because Soviet internal prices were often irrational, the full cost of the inputs was certainly not always charged. But the same could have been said of capitalist manufacturers, especially, perhaps, in such FMI industries as forest products and aluminum. Furthermore, because Soviet internal prices remained essentially unchanged for very long periods, while the capitalist price level was rising, many of the loss-making industries of 1960 must have become profitable, in ruble terms, by 1980 – even when one allows for the appreciation of the ruble, in terms of the dollar, during the 1970s.

In their trade with Canada, as with other capitalist lands, the Soviets were always anxious to export comparatively sophisticated industrial products whenever a market could be found. But for sophisticated goods, such as machinery or vehicles, there proved to be complicated problems of design, quality, and aftersale maintenance, all of which made their efforts more or less nugatory. These problems, furthermore, made any definition of "unfair competition" or "dumping" hard to apply. Politics and ethnic sensibilities, also, could be a barrier – not for the Canadian government, but for Canada's businesses and households.

The saga of the Lada, indeed, illustrated the troubles that Soviet high-tech products not infrequently encountered. From zero in 1977, Canada's imports of Soviet cars and parts rose to \$3.3 million in 1978 and to \$14.7 million in 1979, only to collapse in 1980, recover feebly in 1981 and 1982, and then slump again, so that in 1986 Canada spent only \$213,000 on Soviet cars and parts. The problems were partly political. Developments on the international scene made some people wonder whether one ought to buy Soviet goods, while others wondered whether the supply of spare parts could be maintained if the international skies became really dark. But there were also problems of quality-control, design, and rust, and these became more debilitating as better and more up-to-date vehicles from South Korea became available at very competitive prices. It was not surprising that the importer-assembler went bankrupt, or that the dealer network became sketchy and unimpressive.

During the last twenty years of our period, it was common for politicians and officials in both countries to talk as if the future lay in the exchange of high-tech products. Both nations could, in fact, point to some achievements under this rubric. So far as the Soviets were concerned, the days of fur skins and anthracite were long gone, and in 1986 almost half of Soviet exports to Canada consisted of manufactures. But many of these were comparatively simple – such things as vodka, plywood, cotton textiles, and fertilizers. Canada's exports to the USSR, on the other hand, in spite of some diversification, still

consisted overwhelmingly of wheat. Indeed, in 1984 foodstuffs constituted 95 per cent of that export trade, and industrial raw materials made up another 3 per cent, leaving precious little high-tech in Canada's export flow.

Once Stalin had been put to rest, the Canadian government, unlike the American, never showed much interest in the manipulation of trade for reasons of international politics. Naturally Canada adhered to the "COCOM" guidelines that control the export of high-technology, militarily interesting goods to the USSR. But there was never much likelihood that the Soviet government would procure such goods in Canada – at least not in any quantity. Thus when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, Canada boycotted the Moscow Olympics, abrogated its cultural exchange agreement – and went on shipping wheat. For this interesting behaviour there seem to have been several explanations, all mutually reinforcing. In the first place, Canada's public probably believed that the nation's wheat economy was still important – as indeed it was in the three prairie provinces and at certain ports – and the public recognized that the Soviet Union had become a large and reliable customer for a product that was increasingly difficult to sell. Secondly, no Canadian government could readily face the wrath of the prairie farmers, nor could Ottawa, increasingly worried by budget-deficits after 1975, readily find the money to compensate the farmers if export sales were to cease. Third, Canadian politicians and officials were less inclined than American to make gestures of moral outrage – and they were very inclined to believe that economic pressure, especially from a small country like Canada, could never bring the Soviet Union to heel.

Except in 1969 and 1974, when almost no wheat was bought, Canadian-Soviet trade was characterized by massive bilateral imbalance. There was a bilateral balance in favour of the USSR only in 1969, and that balance was a tiny one. In 1984, a year of really massive wheat purchases, Soviet exports to Canada paid for only 2.2 per cent of Canada's exports to the USSR. Scholars sometimes say that the USSR has normally striven, in its trade planning, for bilateral balance. No doubt, like other nations, it has argued for trade concessions, and perhaps for bilateral bulk purchase or for other special arrangements, on the basis of large imbalances. Indeed, there were sometimes strong signs of such elements in Canadian-Soviet trade discussions, and in Moscow Canada's diplomats were accustomed to dealing with such Soviet representations. The results, however, did not amount to much, and it would be otiose to chronicle them. If one wants to understand why Canadian-Soviet trade developed as it did, one has to understand the world financial and commercial conjuncture, not simply the bilateral position, and especially not the travels and meetings that characterized the commercial diplomacy of the sixties, seventies, and eighties.

From one point of view, what saved the Soviets' bacon, and the Canadians', was the return to non-resident convertibility in the advanced capitalist countries during the late 1950s. This development meant that in so far as

the Soviet Union could earn surpluses on its trade with western Europe, it would be able to spend those bilateral surpluses in North America. Borrowed money, of course, was equally helpful, so long as the borrowed currencies – francs, marks, pounds sterling, yen – were freely convertible into dollars. Because the currencies of the developing world are in general not convertible, the Soviets could expect little help from their growing third-world trade as far as their wheat bill was concerned, except in so far as Soviet authorities might have re-exported their third-world purchases to the advanced industrial states. But non-resident convertibility would not have helped, unless the Soviets had had something to sell. Hence the importance of the “FMI export drive” that we described above. Hence, the enormous importance of the world developments with respect to three commodities: oil, gas, and gold.

If one adds the figures that are reported in *Vneshniaia torgovlia SSSR*, one finds that for at least twenty-eight years the Soviet Union ran a large trading surplus with western Europe, this surplus, of course, being much augmented after 1960, first by the increases in the volume of oil exports, and then by the increase in the oil price. When large natural-gas exports began, the Soviet authorities could garner still larger quantities of hard currency. Much of this, of course, was needed to pay for imports from western Europe, especially imports of machinery. But a large surplus remained. On the other hand, the USSR normally ran a large trading deficit with the other “advanced capitalist states” – Japan, Canada, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand. It has been the surplus in European trade that has covered the deficit in other directions. Indeed, in 1985 the match was almost exact: the surplus with western Europe was 4,258 million rubles, while the deficits with Japan, Canada, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand totalled 4,340 million. The USSR certainly did not balance its accounts bilaterally. But it seemed to have done so with respect to the hard-currency area – the zone within which currencies are freely convertible and transferrable, at least for non-residents.

These calculations take no account of Soviet gold sales. Because the Soviet authorities report neither gold production nor gold exports, the parallel movement of the gold trade cannot be accurately traced. It is known, however, that the USSR produces large amounts of gold, that its central gold reserves were sizeable at least some of the time, and that from time to time it drew on the reserves to pay for imports or to reduce external debt. Here again, the booming world demand for non-monetary gold, not only in the industrialized West but also in the OPEC states, can only have helped the USSR, and the explosion of gold prices since 1968, and especially since the “Nixon shock” of August 1971, has helped still more.

Oil, gas, and gold, furthermore, are bankable. The Soviet Union had a long tradition of punctually paying its post-revolutionary bills; it was therefore regarded, among capitalist bankers, as a very good credit risk. Thanks to the developments in the oil, gold, and gas markets, it became still more attractive to them.

Canadian farmers and the national balance of payments, in short, benefited from developments in the international trading environment. But things could easily have developed differently. Western Europe might not have moved toward convertibility in 1958. The planners in Moscow could, in principle, have chosen a different path for socialist evolution. They could have decided to husband their gas, oil, and gold, to buy less Canadian wheat, and to concentrate instead upon the improvement of their own agriculture. If they had chosen that road, and if the agricultural gamble had paid off, the world economy itself would have looked very different. For fifteen years or more the capitalists would have paid higher prices for oil, gas, and gold, and much lower prices for wheat, so that, perhaps, the common agricultural policy of western Europe and the subsidy programmes of the USA would have collapsed long before 1986.

