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"The British Press And The Origins Of The Cold War"

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In the Discipline of Politics

In December 1987

Statement

No part of the material contained in this thesis has been previously submitted by me for a degree or other qualification to the Open University or any other university or institution. This thesis is entirely my own work.

As my research has progressed I have published the following articles (one of which has been also incorporated in a book) as listed below. These articles are modified Chapters from this thesis and accordingly, entirely my own work.

Articles

"The Times and Appeasement: The Second Phase", Journal Of Contemporary History, Vol.16 No.3, July 1981.

"The Politicians, Public Opinion And The Press: The Storm Over British Military Intervention In Greece In December 1944", Journal Of Contemporary History, Vol.19 No.3, July 1984.

"The Beaverbrook Press, Eastern Europe, The Soviet Union And The Coming Of The Cold War: Independent Conservatism And Foreign Policy", Media, Culture And Society, Vol.8 No.1, January 1986.

Chapter In Book

"The Times And Appeasement: The Second Phase" in: W. Laquer (ed), Sage Readers In 20th Century History, No.4, The Second World War: Essays In Military And Political History, Sage (1982).

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The British Press And The Origins Of The Cold War

An Abstract

During the prelude to the Cold War a substantial section of the British press gave a noticeably cool response to the new line towards Soviet Russia proposed first by Churchill at Fulton from Opposition and pursued subsequently at the policy-making level by Ernest Bevin and the Foreign Office. These newspapers looked in particular with sympathy upon the security aspirations of the Soviet Union in eastern Europe and were not therefore predisposed to see in unilateral Soviet moves in that region conclusive evidence of a sinister overall design on the part of the Soviet Union for continental mastery. What is most remarkable about this understanding attitude towards Soviet moves in eastern Europe is that it extended beyond the progressive press (defined for our purposes as the Labour and Liberal press) to include leading elements in the Conservative press. For important sections of that press signally failed to respond with appropriate enthusiasm in a partisan manner to the foreign policy lead offered by the Conservative leader at Fulton. These same newspapers had disagreed with Churchill's foreign policy views in the thirties, supporting the appeasement of Germany when he had opposed it. In the nineteen forties their natural inclination again would be to support policies of conciliation and accommodation in international affairs, this time in regard to Soviet Russia, at a time when the Conservative leader was himself urging a policy of firmness in confronting the Soviet danger and had given at Fulton a deliberate warning against those who advocated a policy of 'appeasement' with regard to Russia.

This thesis attempts to trace the background to the development of such sympathetic press attitudes towards the Soviet Union during the prelude to the Cold War. It attempts to analyse the content and the range of press coverage of Anglo-Soviet relations in the period before the Cold War had crystallized, with an eye in particular to identifying those lessons drawn by the press and offered to the policy-makers as to how in future British policy towards Russia might most wisely be conducted.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Much attention has been paid over the years by scholars to the subject of the British press and British foreign policy in the 1930's.¹ In particular the support offered by the Times in those years for the official policy of appeasement of Nazi Germany has attracted much comment. Much less attention has been paid to the role of the press in influencing opinion and policy toward another supposedly expansionist power - Soviet Russia - in the following decade, the 1940's, as the Second World War gave way to the Cold War. In the period just prior to, and just after, the termination of hostilities in Europe, a considerable section of the British press was much less suspicious of the Soviet Union's ultimate intentions in Europe than H.M.G. had grown to be. These newspapers looked, in particular, with great sympathy on the Soviet Union's security aspirations in eastern Europe. This led in turn to an uncensorious attitude on their part towards increasing evidence of harsh Soviet methods in eastern Europe. This in itself is perhaps not too surprising when found in the pages of the progressive press,² given Russia's contribution to the war, and given a certain degree of ideological affinity on that press's part with the ultimate aspirations of Soviet socialism if not with its methods. However, this forgiving attitude towards Soviet moves in eastern Europe before, during and after that region's liberation from German occupation was by no means confined to the progressive press. As this study will seek to demonstrate, some of the strongest support for a benevolent response by H.M.G. to unilateral Soviet moves in eastern Europe would come from what is conventionally regarded as the conservative press, or from major sections of that press. Moreover, these same newspapers of the right which advocated concessions to the Soviet Union in eastern Europe in the 1940's had been amongst the strongest supporters of appeasement of Nazi Germany in the 1930's.

General histories of British foreign policy in this period and biographical studies of the British statesmen concerned in the conduct of that policy have tended to ignore this interesting episode in the history of Fleet Street, giving at most for example, a passing reference to the decidedly mixed reception given by the British press to Churchill's Fulton Address, without feeling tempted to explore further the reasons for that mixed response. The chief reason for this neglect is perhaps obvious. Whilst the pro-appeasement press in the 1930's had marched in step with official British foreign policy, the "pro-appeasement" press in the mid 1940's found itself increasingly out of step with British foreign policy as that policy evolved towards the doctrine of the

containment of Soviet expansionism. In this sense the views of those newspapers which advocated a more indulgent foreign policy line towards the Soviet Union at the onset of the Cold War have suffered the same fate as others on the losing side in the many foreign policy debates scattered across British political history. There is a real sense in which Ernst Toller's dictum that history is the propaganda of the victors contains more than a grain of truth. The second reason for this neglect is perhaps scarcely less obvious. In the 1930's such was the intimacy that existed between Geoffrey Dawson and men like Baldwin and Chamberlain that *The Times* has been seen in that era by some historians as almost a partner of the government in the conduct of British foreign policy. Though perhaps exaggerated even for that time, this is not a view that could be sustained for the 1940's. Men like Barrington-Ward and E.H. Carr never enjoyed the same quality of relationship with Churchill, Eden and Bevin that Dawson had enjoyed with Baldwin, Halifax and Chamberlain in the 1930's.

Whatever the causes of Fleet Street's understanding attitude toward Soviet conduct in eastern Europe in the 1940's this meant that, when, eventually British policy changed from being one of accommodation towards Soviet moves in eastern Europe to one of resistance to perceived Soviet expansionism, and the Cold War proper was to commence, British policy-makers found themselves constrained in part by the condition of substantial sections of public opinion, to which Fleet Street itself had made no small contribution. As the chief architect of the new policy line, Ernest Bevin found himself faced with special problems within his own party. However, hesitations and doubts about the wisdom of the new course in British foreign policy extended far beyond the ranks of Labour Party activists and supporters, to include substantial sections of the attentive foreign policy public and of the mass public of all parties of none.³ Bevin's official biographer has recorded and dwelt upon the patience with which the Foreign Secretary set about winning over a hesitant and apprehensive public opinion for a new policy line he had come to adopt himself only reluctantly after bitter disillusionment with Russia's international behaviour during his first year of office.⁴

Insofar as the press was concerned this process of political education by the government, or of "guidance"⁵ by the Foreign Office would take time. In the late 1940's there would remain a significant time-lag between the presentational requirements of a rapidly evolving official foreign policy line towards Soviet Russia and the movement of substantial sections of Fleet Street, where residual sympathies towards the Soviet Union obstinately persisted, sometimes in surprising quarters, to the irritation of the policy-makers.

This thesis has two main objectives. The first is to trace the background to the development of such sympathetic press attitudes towards the Soviet Union during the prelude to the Cold War. The second objective is to analyse the content and the range of press coverage of Anglo-Soviet relations in the 1940's with an eye in particular to identifying those lessons drawn by the press as to how in the future British foreign policy towards Russia might most wisely be conducted.

At the same time as these primary objectives are being pursued it is hoped, more modestly, that some limited light will be cast upon those wider concerns that are of great interest to the political scientist and the political historian viz. the role or the roles of the press in the whole foreign policy process.⁶ At this stage it is perhaps apposite to recall that the very expression "the Cold War" was itself coined and popularised by the most celebrated and influential political journalist of that age, Walter Lippman.⁷

Notes And References

1. See in particular, F.R. Gannon, The British Press And Appeasement 1936-1939. (1971)
2. Defined for present purposes as the liberal and left-wing press.
3. For definitions of the "attentive" and the "mass" foreign policy publics see the next section of this study, "A Conceptual Framework".
4. A.Bullock, Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary (1983)
5. "Guidance" would be the term invariably employed by the Foreign Office when it was thought that some action was necessary on the part of the News Department to facilitate the conduct of British foreign policy by securing (from the Foreign Office's perspective) a more favourable or better informed press.
6. These wider concerns are addressed at their most theoretical level in: B.C. Cohen, The Press And Foreign Policy (1983).
7. W. Lippman, The Cold War: A Study In US Foreign Policy (1947).

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Policy Making

The constitutional arrangements of any given society provide the natural point of departure for the study of policy-making. A constitution may be vague, ambiguous and incomplete, or it may be detailed and precise. It may be operational, operational in part, or not operational at all. These last considerations take us from the field of the formal constitution and its allocation of decision-making power, in the foreign policy-making field, to what some constitutional theorists have called the "informal constitution" which, (they argue) all durable political systems must have, otherwise anarchy prevails. In this world one must further distinguish for analytical purposes between "power" and "influence" whilst recognising that in practice the two are likely to overlap. For this reason amongst others foreign policy theorists in the main today tend to regard foreign policy as a "process" where all kinds of influences are at work - internal, external, economic, historical, geographical, strategic, psychological, bureaucratic, etc.¹ Indeed this approach has also more recently extended to "closed" or "totalitarian" political systems as political scientists have grown sceptical of the validity of the once persuasive monolithic model of such societies, detecting, even within these, signs now if not of incipient pluralism at least of evident complexity.² At the same time a parallel development has occurred in the work of political historians specialising in international history. In their field relatively little of the old style diplomatic history is published today as historians seek to demonstrate in their work the interplay between domestic and foreign policy and to position each country's external relations in that wider context indicated above.³

In this foreign policy process the press everywhere plays a role. In closed societies it can signal abroad the current official foreign policy stance on any issue. More importantly it is often in the press that the first signals are given of an imminent policy change. Sometimes these press signals contain a coded invitation to interested outside states to respond. If such a change is imminent the controlled press in such societies also serves as a transmission belt indicating to the bureaucracy that "public opinion" must be prepared for the new course, for such societies claim democratic legitimacy. Through its "readers letters" columns and other devices the controlled press will also play a direct role in mobilising popular support for the new policy line.

At the other extreme is the free press of an open society, that "fourth estate" of liberal democracy's self-image. In practice the press in a liberal democracy operates under all kinds of constraints, legal, commercial, proprietorial, editorial, etc.⁴ However, that having been said, the press in an open society does provide a route for a two-way traffic between the people and the policy-makers. The policy-makers will seek to exercise guidance over public opinion via the press and upon occasion, when aroused, public opinion may seek to influence policy through the press, sometimes successfully. Moreover, the press itself, or sections of it, may sometimes play an independent role in seeking to educate or defy both the weight of public and official opinion on a given foreign policy issue where it holds both to be dangerously in error - as we shall see the Beaverbrook press did in December 1939 on the issue of possible Allied military intervention in aid of Finland against the Soviet Union. Thus whatever may be said about Fleet Street's failures always to live up to that heroic role in which Macaulay had first cast it as the "fourth estate" of any genuinely constitutional order, nevertheless it remains true that the independent press of a liberal democracy provides an input into the foreign policy process which distinguishes it not simply in degree but in kind from the managed press of an authoritarian state whose "input" is always inspired. That having been said, whilst differences in kind between separate categories of states remain at all times crucial and primary, differences of degree within categories do matter. Not all liberal democracies are the same and consequently, the opportunities for the press to make an input into the policy-making process, and more particularly an input into the foreign policy-making process, vary in scope and character. In this context two factors are perhaps of special significance in the setting of Britain's constitutional arrangements and of her wider political culture. The first of these is the tradition of a particularly wide discretion that the executive has enjoyed, as residuary legatee of the Royal Prerogative, in the conduct of foreign policy in this country. The relatively limited role that parliament plays (both in terms of the absence of formal legislative controls over the executive in foreign policy-making, and in terms of the very limited amount of time parliament is prepared to devote to debates over foreign policy as opposed to domestic policy) in the foreign policy process presents the press in this country both with greater responsibilities and with greater opportunities in providing an alternative forum of debate where foreign policy issues can be argued and presented. The second of the factors referred to above is material here. The freedom of the press in this country, though a very real element in the democratic process, perhaps lacks that enhanced degree of legitimacy that flows from entrenched inclusion amidst the libertarian clauses of a formal written constitution. In both these particulars the United States amongst liberal democracies provides an instructive contrast with the United Kingdom. For in the former not only does the

legislature enjoy a formal, constitutional role in the formulation of foreign policy together with the executive, but the principle of freedom of the press is also enshrined as a provision of the constitution itself.

The Policy-Makers And The Press

Testimony to the increasing interdependence between the policy-makers and the press in this country over the last hundred years is provided by the evidence of the institutionalisation of the relationship between the two. In itself this process was a response, often grudging and reluctant on the part of the executive, to the extensions of the suffrage and of literacy amongst the population at large. The phrase "the old diplomacy" would be retained to describe a past world where public opinion could be largely discounted as a factor in the foreign policy process.

1884 saw the creation of the Lobby, a body flatteringly (and misleadingly) called by Margaret Thatcher at its centenary luncheon in 1984 "the secret service of the fourth estate".⁵ The First World War witnessed the creation of a short-lived Ministry of Information in February 1918 by Lloyd George with a press proprietor, Beaverbrook at its head. The Second World War saw the resurrection of this ministry, headed, after short unsatisfactory spells under Reith and Duff Cooper, by Churchill's intimate, Brendan Bracken, for the rest of the war. By the end of that war Bracken's empire employed over 6,000 people. Bracken too was a press proprietor, though as proprietor of the Financial Times, very much in a specialist line of business. A major source of recruitment to his ministry was Fleet Street and journalism more generally. In contrast to the precedent of 1919 the resurrected Ministry of Information would survive the peace of 1945 and be given permanent status, though a reduced status, as the Central Office of Information. The function that the Ministry had fulfilled in wartime was now recognised as of value in peacetime. In the context of this study it is significant that the incoming Labour government saw the C.O.I. as performing an external as well as an internal function. Presenting the case for the transformation of the old M.O.I. into the new C.O.I. before parliament in December 1945 Clement Attlee said,

"It is essential to good administration under a democratic system that the public shall be adequately informed about the many matters in which government action impinges on their daily lives, and it is particularly important that a true and adequate picture of British policy, British institutions and the British way of life should be presented abroad."⁶

Under the new dispensation the heart of the government information machine would be the Specialist Government Information Service established In 1949. By 1984 this service employed 1,200 officers. Approximately 700 were professionals, for the most part with a background in journalism, but also including radio producers, editors, film makers, etc. 200 were distributed throughout the various press and public relations offices of the ministries. Most are directly employed by the C.O.I. but some are on the payrolls of the individual ministries. In 1984 the size of departmental public and press relations teams varied from the minuscule, as with the low-profile and unnewsworthy Inland Revenue to the grandscale as with the 100 or so officers currently responsible for explaining the work of the Ministry of Defence to the outside world.

In this matter of governmental acceptance of the need to explain policy and procedures to a public opinion which could not, as in an earlier age, be very largely ignored, the Foreign Office, perhaps reluctantly, was to play something of a pioneer role curiously at odds with its reputation as a bastion of aristocratic conservatism and despite its continuing reserve towards Fleet Street in most matters. Two years before Lloyd George's creation of the Ministry of Information, indeed before Lloyd George became Premier, the Foreign Office established in 1916 a new Department of Information to handle relations with the press. Only the General Post Office anticipated the Foreign Office in this regard. More significantly by 1918 this innovation had so proved its value that at the end of the war, when so much else of the wartime administrative experimentation in Whitehall, including the Ministry of Information itself, was being disbanded, this new section of the Foreign Office was given permanent status as the News Department. In doing this the Foreign Office was signalling that good press relations were as necessary in peacetime as in wartime. Public opinion, both domestic and international was seen as a significant factor in the foreign policy process. Not until 1931 did Downing Street itself create a press office. And by the mid 1930's several other departments had followed where the Foreign Office had led and press/public relations units had been established at the Air Ministry, the Ministry of Health, the Colonial Office and the Home Office. Moreover, this whole process would be further stimulated by the extension of broadcasting. From his vantage point in Chatham House Arnold Toynbee would see the News Department by 1939 fulfilling a "key part" in the operations of the Foreign Office, a role that would have been "unthinkable" before 1918.⁷ And from his perspective within the Foreign Office William Strang would acknowledge that the work of the News Department had become by the mid century "indispensable" to the conduct of British diplomacy.⁸

Unlikely model and pioneer that it proved to be, the Foreign Office would remain singular in one respect. Whilst other departments of state would be content to recruit to senior positions within their press sections from outside (and in time from the C.O.I.), usually from the ranks of journalism, the Foreign Office's tendency, one or two exceptions apart, was to appoint from within its own ranks, as it does to the present day. It thus demonstrated its belief that diplomatic experience is more important than journalistic experience in the presentation of British foreign policy. In recent times this pattern has only been disturbed once - by James Callaghan as Foreign Secretary, when, unhappy at the then performance of the Foreign Office in this regard, he imposed his own man, an outsider, as head of the News Department for his tenure. Furthermore, the head of the News Department is the only departmental head within the Foreign Office who enjoys at all times the right of direct access to the Secretary of State. All other heads have to operate in the correct bureaucratic manner through the Permanent Under Secretary.

Whilst these developments were proceeding in Whitehall a parallel development occurred on the ground. In the nineteen twenties the first press attachés were being appointed to the European embassies with the function of advising the ambassador about local public opinion and maintaining contacts with local and visiting journalists. One additional function of these attachés was to create and maintain a local press cuttings library for the use of embassy staff. The office of press attaché was not reserved to full-time diplomats. At the same time the British Library of Information was established in New York, the forerunner of the British Information Services. This had the job not merely of keeping British officials, resident and visiting, abreast of American opinion but also of keeping interested Americans abreast of developments in policy and opinion in England. To do this it kept a very large press cuttings library and deliberately avoided the mistake of limiting its coverage to the traditionally internationalist east coast American press. Each week it prepared a summary of the major developments in the press, copies of which were sent home to Whitehall. Many examples of these are to be found in the Foreign Office files. At all times it made its services and facilities available to American pressmen for its general brief was to contribute towards the improvement of Anglo-American understanding in circumstances where, not only had war with the United States long since been ruled out as a policy option from the British side, but where the benevolent neutrality of the United States was deemed an essential background condition of success should Britain find herself again at war in Europe.

Inter-war Europe witnessed the rise of the dictatorships. These regimes erected their propaganda into major arms of foreign policy. Britain did not respond in kind from a mixture of motives. However, she did create in 1934 the British Council whose purpose was to propagate abroad a wider understanding of the British way of life - an early example of "cultural" diplomacy.

In 1932 the B.B.C. had established a service in English for the countries of the Commonwealth but this was little more than an extension of the Home Service to the overseas empire. At the request of the British government an Arabic service of the B.B.C. was instituted in 1938 to counter Fascist propaganda intended in particular to inflame Arab opinion against Britain over Palestine. In the same year services in Spanish and Portuguese were started for Latin America. After Munich the European services were started in French, German and Italian. In time all of these would be coordinated and integrated in the External Services of the B.B.C. In terms of the news content of their programmes the B.B.C. relied heavily on the press and on the news agencies services, particularly Reuters, for the B.B.C. did not maintain in its early years a large corps of its own correspondents abroad. In part this reflected economic constraints but in part it was a matter of deliberate policy. The B.B.C. did not see itself in these years as in competition with Fleet Street but as complementing Fleet Street's role. The B.B.C. retained independent control of programme content but the Foreign Office decided the languages in which, and the regions to which, the services would be beamed.

In this gradual evolution of a public information policy a distinctive British style can be discerned; crude propaganda was avoided. In part this reflected a national distaste for the vulgarities of self-praise, and the denigration of others, attendant upon such methods. In part no doubt, it also reflected the complacent belief that the British way of life, and the foreign policy which flowed from that way of life, were their own advertisement. More importantly it reflected the belief on the part of the policy-makers that a country's diplomatic prestige rested upon more solid factors - historical status, economic resources, military capability, alliances, etc. - than praise of self and abuse of others. Important though intangible elements contributing to a country's prestige were its standards of culture and civilisation. Truthfulness was one of these standards. Telling the truth, even when the truth was painful or inconvenient, was usually the best policy over the longer term.

This general philosophy on information policy was to pay enormous dividends during the Second World War. In particular the B.B.C. was to achieve unequalled prestige amongst

broadcasting services in Europe. And the reputation for independence of the British media was itself to become an important resource in the hands of the policy-makers themselves, causing them to show self-restraint when they themselves were embarrassed or irritated by some example of a particularly unsympathetic treatment of British policy in Fleet Street or on the B.B.C.

Of course it would be naive and ignorant to suggest that British policy, particularly in wartime, never departed from the most exacting standards of truthfulness. "Grey" and "black" propaganda were both employed against the Nazis and are well documented. And whilst the war continued, the defence regulations allowed the authorities to suppress and therefore censor the press on three broad grounds viz. the propagation of defeatist attitudes, the publication of detailed information about forthcoming military operations, and the propagation and inflammation of divisions amongst the Allies. In fact, these potentially draconian powers were little used, for the government could rely in the main on the intelligent self-censorship of a patriotic press which saw in the war not simply a struggle for national survival but, given the evil character of the Nazi regime, a moral crusade. Nonetheless, the suppression during the early years of the war of the Daily Worker for propagating defeatism, served as a reminder that the commitment of the British government to freedom of the press was not unqualified. And whilst in the broadest terms, British policy-makers might "tell the truth" in peacetime, this was rarely "the whole truth". The Official Secrets Acts and the "D" Notices system are amongst the most obvious constraints upon the free flow of information.

As we have seen information policy was given enhanced status in peacetime Britain after 1945. With particular reference to external relations three bodies shared special responsibilities - the B.B.C., the British Council and the Foreign Office itself, acting directly. Within the Foreign Office in turn two departments carried special responsibilities. Easily the more important of these was the News Department whose general functions have already been outlined. In the postwar era the outstanding issue area upon which this department would be required to offer guidance was the Cold War, for the problem of Soviet expansionism dominated the perceptions of the policy-makers. To the daily press conferences for British diplomatic correspondents were now added daily press conferences for the London correspondents of the overseas press. In other words, a greater effort was being made to win over world opinion for British foreign policy and in particular for Britain's line on the Cold War issues. These collective meetings were supplemented by regular private meetings and briefings with the more reliable correspondents known as "trusties".

The second Foreign Office department concerned with the management of information policy was the Information Policy Department. This took up where the News Department left off. The foreign correspondents in London would have been given the Foreign Office line of the day by the News Department but there was of course no guarantee that their despatches home would reflect this line faithfully, nor, if they did, that their proprietors, or their home broadcasters would not modify their copy in unpredictable ways. Hence the need for a policy of reinsurance. This is where the Information Policy Department came in. It was responsible for communicating the official policy line directly to the posts in the field so that embassy staff, and particularly the press attaches, could make sure in so far as it was within their powers, that all local opinion leaders were kept abreast of the British position on all issues. This department was also responsible for keeping the B.B.C. External Services aware on the same daily basis of the evolution of the Foreign Office line. As we have seen however, the head of the Information Policy Department did not carry the same weight within the Foreign Office as the head of the News Department, for the latter alone shared with the Permanent Under Secretary himself the right at all times of direct access to the Secretary of State.

This was the open structure of the Foreign Office organisation of information policy. However, the Cold War would also provide the occasion for an exercise in clandestine information provision against Soviet Russian influence for which there would appear to be no parallel in the struggle against the dictators in the 1930's. On the initiative of Christopher Mayhew, as Minister of State, in 1947, the Information Research Department of the Foreign Office was established. Its origins lie in the decision to move from the defensive to the offensive in the Cold War battle for minds. This new department produced written material drawn from secret as well as open sources damaging to the Soviet cause and supportive of the western stance on the key issues of the Cold War. This information was distributed free of charge to opinion leaders at home and abroad. These opinion leaders included newspaper journalists and their editors. The recipients were free to use the material as they wished. The External Services of the B.B.C. received the same material upon the same basis. At the same time methods were found to subsidise the works of academic writers and journalists on Soviet Russian and Cold War themes written from a critical stance. Most of these authors themselves would appear to have been unaware of these indirect subsidies and of the identity of their hidden sponsor, though some may have guessed.⁹

In 1954 the Drogheda Committee would report upon its inquiry into the Overseas

Information Services. In doing so it would propound a number of principles and conclusions about information policy. It would point out that "Propaganda is no substitute for policy; nor should it be regarded as a substitute for military strength, economic efficiency or financial stability."¹⁰ Conversely it would point out that, "It is as easy to underrate the potentialities of propaganda as it is to over-rate them. The effect of propaganda on the course of events is never likely to be more than marginal. But in certain circumstances it may be decisive in tipping the balance between diplomatic success and failure". Consequently, "A Great Power with world wide commitments is therefore well advised to pay ^{the} comparatively small premium represented by the cost of efficient Overseas Information Services". Indeed the provision of information "must today be regarded as part of the normal apparatus of diplomacy of a Great Power." Such information should be directed "at the influential few and through them at the many". That having been said, private enterprise would still remain the main channel through which information and impressions about this country and its policies would flow to foreigners. It followed therefore, that as far as possible the British government should always seek to operate upon foreign public opinion via existing private enterprise communication channels rather than by creating channels of its own. The most important of these channels was the press, both for itself and because the press and the news agencies provided virtually everywhere ^{broadcasters} the raw material in covering international affairs.

Public Opinion

From time to time this study has invoked the concept of "public opinion". However, social scientists have found that this useful abstraction can also be dangerously misleading, bearing as it does, overtones suggesting the existence of a fully developed, coherent - indeed monolithic - attitude on the part of "the people" to any given policy or foreign policy issue. For public opinion on any public issue, assuming that it exists at all, is more likely to be a congeries of the distinct attitudes of different groupings which together form "public opinion". This is particularly the case with foreign policy issues where the level of public awareness and of public information about a policy issue is likely to be less than in the domestic policy field. Therefore social scientists, and political scientists amongst them, tend to break down "the public" into more manageable operational sub-categories. Drawing upon the work of Gabriel Almond and James Rosenau ¹¹ this study will therefore employ the following categories:-

(i) The Passive or Mass Public

The ordinary citizen is much more interested in his private life than in the public life of politics, and insofar as he is interested in politics, is more interested in domestic than in foreign politics. Therefore, popular supervision of the domestic activities of policy-makers is likely to be in normal circumstances closer than popular supervision of their international behaviour. This fact may take on a particular significance in the British context where the executive, as we have seen, as the residuary legatee of the Royal Prerogative, enjoys a degree of discretion in the conduct of foreign affairs, and a degree of freedom from control by the legislature unusual among liberal democracies. This is not to say that the policy-makers in this country enjoy a freedom of manoeuvre in the international arena comparable in any way to that enjoyed by the policy-makers in authoritarian states. For in a negative sense the values and opinions of the mass public do set limitations to what the policy-makers may or may not do. These general attitudes or predispositions which prevail in a nation at any given time establish what James Barber, following Karl Holsti, has called foreign policy "mood", and this "mood" exercises a constraining effect on policy alternatives.¹² In this way the mass public sets the limits within which policy must be shaped. More positively, though more rarely, public opinion may grow so excited upon a particular issue that it forms an important element in producing policy outcomes. One factor leading to the frustration of Sir Anthony Eden's Suez policy in 1956 may be seen to have been the excited condition of a deeply divided British domestic public opinion in circumstances where Eden wished above all else to face his Egyptian adversary and the watching world at large with the spectacle of a united British public opinion backing a resolute British government. More rarely still, public opinion may grow so inflamed upon a particular foreign policy issue that it forces change upon the policy-makers. One example of this, frequently cited, is the Hoare-Laval Pact. The venerable nature of this case is itself suggestive of how rare it is for public opinion to play so decisive a role in the foreign policy process. That having been said, possible candidates for inclusion in this select category will be examined in the case studies that follow shortly.

(ii) The Attentive Public

A small proportion of citizens are deeply interested in politics and follow political developments very closely. Their interest in foreign policy as such will probably be less than in domestic policy and be both more spasmodic and sporadic too. A small

proportion of this attentive public will have a special and continuous interest in foreign affairs. An even smaller proportion of this attentive public will be more interested in foreign affairs than in domestic affairs.

(iii) The Activist or Participant Public

A small proportion of the attentive public will seek a more active role in the foreign policy process than that which restricts them to following the press and broadcasters' coverage of international affairs, and the exercise of their electoral choice. They will seek membership of voluntary associations, political parties, pressure groups, etc. However, most of these broadly conceived voluntary associations will be concerned with foreign affairs if at all, only in part. That proportion of the attentive public with a continuous and systematic concern with foreign affairs which wishes to play a more prominent role in the foreign policy process will be tempted to go further. Thus they may join associations exclusively concerned with foreign policy and international affairs. Historical examples of such associations would be the League of Nations Union or the Union for Democratic Control, while contemporary examples would be the United Nations Association, the various "friendship" societies and the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Whilst most of these groups are national in membership and focus, some are international in membership and international in aim. Those activist members of the attentive foreign policy public whose interest in international affairs tends to be detached, academic and scholarly, may incline towards membership of specialist institutions like Chatham House or the Institute of Strategic Studies.

(iv) Opinion-makers and Opinion leaders

These seek to create, mould, influence, reinforce, mobilize and articulate the opinion of the mass public on political issues. Their easiest task is to reinforce existing popular sentiment on any given issue, particularly if that sentiment is already deeply felt. It is more difficult to create an opinion where none was evident before. It is even more difficult to seek to modify or qualify a sentiment that has already taken root. It is most difficult of all to reverse sentiments and opinions strongly entrenched. Amongst their other roles, ministers must act as opinion leaders and are advised in this role by their officials. These generalities apply as much to foreign affairs as they do to domestic affairs. The press in turn is one important channel for the education and guidance of opinion on foreign policy. Accordingly, as we have seen, twentieth century governments have made institutional arrangements for the performance of this function.

Ministers of course, are not the only opinion leaders. And they themselves are influenced, as are their advisers, by unofficial opinion - by influential newspapers, by academic opinion, by outside research institutes, by pressure groups, by backbench foreign affairs specialists, and by the Opposition in what is a reciprocating relationship. However, what characterizes opinion leaders is their ability to project their views about any given issue to unknown, as well as known, outsiders beyond any immediate audience that they might have. This is the quality that distinguished Churchill, for example, in the 1930's, as an opinion leader, albeit out of office, and in opposition to his own party then in government. Opinion leaders on foreign policy, as on other matters must have a platform from which to project their views. Foreign Secretaries and governments have an obvious advantage here, for their views are news and they have all the machinery of the government's publicity apparatus at their disposal. Parliament is an obvious platform. The media, of which the press constitutes so important a component, provide a range of platforms. When in March 1939, following Hitler's occupation of Prague, public opinion in this country moved decisively against the policy of appeasement, it immediately saw in Churchill the one leading politician who had consistently presented an alternative foreign policy based upon rearmament and collective security. In part, Churchill had created this condition of popular familiarity with his dissent over foreign policy through the platform his Commons membership afforded him. However, his second platform had been the press itself.

In the first place, Churchill's views on Germany had been generously reported, whether stated in the Commons itself or at public meetings, throughout the thirties, by Fleet Street, even by those newspapers most unsympathetic to his views. The same could not be said about the B.B.C. Indeed, for several years Churchill's regular platform in Fleet Street had been provided by the Beaverbrook press where he had been permitted to expound week after week a programme for collective security, at first based upon action by the League, and then based upon regional security in Europe, diametrically opposed to that gospel of imperial isolationism that Beaverbrook's leader writers were propagating in their editorials. Moreover, as an active journalist himself, reliant upon his pen for income, Churchill had used the press to project his views worldwide, for his appeal was not merely to domestic opinion but to international opinion, believing as he did that it was of vital importance that outside opinion, particularly United States opinion, be reminded that there was another England to that of Neville Chamberlain. Accordingly, Churchill's signed articles at first in the Evening Standard, and then in the Daily Telegraph, were syndicated worldwide. For good measure, many of his articles, together with selected

parliamentary and public speeches, were then put out between hard covers.

The press was of crucial importance to Churchill in reaching beyond the audience of professional politicians, to which the normal conditions of his working life otherwise confined him. This was doubly so for reasons already hinted at above which now merit expansion. Throughout the thirties Churchill harboured a grievance against the B.B.C. because he believed, rightly or wrongly, that the powers that be had deliberately denied him that access to the microphone on the controversial political issues of the hour, that should have been his natural right as a distinguished statesman and Privy Counsellor. This meant in particular, at first coverage over India and then over Germany, though of course Churchill's personal difficulties with the B.B.C. can be dated back earlier to his clash with Reith over the General Strike.

In fact the position of the B.B.C. in these matters was more complicated and less sinister than perhaps Churchill allowed. Undoubtedly, the B.B.C.'s treatment of political issues in general in the thirties was much more timid and cautious than it is in our own time. Moreover, this general consideration applied with particular force to the coverage of international affairs where the B.B.C. was always sensitive to pressure from the Foreign Office and elsewhere in the administration that the national interest might be jeopardized by the thoughtless treatment of sensitive issues by B.B.C. commentators in current affairs programmes. (In the main the Foreign Office seems to have been quite content with the straight news broadcasts treatment of international affairs). Nonetheless the B.B.C. had a commitment to "balance" in its coverage of politics. This commitment applied to its treatment of international politics as well as its treatment of domestic politics. It was the interpretation that the B.B.C. gave to this commitment to balance that disadvantaged Churchill, an interpretation that both front benches jealousy monitored and protected. A balance of views according to this interpretation meant essentially a balance between the official views on international relations of the two front benches. Naturally this strict interpretation of balance excluded altogether a maverick figure like Churchill. Yet Churchill was not the only casualty of this ruling, he was merely, as far as foreign affairs go, the most prominent. Other sufferers were Lloyd George and Cripps. Tentative attempts by B.B.C. programme planners to circumvent this strict interpretation of the limited nature of the B.B.C.'s commitment to democratic debate over foreign policy, an interpretation that had ^{the} ludicrous consequence that listeners were deprived of access to the views of the government's most formidable foreign policy critic, came to nothing. Churchill's views were of course from time to time reported indirectly in précis form in news programmes when he had made an important parliamentary or public

speech on international affairs. And from time to time he was invited to broadcast in the 1930's on other non-contentious issues outside the field of foreign policy, invitations he for the most part brushed aside. However, what Churchill sought in the mid and late thirties, and felt himself to have been denied as an act of policy, was direct access to the microphone so that he could put his own views in his own words to the British people on the greatest issue of the day, the menace from Nazi Germany. In fact Churchill fell victim to a particular interpretation of the B.B.C.'s statutory obligation to "balance" which failed to convey adequately the full diversity of opinion on any given subject. He was not the first to suffer from what in effect constituted a two-party front bench duopoly over broadcast political debate nor would he be the last.

Media - Diplomacy Relationships

In a recent study of media diplomacy Yoel Cohen has suggested that the different types of relationship between the media and diplomacy are best categorised as follows:¹⁵

- (i) The media, overseas and British are a source of information to members of diplomatic missions abroad and to officials and ministers in London. The British media influence foreign policy as a result of their effect on policy-makers, M.P.'s, interest groups, and the wider public. The media are in addition sources of information and agenda setters for these, and are used by interest groups and M.P.'s as channels to reach the official policy-makers and the public.
- (ii) The media are also channels of communication among policy-makers, British and foreign. They are used by British government departments, individual officials and ministers at the policy formulation stage to disclose information in order to advance or hinder policy options. At the stage of policy implementation the media are used in international negotiations by governments as a device through which to manoeuvre other governments.
- (iii) The media are also used to gain support for policy. The channels include, abroad, the building up by diplomatic missions of relations with the local media and the distribution of helpful material to them; and in London, the cultivation of the same friendly relationship with the foreign press corps and with the B.B.C. External Services. The

British media for their part provide the means by which the F.C.O. seeks to explain policy to the British public.

In fact, upon analysis Cohen's categories can be seen to encompass more than three discrete areas of relationship. In the first place, the press may serve as a source of information for the policy-makers. Secondly, because it may fulfil this vital information role, it may itself influence the policy-makers. Thirdly, the press may help set the agenda in international affairs by the relative prominence it gives to issues. Fourthly, the press may serve as a channel of communication. In this capacity it may serve as a channel between the policy-makers, between governments, and between the policy-makers and that attentive and activist foreign policy public which may wish to make a policy input. Fifthly, the press may be exploited by governments to manoeuvre against other governments in international negotiations. Sixthly, the press may be exploited by the policy-makers to secure the support of domestic and world opinion. Finally, the press may be exploited in order to test public and foreign government reaction to a contemplated but sensitive foreign policy initiative. In a word the policy-makers may wish to "fly a kite".

Most of these roles will be illustrated in the concrete in the case studies and profiles which follow.