The past cannot safely be used to foretell the future, especially when so much of past economic development has depended upon the decisions of Moscow planners, and on the complicated and often rigid economic arrangements inside the USSR. We certainly know that the planners always regarded wheat-importation as a second-best solution, and as an unattractive one. They would rather have relied on domestic production, which they certainly did try to raise. The devices are well-known – the virgin lands scheme of the late 1950s, campaigns focusing on fertilizers, meadows, machines, and strains of seeds, various manipulations of peasant incentives, sharp increases in procurement prices, somewhat more autonomy for *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy*. In the future one may expect to see further experiments, some fruitful and some not. Yet it is far from clear that, in the long run, the area occupied by the former Soviet Union can become self-sufficient in grain. Most of the it is too cold to raise wheat, and much of the rest is too dry. On the other hand, gold and hydrocarbon reserves are not unlimited in that part of the world, and in the eighties oil and gold prices declined perceptibly, while EEC and US wheat subsidies encouraged Soviet planners to buy outside Canada. The future of Canadian trade with the former Soviet Union, therefore, now depends not only on the movement of the oil, gas, and gold prices, and on the success of post-Soviet reforms, but also on American and European policies on agricultural subsidies.

Notes

- ¹ *Vneshniaia torgovlia SSSR*. It is the Soviet statistical annual which deals with trade topics. Except for Canadian trade data before 1926, which were reported only on the basis of a fiscal year ending on 31 March, all data relate to the calendar year.
- ² For a full discussion of this topic see the paper of Dr. Hillmer.
- ³ Ian M. Drummond, “Trade and Russian Trade: Economic Diplomacy in the Nineteen-Thirties,” *Canadian Journal of Economics* I (February 1972), 35-48.
- ⁴ *Negotiating Freer Trade: The Trilateral Trade Conversations of 1938* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1989).
- ⁵ *Historical Statistics of Canada* 2nd ed. (Ottawa, 1982), series K60.
- ⁶ *Canada's Trade with the Communist Countries of Eastern Europe* (Montreal, 1966), 24.

A Rivalry Transformed: Canadian-Soviet Relations to the 1990s*

Leigh Sarty

The 1980s was a decade of dramatic change in world politics; developments in the first part of the 1990s have been more dramatic still. The death of detente following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 plunged East-West relations into a climate that recalled the darkest days of the Cold War, a period so tense that the downing of a Korean airliner over Soviet airspace in August 1983 was prominently compared to the shots fired at Sarajevo in the summer of 1914. Mikhail Gorbachev's ascent to the Soviet leadership and the subsequent emergence of "new thinking" raised the prospect of a renewed era of detente toward the latter part of the decade, yet by the fall of 1989, as the pillars of Moscow's Communist empire in East Europe began to crumble in rapid succession, it became apparent that a more far-reaching transformation was in the offing. A year later, Germany had been reunified, the Cold War was declared over, and the once mighty Soviet superpower appeared headed toward disintegration. By 1992, scarcely a dozen years after the dawn of the "new Cold War", East and West alike were struggling to deal with the consequences of Soviet collapse and the troubling uncertainties of a post-Cold War world.

This broader pattern of East-West change is central to an understanding of Canadian-Soviet relations during this period. As one would expect, bilateral dealings between a country of Canada's stature – the modest ally of one superpower – and the Soviet Union – the "other" superpower in a bipolar world – were conditioned by the more powerful dynamics at work in the international system, and by the course of Soviet-American relations in particular. Such had been the case during the 1970s, when the first Canadian-Soviet rapprochement since World War II blossomed and collapsed in tandem with the rise and fall of East-West detente.¹ So it proved after 1980, as the bilateral relationship's slow passage from deep freeze to renewed thaw generally paralleled the shifting international climate of the Gorbachev era. Canadian-Soviet relations were more than a mere echo of global developments, however. Each side brought a specific agenda to its dealings with the other that lent the relationship a distinctive quality. In the 1970s, the Soviet tie furthered the Trudeau government's effort to "diversify" Canada's external relations, while Canadian-Soviet summitry advanced Moscow's drive to reap the political benefits of military parity

with the United States. In the 1980s, Moscow continued to pursue bilateral relations as a means to further larger ends, but changing priorities in the Canadian capital made Ottawa less receptive to such overtures, and ultimately delayed Canada's embrace of the Gorbachev revolution. What follows is an attempt to account for these changes and continuities by tracing the development of Canadian-Soviet relations between the death of detente and the collapse of the USSR.

I

Canada's response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was virulent and swift. On 11 January 1980, then Prime Minister Joe Clark announced a set of "countermeasures" designed to amplify his government's call for the Soviet Union's "immediate withdrawal" from Afghanistan. These included the termination of Canada's official line of export credit to the USSR, postponement or cancellation of visits at the level of ministers and senior officials, and the indefinite suspension of all programs under the General Exchanges Agreement signed in 1971. In addition, by pledging to restrict Canadian grain sales to the USSR to "normal and traditional" levels, Clark undertook to support the limited grain embargo imposed by U.S. President Jimmy Carter a week earlier. The net effect, one student of the period has observed, was to bring bilateral relations "to a standstill" for the next year and a half.²

Ottawa's ready support for Washington's tough line after Afghanistan represented a striking anomaly in Canadian policy toward the USSR. Canada had traditionally sought to make the most of its narrow margin for manoeuvre on East-West issues by carving out a distinctively moderate position in allied councils, seeking grounds for compromise and accommodation even as it stood fast for the West's shared objectives. The exceptional severity of the "countermeasures" must in large part be attributed to the presence in Ottawa of a seven-month old Conservative government – the first in sixteen years – that in January 1980 was embroiled in a general election campaign. Lacking the previous government's record of commitment to detente, anxious to distinguish itself from the policies of its predecessor, and badly in need of an electoral boost at home, the Clark government had every incentive to take a strong stand against the Soviets' apparently clear-cut affront to the international community in Afghanistan.³ The episode illustrates the occasional prominence of domestic over international considerations in the making of Canada's Soviet policy, a factor that assumed growing importance as the decade unfolded.

The Soviets were clearly disappointed at Ottawa's failure to exert the moderating influence that they had come to expect from Canada in East-West diplomacy.⁴ As detente gave way to the "new Cold War" of the early 1980s, Moscow's Canada watchers remained hopeful that the more "constructive" approaches of the 1970s might yet see the light of day again, particularly after Trudeau's Liberals were returned to power in the election of 18 February

1980.⁵ The new government's termination of the grain embargo in November 1980 was therefore welcomed in Moscow, as was the Liberals' controversial National Energy Program, which heralded a promising rift between Ottawa and the hardline Reagan administration.⁶ But the international climate was not conducive to a renewed detente. Although 1981 witnessed a new five-year wheat deal, and long-stalled talks on Arctic cooperation showed signs of new life toward the end of the year, the imposition of martial law in Poland on 13 December dashed any hope for a complete restoration of Canadian-Soviet ties. In February 1982, Ottawa registered its displeasure over events in Poland by further postponing the resumption of high-level contacts with Moscow.⁷

The death in November 1982 of Leonid Brezhnev, whose sclerotic leadership epitomized the USSR's blundering arrogance through the rise and fall of detente, marked the end of an era in East-West relations, but the succession of Yuri Andropov was not in itself sufficient to bring about a change for the better in those relations. Although some observers held that the new general secretary's tastes in drink and music (scotch and Western jazz) portended liberalization at home and abroad, his early foreign policy pronouncements exposed him as a proponent of continuity and Brezhnevite "old thinking."⁸ Andropov's tenure had a real impact in the longer term, however, by confirming the ascent of his "heir apparent," Mikhail Gorbachev,⁹ who made his "international debut" as the head of a Soviet agricultural delegation that toured Canada for ten days in May 1983.¹⁰ Gorbachev's subsequent prominence has made it difficult to keep this visit in proper perspective. It seems plausible to argue that his encounters with efficient prairie farming helped to galvanize the future general secretary's commitment to economic reform, and certainly the visit played a role in the subsequent rise of Aleksandr Yakovlev, then the Soviet ambassador to Canada, to Moscow and the Politburo as Gorbachev's second-in-command.¹¹ Whether these "connections at the top" later gave Canada "a larger place in Soviet thinking than it might ordinarily have" is less clear, however.¹² Gorbachev's visit added momentum to the post-Afghanistan restoration of Soviet-Canadian relations, but the international picture in general, and the state of Soviet-American relations in particular, remained bleak throughout 1983. In early March, Ronald Reagan publically termed the Soviet Union an "evil empire". Two weeks later, he announced the Strategic Defense Initiative, a plan designed to make the United States impenetrable to Soviet ballistic missiles. While many Westerners did not take the idea seriously, the Soviets "could not indulge in such a luxury"; Washington, it seemed, was now bent on nothing less than stripping Moscow of its hard-won deterrent capability.¹³ Six months later, the Soviets made a difficult international climate much worse by shooting down a Korean civilian airliner that had strayed into Soviet airspace. Although the concrete response in Western capitals was comparatively restrained, the episode inflamed confrontational rhetoric on both sides.¹⁴ At the end of September, Yuri Andropov issued a formal statement that the Soviet

Union foresaw no possibility of constructive dialogue with the Reagan administration.¹⁵ Accordingly, before the year was out, Moscow withdrew both its delegations from arms control talks in Geneva without setting a date for their return.¹⁶

It was against this inauspicious backdrop that Pierre Trudeau launched what Robert Bothwell and J.L. Granatstein have termed "the last hurrah" of his illustrious career: the peace initiative of 1983-84.¹⁷ Deeply disturbed by what he termed an "ominous rhythm of crisis" in East-West relations following the Korean airline disaster, the Canadian prime minister resolved to use his last months in office to act "to lower tensions, to civilize the dialogue, to get out of the Cold war era".¹⁸ The result was a whirlwind tour of world capitals designed to inject the "high-level political energy" necessary to reverse the "trend line" toward confrontation. The effort earned mixed reviews. Some criticized Trudeau for lacking credibility and for the neutralism implicit in his "equidistant" approach to the superpowers; others dismissed these charges and were inclined to give the prime minister at least partial credit for the subsequent easing of East-West tensions.¹⁹

What did the Soviets think? According to Peter Roberts, Canada's ambassador at the time, the prime minister's vague talk of "political will" left the Foreign Ministry's traditional-minded diplomats "absolutely baffled", and it was only their respect for Trudeau's longstanding support for detente that kept them from dismissing the initiative outright.²⁰ At the same time, Geoffrey Pearson, who travelled to Moscow as Trudeau's personal envoy in November, is probably correct when he asserts that the Russians were sufficiently concerned about the superpowers' stalemate to have made more of Trudeau's gesture had it not been for Andropov's illness, which paralyzed Kremlin decision-making in the late fall and winter of 1983.²¹ Given Moscow's traditional interest in exploiting Canada as a voice of moderation in East-West relations, it would have been logical, had domestic circumstances permitted, to have pursued Trudeau's 1983 proposals. Yet the disappointing results of the Trudeau peace mission also serve to underscore Canada's limited utility in this regard. In the absence of an *a priori* Soviet willingness to move forward in the fall of 1983, Canada proved incapable of affecting the climate of superpower relations on its own. As one would expect of two states with such disparate capabilities, it was Moscow – not Ottawa – that determined the broader impact of bilateral dealings between Canada and the USSR.

II

Whether one credits Trudeau's peace initiative or the pre-election opportunism of Ronald Reagan, the international climate took a turn for the better in 1984, with U.S.-Soviet relations leading the way.²² By January 1985 the two superpowers had put the worst of the "new Cold War" behind them with a burst of high-level contacts and an agreement to resume arms control negotiations in

Geneva.²³ Canadian-Soviet relations were on the move as well, spurred by new agreements in the areas of fisheries and Arctic cooperation and by an invitation to Joe Clark, the secretary of state for External Affairs in the Conservative government elected in September, to visit the USSR in the spring of 1985.²⁴ But by far the most significant development during this period was the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev, whose March 1985 election to the top post in the Soviet leadership presaged nothing less than a full-blown revolution in East-West affairs.

Western expectations at the time were, understandably, more modest. Although contemporary observers were aware that Gorbachev's age and background set him apart from his predecessors,²⁵ his likely contribution to Soviet foreign policy was difficult to predict. The new general secretary's early pronouncements offered mixed signals, combining encouraging talk of "a new way of political thinking" with standard boiler-plate about the "aggressive appetites of imperialism".²⁶ The Western statesmen who met with him after Chernenko's funeral, including Canada's Brian Mulroney, came away impressed by Gorbachev's take-charge manner,²⁷ but there was no indication that a foreign policy revolution was in the offing.

In fact, Gorbachev and his own advisors could scarcely have anticipated where their policies would ultimately lead. At the outset, the "new thinking" they proclaimed in Soviet foreign policy was largely a tactical cover for domestic reform, a quest for renewed detente to ease the military burden on a straining Soviet economy. Once unleashed, however, the reform process gathered a momentum of its own, as critics emboldened by '*glasnost*' – Gorbachev's new policy of "openness" in public affairs – and confounded by the system's resistance to change began to question the key premises of Soviet strategy both at home and abroad. "New thinkers" gradually rejected the militant unilateralism of the Brezhnev era, embracing instead an increasingly innovative approach to national security that allowed for a much more thoroughgoing accommodation with the outside world than the short-lived "breathing spells" of the past. But the process took time; the Gorbachev revolution did not spring forth overnight. The transformation of East-West relations in the latter half of the 1980s was initially a halting and uncertain affair, as Soviet reformers struggled to find their voice and a sceptical West awaited signs of real change.

Canadian-Soviet relations typified this pattern. Three weeks after Gorbachev came to power, Joe Clark embarked on an official eight-day tour of the USSR that left him singularly unimpressed about the prospects for reform. Clark's meetings with his Soviet counterpart, Andrei Gromyko – the war-horse of the Brezhnev era – had revealed little shift in Soviet attitudes on the divisive East-West issues of the day.²⁸ The visit to Canada some months later of Politburo member Vitalii Vorotnikov, another holdover from Brezhnev's time, was equally discouraging. Ottawa's first taste of the new openness of the

Gorbachev era had to wait until October 1986, when Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze arrived in the Canadian capital. It was this occasion, several senior External Affairs officials have recalled, that truly brought home the changes underway in Moscow. Unlike the dour, "no comment" Gromyko, the new foreign minister was willing to discuss any subject, including the contentious question of human rights. Enthusiastic and well-briefed, Shevardnadze expressed full satisfaction with the existing state of relations, and pushed hard for a full restoration and expansion of bilateral exchanges suspended in January 1980.²⁹ Ottawa proved receptive; after a lapse of nearly seven years, a new General Exchanges Agreement was signed later that fall.³⁰ One positive encounter was not sufficient to wipe out the bad blood of recent years, however. Barely a month after Shevardnadze's departure, Joe Clark delivered a scathing attack on Soviet human rights abuses before the Vienna review session of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and reminded his audience that the USSR had "violated virtually all of the principles guiding relations between states by its continuing intervention in Afghanistan". Afterwards, Clark told reporters that where the Soviet Union was concerned, "we have seen dramatic changes in style but not much more."³¹ This official attitude would change little in the next two years.