Notes And References

1. See for example, W. Wallace, The Foreign Policy Process In Britain (1976) and J. Barber, Who Makes Foreign Policy? (1976)
2. See for example, S. Bialer (ed), The Domestic Context Of Soviet Foreign Policy, (1981) and C. Adomeit and R. Boardman (eds), Foreign Policy Making In Communist Countries (1979)
3. See for example, P.W. Kennedy, The Realities Behind Diplomacy (1981)
4. These are explored in today's press in, C. Wintour, Pressures On The Press (1972)
5. Quoted, P. Hennessy, What The Papers Never Said (1985), p 1
6. Quoted, P. Hennessy, Sources Close To The Prime Minister (1984), pp 57-58
7. A. Toynbee, Experiences (1969), p65
8. Lord Strang, The Foreign Office (1955), p22
9. On the work of the I.R.D. see L. Smith, "Covert British Propaganda: The Information Research Department: 1947-1977", Millennium: Journal Of International Studies Vol.9 No.3 Spring 1980
10. Report On The Overseas Information Services (Drogheda Report), Cmd.9138 (1954)
11. G.A. Almond, The American People And Foreign Policy (1950). J.N. Rosenau, Public Opinion And Foreign Policy (1960)
12. J. Barber, Who Makes Foreign Policy? (1976), p92
13. For the B.B.C.'s special difficulties with Whitehall over its coverage of international affairs, see P. Scannel, "The B.B.C. And Foreign Affairs

1935-1939", Media, Culture And Society, Vol. 6 (1984). The B.B.C.'s difficulties in this area can be traced back to the Vernon Bartlett row of 1933, when Ramsey Macdonald, the Prime Minister, had angrily intervened with Reith directly, demanding to know who was in charge of British foreign policy - the government or the B.B.C. Macdonald had followed up his "phone call to the Director General with a formal letter of protest to the Board of Governors. The matter was raised in Cabinet and considered at the highest levels within the Foreign Office. In the meantime Vernon Bartlett's services were quietly dispensed with by the B.B.C. and the best known foreign affairs commentator found himself denied access to the microphone for several years. For further information on the Bartlett affair, see A. Briggs, Governing The B.B.C. (1979), pp 194-197 and B. Haworth, "The British Broadcasting Corporation, Nazi Germany and the Foreign Office", Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, Vol. 1 No. 1 (1981)

- 14 On Churchill and the B.B.C. in the thirties see Scannel op.cit. "The B.B.C. And Foreign Affairs 1935-1939"
- 15 Y. Cohen, Media Diplomacy: The Foreign Office In The Mass Communication Age (1985), p5

Source

P.M. Taylor, The Projection Of Britain (1981)

CASE STUDIES AND PROFILES : A Rationale Of Selection

The Cold War is a massive subject. The study of British press treatment of the Cold War is scarcely less massive. Intelligent and reasoned selection of historical material was therefore required to keep this study within the realms of the practicable. The choice of topics is therefore reasoned rather than arbitrary. The choices themselves together with the reason for each choice follow,

(i) The Times And Anglo-Soviet Relations

Most previous studies of the British press written from a political perspective have treated this newspaper in a category all its own, as the single most important British newspaper, a position in turn based upon three considerations. In the first place, the newspaper has been seen as the newspaper of the elite, particularly of the foreign policy elite, the newspaper that influenced the people of influence. In the second place, the newspaper and its editor have been seen as the natural leaders of Fleet Street and of the British press more widely. This has meant amongst other things, that The Times has time and again provided the agenda of debate, particularly the agenda of debate over foreign policy, for the rest of Fleet Street in a way no other newspaper has done. In the third place, The Times has been seen from abroad, during much of its history, as enjoying a privileged position of special intimacy with all British governments, most particularly in the field of the foreign policy. No episode in the long history of the newspaper has attracted so much controversy as The Times' role in supporting Neville Chamberlain's policy on Germany in the 1930's.

Prima facie, these considerations therefore suggested that the role played by The Times in the subsequent decade during the prelude to the Cold War, would repay examination. As we shall see, The Times did adopt a distinctive line on the problems of international relations in that period, though this line, controversial in so many ways though it would be, has not penetrated the collective memory of informed opinion in this country to the same extent that its earlier conduct in counselling the appeasement of Hitler's Germany in the 1930's undoubtedly has. Nonetheless, it will be the argument of this study that there was a very strong element of continuity linking The Times' line on

Germany in the 1930's with the same newspapers's line on Soviet Russia in the 1940,s.

(ii) **The Beaverbrook Press And Russia**

The choice of the Beaverbrook Press's attitude to Soviet Russia as the second part of our special studies, flows in very large part from the initial choice of The Times as our first, and this for two reasons. Just as The Times occupied the position of being the most influential newspaper, read by the policy-makers, the foreign policy elite and the attentive foreign policy public, so the circulation statistics provided by the postwar Royal Commission on the Press would demonstrate that as the Cold War commenced the Daily Express had the greatest single following amongst the mass public of any daily newspaper. And in the summer of 1949 Gallup would show that more than one British citizen in four claimed to read the Daily Express, a figure far in excess of that claimed for any other daily newspaper at that time. An analysis of the attitudes of the two newspapers to the key issues of Anglo-Soviet relations allows us therefore to compare and contrast the leading quality newspaper in this regard with the most popular newspaper. In other words, we can compare what the attentive and activist foreign policy public on the one hand were being told about Anglo-Soviet relations, with on the other hand, what the mass public were being told about the same subject.

The second reason for the choice of the Beaverbrook press, in conjunction with the earlier choice of The Times, lies in the fact that both The Times and the Beaverbrook Press supported the Conservative party. In the overall context of this study, this fact is doubly important. For as we shall see, at the onset of the Cold War the Soviet Union could draw upon a reservoir of goodwill and sympathy in Fleet Street. Amongst the progressive press (defined for our purposes as the liberal and left-wing press), given Russia's sacrifices in the defeat of Hitler's Germany, and given a certain degree of affinity on that press' part with the aspirations, if not the methods, of socialism Soviet-style, this goodwill is perhaps not altogether surprising. However, as this study will seek to show, this attitude of benevolence towards Stalin's Russia extended far beyond the progressive press to include both the most influential Conservative newspaper and the most popular one. The leading newspaper in terms of influence, and the leading newspaper in circulation, from amongst the

"capitalist" press of Fleet Street both failed for their different reasons to take an ideological line on British policy towards communist Russia.

(iii) **British Military Intervention In Greece In December 1944**

In December 1944 in Athens the British employed military force to frustrate what they believed to be an attempted armed communist coup in Greece. For the first time a western power employed superior counter-force against communism, whilst military operations to defeat German fascism were still in full flood. Churchill's decisive action in Greece caused a major domestic and international political storm which shook his government. In these events the British press played a major role. Insofar as events in Greece anticipated the wider shape of things to come in international affairs, once Germany was defeated, and insofar as the attitude of the British press to these events provided the British government with a major embarrassment in its pursuance of its objectives, this episode has an obvious importance in the overall context of this study.

(iv) **The British Press And The Polish Question**

Perhaps no diplomatic problem in the twentieth century has proved so ominous for the evolution of British foreign policy as has the Polish Question. For in the Polish Question can be seen the seeds of both the Second World War and the seeds of the Cold War. Political actors as various as Churchill, Eden, Harriman and Truman have seen in wartime Allied divisions over Poland, the single most important issue leading to the Cold War. The attitude or attitudes of the British press towards Poland therefore, and most particularly that press' attitude towards the implications of the British Guarantee to Poland, formalised in the Anglo-Polish Treaty of Mutual Security of 25 August 1939, obviously merit special attention, most particularly after that commitment became inconvenient and embarrassing.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TIMES AND ANGLO-SOVIET RELATIONS

Few historians of British foreign policy in the 1930's have resisted the temptation to comment upon the role played by The Times during that decade in the support that the newspaper offered for the official policy of the appeasement of Nazi Germany. Far less remarked upon has been the same newspaper's advocacy of the appeasement of the Soviet Union in the 1940's, as the harmony of the wartime Grand Alliance gave way to the discord and antagonism of the early years of the Cold War. The relative neglect of this second phase of commitment by The Times to policies of appeasement in Europe is surprising for a number of reasons, three of which I should like to pursue in this study.

In the first place, The Times' advocacy of a sympathetic policy towards the Soviet Union in 1940's, following as it did so closely upon the heels of a similarly conciliatory line towards Nazi Germany in the earlier decade, tended to invite from its critics charges of inconsistency or worse which have served to mask a striking continuity of vision about the external world on the newspaper's part. Secondly, the repeated pleas by The Times for a greater degree of understanding of Russia by the western powers led the newspaper to expound a philosophy of international relations which is of intrinsic interest when found in a journal, which, sometimes, to the intense embarrassment of British ministers, was so often in these years assumed by foreigners to enjoy a special relationship with all British governments. Thirdly, any student of Times leaders on relations with Russia at the onset of the Cold War cannot but be struck by the number of occasions when the newspaper, in support of its general thesis that the western powers shared the guilt for the deterioration of relations with the Soviet Union, anticipates the main features of the argument later to be put forward in support of a similar thesis a generation later by the revisionist historians of the Cold War's origins.

The substantial continuity of view which links The Times support of policies of appeasement through the two decades under consideration can best be illustrated in the formulation of one simple proposition. This was that British governments should "disinterest" themselves in Eastern Europe.

How did The Times arrive initially at such a position? The explanation for this must be sought in the newspaper's reflections on the Versailles Treaty. According to the consequent analysis of that treaty and its outcomes, the Versailles settlement rested upon

a series of illusions. The first of these was that tranquility in Europe could be secured by the general extension of representative democracy. Post-war experience had in fact confirmed the wisdom of Mill's conclusion of a century earlier that a high level of cultural and economic development was the essential prerequisite for the successful operation of representative institutions. Of nowhere had this proved more true than Eastern Europe, where attempts to transplant parliamentary institutions native to Western Europe had met with almost universal failure. Moreover, the newspaper, no more than other sectors of informed opinion in the thirties, still believed that the First World War had really been fought as a struggle between democracy and authoritarianism as Allied propaganda had come in time to claim. As for the conviction that democracies were necessarily pacific, this surely must remain an act of faith.

The second illusion upon which the Versailles settlement had been constructed had been the belief that a stable European order could be created through the universal application of the principle of national self-determination. This principle raised problems of a general character everywhere, but, given the racial confusion of Eastern Europe in particular, was little short of a recipe for permanent turmoil in that troubled region.

The third great illusion to inform the settlement was the hope that a stable new European system could be fabricated without the participation of either Germany or Russia.

This constituted a reasoned and considered perspective on the problems raised for British policy-makers by developments in Eastern Europe between the wars. To a large extent it reflected much common ground in, for example, the willingness of inter-war British policy-makers to enter into, in concert with other powers, security commitments guaranteeing the Western European frontiers established at Versailles as contrasted with their extreme reluctance to enter into identical agreements with reference to those East European frontiers similarly established. The Times, however, was prepared to draw the logical conclusions from this reluctance. As no vital interest of Great Britain was at stake in Eastern Europe and as she lacked the political will and military resources for decisive intervention in so distant an area, then she should not necessarily feel compelled to oppose the predominance in that region of another great power. Though the putative ultimate beneficiary of this advice, if taken, might have changed in the interim, this was to remain the position of The Times on Eastern Europe in the 1940's, for, as the newspaper repeatedly argued, British foreign policy was not and should not be based upon ideological considerations but upon the national interest assessed in a rational and enlightened manner.

A few years ago, Professor W.N. Medlicott suggested that the term "appeasement"⁶ should join "imperialism" as terms which henceforth no serious scholar should employ on the grounds that they had been used to cover promiscuously what were often discrete policy positions.¹ He may or may not have in mind *The Times* when he wrote those words, but certainly any study of the special character of that newspaper's support for the appeasement of Germany in the 1930's, and of its distinctive attitude towards Eastern Europe should induce hesitation in those tempted to easy generalization. To suggest, for example, "that what united the appeasers was a common belief in the principle of self-determination"² is either to forget or to misunderstand the position of *The Times* for reasons already indicated above. In its support for the Munich settlement *The Times* might indeed point out that given its substantial minorities, Czechoslovakia was not defensible in terms of that doctrine of national self-determination, but this no means meant that the newspaper itself subscribed to that doctrine in any unqualified manner. Manifestly it did not. In advising against the blank rejection of Hitler's demands, *The Times* was arguing that a proper deference be paid in Eastern Europe to the realities of power.³

Another familiar generalization about the appeasers is that which claims "the appeasers drew their strength and sustenance from a hatred of Russia and of communism".⁴ In view of the reputation the newspaper was to acquire in the forties for its pro-Soviet sympathies, this is a difficult charge to sustain against *The Times*, and a reading of *Times* leaders written in the thirties reveals no obsessive concern with Russian expansionism or indeed with communist subversion. For *The Times* followed most other informed opinion of the period in regarding Stalin's triumphant emergence from the Kremlin power struggles as signalling, among other things, Russia's transformation into a cautious defensive power on the international scene which henceforth would give priority to domestic development. The rise of Stalin was widely welcomed in the western press at the time for precisely these reasons. *The Times* opposed the construction of a general anti-German alliance in the 1930's, which perforce would have included the Soviet Union, not because of a pre-occupation with the superior danger supposedly presented by Soviet Russia but because of a general theoretical objection to the emergence in Europe of two opposed alliance systems which might end in a repetition of the catastrophe of 1914.

The Second World War broke out over Poland and many commentators, including Churchill, have seen in Allied disagreements over Poland the seeds of the Cold War.⁵ For these reasons the British press' treatment of the Polish Question is the subject of separate independent treatment in a full study later. For the moment, however, some of

the findings of that fuller study need to be anticipated here. For The Times' treatment of the Polish Question is a specially instructive example of its attitude to Eastern Europe as a whole and the supreme illustration of that continuity of view about that region which characterises the newspaper in the thirties and forties.

When Chamberlain announced the unilateral British Guarantee to Poland in the Commons in March 1939 the unqualified nature of that Guarantee surprised the Prime Minister's supporters as much as it did his critics. The unease that The Times felt at the seeming acceptance by Britain of such a sweeping security commitment in Eastern Europe, in apparent contravention of all previous policy found immediate expression in the controversial leader that appeared on the morrow of the statement. As editor Geoffrey Dawson accepted responsibility for this leader, though in fact it was written by A.L. Kennedy.⁶ In this leader The Times stressed that Chamberlain's statement repaid the closest scrutiny, for this would show that Britain had guaranteed the independence of Poland but not her territorial integrity. There was no blanket endorsement of the status quo from the British side, for there was recognition that problems still existed in which adjustments were still necessary, and the newspaper added, somewhat ominously for the Poles, "The relative strength of nations will always and rightly be an important consideration in diplomacy". This leader caused Beek to delay his imminent departure for London until the Foreign Office had issued an official statement repudiating The Times' interpretation of Britain's new obligations and, as the Czech precedent was in every mind, caused the Polish ambassador, Raczynski, to proclaim emphatically to Orme Sargent at the Foreign Office, "We want no Runcimanism in Poland".⁷

This initial reserve on the newspaper's part about accepting an unlimited obligation to Poland set the tone for the future. Amidst the clash of arms and during the gallant but doomed resistance of the Poles, there were no further references, however oblique, to the negotiability of Poland's frontiers and The Times followed the rest of the press, the Daily Worker apart, in denouncing The Soviet occupation of the eastern provinces of Poland. Yet in regard to the latter, the newspaper reflected some of the ambivalence of official British policy. Whilst condemning aggression whatever its source, Halifax had distinguished in the Lords between German and Russian action in Poland on the grounds that the latter had not actually initiated the war. He had further noted that Soviet forces had advanced only up to the Curzon Line.⁸ Although there were no further "Curzon Line" arguments available to be invoked in mitigation of Soviet conduct when Russia subsequently moved against the Baltic states The Times was for the next two years to maintain a broad distinction between German and Russian expansionism in Eastern Europe, Russia was seeking security through pre-emptive moves which would allow her

to resist from the most forward positions the perceived threat from Germany. The Times took it as axiomatic that a ruler as experienced and cunning as Stalin would place little credence in Hitler's public professions of goodwill. These being the wellsprings of Soviet actions the lesson for Britain was that she must on no account alienate Soviet Russia as a potential ally through quixotic action over Eastern Europe. Only once, and that briefly, did The Times depart from this reasoned distinction between the behaviour of Hitler and that of Stalin. This was when the Soviet invasion of Finland so outraged Printing House Square that The Times joined the rest of Fleet Street, the Beaverbrook press excepted, in support of the extension of the war into an anti-totalitarian crusade in Eastern Europe.

The events of 22 June 1941 were to simplify matters. Looking back, The Times was to find in these events confirmation for its interpretation of the sources of Soviet conduct and, incidentally, a degree of retrospective justification for that conduct itself. Russia's fears had proved well-founded. When six months later, the United States followed Russia into the war, The Times was to repeat in leader after leader one simple message. This was that ultimate Allied victory was assured so long as harmony between what the newspaper liked to call "the Great Allies" prevailed. Conversely, it would be a primary German objective to shatter that harmony. At all costs this objective must be frustrated.

The Poles were soon to learn what the implications of this simple message for a lesser ally might be. As the Russians first contained and then rolled back the invading German armies, those Russo-Polish differences which had been buried under the first impact of the German onslaught, began to surface again. With every step that the Russian troops took towards the 1939 frontiers of Poland, the settlement of these differences became more urgent. There was little attempt at impartiality on the part of The Times. On what it understood to be the key issue in dispute between Britain's two allies, The Times came down heavily on the Soviet side. The Times' attitude on these contentious issues will be examined later in greater depth in a special study of the Polish Question. Suffice it to say here that at all times The Times' position depended less upon the merits of these particular arguments than upon the general philosophy of international relations it had come to espouse. For this philosophy had important implications for Poland and for Eastern Europe more broadly. Given its attitude to Eastern Europe, The Times had never been happy with Chamberlain's original commitments to Poland and when these obligations threatened in the course of the war to provide new embarrassments for Britain, the newspaper led the movement of those who believed that Britain again should disengage herself from all East European entanglements. In propagating this message in the 1940's the newspaper was led to expound a philosophy of international relations which was

global in its implications and to which I should now like to turn.

Inevitably, Times leaders of the war years devote most of their space to the pressing issues of the hour, but from the beginning they also expound a clearly articulated and coherent philosophy of international relations and proclaim that the war is not being fought to restore the status quo ante in Europe. They advance a model for a stable new European world order. This philosophy and that order are to a large extent historically conditioned, and that favourite journalistic phrase "the lessons of history" is much invoked. What were these lessons and what guidance did they offer statesmen concerned with the construction of the post-war world?

Two of these lessons have already been touched upon earlier in this study. Inter-war experience had, according to The Times, demonstrated that no stable European order could be built simply by applying the twin Wilsonian principles of national self-determination and of representative government. These had proved particularly inappropriate in Eastern Europe. The inter-war "sovereignty" of many of the states of that area had been little more than a polite fiction of diplomacy given their military and economic weaknesses. Moreover, inter-war experience had suggested that representative institutions transplanted from Western Europe could not confidently be expected to flourish in the soil of Eastern Europe. The likely real post-war choice in Eastern Europe in practice, The Times suggested, would therefore be between rival forms of authoritarian rule. It is important to bear this last point in mind when considering the relative equanimity with which the newspaper was to meet the extension of communist rule throughout Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the second world war. For implicit in the Times attitude was the preference for a socially progressive political authoritarianism of the left, which might contain those nationalistic passions which had been the curse of Eastern Europe between the wars, over any right-wing variant of the same. All of this being so the two greatest needs in a post-war Eastern Europe would be for what The Times liked to term "leadership" and "organisation".

The third lesson of history that the newspaper derived from the catastrophe of the world war was that henceforth international relations must be anchored firmly in the realities of power and not clouded and confused by the illusions of idealists. The great illusion of the 1930's had been that collective security could be achieved through the League of Nations. Men had attempted to build a new world order on the basis of the equal rights and responsibilities of each sovereign state. An international system had been built upon a polite fiction of diplomacy. Inevitably in these circumstances collective security had meant collective insecurity. In the real world states differed widely in their resources and

their ability to mobilize those resources for military and other purposes. The real world of states was not a democracy but "an aristocracy of power".⁹ Henceforth any new international system must temper idealism with realism and the rights, duties and responsibilities of states must be aligned with each state's effective power to control and influence events. Unsurprisingly, such attitudes expressed in the newspaper's leader columns alarmed some readers as strikingly reminiscent of that doctrine of *realpolitik* which supposedly Britain was at war to oppose. This reaction made *The Times* all the more insistent in its self-imposed task of educating public opinion out of its illusions. The beginning of all wisdom in approaching international relations lay in the unsentimental intellectual acceptance of the fact that the world is as it is and not as we would have it be.

The fourth lesson which could be garnered from twentieth century history was that stability could no longer be secured in Europe through the maintenance of a balance of power. In view of Britain's history this lesson was of particular relevance to the statesmen of that country. August 1914 had shown that any equilibrium based upon the countervailing power of two great alliance systems, sustained by massive arms expenditure, with Britain providing the fine balance, was inherently unstable. The character of modern war, once a diplomatic balance collapsed, meant that the ensuing conflict would be so costly in blood and treasure that there could be no real victors.

These were the lessons to be garnered from twentieth century experience and they were all of a negative character. For the positive lessons of history one had to look further back, to the nineteenth century, for that century provided a successful model on which to base an international order. That nineteenth century prototype was provided by the Concert of Europe. A new Concert was what was now required, but a Concert intelligently modified to suit the changed circumstances of the mid-twentieth century. This meant in the first place that the new Concert would be, in the words of one *Times* leader, not so much "a Concert of Europe but a Concert of the World".¹⁰

From this model springs *The Times*' essential division of the powers of the world into two categories viz. the great powers and the small powers. The great powers alone disposed of those orders of resources and military strength which could maintain world peace or launch world war. Furthermore, because of the terrible cost of such war, given the destructive potential of modern technology, the great powers in the post-war world would have a common interest in the preservation of peace. For the great powers to realise fully this community of interest in practice it would be necessary for each of their number to feel confident in its own security.

How was this confidence to be instilled? According to the newspaper, by the rational division of the world into spheres of influence within each of which the predominance of the security interests of one of their number would be freely acknowledged by the other great powers. In an important sense, The Times put it on one occasion, "zones of influence exist, were bound to exist, and will continue to exist".¹¹ What would characterise the new international system, however, would be the universal recognition of non-overlapping, clearly demarcated spheres of influence. In this way friction between great powers on matters of vital interests would be avoided.

At the same time not all the globe would fall within those areas judged by one great power or another to be vital to its own security. In these contested regions the great powers must practice consultation and seek to coordinate their policies. Particular prudence would be called for as minor powers would, understandably, seek to gain great power backing in pursuit of their own aims. At all costs the great powers must avoid a situation arising in which they would be set upon a collision course with each other through the rash espousal of the conflicting claims amongst rival client states.

A programme such as this when put forward in a newspaper of the standing of The Times could hardly be expected to pass without comment from readers. And, rightly or wrongly, foreign readers in particular tended to assume the existence of a relationship of special intimacy between the newspaper and those responsible for the making of British foreign policy. The representatives of the governments-in-exile in London who spoke for the smaller European powers felt especially alarmed. From their perspective it seemed that the Second World War itself was being fought to prevent Germany from being able to impose its will upon the lesser states of Europe. Less directly interested readers were to regret what they discerned as the adoption by The Times of the language of *realpolitik*. Was this not, after all diplomatic euphemisms had been put aside, that very philosophy of international relations which Great Britain had gone to war to oppose? We find therefore Times leaders of the war years defending the newspaper against charges of "Hitlerism" and allegations that it was preaching "power politics". In response the newspaper set about educating its critics out of that condition of naivety that alone made the formulation of such an indictment possible. Power, it explained, was the necessary, if not the sole ingredient of all politics. There was no such thing as "powerless" politics.¹² The open and universal use of the expression "the powers" in international politics was simply testimony to the fact that this general truth was more honestly acknowledged and could therefore be more starkly expressed in discussion of international politics than in other aspects of politics.

Having expounded its philosophy of international relations The Times was not remiss in drawing all the logical conclusions from that philosophy. If each great power were to be freely conceded its legitimate sphere of influence in the post-war world by its fellow great powers, then there could be no gainsaying the fact that Eastern Europe must fall within the Soviet sphere. As early as August 1941 The Times had concluded that the chief lesson of the inter-war period for the states of Eastern Europe was that in any new post-war order they would have to accept the "leadership" of a great power.¹³ As neither Great Britain nor the United States could or should seek to exercise predominant influence in the area, this in the nature of things must mean the leadership of either Germany or Russia. And, Hitler's Germany by its aggressive conduct had demonstrated that its ambitions extended beyond a legitimate regional predominance to continental mastery and perhaps to global power, post-war leadership in Eastern Europe must mean the leadership of the Soviet Union.

It is of the greatest interest that The Times should adopt this position so early in the war on the Eastern front as the Soviet Union was still staggering from the opening German onslaught. Much later in the conflict, after the tide had turned in the East, many other sectors of British opinion were to come to a similar conclusion, at least temporarily, that it would be wise to accept in the East the results of the arbitrament of arms. However, their reaction could be viewed for the most part as governed by expediency. They were counselling the acquiescence of a war-weary Britain in the somewhat mixed results of a war from which she had emerged in the ranks of the victors. The position of The Times was quite different. It had anticipated events and was able to do so because its views on Eastern Europe sprang from a considered and deliberate philosophy of international relations. This philosophy dictated that Great Britain must "disinterest" herself in Eastern Europe.

As relations between the wartime allies began to deteriorate once the war itself had been won, The Times at no time absolved the Soviet Union from its share of guilt in contributing to this sad process. It found the vitriolic language of Soviet diplomacy unpalatable. It suggested that the Soviet Union's perfectly legitimate sensitivity over its own security showed signs on occasion of degenerating into paranoia. Yet what was to characterise the attitude of the newspaper was its insistence on the shared, indeed the equal guilt of both sides. Thus, towards the end of a leader arguing the need for the restoration of the wartime conditions of harmony and trust among the Allies, in which it had surveyed the varied contentious issues which had come to divide them, The Times concluded,

"If relations are to be improved, if suspicions are to be exorcised, Russia has a large contribution to make. But an equally large contribution is required from the U.S. and Britain." 14

This was very even-handed justice. On what precise counts did the newspaper indict the policy-makers of the Western powers?

The general charge was one of inconsistency against the Western powers, inconsistency tinged with hypocrisy. These powers were showing themselves decidedly unenthusiastic about the prospects of Soviet predominance in the Balkans and in Poland. Indeed from time to time they interfered to show their disagreements with Soviet plans for the post-war organisation of Eastern Europe, action which could only excite the hopes of anti-Soviet elements in that region. And all of this was being done in an area which was manifestly one of the utmost sensitivity for Soviet security. At the same time Britain was asserting for herself a primary role in the settlement of Greece and together with the United States effectively excluding Russia from any significant participation in shaping the post-war destinies of Italy, France and the Low Countries. As for the United States alone, she was clearly intent on fashioning a Japanese settlement exclusively according to her own ideas. To none of these schemes of the Western powers had the Soviet Union made any noisy objections, until that is, it became clear that the Western powers would seek to deny to the Soviet Union what they claimed for themselves, i.e., predominance in regions where they held their own security to be at stake. To the Russians this smacked of double-dealing and of a refusal to accept the Soviet Union as an equal amongst the great powers when she had made the greatest sacrifices of all in the defeat of the common enemy. The Times could see no logical distinction between Britain's claims to a preponderant influence in the Middle East and the Low Countries, or America's claims to exercise a similar influence in the Pacific and the Western hemisphere as a whole, and Russia's aspirations in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the newspaper repeatedly said so. On a number of occasions the analogy was made with the Monroe Doctrine. Following Franklin Roosevelt, the latter was characterised as a "good neighbour policy". All the Soviet Union was claiming in Eastern Europe, The Times explained to its American readers, was the world's acceptance of its rights to play a similar concerned role in Eastern Europe. Setting aside all necessary obfuscation of language it is of the greatest interest that at the very outset of the Cold War we find The Times advocating the voluntary acceptance by the Western powers of something akin to the Brezhnev Doctrine a generation before that doctrine received a formal formulation by the Soviet rulers.

In the months that followed Potsdam, The Times was to return to this theme repeatedly. By that time, however, Western policy-makers had provided the leader writers with new evidence of their refusal to treat the Soviet Union as an equal and act towards her in a free and open manner. In regard to the development of the atomic bomb, the newspaper found the behaviour of the Western powers to be myopic and irrational on both political and scientific grounds. Conversely, it judged Soviet suspicions to be legitimate,

"No decision taken now by any power or group of powers is likely to restrain the number of nations possessing the skill and resources to develop the use of atomic energy . . . But what is done now may have incalculable diplomatic consequences in fostering or allaying suspicions between the great nations of the world...."¹⁶

The Times advised that,

"The control of the latest and deadliest of weapons fully and frankly shared between the principle governments of the United Nations must take its proper place as part, even though the weightiest part of the control of all weapons. This control cannot be separated from the general business of the planning of peace and the prevention of war and the responsibility for it must rest in the same hands."¹⁷

Churchill's speech at Fulton is conventionally taken to mark the first public declaration of the Cold War from the Western side. In that speech Churchill had deliberately singled out for condemnation attempts to gain security in Europe by counselling the adoption of that misguided policy of "appeasement" towards Soviet Russia that had earlier been applied with such tragic consequences to Nazi Germany. Such an analogy could not be lost on attentive readers of The Times and, more narrowly, the foreign policy elite were well aware of the personal record of men like Barrington-Ward and E.H.Carr on the appeasement of Hitler's Germany. The response of The Times to the Fulton speech is therefore of particular interest. The newspaper echoed Churchill's criticisms of Soviet policy but then proceeded to temper these with a strong plea for Western understanding of the obsessive nature of Soviet preoccupations with their security together with an insistence that Russia alone was not responsible for that deterioration in inter-Allied relations that had undoubtedly occurred. In a variety of ways the Western powers, perhaps unintentionally, had sown the seeds of distrust in Russian minds. And it concluded,

"Most of all, perhaps, the policy which has retained for the U.S. the exclusive exploitation of the atomic bomb has aggravated an existing state of insecurity in Soviet minds that may not be intelligible to westerners who forget by how narrow a margin the Soviet Union escaped catastrophe. It has fortified the belief in an attempt to build up a reservoir of military power against the Soviet Union and it has troubled their pride, never more conspicuous than in the hour of victory and exultation."¹⁸

Much earlier, The Times had commented adversely on the failure of the Attlee government to dissociate itself from American policy on this crucial issue.¹⁹ This acquiescence could only contribute to the impression being gained by Russia's rulers that the Western powers were intent upon concerting their policies against the Soviet Union. And this was a direct contravention of the first principles of that revived Concert of Europe which The Times had expounded as its model for a new international order. For that model had stipulated that whereas there should be some kind of formal or semi-formal institutionalisation of that "aristocracy of power" which would be an inevitable feature of the post-war world, the newspaper had been insistent that the experiment could only succeed if all of the member states of that aristocracy were treated as equals. This meant in particular that there be no "ganging-up" against any one of their number by the others. Within the aristocracy of power, in short, democracy of conduct must prevail.

Such in broad outline was The Times' critique of Western policy, which it offered to sustain its general thesis that the Soviet Union enjoyed no monopoly of guilt, nor the Western powers a monopoly of innocence, in the sad story of the deterioration of inter-Allied relations. When this critique is brought forward to be examined in the context of the varied arguments advanced subsequently by the revisionist school of American historians of the Cold War's origins, it takes on an obvious renewed interest in that it prefigures many of the attitudes they were to adopt. Yet a number of points need to be made here. In the first place, to claim that all of the positions taken by the revisionist school on the Cold War's origins can be found anticipated in the leader columns of the contemporary Times would be to claim too much. Moreover, though license allows us to speak of a revisionist "school", that school, like most historical schools, reveals a significant degree of differentiation of attitude and argument upon closer scrutiny. The contemporary line adopted upon international relations by The Times at the Cold War's inception was relatively simple in itself and was lucidly expressed. Not surprisingly, it does not anticipate all of the shades and nuances of later debate.

The second point is more important. It concerns a difference of moral perspective. The revisionist school has sought to portray the Cold War as an old-fashioned power-struggle masquerading as something else behind a weight of rhetoric on the one side about freedom and on the other side about socialism. Infusing their whole thesis is something more than an indictment of Western hypocrisy. This has been a profound puritan distaste for the world of power politics as such, a yearning for a different kind of world in which, perhaps the great issues will be decided upon their merits and not upon the disposition of military force. Nothing could be more different from the moral, or amoral, perspective from which The Times viewed the international scene in the 1940's. As has been previously indicated, The Times constantly argued for realism and maturity in politics. Power was the necessary, though not the sole ingredient, which informed all politics and differentiated political behaviour from other forms of human activity. On a number of occasions the newspaper found it had been necessary to defend itself against the charge that it was preaching "power politics" by distinguishing between its own realism and what the usage of the time tended to term "Prussianism" or "Hitlerism". One looks in vain for any trace in these leaders of a moral revulsion from the world of actuality or for any evidence of anguished yearnings for the creation of a new order where the swords will be transformed into ploughshares. Rather, the newspaper found it necessary to suggest that it was specially incumbent upon democratic statesmen not to pander to the wishful thinking of such substantial sections of their electorates in these matters. As we have seen, the model which The Times took for its own conception of a sound and practicable post-war international order was that provided by the system established at the Congress of Vienna. Conversely, when the newspaper was in need of a negative model, illustrative of how such an order could not be achieved, it invoked the Versailles settlement. More specifically, it used the part played by Woodrow Wilson in the shaping of that settlement to illustrate the dangers that democratic statesmen ran in awakening a body of unrealisable aspirations in the peoples of the world through irresponsible moralizing. Innocence and cynicism about the role played by power considerations in international politics were equally dangerous and each had played its part in bringing about the war. The supreme quality required in statesmen and in peoples which alone could offer Europe and the wider world the promise of post-war tranquility was realism in the conduct of foreign policy. For these reasons, whilst it is substantially true that we can find many of the arguments advanced by the revisionist school prefigured in the leader columns of The Times a generation earlier, it would be erroneous to deduce from that any coincidence of basic values still less any shared moral vision. The Times was advocating a more general, a more open, a more businesslike acceptance of just those canons of international conduct that the revisionist historians would seem to deplore.

In the war years *The Times* was to acquire a reputation on the backbenches, and not just upon the backbenches, for having become a left wing newspaper, an upmarket edition of the *Daily Worker*. In part, this exaggerated reputation was a consequence of the line that the newspaper took on domestic affairs. For here *The Times* adopted a highly progressive approach, giving, for example, the warmest of welcomes to the Beveridge Report, whilst leader after leader expounded upon the bankruptcy of *laissez-faire* in the thirties and propounded the need to embrace "planning" and full-blooded Keynesian demand management in the post-war world. The newspaper stopped short only at the advocacy of the widespread extension of public ownership. Readers had recently been reminded of the radical past of "The Thunderer" by the published volumes of Stanley Morison's authorised history. Barrington-Ward's Tory radicalism could be seen as reviving this tradition. Moreover, Morison, an autodidact, who managed to reconcile (at least to his personal satisfaction) a devout Roman Catholicism with a committed Marxism, was not only one of the editor's most intimate friends but also exercised a significant intellectual influence over Barrington-Ward. Even Geoffrey Dawson had been known to confide that he had always regarded *The Times* as an organ of the left, though not, he had hastily added, of the extreme left.²⁰ There was a marginal area of overlap between the newspaper's re-awakened domestic radicalism and its foreign policy line which did not fully square with the non-ideological approach to British foreign policy which *The Times* had proclaimed through the thirties and forties. This was the espousal from time to time of the "convergence" thesis according to which all that separated the Soviet Union from the liberal democracies was a difference of choice of the preferred path to the common destination of "democracy", the former having chosen the economic road whilst the latter had chosen the political road.²¹ In the thirties, there had been no similar talk about the common aspirations of British and German societies, *The Times* on that earlier occasion being much more inclined to argue that each state had a perfect right to construct its own version of heaven - or hell - without outside interference, and that what suited Britain might very well not suit Germany and vice-versa.

To return however, to the foreign policy field, the figure who at the time was credited by the cognoscenti with the responsibility for the pro-Soviet line the newspaper was taking was E.H. Carr, Assistant Editor of *The Times* from January 1941 to July 1946. The ease with which this assumption was made sometimes proved offensive to the amour propre of the Editor, Barrington-Ward, but the latter's biographer has in fact endorsed this contemporary judgement as substantially correct, roundly stating in reference to Carr that, "it is clear that the main strategic thinking on foreign policy was done by him".²² Barrington-Ward's confidence in Carr meant that he largely confined his own interventions in the leaders dealing with Eastern Europe to matters of presentation rather

than of content, tempering the full ruthlessness of Carr's message by the substitution of language more diplomatic than Carr's own chosen vocabulary. Just how ruthless this message in essence was is indicated by Carr's pronouncement in the privacy of an office memorandum that Russia should be given "a free hand in Europe".²³ This stark message that the Western powers should not meddle where they could not mend could hardly be conveyed to the readers in unvarnished form. But the more judicious language in which therefore the leader columns clothed the same message failed to disarm the critics, who found merely, in the many euphemisms this process involved, confirmation of that traditional penchant of Printing House Square for compounding its many sins with a dash of mendacity.

Yet what is important about Carr's personal role in the context of this study is that Carr was not recruited to *The Times* for any views he may or may not have had on communism or on the Soviet Union. He was first brought to the attention of Barrington-Ward, then Assistant Editor, by the ubiquitous Tom Jones in the later thirties as a man with a useful Foreign Office and academic background who might offer powerful intellectual support for the line the newspaper was then taking on Germany, in short as an exponent of appeasement.²⁴ More broadly, Carr could be expected to take a progressive line on domestic issues. Jones himself was something of an eminence grise of British politics and public life in the thirties. As a former Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, Jones had risen from a humble background to serve four Prime Ministers with sufficient loyalty and efficiency to earn the respect and friendship of all of them, but particularly of Baldwin. A man of the left in his private politics in domestic affairs, Jones was a strong supporter of appeasement in foreign policy. Amongst the many offices that Jones had accepted on his retirement in his native Wales, was membership of the Court of the University of Wales. When Carr had left the Foreign Office his first academic appointment had been to the Woodrow Wilson Chair of International Politics at the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth. This Chair was the first established in its field at any British University. Carr had taken the opportunity of his inaugural lecture in October 1936 to launch an aggressive defence of the policy of appeasement in what amounted to a personal manifesto or credo on foreign policy much of which was devoted to repudiating the arguments of the proponents of collective security as the road to peace. The inaugural would subsequently be published in full by Chatham House in "International Affairs", and thus reach the wider foreign policy elite, or such of them as did their homework.²⁵ In sum therefore, given the identity of their proclaimed views on both domestic and foreign affairs, it is not surprising that Tom Jones should have recommended Carr to Barrington-Ward nor that the latter responded positively to the recommendation.