In the meantime, Soviet policy makers moved with increasing decisiveness to dispel such skepticism. From September 1986, when for the first time Moscow agreed to limited on-site inspections as a condition for arms control, Soviet negotiators yielded on a procession of formerly sacrosanct positions in an apparent effort to convince doubters that Soviet reform was genuine and worthy of Western support.³² The resulting Soviet-American treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces, and the two full-dress superpower summits that accompanied this development (in December 1987 and May-June 1988), offered tangible proof that Gorbachev's approach was paying off. "Serious differences" remained, to be sure³³, yet the sight of Ronald Reagan strolling by the Kremlin walls was a powerful symbol of how far Soviet-American relations had come since the "evil empire" days of 1983.

The emergence of "new thinking" in Canadian-Soviet relations still proved fickle, however. In the summer of 1987, the Canadian government issued a White Paper on defence that virtually ignored the advent of Gorbachev, portraying the USSR as a power whose leadership continued "to view the world as divided into two antagonistic camps" and whose "long-term aims" still included "the dissolution of NATO, the neutralization of non-communist Europe and the weakening of the West as a whole."³⁴ As contemporary critics anticipated, the purpose of the exercise, to generate public support for an ambitious rearmament programme, proved untenable in the thawing East-West climate of the late 1980s.³⁵ Even so, the document's tenor – "a Reagan-style 'call to arms'"³⁶ just as the Great Communicator himself was moving to embrace real arms control – did not suggest that the Mulroney administration was receptive to the Gorbachev revolution.

More dramatic evidence of "old thinking" came to light the following June, when a Canadian decision quietly to expel eight Soviet diplomats and declare nine others *persona non grata* for suspected espionage became public. Moscow's response – ejecting two Canadian diplomats and banning the return of three others – was, as such matters go, "fully anticipated and relatively restrained", yet Ottawa chose to up the ante by ejecting the Soviet defence attache, declaring an additional Soviet *persona non grata*, and reducing the allowable size of the Soviet mission in Ottawa from 63 to 60. Moscow blasted back with further official expulsions and the highly disruptive withdrawal of two-thirds of the locally employed Soviet staff at the Canadian embassy in Moscow. At this point in the stand-off the Canadians wisely allowed the matter to rest; expressions on both sides of a desire to put it behind them quickly followed.³⁷

Viewed against the hard-line rhetoric of the White Paper on defence, Ottawa's handling of this incident left no doubt that "Cold War proclivities were still strong" in the Canadian capital.³⁸ As late as January 1989, for example, Joe Clark told a Calgary audience that there were signs of positive change in the USSR, but he cautioned against "euphoria" and reminded Canadians "to look at all the faces of the Soviet Union."³⁹ And although the restoration of bilateral machinery ruptured by the invasion of Afghanistan had at last been completed, no new policy initiatives on the Soviet Union and East Europe had been put forward. Instead, as Carl McMillan has shown, it fell to the private sector to lead Canada's response to the opportunities created by the Gorbachev reforms.⁴⁰ This contrasted with the experience of the 1970s, when the Trudeau government had taken the lead in encouraging business ties with the USSR.⁴¹ At the summit level, the contrast between the two periods is even greater. In May 1971, Pierre Trudeau had been among the first Western statesmen to visit the USSR and embrace East-West detente; when Brian Mulroney arrived in Moscow in November 1989, he was among the last.

These differences suggest that the reasons for Canada's belated response to the "new detente" of the late 1980s must be sought, at least in part, in the distinctive foreign policy priorities of Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government. The same ethnic constituencies that had encouraged the short-lived PC government of 1980 to take such a hard line on the invasion of Afghanistan doubtless reinforced the Tories' inclination to take a dim view of Gorbachev's prospects after 1985.⁴² It was surely no coincidence that the secretary of state for External Affairs, himself from Alberta, had chosen Calgary to deliver a tough message about the need for caution in Canadian-Soviet relations, or that the same speech recalled the "bitter personal and family experience" of those Canadians and their relatives who had lived or still lived under Communist tyranny in Eastern Europe. A second partisan consideration that shaped Ottawa's lukewarm response to events in Moscow was Prime Minister Mulroney's commitment to undo more than a decade of alleged Liberal

damage by rebuilding Canada's relations with the United States. This and the resulting negotiations toward a Canadian-American Free Trade Agreement, it has been suggested, left little time for *perestroika* during his government's first term (1984-1988).⁴³ Finally, the Conservatives' inclination to "go slow" in their approach to Gorbachev and "new thinking" reportedly found a receptive audience in the upper ranks of the Departments of National Defence and External Affairs.⁴⁴

By the spring of 1989, however, with Free Trade successfully negotiated and a second parliamentary majority secured in the election of November 1988, the Mulroney government began to catch up with the rest of the world on policy toward the USSR, including planning for a prime ministerial visit that fall.⁴⁵ Four months after his grim words of caution in Calgary, Joe Clark began to express the increasingly widespread view that "real change" was underway in the USSR and that Canada had a special stake in seeing it succeed.⁴⁶ By the time Mulroney reached Moscow in November 1989, effusive support for Gorbachev was the order of the day. Praising Gorbachev as "a genuine reformer ... a remarkably skillful politician", Mulroney commended the Soviet leadership's efforts "to bring a new spring of hope and opportunity to international affairs."⁴⁷

Although the official Soviet press agency TASS noted in passing that the visit by the Canadian prime minister was "overdue", Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze assured his Canadian guests that they had not missed "many valuable opportunities" as a result.⁴⁸ The Soviets were especially pleased to welcome the delegation of 240 businessmen that accompanied Mulroney; their investment dollars represented an important potential contribution to the process of domestic economic reform. The Canadians did not disappoint, undertaking seven new joint-ventures and close to \$1 billion in commitments for future investment during the inaugural meeting of the Canada-USSR Business Council. Activity at the diplomatic level was equally brisk, resulting in thirteen bilateral agreements on subjects ranging from environmental cooperation to the protection of Canadian investment in the USSR. It was more action than Canadian-Soviet relations had seen in the past 20 years.

The highlight of the six-day trip was the Soviet-Canadian "Political Declaration" that Mulroney and Gorbachev signed on 21 November.⁴⁹ Affirming their shared vision of the contemporary world as "an interdependent community of nations", the 1200-word document underscored the two sides' commitment to consult and cooperate in the search for solutions to the pressing "global" issues of our time.⁵⁰ The gesture was purely symbolic, of course, but it marked an important milestone in the bilateral relationship. For Ottawa, the declaration signalled a readiness to put the lingering tensions of the 1980s behind it and assume Canada's rightful place as a leading proponent of East-West accommodation. Moscow, for its part, seized on the opportunity to win fresh endorsement for its program of reforms, making it clear that despite the

bilateral difficulties of the preceding decade, it still valued Canada as a means to further larger Soviet ends in the international arena. The Mulroney government proved most obliging in this regard. Delighted by Soviet Prime Minister Ryzhkov's highly complementary references to the Canadian tradition of "constructive internationalism,"⁵¹ Mulroney undertook to act as a "broker" between Moscow and the West by agreeing to support Gorbachev's quest for observer status in the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) as well as his request for a working relationship with the Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrialized countries.⁵²

This affirmation of bilateral rapprochement also underscored a deeper transformation in the politics of East-West relations. Canada's earlier attempts to ameliorate Cold War tensions had always been constrained by the need to maintain Western solidarity in the face of persistent Soviet efforts to drive wedges in the NATO alliance. Canadians' enthusiasm for detente in the 1950s, for example, had prompted one leading European statesman to term them the "Yugoslavs of NATO", while Trudeau's willingness to challenge East-West dogmas earned him a reputation as a "crypto-communist."⁵³ Mulroney's belated arrival in Moscow, by contrast, could scarcely be interpreted as a threat to NATO unity. More importantly, by November 1989, driving wedges in a contradiction-riddled Western bloc was fast becoming an anachronism in Soviet policy. First, the improved climate of Soviet-American relations in evidence at the summits in Washington, Moscow, New York, and Malta between 1987 and 1989 diminished Moscow's traditional inclination to pressure Washington indirectly through its allies. Second, as "new thinking" gathered steam during this period, Soviet analysts and policy makers began to acknowledge with increasing bluntness the fundamental stability and coherence of the "imperialist camp", thereby eliminating a key ideological rationale for seeking to divide NATO. Finally, internal decline placed a further damper on Moscow's appetite for inter-allied troublemaking. By the time Mulroney arrived in Moscow, Gorbachev was unable to afford the aggressive splitting tactics that his predecessors had employed; a West united in favour of assisting Soviet reform was now his preferred state of affairs. Even though the economic situation in November 1989 was not as bad as it would later become, it is still reasonable to assume that Mulroney's support was welcomed, not as a means for weaning Canada away from its Western allies, but as a way to help bring them forward together in support of Gorbachev's cause.

By the end of 1989, then, Canada and the Soviet Union had moved some way toward overcoming the various trappings of East-West confrontation that had historically limited the development of bilateral relations. It was inevitable, given the powerful company Canada keeps in NATO and the G-7, that Moscow continued to approach Canada in essentially functional terms, as a useful channel to further broader diplomatic ends. Yet Canada also had increasingly come to be valued as a power in its own right. The various

agreements signed during the Gorbachev-Mulroney summit, in particular those on the Arctic and reciprocal protection of investments, demonstrated a willingness on both sides to move forward in traditionally underdeveloped areas of bilateral interest. Ottawa's early skepticism had delayed this progress, to be sure, yet by the end of the period under review Prime Minister Mulroney had more than compensated for past lassitude by preaching Gorbachev's cause with the fervour of the recently converted. Thus, on the threshold of the 1990s, as Ottawa basked in the afterglow of a successful summit, and the world watched in amazement as Moscow acquiesced in the rapid collapse of its former empire in East Europe, the prospects for Canadian-Soviet relations, like East-West relations in general, appeared brighter than ever before.

III

This post-Cold War euphoria proved comparatively short-lived, owing primarily to Gorbachev's mounting difficulties at home. Predictably, the state of the economy was the biggest worry. By the spring of 1990, a ballooning budget deficit, chronic shortages, and the threat of runaway inflation were the principal legacies of five years' misguided effort at economic reform. Gorbachev's troubles were compounded by the victories of separatist nationalists in a number of local and republic-level elections in February 1990, the consequences of which were brought home by Lithuania's declaration of independence on the 11th of March. Thus, within months of Ottawa's belated acknowledgement that Gorbachev and *perestroika* were for real, untoward (from Moscow's point of view) developments threatened to unravel the limited gains of the preceding half-decade.

Despite this uncertain climate, Canadian-Soviet relations continued to show signs of forward momentum during the first months of 1990. January marked the opening, with much fanfare, of the two sides' most prominent joint venture, a Macdonald's restaurant in Moscow's Pushkin Square. February found Shevardnadze in Ottawa, where he described Canada and the USSR as "natural partners" in a post-Cold War world.⁵⁴ In May, Joe Clark announced a series of measures designed to support economic development and political reform in Europe, including the creation of a special "Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe" to elaborate and administer an "expanded assistance program" in the region.⁵⁵ The Task Force, plus a new \$425 million line of credit to finance Soviet purchases of Canadian wheat, was welcome news for an increasingly "beleaguered" Mikhail Gorbachev, who arrived in Ottawa for a 29-hour stopover enroute to Washington later that month.⁵⁶ The Canadian initiatives complemented a broader effort to carve out a distinctive position as "an interpreter and moderator" on questions of Soviet and East European reform, an approach evidenced by Mulroney's push for closer ties between Moscow and the G-7 and by his subsequent attempts to bridge inter-allied differences

on the issue of financial aid to the USSR.⁵⁷ It was an approach that Moscow sought to encourage, with Soviet spokesmen indicating that their President "might use his Canadian visit to send a last-minute advance signal to the White House before the superpower talks."⁵⁸ If Canada still sought to play "honest broker", Moscow was apparently more than willing to oblige.

The Gorbachev revolution's most dramatic legacy to Canadian-Soviet relations was perhaps best captured during the Soviet president's 70-minute public "walkabout" on the day of his arrival in Ottawa. In 1971, then-Soviet premier Alexsei Kosygin had been assaulted on Parliament Hill by a young Hungarian protesting the Soviet domination of his homeland. Nineteen years later, a Hungarian member of the Ottawa crowd that gathered around Gorbachev thanked the Soviet leader for "liberating" his country.⁵⁹ The event was a striking symbol of the possibility that, with the collapse of communism in East Europe, the "ethnic" factor – the fact that one in ten Canadians traces his or her origins to the countries of the former Soviet bloc – might cease to hinder and instead facilitate Soviet-Canadian cooperation.⁶⁰ The Gorbachev leadership's unprecedented forthcomingness on the issue of family reunification provided further grounds for optimism in this regard.⁶¹

Unfortunately, these positive developments were soon overshadowed by the rapid deterioration of the Soviet economy during the course of 1990, as the leadership advanced and discarded a series of contradictory plans aimed at "comprehensive" economic reform.⁶² When in the fall of 1990 Gorbachev rejected an ambitious proposal for a 500-day transition to a market economy in favour of an ill-conceived compromise package, the country seemed to many to have embarked on an irreversible descent into chaos.⁶³ The abrupt rise of several prominent hard-liners within the top leadership coupled with well-publicized moves to expand the powers of the presidency led to widespread fears that Soviet reform was giving way to dictatorship, fears given dramatic prominence in Eduard Shevardnadze's resignation speech of 20 December 1990.⁶⁴ The brutal killing of 14 civilians by Soviet military forces in Vilnius, Lithuania, on the night of 12-13 January 1991 seemed to provide tragic confirmation of the Soviet foreign minister's gloomy prognosis.

The Baltic slayings had an immediate, chilling effect on Canadian-Soviet relations and the international climate as a whole. In a strongly worded letter to the Soviet President dated 13 January, Prime Minister Mulroney condemned the massacre in the Lithuanian capital and indicated that any further escalation would have "serious consequences" for bilateral relations. Following the assault one week later by Soviet "black beret" troops that left five more dead in Riga, Latvia, the secretary of state for External Affairs announced that an earlier offer of technical assistance and a \$150 million line of credit to the Soviet Union had been suspended.⁶⁵ This dramatic downturn in East-West relations appeared even more ominous in light of indications that the "new thinking" was falling out of favour in the USSR. The broad foreign policy consensus of

Gorbachev's first years began to break down in the period 1990-91, as conservative commentators condemned the precipitous collapse of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe as a symptom of fundamental short-sightedness in "new thinking" as a whole.⁶⁶ Worse, Soviet foot-dragging on the implementation of a treaty to reduce Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) seemed to indicate that the conservatives were not without weight in Moscow's corridors of power.⁶⁷ Reform-minded analysts spoke of an "imminent threat" of retrenchment in favour of the "old thinking" in Soviet diplomacy.⁶⁸

Such fears turned out to be premature. On 24 April 1991, Gorbachev displayed his now familiar tactical skills and flexibility by issuing a joint statement with the leaders of nine of the country's fifteen republics that came out decisively on the side of continued reform.⁶⁹ Once again, a speedy transition to the market became a top priority, symbolized by the despatch of a high-level team of reform-minded economists to Harvard University for advice on how to proceed.⁷⁰ Moscow's acceptance of a face-saving compromise on the CFE Treaty in early June helped to pave the way for an invitation to Gorbachev to attend the G-7 summit in London in mid-July. That meeting revolved around a single issue: whether and how the West should act to further the USSR's new-found commitment to economic and political reform.