This was the basis upon which Carr made occasional contributions to *The Times* in the later thirties and it was at this time that Barrington-Ward resolved to recruit him to the staff of the newspaper when the opportunity arose, a project that did not reach fruition because of difficulties on both sides until January 1941.

Carr's support, first for the appeasement of Nazi Germany and then for the appeasement of communist Russia, testifies to the non-ideological character of his approach to international relations and gives to his journalism and published works on contemporary international history a degree of symmetry, for Carr can be seen as both the spiritual precursor of the British revisionist historians of British foreign policy in the thirties and as the precursor of the American revisionist school of historians of the Cold War's origins. *The Times'* Diplomatic Correspondent of the forties has recalled his personal embarrassment at having constantly to fend off the charge that the newspaper, having led the campaign for the betrayal of the peoples of Eastern Europe once, was intent upon repeating the performance.²⁶

The tone of any great newspaper, however, is something which cannot be entirely established by any one man. The leaders on British military intervention in Greece in December 1944, composed on the basis of reports from the Athens correspondent, Geoffrey Hoare, were for the most part written by Donald Tyreman, and it was these leaders which sparked off Churchill's angry attack on *The Times* in the Commons. Churchill certainly held Carr and Barrington-Ward responsible for those leaders.

An important contribution to establishing the tone of the newspaper was made by Ralph Parker, the Moscow correspondent. Parker's reports merit attention because whilst the newspaper's leader columns tended to warn the Western powers against applying double standards in seeking to deny the Soviet Union those regional security safeguards which they claimed for themselves, the Moscow correspondent reproached some sections of western opinion for precisely the opposite transgression, viz. for applying to Russian politics those same exacting standards that they invoked when dealing with the liberal democracies. According to Parker, this was completely to ignore the circumstances to which they were heirs. When this argument for relative values found expression in for example, a totally uncritical *Times* report of the politically educational function of public executions of alleged collaborators with the German occupying forces (in which the death agonies of the condemned were filmed for general distribution) it proved too much for some readers, like Arthur Koestler, to stomach.²⁷ After the war, Parker's connection with *The Times* was to be severed, but he was to grow ever warmer in his enthusiasm for

Russia's experiment in socialism and join that long line of foreign correspondents who have gone completely "native", settling permanently in Russia with his Russian wife in a Moscow flat from whence he continued to represent a variety of Western newspapers and journals, and play host to Fleet Street visitors, until his death twenty years later.

Although for obvious reasons his connection with the Manchester Guardian is better known, a significant part in expounding The Times' line on Eastern Europe and its views on the Polish Question in particular, was played by Lewis Namier in the articles supportive of that line and those views that he contributed during the war years. From very different points of departure - a firm Tory, a committed Zionist, a believer in the principle of nationality, an active anti-appeaser in the thirties, and still one of Churchill's warmest admirers - Namier had reached substantially the same conclusions as to the qualities desirable in a post-war settlement as Carr. Though a Tory, Namier had never been among those Tories who were obsessed by the Bolshevik bogey, as his record of political journalism from 1918 onwards makes abundantly plain. Moreover, his Times articles in support of a Russo-Polish boundary settlement on the basis of the Curzon Line came with a special authority from Namier, given his intimate personal knowledge of the area under dispute and his claim to have been the original author of that Line, when he was serving with the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office during the First World War and its aftermath.²⁸ Something of the special character of Namier's views on Eastern Europe at that time can be garnered from the fact that Headlam-Morley, writing to Namier from Paris, felt constrained to discount some of the latter's advice on the grounds that Namier appeared to regard Polish imperialism as a greater threat to European peace than Bolshevism.²⁹ Inter-war experience had demonstrated for Namier that one or other of the two regional Great Powers must inevitably enter the power vacuum constituted by Eastern Europe, whether or not the smaller nations of that area continued to enjoy formal political sovereignty. For British policy-makers, therefore, this raised one simple question: whose predominance in Eastern Europe best served or least harmed Britain's national interests? For Namier there could be but one answer to this question. Germany had demonstrated by her two bids for power in the twentieth century (always for Namier, the "German" wars) that her ambitions extended far beyond a legitimate regional predominance to continental mastery and ultimately to world dominion. As, like Vansittart, Namier held the German people collectively responsible both for the world wars themselves, and for the barbarous methods by which the second in particular was waged, he had no faith at all in the capacity of that same people for a rapid post-war rehabilitation through a return to liberal democracy. On no account therefore, should a misplaced sense of national honour over the Polish Question lead British policy-makers to balk at the explicit and unqualified acceptance of Russia's

leading role in Eastern Europe. Poland must be compelled to accept the political logic of its geographical position. The unqualified nature of Namier's own acceptance of Russia's position in Poland can be appreciated from the fact that when, in the process of preparing some of his wartime journalism for hard cover publication in 1947, he included his Times articles (which given the then impersonal character of the newspaper, had been anonymous on first appearance), he did so with the affirmation that their "underlying contentions seem to me as valid then as now",³⁰ and with a renewed plea for that more systematic and agreed division of Europe into spheres of influence which alone could prevent a further deterioration in Great Power relationships. This was, of course, some considerable time after Russia had failed to honour the Yalta promises of free and unfettered elections in Poland. As Namier wrote, "The destiny of nations is written on the globe".³¹

It has been the basic contention of this study of The Times that a fundamental continuity of view on the problems of Eastern Europe provides the connecting link which unites the advocacy by the newspaper of policies of appeasement through the two decades under consideration. Yet though The Times might preach the same message, the world that received that message in the forties was itself much changed and was still changing fast. As E.H. Carr himself has reminded us in explaining the attitude the newspaper adopted towards Russia in the forties, this attitude must be understood in the context of the times.³² In the first place, The Times proved no more prescient about the rapidity of Britain's decline from Great Power status than most other opinion leaders. Secondly, given the precedent of 1919, it would have been quite irresponsible in planning for the peace to assume confidently that the United States would be prepared to accept permanent post-war security commitments in peacetime Europe. What had to be avoided at all costs was a situation arising in which Britain faced alone an alienated Russia across a devastated Europe.

In addition to these changes in the external world, the position of The Times in the domestic world of British politics between the two decades was much reduced. Barrington-Ward's friend and colleague, Stanley Morison liked to distinguish the newspaper from all others as the newspaper of Britain's ruling class.³³ As a Marxist this was a consistent view for Morison to hold, although it was by no means a view held exclusively by Marxists. Yet in the forties Barrington-Ward was at no time to establish those relations of easy intimacy with Downing Street that Dawson had enjoyed with Baldwin and with Chamberlain. Churchill's distrust of The Times was too deep-dyed to be easily expunged and the wild cheering from the Tory backbenches which met his attack on the newspaper in the Greek debate in the embarrassed presence of the editor and

chief proprietor, Astor, gave some indication of its standing with Britain's natural party of government at large. When the first majority Labour administration succeeded the coalition, The Times, despite its newly acquired left-wing reputation, could hardly have expected its influence to grow, but it was an entirely new experience for its editor to find himself summoned to the Foreign Office to be denounced by the new architect of Britain's foreign policy for his newspaper's lack of patriotism. When Ernest Bevin followed this by partially exonerating the Editor himself from this general indictment with the insulting suggestion that Barrington-Ward was not perhaps in full control of the "pink intelligentsia"³⁴ at loose upon the newspaper, the pattern of the future must have been clear. Whilst The Times would retain its capacity for embarrassing British governments as the Cold War unfolded, its influence over the formulation of official policy would be minimal.

Notes And References

1. International Affairs, XXXV111 (1962), 84-85
2. M. Gilbert, The Roots of Appeasement (1966), 159
3. According to The Times the rise of Hitler placed Europe in the dilemma of having to yield to extremism what had been denied to moderation. That she must do the right thing, albeit for the wrong reasons, and yield, the newspaper had no doubt. See The Times, 28 June 1933, "Germany's Day of Mourning".
4. A.P. Young (S. Aster, ed.), The X Documents: The Secret History of Foreign Office Contacts with the German Resistance (1974), 204.
5. W.S.Churchill, Triumph And Tragedy (1954), 302
6. Inverach Macdonald to the author 21 November 1981.
7. Quoted in H. Dalton, The Fateful Years (1957), 239.
For the ambassador's own account see E. Raczynski, In Allied London (1962), 14.
8. House of Lords Debates, 28 October 1939, Vol. 114, cols. 1565-6.
9. The Times 28 October 1945. This phrase was coined by Vansittart to characterise a view of the management of international relations of which he disapproved.
10. The Times 4 November 1943, "After The Conference".
11. The Times 14 July 1945, "The Unity of Europe".
12. The Times 3 January 1945, "The New Congress". See also the leader, "The Rule of Law", The Times, 12 April 1945

13. The Times 1 August 1941, "Peace and Power".
14. The Times 29 November 1945, "Conditions of Confidence".
15. The Times 3 January 1945, "The New Congress".
16. The Times 8 October 1945, "Policy And The Atom".
17. The Times 9 October 1945, "Peace And The Atom".
18. The Times 14 March 1946, "The Three Powers".
19. The Times 29 November 1945, "Conditions of Confidence".
20. C.Cockburn, In Time of Trouble (1957), 199.
21. See for example the leader of 7 November 1941, "Britain And Europe".
22. D. McLachlan, In The Chair: Barrington-Ward of The Times (1971), 221.
23. Ibid., 222.
24. This account of the circumstances of Carr's recruitment to the newspaper, which is substantially McLachlan's was confirmed by Professor Carr in a personal interview with the writer on the 26 March 1980.
25. E.H. Carr, "Public Opinion As A Safeguard Of Peace", International Affairs XV (1936), 846-62.
26. I. Macdonald, A Man Of The Times (1976)
27. Koestler's objections to this kind of reportage were first published contemporaneously in the New York press, but subsequently put out between hard covers. See A. Koestler, "Soviet Myth And Reality" in his collection, The Yogi And The Commissar (1945)

28. A claim Namier made twice publicly in the presence of the Polish ambassador. Interview with Count Edward Raczynski, 31 March 1980.
29. Sir James Headlam-Morley (A. Headlam-Morley ed.), A Memoir Of the Paris Peace Conference 1919, (1972), 36.
30. L.B. Namier, Facing East (1947), 96.
31. Namier's views on Poland smack of geo-political determinism and he himself acknowledged one of the few lasting influences of his brief attendance as a student at the L.S.E. to have been the lectures of Halford Mackinder. It is of interest, therefore, to note in passing that Mackinder argued a precisely opposite case to Namier's, i.e., that it was a British interest to preserve a tier of independent states in Eastern Europe free from either Russian or German domination. See H. Mackinder, Democratic Ideals And Reality (1941), 154.
32. The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 7 July 1978, "A Profile Of E.H. Carr".
33. N. Barker, Stanley Morison (1972), 473.
34. McLachlan, In The Chair, Appendix 2, 280-81. "Interview With Ernest Bevin".

CHAPTER THREE

THE BEAVERBROOK PRESS AND RUSSIA

Every social scientist will be familiar with Beaverbrook's candid testimony before the post-war Royal Commission on the Press that he ran his newspapers to make political propaganda. Necessarily this propaganda was made, broadly speaking, in the conservative interest and focussed in the main on domestic issues. However, the Express newspapers prided themselves upon being the voice of "independent conservatism". This claim was not mere rhetoric. On a number of important issues Beaverbrook, through his newspapers, would oppose the official Conservative policy line. This independence was particularly prominent in the field of economic policy. His newspapers opposed the American debt settlement of 1923, the return to the gold standard in 1925, and the American loan of 1946. The Express group was a consistent inter-war advocate of high wage capitalism, and from 1932 onwards had argued for the immediate restoration of the 1931 public expenditure cuts. By intuition, inclination and experience, Beaverbrook was a Keynesian before that doctrine had achieved its full intellectual formulation. However, these matters are not the direct concern of this special study, the central purpose of which is to explore the implications of Beaverbrook's special brand of independent conservatism for the field of foreign policy, and, more particularly for British relations with the Soviet Union and with Eastern Europe.

Beaverbrook's attitude towards foreign policy is best viewed as the obverse side of the coin of that imperialism which was his prevailing passion. The first world war had confirmed and fortified Beaverbrook in his imperialism. From that catastrophe he drew the conclusion that the acceptance by Great Britain of a continental security commitment had proved disastrous. Horrific sacrifices had resulted in a post-war world which, if anything, was more troubled and more dangerous than the pre-war world that it had replaced. On no account, therefore, should Britain repeat the errors of her immediate past but, rather she should return to an earlier tradition (for such was Beaverbrook's reading of history) of basing her security upon naval predominance, now supplemented by air power, and by enhanced imperial integration. Thus throughout the inter-war period the Beaverbrook press would preach the twin doctrines of imperialism and isolation. And as the storm clouds thickened in the 1930's the Express group would be amongst the first to take up the causes of rearmament and of conscription.

These attitudes had the most obvious foreign policy implications. Whilst the Express group loudly preached the integration of the economic and the defence policies of Britain and her dominions, it equally noisily opposed Britain's acceptance of entangling alliances on the European continent, most particularly if these postulated military intervention. It was to be this unqualified rejection of all military commitments in Europe from 1919 onwards that would distinguish the Express group from the rest of the conservative press, which throughout the period would prove much more reflective of official thinking and of party policy on foreign affairs. The orthodox view, as we have seen, advocated a policy of limited liability in Europe. Britain was prepared to accept, acting in concert with others, security commitments guaranteeing those west European frontiers established at Versailles. What she was not prepared to accept was any commitment to act as a guarantor of those east European frontiers similarly established. For its part, however, the Beaverbrook press advocated a repudiation of even this limited obligation in favour of that free hand in foreign affairs that had for so long been considered as axiomatic by British foreign secretaries in their conduct of affairs. And for precisely these same reasons the Beaverbrook press took a decidedly antagonistic line towards the League of Nations. According to Beaverbrook, the Wilsonian universalism of the League risked implicating this country in interminable crises over historic grievances, real and imagined across the globe. The absence from the League of the United States, and others among the great powers, could only mean saddling the British people, shortly after a cruel war, with unforeseeable commitments to rectify wrongs far beyond their material resources or political wisdom to remedy. A perfect example of the casual acceptance by Great Britain of dangerously reckless commitments, according to Beaverbrook, was provided by the Palestine Mandate. How could the British, or indeed anybody else for that matter, square the circle between Arab and Jew in the Holy Land? Thus a generation before Ernest Bevin's fateful decision to withdraw British troops from an impossible mission in Palestine we find the Beaverbrook press campaigning in 1923 for just such a withdrawal and for the surrender of the mandate.¹ This robust rejection of the League of Nations on grounds of first principles, when that institution was in the first flush of its popularity, marked out yet again the Beaverbrook press from the rest of the conservative press. For the latter continued to make genuflection at least to the ideals that inspired the League, though admittedly in an increasingly perfunctory manner, until that body's demise.

However, what is important in the context of this study are the implications of these views for Britain's relations with Russia and with Eastern Europe generally. From October 1917 onwards the Express newspapers would consistently advocate non-intervention in the affairs of Soviet Russia by all other powers but most particularly

by Britain, and would counsel that British policy towards Russia be based upon pragmatic considerations of national interest, rationally assessed, and not upon these ideological considerations so attractive to some of the more combative spirits within conservative ranks. Thus, alone amongst the conservative press, the "Daily Express" would oppose British military intervention in Russia at the end of the first world war. when this military intervention occurred, nonetheless, only to end in British humiliation, the "Daily Express" urged immediate evacuation of Archangel and Murmansk, lest political humiliation be compounded by military disaster. At the same time, the newspaper demanded to know "who had been responsible for this hare-brained policy", a purely rhetorical question to which all informed opinion already knew the answer.² Writing six years later, Beaverbrook could be more explicit,

"I began to have growing doubts as to Mr Churchill's policy - for it was his - of campaigning against the Bolsheviks in Russia by keeping a British force at Marmansk and Archangel and by supplying the White armies of Denikin and Kolchack with arms and ammunition. The war ought to have ended with the Armistice and peace and reconstruction were essential to the very existence of Britain. While the Bolsheviks were in fact a branch of the German army it was reasonable to check them by force. But once peace was declared the only thing to do was to evacuate Russian soil and leave the Russians to order or disorder their own affairs. Mr Churchill however, despite official protestations to the contrary, was by the summer of 1919 trying to involve this country in nothing less than an armed crusade to change the central Government of Russia. The "Daily Express" protested against this. It had no support, save from the "Daily Herald" - a collaboration which did it more harm than good.... I had an interview with Mr Lloyd George on this subject. He tried to dissuade me from carrying on the attack on the Churchill policy in Russia. But though he said all the loyal and proper things, as far as his colleague was considered, his heart was obviously not in the business."³

Consistent with this line the Express newspapers, alone amongst the conservative press, gave unqualified support early in 1924 to Ramsay Macdonald's recognition of Soviet Russia. At the same time the reaction of the Beaverbrook press to the Russian policy of the first Labour government illustrates the limits of the press magnate's enthusiasm for both the foreign policy of the Labour Party and for friendship with Soviet Russia. As Beaverbrook freely acknowledged, whatever his differences with official Tory policy, at election times his newspapers would always advise their readers to vote Conservative.

Moreover, although the Beaverbrook press always, in general terms, favoured trade contacts as a sure method of improving Anglo-Soviet relations, this occurred only in the context of Beaverbrook's over-riding imperialism, an imperialism, it will be recalled, that was heavily economic in character, unlike that of Churchill's. Throughout setback after setback, Beaverbrook's newspapers would continue to preach the gospel of Empire free trade. Consequently the "Express" group opposed the Russian Trade Treaty of Macdonald's first government specifically on the loan clauses of that treaty, not from that general animus which motivated the rest of the conservative press. Commercial contracts on the sound basis of mutual advantage were one thing, the squandering of British government money, itself containing an hidden aid element, on official projects of doubtful commercial wisdom, and all of this before British creditors dispossessed by the October Revolution had been properly compensated, was quite another. If the British government had funds available for useful employment these should be put to work in reconstruction at home or in that empire where a thousand exciting opportunities beckoned.

The British general election of 1924 remains one of the few to have been fought very largely over foreign policy issues and all of these issues revolved around the question of Anglo-Russian relations. The Russian Trade Treaty, the first of these issues, has now been commented upon. The second of these issues was the Campbell case. Over the Campbell case the Express group enjoyed scoring partisan domestic political points off the Labour government along with the rest of the conservative press, the more so in that these seemed so gratuitously offered. Yet, throughout, the Beaverbrook press concentrated on the constitutional and broader political aspects of the affair. From their perspective it demonstrated both the constitutional impropriety of government conduct and a lamentable lack of that co-ordination of government policy as between ministers that the convention of cabinet collective responsibility supposedly existed to ensure. Yet the Express newspapers did not use the Campbell case, as did for example, the "Daily Mail", as a useful stick for berating the Soviet Union for propagating international subversion. Additionally, the Beaverbrook press, whilst enjoying and exploiting the discomfiture of the Labour government, was altogether more relaxed than the rest of the conservative press in its treatment of the affair. As so often in similar matters the Beaverbrook newspapers remained free from anti-communist hysteria, expressing their confidence in that natural stock of common sense and that abundant fund of patriotism that they believed rendered the British working man virtually immune to subversion. And what was the British soldier but that working man in uniform?

The third issue of Anglo-Soviet relations, and electorally the most important, which dominated the 1924 election campaign was the Zinoviev letter, the celebrated "Red Letter", so important a constituent element to this day in the mythology of the left as to Fleet Street's malign role in the perversion of British democracy. No re-reading of the contemporary Express newspapers can disguise the fact that Beaverbrook was prepared to use this damaging affair against the Labour Party. On election day, 29 October 1924, the "Daily Express" advised its readers across every page, "Do not vote Red today" and its leader column's imagery echoed with references to Whites and Reds and to the events of October 1917. However, a number of important qualifications need to be made to this general statement. In the first place, Beaverbrook advised his readers to vote conservative, or at any rate anti-socialist, before every election. Indeed a British general election without such advice would have appeared oddly incomplete. Secondly, it must be remembered that Beaverbrook always quite openly distinguished between the news columns of his newspapers and the leader columns, making it quite plain that the latter were the platform for his views and his views alone. Indeed he often wrote or dictated the leaders himself in these years of his full vigour. This was his version of C.P. Scott's celebrated dictum that whilst the facts were sacred, opinion was free, with perhaps in Beaverbrook's case a greater emphasis on the freedom of opinion than on the sanctity of the facts. Thirdly, it has been correctly said that over the Zinoviev letter the Express group must be seen as much "less hysterical" than the rest of the conservative press.⁴

The present writer would press this point further for the Beaverbrook newspapers reserved their position on the authenticity of the Zinoviev letter from day one. On the day of the letter's publication the "Daily Express" was one of the only two national dailies (the other, not surprisingly, being the "Daily Herald") to carry, and to carry prominently on its front page, next to the sensational news of the letter's disclosure itself, the repudiation of the letter's authenticity by the Acting General Secretary of the British Communist Party, a fact which that party would acknowledge subsequently when it took the rest of Fleet Street to task for its conduct over the whole affair. Moreover, on this same day the "Daily Express" again alone among the conservative press, would carry on its front page an interview across two columns with Christian Rakowsky, in which the Soviet Charge d'Affaires gave an amused and detailed denunciation of the document, on the basis of internal evidence, as a transparent forgery.⁵ The Express newspapers together subjected the letter to a series of penetrating questions as to its authenticity. And very pointedly, whilst not calling into question that Office's good faith, Crossbencher, in the "Sunday Express", demonstrated that the letter's claims to authenticity rested entirely upon its acceptance by the Foreign Office.

Furthermore, it was manifestly the case that the Beaverbrook newspapers did not immediately appreciate the ultimate electoral significance of the letter's publication. For in the days running up to the election they repeatedly warned their readers that it had in all probability been sprung upon a surprised electorate by Macdonald himself, stung by frequent Tory jibes that over the Trade Treaty he had been truckling to the Russians, in a subtle ploy to demonstrate the patriotic independence of Labour's foreign policy. As the Sunday Express leader immediately prior to election day observed, "It may be a forgery but it is a mighty convenient forgery, for it allows Mr Macdonald to pass as an enemy and not as a friend of Bolshevism."⁶ Even the election result did not immediately change the Express newspapers' preferred interpretation of these admittedly puzzling events, their inclination now being merely to conclude that Macdonald's strategy had simply backfired. Perhaps these were some of the reasons why Beaverbrook showed himself immediately sensitive to the charges, already beginning to circulate upon the left, that a Fleet Street conspiracy had stampeded gullible, frightened and bewildered electorate into the conservative camp. Writing above his own name in the "Sunday Express" immediately following the election, Beaverbrook angrily refuted these charges as far as his own newspapers were concerned, on grounds substantially outlined above, and challenged his critics to prove their case: "If anyone says that the Daily Express or the Sunday Express promoted the Red Peril panic my answer is that a study of their columns will reveal the exact opposite to be the case."⁷ He then continued, to deplore the confused circumstances in which the election had in fact been fought, whatever the origins of that confusion, for it had given rise to a Conservative administration with such a large majority that it might be tempted towards, or pressured into by its own backbenchers, policies of a divisive or ideological character.

Immediately the election was won voices were raised from within the Tory Party for the adoption of a harder line against the Soviet Union. The Beaverbrook press consistently opposed these demands, and most particularly when they incorporated proposals for retaliatory action against the Soviet Union. This movement came to a head in May 1927 with the police raid upon the offices of the Soviet Trade Delegation and its commercial arm, Arcos Limited, on suspicion of espionage. Shortly after the raid, which did not uncover the specific document whose alleged existence had inspired Home Office action, the British government nonetheless broke off diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. to the applause of the conservative press. Inevitably, the Beaverbrook press provided the exception to this generalisation for it found the whole affair a severe reflection upon the maturity of the Baldwin government's conduct of international relations. Did not all

governments, quite apart from the rights and wrongs of the specific affair, indulge in espionage? Even on friends? Was it not, though never formally acknowledged, merely a routine part of national security policy? Indeed would not a government too scrupulous to engage in such activity be in default of its duty? Express writers noted the role in this affair of the Home Office and hinted that whatever the propriety of the moralistic approach to domestic affairs of Mr Joynson Hicks, innocence could be a very dangerous quality when applied to foreign affairs. In a leader of 29 May 1927 the "Sunday Express" summed up, "The rupture is now defended on the ground that there has been a discovery of a system of espionage practiced by the Russians. But espionage has been practiced by civilised and by uncivilised nations from time immemorial. All governments practise it. Espionage has never been used as a pretext for breaking off relations"

Having failed to prevent the diplomatic rupture the Beaverbrook press pursued a policy of damage limitation. In particular, it opposed those ideas for economic sanctions against the Soviet Union which had sometimes been voiced from the Tory backbenches. In fact there was never any serious danger of such sanctions being adopted by the Baldwin administration. However, the "Daily Mail" did start a campaign for the adoption of voluntary sanctions aimed at sympathetic conservative local authorities and business enterprises and directed particularly at those imports of Russian oil and timber which then formed such a significant element within Anglo-Soviet trade. The Express group came out squarely against all such schemes. When in due course the second Labour government restored diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union the only expression of support to emerge for that policy from within the conservative section of Fleet Street would come from the Express group and that support would be enthusiastic.

Throughout the 1920's the Soviet Union was obsessed by the fear of capitalist encirclement and, given the precedent of 1919, saw in Britain, particularly a conservative Britain, the natural leader of such a conspiracy. Consequently the Locarno accords of 1925 were met by the Soviet Union with the gravest suspicion, as an attempt to undo the work of Rapallo and turn Germany's aspirations towards the east. Whatever the validity of these fears the Locarno accords won for Sir Austen Chamberlain a rapturous reception in Fleet Street, and indeed, more generally, are still conventionally considered the high-water mark of the appeasement of inter-war Europe. Alone in Fleet Street the Beaverbrook press, consistent in its advocacy of isolationism, along with the "Workers' Weekly" (predecessor of the "Daily Worker"), stood out against the general euphoria.

In the 1930's, the Beaverbrook press found much that was encouraging in the natural direction of Soviet politics. Like most of the British press, indeed like most of the international press, they welcomed the triumphant emergence of Stalin from the Kremlin power struggles, on the grounds that Russia now had a leader who would henceforth give priority to domestic development over international revolution. Throughout the Thirties, therefore, the Express group would be fortified in its general line that friendly relations between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. were in the national interests of both countries. This observation leads in turn to an important point.

Much of the historiography of appeasement has suggested that the movement for the appeasement of Hitler's Germany drew much of its strength from fear of, and antagonism towards, the Soviet Union. Whatever the validity of this proposition in general terms it does not survive serious scrutiny when applied to Beaverbrook and his newspapers. Towards the end of the Thirties no Fleet Street newspapers were louder in the support they offered for Neville Chamberlain's policies of appeasement than the Beaverbrook newspapers, yet equally, none, on the right at least, were so consistently friendly towards Stalin's Russia. Of course Beaverbrook's newspapers violently opposed all schemes for an anti-fascist alliance, so popular on the left, which perforce would have included the Soviet Union, but this attitude, as we have seen, sprang from Beaverbrook's general philosophy of isolationism and not from any obsession with the superior danger supposedly presented by international communism.

Indeed in the 1930's Beaverbrook was not above exploiting this record to the advantage of his newspapers. Writing in November 1936 to the new Soviet ambassador, to ease the passage of an Express man to Moscow, Beaverbrook reminded Maisky of the Daily Express' "friendly attitude towards your great leader", and continued to express his high regard for the ambassador himself, to the extent that he was "determined that nothing shall be done or said by any newspaper controlled by me which is likely to disturb your tenure of office", adding for full measure, "while I am free, and my newspapers in the attitude I take to the Russian leader, I must say I admire and praise his conduct of government."⁸

Three years later Beaverbrook wrote again to the Soviet ambassador on similar business,

"And if you will examine the policy of the Daily Express you will find that paper has been more friendly to Russia than any other paper of the Right. And the friendship is not a recent development... As long ago as the embargo by Joynson Hicks, in the Dark Ages, the Express was raising a storm, and objecting to the Government's

policy in relation to Russia..... And, after all, in 1919 and 1920, the Express fought Mr Churchill so long, and so hard that it is fun now for the proprietor of the Daily Express, to see Mr Churchill's being hugged by the Bear."⁹

Ivan Maisky replied the following day in the same congenial spirit to register that the point had indeed been well taken, for "as regards the Master himself, M. Maisky believes he is still as he ever was, loyal to his own virile, independent political viewpoint (Isolation and Empire) and those who commonly suppose that he follows in another's footsteps do not do him justice."¹⁰

The two men had first been brought together by Aneurin Bevan on the initiative of Beaverbrook himself in the summer of 1935. They had immediately warmed to each other. Maisky appreciated Beaverbrook's sincerity and frankness and found the "brutal realism" of the press lord's views on Anglo-Soviet relations "refreshing".¹¹ According to Maisky's reading of Beaverbrook's approach to international relations the press peer was guided entirely by "the egotistical interest of his state, and was appealing to the "egotistical interest", as he understood it, of the Soviet state."¹² The Soviet ambassador immediately concluded that it was indeed possible "on such a basis.....to build up a serious policy of joint action" and resolved to cultivate the relationship with Beaverbrook in the future interest of his country.¹³

The second half of 1939 would give the Beaverbrook press ample opportunities to demonstrate the "virile independence" of its foreign policy line. On 23 August news of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact burst upon an astounded world, causing Soviet standing with progressive opinion in this country to plummet, and a Foreign Office spokesman to observe that henceforth "all isms are wasms"¹⁴ When this news was rapidly followed by Soviet military occupation of Poland's eastern provinces in the moves against the independence of the Baltic states, it seemed to many Fleet Street observers that Stalin had plumbed the depths of perfidy. That this was not yet so, was demonstrated on 30 November 1939 when Russian troops crossed the Finnish frontier.

Along with the rest of the British press Beaverbrook's newspapers condemned the greedy opportunism and the ruthlessness of Stalin's conduct, but, true to form, they were less inclined to moralise than most of Fleet Street about international affairs. Thereafter, however, their attitude was distinctive. This was not surprising. At the time of the crisis produced by the German occupation of the rump Czech state the Express group had come out against the policy of guarantees in Eastern Europe, as indeed, at the time of the

Munich settlement itself, it had alone in Fleet Street opposed the British guarantee to the residual Czech state. When, nonetheless, Chamberlain extended the British guarantee to Poland on 31 March 1939, and then rapidly followed it with guarantees to Rumania and Greece, Beaverbrook swung his newspapers, in the heat of the immediate crisis, behind official British policy, though not before the "Evening Standard" had brought down upon its head a storm of criticism by suggesting on the evening of Chamberlain's statement, that the guarantee did not apply to the Corridor or to Danzig.

Two factors explain Beaverbrook's conduct in these days. In the first place, his newspapers freely acknowledged that, whatever the folly or wisdom of the Polish Guarantee, the revolution in British foreign policy that that guarantee symbolised had massive popular support. Secondly, Beaverbrook acknowledged privately that he conceived it to be his patriotic duty not to divide the nation when it seemed to be on the brink of war.

This was his response when he was reproached by Sir Herbert Dunnico, the M.P. who had led the forlorn parliamentary struggle against Locarno, for abandoning the doctrine of isolationism in the face of popular hysteria.¹⁵ It was also his response when he received an approach from the eccentric Arabist, St John Philby, for the support of the Beaverbrook newspapers in the summer of 1939. This maverick figure was fighting the by-election at Hythe (a safe Conservative seat) under the banner of Lord Tavistock's British People's Party, which opposed all British involvement in Europe, on the single issue of opposition to the Polish Guarantee.¹⁶

Proof that Beaverbrook had not suffered any fundamental conversion from the doctrine of isolationism to some form of collective security was rapidly forthcoming. As the immediate crisis over Poland eased temporarily in the late spring of 1939, whilst much of the rest of Fleet Street was tempted to romanticize Britain's new ally, the Express newspapers ceaselessly grumbled about the excessive diplomatic and economic cost of this unlikely alliance and yearned nostalgically for the freedom of diplomatic manoeuvre allowed by a policy of isolationism. Below this preferred position on international relations, however, was a secondary one from which the Beaverbrook press questioned the wisdom of British policy. For Beaverbrook, along with Churchill and Lloyd George, saw clearly enough that the key to the containment of Germany on her eastern frontiers lay in Moscow not in Warsaw, for all the great power delusions of the Poles. Therefore the Polish Guarantee should have been a consequence of an Anglo-Russian understanding not a preliminary to one, whatever the sensitivities of the Poles in this matter.

Indeed from this perspective, the "panic" guarantee to Poland had, in fact damaged Britain's negotiating hand not strengthened it for, given the facts of east European geography, a British guarantee to Poland against German aggression constituted in itself a guarantee to Russia as well, but a guarantee without the exaction of any quid pro quo. This was indeed a remarkable diplomatic performance on Chamberlain's part. In the House of Commons this was the indictment of government policy levelled at the Treasury bench with such telling effect by Lloyd George. But, in addition, throughout the summer of 1939 the former Prime Minister was able to marshal the same argument before a far wider audience through a series of articles in the "Sunday Express". By lavishly lauding the wisdom of Lloyd George's views, whilst at the same time constantly reaffirming its own belief in a total disengagement from Europe combined with the most urgent rearmament, the newspaper was able to intimate that a policy of engagement in Europe, which at the same time did not have as its first step, not its last step, an understanding with Soviet Russia, was dangerously flawed even within its own mistaken terms of reference.

The events of August and September 1939, therefore, more than fulfilled Beaverbrook's darkest apprehensions about British policy. A reckless policy of guarantees had been dangerously bungled in execution. Faithful as ever to their long-term belief that there was an ultimate natural coincidence between the interests of this country and those of the Soviet Union, Beaverbrook's newspapers argued for the caution in the face of expansionary Soviet moves in Eastern Europe, and in particular opposed those wild voices which proposed that the western allies embark upon an anti-totalitarian crusade in Eastern Europe. National interest should be the sole guide in determining British foreign policy. These conclusions were by no means out of line with official British thinking nor indeed with a substantial sector of opinion elsewhere in Fleet Street and beyond. Until that is the Soviet invasion of Finland.

The Soviet invasion of Finland at the end of November 1939 produced a new low in Anglo-Russian relations. Indeed for the first time since 1919 British policy-makers, in concert with our French allies, gave serious consideration to plans for direct military intervention against Russia in aid of Finland, plans that seemingly were frustrated only by the obstinate neutrality of the other Scandinavian states and by the surprisingly sudden armistice concluded by the two belligerents on 12 March 1940. Throughout this period, Maisky would later recall, Russia suffered the worst press of his entire embassy to this

country and thus Fleet Street itself contributed to the inflamed condition of Anglo-Soviet relations.¹⁷

Yet to this generalisation there is one important exception. The Beaverbrook press joined with the rest of Fleet Street in condemning the baselessness of Russian conduct and in praising the indomitable national spirit of the Finns but at that point it parted company from the rest of the press. Beaverbrook's newspapers stood out against the translation of a perfectly legitimate popular revulsion at Soviet behaviour into precipitate foreign policy decisions. Foreign policy should no more be based entirely on moral and ethical preferences than it should be based upon ideological ones. Therefore, from the beginning of the crisis over Finland the Express group alone resolutely opposed military intervention against Russia as the supreme folly. But it also did more than this. Beaverbrook's newspapers opposed military aid to Finland. They opposed proposals for trade sanctions against Russia and proposals for diplomatic sanctions. In particular, they opposed the proposals for the expulsion of the Soviet Union from the moribund League of Nations, proposals ultimately successful, on the grounds of gross hypocrisy. For no other aggressor state out of a woefully long list had been so treated, though some, of course, had left of their own volition. There was more than a touch of irony about this situation, for it was well known that Beaverbrook had no time at all for the League, and that his newspapers had long campaigned not only for Britain to leave but for the whole dangerous enterprise to be put into voluntary liquidisation. Michael Foot has paid tribute to the freedom with which he and Frank Owen were allowed to argue the case for patience and caution in Anglo-Russian relations in the leader columns of the "Evening Standard" against the stream of both Fleet Street and popular opinion.¹⁸

Events would amply justify this caution. For as 1940 passed, that annus mirabilis of German arms, and the world entered 1941, signs of Russo-German tension grew and were widely reported in the British press. These served to confirm the view frequently expressed in the Beaverbrook press and elsewhere that the Russo-German Pact was essentially "artificial" and could not long contain the explosive ideological and territorial antagonisms it had temporarily masked. When that explosion duly occurred on 22 June 1941 the Express group gave the most enthusiastic of receptions to Churchill's offer of all possible immediate aid to Russia, a fact not surprising when it is recollected that Beaverbrook was a house guest of the Prime Minister's on the afternoon of the broadcast's composition. In September 1941 Beaverbrook would be Churchill's choice to lead the British contingent in the Anglo-American aid mission to Moscow, Harriman leading the American contingent. The press lord returned an even more fervent advocate of

aid than when he had departed. Beaverbrook's enthusiasm in this matter has sometimes been treated patronisingly as naive and shortsighted and he was certainly prepared to go further in aid of Russia than either his cabinet colleagues or than Churchill himself, to the extent that he was prepared to take greater risks than they were in home defence, in the provisioning of the North African armies, and in the fuelling of the strategic bombing campaign, if these measures would materially help Russia. Yet, from an alternative perspective, these views demonstrate the rapidity and shrewdness of Beaverbrook's strategic judgement, whatever might be said of his wider political judgement, for he was amongst the first to recognise that the war against Germany would be won or lost on the eastern front and not in the air or on peripheral battlefields.