The debate on this question was framed by the recommendations that emerged out of the consultations between Soviet and American economists at Harvard. Their call for up to \$60 billion in direct aid to ease the transition to a market economy in three years came to be known as the "Grand Bargain" – Western assistance in return for Soviet stability and global peace.⁷¹ While all members of the G-7 agreed that their involvement is necessary for successful Soviet reform, they disagreed on questions of timing and extent. The continental Europeans – France, Italy, and Germany – favoured rapid, large-scale measures; the United Kingdom and the non-Europeans favoured a more cautious, go-slow approach.⁷²

Canada lined up squarely in the latter camp. Despite attempts by senior Canadian officials to depict Brian Mulroney's position on aid to Gorbachev as "'forward-leaning' rather than 'foot-dragging'", the prime minister's skepticism was well conveyed by his warning that the Soviet President could not expect "either miracles or blank cheques" from the G-7 meeting.⁷³ In the event, it was caution that built consensus, and the seven leaders agreed only to a finite package of technical assistance, associate membership for the USSR in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and a commitment to keep engaged through future meetings between their finance ministers and Soviet officials.⁷⁴ Mulroney sweetened the pot by lifting the freeze on the \$150 million package initially offered in November⁷⁵, and Gulf Canada's announcement of a \$250 million joint venture in the Soviet Arctic gave Canadian-Soviet business cooperation a highly visible boost.⁷⁶ It was nevertheless clear that Canada was not inclined to take any kind of lead in forging a more generous Western response to Gorbachev's pleas for assistance.

The Canadian and Soviet delegations thus departed London with their bilateral ties restored to the level of wary good will which had been in evidence before the Baltic crackdown six months earlier. Moscow would doubtless have welcomed a more forthcoming Canadian stand on the question of aid, but Prime Minister Mulroney, arguably distracted by constitutional difficulties at home, showed little inclination to play the "honest broker".⁷⁷ Instead, by holding firmly to the American line, Canada helped to ensure that the agreed package of Western aid would be a modest one.

IV

On the morning of 19 August 1991, the right-wing coup that Soviet reformers had warned against for months at last became a reality, when a group of hard-line conservatives tried to seize power in the name of a "State Committee on the State of Emergency in the USSR". The operation was a complete fiasco that unravelled within forty-eight hours, but its consequences were profound. The coup attempt marked a last stand by the pillars of the old Soviet order; its collapse ushered in yet another phase of domestic turmoil and change. In less than a week, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was outlawed; ten days later, the Union's highest legislative authority voted to dissolve itself, launching an ill-defined process of constitutional reform that was scuttled when Ukraine voted for independence in a referendum on 1 December. Later that month, eleven former Soviet republics (all except the Baltic states and Georgia) founded the "Commonwealth of Independent States" – an entity whose fate remains far from clear, but whose founding nevertheless marked the formal demise of the USSR.

Canadian-Soviet relations thus drew to a close in the final months of 1991 in an atmosphere of drift and uncertainty, a condition by no means exclusive to the Soviet side. Ottawa's reaction to the coup attempt was especially inauspicious. Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall's initial suggestion – subsequently retracted – that Canada would be prepared to recognize the Emergency State Committee, provided its transition to power was a peaceful one, was an embarrassing indication of high-level confusion in the making of Ottawa's Soviet policy.⁷⁸ The Mulroney government appeared to have a better sense of its priorities by the end of September, when the prime minister delivered an impassioned call for a "lifeline" of Western aid to support democracy in the Soviet republics.⁷⁹ In the meantime, Canada's increasingly open and enthusiastic support for Ukrainian independence – a subject upon which federal officials had historically tread carefully to discourage comparisons with separatist aspirations in Quebec – can scarcely have endeared Ottawa to those in Moscow who still sought to preserve some form of Union.⁸⁰ In retrospect, however, Canadian policy makers deserve credit for recognizing the Union's inexorable decline and for placing their stock in the individual republics through the fall of 1991.⁸¹ Even though Canada's speedy recognition of Ukraine

following the December referendum on independence (Canada was the first Western government to do so) was determined by domestic political considerations rather than geopolitical foresight, this step did anticipate and thus helped to pave the way for the West's gradual acceptance that the Soviet Union had ceased to exist.

V

It remains to assess the significance of Canadian-Soviet relations for Canada and the "post-Soviet" future. It has been suggested here that the main contours of the bilateral relationship have historically been determined by developments in the international system. For most of the period since 1945, dealings between Ottawa and Moscow were conditioned by the larger constraints and opportunities that each side confronted in a world sharply divided between East and West. Canada's priority in such a world was to maximize both the prospects for East-West accommodation and its own freedom of manoeuvre by establishing distinctive credentials as a loyal but independent-minded member of the Western alliance; occasional rapprochement with Moscow – international circumstances permitting – served to promote both of these objectives. For the Soviets, improved relations with Canada were valued as a means to further those broader trends that Moscow associated with its own emergence as the globe's "other" superpower in the 1970s. When these expectations were betrayed by the outbreak of "new Cold War" in the early 1980s, Moscow still looked to Western allies such as Canada for signs that the international tide might once again be turned in its favour. Moscow's objectives changed substantially under the impact of "new thinking", yet Soviet conduct during the Gorbachev-Mulroney summits of 1989 and 1990 indicated that Canada remained a useful ally in Moscow's campaign to effect a stable transition to a post-Cold War world.

The passing of the Soviet Union, and with it, the familiar bipolarity of the postwar era, has obviously transformed this situation. For the successor states of the USSR, grand concepts and international campaigns have given way to a simple struggle for survival; external ties are valued, not for the contribution they make to furthering the ambitious designs of a superpower, but for their ability to put money in the bank and food on the table. But if some of the considerations that once fuelled Soviet interest in Canada have faded, the bilateral pattern of the past is not without relevance for the post-Soviet era. Most importantly, the former Soviet republics still have good reason to value Canada as an "honest broker", a respected member of the G-7 which might help to convince more powerful Western doubters of the benefits of aiding the former USSR's reintegration into the world economy. In the longer term, whatever political entities emerge from the ashes of Communism in that part of the world, they will have cause to seek out middle powers such as Canada in order to temper their dealings with a globally preponderant United States.

Whether Canada successfully meets these and the many other challenges of a post-Soviet world will largely depend on developments at home. As the record over the past decade makes clear, the changing international setting, while crucial, is only one part of the Canadian-Soviet equation. Domestic politics were critical, for example, in shaping Canada's tough response to the invasion of Afghanistan and delayed embrace of the Gorbachev revolution; more recently, it has been suggested that economic and constitutional difficulties contributed to Ottawa's low profile in G-7 consultations on assistance to the USSR during the twilight of the Gorbachev era. As a number of observers have pointed out, only a strong and actively engaged Canada can successfully exploit the reputation for constructive involvement that we have earned in the past five decades. A weak and distracted Canada will count for little in the post-Cold War world, and its voice will go unheeded in the international deliberations that help to shape the post-Soviet future.⁸² Canada's ethnic make-up will likely further complicate efforts to contribute constructively to this process. The aspirations of Canadians with roots in former Soviet lands have already made their mark on Canada's "post-Soviet" policy, as evidenced by Ottawa's prompt recognition of Ukraine and its willingness to break ranks with its G-7 partners by extending new credits to Kiev before an agreement was reached on former Soviet debts.⁸³ This makes it all the more probable that as tensions increase among the former Soviet republics, Canada will find it increasingly difficult to exert the disinterested, moderating influence that the international community has come to expect of it.

Notes

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- 1 See pp. 117-131 (earlier Sarty chapter).
- 2 Carl H. McMillan, "After Detente: Canada's Economic Relations with the USSR in the 1980s", *Centre for Russian and East European Studies [CREES] Working paper No. 4* (University of Toronto, October 1989), 31. The countermeasures are summarized in *ibid.*, 32-36. On the grain embargo, see Robert L. Paarlberg, "The 1980-81 US Grain Embargo: Consequences for the Participants" in David Leyton-Brown, ed., *The Utility of International Economic Sanctions* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 186-187.
- 3 McMillan, "Economic Relations in the 1980s", 36-37.
- 4 See, for example, "V farvatere Vashingtona: Pravitel'stvo Kanady deistvuet v usherb national'nym interesam", *Pravda*, 7 February 1980, 7; "Nashi kommentarii: Vmesto 'Kanadizatsii'", *Pravda*, 26 May 1980, 5.
- 5 See, for example, S.F. Molochkov, "Evolutsiia voennoi politiki kanady", *SShA*, No. 3 (1980), 39-40; Sergei Iul'evich Danilov, *Dvukhpartiinaia sistema kanady: Tendentsii razvitiia* (Moscow: "Nauka", 1982), 140-141; L.A. Bagramov, "Zakliuchenie" in L.A. Bagramov, ed., *Kanada-SShA: Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie otnosheniia* (Moscow: "Nauka", 1983), 283-284; S.F. Molochkov, "P'er Triudo ukhodit", *SShA*, No. 6 (1984), 74.

- ⁶ V.V. Popov, I.B. Runov, and A.I. Cherkasov, "Bor'ba za Kanadskie energoresursy" in Bagramov, ed., *Kanada-SShA*, 78, 97, 103; see also V.V. Popov, "Severoamerikanskaia integratsiia: Obshchee i osobennoe" in *ibid.*, 29-30. On the NEP and Canadian-American relations, see Stephen Clarkson, *Canada and the Reagan Challenge* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1985), 55-82.
- ⁷ McMillan, "Economic Relations in the 1980s", 40; *The Globe and Mail*, 24 February 1982, 1,2.
- ⁸ Raymond L. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1985), 1015. On the misguided interpretation of Andropov's allegedly liberal tastes see Stephen White, *Gorbachev in Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 11.
- ⁹ The quoted phrase is Jerry Hough's in his *Russia and the West: Gorbachev and the Politics of Reform* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 163. On Gorbachev's ties with Andropov and the strengthening of his power base during the latter's tenure in office see Archie Brown, "Gorbachev: New Man in the Kremlin", *Problems of Communism*, vol. 34, no. 3 (May/June 1985), 12-13.
- ¹⁰ Bill Keller, "Moscow's Other Mastermind", *The New York Times Magazine*, 19 February 1989, 31. An anecdotal account of the visit can be found in the memoirs of Eugene Whelan, the Minister of Agriculture who was Gorbachev's host. *Whelan: The Man in the Green Stetson* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1986), 255-261.
- ¹¹ On the influence of Gorbachev's 1983 tour on his subsequent thinking see *Maclean's*, 11 June 1990, 44; on Yakovlev and the visit see Keller, "Moscow's Other Mastermind".
- ¹² Lawrence Martin, the *Globe and Mail* correspondent in Moscow when Gorbachev came to power, believed this to be the case; the quoted phrases are from his report for the *Globe and Mail*, 29 September 1986, A1-A2. Other analysts are not so sure. Lenard Cohen, for example, has pointed out that while "in many respects, the historian and diplomat, Yakovlev, is the USSR's major Canadianist, and Gorbachev his most prominent pupil", he hastens to add that this awareness "does not, of course, necessarily translate into greater Soviet attention to Soviet affairs, or even a more favourable image of Canada." Lenard J. Cohen, "Canada in the Soviet Elite Mindset: A Case of 'New Political Thinking'", *CREES Working Paper No. 3* (University of Toronto, October 1989), 39, 42.
- ¹³ William G. Hyland, *Mortal Rivals: Superpower Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (New York: Random House, 1987), 244.
- ¹⁴ Ottawa, for example, simply suspended Soviet Aeroflot flights to Canada for a period of sixty days; Washington's response was similarly mild. McMillan, "Economic Relations in the 1980s", 54; Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation*, 1016. Canada's verbal response was much sharper, however. Allan MacEachen called the Soviet act "unacceptable, unjustifiable, incomprehensible, and shocking", while the *Toronto Star* carried a front page editorial titled "Let's show our outrage through sanctions". *Toronto Star*, 2 September 1983, p. A10, 3 September 1983, p. A1. For detailed accounts of the episode see Alexander Dallin, *Black Box: KAL 007 and the Superpowers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) and Seymour M. Hersh, "The Target Is Destroyed" (New York: Vantage Books, 1987). Interestingly, the Soviet pilot who shot down the airliner insists to this day that "it was a spy plane". *The New York Times*, 19 May 1991, 12.
- ¹⁵ Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation*, 1017.
- ¹⁶ On the Soviet "walkout" from the INF and START negotiations see Strobe Talbott, *Deadly Gambits* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 205, 342.
- ¹⁷ J.L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 363-376.
- ¹⁸ Cited in *ibid.*, 365; see also Michael Pearson, Gregor Mackinnon, and Christopher Sapardanis, "'The world is entitled to ask questions': the Trudeau peace initiative reconsidered", *International Journal*, vol. 41, no. 1 (Winter 1985-86), 142.

- ¹⁹ Among the harshest critics was Canada's former ambassador to Moscow, Robert Ford, who described the initiative as "'a total absurdity' ... Trudeau had no leverage in Washington and 'no corresponding clout in Moscow ... he had no credit in the banks of either place.'" Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, 374. While criticizing the lack of ground work and hinting darkly at the perils of "equidistance", Granatstein and Bothwell nevertheless conclude that Trudeau "had been right to try" and that "he deserved some of the credit" for the subsequent easing of tensions during 1984. *Ibid.*, 376. For more favourable views, see Pearson et al., "'The world is entitled to ask questions'", and Geoffrey Pearson, "Trudeau peace initiative reflections", *International Perspectives* (March/April 1985), 3-6. The most balanced account is Harald Von Riekhoff and John Sigler, "The Trudeau Peace Initiative: The Politics of Reversing the Arms Race" in Brian W. Tomlin and Maureen Molot, eds., *Canada Among Nations 1984: A Time of Transition* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1985).
- ²⁰ Author's interview with Peter Roberts, Ottawa, 12 March 1991. Trudeau himself admitted at the time that the Soviets seemed "confused" as to how to respond to his initiative. *Montreal Gazette*, 17 December 1983, p. A7.
- ²¹ Author's interview with Geoffrey Pearson, Ottawa, 17 April 1991; see also von Riekhoff and Sigler, "The Trudeau Peace Initiative", 64.
- ²² On the new mood - and efforts to credit Trudeau's peace mission for it - see Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, 374, 376; on Reagan's electoral considerations, see Hyland, *Mortal Rivals*, 239.
- ²³ Talbott, *Deadly Gambits*, 352-354; Hyland, *Mortal Rivals*, 236; Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation*, 1028.
- ²⁴ McMillan, "Economic Relations in the 1980s", 55-57.
- ²⁵ See especially Brown, "Gorbachev: New Man in the Kremlin".
- ²⁶ On Gorbachev's early pronouncements see White, *Gorbachev in Power*, 155-157.
- ²⁷ Roberts interview.
- ²⁸ *The Globe and Mail*, 4 April 1985, p. A1.
- ²⁹ Confidential interviews.
- ³⁰ Carl H. McMillan, "Canada's Response to the 'New Detente' in East-West Economic Relations" in Maureen Appel Molot and Fen Osler Hampson, eds., *Canada Among Nations 1989: The Challenge of Change* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990), 68.
- ³¹ Cited in *The Globe and Mail*, 6 November 1986, p. A15.
- ³² A good summary of these developments can be found in Walter C. Clemens, Jr., *Can Russia Change? The USSR Confronts Global Interdependence* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 207-250.
- ³³ The official Soviet report of the May-June 1988 summit as cited in White, *Gorbachev in Power*, 167.
- ³⁴ Government of Canada, *Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1987), 15.
- ³⁵ See Fen Osler Hampson, "Call to Arms: Canadian National Security Policy" in Maureen Appel Molot and Brian W. Tomlin, eds., *Canada Among Nations 1987: A World of Conflict* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1988), 68, 88-90.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.
- ³⁷ *The Globe and Mail*, 22 June 1988, pp. A1-2; 23 June 1988, pp. A1-2; 24 June 1988, pp. A1, A9; 27 June 1988, p. A1; 28 June 1988, p. A1; 30 June 1988, pp. A1-2; confidential interviews.
- ³⁸ McMillan, "Canada's Response to the 'New Detente'", 68-69.
- ³⁹ "East-West Relations: The Way Ahead", *Statements and Speeches*, 89/2.