Even as Russia was still staggering from the opening German onslaught, Stalin had been concerned to ensure that the diplomatic revolution that had ensued from Hitler's treachery did not cost him those territorial gains that had been the fruit of the years of Russo-German amity. Therefore, one of the first issues raised in Stalin's correspondence with Churchill was the question of British recognition of the 1941 borders of Soviet Russia. And indeed this issue was duly raised again by the Russians with the Beaverbrook-Harriman mission though that mission had no remit in this matter.

Again during Eden's visit to Moscow in December 1941 it provided the most difficult unresolved problem of Anglo-Soviet relations. We know from Churchill's own account that the British government came perilously close to recognising, and thus legitimising, the 1941 frontiers of Russia early in 1942, in a desperate attempt to keep Russia in the war, and that American opposition to such a policy, on general grounds of non-recognition of any territorial changes until a peace settlement, caused Britain to draw back and the Soviet Union to relax her pressure for this vital concession.

During these critical months of the war the loudest voice within the cabinet advocating the full acceptance of Soviet demands was that of Beaverbrook, as generous in his attitude to Soviet security concerns as he was waspish about American pressures on this country. The cabinet minutes for 6 February 1942 record Beaverbrook as urging, in a discussion over renewed Soviet demands for boundary recognition, "We should therefore (subject of course to the views of the U.S.) agree to Stalin's request..... We should hold out the hand of friendship. So far Russia has contributed far more to the war effort than the U.S.A. to whom we have made such frequent concessions".¹⁹ The same minutes show Attlee's anger at Beaverbrook's ruthlessly casual treatment of the destinies of whole peoples

when their aspirations and interests might be judged inconvenient to the immediate needs of British diplomacy.

Yet Beaverbrook's attitudes in such matters set the pattern for his conduct in and out of office throughout the rest of the war. However difficult an ally Russia might prove to be there was no breath of criticism of her conduct from the Beaverbrook press. Moreover, no newspapers did more to cultivate the comfortable wartime myth of kindly pipe-smoking "Uncle Joe". This feature of Beaverbrook's newspapers particularly alarmed Arthur Koestler, amongst others. Koestler, after having been released from internment on the Isle of Mann as an enemy alien had been taken on to the "Evening Standard" by a kindly and admiring Michael Foot. The inevitable invitation to spend a weekend at Beaverbrook's county house soon followed. Koestler resolved to take up with his host the question of the dangerous (for the future) delusions about the true nature of the Soviet regime that wartime alliance needs, aided by official propaganda, made British public opinion only too susceptible to. Koestler got nowhere with Beaverbrook, the latter brushing aside Koestler's objections with the simple observation, "Arthur, I believe in Uncle Joe. Uncle Joe is a democrat."²⁰ Undecided whether this was an expression of Beaverbrook's innocence or of his cynicism, Koestler departed, to receive no further invitations to Cherkley.

However indulgent the Beaverbrook press might prove towards Soviet Russia the same could not be said about that press' attitude to British policy. On 26 February 1942 Beaverbrook resigned from the cabinet on grounds of ill health. For months earlier he had been arguing fiercely in cabinet not merely for the recognition of the 1941 frontiers of Russia but for the immediate opening of a second front in aid of the Soviet Union, protesting in particular at the timidity of the chiefs of staff on this issue. In this latter matter Beaverbrook was touching upon an issue upon which Soviet exhortations to Britain for sympathetic action had been even more frequent and more pressing than on the matter of frontier recognition. Indeed in a strange reversal of 1919 Stalin had on one occasion gone so far as to propose that Churchill send a British army to fight on Russian soil, such was the desperate nature of Russia's peril.²¹

Beaverbrook soon put his new-found freedom to work in swinging his newspapers squarely behind the Soviet position on the major strategic division that separated the allies and placing it openly within the public domain. In a speech delivered in America on 23 April 1942 he openly assumed leadership of the "Second Front Now" campaign which in due course would lead him to share a platform at meetings up and down this country with

unlikely left-wing company, and caused Churchill, still sensitive to popular memories of the Gallipoli operations, still seeking to reassure a suspicious Russia, and still seeking to convert a sceptical United States to his Mediterranean strategy, the gravest embarrassment. According to the following day's Daily Express Beaverbrook had said that "The war can be settled in 1942. Communism under Stalin has produced the most valiant fighting army in Europe. Communism under Stalin has provided us with examples of patriotism equal to the finest in the annals of history. Communism under Stalin has produced the best generals in the war." These words it will be recalled were spoken long before Russia had experienced any of those military successes on the eastern front that she would later enjoy and which would excite the admiration of the western world. Moreover, although the speech came as an unwelcome surprise to Churchill, Beaverbrook would tell his wartime political secretary that he had cleared the speech before delivery with Roosevelt "almost line by line".²²

When in time those successes began, and Russia first contained and then began to roll back the invading armies of Hitler, those inter-allied differences which had been temporarily buried under the camaraderie of war surfaced again. The most important of these was Poland. Just as Poland provided the occasion of the second world war so also it is in the Polish Question that we see the seeds of the Cold War. Precisely because the Polish Question is so important to the history of British foreign policy in the twentieth century the whole issue of press attitudes towards Poland, including the line taken by the Express group, will be treated separately in depth later. As we shall see Beaverbrook would take the most indulgent and sympathetic of lines towards increasing evidence of unilateral Soviet moves in Poland. Of course as Soviet diplomatic pressure on the Polish government-in-exile grew we find these same attitudes widely reflected elsewhere in the war-time British press as Poland became an increasingly inconvenient ally. However, in the case of the Beaverbrook press at least, it would be wrong to see and dismiss their position on this issue as being dictated by pure expediency, whatever may have been the cause elsewhere. We have seen already how uncomfortable Chamberlain's policy of guarantees had made the Express group in 1939 as it ran contrary to their whole philosophy of international relations. Moreover, Beaverbrook saw an independent Eastern Europe as essentially an artificial creation of Versailles which could not long survive the recovery of Germany and Russia, the natural great powers of the region, and which in any case was not a vital national interest of Great Britain's. Throughout by far the greater part of modern history Britain's own status as a great power had in no way been conditional upon the existence of an independent Eastern Europe. Manifestly Britain's own national security was not dependent upon the continued existence of that

same independent tier of states between Russia and Germany. Moreover, Eastern Europe between the wars had proved the graveyard of the illusions that had inspired the Wilsonian settlement. Given the racial confusion of that region, the principle of national self-determination had prove little short of a recipe for permanent turmoil. Representative institutions had proved ill-suited to the thin soil of that area when transplanted from western Europe and parliamentary government had collapsed practically everywhere, Czechoslovakia apart, throughout Eastern Europe well before the countries of that region had had to face the challenge from Hitler's Germany. Was not the likely real choice in those same countries post-war to be different forms of political authoritarianism yet again? Finally relations between the successor states of Eastern Europe between the wars had proved if anything more troubled and more poisonous than those previously enjoyed by the old empires of the region, a fact which in itself made a major contribution to Hitler's early diplomatic triumphs. Beaverbrook saw no point at all in alienating Russia by seeking to force a return to the status quo ante in Eastern Europe in circumstances where it would again prove inherently unstable and which might well yet again provide the flashpoint for a new European conflagration.

Consistent with this realism the Beaverbrook press enthusiastically joined in the welcome given to the Yalta accords when they agreed early in 1945 in so far as they affected Eastern Europe. When later Stalin failed, at least in the eyes of his critics, to deliver on the promises made at Yalta the Express newspapers faithfully reported this disappointment along with the rest of the British press. Thereafter, their position was distinctive. Beaverbrook's newspapers were inclined to put inter-allied differences down at all times to genuine misunderstanding and never to question Soviet goodwill. Moreover, the leader columns of Beaverbrook's newspapers were always emphatically insistent that the preservation of friendly relations between Britain and the Soviet Union must take precedence over our concern at the admittedly robust methods being employed by communism in Eastern Europe.

Against the broader backdrop of the development of the Cold War this forgiving attitude towards the Soviet Union continued to characterise the Express group's approach to the problems of international relations. Thus whilst welcoming Churchill's Fulton speech, Beaverbrook's newspapers were careful to couple this welcome with a plea for renewed efforts from all parties to recover the intimacy of the war-time alliance. Equally, whilst welcoming the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine they persisted in preaching reconciliation with Soviet Russia. As regards the former, whilst opposing British membership of the Plan, the Express newspapers encouraged the participation of the

whole of the rest of Europe, east and west, in Marshall's scheme, until, that is, Russia herself closed the door on these proposals. And thereafter the Beaverbrook press showed ready understanding of Soviet reluctance in this matter. They could, after all, hardly do otherwise, for consistency's sake. Had not the Express group itself fought an abortive domestic campaign against British participation precisely from a fear of that American economic domination that the Russians were more rudely denouncing as "dollar imperialism"? As regards the latter the Express group always insisted that, whatever the Soviet Union's excesses, these sprang in very large part from her obsession with security, an obsession which, given Russia's modern history was only too understandable. Moreover, on no account should the Truman Doctrine be interpreted to imply the sanctioning of an ideological anti-communist crusade.

This indulgent attitude of Beaverbrook and his newspapers towards the Soviet Union could hardly expect to pass unchallenged as the Cold War itself intensified. Indeed it would be one of the issues brought up by those submitting evidence to the post-war Royal Commission On The Press. In particular, Beaverbrook's critics would fasten upon one prize example of what they believed to be the press lord's selective vision of international affairs on which to challenge his newspapers' journalistic integrity. On 18 November 1947 the United States Secretary of State, General Marshall, made an important speech on American foreign policy, a speech widely and extensively reported elsewhere in the London press, for very obvious reasons. The greater part of Marshall's speech was devoted to sounding the alarm about the inflammatory nature of Soviet propaganda against the United States, and to warning Europe against Russian attempts to gain politically by prolonging indefinitely the unsatisfactory economic and political conditions then prevailing in Western Europe. Inevitably, as in all such speeches, Marshall's scriptwriters softened the tone of the speech with a few kind words about Russia's past services and expressed the hope that great power harmony might soon be restored. The "Daily Express" of 19 November 1947 reported Marshall's speech in two column inches at the foot of its front page in the following manner,

CONFLICT WILL LESSEN

Washington Tuesday.

Secretary of State George Marshall said today that if Europe is restored to solvency and vigour "the disturbing conflict between Russia and the U.S. will lessen." Said he: "Differences are not caused by a direct clash of interests. We can afford to

discount alarms intended to distract us, and proceed with calm determination along our path."

Express News Service

Brushing aside as implausible the justifications proffered for this remarkable treatment of Marshall's speech, by the editor, Arthur Christiansen, the Royal Commission concluded in its Report,

"This was on any grounds a totally inadequate account of an important speech: but it was not merely inadequate: it was travesty. By quoting three sentences out of their context the report gave the impression - heightened by the unqualified headline - that the speech was sedative and reassuring: it was in fact a weighty and detailed warning of the dangers of Soviet policy. But the speech as reported in the Daily Express completely disguised that, and even made it appear consonant with the policy of the paper instead of, as in fact it was, the exact opposite."²³

This indictment of the methods employed by the Beaverbrook press was all the more crushing given the preceding circumstances. For when Beaverbrook himself had appeared before the Royal Commission to give evidence, on the celebrated occasion when he had freely confessed to running his newspapers for the sole purpose of making political propaganda, he had on that earlier occasion gone to the greatest pains to emphasise that that political propaganda was restricted entirely and exclusively to the leader columns, which were his own platform, and to signed articles in his newspapers. The distinction for him between the news columns of his papers and the rest of the columns was sacred. He had told the Commissioners,

"The policy is that there shall be no propaganda in the news. Propaganda is all in the leader columns and other articles, but never, never, never in the news. There is a strong, stern rule, and the most tremendous attempt by Mr Christiansen and the other editors to carry that rule into effect, but we do stumble. It is terrible how often we stumble: it is heartbreaking sometimes."²⁴

Challenged by Lady Violet Bonham Carter, one of the Commissioners, on the specific matter of the "Daily Express"' treatment of the Marshall speech Beaverbrook had disengenuously suggested that this indeed might well be one of those occasions when Arthur Christiansen, a busy editor, had simply stumbled and slipped. This damning indictment of the behaviour of the "Daily Express" in this matter contained in the passage from the official Report of the Royal Commission, despite Beaverbrook's innocent disclaimer, quoted above, shows therefore how little inclined the Commissioners were to "buy" the press peer's own reconstruction of events.

Nonetheless, when Beaverbrook had appeared before the Royal Commission to give personal testimony as to the state of Fleet Street he had clearly enjoyed himself by teasing his critics. Here it should perhaps be remembered that an entirely disproportionate role in the campaign to establish the Royal Commission in the first place had he been played by former Beaverbrook journalists, usually men of the left and sometimes, like Michael Foot and Tom Driberg, themselves now embarked on political careers. Obviously his cheerful open declaration that he ran his newspapers solely to make political propaganda was meant to provoke these critics by its shamelessness. This could also be said of his cheeky response to a serious question from Lady Violet Bonham Carter, one of his inquisitors, pointing to the dangers of proprietorial intervention in the supposedly free press of a liberal democracy. In his reply Beaverbrook boasted that things were even worse than she feared for he now (1948) exercised the rights of the worst kind of control - absentee control - by telephone from the south of France where he spent eight months of each year. Lady Violet and Beaverbrook were of course old enemies. She had personal as well as general grounds for disapproving of the man and his politics. She suspected that he had played a role second only to that of Northcliffe in the intrigue that had brought down her father as Liberal leader in 1916 and introduced such a bitter schism in the Liberal party, thereby, that that party had been in time destroyed as a party of government. However, that having been said, Lady Violet had a special interest in the Beaverbrook press' record on foreign policy, a record that she found deplorable, for Beaverbrook's newspapers, having advocated the appeasement of Nazi Germany in the 1930's, seemed now to be intent upon compounding their errors by advocating the appeasement of communist Russia in the 1940's. This concern gave rise to the following illuminating exchange:

Lady Violet Bonham Carter:

Another thing.... is what I would describe as the playing down lightly in your papers of the Russian danger, the Russian challenge. Please tell me if you think that it is an unfair description. It has been played down?

Beaverbrook:

We do not believe it.²⁵

The timing and context of this exchange are important. Beaverbrook gave evidence before the Royal Commission on 18 November 1948. That same morning the newspapers were full of the news of the signing the day before in Belgium of the Brussels pact, the immediate precursor of the North Atlantic Treaty. The newspapers, including Beaverbrook's own, were still reverberating with the news of the communist coup in Czechoslovakia on 25 February 1948 and of the subsequent "suicide" by Jan Masaryk on 10 March 1948. This was a time when western opinion was deeply alarmed by the threat of Soviet expansionism, a time when East-West relations were at their most inflamed. And although history is an untidy affair with few neat beginnings and endings many reputable authorities date the Cold War proper from the Prague Coup. Thereafter the die is seen as cast.

The Prague Coup and Beaverbrook's appearance before the Royal Commission also provide a natural conclusion to this survey of the attitude of the Beaverbrook press to Anglo-Soviet relations during the prelude to the Cold War. Nonetheless the pattern for the future had been set. As the Cold War unfolded the Express group would always prove to be that sector of Fleet Street most sceptical of hardline policies towards Soviet Russia, at least on the right. In the crisis over Berlin later in 1948, the first battle of nerves of the Cold War, Beaverbrook's newspapers would be the "wobbliest" section of the conservative press in the support that press offered for Ernest Bevin's resolute line towards Russia, constantly insinuating that the Germans alone, the old enemy, would be the only ultimate gainers from a permanent split between Russia if the Western powers went to war to protect the liberties of a people who had shown no previous inclination to value personal political freedom any more highly than the Russians themselves. (In this latter the Beaverbrook press was reflecting a widespread contemporary view - "Vansittartism" - that Germans, all Germans, were culturally predisposed towards political authoritarianism.)

In some matters the post-war Beaverbrook press would adopt policy positions which "objectively" coincided with the aims of Soviet foreign policy. Thus for example, it campaigned against Eden's permanent commitment of British troops to Europe when the E.D.C. project foundered and campaigned even more vigorously against German re-armament and German entry into N.A.T.O. As regards the last two of these, Beaverbrook's newspapers repeatedly asked that proper consideration be given to legitimate Soviet sensitivity over the fears awakened by a resurgent Germany. Nowhere else on the right in Fleet Street was a similar concern for Soviet sensibilities shown. More positively, Beaverbrook gave the warmest of support to all post-war attempts at reconciliation with Russia, from the friendly moves made by Churchill himself during his last administration (when it was widely appreciated in Fleet Street that the old warrior had to battle for this initiative against the hostility of the Americans and the scepticism of Eden and the Foreign Office)²⁶ to the initiative taken by Macmillan during Beaverbrook's last years.

One or two general considerations should be added here. Beaverbrook expected his newspapers to be cheerful and optimistic and this applied as much to their treatment of international affairs as it did to their treatment of domestic matters. Moreover, on certain delimited issues - imperial and economic matters for example - Beaverbrook regarded the United States as a greater threat to Britain's interests than the Soviet Union. In private Beaverbrook was prepared to go much further in expressing his distinctive views on East-West tensions than he allowed his newspapers to go in public, though no attentive reader could miss the drift of the latter. In the post-war period Mrs Michael Foot would find herself a guest at a private dinner given by Beaverbrook in honour of the visiting American publisher, Henry Luce. Listening along with everybody else at table to a long disquisition by their host on the origins of the Cold War. So even-handed was Beaverbrook in his allocation of responsibility for the deterioration of great power relations once the Hitler war had been won that an American fellow guest would turn to ask "Is this fellow a Commie?"²⁷

Beaverbrook never lost his personal admiration for Stalin, even after the revelations of the Khrushchev "secret speech", reminders of which he would impatiently brush aside in old age; and in Moscow itself his services to Anglo-Soviet relations would be recalled for a later generation of Russian citizens when Maisky was permitted to publish his memoirs. Maisky would portray Beaverbrook to his Russian readers in the 1960's as a man able to

rise above the prejudices of his class so much that their relationship "was of no little value to the Soviet Union. In the years of the second world war Beaverbrook, as a member of Churchill's cabinet, rendered no small services to our country in matters of supply. He was also, from the very beginning of the Great Patriotic War a warm supporter of the opening of a second front in France. It was not by chance that the Soviet Government decorated Beaverbrook with one of our highest orders."²⁸

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CHAPTER FOUR

BRITISH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN GREECE IN DECEMBER 1944

For a variety of sound reasons, British military intervention in Greece in December 1944 has attracted the passing attention of a number of historians primarily interested in the wider implications of the affair. Some of these have seen it as an omen, the coming of the Cold War already visible in the spluttering embers of the Second World War, as a Western power opposed with superior counter-force what it had identified to be an armed bid for power on the part of a European communist movement. Others have challenged this neat prefiguration, pointing to the evident disarray in Western policy at the time and to the simultaneous restraint shown by the Soviet Union which render it impossible to discern here the power alignment of that future struggle. For British policy-makers were manifestly much more seriously embarrassed by the American criticism of the lead they took in Greece than they were by anything said or done in Moscow. Indeed, this "mismatch" of future enemies and allies^{has} had two continuing consequences for the developing historiography of the Cold War. In the first place, Soviet restraint over British intervention in Greece ^{has}^{been} cited as supportive evidence by those historians who have sought to argue that Russian foreign policy is inspired by traditional security needs of a cautious, limited and defined character, perforce decked out in revolutionary socialist rhetoric, and not by ideological considerations of unmanageable implications. Given this reading, the myth of the international proletariat was simply a more potent successor to those myths which had portrayed the old Russia as the protector of Orthodox Christianity or the ultimate guardian of all Slav people, and which from time to time Stalin's Tsarist predecessors had harnessed to their foreign policy aims. Secondly, the behaviour of the United States during this first phase of the struggle for Greece has provided those American revisionist historians of the Cold War's origins, who have seen in their own country the original transgressor in that conflict - in its long laid schemes to keep the world safe for liberal capitalism - with an obstinately inconvenient example of early United States indulgence towards communism in need of a more plausible explanation than any yet forthcoming. Indeed, the Greek affair in its first place has a special relish for those students who enjoy the ironies and untidy inconsistencies of history, possessed as they are of the knowledge that only three years later a subsequent round in the struggle for Greece would provide the occasion for the declaration of the Truman Doctrine,

whereby for the first time the United States accepted permanent security commitments in peacetime outside her own hemisphere and signalled to the world her final, if reluctant, assumption of that active great power role that her economic performance had long since rendered optional.

These legitimate preoccupations with the wider interpretation of the whole affair have led to a relative neglect of other important aspects of the crisis over British military intervention in Greece which form the subject of this study. In the first place, when the public records for the war years first became generally available a few years ago, many researchers were surprised by the extreme sensitivity of Churchill and some of his cabinet to media criticism that they revealed for, very broadly speaking, ministers at the time had contained or concealed their irritations at media excesses far more successfully than had their first world war predecessors. This very success, therefore, gives an obvious renewed interest to that single occasion during the second world war when ministers gave public vent to their frustrations and Fleet Street found itself lashed from the Treasury bench before a wildly cheering House of Commons, as proved to be the case over Greece. Secondly, for any student of political history with a special interest in the interplay of press influence, public opinion and foreign policy formulation, the events of December 1944 and their denouement have a particular fascination as offering the most dramatic example the second world war affords of the impact of the press on the conduct of British foreign policy, through the part it played in shaping the contemporary vision of the external world. Thirdly, the previously mentioned tendency to read event in Greece only against the backdrop of subsequent developments has meant that this contemporary vision and the many varied perceptions which together went to compose it have been largely lost sight of. The chief purpose of this study, therefore, is to attempt to recapture that contemporary vision of events in Greece as seen primarily through the British national press and to assess the impact of that vision on the policy-makers and, beyond them, on that public opinion upon whose support a sustained foreign policy in a democracy ultimately depends. Some reference will necessarily be made to the foreign press and to the role of the B.B.C., for as the crisis over Greece unfolded, the British government found its full freedom of action in foreign affairs constrained, not only by the excited condition of domestic opinion, but also by the rapid communication abroad of Fleet Street's distress at the course of British policy in Greece. This latter became in itself an independent variable which Britain's external representatives had to monitor closely and with the diplomatic consequence of which they had to grapple.

On 4 December 1944, The Times carried a report from its Athens correspondent which began, "Seeds of Civil War were well and truly sown by the Athens police this morning when they fired upon a demonstration of youths and children". Seldom can a correspondent's words have reverberated so resoundingly across the press columns, debating chambers and air waves of the world as were to do those of Geoffrey Hoare, despite the fact that similar sentiments were expressed by most of the other correspondents present at the demonstration. As on other occasions if a story appeared in the columns of The Times it was vested with a special authority. On the eve of overall military victory in Europe, the wartime coalition found itself buffeted by a political crisis of both international and domestic dimensions. In Washington, on 5 December, the new Secretary of State, Stettinius, publicly distanced his country from support for British policy in liberated Europe. At home, an ominous crack appeared in the cement binding the coalition when, despite a prior appeal by Attlee for loyalty at a private party meeting, the Labour Party officially abstained in a censure vote on British policy. Party discipline proved too weak to hold even this second line and in the outcome, the party broke into three with, significantly, the party vote against the government slightly exceeding that cast in its support, which latter was confined in any case almost entirely to the ministerial vote. As the parliamentary correspondents duly noted, this was the first time since Dunkirk that the majority of the Labour Party backbenchers had failed to support Churchill's government on the conduct of the war. Not a single Tory or Liberal member present voted against the government or abstained. In this fevered atmosphere of fast-moving political crisis, Donald Tyerman, whose pen had drafted those Times leaders on Greece, based upon the despatches of Geoffrey Hoare, which had so stung Churchill, would later recall being greeted by the Prime Minister's most formidable parliamentary critic, Aneurin Bevan, in the Great Eastern Hotel, with the cry of "Junius".¹

What was the case that the press presented against British policy in Greece with such impressive initial unity that it led to such dramatic results? For reasons of space this is best reconstructed in the shape of a "composite" formulation of the press indictment, followed by the necessary qualifications and provisos. However, before this is done, two preliminary points need to be made. In the first place, today's reader of the contemporary press is immediately struck by the universal assumption on that press' part of Churchill's very personal responsibility for all the major decisions over Greece. Indeed this attitude becomes incorporated in the indictment itself with the repeated suggestion that over Greece the Prime Minister had disregarded the normal proprieties of cabinet government. Such limited criticism of the cabinet at large that occurs, or of Eden, who after all was in charge of foreign policy, is largely implicit and is confined to the

suggestion that collective weakness of character allowed them to be swept along by so formidable a personality against their better judgement. After Churchill himself, the most criticised figure is Rex Leeper, the ambassador in Athens, held by many to be the Prime Minister's evil genius in the Greek affair. Thereafter General Scobie, as military commander, attracts most press fire but is nowhere treated as more than the unimaginative and heavy-handed military servant of a policy fashioned in all essentials elsewhere. Secondly, the great bulk of the press accepted from the start that the Prime Minister had acted in Greece from a mixture of motives, some of which were by no means ignoble, even if misplaced. In his unqualified support for the Greek government-in-exile, Churchill was believed to be swayed in part by his romantic attachment to the idea of monarchy as such and in part by his profound sense of reciprocal obligation to all of those like the King of Greece who had stood firm as faithful allies at Britain's own time of most desperate need. These considerations had blinded him to the ambiguous constitutional record of the Greek King before the war, when the King's acquiescence in the Metaxas dictatorship had so compromised the monarchy as to render the king a deeply distrusted figure in Greek domestic politics henceforth, and to justify in very large part E.A.M.'s current loudly proclaimed fears of impending royalist repression. Reinforcing these honourable, if misconceived, motives were believed to be others more dubious and more dangerous. The Prime Minister already had more than half an eye on the future and therefore wished to restore in Greece a conservative authoritarian regime which alone could be confidently relied upon to underpin that British imperial predominance in the Middle East he had determined to reassert, once the rhetoric of the Atlantic Charter was finally forgotten and power considerations resumed their natural role as the governing forces shaping international relations.

In combination this mixture of motives had induced Churchill to characterise E.A.M., an authentic popular resistance movement, as a communist-dominated front of dupes and fellow-travellers, and to blackguard its military wing, E.L.A.S., somewhat inconsequently, as little more than a band of brigands and ruffians, using patriotism as a cover for criminality. In short, the Prime Minister was reverting to type, the indomitable patriot giving way to the impenitent imperialist and ineducable power-broker. As Seymour Cocks had put it in the Commons debate, in an analogy flighted as much at a transatlantic as at a Westminster audience, the Chatham of 1940 had left the stage and on his place had shuffled Lord North.² The Prime Minister, by thus unleashing his hitherto restrained alter ego to indulge in an exercise in old-style power-politics in the Middle East, had imperilled Allied harmony before the war was won and demonstrated his personal contempt for the ideas of those who hungered after a reborn postwar world

where international disputes would be decided on their merits and not by the disposition of military power.

The above generalisations must now be particularised and qualified. Although "the press" is a useful abstraction that the historian must perforce employ, the British press, even during its moments of greatest unity, has never been monolithic. In December 1944, national newspapers were to oppose British policy in Greece on differing grounds, with differing intensities and for differing durations. Moreover, newspapers could differ sometimes as much within themselves as between themselves. On the same newspaper, foreign correspondents, leader writers and columnists did not always march in perfect step. Selected examples will illustrate these points.

From the start of the storm over Greece, The Daily Telegraph was completely out of step with the rest of Fleet Street and this fact doubtless contributed to the remarkable solidarity with which Conservative M.P.'s supported official policy during the crisis. When in time in the Daily Worker, Douglas Hyde came to look back with permissible complacency at Fleet Street's emphatic response to the Greek crisis, he would exempt The Daily Telegraph from his collective tribute to the press on general grounds with the sour comment that "when there is dirty work to be done on the press front Lord Camrose's Daily Telegraph can always be relied upon to be right at the head of the queue".³ And indeed, if it be true that Tory backbenchers read the Daily Telegraph for pleasure and The Times from duty, rarely can the contrast between pleasure and painful duty have been so acute as over Greece at this time. Yet this was not simply a case of the newspapers's editorial sympathies dominating its news coverage. Moreover, with regard to the latter, the paper had a not undeserved Fleet Street reputation for the quality, range and integrity of its foreign news service, however politically self-indulgent it might choose to be in its leader columns. When, towards the end of the immediate crisis in Greece, the Citrine Commission's report came to pass an adverse collective judgement on the role played by the British press in the coverage it had offered of events in Greece, The Daily Telegraph loudly protested its own innocence as the one national newspaper entirely without sin in the whole sorry affair, and gave the fullest credit for this unique performance to its Athens correspondent, Richard Capell.⁴ By chance, Capell had not been present in Athens to witness the dramatic events of 3 December, having dropped off in Rome to see a brother serving in the army in Italy on his way back to London after having been summoned home by his newspaper. However, Capell had much earlier, during his time in Egypt, defined his own views as to the character and ambitions of E.A.M. and had concluded that when it judged the time to be right that organisation (or

rather the communists who dominated the organisation) would make its bid for total power through the ruthless use of the armed power of E.L.A.S. These views had been communicated home despite the military censorship, though perhaps for obvious reasons his newspaper had judged it impolitic to publish them. When the crisis broke in Athens, therefore, Capell, though he hurried back as fast as wartime transport conditions would allow, merely found in the course events had taken confirmation of his expectations. From day one, his dispatches home reveal no doubts as to how events in Greece should be read. An armed minority was attempting to seize power at the point of a bayonet and to impose by terror on a disarmed civilian population, demoralised by wartime occupation and fears of Anglo-American abandonment, a political system they would never freely choose. All of this being done behind a facade of manipulated demonstrations and an involuntary general strike, enforced by intimidation calculated to give a spurious popular legitimacy to the operation, with the more naive of foreign observers particularly in mind. Capell's preferred description of E.L.A.S.'s activities was "red fascism", though in deference to Britain's Soviet ally he would, like more prominent figures later, from time to time characterise the Greek communist movement as a "Trotskyite deviation to the left". In essence, however, Capell saw no distinction between the exponents of class war and the exponents of race war and repeatedly said so. All of this was an easy appreciation for Capell to make but what did puzzle the Telegraph's correspondent was the reaction of most of the other war correspondents to the events of 3 December and to their significance. To Capell the reaction of these men constituted a classic example of the dangers of seeing with and not through the eye. This bafflement forms the consistent secondary motif to his contemporary dispatches and to the book he was subsequently to devote to his experiences in Greece,⁵ particularly in regard to a colleague like Geoffrey Hoare for whom he felt affection and respect. What exasperated Capell most of all was the readiness amongst many of his colleagues to accept E.L.A.S. on its own valuation and to judge it on the purity of its revolutionary aspirations rather than by the barbarity and savagery of its conduct.

Within ten days or so of the crisis' commencement, The Daily Telegraph found itself rejoined by other newspapers whose natural loyalties lay with the government. Originally, The Daily Mail and The Daily Express seemed to take some share in the criticism that was offered of official policy in Greece on grounds of its substantive content. Rapidly thereafter, however, they shifted their ground to the less serious count of criticising that policy for inadequacies of presentation. Throughout the war, the newspapers now suggested, British propaganda had encouraged the public to regard all European resistance movements indiscriminately as consisting exclusively of valiant

fighters for freedom as it was understood in the U.K. Overnight, the public was now being required to exercise much greater discrimination in its enthusiasms and to see those who controlled E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. as bitter enemies of democratic liberties. The British public had not been educated in preparation for such a sudden shift in perceptions. There had been a failure to keep the public informed, policy had been too secretive. The Foreign Office was most at fault here and the lesson for the future must be learnt. In the meantime, the British government was saddled with a thankless task in Greece, but a necessary one, and deserved both press and popular support in its performance.⁶ Whatever the past mistakes, and they had been many, there could be no doubt as to the disinterestedness and ultimate benevolence of British purposes in Greece. Privately, Beaverbrook regarded Churchill as his own worst enemy in the Greek affair, for the Prime Minister's natural pugnacity had ruled out those concessions on inessentials to his critics over Greece that the press lord himself would have favoured.⁷ Moreover, as regards the international ramifications of the affair, Beaverbrook had always adopted a somewhat different perspective on international relations from that of the Prime Minister. He believed that sentiment and wishful thinking blinded Churchill to the fact that there was no necessary and inevitable coincidence of interests on all issues between the Anglo-Saxon powers. More sceptical of Roosevelt than Churchill, Beaverbrook was conversely more hopeful of Stalin and remained, therefore, throughout the war years and into the peace consistently sanguine over the prospects for a durable postwar understanding with Soviet Russia, as we have already seen. The differing reactions of her great allies to Britain's difficulties in Greece, therefore, served only to confirm Beaverbrook in his prejudices.

Amongst the newspapers more sustained in their criticism of government policy, the behaviour of the Daily Herald is of direct interest, not least because of its party affiliation. Upon examination, the newspaper's reaction to the Greek crisis reveals a degree of schizophrenia, indeed a general identity problem. Nowhere were the denunciations of British policy more sweeping than in this newspaper's leader columns. Nowhere did the expressed suspicions of British policy run deeper than in the columns of its diplomatic correspondent, W.N. Ewer. However, these opinions do not always harmonise with what the newspaper's Athens correspondent was simultaneously writing in his reports home, or more precisely with what he was not writing. Initially, Salusbury had followed the rest of the war correspondents in his reporting of the bloody events in Athens on Sunday 3 December, and had placed responsibility for these firmly on the shoulders of the police, warning against the dangers of backing with British arms a reactionary regime in Athens. Rapidly, however, Salusbury came to adopt a more sympathetic attitude

towards official British policy and to revise his attitude towards police conduct on that occasion, seeing it now as a result of panic, indiscipline and provocation rather than as evidence of anything more sinister. British policy, he believed, though clumsily executed without due preparation of British public opinion, was inspired by honest and honourable motives. These changing views were to lead to increasing difficulties for Salusbury with his newspaper and to a whispering campaign in Fleet Street led by the *Daily Worker*, in which his integrity was constantly questioned. Elsewhere in the same newspaper, the political columnist Michael Foot, in a column that always showed him to be a close, if angry, student of those *Times* wartime leaders by E.H. Carr, advocating a postwar settlement with the U.S.S.R. based upon *realpolitik*, was linking events in Greece with events in Poland. According to Foot's analysis, the foreign policy "realists" were now being granted their wishes. Stalin was being allowed to impose on Poland a Lublin "government" which, whatever the follies of the Polish government-in-exile, represented nothing but itself without any very obvious protest from the West. In response, Churchill was claiming for himself a free hand in Greece and the Middle East. A system of spheres of influence was descending on Europe based upon the supposed postwar security needs of the great powers. Time alone would reveal who were the more deluded, the foreign policy realists or the foreign policy idealists. As a libertarian socialist, Foot proclaimed himself an unrepentant admirer of the ideas of Woodrow Wilson and could not believe that any lasting European peace could be achieved which subordinated the principles of national self-determination and of representative democracy to the alleged security needs of the great powers. According to Foot, the interwar settlement had failed because the noble principles which had inspired the Wilsonian vision had been defectively practised at Versailles, in particular when the interests of the victors were at stake, not because those principles themselves were inherently flawed, as some of Wilson's critics had subsequently come to claim. What was needed in any new settlement, if it were to endure, was a more honest and full implementation of those same principles, not their repudiation.⁸

Much more uniformly and consistently opposed to British policy in Greece than the *Daily Herald* was the *News Chronicle*, thus consolidating that newspaper's wartime reputation for being not only to the left of the parliamentary Liberal Party but also to the left of the Labour movement.⁹ At the time that the crisis broke in Greece, this newspaper did not have its own correspondent of in Athens but shared the services of correspondents of other newspapers. However, with the crisis at its height, the editor, Gerald Barry, took himself off to Greece to make a one-man, on-the-spot investigation of the facts. The tenor of his subsequent report on his mission can best be appreciated when it is noted that

the most implacable of the Fleet Street critics of British policy in Greece were later to express a distinct preference for Barry's findings over those of the semi-official Citrine Commission when the two reports appeared more or less simultaneously.¹⁰ However, the most trenchant criticism of British policy throughout the crisis was provided in the "Spotlight" column of A.J. Cummings. This veteran journalist entertained a lifelong suspicion of government manipulation of the press, particularly in wartime, which derived to a large extent from his distaste for the "patriotic" role played by Fleet Street during the first world war.¹¹ As is not infrequently the case, however, Cummings could on occasion be, conversely, more trusting of foreign governments than he was of his own. A decade earlier he had been one of the very few prominent figures in Fleet Street to give credence to the Soviet case in the Metropolitan-Vickers affair. Altogether more measured in his critique and less given to personal invective was the newspaper's diplomatic correspondent Vernon Bartlett who, in his parliamentary capacity as an Independent M.P., had voted against the government in the division of 8 December. Nonetheless, Bartlett remained firm throughout in his main point that British policy had been fundamentally flawed in not understanding that E.A.M. was something more than a mere communist front, although, by its obstinacy in error, the British government was well on the way towards creating its own reality.

Speaking for and to much the same kind of political constituency as the News Chronicle was The Manchester Guardian, the newspaper which, together with The Times, was to earn a word of reprimand for its conduct over Greece eight years later in Churchill's war memoirs.¹² This newspaper's coverage and comment upon the crisis very closely resemble those in The Times, but this is less surprising than at first might appear. For The Manchester Guardian subscribed at this time to The Times foreign news service and, differences of sub-editing apart, the same dispatches from Geoffrey Hoare appeared in both newspapers and formed the same raw material from which leaders were built. More surprisingly, perhaps, is the frequent similarity of tone to be found in the voice of provincial liberalism to that found in the accepted organ of metropolitan conservatism. Thus, in a leader of 5 December, the Manchester newspaper would say of E.A.M. that it "may and probably does represent a minority in Greece as a whole, but it is the most energetic and progressive section of the population,"¹³ and a month later would repeat of the same organisation that it "undoubtedly represents the most vigorous and progressive part of the Greek nation."¹⁴ This kind of gloss on the idea of representative democracy caused readers wedded to more traditional majoritarian notions of democracy to fear for their newspaper's liberal soul. Such talk in The Times, given the whole thrust of that newspaper's wartime insistence that practical politics was as much a matter of effective

power as of theoretical rights, however much we might wish things otherwise, was altogether less remarkable. However, as the events in Greece unfolded, The Manchester Guardian was to reveal itself as far less unbending and irreconcilable towards official policy than either its liberal sister newspaper or The Times. Thus despite the slashing attack that speech contained on the conduct of the British press, and more particularly on the role of the quality press, in the Greek crisis, The Manchester Guardian warmly congratulated the Prime Minister on his great Commons defence of the government's foreign policy of 18 January 1945, finding it to be one his "wisest" speeches and accepting that British purposes in Greece were fundamentally honest and honourable, though dangerously bungled in execution and presentation. The same leader then proceeded to take up the cudgels for the Prime Minister in a way that Churchill could not, for obvious reasons, easily employ for himself, even if he had felt so inclined. Addressing itself to United States opinion, the newspaper advised that Americans should exercise a little self-knowledge and perhaps self-criticism before denouncing "power politics", "spheres of influence" and "imperialism", as sins committed exclusively by corrupt Europeans. They should read again the Monroe Doctrine and dwell a little less on the Middle East and a little more on Latin America, reflect a little less on the survival into the twentieth century of largely nominal overseas empires and a little more on the survival of contiguous land empires. For nations as for individuals, self-knowledge was the beginning of all wisdom. As for Britain, The Manchester Guardian concluded stoutly "in spite of our manifold imperfections we have as clear a conscience as the Americans."¹⁵ When three weeks later, at the beginning of February, the report of the Citrine Commission appeared, it contained not only a generally negative verdict on the performance of the British press, but also a specific example of E.L.A.S.'s attempt to exploit domestic press hostility to official policy in Greece by distributing to British forces material taken from The Manchester Guardian in the hope of undermining troop morale. The Commission's members themselves were deeply impressed by the depth of troop outrage at the treatment by the London press of their role in Greece. As with Churchill's attack on the press of 18 January, The Manchester Guardian took this renewed chastisement in good part, confining itself in a leader comment of 9 February to the mild observation that, "If the British press is charged with being misinformed about the fighting in Greece, the soldiers were certainly misinformed about the British press."¹⁶

However, when Churchill made his savage attack on the press in the Greek debate, everybody present understood, though the Prime Minister named no names, that he had in mind above all else one newspaper and that the most famous in the land. The wildly

enthusiastic cheering from the Conservative backbenches that greeted the Prime Minister's sallies brought home for the first time to the editor and the chief proprietor of The Times, both of whom were present at the debate, the depth of hostility towards their newspaper felt within Britain's natural party of government. The Greek debate must therefore be seen in context if reactions are to be understood. For the debate offered to many members an opportunity for the release of antipathies all the more violent for long suppression. These had as much to do with the general wartime policy line pursued by The Times with regard to the creation of a postwar domestic and international order as they had to do with immediate concerns in Greece.

During the war years, the newspaper had advanced to its readers a policy mix which in domestic terms had found inspiration in the ideas of Keynes and the proposals of Beveridge and in terms of foreign policy had found inspiration in the achievements of Metternich and of Castlereagh. For varying reasons, not all of its readers had responded with enthusiasm to such an agenda. It is, however, the newspaper's line on international relations which, in the limited context of this study, is of most interest, though from time to time there was some degree of overlap between The Times foreign policy realism and its domestic reformism. As we have seen, from the earliest days of the war, The Times had argued that in any new peace settlement there could be no question of a return to the status quo ante; that the Versailles settlement had collapsed not, as some had maintained, because its basically sound principles had been partially implemented and defectively practised, but because that settlement had been inherently flawed. Therefore to attempt again to build a lasting European settlement purely on the basis of national self-determination and representative democracy would be to fly in the face of experience. In place therefore of the Treaty of Versailles as a model for the new settlement Printing House Square had offered the model of the Treaty of Vienna which had bequeathed Europe a century of, if not perfect peace, at least limited, short and localised wars, which had left the great mass of the continent's peoples at any one time largely undisturbed. Such a settlement if adopted anew would have to rest upon a directorate of the great powers who would jointly carry responsibility for the management of international affairs. Each great power could only be expected to cooperate in such a scheme if it felt confident of its own regional security. To achieve such conditions of confidence it would be necessary for each great power to be accorded a sphere of influence clearly demarcated in the regions most sensitive to its security needs from which its fellow great powers would voluntarily exclude themselves, whatever the anxieties of any lesser powers whose territory might fall within one or other of these spheres. For it seemed manifestly clear to The Times that the future peace of the world could not be made conditional upon

the irresponsible whims of every minor power. To be credible a reconstructed Concert of the great powers could not be premised upon the enthusiastic or entirely voluntary participation of the minor states of any given region judged vital to the security needs of one or other of the great powers.

The Times was quite explicit as to the geographical location of these areas of special security sensitivity. Intervention in the Western hemisphere by any European power had long been regarded by American statesmen as constituting an unfriendly act towards the United States. Britain claimed for herself a special position in Western Europe and in the Middle East. What Western statesmen had in the past been reluctant to acknowledge, however, and what The Times had assumed the wartime burden of educating Western opinion to accept, was the fact that Russia could only fairly be expected to play a stabilizing role in any postwar international system if she were treated as an equal and therefore freely accorded predominance in Eastern Europe where her own security needs were at their most sensitive.

This is the context in which political reaction to The Times position on Greece must be seen. The Polish ambassador was not alone in contrasting the leaders on Greece with those appearing more or less simultaneously on Poland or in noting the highly selective nature of The Times enthusiasms.¹⁷ The newspaper which was prepared to trust Stalin over Poland and to exhort the rest of the world to do likewise was not apparently prepared to trust Churchill over Greece. The newspaper which was always prepared to put the most charitable interpretation on unilateral Soviet moves in Poland and Eastern Europe, by employing all mitigating arguments to hand, was an altogether more sceptical and exacting critic of British policy in Greece and the Middle East. Had The Times taken a consistently libertarian line over liberated Europe, its stand over Greece would have angered its critics less. There could, after all, be honest differences of view as to the democratic character and popular legitimacy of E.A.M. and E.L.A.S., but in the eyes of its critics, it was altogether shameless of The Times to pose as the champion of popular liberties in emancipated Europe, when its whole line on international relations throughout the war years had served to reinforce its reputation, in the indelible phrase of William Hazlitt, for being "ever strong upon the stronger side." The contrast between the newspaper's line on Greece and its line on Poland was painfully obvious to all but the most superficial readers. Conversely, had The Times taken the same line over Greece as it had done over Poland, that is, been consistent in its doctrine of realpolitik, it would have accorded Churchill that same free hand in Britain's natural sphere of influence, i.e., the Middle East including Greece, that Printing House Square was manifestly prepared to

concede Stalin in Eastern Europe, Russia's natural sphere. Therefore what struck the attentive foreign policy public about The Times stance over Greece was its internal inconsistency.

The official documentary record shows clearly that the course taken by events in Greece did not take the British government by surprise. Ambassador Leeper had long advised the Foreign Office that E.L.A.S.'s plans for a military coup awaited only propitious circumstances. In a minute to Eden of 11 November, the full text of which he would subsequently include in his war memoirs, Churchill wrote of his own expectations:

"In my opinion having paid the price we have to Russia for freedom of action in Greece we should not hesitate to use British troops to support the Royal Hellenic Government under Mr Papandreou I fully expect a clash with E.A.M. and we must not shrink from it provided the ground is well chosen."¹⁸

What the official records show equally clearly is that the strength of the political, the press and of popular reaction to the military response by Britain to the putative attempted coup in Athens was entirely unanticipated and that, accordingly no contingency plans were laid.

Even before the shock of the disastrous morning newspaper coverage of the bloody events in Athens on 3 December, Churchill and Eden were thoroughly alarmed by the treatment of these same events on the day of their happening by the B.B.C.'s nine o'clock news broadcast and the Prime Minister instructed his staff to pass on to the Corporation immediately his dissatisfaction with its performance.¹⁹ The gravamen of the Prime Minister's complaint was that an armed insurrection against the legally constituted government had been treated as simply a clash between royalist and republican factions, in which both were of equal standing, and for which each side was equally culpable. To this kind of complaint the B.B.C. could only respond that it had to place confidence in its correspondent on the spot and that his reports were perfectly consistent with those being sent by his press colleagues. Subsequently the Corporation would be able to point out that in its coverage of British reaction to events in Greece it had cited several newspapers, as was customary, but had refrained from quoting The Times correspondent on the grounds that some of the facts included in his initial report were at first uncorroborated elsewhere in the press.

Throughout the crisis in Greece, the cabinet was to maintain an impressive public solidarity, but privately there were some doubts. On 5 December, Attlee wrote to Eden to suggest that it was improbable that all the war correspondents, who after all were

eye-witnesses, could be wrong, as Leeper would have it, and expressed serious reservations about the ambassador's judgement, impartiality and personal competence to understand the political left in Greece.²⁰ Meanwhile, alarmed by Stettinius' statement of the previous day, Churchill on 6 December appealed directly to the President, in injured tones, in an attempt to repair the unity of the Alliance. Replying on 13 December, Roosevelt offered the Prime Minister every comfort except the one most needed, viz. an unequivocal public statement of American support for British policy in Greece, pleading that he was inhibited from so doing by the limitations imposed on him by the traditions of American foreign policy and, significantly, "by the mounting adverse reaction of public opinion in this country."²¹ Before receiving this wounding rebuff, Churchill, on 7 December, had reviewed the history of British wartime policy on Greece before the cabinet, taking particular pains to rebut the two most damaging charges of his critics - namely that British policy in Greece was unilateral in inspiration and that it was anti-democratic in character.²² On 8 December, the Prime Minister defended British policy in liberated Europe before the House of Commons with parliamentary results already indicated. Press reaction to this speech was unfavourable, as much, as the "News Chronicle" suggested, for its bellicosity of tone and for its injudicious vocabulary as for its substantive content.²³ How could E.L.A.S. be at one and the same time the obedient military tool of a subtle communist conspiracy and an undisciplined band of brigands and criminals using political cover to pursue private ends, as the Prime Minister had suggested? The following day, Churchill asked Scobie whether he was experiencing any political difficulties with the troops under his command. Replying that same day in the negative, Scobie indicated that E.L.A.S.'s excesses were alienating even those amongst his troops of known left-wing views. Moreover, he had issued secret instructions to his military commanders to explain to their men the true facts about the role of the British army in Greece.²⁴ On 13 December, British policy in Greece was defended before the Annual Conference of the Labour Party, fixed by a malign providence to meet that year at the height of the Greek crisis, by the Minister of Labour in a speech the latter's biographer would later judge to be one of the most courageous of Ernest Bevin's career.²⁵ On the same day that Bevin was shoring up one front there was further slippage on another. New embarrassments were heaped upon the government's head when Drew Pearson revealed in the American press the substance of Churchill's secret telegram of 5 December in which the Prime Minister had instructed General Scobie to treat Athens if necessary "like a conquered city". This leak was subsequently traced to the American embassy in Rome, but the damage to American opinion had already been done and it was little comfort for the Prime Minister to learn later of Roosevelt's characterisation of Pearson as his country's "champion liar".

At home, several ministers were alarmed by what they believed to be the undue prominence given by the B.B.C. news bulletins to the speeches critical of official policy made at the Trafalgar Square "Hands Off Greece" demonstration on 17 December and these were duly discussed in cabinet.²⁶ Quite early in the crisis, angered in particular by the newspaper's leaders on Greece, Churchill had drafted a letter to *The Times*, complete with offensive references to Munich, which he had been dissuaded from sending on the intervention of Bracken and Beaverbrook. Later, in a modified approach, he telephoned Barrington-Ward ostensibly on a different matter, switched the conversation to Greece, and suggested a personal meeting, a proposal that came to nothing, in part because of the editor's previous commitments and in part because of Churchill's own imminent departure for Athens, a secret undisclosed, of course, to the editor.²⁷ Meanwhile, Harold Macmillan took the opportunity of a lunch he had been invited to attend at Printing House Square on 7 December to reprove Barrington-Ward for the unhelpful line *The Times* was taking on Greece, before his own hurried return to that country at Churchill's express wish.²⁸ On their return from Athens, Churchill and Eden were to distribute to their war cabinet colleagues the routine summary of troop correspondence home for the week ending 16 December, prepared by the chief military censor, a copy of which had been passed on to them by Alexander in Rome.²⁹ This demonstrated very clearly the low opinion entertained by ordinary servicemen, of E.L.A.S., their anger at the press treatment of the British army's role in Greece and the general support through all ranks for Churchill's policy in Greece - support that was all the more telling in the case of those many servicemen who were careful to dissociate themselves from other aspects of the Prime Minister's policies. In addition, Churchill gave instructions that he was to be provided with a copy of the weekly report of the military censorship with special reference to Greece until further notice.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary also brought back from their Greek visit complaints originating from the military authorities via the embassy about the performance of Reuters, in including in the news material it provided on home affairs for troops serving in the field quotations from the "Spotlight" column in the "News Chronicle" written by A.J. Cummings, one of the government's harshest critics over Greece. Hard things were said about Reuters around the cabinet table, the question of its government subsidy was raised and a cabinet committee under the Minister of Labour was appointed to investigate the whole affair. In the meantime, Chancellor, the head of Reuters, volunteered not to quote over the agency's services anything dealing with foreign affairs.³⁰ In the event, when Ernest Bevin's committee finally reported on 21 January, it entirely exonerated Reuters from all guilt in the matter. The offending material, the inquiry revealed, had not in

fact been distributed to the troops, nor had it been transmitted over the special forces news service that the agency provided for the military at official request and for which they accepted a small government subsidy. Originally transmitted over the ordinary overseas service of the agency, the material had first been monitored by the appropriate arm of the Political Warfare Executive and passed on by them in routine fashion through the proper military channels. At this stage, it had fallen victim to the administrative slackness not uncommon in the fog of war and had been approved, improperly, as material suitable for broadcasting to the fighting troops in Greece, though in fact it had not been transmitted. If anyone were to blame, it was the military themselves, and not Reuters, for tripping over their own feet, and the committee concluded its findings with a homily about the need for administrative efficiency in wartime.³¹

The same cabinet committee also registered Scobie's complaint that the accredited war correspondent of the Daily Herald, Salusbury, had received a signal from his editor, Cudlipp, asking whether special propaganda methods were being directed towards the troops to make them write home those letters so critical of E.L.A.S., some of which by this time were already appearing or being quoted in the British press.

However, concern about media coverage of developments in Greece was by no means limited exclusively to the side of the policy-makers, their advisors and their military servants. The critics of government policy also had their grievances. When Churchill received an official Labour Party deputation about Greece on 15 January 1945, Harold Laski, in his capacity as leader of the delegation, immediately expressed the concern felt upon the left at the kind of publicity appearing in the press about E.L.A.S., which seemed to be emanating from the Athens embassy. Giving some hint of the embarrassing disclosures he would make three days later in the Commons, Aneurin Bevan followed this up with an attack on the B.B.C. for inflaming British public opinion against E.A.M. by putting out tendentious, government-inspired propaganda against it. When Churchill responded in kind by launching into his attack on the gross irresponsibility of those most famous of British newspapers which persisted in slandering his government when it was grappling in Greece with a dangerous communist challenge from a "Trotskyite deviation to the left", Bevan countered by pointing out that the suspicion by some of these newspapers of their pro-government loyalties suggested all the more eloquently that their concern might be factually based. He further inquired of Churchill whether the British response would have been different if the Greek communists had been of the orthodox Stalinist variety. Clearly uncomfortable with both points, the Prime Minister failed to deal with either, treating his visitors instead to a disquisition on the intuitive, non-eclectic nature of his own

reasoning processes when important political issues required judgement. To the suggestion that a Labour Party fact-finding delegation might visit Greece, Churchill replied that the House was likely to insist that such a body be all-party in composition, but that in any case he was thinking of inviting a trade-union delegation to make such a visit.³² Indeed, this idea, originating with Greek trade unionists and passed on by Leeper, had already been put by the Prime Minister to Sir Walter Citrine on 12 January. Churchill had subsequently hesitated for fear of having unwittingly offended Ernest Bevin by failing to consult him first, but the ever-efficient Citrine had by that time pre-empted any prime ministerial afterthoughts by already having committed not only himself but others. In the event, the Minister of Labour showed no injured feelings.

Amongst his many other urgent concerns, Churchill was to follow the subsequent progress of the T.U.C. delegation in Greece with the greatest of interest and grew pleased that the idea of such a delegation had been put to him. On 26 January 1945 he drew the attention of the war cabinet to the press reports of the interviews conducted by Sir Walter with members of the British forces in Greece, during which the troops had impressed upon Citrine the strong exception that they took to the one-sided presentation of their role in Greece given in certain press quarters at home.³³ The war cabinet went on to approve the suggestion that arrangements be made for Sir Walter and perhaps other members of the delegation to broadcast upon their return home. Hearing the final report of the delegation whilst abroad in connection with the Yalta Conference. Churchill's first impulse on digesting its contents was to seek Citrine's permission to publish it as a parliamentary paper, but in the event wiser counsels of the Chief Whip and of Bracken prevailed, for not only would such action have created an awkward precedent, but it would also have detracted from the value of the document, much of which sprang precisely from its independent, unofficial character.³⁴

To move from cabinet to departmental level, the Foreign Office files on the Greek crisis demonstrate a marked tendency of the centre and periphery each to urge the other to greater efforts to retrieve the situation.³⁵ Leeper's relations with the press corps had deteriorated much earlier, in Cairo, particularly with the Americans.³⁶ Even an admirer of the ambassador's solid qualities of courage and decisiveness, like Richard Capell, was compelled to admit that the ambassador's character was nonetheless deficient in those shallower but necessary qualities in a twentieth century ambassador of friendliness and approachability which might have won the press corps over to his side. Capell took no exception to the low opinion Leeper had of the press, but thought him unwise not to conceal it particularly from the Americans. Ironically enough, Leeper had served in the

later thirties as head of the Foreign Office News Department at which time his relations with the press had been happy enough. Indeed at that time his difficulties had come from a quite different direction for Leeper's known personal distaste for the policy of appeasement had earned him the distrust of Neville Chamberlain, and contributed to the process whereby Chamberlain tended to by-pass the Foreign Office in his formulation of foreign policy. Leeper had at first declined the services of a press attache in Greece as superfluous, but after the true dimensions of the crisis became apparent, Osbert Lancaster was despatched in that capacity, arriving in Athens on 13 December. Two days later, in his first report home, which was to reach the Prime Minister's own desk, Lancaster was to strike most of the themes his later reports would repeat and amplify.³⁷ The first of these was to pass a negative judgement on the professional competence of the press corps as a whole. This was followed by a series of harsh but often amusing personal vignettes of the offending journalists, with the most withering fire reserved for the Americans. The friendly or open-minded correspondents, like Sedgwick of The New York Times and Salusbury of the Daily Herald, were then identified. Below all of this, an impersonal generic point is made, that workaday war correspondents were being required, perhaps unfairly, to interpret a complex fast-moving political situation which could only be fully understood in its wider diplomatic context.³⁸ Therefore, what above all was required to improve press coverage of developments in Greece was to secure as soon as possible the replacement of war correspondents by diplomatic correspondents. In the meantime, Lancaster had secured military permission for the accreditation of one such correspondent and suggested how this might be most profitably used.

Reporting home the following month, Lancaster had by this time some sensitive information to pass on about The Times correspondent.³⁹ Geoffrey Hoare's general ill-health was compounding the difficulties consequent upon his natural disability - deafness - and had necessitated hospital treatment, for which reasons the correspondent had practically ceased attending the daily embassy press conferences. In these circumstances of increasing personal isolation, Hoare was becoming ever more dependent for the raw material upon which dispatches were based on the assistance of his friend Clare Hollingworth, the correspondent of the Kemsley press, a fact of which The Times appeared ignorant, but in which presumably it would be most interested if, as Lancaster suggested, the information was discreetly passed to it via the newspaper's diplomatic correspondent, Iverach McDonald. This would be doubly so if, as Lancaster suspected, much of what was sent to Printing House Square above Hoare's signature was in fact written by Clare Hollingworth. Lancaster's suspicions in this matter were not without foundation. Although she arrived back from a visit to Cairo only on the evening of 3

December and therefore missed the dramatic events in Constitution Square, Clare Hollingworth subsequently not only did much of the necessary "leg-work" for The Times correspondent that Geoffrey Hoare's condition rendered it impossible for him to perform himself, but also helped him in a more general way in the writing of his reports, a fact of which the newspaper was not informed directly at the time.⁴⁰ The Times after all was well-known in Fleet Street for the jealousy and exclusiveness of its relationship with its staff correspondents. For his part Harold MacMillan upon his return to Greece had taken an even blacker view of The Times correspondent describing him as a "disgracefully incompetent and foolish fellow".⁴¹ Lancaster's efforts were well appreciated in the Foreign Office, the report sent on 21 December for example, earning a marginal comment from Eden as Foreign Secretary, on its "wise and far-seeing" character, together with instructions that the Foreign Secretary's personal appreciation of Lancaster's efforts be communicated directly to the press attache by the News Department.⁴²

The response of the Foreign Office to the reports coming from the embassy was mixed. Thus, by no means all of the more harsh personal judgements on individual correspondents were supported. In Whitehall, there was more of a tendency to account for the admitted weaknesses of the news coverage from Greece in terms of the innate complexity of a Byzantine political situation facing correspondents trained to report military operations, rather than to explain those shortcomings in terms of professional incompetence or political malice. For this reason, Lancaster's point about replacing war correspondents with civilian correspondents as soon as the military situation itself permitted was strongly supported there, as it was also within the Ministry of Information, though it was recognised that this would again raise the constant minor wartime irritation of the status in this matter of the Daily Worker. This newspaper had been repeatedly denied war correspondent accreditation on security grounds, after consideration at cabinet level after its freedom to publish had itself been restored following Russia's entry into the war. However, if circumstances were to change in Greece it could hardly be denied civilian standing. In fact the passage of time would largely solve this problem as it became increasingly obvious that Pravda itself was not inclined to make British conduct in Greece an issue of dispute between the Allies. On the whole, therefore, the embassy grew to welcome the prospect of eventual Daily Worker representation in Greece. For whatever might be said about American conduct over Greece, Russian conduct, as Lancaster duly noted, had been wholly correct. William Ridsdale, head of the Foreign Office News Department, favoured encouraging the News Chronicle to send out to Greece the paper's diplomatic correspondent, Vernon Bartlett, who, though one of the members who had voted against the government in the division of 8 December, was nonetheless able and open-minded.⁴³ In the event, it was found that

Bartlett was too ill to go anywhere and so the newspaper was encouraged to send out its own editor instead, with results that from a Foreign Office perspective could only be judged as disappointing, as already indicated.

As for The Times, over Greece as over so many other wartime issues, the Foreign Office was chary of too direct an approach at too formal a level, feeling that any clumsiness might prove counter-productive, preferring always to channel any intercourse with the newspaper through the diplomatic correspondent, Iverach McDonald, whilst recognising at the same time that the latter did not carry the same weight in Printing House Square as did Carr or Barrington-Ward himself. When it was learnt that The Times had independently decided to strengthen its coverage of the Balkans, including Greece, by sending out a senior staff writer, Christopher Lumby, to prepare a series of "turnover" articles, this was met with general satisfaction within the Foreign Office.

This more measured approach to the crisis by Whitehall explains the relative scepticism and coolness with which the Foreign Office met some of the more intemperate outbursts emanating from the Athens embassy against the press. Thus Harold MacMillan, the Minister Resident, angered by what he regarded as a particularly irresponsible Times leader of 28 December on Greece, protested:

"I do not like to see The Times once again completely misrepresenting the facts. It seems where Greece is concerned prejudice colours all that appears on the leader page. We are making a gallant effort to banish from Greece 'Trotskyite deviation to the left'. But it grows like a rank weed in Printing House Square."⁴⁴

In contrast to the men on the spot, the Foreign Office in London was altogether more inclined to put down these admitted lapses on the part of the newspaper to honest ignorance, a condition offering prospects of correction through sensitive guidance, than to attribute them to anything more sinister.

Moving from The Times to the Daily Herald, the Foreign Office was fully seized of the vulnerability of Salusbury's position with his newspaper and the soundness of the reasons why the embassy, whilst it would have been happy to see most of the other correspondents replaced, was anxious to see this particular correspondent kept in place, and indeed see his position with his editor strengthened. However, it was also recognised, such were the sensitivities of Fleet Street, that any Foreign Office initiative would be bound to leak out and would then serve as the kiss of death for the

correspondent. Therefore, the News Department could exercise only a watching brief on his behalf. Nonetheless, events themselves were to work in the correspondent's favour, when it was learnt with considerable gratification within the Foreign Office that upon his return from Athens, Citrine had put in an unsolicited work in praise of Salusbury's work in the right quarters. Despite the whispering campaign against the journalist orchestrated by the Daily Worker and centring on Salusbury's allegedly improper links with the royalist Athens press, the correspondent was to remain in Greece to official satisfaction throughout 1945 and into 1946, though never ceasing to complain at how little of his copy actually appeared in his newspaper, a complaint that may in part be discounted as an occupational grouse of journalists. For although the Daily Herald certainly caused offence in official circles by some aspects of its coverage of the Greek crisis, it was also capable of making handsome amends on occasion. Thus it published in full, in response to that editorial query which had so upset the embassy and the military authorities, Salusbury's personal repudiation of the rumour circulating in Fleet Street that those letters from troops expressing anger at the conduct of the press over Greece had been officially inspired and added the correspondent's testimony that on numerous occasions he had been spontaneously approached by ordinary servicemen, in the absence of any officers, wishing to express verbally the same sentiments.⁴⁵

Although the major pre-occupation of the Athens embassy was always with the press treatment of Greek affairs, concern was also expressed at the general performance of the B.B.C. over Greece, more from its London end than from within Athens itself, for of its two local correspondents, John Nixon had impressed Lancaster on first introduction and Kenneth Matthew was highly regarded in all official quarters. Nonetheless, the embassy was seriously alarmed by the treatment given in particular to the Commons debate of 8 December by the Greek Service of the B.B.C. which, deliberately or not, had contrived to suggest that whilst the Prime Minister had won the division he had lost the argument. Indeed such was Churchill's anger when he learned of this gloss on his performance that Bruce Lockhart, the Director General of the Political Warfare Executive, the body directly concerned with the proper presentation of British policy in Europe, was summoned to appear immediately that same evening before the cabinet. Once there Bruce Lockhart's attempts to defend the B.B.C. by putting the matter in perspective, and by promising an investigation, were swept aside by an angry Prime Minister who denounced the Corporation as "a nest of communists" deliberately seeking to undermine him.⁴⁶

When the complaint was investigated in London, it was concluded that the impression that Churchill had lost the argument in the Commons had indeed unfortunately been

conveyed to Greek listeners of the B.B.C., but that this had happened as the result of the inexperience of a non-established programme editor and the sheer rush of events, rather than because of anything more sinister. In particular, the injudicious insertion into the programme's end of an uplifting inscript, written for use in all appropriate situations under a standing directive to the B.B.C. from the Political Warfare Executive, had backfired. Calculated to demonstrate to a benighted occupied Europe that even amidst the clash of arms the British executive remained at all times accountable to the normal democratic procedures of this country, the use of this inscript, in epilogue to the coverage of the stormy Greek debate, had the effect of suggesting that a parliament that had supported the government on general grounds, rather than on the merits of a particular policy, would yet have to answer for its conduct at the war's end before a sovereign electorate with which it had largely lost touch.⁴⁷ Six weeks later, both the embassy and the Foreign Office were to share with the Corporation the general governmental embarrassment at the revelation by Anuerin Bevan in the Commons debate of 18 January of the existence of the Political Warfare Executive directive to the B.B.C. of April 1944, instructing the authority to deny any further credit to E.L.A.S. for continuing operations against the German forces in Greece. This revelation was doubly embarrassing in that the directive had unwisely been sent out in the Prime Minister's own name, thus further contributing, when revealed, to the general popular impression that Churchill was conducting something in the nature of a personal vendetta in Greece. However, as the source of this leak to Bevan, consistently the best informed of the "unofficial opposition" to the wartime condition, was never traced, no particular blame could devolve upon the B.B.C. In fact, the P.W.E. directive had its origins in a recommendation of Leeper's. The ambassador had become convinced from an early stage that, whatever the merits in general propaganda terms of the British policy of exaggerating and romanticising the role of the European resistance movements, in the specific Greek context the British government was preparing a rod for its own back. Gratuitously to allow E.L.A.S. to amass a stock of credit with British public opinion upon which to draw to the embarrassment of H.M.G. when it made that bid for power which it had always intended was, in the ambassador's opinion, the highest folly.

Yet, though the broadcasters might on occasion irritate the policy-makers and their advisors over Greece, one needs to differentiate their role from that of the press itself, for clearly the politicians did so both at the time and later. Whatever frustrations the politicians might feel over the B.B.C.'s handling of events in Greece, or more specifically, over its handling of the impact of these events on British public opinion, there was to be no great public ministerial attack on the Corporation equivalent to

Churchill's great broadside against the press. More significantly, the memoir material shows the same pattern. Churchill, for example, might fulminate in private at the time, as we have seen, at the B.B.C. as a "nest of communists" but not an unkind word passed his lips in public about the Corporation. In his war memoirs written some years later he would again openly display his grudge against Fleet Street for its conduct over Greece but no word of criticism of the B.B.C. would come from his pen. Harold Macmillan's memoirs furnish another example.⁴⁸ Despite his concern with the B.B.C.'s performance at the time, writing a generation later, the broadcasters are largely forgiven and forgotten in the mellowness that comes even to politicians in retirement. A similar charity is not shown towards the press. Its role continues to rankle. Giving a dishonourable mention to three newspapers over Greece - the News Chronicle (misnamed the Daily Chronicle in a slip into an earlier age), The Manchester Guardian and The Times - the author has by now abandoned his contemporary detection of a flourishing Trotskyite cell in Printing House Square in explanation of Fleet Street's conduct over Greece. However, this is not replaced by the free acceptance, outside the heat of the immediate controversy, that honest men might in good faith sometimes disagree in their reading of a complex political situation, but by a second charge that there were forces at work within Fleet Street and outside it, which had never reconciled themselves to Churchill's premiership and which saw in the Greek crisis an issue that might so shake his authority that he could subsequently be removed, so that the regime of mediocrity might be restored to shape the coming peace.

No comparable charges of sinister purpose were made against the B.B.C. in later years. A number of reasons can be suggested for this. In the first place, the broadcasters had quite simply caused less offence. Secondly, the politicians regarded the Corporation and its employees as, in normal circumstances, much more balanced and reticent in judging contentious political issues and much more amenable to official guidance or, on occasion official direction than was the press. Indeed, in a sense, the history of the controversial "E.L.A.S." directive had demonstrated this. Thirdly, despite this last point, all parties agreed that the B.B.C. had come to enjoy an immense war-time international prestige for its integrity and independence, which had in itself become an important national resource available for discreet government exploitation in the future. Clumsy interference with the Corporation's existing freedoms or public ministerial rebukes over Greece could only serve fruitlessly to jeopardise this invaluable national asset. When the cabinet showed an undue interest in the conduct of the B.B.C. over Greece, these were the arguments Bracken was able to deploy skillfully in its defence, as he had so often done before over other issues.

The position of Fleet Street, even its self-image, was quite different. It had an altogether more chequered past and an altogether more ambiguous position in the nation's life. The conventional wisdom instructed the wise man not to believe all that he read in the newspapers, whilst as yet no similar maxim relative to the wireless had been coined or popularised. Indeed, not only did Fleet Street lack a protective myth similar to that which surrounded the B.B.C., but it also fell victim to a curious counter-belief that extended beyond the politicians to the general public, viz. that any attack by authority on the press was a demonstration of English liberties, not a repudiation of them.

As has been previously indicated, the policy-makers and their advisors were as much concerned about the impact of the press storm over Greece on international opinion, which effectively meant that opinion within Britain's two great allies, as they were with its effect on domestic opinion and it is to this that we must now turn our attention.

On 6 December, Eden instructed Clark Kerr to keep Molotov fully briefed about British policy in Greece as events unfolded, and this the ambassador duly did. However, from the beginning of the crisis, the press attache at the Moscow embassy, engaged in his daily work of monitoring the Soviet press, reported to his superiors clear evidence of Soviet restraint.⁴⁹ Whilst volunteering no direct editorial comment themselves on events in Greece, the Soviet newspapers, by including a full coverage of British press opposition to Churchill's policy, contrived to indicate where official sympathies lay, whilst avoiding direct offence to an ally. This pattern of reticence, once set, would persist for three months. On his return from Yalta, the Prime Minister would tell his cabinet that Russia had shown the most scrupulous regard for the British position in Greece, that not a shadow of criticism of this country's conduct there had appeared in the Soviet press, and that this correctness of behaviour confirmed the Prime Minister in his prior view that once the Russians made an agreement their natural inclination was to keep to it.⁵⁰ Yet by the end of this same month, this happy position was breaking up under new strains. In noting the rapidly changing Soviet attitude towards Greece Clark Kerr would report back to the Foreign Office his belief that, "This abandonment by the Soviet press of previous ostentatiously neutral attitude about Greece is doubtless connected with line we are taking over Rumania which Soviet Govt. regards as having been given them in exchange for Greece." (Clark Kerr had been one of the few eye-witnesses of the celebrated "Balkan percentages" meeting at Moscow the previous October.)⁵¹ In marginal notes on this dispatch of 7 March 1945 from the Moscow embassy, Churchill would indicate his substantial concurrence with the ambassador's reasoning whilst Eden found the neat

causal connection suggested too pat. Whatever the explanation, from this time onwards a new note was to be struck in the Soviet press towards British intervention in Greece which would set the tone for the future, and that was not to be forgotten by either side. Writing at the height of the Cold War, Churchill, in his memoirs would pay handsome tribute to Stalin's conduct over Greece and would, without apparent irony, contrast the irresponsibility demonstrated by Fleet Street in the Greek affair with the decent reticence shown by Pravda and Isvestia. And Stalin himself was not above explicitly reminding the western leaders of the debt of gratitude they owed him over Greece, which they were too shameless to acknowledge, when he invited them to demonstrate a similar sympathetic reticence when the vital interests of the Soviet Union were at stake. Needled by western criticism of unilateral Soviet moves in Poland, the Russian leader, writing to Churchill and Roosevelt on 25 April 1945, reminded the western leaders of Soviet restraint in the settlement in the settlement of Greece and of western Europe and protested, "Poland is to the security of the Soviet Union what Belgium and Greece are to the security of Great Britain....I cannot understand why in discussing Poland no attempt is made to consider the interests of the Soviet Union in terms of security as well."⁵²

In contrast to the Soviet press, the attitude of the American press during the first three months of British involvement in Greece was much more consistently hostile. Whatever their difficulties with the British correspondent Leeper, Lancaster and Macmillan found their American cousins even more intractable. According to Lancaster, the reasons for this were various. Several of the correspondents were themselves of central European extraction, which meant that they knew too much about Balkan politics or too little. Whatever the case, all were sufficiently American in identity to have absorbed that suspicious and vigilant attitude towards the supposed dangers of a restlessly expansionist British imperialism which itself formed part of popular American demonology. As some of these same correspondents doubled as representatives of English newspapers, their attitudes were particularly unfortunate. It was difficult to counter such atavistic reflexes with reasoned argument and guidance.