- ⁴⁰ McMillan, "Canada's Response to the 'New Detente'", 68-73; see also Carl H. McMillan, "Canada and the Transformation of the East European Economies: Policy Challenges of the 1990s", *CIIPS Background Paper No. 35* (October 1990).
- ⁴¹ See McMillan, "Canada's Economic Relations with the USSR - An Appraisal" in Aloysius Balawdyer, ed., *Canadian-Soviet Relations, 1939-1980* (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1981).
- ⁴² McMillan, "Canada and the Transformation", 2.
- ⁴³ *The Financial Post*, 20 November 1989, 13; Lenard J. Cohen, "The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in Transition: Trends and Implications for Canada" in Molot and Hampson, eds., *Canada Among Nations 1989*, 36-37.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Joe Clark, "What's at stake for us in today's Russian revolution", *Canadian Speeches* (June/July 1989), 28.
- ⁴⁷ *Ottawa Citizen*, 20 November 1989, p. A1; *Ottawa Sun*, 21 November 1989, 5.
- ⁴⁸ This discussion draws upon the author's "A Middle Power in Moscow: Canada and the Soviet Union from Khrushchev to Gorbachev", *Queen's Quarterly*, XCVIII, no. 3 (Fall 1991), 567-569.
- ⁴⁹ *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 November 1989, p. A1.
- ⁵⁰ *Izvestiia*, 22 November 1989 [Moscow evening edition], 1, 4.
- ⁵¹ TASS, 20 November 1989.
- ⁵² *The Financial Post*, 21 November 1989, 1. The term "broker" is from an editorial in the *Globe and Mail*, "Signed, Ottawa and Moscow", 25 November 1989, p. D6.
- ⁵³ The "Yugoslav" comparison was the private view of then Belgian Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak, cited in Peter C. Dobell, *Canada's Search for New Roles: Foreign Policy in the Trudeau Era* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 27; on Trudeau's reputation see Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, 189-190.
- ⁵⁴ *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 February 1990; see also *Pravda*, 16 February 1990, 5.
- ⁵⁵ "Canada and the New Europe." Notes for a speech by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, at Humber College, Toronto, 26 May 1990. See also McMillan, "Canada and the Transformation of the East European Economies", 4-5.
- ⁵⁶ *The New York Times*, 30 May 1990, pp. A7, A10.
- ⁵⁷ McMillan, "Canada and the Transformation of the East European Economies", 5.
- ⁵⁸ *The Globe and Mail*, 16 May 1990, p. A4; see also "Gorbachev, Mulroney Hold Joint Press Conference", TASS International Service in Russian, 1620 GMT, 31 May 1990, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS] Daily Report - Soviet Union*, FBIS-SOV-90-107, 4 June 1990, 14.
- ⁵⁹ *The New York Times*, 30 May 1990, p. A10.
- ⁶⁰ In the spring of 1990 this theme began to figure in official commentary on both sides, most prominently in connection with the Canadian government's establishment of the "Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe". On the Soviet side, see *Izvestiia*, 30 May 1990, 1.
- ⁶¹ In his speech to the Canadian Club in Toronto in May 1989, for example, Clark announced that all 42 family reunification cases presented to Shevardnadze in 1987 had been resolved - a success rate unknown in the Brezhnev era.
- ⁶² A good recent summary of these developments can be found in Keith Bush, "Pavlov's Anticrisis Program", *Report on the USSR*, vol. 3, no. 20 (17 May 1991), 1-6.
- ⁶³ Peter Reddaway, "Empire on the Brink", *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 38, no. 3 (31 January 1991), 7.
- ⁶⁴ Reddaway, "Empire on the Brink", 7-9; Yuri Afanasyev, "The Coming Dictatorship", *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 38, no. 3 (31 January 1991), 36-39; Abraham Brumberg, "Russia After Perestroika", *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 38, no. 12 (27 June 1991), 54-56.
- ⁶⁵ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 21 January 1991, 17532.

- ⁶⁶ Mikhail Aleksandrov, "Security of the USSR: Two Views of the Philosophy of Foreign Policy", *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, No. 8 (22 February 1991), translated in *FBIS-SOV-91-0865S*, 3 May 1991, 5-10; N. Kapchenko, "Na kogo zhe rasschitana takaia pozitsiia?", *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* No. 12 (1990), 57-66; Suzanne Crow, "Who Lost Eastern Europe?" *Report on the USSR*, vol. 3, no. 15 (12 April 1991), 1-5.
- ⁶⁷ Douglas L. Clarke, "Trouble with the Conventional Forces Treaty", *Report on the USSR*, vol. 3, no. 15 (12 April 1991), 6-10.
- ⁶⁸ Andrey Lipskiy, "'New Thinking' at an End. What Next?", *Moscow News*, No. 6 (10-17 February 1991), 3, reprinted in *FBIS-SOV-91-051-S*, 15 March 1991, 33; "Plutnik Laments Resurgence of Old Thinking", *Izvestiia*, 19 February 1991, 1, translated in *ibid.*, 33-35.
- ⁶⁹ See Brumberg, "Russia After Perestroika", esp. 53-54.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Two leading members of the Harvard group spelled out their views in an article published just before the London summit. See Graham Allison and Robert Blackwill, "America's Stake in the Soviet Future", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 3 (Summer 1991), 77-97.
- ⁷² "Europeans Continue to Favor More Generous Financial Help to Soviets", *The New York Times*, 19 July 1991, p. A7.
- ⁷³ *The Globe and Mail*, 15 July 1991, p. A1; 16 July 1991, p. A1.
- ⁷⁴ "7 Offer Moscow Technical Help", *The New York Times*, 18 July 1991, pp. A1, A12.
- ⁷⁵ *The New York Times*, 19 July 1991, p. A6.
- ⁷⁶ *The Globe and Mail*, 18 July 1991, pp. B1, B13.
- ⁷⁷ The view that constitutional difficulties at home contributed to Mulroney's low-key performance in London is put forward by *Globe and Mail* correspondent Madelaine Drohan. See "Mulroney Blends into Background", *The Globe and Mail*, 19 July 1991, p. A6.
- ⁷⁸ *The Globe and Mail*, 21 August 1991, 6, and 22 August 1991, pp. A1-2. For a more detailed critique, see Kim Richard Nossal, "Does Canada Have a Soviet Policy? Reflections on Relations with the USSR, 1985-1991", paper presented at the Centre for Canadian-Soviet Studies' Roundtable, "Canada and the Soviet Union: What Now?", Carleton University, 25 October 1991.
- ⁷⁹ *The Globe and Mail*, 30 September 1991, pp. A1-A2.
- ⁸⁰ *The Toronto Star*, 28 August 1991, p. A14; *The Globe and Mail*, 27 August 1991, p. A6, and 31 August 1991, p. D5.
- ⁸¹ See, for example, the comments by Paul Frazer, the Executive Director of the Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe, in the summary report of the CCSS Roundtable, "Canada and the Soviet Union: What Now?".
- ⁸² See, for example, Fen Osler Hampson and Christopher J. Maule, "After the Cold War" in Hampson and Maule, eds., *Canada Among Nations 1990-91: After the Cold War* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991), 1-2; Bernard Wood, *A Time of Hope and Fear: A New World Order and a New Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, January 1992).
- ⁸³ "Ukraine is Getting Canadian Credits: After Assurances on Debts, Ottawa Breaks with Plan of Industrial Powers", *The New York Times*, 23 February 1992.