Whatever the cause, the effect was clear enough. The Washington embassy reported home that British action in Greece had received a truly appalling press. However, amidst the general gloom, one newspaper provided a comforting exception, particularly in view of its reputation, and that was The New York Times, in the judgement of many well informed observers the single most influential newspaper in the United States. From the start, its Athens correspondent, Sedgwick, who had a deep historical knowledge of Greek politics, a Greek wife, and who spoke the language (unlike most of the

correspondents), had taken a radically different view of the British role in Greece from that adopted by most of his compatriots. The embassy noted with gratification that the influence of The New York Times far exceeded its circulation. It was read by the entire political and bureaucratic establishment, its columns were widely syndicated in the regional and local press, and it was automatic reading for those hundreds of radio political commentators from whom the ordinary American citizen was most likely to absorb such foreign affairs information as he was inclined to digest. The embassy would also note that these factors were fully appreciated by the other side too, when Sedgwick further distinguished himself by ostentatiously dissociating his name from the protest sent to the State Department above the signatures of all the other American pressmen when Scobie refused to sanction press contacts with E.L.A.S. whilst fighting continued in Athens. On 25 January, the American press recorded a noisy demonstration of Greek-American sympathisers of E.L.A.S. outside the Greek embassy in Washington, demanding that the ambassador require of the American authorities the recall of this "provocateur-reporter" who was so much out of step with his fellows.⁵³

The conduct of The New York Times (which stood by its reporter) over Greece served to enhance its already high standing in British official circles in other ways too. The attitudes towards the more intractable problems of international affairs expressed in its leader columns had a maturity that contrasted markedly with the regrettable tendency of so much of the rest of the American press to treat such issues as occasions for moralising rather than opportunities for serious political analysis and debate - though even the New York newspaper was not entirely free of this national trait. This more adult attitude towards foreign affairs went hand in hand with a greater sensitivity to the wider diplomatic implications of events in Greece. As early as 9 December 1944, its London correspondent, in a column headed "Spheres of Influence again Operate in Europe", besides touching upon an old American obsession, fastened upon the wider significance of the eloquent silence maintained by the Soviet Union in the face of British action in Greece. Raymond Daniel then proceeded to explain this by suggesting, "The answer is that there was a deal. It is not clear where the line of demarcation runs but it is probable that it lies somewhere from the Baltic states southwards along the Curzon Line through Poland to the Aegean",⁵⁴ and returned to this same intriguing theme of Soviet reticence over Greece a few weeks later to suggest that Churchill and Stalin had defined their two countries mutual spheres of influence when they had met previously during the Teheran Conference.⁵⁵

American reactions towards British policy in Greece at all levels placed British policy-makers in serious difficulties. From the British perspective American policy lacked both consistency and coordination. A year before the events of December 1944, British policy on Greece had temporarily reversed itself. Intelligence received at that juncture had made it clear that the German army was making contingency plans for an ordered withdrawal from Greece in the face of the Soviet advance, and that the enemy was not therefore committed to making a stand on Greece, as had been previously thought. Consequently, there would be no necessity to send in a major Allied army to dislodge them. It therefore followed that Britain would lack the immediate troop strength to be able confidently to enforce its political will in Greece initially in all particulars. In these changed circumstances, acting with full cabinet approval, Churchill and Eden had pressed the King of Greece to forego an immediate return and to content himself with a regency until a plebiscite could be held. On this occasion Roosevelt had proved himself more of a royalist than Churchill, counselling the king to resist this improper British pressure despite the fact that the State Department, gratified by this movement in the British position, was simultaneously advising the Greek government through official ambassadorial channels to bow to the British request. Indeed, a major factor in causing the British policy-makers subsequently to return to their original unbending position on the monarchy was precisely their reading of what they understood to be the President's mind on the issue. Therefore, the crisis in Anglo-American relations over Greece in December 1944 was replete with irony.⁵⁶

A further cause of irritation to the British was the tone of much American critical comment upon operations in Greece. The Greek affair released many of those residual American attitudes, temporarily buried under the camaraderie of war, which were a part of the popular culture and of the national character. The reawakening of that tendency to preach to others impossible standards of international conduct in a fallen world, whilst refusing to accept concrete security commitments which might bind the United States to defend the right, served only to multiply difficulties for those of America's friends, who, like the United Kingdom, enjoyed a less privileged geographical, strategic and economic position than the United States and who perforce had therefore to look to more material safeguards of their future security than those provided by the international community's sense of natural justice. Many in British official circles shared the view sometimes expressed openly in the British press, as we have seen, that American innocence sprang less from a knowledge of the impeccable historical conduct of the United States - a proposition that would not itself survive serious historical scrutiny - than from a deficiency in those qualities of self-critical awareness in the national character with which

the British themselves had been only too amply endowed. Compounding this was the fact that America enjoyed what in some respects might be termed a retarded political culture which allowed her citizens to continue to believe that monarchism versus republicanism was a serious twentieth century international political issue, and which, conversely, allowed that same citizenry seemingly to remain happily indifferent to those ideological, economic and social issues upon which mankind was so deeply divided elsewhere. It was this same antique political belief system which allowed Roosevelt to damn the domestic opponents of the New Deal as "economic royalists". Fidelity to such obsolete political categories might be harmless at home but abroad was causing American opinion to misread the real nature of the struggle in Greece. In such a context, even the Greek king's name - George - was unfortunate.

In these circumstances, the Foreign Office at home and the embassies in Athens and Washington recognised that any heavy-handed attempt to influence the American press was likely to boomerang, so pervasive were atavistic American suspicions of British imperialism and so sensitive were American pressmen to the supposedly seductive ways of British diplomacy. Nonetheless, in Athens, Harold Macmillan and Osbert Lancaster made an earnest effort to win over the less implacable American journalists, but only with the most limited success. Looking back from retirement on these efforts a generation later, Macmillan would concede that it would require a further three years of harsh experience as an active great power to cause the Americans to ignore ancestral voices and seen in international communism rather than in British imperialism the real threat to the freedom and independence of Greece. In Washington itself the embassy worked hard to correct the grosser press distortions of the British position in Greece. Halifax himself seized upon the first convenient opportunity to take Stettinus aside to impress upon the Secretary of State the gravity of the problems raised for America's allies by the tendency of that country's representatives to indulge in irresponsible moralising at the expense of those same allies, only to be met by a protest from a wounded Secretary at the injustice of a situation in which he, the architect of Lend-Lease, was being widely portrayed as an Anglophobe, merely for faithfully executing without change that established foreign policy whose chief custodian he had so recently become.⁵⁷ Stettinus was particularly offended that Churchill should have appealed over his head directly to the President to repudiate his own Secretary of State. In fact, a report based upon public opinion surveys entitled "American opinion on recent European developments", dated 30 December 1944 and made available to the President by the State Department, indicated that of that one third of the American public which was dissatisfied with the extent of Big Thee

cooperation, 54 per cent blamed Britain for this state of affairs whilst only 18 per cent blamed Russia.⁵⁸

Reference having been made to the international implications of the press reaction to British intervention in Greece, it is now time to consider the domestic impact within Britain of that press hostility, beyond those ministerial and official circles to which reference has already been made. We do have some useful pointers which help us to gauge the degree of both excitement and confusion over Greece in the public mind. Many of the newspapers themselves reported exceptionally heavy correspondence on the issue and a few attempted some analysis of this response. Thus A.J. Cummings would record that only once in his long journalistic career could he recall receipt of a larger mail on a single issue, and he would further note that his mail was overwhelmingly supportive of the line adopted by the News Chronicle over Greece.⁵⁹ The passionate correspondence received by The Times would divide roughly into two fifths who endorsed the editorial line of the newspaper and three fifths who opposed it.⁶⁰ Beyond the newspapers themselves, there were the infant opinion polls. Though these were patchy, especially when compared to the kind of detail already becoming available in the United States, they do afford us nonetheless some entry into the public mind, as can be seen below.⁶¹

October 1944

In general, do you approve or disapprove of Mr Churchill as Prime Minister?

Approve - 91% Disapprove - 7% No Opinion - 2%

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the government's conduct of the war?

Satisfied - 81% Dissatisfied - 12% No Opinion - 7%

January 1945

In general, do you approve or disapprove of Mr Churchill as Prime Minister?

Approve - 81% Disapprove - 16% No Opinion - 3%

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the government's conduct of the war?

Satisfied - 72% Dissatisfied - 20% No Opinion - 8%

January 1945 (cont)

Do you approve or disapprove of Mr Churchill's attitude on the Greek question?

Approve - 43% Disapprove - 38% No Opinion - 19%

In general, from what you have heard and read do you approve or disapprove of British policy towards the resistance movements in countries which have been liberated?

Approve - 41% Disapprove - 31% No Opinion - 28%

February 1945

In general, do you approve or disapprove of Mr Churchill as Prime Minister?

Approve - 85% Disapprove - 11% No Opinion - 4%

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the government's conduct of the war?

Satisfied - 77% Dissatisfied - 14% No Opinion - 9%

Do you approve or disapprove of Mr Churchill attitude on the Greek question?

Approve - 46% Disapprove - 28% No Opinion - 26%

March 1945

In general do you approve or disapprove of Mr Churchill as Prime Minister?

Approve - 87% Disapprove - 10% No Opinion - 3%

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the government's conduct of the war?

Satisfied - 83% Dissatisfied - 12% No Opinion - 5%

These figures suggest a number of tentative conclusions. When the Greek crisis was at its height, the Prime Minister's personal popularity at all times remained impressively high. During the crisis it eased perceptibly but not significantly and was at no time out of line with similar slight fluctuations at equally troubled times during the war years. Secondly, the Prime Minister's personal popularity remained ahead of the public confidence that the government itself commanded for the collective conduct of the war, even though both pollster and public associated official British policy in Greece in a very personal way with prime ministerial leadership. Thirdly, the figures suggest that popular opinion remained deeply divided on the specific issue of Greece throughout the crisis and

in disarray over the general question of official British policy towards the European resistance movements. Finally, they suggest that the public distinguished clearly between their general confidence in Churchill as a war leader and their particular reservations regarding a specific policy with which his name was linked.

The student who monitors the treatment of Greece in the British press between December 1944 and March 1945 can detect a clear movement back towards support for official British policy on the part of substantial parts of the press, though this movement was in no sense universal. Several factors can equally clearly be discerned as contributing towards this cumulative process. The first of these was the reception given by the press to Ernest Bevin's speech of 13 December before the Annual Conference of the Labour Party, which coincided by chance with the crisis over Greece. The uncompromising nature of this speech, coming as it did from such a source, meant that, as the *News Chronicle* noted, the government's critics could not dismiss the Minister of Labour's statement as a perfunctory gesture in support of an abstract convention of the constitution, as it might have been tempted to do had the speech emanated from almost any other mouth. The whole press accepted immediately that the speech in itself constituted a major political event, a view which Bevin's biographer would subsequently endorse. In repetitive and explicit detail; the Minister of Labour had claimed for himself individually and for the cabinet collectively, participation in and complete foreknowledge of, all those policy decisions over Greece that so much of the press had portrayed as springing from the Prime Minister's arbitrary will. Aneurin Bevan might judge the speech "garbled and inadequate where it was not unveracious"⁶² at the time of its delivery, and a few days later, in his regular column, A.J. Cummings might suggest that the Ministry of Labour was telling his friends that he had come to regret acting too precipitately in springing to the Prime Minister's defence over Greece when not as yet fully briefed,⁶³ but Fleet Street as whole did not share these doubts and reservations. Almost unanimously, the press agreed that the speech was a major political event in its own right and that the Prime Minister's position had been secured by it. Whatever modifications the future might bring to British policy in Greece, there would be no outright reversal of a policy with which Bevin's name was associated, as well as Churchill's from its inception. The measure of Churchill's own gratitude for the speech is indicated by the handsome tribute he would pay to Bevin for it in his memoirs. Harold Macmillan for his part would later judge Bevin's services in steadying the government's resolve over Greece in the face of the press storm as second only to those of Churchill himself.

The second major factor in improving the tone of Fleet Street's coverage of British policy in Greece was provided by the dramatic Christmas flight of the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary to Athens, or more particularly by the major modification in British policy to which their consultations there were eventually to lead. When it became clear that there would after all be no immediate return of the king to Athens, but that in his place a regency would be established to be filled by Archbishop Damaskinos pending a referendum in less troubled times on the whole issue of the monarchy, Fleet Street treated this as not merely a triumph of common sense, but as a major vindication of its own noisy opposition to the original rigid course of British policy.

The third factor leading to a retrieval of much press support for official policy in Greece was the Prime Minister's great speech in defence of British policy towards liberated Europe in the Commons on 18 January 1945. All who heard it acknowledged that it constituted one of Churchill's greatest oratorical and parliamentary triumphs and the Prime Minister himself for some time later would gleefully recount to his colleagues and cronies the discomfiture of his critics. Despite the slashing attack on Fleet Street contained in the speech, the press gave Churchill's performance a surprisingly generous reception and almost all of the newspapers accepted that the press in its original rush to judgement on Greece had been less than fair to its own government in judging motives, though it retained its original view that however blameless in reality British purposes in Greece might be, there had indeed been a major failure in presentation of policy.

In his speech, Churchill had made particularly telling use of official, authenticated embassy reports of the barbarous treatment meted out by E.L.A.S. to its captives. As Churchill acknowledged in that speech, quoting directly from current ambassadorial reports was highly unconventional parliamentary behaviour justified only by the gravity of the occasion. When Aneurin Bevan, conscious no doubt of the opportunities for political abuse afforded by selective quotation from official documents, requested that the documents be laid upon the table of the House in their entirety as a parliamentary paper, Churchill seized upon this opportunity for wider publicity, subject only he said to editing on grounds of public security. Alerted by this time to the superlative quality of the sources of information that the member for Ebbw Vale seemed to have available to him in all matters pertaining to Greece, Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister were scrupulous to ensure that the end result was not improperly edited.⁶⁴ To this there was perhaps one exception. In the original reports Leeper and his staff had referred to the danger that in Athens "red" terror might be replaced by "white" terror if the British themselves did not take firm control of affairs. In the documents laid before the House of Commons while

reference to the reality of red terror in Athens was clear for all to see, any reference to the possibility of its replacement by counter-revolutionary terror was carefully excised.

The fourth factor inducing Fleet Street to take a more restrained line on British policy in Greece was the growing awareness at home of the anger of the fighting troops in Greece at the way their role had been relayed by the press to opinion in Britain. Letters of protest from friends and relatives of serving soldiers had begun to appear in the correspondence columns, to be followed by others from the forces themselves. Churchill himself first noted a particularly emphatic example of the latter category in the *Yorkshire Post* on 6 January 1945, but the same letter signed by thirty non-commissioned officers and men serving in a Signals unit in Greece, claiming 99 per cent troop support for the Prime Minister's policy, appears also to have been submitted to and to have appeared in several other newspapers at the same time. Implacable critics of government policy like A.J. Cummings were to suggest that the sudden flood of such letters, together with their pronounced similarity of tone, content and format, suggested to him official inspiration,⁶⁵ much to the anger of Osbert Lancaster in Athens who protested to the Foreign Office the complete innocence of the embassy in this matter.⁶⁶

The fifth factor encouraging the press to take a more sober line in any criticism it might advance regarding official policy towards Greece was increasing awareness of the noisy silence of Moscow over British intervention there. When, On 8 December 1944, the Prime Minister's parliamentary critics had launched their initial Commons attack on Churchill's policy, Tom Driberg, after surveying the excited condition of world opinion, had perforce to speak of the "presumed"⁶⁷ antagonism of Soviet opinion to Churchill's conduct in Greece. Following this lead, Fleet Street had initially put Moscow's silence down to the ponderous bureaucratic procedures of Soviet policy-making without further ado, for the record did indeed show that the Soviet Union could act on occasion with great deliberation. However as the old year gave way to the new, this convenient explanation would no longer suffice in the face of unbroken silence from the Kremlin. Whatever might be the correct explanation of this intriguing reticence, it clearly did not endorse, as *The Daily Telegraph* duly noted, that part of the indictment of British policy that the Prime Minister's critics had compiled, that stressed that Churchill's unilateral action in Greece had imperilled the Grand Alliance before the war was won and had jeopardized the prospects for a concerted approach to the problem of building an enduring peace. As has already been noted, this apparent Soviet complaisance in the face of British action in Greece would remain unbroken until the end of February.

The final factor that played a major part in turning around so much of press opinion and reassuring it of the ultimate benevolence of British purposes in Greece was the report of the Citrine Commission.⁶⁸ This report contained new evidence of sickening E.L.A.S. atrocities against civilian hostages on mindless grounds of collective class guilt in pursuance of quite literal class warfare. A.J. Cummings noted how these, to him, one-sided atrocity stories were made the fullest use of by the "reactionary" British press. Whilst in Greece, Sir Walter had already partially discounted such reactions by noting with amusement the ready tendency of some journalists to treat him and his team as gullible trade-union dimwits being manipulated by men with sharper brains. The report of the trade-union delegation also devoted considerable space to recording the views of British servicemen, particularly these men's complete disenchantment with the performance of Fleet Street. The trade-union delegation, which had included men who, on their departure had been strong critics of official policy, had been particularly impressed by the unanimous support for the Prime Minister's policy expressed by the many active trade unionists amongst the troops, men who on general grounds could not be expected to be naturally favourably predisposed towards Churchill. For its part, somewhat late in the day, the Daily Worker would be reminded of the inadequacies apparent in the literary fruits of Citrine's earlier searches after truth in Finland and in Soviet Russia. However, it was noticeable that whatever might be said or not said in the British press about the Citrine Commission, no breadth of criticism either of its competence or of its good faith was allowed to appear in the contemporary Russian press. Even more remarkably, when seeking a year later to deflect criticism of Soviet conduct in Poland by needling Bevin with a reminder of the precedent for unilateral action provided by British conduct in Greece, as was his frequent ploy, Vyshinski was careful not to call into doubt the good faith of the trade-union delegation which had visited that country.⁶⁹

Viewed from the perspective of over forty years, it is difficult to contest the claim made by many of the government's contemporary critics that the opposition shown by so much of Fleet Street to the course of official policy in Greece played a major part in securing the modification of that policy. It may indeed be possible, as some have suggested, that the vigilance of the press prevented Churchill from persisting in an unwise course beyond the point of retrieval to the edge of disaster, as British policy increasingly alienated an ever wider body of Greek opinion which was republican in sentiment but constitutional in character. And as Halifax had noted with reference to the Greek-American community, Britain's initial policy of apparently unqualified support for the Crown had served to divide and alienate substantial sections of an ethnic group that in normal times could be

relied upon to be pro-British. In this context, one might also observe that however antique the political belief system of Americans at large might strike some British policy-makers as being, it did perhaps mean that in an important sense the Americans were more in tune with the character of Greek politics than were the politically more sophisticated British. Americans after all were republicans too with a profound suspicion of monarchy. Whatever the case, the official documents record that Churchill persisted in his policy of supporting the immediate return of the king of Greece long after his advisors had urged such policy modifications as would separate the constitutional left in Greece from the revolutionary left. They also register his extreme irritation when Leeper and Macmillan moved beyond their roles as analysts of and reporters on the Greek political scene to offer him unsolicited advice as to how certain policy changes might help him overcome his problems with the Americans and before a troubled domestic public opinion. Whether Churchill's inflexibility sprang from injured pride in the face of press criticism, or from secret confidence that Soviet restraint over Greece would allow him such freedom of manoeuvre as to be able to dispense with any need to settle for a "messy" compromise, is more difficult to judge. This confidence in Soviet reliability however, was by no means confined to the Prime Minister, nor to that handful of people at the top with private knowledge of the celebrated Moscow "percentages" agreement, and it pre-dated that most welcome Soviet silence following the first bloodshed in Athens. Thus Leeper in a remarkable dispatch of 15 November had suggested that a coup attempt by E.L.A.S. might well be forestalled by a British appeal to Stalin to denounce such a move in advance as damaging to that Allied harmony upon which the efficient conduct of the war against Germany depended, a proposal turned down by the Foreign Office on grounds of national prestige.⁷⁰ Ironically Leeper subsequently would be credited by the press as the Prime Minister's evil genius with an obsessively ideological anti-communism in Greece, which might jeopardize Anglo-Soviet relations as well as distort his vision. Once the crisis had broken, the ambassador, together with Harold Macmillan, had come very rapidly to the conclusion that the British position in Greece could only be retrieved by the establishment of a regency under Damaskinos, the one public figure in the country who commanded general popular confidence. This view was then pressed upon a reluctant Prime Minister, still protesting his fears of clerical dictatorship and his preference, if need be, for a Regency Council where power would be diffused and the king's interests more securely safeguarded. As informed and sympathetic an actor historian as C.M. Woodhouse has judged Churchill to have been unwisely obstinate in this matter.⁷¹

Whatever the positive services rendered by the press in encouraging the British authorities to reappraise their strategy if not their objectives in Greece, Fleet Street would earn little credit for its performance in these events. Many of the major players would harbour a grievance against the press which would emerge later in their memoirs, as we have seen. More immediately, men like Harold Macmillan and Osbert Lancaster would monitor the press in the later 1940's to try to counter what they regarded as a dangerous myth about what really happened in December 1944.⁷² When Ernest Bevin succeeded Churchill as the chief architect of British foreign policy, he would note with some exasperation the "amazing regularity" with which Greece would be thrown at him by his critics on his party's left, when in their judgement he took too didactic a tone with the Soviet Union about that country's shortcoming. The Foreign Secretary would amuse the House, to the discomfiture of Vernon Bartlett, by assuring it that no new decisions over Greece were made before he had carefully pondered all advice offered him by the News Chronicle. This would serve as a prelude to a heavy ironic tribute to The Times, that "friend of all British governments".⁷³ In the same unapologetic spirit, when teased by a Vyshinski anxious as ever to deflect attention from Poland by citing the poor grace with which the British government had met domestic criticism of its Greek policy, despite its theoretical and rhetorical commitment to civil freedom, including freedom of the press, Bevin chose to lecture his Russian adversary on the real world of democracy. A free press he explained did not guarantee a virtuous press. No Englishman opened his newspaper with the same reverence with which the good Christian approached the Bible, for all knew that some newspapers were careless of facts and truth: "In some newspapers in England if it is there it is not so" (sic).⁷⁴

Though the politicians would remain implacable and unforgiving, many in Fleet Street would modify their opinions in retrospect. John Pringle, who had been responsible for most of The Manchester Guardian's leaders on Greece, and the newspaper's editor, A.P. Wadsworth, who, as former long-term Labour correspondent of the newspaper, knew the members of the Citrine Commission well, both came to regret their over-reliance upon the Athens dispatches of Geoffrey Hoare in the composition of their editorials.⁷⁵ Hoare himself was to surprise his editor subsequently by suggesting The Times leader columns on Greece went further by way of comment than anything contained in his messages from Athens justified. But in comparing again the leaders with the reports from Athens, Barrington-Ward's biographer would come to share the correspondent's view.⁷⁶ Despite Churchill's clear conviction that "Professor Carr" was the chief culprit in this matter,⁷⁷ these contentious leaders were for the most part the work of Donald Tyreman, but were cleared in the normal way by Barrington-Ward as

editor. For his part, Vernon Bartlett would come to regret a certain acerbity of tone and a lack of generosity in the attribution of motives over Greece in his newspaper outside his own column, but continue to believe that in the Greek affair as a whole, the vigilance of the press, unpopular though this had made Fleet Street with those who held office, had had a salutary effect on British policy in Greece.

As for the detached academic observer, the Greek episode could only grow in interest, for here could be seen in embryo the coming birth of that bi-partisanship of foreign and defence policy which would survive the passing of the coalition and which itself perhaps constitutes the chief feature distinguishing Britain's postwar external policy from its interwar predecessor. From this perspective, Ernest Bevin's participation in this first phase of the struggle for Greece anticipates the shape of things to come in the broader field of foreign policy. Such a development could not come about without strife and protest.

Notes and References

1. Donald Tyreman to Professor James Barber, 14 May 1980. I am indebted to the Master of Hatfield College, Durham for a photocopy of this letter.
2. House of Commons Debates, 8 December 1944, vol.406, col.915.
3. The Daily Worker, 13 January 1945.
4. The Daily Telegraph, 9 February 1945, "Truth Conquers".
5. R.Capell, Simiomata: A Greek Notebook 1944-45 (1945).
6. See, for example, the Daily Mail leader of 14 December 1944, "Too Much Noise".
7. A.J.P. Taylor, Beaverbrook, (1974) pp 718-719.
8. Very typical of Foot's approach is his column of 19 December 1944, "Was It For This That They Suffered And Died?"
9. Mr William Forrest, a long-serving staff member of the newspaper and a Marxist, demurred at my description of the News Chronicle as "left-wing", preferring to characterise its line as "radical in the old-fashioned nineteenth-century sense", a condition he further defined as "being in favour of revolutionary movements - abroad". Interview with William Forrest, 14 May 1981.
10. See, for example, the leader in the Co-operative newspaper the Reynolds News of 11 February 1945, "Reports On Greece", where the newspaper declares its strong preference for the report produced by the editor of "a great Liberal newspaper" over that "of our own movement". And for a recent appreciation of the events of 3 December 1944, see L. Baerentson,

"The Demonstration In Syntagma Square On Sunday, The Third Of December 1944", in Scandinavian Studies In Modern Greek, no.2 (1978).

11. See Cummings' pre-war book, The Press (1936) for his views.
12. W.S. Churchill, Triumph And Tragedy (1954), p 255
13. The Manchester Guardian, 5 December 1944, "Greece".
14. The Manchester Guardian, 13 January 1945, "Peace At Last".
15. The Manchester Guardian, 19 January 1945, "British Policy".
16. The Manchester Guardian, 9 February 1945, "Report On Greece".
17. Interview with Count Edward Raczynski, 31 March 1980.
18. Churchill, Triumph And Tragedy, p 250.
19. PREM 3 212/10, Peck to Sendall, 4 December 1944.
20. The Avon Papers F954 11B, Attlee to Eden, 5 December 1944.
21. Churchill, Triumph And Tragedy, p 261.
22. CAB 65/48 WM (44) 162
23. The News Chronicle, 9 December 1944, "Greece".
24. PREM 3 212/11, Churchill to Scobie, Scobie, Scobie to Churchill, both 9 December 1944. See also H. Maule, Scobie, Hero of Greece (1975), based as it is upon Scobie's personal diaries and many interviews with and letters from the men who served with him in Greece. Unfortunately, the value of this book for scholars is diminished by the absence of source references.

25. A. Bullock, Ernest Bevin, vol.11 (1967), pp 340-347.
26. CAB 65/44 WM (44) 171.
27. D. Mclachlan, In The Chair (1971), p 256.
28. H. Macmillan, War Diaries (1984), p 598.
29. CAB 66/60 WP (44) 766
30. CAB 65/49 WM (45) 1.
31. CAB 66/61 WP (45) 63.
32. PREM 4 81/4, "Notes of Deputation of Labour Parliamentary Committee, 15 January 1945".
33. CAB 65/49 WM (45) 10.
34. PREM 4 19/8.
35. The three newspapers whose names recur most frequently in the Foreign Office, Ministry Of Information and Cabinet records on the Greek crisis are The Times, the Daily Herald and the News Chronicle.
36. For the ambassador's own account of these relations see, R. Leeper, When Greek Meets Greek (1950)
37. PREM 3 212/12, Athens to the Foreign Office, 15 December 1944.
38. A point already made in the press itself. See the Daily Mail leader of 12 December 1944, "Darkest Greece".
39. OF 371/48234, Athens to the Foreign Office, 17 January 1945.
40. Clare Hollingworth to the author, 10 April 1982.

41. H. Macmillan, War Diaries (1984) p 605.
42. FO 371/48234, Athens to the Foreign Office, 21 December 1944.
43. The two men were also warm personal friends. Interview with Vernon Bartlett, 18 August 1981.
44. FO 371/48233, Athens to the Foreign Office, 4 January 1945.
45. The Daily Herald, 10 January 1945.
46. K. Young (ed.), Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart: Diaries 1939-65 (1980) p 376. See also Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, Comes The Reckoning (1947) pp 332-34.
47. INF/986 (1944)
48. H Macmillan, The Blast Of War, (1967), p 601
49. Interview with Sir John Lawrence, 17 May 1981. For Sir John's near contemporary analysis of the evolution of the attitude of the Soviet press at this time towards developments in Greece, see his contribution on the role of that press to the National Press Council publication "Two Worlds In Focus" (1950).
50. CAB 65/44 WP (45) 157.
51. FO 371/48236, Moscow to the Foreign Office, 7 March 1945.
52. Stalin's Correspondence (1958), 11, no.298.
53. The Washington Post, 26 January 1945.
54. The New York Times, 9 December 1944.

55. The New York Times, 27 December 1944. The import of speculation of this kind as to the wider significance of Soviet restraint over Greece was not lost upon the Poles, particularly after Yalta. On 20 February 1945 Raczynski sought - and received - Eden's assurance that Britain would not reciprocate for Russian non-interference in Greece by disinteresting herself in Poland. (Documents On Polish-Soviet Relations, (1967), 11, no. 314).
56. Lord Avon, The Reckoning (1965), p 430. For comprehensive treatments of the evolution of British and American policies on Greece, see, respectively, G.M. Alexander, The Prelude To The Truman Doctrine, (1982), and L.S. Wittner, American Intervention In Greece 1943-49, (1982).
57. FO 800/414, Washington to the Foreign Office, 3 January 1945.
58. Cited in J.L. Gaddis, The United States And The Origins Of The Cold War, p 154, footnote 39.
59. The News Chronicle, 12 December 1944.
60. Mclachlan, In The Chair, p252.
61. Extracted from Gallup International Public Opinion Polls: Great Britain 1937-1975, vol.1 (1976). (These polls were published contemporaneously by the News Chronicle).
62. Report Of The Annual Conference Of The Labour Party, 1944.
63. The News Chronicle, 19 December 1944.
64. PREM 3 213/4, "Documents Regarding The Situation In Greece", Cmd. 6592 (1945).
65. The News Chronicle, 12 January 1945.
66. FO 371/48233, Athens To The Foreign Office, 3 January 1945.

67. House Of Commons Debates, 8 December 1944, vol 406, col 958.
68. "What We Saw In Greece: Report of a Delegation appointed to visit Greece in order to report on Matters Relating to the Position of the Greek Trade Union Movement" (1945).
69. The Times, 5 February 1946.
70. PREM 3 212/14.
71. C.M. Woodhouse, The Struggle For Greece (1976)
72. See their respective letters to The Times of 6 March 1946 and 22 July 1947.
73. House Of Commons Debates, 21 February 1946, vol.419 cols 1354-64.
74. The Times, 5 February 1946.
75. D. Ayerst, Guardian: Biography Of A Newspaper (1971), p 586.
76. Mclachlan, In The Chair, p 255.
77. Lord Moran, Winston Churchill: The Struggle For Survival 1940-1965 (1968) p 264.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLAND AND THE BRITISH PRESS

Political actors as various as Churchill, Eden, Harriman and Truman have recorded their view that the biggest single issue that led to the erosion of the wartime harmony of the Grand Alliance and its replacement by the distrust and antagonism of the Cold War was the fate of Poland. In their turn historians have endorsed this view and seen in the Polish Question both the occasion of the Second World War and the seeds of the Cold War. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that no external commitment assumed by Great Britain in the twentieth century has proved so ominous in its implications as the Guarantee extended to Poland on 31 March 1939.

However, when Neville Chamberlain announced the Guarantee to Poland in the House of Commons he surprised his friends as much as his critics by the unqualified nature of the commitment undertaken, for this apparently was unilateral in inspiration and unlimited in extent. Indeed only the very top circle of policy makers seem to have played any role at all in this major new departure in British foreign policy. William Strang would later record the surprise with which the news of the Guarantee was met within the Foreign Office itself and observe the "idea (of the Guarantee) seems to have sprung fully grown from the ministerial mind,"¹ If insiders were surprised, outsiders were astonished. At Teheran four years later Churchill (perhaps unwisely) would confess to Stalin his personal amazement - gratified amazement - as he listened to a Prime Minister, who a year earlier had refused to make a stand on the far more promising ground of Czechoslovakia, announce that Britain was prepared to fight for Poland.²

As for the contemporary British press, however precipitate the origins of the Guarantee might have been, the whole of Fleet Street recognized that Chamberlain's declaration constituted in itself a revolution in British foreign policy, a revolution from which Poland was the immediate, albeit unlikely, first beneficiary.

To understand fully this surprise and astonishment in all quarters it is necessary to place Chamberlain's statement in its proper context against the background of the evolution of British foreign policy since Versailles. To some extent that background has already been sketched out earlier in previous sections of this study for other purposes. That having been said a brief recapitulation may nonetheless be helpful at this point.

Britain and Eastern Europe

The essence of inter-war British foreign policy can be encapsulated in the proposition that it was a policy of limited liability. Britain had proved prepared to accept in these years a continental commitment, which, in itself contrasted with that "free hand" in foreign affairs she had fought to preserve before 1914. However, she was at no time prepared to accept an unlimited liability towards continental security. More specifically, Britain was prepared, acting in concert with others, to enter into security commitments guaranteeing the western European frontiers established at Versailles. What she was not prepared to do was to enter into similar commitments guaranteeing those eastern European frontiers similarly established.

These attitudes had the most obvious implications for independent Poland as the largest of the successor states of eastern Europe both in terms of territory and population. Insofar as inter-war Europe had enjoyed an "era of good feeling" that briefest of eras was symbolized by the "spirit of Locarno". Yet the Locarno agreements themselves had marked out the natural limits of Britain's commitment to continental security. Although there would be much talk, in the years following of an "Eastern Locarno", inspired particularly by the French, all such talk would founder upon the inflexible opposition of British policy makers of all political persuasions, to any commitment by the United Kingdom - whatever others might do - to the defence of east European frontiers. In a word the Locarno accords had created two classes of frontiers in Europe, those which had the full legitimacy and permanence of a collective guarantee by the great powers and those which did not. Well might the Poles draw the worrying conclusion from the Locarno proceedings that in British eyes - and therefore even more in the eyes of those less benevolently disposed towards the new Poland than the British - the western frontiers of Poland were negotiable. Had they been privy to the exchanges of British policy makers they would have found ample grounds for alarm. Thus the chief architect of Locarno, Sir Austen Chamberlain (committed to a France, it will be remembered, that he loved "like a woman") would at this time advise his cabinet colleagues that "the German-Polish boundary in its present form, particularly in connection with the Corridor and Upper Silesia could not remain as it is."³ Of his own reaction as Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time of Locarno, Churchill would later write, "I did not at any time close my mind to an attempt to give Germany greater satisfaction on her Eastern frontier."⁴

Perhaps no peace settlement in history has suffered such a rapid erosion of support on the part of its creators as has the Versailles settlement. The critique levelled at that settlement,

whilst the ink was scarcely dry on the treaties, by men like Keynes penetrated at first the consciousness of the attentive foreign policy public but thereafter was rapidly diffused to the mass public, in the main, a non-reading public, through the agency of the press, at a period when broadcasting was still in its infancy. By the time of Locarno by far the greatest part of the British press favoured appeasement of Germany through peaceable treaty revision to right Germany's acknowledged wrongs.

Whatever Britain's reservations about Poland's western frontiers, those frontiers could at least claim such limited legitimacy in British eyes as the Versailles settlement still bestowed. The position of Poland's eastern frontiers was quite different, for these had formed no part of that settlement at all being, as they were, the result of the arbitrament of arms and defined by the Treaty of Riga which had ended the Russo-Polish war in March 1921. Admittedly, this treaty had been itself recognized by a Conference of Ambassadors of the Allied and Associated Powers, acting as successors of the Supreme Council, in which Britain herself had participated in March 1923. The Poles themselves would never tire of pointing to the significance of this act of international recognition. However, Britain's own considered position on Poland's proper frontiers in the east at the time of the resurrection of the Polish state, frontiers drawn up on the "correct" ethnographical lines, had received authoritative utterance in the Curzon Note issued from Spa in July 1920 at the height of the Russo-Polish war. For British policy makers at this time had the gravest reservations about what they perceived as the reckless nature of Polish designs in the east, designs pursued under the sponsorship of a vengeful and malevolent France.

These reservations of the policy makers found full expression in the British press. This point has not always been appreciated for it runs contrary to one of the most obstinate political legends of the twenties. This legend suggests that at the time of the Russo-Polish war industrial action by the British Labour movement, in particular by the transport workers and dockers, prevented this country from becoming embroiled in the Russo-Polish war in defence of Poland, in a remarkable, indeed unique example of the application of industrial muscle to a foreign policy end. Moreover, the legend continues, in Fleet Street George Lansbury's Daily Herald fought the good fight practically unaided to win the support of public opinion against a potentially disastrous foreign policy initiative by Lloyd George's government. This was symbolized by the Daily Herald's production of an unprecedented special Sunday issue on August 1920 with a streamer "Not A Man, Not A Penny, Not A Sou".

Modern scholarship has pointed to a more complicated truth, whereby in the words of one recent authority the trade unions were merely pushing at an open door.⁵ For the Prime Minister himself was already determined to oppose entanglement in the war on the Polish side on general grounds of policy and in fact welcomed support from whatever quarter it might come in imposing his already settled policy on some of the wilder spirits in the Coalition ranks.

However, what is of particular interest in the context of this study is the implication in this particular legend that the "capitalist" section of Fleet Street took an ideological line on the Russo-Polish war in contrast to the non-interventionist line pursued by the Daily Herald, and that this line was anti-Soviet and pro-Polish in a straightforward and partisan manner.

Again a reading of the contemporary press reveals the truth to have been a good deal more complicated. The "capitalist" British press did not in fact support from the beginning a simple strategy of strangling the newly born Soviet state by backing Pilsudski's adventure in Russia to the hilt. Important sections of Fleet Street had serious reservations about Polish policy earlier in the war, when things had been going very well for the Poles against the Russians. Thus The Times which had earlier still taken a bitterly ideological anti-Bolshevik line and been a warm supporter of those cabinet ministers who like Churchill had seen in British military intervention in Russia a moral crusade to unseat a Godless and evil political system, no longer thought in terms of the complete overthrow of communism.⁶ Rather it thought now in more realistic terms of a policy of containment of Soviet communism, a policy which of course would cast Poland in a particularly important role. For such a policy to work Poland's more excessive ambitions must themselves be moderated. Thus when Pilsudski's conquests were at their height and all Russia seemed to lie at the Polish marshall's feet, The Times, under the heading of "The Poles And The Bolsheviks", published on 1 May 1920 the following leader advice to the Polish commander,

"He had already made it clear that Poland, as her friends always foresaw, may if she is wisely governed and developed, be Europe's bulwark against Bolshevism. We trust however that the Poles will not be led astray by their brilliant military success. The great tasks before them lie within their own borders. They should not burden themselves with external responsibilities beyond their strength. Some of their original demands as presented to the Soviet government, particularly colossal claims for ancient wrongs would merely sow new and dangerous

grievances. It is expected that, when military operations are concluded, they will put forward terms of peace. By the degree of statesmanship with which these terms are framed the lasting value of the Polish enterprise will be judged. Poland would gain little in the long term if she were, by immoderation, to range against her, under any government, the latent national spirit of the Russian people."

These friendly warnings to the Poles not to over-extend themselves, and to show proper respect for Russia's legitimate interests, were widely echoed in the British press. The Times itself would publish an anonymous letter, simply signed "S", from a Russian emigre leader congratulating the newspaper both on the advice it had offered the Poles and upon the distinction implied in that advice between the ideology of Bolshevism, to which all civilized men took exception, and the legitimate long term rights of the Russian state and people. The Foreign Office archives show "S" in fact to have been Boris Savinkov, former Provisional Government minister and S.R. leader in Russia and subsequent associate of Sidney Reilly.⁷

Whilst The Times might offer friendly if critical advice to the Poles one section of the Conservative press was actively hostile to Poland and expressed its opposition in the most vehement language. This was the Beaverbrook press. On 23 May 1920 The Sunday Express leader declared:

"Poland is the mad dog of Europe and she must be chained up. She occupies an area of Russia as large as Germany. In this area the Poles are only a small fraction of the population. The French militarists have egged on the Poles in their insane ambitions. Poland has disregarded the advice of the British government. . . . The Poles have behaved insanely and it is time that they were brought to their senses. They have misused munitions given to them for the purpose of self defence for the purpose of criminal aggression. Before their liberation they made the world ring with their protests against the tyranny of majorities over minorities. Now they are shamelessly doing what they previously denounced. There are influences in this country which secretly support the Poles in their disastrous follies. It is time to make an end of these lunacies."

When a few weeks later, after their initial successes, the Poles began a headlong retreat in the face of a Soviet counter-attack, the Express newspapers found their views vindicated but now warned against the danger of Britain allowing itself to be drawn into events. On the 7 July 1920 The Daily Express commented,

"Of the making of wars there would seem to be no end. But we hope earnestly that the Allies will not involve themselves lightly in the Polish adventure, Marshall Pilsudski, rejecting wiser counsels and relying on his own spirit of adventure, led his country to the attack on Soviet Russia. It was a most dangerous exercise. It has done much to strengthen Soviet tyranny in Russia by rallying the people on the cry of patriotism. It has recoiled on the Poles who now profess themselves in extreme danger and cry for Allied help. These consequences were foreseen clearly by The Daily Express which held very firmly that the Polish adventure ought to have been stopped by the Allies. If, having failed to stop it, we are now to take part in it, worse will become worse. . . . Let the Allies stick to the making of peace at Brussels and at Spa. We can afford no more wars great or small."

At the time of the campaign against British intervention in the Russo-Polish war, the formation by the labour movement of the Council Of Action to frustrate by direct industrial action if need be, any British government designs to involve this country on the Polish side, gave rise in some Conservative quarters to claims that such action posed a serious threat to constitutional government and to parliamentary democracy. For their part The Express newspapers impatiently brushed aside such fears. Indeed Beaverbrook's newspapers treated the Council Of Action with the greatest of sympathy and sought to assuage the natural apprehension of Conservative supporters. On 15 August 1920 The Sunday Express gave over much of its front page to a long interview with Frank Hodges, the General Secretary of the Miners Federation and one of the moving spirits behind the Council. Here the Miners' General Secretary sought to establish the distinction between the extra-parliamentary action that he and his followers were advocating and the anti-parliamentary methods of true revolutionaries. There was no attempt to overthrow parliamentary democracy in the interest of establishing Soviet style democracy as some of the union's calumniators were suggesting. The Sunday Express accepted for its part the distinction between extra-parliamentary and anti-parliamentary methods. What had really gone wrong it argued was that honest and patriotic men had no alternative available but to resort to such methods when faced by a coalition government toying with a dangerously reckless foreign policy initiative in circumstances where the normal controls allowed by a system of parliamentary opposition in a properly functioning party system had been suspended. According to the Beaverbrook press the trade unionists were correct in their belief that certain ministers were completely out of touch with public opinion on the key foreign policy issue of the hour and were acting in the best traditions of concerned citizenship in trying to rectify the situation before it was too late. The trade unions were reflecting a degree of alarm about a dangerous tendency in British foreign policy which

extended far beyond their own ranks to encompass the greater part of British public opinion at large. In performing this function the trade unionists were serving the nation well.

In fact the Poles, with some limited assistance from France, proved able to halt and then turn back the Russian advance following the "miracle on the Vistula", in this war of movement, without British assistance, and subsequently by the Treaty of Riga were able to consolidate many of their territorial gains in the east. Yet what is of special significance in the limited context of this study is that broad sections of the British press, including it must be re-emphasized the Conservative press, remained both unconvinced by the title deeds whereby Poland held possession of these eastern lands and unconvinced by Poland's capacity to maintain possession once Russia recovered her natural strength. Of course there were newspapers which took an uncritically pro-Polish stance. In these years *The Daily Mail*, for example, took a near-hysterical anti-Bolshevik stance on any foreign policy issue which might damage the Soviet Union. And the *Morning Post* (in normal circumstances no uncritical admirer of France and her policies) did consistently support what it understood to be the central objective of French policy viz. the construction in eastern Europe of a "cordon sanitaire" around Soviet Russia, in which a greater Poland provided the lynch-pin. Yet these newspapers remained in a profound minority. Fleet Street as a whole was much more sceptical of the wisdom of Polish policy which it saw as flawed by a lack of realism. Poland had cast herself in the role of a great power when she lacked the resources to sustain that role over the longer term.

The British Press And Independent Poland

When Count Edward Raczyński returned to London - he had previously served in the twenties as Secretary to his country's London Legation - as Polish ambassador in November 1934 he would characterize Anglo-Polish relations as "correct but cool".⁸ This was true of course of relations at the official level. Anglo-Polish relations involved however, something more than simply diplomatic relationships. Apart from the personal, political and social contacts which flowed naturally from his post the ambassador's major source of information on the condition of British public opinion with special reference to Eastern Europe and particular reference to Poland was the British press, a press he attempted throughout his embassy to follow assiduously.⁹ His immediate impression however, was that from a Polish perspective, Fleet Street's coverage of Eastern Europe and of Poland left much to be desired. In particular, there appeared to be little awareness that the security of Western Europe - including Great Britain - was intimately linked with the security of Eastern Europe. Secondly, he detected a lack of generosity and of

understanding in both the treatment of Polish foreign policy and in the treatment of the internal problems which the new Polish state had encountered.

It is difficult to fault this general judgement. Indeed one is tempted to press it further. Despite the Polish ambassador's conscientious attempts to correct and improve press treatment of his country that treatment of Poland in fact grew steadily cooler, not warmer, in the early years of his embassy. No student of Fleet Street's coverage of Polish affairs in the years 1934-39 could easily disagree with the conclusion of the historian of the British press and the appeasement of Nazi Germany therefore that "From the point of view of British public opinion, Poland was the least attractive of the succession states."¹⁰ Indeed one element, as has earlier been suggested, that gave an added piquancy to that revolution in British foreign policy that occurred in March 1939, lay precisely in the fact that Poland was the unlikely first beneficiary of that diplomatic revolution.

The question that we need now to address is the following. Why was it the case that by the opening of that fateful year of 1939 Poland had come to enjoy the worst London press of all the newly independent states of Eastern Europe? In order to attempt to answer such a question we need to begin by noting that some of the reasons for this unhappy situation lay in British perceptions of the "unhelpful" role played by Poland in international affairs in the period prior to the crisis of March 1939. Secondly, we need then to note that British perceptions of the Polish state's internal character and conduct had also made an important contribution to the poor image enjoyed by Poland in the British press vision of the external world. Thirdly, it is important to note that in the case of Poland in particular, and of British perceptions of Poland there existed a significant overlap between the international and the domestic behaviour of the Polish state and people in shaping that negative image that Poland enjoyed in Fleet Street. Indeed many of the issues that served to alienate the new Poland from important sections of British public opinion are best described not as domestic or foreign but as "intermestic", to employ a useful new term from the vocabulary of modern international relations theory. This interplay between the domestic and the external in shaping British attitudes towards Poland is best demonstrated by concrete examples to which we must now turn. However, before examining those aspects of the political performance of inter-war Poland that served to alienate important sections of British opinion an important preliminary point must be made. This is the point that there existed in this country a significant strand of opinion both amongst the policy-makers and the opinion makers that had taken a hostile or negative attitude to Poland almost from the moment of its resurrection as an independent state. Such men should perhaps be distinguished from that broader band of British opinion which would turn against Poland in the later twenties and

in the thirties from a sense of disappointment at the uses to which Poland had put her newly recovered freedom, from in a word, pragmatic, considerations.

At the time of the destruction of the Polish state Molotov would refer to Poland as "the monstrous bastard of Versailles" and Stalin would call it "pardon the expression, a state". Yet it can easily be forgotten, as Norman Davies has pointed out, that this self-serving Soviet abuse of November 1939, at the moment of Poland's crucifixion, is to a large extent pre-figured by certain British attitudes twenty years earlier at the time of the renaissance of the Polish state.¹¹ At that time, it was Keynes who dismissed the new Poland as "an economic impossibility whose only industry is Jew-baiting", E.H. Carr who described that state's resurrection as "a farce", Lloyd George who discounted Poland as "an historic failure" and Lewis Namier who characterized Poland's condition as "pathological". Well might Norman Davies as the leading contemporary historian of modern Poland protest angrily at "those flights and fantasies of the liberal conscience", for it is indeed remarkable that so many influential Englishmen took such an unforgiving and ungenerous attitude towards a newly independent nation which had historically, whatever its mistakes, conventionally been seen as more sinned against than sinning. In the context of this study, moreover, the attitude of men like Carr and Namier is doubly important because that attitude once formed would remain fixed in its hostility to the new Poland and fate would give these men access to platforms in the press from which they could exercise influence over British opinion in the nineteen forties when the fate of Poland after the Second World War was emerging as a key issue of contention between the Allies and playing a major part in sowing the seeds of the Cold War. To these matters, however, we will return later in their proper place. For the moment, however, having established the important preliminary point that the new Poland had had the ill-luck to acquire an influential body of hostile critics in England whilst it was taking its first faltering steps, we must now turn to an examination of those reasons why Polish policy in her two decades of independence served to alienate those broader segments of British opinion, not initially ill-disposed towards the new Poland, to such an extent that by January 1939, judged by the measure of press treatment, Poland stood lower in British popular estimation than any other of the successor states.

To do this we must first turn to foreign policy, though as has previously been suggested, and as we shall shortly see in the concrete, in so many matters affecting inter-war Poland, a sharp division between foreign policy and domestic policy is essentially artificial. Matters of internal policy often had an important foreign policy dimension. Decisions in foreign policy equally could have important domestic implications.

In the early twenties, important divisions began to emerge between the former wartime allies England and France relating in the main to policy on Germany, divisions into which considerations of space do not allow us to enter here. Suffice it to say that some of the criticism then expressed widely in the British press of a vengeful and short-sighted France rubbed off on Poland, widely seen as France's most faithful and powerful ally in the east. The French policy of seeking security through a policy of alliances to encircle Germany in which the Franco-Polish Treaty of 1921 provided the lynch-pin was seen in Britain as misconceived, as indeed providing an obstacle to the general appeasement of Europe to which all men of goodwill should work. It became therefore one objective of British foreign policy to seek to wean France away from this policy of German encirclement through a policy of mutual collective guarantees in the west which Germany would feel were not exclusively directed against her. This policy reached its culmination at Locarno. As we have seen, the Locarno accords had the effect of creating two classes of frontiers in Europe, those in the west accepted as permanent by the states directly concerned and guaranteed by the disinterested great powers on their flanks, and those in the east which Streseman's Germany refused to accept as permanent but pledged herself not to attempt to revise by force. The Locarno accords, and Austen Chamberlain as their chief architect, received a rapturous press in England, Express newspapers and the "Workers Weekly" (predecessor to the Daily Worker) alone excepted. In the context of this study what is however of importance is that the British press also saw in the Locarno accords a defeat for Polish foreign policy for, whatever the public protestations of the Polish foreign minister to the contrary Poland was widely seen in this country as having been engaged behind the scenes in activities aimed at wrecking the conference. Indeed Poland's alleged misdeeds on this occasion would lead to such an intemperate attack on Poland - that "possessor of five Alsace Lorraine's" - by Lloyd George in the House of Commons that Austen Chamberlain hastily distanced himself from the vehement denunciation of Poland by his former chief by protesting that Poland's attitude to the negotiations had never been less than helpful.¹³

As for the Poles themselves, the Locarno events would lead them to conclusions about the reliability of the western powers that would have serious implications for Anglo-Polish relations over the longer term. More immediately, at the end of the twenties the rehabilitation of Germany following Germany's entry into the League meant further embarrassments for the Poles. These flowed from Poland's status as a signatory, indeed the most important signatory (40% of Poland's population was non-Polish), of the Minorities Treaties which had formed part of the Versailles settlement. For Germany was assiduous in constantly keeping the conditions of Poland's German minority before the eyes of the world by placing Poland in the dock at Geneva. The Poles regarded this as

both grotesque and unjust for they believed their Germans to be perhaps the best treated minority in the world, protected indeed to the point of privilege. Whatever the truth of this, Germany's tactics in this struggle for world opinion proved successful in so far as we can judge these things by the coverage offered by the British press. For that coverage in the later twenties and early thirties was both extensive and more or less uniformly pro-German for the Poles for whatever reason failed to get over their case.

This brings us in turn to one of the ironies of Hitler's accession to power in Germany in 1933. One consequence of that momentous event would be Germany's withdrawal from the League. Another consequence would be an immediate and surprising rapprochement between Germany and Poland under the terms of the German-Polish Treaty Of Non-Aggression of January 1934, whereby Poland became the first European state to seek and achieve an accommodation with the new Germany. Under the terms of this treaty each party agreed to a policy on non-intervention in the affairs of the other relative to their fellow nationals resident in that state. At a stroke Poland's treatment of her large German minority disappeared from the international agenda and, as a consequence, from the columns of the newspapers of the world, for five years. When the issue eventually re-emerges on the international agenda with startling suddenness in January 1939, it provides a signal to the rest of the world of that wider deterioration in German-Polish relations, of which it is the symptom not the cause, which will lead to the Second World War.

Poland's image problem before British public opinion, as that image was transmitted through the British press, is illustrated by the example of Poland's alleged maltreatment of its German minority. However, for the Poles, this minority represented merely one part of a much wider problem for the Germans were only one of inter-war Poland's several minorities and by no means the largest of these minorities.

In independent Poland was to be found the largest Jewish settlement of any country on earth for to the new Poland had fallen most of the territory of the old Pale of Settlement to which the Jews had been confined in the Tsarist Empire. At the time of the recreation of the Polish state certain anti-semitic outrages had attracted to Poland the hostile attention of the western press - Keynes sharp comment on Poland in this regard has already been noted. A modern scholar has observed of the situation at this time that "The new Poland was probably the most anti-semitic state in Europe."¹⁴ Whatever the objective truth of this comment it is certainly the case that until the rise of Hitler the new Poland was so portrayed in the bulk of the British press. This unsavoury aspect of Poland's reputation was given particular attention in those newspapers like the Manchester Guardian and the News

Chronicle themselves most sympathetic to Zionism. Moreover, those newspapers painted a situation in which as the years passed the conduct of Polish policy makers towards the Jews, and therefore the condition of the Jews, grew steadily worse rather than improving. The passing of Pilsudski in 1935 was seen as registering a turning point in this regard. The liberal press in England could hardly be expected to be numbered on general grounds amongst the most uncritical admirers of a man they held, amongst other things, to have subverted parliamentary democracy in order to establish his quasi-dictatorship. Nonetheless that press always gave generous recognition to the positive aspects of the old marshal's record, as they saw them. Amongst these was Pilsudski's deserved reputation as the protector of Poland's Jews from the attention of the more virulent of the Polish nationalists. Those junior officers who succeeded Pilsudski, to form what the press immediately christened the "regime of the colonels" though Pilsudski-ites to a man, failed to respect this element in their ideological inheritance by introducing measures of legal discrimination against the Jews which caused the British press to draw an analogy with what was happening in contemporary Germany. Such an analogy did little of course for Poland's image in England.

Poland's Jewish question had international ramifications of particular importance for Anglo-Polish relations. Indeed it constituted a classic example of one of those intermestic issues earlier referred to. For all inter-war Polish administrations had insisted upon regarding this problem as a proper question for action by the international community and not as a purely domestic matter that Poland could reasonably be expected to settle alone. In particular, Polish governments consistently supported Zionist pleas for open access to Palestine. This proved a constant irritant to Anglo-Polish relations for the Poles showed little understanding of the complexities of Britain's own position in the Middle East. American action in putting a virtually complete bar on all further immigration into the United States in 1922 had added to these complexities. In the 1920's the major single source of Jewish emigrants to Palestine was Poland. Perhaps surprisingly, this would remain so during the early years of Hitler's rule in Germany. In the period 1932-35 total Jewish immigration into Palestine numbered 134,000. Exiles from Germany made up less than one eighth of this total whilst 43% of the new settlers came from Poland.¹⁵ Whatever its source, the scale of this immigration into Palestine excited Arab fears of being reduced to a minority in the land of their birth. These fears exploded in the Arab Rising of 1936. Having put down the Rising the British moved quickly to introduce stringent new controls on Jewish immigration. As general war threatened in Europe the negotiating hand of the Zionists weakened as considerations of realpolitik dictated British policy. British policy makers knew that, given the character of Hitler's regime, Jewish support could be taken for

granted whilst Arab opinion had to be won. As a consequence, to Zionist outrage, the 1939 White Paper on Palestine, after allowing for a brief interim period of strictly controlled Jewish immigration proposed that all further Jewish immigration to Palestine be made conditional upon the consent of the Arab majority.

Whilst the doors of Palestine were gradually being closed by the British to further Jewish immigration, the situation of European Jewry steadily deteriorated, not least in Poland. Unofficial social and economic discrimination against the Jews had long disfigured certain sections of Polish society and damaged Poland's standing as reflected in the British press. This standing was further damaged when Pilsudski's successors introduced official anti-semitism by, in particular, imposing controls on Jewish access to higher education, to the professions and to employment in the public services. These measures received their most critical attention, unsurprisingly, in the progressive pro-Zionist press, in newspapers like the News Chronicle and The Manchester Guardian. As for the latter, personal factors also explain in part the negative coverage given to Poland in these years. Crozier, the editor, was a lifelong Zionist, though not himself a Jew - indeed he can be seen as one of the most prominent of the so-called "gentile Zionists". Zionism was Crozier's dominant political enthusiasm, an enthusiasm he was able to nurture in the company of his Manchester neighbour and constant luncheon and dinner guest Lewis Namier.¹⁶ In the thirties Namier held the Chair of Modern History at the University and besides being a frequent contributor to The Manchester Guardian, particularly on Zionist themes, acted more generally as one of the editor's major sources of news and views on eastern Europe as a whole. In this context Namier's unfriendly attitude to independent Poland from the time of Poland's resurrection as a European state was of some little significance.

Jews and Germans were but two of Poland's many minorities, though important ones. However, the biggest, numerically, of Poland's minorities were her slavic ones, the White Russian and Ukrainian peoples of her eastern and south-eastern provinces. Attempts to win over these peoples to the new Polish state had substantially failed. Integration by process of polonization had been deeply resented and had proved ultimately counter-productive. In 1930 serious disturbances had broken out in the Polish Ukraine. Polish counter-measures of police and military pacification of the disaffected areas had attracted widespread western press comment, little of which was sympathetic to Polish policy. Under the heading "Tragedy Of The Ukraine : A Polish Terror" the local correspondent of The Manchester Guardian would tell that newspaper's readers:

"The Polish terror in the Ukraine is now worse than anything that is happening anywhere else in Europe. The Ukraine has become a land of despair and desolation that is all the more poignant because the rights of the Ukraine have been guaranteed by international treaty, because the League has been altogether deaf to appeals and arguments and because the outside world does not know or does not care."¹⁷

The Times' correspondent was more sympathetic but only marginally so, seeing in the intransigence of the Ukraine leadership, and in the suspected hidden hand of Berlin (playing its traditional game of manipulating Ukrainian nationalism) secondary factors in a complex situation approaching civil war in some parts of eastern Galicia. He told Times readers:

"To revisit Eastern Galicia at the present time is to have a sharp and unpleasant reminder of one of the few latent wars that continue to be waged by a wholly submerged nationality. The conflict is between the Poles who are sovereign and the Ukrainians or Ruthenians who are subject."¹⁸

The Polish authorities bitterly resented western press criticism, particularly British press criticism, of their policy in eastern Galicia. These sensitivities dated back to the contentious circumstances of the Peace Conference and its aftermath when the new Poland had gained that territory only in the face of the hostility of Lloyd George. And whilst Polish policy-makers might welcome in some respects international recognition that their Jewish problem was merely part, albeit a major part, of the wider international Jewish Question, a Question quite properly meriting the attention of the international community, no inter-war Polish administration took the same expansive attitude towards Poland's treatment of its Slavic minorities. In these matters foreign intervention in Poland's domestic affairs was deeply resented.

Nonetheless, so disturbing were British press reports of the pacification of eastern Galicia in the autumn of 1930, that it was very largely owing to the pressure of British public opinion that the case of eastern Galicia was brought before the Council of the League of Nations in January 1931.¹⁹ However, so weak was the resolution adopted then by the Council, and so ill-equipped was the League for decisive action in such matters, that the League intervention proved on balance, counter-productive, being sufficient to alienate the Poles without helping the Ukrainians.

This demonstration of League impotence was not lost upon the Poles. Following the Treaty of Non-Aggression with Germany of January 1934, the Warsaw authorities moved to remove a second of their minorities' problems from the international arena (the treaty itself having removed the problem of their German minority). According to the Poles the Minorities Treaties of the Versailles settlement had come to constitute an intolerable license for intervention in the domestic affairs of those states like Poland which had been required to sign them. These states were now sufficiently mature to claim precisely the same degree of sovereignty as the traditional powers of Europe, no more but no less. Accordingly, on 13 September 1934 the Polish delegate at the Assembly of the League drew attention to the double standards operating in the international system by proposing the convening of an international conference of the powers to draw up a convention on minority rights which would be binding on all parties. However, as he was not optimistic,

"Pending the introduction of a general and uniform system for the protection of minorities, my government is compelled to refuse, as from today, all co-operation with the international organisations in the matter of the supervision of the application by Poland of the system of minority protection. I need hardly say that the decision of the Polish Government is in no sense directed against the interests of the minorities. Those interests are and will remain protected by the fundamental laws of Poland, which secure to minorities of language, race and religion free development and equality of treatment."²⁰

The delegates of Britain and France protested that Poland could not unilaterally denounce a treaty to which she was simply one of the signatories. However, the western powers could do nothing in the face of such Polish opportunism. Moreover, the Poles had moved elsewhere on the foreign policy front in a direction they knew to be agreeable to the western powers by removing their objections to the Soviet application for membership of the League. Such mitigating action elsewhere did little however to appease Poland's critics. Her conduct in the matter of minorities, particularly when seen in the general context of her opportunistic exploitation of the new situation created by Hitler's accession to power in Germany, earned her a uniformly critical press in England, not least for the short-sightedness of such cynical behaviour.

As the nineteen thirties took their course developments both in the internal character and in the external conduct of the Polish state served only to further alienate most British opinion. Internally Poland was perceived as militarist, authoritarian, Catholic, repressive

of minorities in general and anti-semitic in particular. There was little in such a mix of natural appeal to the Anglo-Saxon mind.

Externally, Poland was seen as a power whose conduct under Beck as foreign minister steadily degenerated so as to become virtually indistinguishable from that of the major European dictatorships. In March 1938 he had demonstrated his conversion to the new diplomacy by issuing an ultimatum to Lithuania compelling that state to resume diplomatic relations under the threat of military action. During Czechoslovakia's hour of trial Beck had organized a propaganda campaign in the Polish press about the sufferings of the Polish minority in the Teschen, and then followed this up by concentrating Polish troops on the Czech frontier. At the Council of the League the Polish delegate ostentatiously read a newspaper whilst Halifax and Litvinov were speaking. In the words of the historian of the League of Nations, Poland had "made its full contribution to the deterioration of the general situation of Europe" and in doing so, the regime of the colonels "had vied with Hitler and Mussolini in its contempt for the League."²¹

With Beck's seizure of the Teschen from a prostrate Czechoslovakia with the contemptuous acquiescence of Hitler Poland's standing with British opinion reached its nadir. Of this shameful exercise in "jackal" diplomacy Churchill would later write that Poland's friends had been reminded by it that throughout history there had always been two Polands, that she was "Glorious in revolt and ruin ; squalid and shameful in triumph. The bravest of the brave, too often led by the vilest of the vile..... one (Poland) struggling to preach the truth, the other grovelling in villainy."²²

Thus by the end of 1938 that situation previously referred to had effectively been realised. On the eve of the second world war from the perspective of British public opinion as reflected in the British press the least attractive of the succession states of eastern Europe was independent Poland. Yet it would prove to be Poland that was the improbable first beneficiary of that revolution in British foreign policy induced by Hitler's conduct in occupying the rump Czech state in March 1939. It is to these events and to the part played in them by the British press that we must now turn.

Fleet Street And The British Guarantee To Poland

On 15 March 1939 German troops entered Prague and at a single stroke Hitler demonstrated that his ambitions extended further than the principle of national self-determination would allow. This action produced a revulsion of British public

opinion followed by a revolution in British foreign policy. At the end of that same month Chamberlain announced the Guarantee to Poland and followed it rapidly by guarantees to Rumania and Greece. In apparent contravention of all previous inter-war British foreign policy an independent eastern Europe was now seen as a vital interest of Great Britain's.

Such was the metamorphosis produced in British opinion by Hitler's conduct that the Polish Guarantee was warmly welcomed by most of Fleet Street across the ideological divide from *The Daily Telegraph* to *The Daily Worker*. To this generalisation there were however two exceptions, as we have seen earlier in this study, namely *The Times* newspaper and the Express group of newspapers.

Throughout that troubled fortnight the Express newspapers had been engaged in what they acknowledged to be a struggle against the emerging current of a transformed public opinion. In a leader on the day of the German occupation of Prague headed "The Ramshackle State", *The Evening Standard*, whilst condemning the brutal German aggression, reminded its readers that Czechoslovakia, as a polygot state, had constituted a standing reputation of that principle of national self-determination that had supposedly inspired the Versailles settlement. It further reminded readers that the Express group alone had opposed that British guarantee that had been extended to the residual Czech state after the Munich settlement. True to its philosophy of isolationism the same leader drew the appropriate conclusion. The path of both honour and interest dictated that Britain should formally withdraw from all commitments in which her own national security or other vital national interests were not directly involved. On no account, therefore, should the sad events in Prague lead Britain to repeat the folly of a policy of guarantees in eastern Europe. Having cleared the decks in Europe first Britain should then move immediately to disengage from the impossible entanglement in Palestine. Rapid and increased rearmament, immediate conscription and enhanced cooperation with the dominions were the keys to Britain's own security. When a week after the events in Prague German troops moved to occupy Memel in defiance of the Versailles settlement in the face of League impotence, *The Evening Standard* expressed its alarm that the sheer rush of events together with an inflamed public domestic opinion might panic the British government into an unwise policy of accepting "fast commitments for an unforeseeable future" in Europe.²³

Given this background, together with that whole philosophy of international relations previously examined in this study, it is not surprising that the Beaverbrook press met the news of the Polish Guarantee with considerable disappointment. However, it was *The*

Evening Standard's interpretation of that Guarantee on the evening of Chamberlain's announcement in the Commons that caused a sensation. That afternoon the Prime Minister's listeners, friends as well as opponents, had understood the Prime Minister to give a unilateral and unconditional declaration of guarantee of Polish independence. According however, to "A Diplomatic Correspondent" writing on the front page of The Evening Standard "the British and French Governments' Guarantee to Poland against unprovoked aggression threatening the independence of that country will not apply to Danzig, now nominally a free city, or to the Polish Corridor."²⁴ Now as these two issues provided precisely the flashpoints of the German-Polish crisis, this was a remarkable reading of events on any account. The Polish embassy and Poland's friends in Britain suspected official inspiration from incorrigible appeasers in the administration. For its part The Evening Standard made clear that it accepted the Guarantee reluctantly even in the qualified form it had ascribed to it, pointed to the major weakness in the Guarantee - the non-involvement of the Soviet Union - and distanced itself from Polish attitudes to Russia, thus signalling the consistent stance to be assumed by the Beaverbrook press in all future Russo-Polish difficulties. In the leader published the same day as "A Diplomatic Correspondent's" remarkable exegesis of Chamberlain's statement, the newspaper explained its own position:

"The Evening Standard does not believe that the present menace is diminished by the acceptance of heavy and unforeseeable responsibilities and commitments in Eastern Europe. Yet that is the path which, it seems, the British Cabinet is now to follow. Both the position of Poland in the crisis and the nature of Britain's pledge have still to be clarified. Certain facts however, may be assumed. First Russia is unlikely to join in the Guarantee. Polish statesmen believe that danger threatens them from the East as well as from the West. They fear Berlin but they do not wish to invoke the aid of Moscow. They hold to this view despite the fact that in eighteen years the Soviet Government has made no territorial claims against Poland or indeed made any threats against its neighbours whilst Germany has brought Eastern Europe to the verge of war. Second, regarding Britain's pledge, it is clear that Danzig and the Polish Corridor must be excluded from the new commitment. A short time ago the proposal to guarantee Polish independence would have run counter to British public feeling. The change in that feeling has not been so great that we should now be willing to extend British protection over the long disputed areas of the Free City and the Corridor. Nevertheless it must be admitted that the mind of the British public has changed. The new temper is due to the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the fall of Prague. The Evening Standard, whilst regretting the

move towards Eastern commitment, agrees nonetheless that it accords with the changing outlook of the British people."

Lest anybody assume that The Evening Standard's reading of Chamberlain's Commons statement could be lightly brushed aside as wishful thinking, that interpretation of Britain's new obligations seemed to acquire a new authority later that same Friday evening when Reuters News Agency issued a press release entirely in the same spirit. Even more alarming was the following day's Times leader, a leader to which reference has already been made but which we must now examine in greater detail and position in its wider context. According to The Times:

"...the Prime Minister's statement.....was one in which every word counted. It should be read and re-read if its exact implications are to be appreciated correctly.....The new obligation which this country yesterday assumed does not bind Great Britain to defend every inch of the present frontiers of Poland. The key word in the statement is not 'integrity' but 'independence'.....Mr Chamberlain's statement involves no blind acceptance of the status quo, his repeated references to free negotiation imply there are problems in which adjustments are still necessary.....The relative strength of nations will always and rightly be an important consideration in diplomacy.....This country has never been an advocate of the encirclement of Germany, and is not now opposed to the extension of Germany's economic activities and influence, nor to the constructive work she may do for Europe. Germany is admittedly bound to be the most powerful continental state."²⁵

This leader, coming on top of the insinuations of the previous evening's Reuters and Evening Standard's treatment of the Polish Guarantee appeared to confirm Polish suspicions of official inspiration. For the first time in his embassy in this country Raczynski descended in person on the Foreign Office on a Saturday morning where he found only the Deputy Under-Secretary at his desk (Halifax, R.A. Butler and Cadogan having departed for their usual weekends in the country). To Orme Sargent the Polish ambassador made his pointed reference to the Czech precedent for this was in every mind (as was the role played by The Times newspaper in the "betrayal" of that country) by proclaiming "We want no Runcimanism in Poland".²⁶ The imminent departure of Foreign Minister Beck was delayed until the position in London was clarified. On Saturday evening that clarification duly came about when the Foreign Office published a statement repudiating The Times interpretation of Chamberlain's Commons statement on

Poland of 31 March. Meanwhile Raczynski had been in contact with Hugh Dalton who led for the Opposition in the Commons on foreign affairs (and whom the Poles would (correctly) see as one of their consistent friends in the Labour leadership). Despite all disclaimers to the contrary Dalton was convinced that the contentious press reports had in fact been inspired. Having convicted the government itself of infirmity of purpose in pursuing the new anti-appeasement course on which it had set British foreign policy and of hankering still after some dishonourable deal with Germany at the expense of friendly countries. Dalton turned his invective upon The Times for the shameless part it was preparing to play in selling out yet another friendly state,

".....it appeared that The Times had been well primed... Now we have another Slav victim to be sacrificed on the altar of Printing House Square. Poles today, Czechs yesterday. These traitors of Printing House Square, this residue of the Clivedon Set, Hitler's Fifth Column in London....."²⁷

Answering in the same emergency debate for the government on Monday 3 April 1939 Simon repudiated the specific charge of official inspiration and dismissed The Times' interpretation of the Guarantee as an "unreasonable comment and quite unfounded gloss."²⁸

The Times found itself increasingly isolated at the centre of the storm it had unleashed, particularly when a letter was printed in the newspaper from Reuters correcting its earlier version of the meaning of Chamberlain's statement on Poland. This storm was by no means confined to Westminster for it extended to Fleet Street and to public opinion at large. Within Fleet Street much the most significant voice was that of The Daily Telegraph for the reaction of the progressive Fleet Street press was largely predictable as it had been sniping at The Times' foreign policy line on Germany for several years. And for their part, as we have seen, over the Polish Guarantee the Beaverbrook press was tarred with the same brush as Printing House Square. However, The Daily Telegraph was universally seen as an important Conservative newspaper, a newspaper which was accorded a special status by Conservative backbenchers who saw in this newspaper reflected not only their attitudes and prejudices but more importantly the attitudes and prejudices of their most important supporters. For, whilst The Times might be traditionally conceived of as the natural reading of the Tory elite The Daily Telegraph was seen as the natural reading of local Tory activists.

On the morning of Monday 3 April in a leader which studiously avoided naming The

Times headed "An Unequivocal Guarantee" The Daily Telegraph reminded Conservative frontbenchers preparing for that afternoon's foreign policy debate on the Polish Guarantee that national honour had been put in question by the confused events of the previous weekend. What the Conservative Party in the country required was that its government immediately sweep away all equivocations over the Polish Guarantee and restore forthwith Britain's reputation for plain-dealing in international affairs. According to the leader writer:

"the weekend has been occupied with a considerable amount of diplomatic activity directed to dispelling some mischievous misconstructions which have been placed in certain quarters on Mr Chamberlain's statement about our Guarantee to Poland. It has been asserted for example that the statement 'involves no blind acceptance of the status quo' and its essence is that 'independence' in negotiation must be restored to the weaker partner. If that indeed were the essence of the matter it would be difficult to imagine anything so well calculated to spell jubilation in Berlin and stupefaction not in Warsaw alone but in all the other capitals disposed to look to this country as a bulwark against aggression. For it can mean nothing else than that if Germany puts in a demand for Danzig or even the Corridor, our role of Guarantor of Polish 'independence' is to assist Poland in negotiating these territories away. That obviously makes sheer nonsense of the whole guarantee. The function of our new policy is not to aid and abet aggression but to intervene decisively and promptly with the whole of our resources the moment Poland finds it necessary in her 'vital interests' to fight in defence of her frontiers. Poland has already made it abundantly clear that she will fight whenever her frontier is violated and the moment she fights it is clear her independence is threatened. Moreover the palpable risk that a war with Germany must impose upon her is ample warrant that she will only fight when her independence is really at stake. A statement made by the Foreign Office to the Polish ambassador on Saturday night and circulated in London has allayed the intelligible anxiety felt by the Poles but it is nonetheless of urgent importance that the Prime Minister when he speaks in the debate this afternoon should make the most emphatic and categorical repudiation of the false impression that has been created."

On that same afternoon of 3 April, Neville Chamberlain duly spoke in the foreign affairs debate in the Commons and was present in his seat when Simon repudiated for the government any official complicity in inspiring the controversial Times leader of the previous Saturday, a leader which Churchill described from the government

backbenches as "sinister".²⁹ Chamberlain innocently expressed his "surprise" at the "misunderstanding" of the words that he had used on the previous Friday in the Commons by certain sections of Fleet Street, words he had thought a model of clarity.³⁰ "So thought the world", commented The Daily Telegraph on 4 April in a leader, "until a qualifying and limiting interpretation of the pledge was put forward by The Times" and stressed the need in future for absolute precision of language in all statements of British foreign policy involving any kind of commitment to action by Great Britain.

These statements by Simon and Chamberlain stilled for the moment at least the anxieties of those Conservative backbenchers and newspapers who had been alarmed at the apparent lack of resolve in certain ministerial circles in the new course of British foreign policy. As for the opposition parties they continued in their distrust of the sincerity of the government's conversion from the politics of appeasement to the politics of collective security.

Whatever the attitudes of contemporaries the material available to the modern scholar makes it difficult for him to exonerate Chamberlain's government from the charge of having misled the House in this matter.

In the first place though as editor Geoffrey Dawson manfully took the "flack" when the storm broke, the celebrated Times' leader of 1 April 1939 was written not by Dawson but by A.L. Kennedy, a senior Times staff writer (and himself a longtime advocate of appeasement) directly after an interview on the evening of 30 March with Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office.³¹ Most tellingly of all on the evening of Monday 3 April, only a few hours after Chamberlain had expressed to the Commons his innocent "surprise" at the weekend press "misunderstanding" of his Friday statement on the Polish Guarantee, the Prime Minister wrote to his sister,

"...I refused to be rushed into making a statement at 11.00 a.m. on Friday in spite of suggestions that everyone would get the jitters if they were not told everything at once. This gave a little time to redraft the statement in the light of the latest information and after further reflection. It was of course mostly my own and when it was finished I was very well satisfied with it. It was unprovocative in tone, but firm, clear but stressing the important point (perceived alone by The Times) that what we were concerned with is not the boundaries of states but attacks upon their independence. And it is we who will judge whether this independence is threatened or not."³²

According to all the normal rules of evidence these last sentences must be regarded as decisive. The Times interpretation of Neville Chamberlain's statement on the Polish Guarantee is confirmed by that Guarantee's author, and confirmed within hours of direct repudiation of that interpretation by the Foreign Office and by Simon, and indirect repudiation by implication by the Prime Minister himself, before the House of Commons. Moreover, the meeting of The Times leader writer with the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office on the evening before the statement was made, a meeting confirmed in the Cadogan Diaries,³³ provides the strongest possible circumstantial evidence of official inspiration of The Times exercise in exegesis, the very thing that had so alarmed the Polish ambassador.

These events dramatically illustrate the preferred initial position of the British government on the Guarantee it had extended to Poland. In this context the officially inspired leader in The Times must be seen as a "kite" flown in part to test public opinion and in part to prepare public opinion for a Guarantee to Poland that would in the event be much more circumscribed than a first reading of Chamberlain's dramatic Commons statement would appear to indicate. In a word Britain did not wish to commit herself to the defence of the existing Polish frontiers in the west any more than she had been prepared to do during the high tide of appeasement before the crisis of March 1939. In this sense appeasement as a policy was not dead, and the Prime Minister's critics were quite correct, the government had not changed its spots. And The Times for its part was quite correct to point out that Chamberlain's words made no reference to frontiers or to the territorial integrity of Poland only to the independence of the Polish state. Secondly Chamberlain's government at this stage was determined, as it saw it, not to lose control of British foreign policy. It alone would decide just when German moves against Poland constituted a threat so grave that they should be considered to imperil Polish independence and thus "trigger" the Guarantee.

This being the case why did the British government retreat from its own preferred position during the long negotiations of the summer of 1939 leading up to the Anglo-Polish Treaty of Mutual Security of 25 August 1939?

The first thing to note is that though it did retreat it did so only in part. The Anglo-Polish Treaty remains unusual amongst international treaties of mutual security to this day in that neither the open nor the secret clauses of that treaty make any reference at all to the territorial integrity of either contracting party. All material references are to the

"independence" of the signatories. This is precisely consistent with Chamberlain's original formulation of the original unilateral Polish Guarantee on 31 March 1939. Thus on the eve of the Second World War Britain was careful despite all Polish pressure to the contrary not to commit herself to the Versailles frontiers (or indeed to any other precise frontiers) of the Polish state. At Teheran a few years later Churchill would seek to exploit the freedom this allowed a British government to point out to Stalin that Britain's commitments to Poland did not commit her to any specific Polish frontiers.

That having been said Chamberlain was forced from his original preferred position in its second regard. This result was brought about by the obduracy of the Poles, an obduracy however in which they were also able to depend for support on the mass of public opinion and upon the support of the greater part of the British press. By mid 1939 British public opinion had turned entirely against any policy of seeking accommodation with Hitler's Germany by process of making concessions. Indeed it had grown convinced that the menace from Nazi Germany had to be met by firmness as Hitler clearly mistook reasoned compromise for weakness. Against this scenario the Polish virtues of courage and obstinacy were very much in tune with what British public opinion had grown to require in its own government. The British people had become convinced that Hitler could only be stopped by the threat of superior force. The Poles had made it repeatedly clear that unlike Hitler's previous victims they would fight if attacked - preferably with allies but alone if necessary. Moreover, they would fight for every inch of Polish soil for there would be no misguided attempts to buy Germany off.

In these circumstances the greater part of the British people and the greater part of Fleet Street were impatient of all subtle qualifications of the British stand that might suggest that Britain whilst guaranteeing Poland was not guaranteeing the whole of Poland or that Britain herself might so hedge her guarantee to Poland in the moment of renewed German-Polish crisis so as to transform the British Guarantee into a weapon to be used against Poland instead of by Poland. For their part in the negotiations of the summer of 1939 the Poles made it abundantly clear that they and they alone must be left to judge when German action threatened Polish independence. The Treaty, when it came to be signed in August, left it clearly up to each party separately to decide when German action did or did not constitute a threat to its independence and so when it might invoke the guarantee provided by the other party.

Some indication of the popular support enjoyed by the new course of British foreign policy following the declaration of the Polish Guarantee is given by the Gallup poll held

in April 1939 and published contemporaneously by The News Chronicle (the first British newspaper to publish and commission on a regular basis political opinion polls).³⁴ To the question "Is the British Government right in following a policy of giving military guarantees to preserve the independence of small European nations?", 72% of those questioned responded in the affirmative, 14% in the negative and 14% had no opinion (it should perhaps be recalled here that the Polish Guarantee had been rapidly followed by similar British guarantees to Greece and Rumania).

Such evidence of massive popular support for a policy of containing an expansionary Germany by extending security commitments to the countries of eastern Europe, and most importantly to Poland, did not of course entirely still the voices of those who still harboured serious reservations about the wisdom of a policy whereby Britain seemed to underwrite the inherently unstable frontiers, in their view, of a turbulent region. From this perspective it was folly to believe that the Versailles settlement in all its remaining particulars could, or should, be regarded as sacrosanct. On 4 May 1939 The Times gave voice again to those same reservations, this time with respect to Danzig alone, that caused the storm to break about her head earlier in the year,

".....So long as the writ of the League Of Nations ran (however imperfectly) over Europe, the arrangement which made of the Danzig territory a Free City worked on the whole to the general satisfaction and afforded a good example of the value of international control in certain special circumstances. With the unfortunate decline in the authority of the League both Berlin and Warsaw are pretty well agreed that some other arrangement has become necessary; and each seeks to obtain general control while assuring specified rights to the other.....

The Polish Government want to find a basis of negotiation. The difficulty is that the mere word negotiation has become distasteful to the present rulers of Germany who are in danger of driving Europe back to the violent methods of earlier epochs. Danzig is really not worth a war.....It is essentially a question for skilful diplomacy."

The phrase "Danzig is really not worth a war", carelessly or deliberately chosen, whichever may have been the case, proved dynamite in the feverish circumstances of May 1939 and brought down on Printing House Square a storm hardly less intense than that of one month earlier. For the Poles had made it abundantly clear that they regarded Danzig as well worth a war, that any attempt by Germany to terminate the Free City status of Danzig, and to absorb that city into the German Reich would be considered by

Warsaw a *casus belli*. The Times was widely attacked in Fleet Street as incorrigible in its commitment to appeasement and in the Commons Anthony Eden invited the government to dissociate itself from the position adopted on Danzig by Printing House Square. In Fleet Street only one section of the press chose to associate itself with The Times position and that predictably enough was the Beaverbrook press. Indeed so pleased was the Beaverbrook press with the phrase "Danzig is really not worth a war", that, though The Times itself carefully avoided using the offending phrase again, throughout the summer of 1939 Express newspapers used it again and again in leader after leader always being fastidious in giving its correct attribution.

Though the government again dissociated itself from a position adopted on the German-Polish dispute by The Times, its critics in Fleet Street continued to be sceptical as to the resolution of the ministry in its adoption of a policy of firmness towards Germany and suspected that in a supreme crisis in German-Polish relations the British government might be tempted to place pressure on Poland to yield rather than upon Germany to desist.

However, by the early summer of 1939 this was by no means the only reason why important sections of the press entertained doubts as to the government's total commitment to a policy of collective security against Nazi Germany. As early as 4 April a leader in The Manchester Guardian had commented with reference to Poland's own reservations about seeking diplomatic cooperation with Soviet Russia in the face of the German danger,

"Poland's fears are understandable enough....And yet from our own point of view a system of 'cooperation' between states against German aggression is incomplete without Russia. Indeed it might also be said it would be futile....Difficult though Poland's choice may be, it is the Government's duty, on the most practical grounds, to ensure Russia's participation in the general scheme....If we are to take enormous risks for Polish independence we cannot ourselves afford to be quixotic."

As the spring turned to summer, and as the summer itself matured, this would set the pattern for the anti-Conservative press. That press was strongly opposed to any suggestion that pressure should be applied to the Poles to enter into any negotiations with Nazi Germany. At the same time that press increasingly recognised that the key to the containment of Hitler's Germany on its eastern frontiers lay in Moscow and not in

Warsaw. This section of the press therefore favoured friendly pressure on Poland to modify its intransigent attitude towards the U.S.S.R. in the interests of a scheme of collective security in eastern Europe which must include Russia. Should that pressure prove however unavailing then this section of the press urged a British approach to Russia in Britain's own national interests over the heads of the Poles, though not of course concealed from them. Above all it pressed for urgency, for speed of action.

This was precisely the position put with great force and eloquence by Lloyd George in the Commons debate immediately following Chamberlain's announcement of the Polish Guarantee. In the Commons foreign affairs debate of 3 April the former Prime Minister had scarcely veiled his meaning that the Guarantee to Poland should not be understood as allowing the Poles any general veto over Britain's full freedom of action in foreign affairs. Whilst Lloyd George had welcomed the government's apparent conversion to the doctrine of collective security he had expressed grave concern at its diplomatic strategy for this seemed dangerously out of sequence. Only one power had the military capability of containing Germany on her eastern frontiers and that power, for all the courage and patriotism of her people and the resolution of her leaders, was not Poland. Therefore,

"If Russia has not been brought into this matter because of certain feelings the Poles have that they do not want the Russians there, it is for us to declare the conditions and unless the Poles are prepared to accept the only conditions with which we can successfully help them, the responsibilities must be theirs".³⁵

As the summer passed, the government's critics in the press saw no evidence of any sense of urgency and priority in the approaches that Chamberlain's government did in fact make towards Russia. The more charitable amongst them put this down to incompetence, the more suspicious put it down to something more sinister. Again it would be Lloyd George who would offer the most telling indictment of Chamberlain's foreign policy. This he would do in the first place from his seat in the Commons. However, he would also use *The Sunday Express*, to which he contributed a series of articles, to reach a far wider audience. From this platform Lloyd George savagely attacked government policy in articles widely quoted elsewhere in the press and syndicated abroad, particularly in the United States. In these articles Lloyd George portrayed the Prime Minister, for all his undoubted arrogance, as an innocent abroad in the field of foreign policy. He seemed incapable of realising that an agreement with Russia should have been the first move not the last move in any strategy of collective security in Europe. Moreover, a Prime Minister who had been prepared to fly twice to

Germany to negotiate with Adolf Hitler in person saw fit to negotiate with Soviet Russia via a delegation headed by a junior Foreign Office official (Strang) travelling by scheduled rail and ferry services like any casual visitor. Did not the Prime Minister realise the weakened character of the diplomatic hand he was playing? Given the facts of east European geography the extension of a unilateral British Guarantee to Poland against Germany meant that Britain had also guaranteed Soviet Russia against Germany but without any kind of quid pro quo - a truly remarkable diplomatic achievement. In part Lloyd George put down Chamberlain's performance to simple incompetence but for the major part he put it down to something altogether more sinister. The government by its tardy and insulting behaviour towards Russia, together with its "exaggerated" concern for Polish sensibilities, was in fact demonstrating that it did not really want an agreement with Soviet Russia because this ran counter to its ideological prejudices. Did the ministry think that the Russians were too stupid to comprehend these things and draw their own conclusions?³⁶

From this perspective Polish sensibilities were therefore being exploited as a cover to disguise the true reason for the diplomatic impasse that arose in the Anglo-Soviet negotiations that finally got off the ground in the high summer of 1939. The really fundamental reservations about Russia's acceptability as an ally lay with Britain's own policy-makers. And this was a most serious matter given the manifest popularity of the projected Anglo-Russian security pact amongst Britain's population at large. In April 1939 The News Chronicle had commissioned the following Gallup Opinion Poll question, "Are you in favour of a military alliance between Great Britain, France and Russia?", 87% of those questioned had replied in the affirmative, 7% in the negative, and 6% had no opinion.³⁷

The Poles for their part did what little they could to counter these damaging rumours and to gain a more positive press. On two separate occasions in the summer of 1939 Raczynski spent several hours at the house of Brendan Bracken with Beaverbrook seeking to change the press lord's hostile attitude towards Poland. These conversations proved totally unsuccessful as, in the ambassador's words, Beaverbrook "continued for months on end to attack Poland almost daily in The Express and Evening Standard". Whilst engaged in this abortive enterprise Raczynski also met at Bracken's house Winston Churchill and Lloyd George and found himself, again in the ambassador's own words, "obliged to argue vehemently to convince them that Poland was not in league with Chamberlain to prevent the success of the Anglo-Soviet defence negotiations."³⁸

The Guarantee To Poland And The British Press: The Forgotten Dimension

The contemporary press debate about the British Guarantee to Poland has now been dealt with at some little length. Two chief elements have been noted about that debate. In the first place, the British government was clearly most reluctant to give a specific guarantee of the existing "Versailles" frontier of Poland in the west including the special status of Danzig as they wished to prevent the Poles from exploiting such a guarantee to close off for all time the possibility of boundary revision. In short, London looked forward to a time when more reasonable men ruled in Berlin and, perhaps, less obdurate men governed in Warsaw. All policy options had therefore to be kept open for better times. The British government's domestic critics placed a different interpretation upon their government's reservations in this matter. They found it difficult to accept as plausible a guarantee that pledged Great Britain to defend Poland's political independence which did not at the same time guarantee that country's territorial integrity. They feared that this subtle distinction masked a residual commitment to appeasement on the part of H.M.G. which would manifest itself in British pressure on Poland to make concessions when the supreme crisis in German-Polish relations arrived. In the event, as we have already seen, the Anglo-Polish Treaty of Mutual Security, when it was finally concluded in August 1939, would be unusual amongst such treaties of security in that there was included no mutual guarantee of each contracting party's territorial integrity. The suspicions of Chamberlain's domestic critics in this regard would not be entirely stilled until Britain finally entered the war at Poland's side in September 1939. Even then they had been inflamed anew by the delayed nature of the British declaration of war against Germany immediately following the German invasion of Poland, a delay occasioned according to British sources by nothing more sinister than the need to co-ordinate policy with the French.

The second chief element in the press debate about the nature and significance of the British Guarantee to Poland in the spring and summer of 1939 revolved around the part to be played by Soviet Russia in the great scheme of things now that the British government had apparently abandoned the policy of appeasement in favour of a policy of collective security in the face of the German danger. Quite simply Chamberlain's critics saw Russian participation as absolutely essential to any credible scheme of collective security. Given the seemingly casual and low key nature of the British approach to what they saw as self-evidently the key prize yet to be won in the struggle against Germany - a security pact with Stalin - the Prime Minister's critics suspected that basically

Chamberlain's approach to Moscow was not inspired by goodwill but was an insincere gesture to appease for the moment a clamorous public opinion at home, whilst the mainlines of British policy were still decided by ideological factors, ideological factors that excluded Soviet Russia from playing an equal role in great power diplomacy in Europe still, as they had done a year earlier at the time of the Munich settlement.

Given the special context of this study one thing above all is remarkable about the character of this debate. Acres of newspaper space would be spent on deciding what the British Guarantee did or did not imply for Poland's frontiers in the west, and gallons of printer's ink would be used in discussing Russia's proper place in a scheme of collective security in Europe. Yet the reader will scan the British press in the summer of 1939 in vain to find any discussion at all about the eastern implications of the British Guarantee in the narrower sense. That is to say, there was simply no discussion at all in the press as to whether or not the British Guarantee applied in the case of aggression against the territorial integrity or the political independence of Poland from her great eastern neighbour, Soviet Russia. Yet in his statement of the original guarantee on 31 March in the House Of Commons Chamberlain had not specifically named Germany as the state against which the guarantee was exclusively directed. On that occasion, after informing the House that Britain had entered upon discussions with the Poles directed towards the signing of a mutual security pact between the two countries, the Prime Minister had continued,

"I now have to inform the House that during that period in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect."³⁹

On the surface at least the British Guarantee was not only unilateral and unqualified in the obvious sense, that *The Evening Standard* and *The Times* would subsequently query, but it was also on paper unilateral and unqualified in another sense that seems to have escaped Fleet Street's attention entirely. Read as spoken, the British government would have appeared to have extended a Guarantee of Polish independence against all comers not exclusively against Germany. A few days later, after hurried negotiations between the two sides, on 6 April *The Anglo-Polish Temporary Agreement On Mutual Assistance* was published. Again the document as published does not specifically limit Britain's

obligations to Poland exclusively to the case of a threat to Poland's independence emanating from Germany alone. On 13 April Britain issued Guarantees to Greece and to Rumania which in their formulation are virtually verbatim copies of the earlier Guarantee to Poland. Accordingly, Britain's obligations to these two countries are not directed against Germany alone for no specific potential aggressor is individually named. Finally when the Anglo-Polish Treaty Of Mutual Security came at last to be signed and published on 25 August 1939 we find the same broad pattern is maintained. Again the published document makes no specific mention of Germany but rather outlines each contracting party's obligations to the other in the event of aggression by "a European power". Now this could be said to be not so much a guarantee against all comers as a guarantee against aggression emanating from anywhere within the European continent. It would not apply for example if Britain herself suffered attack by Japan. Yet Russia despite her untidy geography, was conventionally considered to be a "European" power. Indeed historically this had been a point of pride and sensitivity in Russian diplomacy for the Russians had always resented references to Russia as an "Asiatic" power as slighting - as indeed such references were usually intended to be.

From one perspective the reasons why Fleet Street and indeed the attentive foreign policy public at large ignored these wider implications of the highly generalised language in which Britain's new obligations were couched are obvious. In the first place the British Guarantee to Poland, the other guarantees that followed, and the Anglo-Polish Treaty did not name Germany specifically out of deference for German sensibilities. Diplomacy after all should be diplomatic. Secondly, from the contemporary perspective it was manifestly the case that in the charged atmosphere of 1939 only one state posed a serious threat to Polish independence and to European peace and that state was Hitler's Germany. Stalin's Russia, however much it might dabble in internal subversion where opportunity arose, was seen as essentially a cautious defensive actor in international affairs which for a decade or more had given priority to internal development.

Given these general considerations it is not at all surprising that public opinion paid no attention at all to the purely abstract wider potential implications of the British Guarantee. These implications were after all entirely academic.

Yet however academic these implications might have been for Fleet Street in the summer of 1939, within the Foreign Office all eventualities had to be catered for, even if, after the event. As we have seen already the Foreign Office bureaucracy, at least below the level of the Permanent Secretary, Cadogan, played no part at all in the decision to issue the

original Guarantee to Poland. Twenty three years later the then Deputy Permanent Secretary, Sir Orme Sargent would write,

"My recollection is that it was an entirely personal act by Neville Chamberlain, who was furious at having been so grossly deceived by Hitler and simply went off the deep end without consulting anybody - 'Un mouton enrage' as the French saying is."⁴⁰

Much of the summer of 1939 would be spent by the Foreign Office in picking up the pieces scattered by an impulsive Prime Minister. One of these pieces was the precise significance of the Prime Minister's words for British policy towards Russia and towards the eastern provinces of the Polish state. In the first place, reluctant as Britain might be to guarantee Polish frontiers in the west she was doubly reluctant to guarantee Polish frontiers in the east that had been no part of the Versailles settlement at all but had been decided by the arbitrament of arms and flew in the face of all ethnographical principles. In the second place it was fully appreciated that the British commitment to Poland in itself marked a high-risk policy. To have moved even further, especially when circumstances did not require it, and guarantee Polish independence against both Germany and Russia would have been both reckless and unnecessary. Consequently we find that, in the Foreign Office deliberations of the summer of 1939 aimed at constructing from the Prime Minister's statement of 31 March a formal Anglo-Polish security pact, one of the consistent elements in the British position is to limit the British liability to the case of German aggression against Poland alone. Thus, in a memorandum written on one Foreign Office draft formula of the proposed treaty presented to the Cabinet's Foreign Policy Committee on 16 June 1939, Halifax, whilst rejecting Sir William Malkin's (the F.O.'s legal expert) handiwork on quite different grounds, does acknowledge that nonetheless the draft "achieves our main object - that of relieving us of the obligation to guarantee Poland against Russia."⁴¹ Moreover we need also to recollect at this point that it was the case in the summer of 1939 that the Foreign Office brief for work on an understanding with Poland was set in a general context that assumed that Russia would subsequently be brought successfully in to a general security system in eastern Europe. Indeed the rejected draft referred to above had been deliberately and carefully phrased by Sir William Malkin to allow for that very eventuality.

In short therefore the point to emphasise is that despite the many myths that were to circulate about this issue later, particularly after Yalta, the British government never at any time intended to guarantee Poland, either in her territorial integrity, or in her political

independence more narrowly, against all comers. In particular, the British were scrupulous to avoid any commitment to Poland against Russia. To this generalisation there was to be but one exception. In the light of later events the Poles would be able to mount a good case that in opening a discussion with Stalin about the future borders of Poland in the absence of his Polish ally at Teheran, as he did, Churchill was acting in breach of the Anglo-Polish Treaty Of Mutual Security of 25 August 1939. It is to that treaty and its implications for Anglo-Russian and Anglo-Polish relations that we must now turn.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, The Anglo-Polish Treaty And The Outbreak Of War

On 23 August 1939 the news of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact burst upon an astounded world. Fleet Street was taken completely by surprise, no newspaper having intimated at such a possibility of diplomatic revolution until the news of Ribbentrop's sudden flight to Moscow had itself broken. According to one source a Foreign Office spokesman would observe "Gentlemen, henceforth all 'isms' are 'wasms'".⁴² In these circumstances what had always been a high-risk strategy on Britain's part became even more so. Yet there was no organised attempt in the press to oppose the signature of the Anglo-Polish Treaty now that Hitler had removed Russia from the diplomatic equation, even on the part of the Beaverbrook press, whose previous criticisms of "reckless" guarantees in eastern Europe had now gained greater logical force. Instead Fleet Street gave a general welcome to the Anglo-Polish Treaty when it was at last published and signed on 25 August. At dawn on 1 September German troops crossed the Polish frontier. The whole press was unanimous in the support it offered for Poland. No word of reservation about Britain's commitment to Poland was to appear even in previously critical newspapers during the clash of arms, except that is in the Daily Worker as that newspaper began the painful process of re-aligning itself according to the requirements of Soviet foreign policy. Indeed there was considerable criticism of the delay in announcing the British ultimatum to Germany which did not come until 9.00 a.m. on 3 September and expired at 11.00 a.m. Even at the eleventh hour sections of the press clearly feared a dishonourable relapse into appeasement on the part of the British government.

The German victory against Poland proved more rapid than the press had anticipated. One reason for the rapidity and completeness of the German victory lay in another sensational development in a fast-moving situation. On 17 September Russian forces

crossed the Polish frontier in the east in the rear of the retreating Polish armies. At first some desperate hopes were expressed that the Soviet troops were moving forward in unsolicited support of the battered Polish forces but these hopes soon changed to anger as it became increasingly clear that the Russian moves were coordinated with those of Germany. All Fleet Street subsequently railed against Soviet perfidy in perpetrating this "stab in the back" against Britain's helpless ally.

Yet Russia's conduct in this matter raised issues important in the context of this study of a different character. As we have earlier seen the published clauses of the Anglo-Polish Treaty promised British intervention in aid of Poland if Poland's independence was threatened by a "European power". Russia was a European power. Did not the Treaty require therefore Britain to declare war upon Russia as she had earlier declared war on Germany? The policy makers on both sides knew of course what would be publicly revealed after Yalta, that the secret clauses of the Anglo-Polish Treaty in fact confined the mutual security guarantee solely and exclusively to the case of German aggression and to German aggression alone. An imprecision of language introduced originally into the Polish Guarantee out of deference to German sensibilities could, conceivably, prove embarrassing to British policy-makers in the transformed international situation of late September 1939. For whatever the policy-makers might know, Fleet Street, public opinion, and world opinion, had access only to the open clauses of the Anglo-Polish Treaty. However in the event there was at no time any significant campaign in the press in support of the extension of the war into a general anti-totalitarian campaign in eastern Europe. In fact Fleet Street's self-restraint in this matter affords a striking contrast to its reaction a few months later to renewed evidence of Soviet aggression in eastern Europe, this time against Finland. Nonetheless Russian action had rendered immediate and concrete a question that for the British press and public had previously been so remote and academic as to pass entirely unasked viz. In accepting an obvious obligation to defend Poland's independence against an all too visible German threat had Chamberlain's government also, wittingly or unwittingly, assumed a similar obligation to defend that independence from an entirely unanticipated Russian threat?

Events would allow the attentive foreign policy public to fit together the various elements necessary towards arriving at an answer to this question. Of course the secret clauses of the Anglo-Polish Treaty remained secret, as they were to continue to remain until after Yalta. Yet though the post-Yalta revelations would come as news to the mass public (and perhaps to others with imperfect memories) an intelligent reading of events and

exchanges in the Autumn of 1939 should have allowed the attentive observer to arrive very closely at the truth in this matter.

In the first place the British government did not in fact respond to Russian aggression against Poland with an ultimatum followed by a declaration of war as had been the response in the case of German aggression earlier. Secondly, Britain did not break off diplomatic relations with Russia, or threaten to do so. Indeed the immediate official response to Russian aggression was noticeably cautious. On 19 September 1939 the Foreign Office issued the following statement,

"The British Government have considered the situation created by the attack upon Poland ordered by the Soviet Government. This attack made upon our ally.....cannot be justified by the arguments put forward by the Soviet Government. The full implication of these events is not yet apparent, but His Majesty's Government take the opportunity of stating that nothing has occurred which can make any difference to the determination of His Majesty's Government, with the full support of the country, to fulfil their obligations to Poland, and to prosecute the war with all energy until their objects have been achieved."⁴³

This is a remarkably moderate statement, shorn as it is of any threat to take any kind of retaliatory action against Russia whether military, diplomatic or economic. Moreover, perhaps even more significantly, there was no obvious public pressure by Polish officials to get the British Government to take up a more robust stand against Russian aggression in eastern Poland, whatever might or might not have been the case in private. At this time for obvious reasons many interviews with various Polish spokesmen and representatives appeared in the British press. Not a word of criticism of official British policy appears in these interviews.

Of course all of the above might be circumstantial evidence that the British Guarantee to Poland was in fact less comprehensive than the published Treaty suggested. Alternatively, it might suggest that, though that Treaty was fully as comprehensive as its open text suggested, Britain for wider political reasons, with full Polish concurrence, had decided that it would be unwise to fulfil, at least immediately, her full contractual obligations under the Treaty. After all, to add Russia gratuitously to Britain's enemies would render the chief objective of the war - the liberation of Poland - even more remote than it had become already. Germany was the main enemy and everything must be done, despite all disappointments, to keep her isolated.

Evidence that this alternative interpretation of Britain's modest response to Russian aggression against Poland, plausible though it might have appeared, was far from the whole truth, was forthcoming in the following month in the press. On 20 October The Times published in its parliamentary columns the following exchange of the previous day in the House of Commons,

Mr Harvey (Combined Universities) asked the Prime Minister whether the reference to aggression by "a European power" in the agreement of mutual assistance signed by the United Kingdom on 25 August last were intended to cover the case of aggression by other powers than Germany, including Russia.

The Under-Secretary Of State For Foreign Affairs (Mr R.A. Butler): No Sir. During the negotiations which led to the Treaty between the Polish Government and H.M.G. it was agreed that aggression should only cover the case of aggression by Germany; and the Polish Government would confirm this.⁴⁴

On the face of it this would appear to be a sharp question by an attentive backbencher. However the Foreign Office archives show clearly that this was a "planted" question composed entirely within the Foreign Office, initialled by Butler as seen and approved by the Prime Minister, and then passed on to a cooperative backbencher for him to go through the necessary motions of subjecting the Executive to proper parliamentary scrutiny. In fact what the Foreign Office was here doing was revealing the real substance of the secret protocol of the Anglo-Polish Treaty four and a half years before that protocol would be formally published.

This would not be the only move made by the British Government at this time. In a Lord's reply of 28 October, Halifax, in response to recent events, condemned aggression in eastern Europe whatever its source but then went on to distinguish between German and Russian action in Poland on the grounds that the latter had not actually initiated the war. He had further noted that the Soviet forces had advanced only up to the Curzon line.⁴⁵ The implication in this last comment that Stalin had merely, in British eyes, used distasteful methods to remedy a legitimate grievance was not lost upon the Poles who made all due representations but did not go "public" in their expression of concern.

These moves by British policy-makers were of course intended as signals to Moscow that however reprehensible Britain considered Soviet behaviour to have recently been, as far

as London was concerned, the doors were still open to the reconstruction of a more positive relationship between the two countries. These signals were not lost on Moscow. Within his embassy Maisky noted Halifax's restrained Lord's statement with great interest.⁴⁶ For him it reflected, merely the latest in a number of such signals whose commencement he dated from the beginning of October 1939. For after a brief period of isolation following immediately upon Russian action against Poland, when the Foreign Office had to all appearances placed the Soviet Union under quarantine, the Soviet ambassador found his position transformed by the beginning of October as the usual diplomatic and social invitations suddenly flooded back, making the ambassador, in his own words, feel "something like a rich bride with many suitors".⁴⁷

One of the chief movers in this attempt to repair the relationship with Russia was Churchill. On 25 September, just eight days after the Soviet aggression against Poland, Churchill as First Lord had presented the cabinet with a long paper arguing that the new situation in the east by presenting Russia for the first time with the direct menace of Nazi power on her own frontiers contained many positive elements from the perspective of the western powers. These elements should be exploited.

On 1 October Churchill shared these thoughts with a far wider audience in his first wartime broadcast, a broadcast which had an obvious first purpose, to boost wartime morale, but also had a secondary diplomatic purpose as a signal, *en clair*, to Moscow,

"Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland instead of as invaders. But that the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate the line is there, and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail....

I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russia's national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest or the safety of Russia that Germany should plant herself upon the shores of the Black Sea, or that she should overrun the Balkan states and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of southeastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia."⁴⁸

After listening to this broadcast the Prime Minister wrote to his sister, "I take the same view as Winston, to whose excellent broadcast we have just been listening. I believe Russia will always act as she thinks her own interests demand, and I cannot believe she would think her interests served by a German victory followed by a German domination of Europe."⁴⁸

Fleet Street too was impressed by Churchill's broadcast and a number of newspapers gave the broadcast wide and sympathetic treatment. In their view a sober analysis of the international situation despite, all recent sensational developments, did point to the continuing existence over the longer term of a coincidence of interests between Russia and the western powers.

A particularly close listener to Churchill's broadcast was Maisky who saw in it the first signal that he could now emerge from that cold isolation into which events had cast him.⁴⁹ Telephoning Churchill he received a warm invitation to call at the Admiralty. Having broken the ice he found other ministerial invitations rapidly followed. Once again, as earlier in the year, Russia was being courted. Wherever he went he found himself assured that, as far as Britain was concerned the past was closed and that both sides should work to open a new chapter in Anglo-Soviet relations.

The press reflected this businesslike and unsentimental attitude towards Anglo-Soviet relations. On the one hand The Times repeatedly reminded its readers during the autumn of 1939 that British foreign policy never had and never should be based upon ideological considerations. On the other hand the more popular newspapers, particularly the Express newspapers, took a most friendly interest in the personality of the Soviet ambassador, who we find commended for his good humour and for the breadth of his familiarity with British culture, and reported his comings and going with a detail previously found unnecessary. Indeed we find at this time early stirrings of what would become later in the war a considerable Maisky personality cult, a minor version of the far more important cult of Stalin as jovial pipe-smoking "Uncle Joe".

However, this whole process of steadily recovering Anglo-Soviet relations would be brutally interrupted by the events of 30 November 1939 and it is to these that we must now turn for they were to lead to a shattering decline in Russia's standing with the British press.

Fleet Street And The "Winter War"

On 30 November 1939 Russian forces crossed the Finnish frontier. The Soviet Union as a consequence of this invasion suffered the worst press since Brest-Litovsk and certainly, as he would later acknowledge, the worst in Maisky's entire embassy.⁵⁰ From our perspective British reaction to the Soviet attack on Finland still remains puzzling in terms both of its intensity and its duration and it is puzzling for a number of reasons. In the first place Britain had no treaty obligations of any kind to Finland, as she had for example, to Poland. Indeed Finland between the wars, like the other Scandinavian states, had sought security in a policy of prickly neutrality. Secondly, Britain had never seen, still less declared, Finnish independence to be a vital national interest.

Yet British public opinion and the British press were manifestly more outraged by Russian action against Finland than they had been two months earlier by Soviet aggression against Poland. There was considerable public support for aid, including military aid, to Finland. In January 1940 a Gallup opinion poll reported that 74% of those asked supported military aid to Finland, whilst only 18% opposed such aid. Even more surprisingly a substantial 33% supported sending troops to help Finland, a policy which certainly would have entailed war with Russia.⁵¹ From one perspective this episode might show the difficulties of basing foreign policy in a democracy purely on considerations of realpolitik. Yet this would be to mislead. For the policy-makers seem to have fully shared the popular outrage at Soviet conduct and been intent upon basing policy on it. Britain and France were planning quite seriously to send troops to fight Russia alongside the Finns. As First Lord Churchill made an important contribution to these plans without apparently expressing any serious reservations about the policy underlying them, despite all he had said earlier about Russia. As for Fleet Street it was almost totally at one with public opinion and the policy-makers in the uncritical support it offered to official policy on help to Finland as that policy evolved. The single exception to this generalisation was, as we have seen earlier, the Beaverbrook press. Yet even that press freely acknowledged that it was standing against the great mass of public opinion. Never has Britain been so near to open war with Soviet Russia as she was in early 1940. That this was not in fact the outcome owed nothing to the policy-makers. The danger in fact passed because the obstinacy of the other Scandinavian states in their neutrality led them to refuse rights of passage and because of the suddenness of the Russo-Finnish truce of 12 March 1940.

The minority case - against intervention in aid of Finland - receive its ablest articulation in Beaverbrook's Evening Standard. On 6 December 1939 within a week of the opening of the war, in a leader entitled "Which Enemy" that newspaper argued,

"It is still our view that Germany is the paramount criminal. If we are to make the defeat of aggression everywhere our war aim, the march would not stop in Moscow. There is still another business in Asia which on that score would remain to be tackled. In short if we are to fight aggression everywhere, we would finish by defeating it nowhere. Therefore let us get the question clear. The dearest wish of Nazi Germany is that this country should become involved in combat with Russia. It is for this reason more than any other that Hitler has been prepared to condone and even approve Stalin's war on Finland."

As popular support for Finland grew The Evening Standard returned to its theme of the need for caution in the Baltic on 20 December,

"There is a demand in some quarters that Britain should send aid to Finland. Certainly no real dispute exists as to the righteousness of Finland's cause. She is a gallant nation fighting for her existence. We must not forget, however, that Britain is also fighting for her national existence. In our struggle, while we hope we retain all our friends, we cannot afford to multiply our enemies. We are grappling with the most formidable enemy of Europe's freedom. Finland therefore must look elsewhere. She will naturally turn to that great nation across the Atlantic with which she has such close ties of commerce and even of blood."

As British public opinion and the rest of Fleet Street grew even more inflamed against Russia The Evening Standard repeated yet again its argument for caution on 27 December,

"Finland, therefore, has the right to call upon the aid of other nations to provide her with those implements of war which may do something to counteract the Soviet superiority in manpower. Where will they come from? Britain is already engaged in a major war against the chief enemy of Europe's freedom. Upon our victory depend the liberties not of one small state but of a whole continent. It would be clear folly therefore for us to divert our energies from the first task to grapple with one of smaller dimension and significance. The best hope of Hitler is that Britain shall become engaged in war with Russia. He would like to see us engaged

through deeper implication in the Russo-Finnish war. Yet we can only undertake new commitments in the second contest at the expense of our effort to overthrow the monstrous tyranny of Nazism which bears the responsibility of unleashing all these horrors on mankind. We would be aiding an aggressor Power far more capable of extending its dominion over independent peoples than Soviet Russia. We would be risking the transformation of this war into a world crisis which might last perhaps for a decade and in which civilisation itself might splutter and expire. Finland must look to those great neutral states who watch our contest with the Nazis with sympathy, but without giving active support. We may justly claim that with France we are shouldering the heaviest burden which must be borne if peace is to be restored and liberty established throughout Europe. No true friend of freedom will ask us to turn aside from the main war with the main enemy."

From The Winter War To The German Invasion Of Russia

Following the Russo-Finnish armistice of March 1940 the overall tone of the British press towards the U.S.S.R. grew steadily more sober and realistic, particularly as evidence grew of German coolness towards the action that Stalin had taken against Finland. Moreover, it became more and more clear to the press that there was little danger, as had been feared earlier, of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact developing into a full-blown offensive and defensive treaty of alliance between Germany and Russia. As for public opinion at large it would demonstrate the selective nature of its enthusiasms by meeting the news of the incorporation of the Baltic states in the U.S.S.R. in the summer of 1940 with none of the outrage it had shown against Russia at the time of the Finnish war. The same can be said about Fleet Street. Of course both public and press had far more sensational events in the west to distract them by this time. At the same time the press began to pick up any straws in the wind that suggested difficulties between Moscow and Berlin. Increasingly, the adjective "unnatural" was employed to describe the "friendship" between the two states.

From time to time the press would cover conditions in German occupied Poland, carrying news about executions, reprisals and deportations. The news coverage of conditions in Russian occupied Poland was far more scant, though material about deportations east from eastern Poland and the Baltic states did appear in the London press. This serves to remind us of one important fact about contemporary perceptions by the reading public of conditions in occupied Europe during the Second World War as a whole. Though certain restrictions did of course exist, and it would be a gross distortion of reality to portray

Nazi Germany in this matter as little different from a liberal democracy, the fact remains that the British public was kept far better informed about events in German occupied Europe. including German occupied Poland, than they were about events in Russian occupied Europe. The Nazis were far freer than the Russians in granting press accreditation to journalists from neutral states. Moreover, once accredited, neutral journalists and war correspondents enjoyed far greater freedom of movement in German occupied Europe than did their counterparts in Russian occupied Europe. Although the German authorities did declare proscribed zones where foreign journalists were not free to travel, proscription was used far less lavishly by the Germans than by the Russians. Additionally, journalists from states friendly to, or allied with, Germany were sometimes granted facilities superior to those granted to the neutrals. These journalists in turn might write for home newspapers operating in political systems themselves better described as authoritarian rather than totalitarian. In part these differences between the press policies of the two occupying powers are to be explained in terms of distinctive features of Nazi political culture. The Nazis were less given to obsessive secrecy than the Russians. Moreover they were proud of the "discipline" that the New Order was bringing to the "chaotic" affairs of these lesser races of the east. Finally, the Germans were far less successful than the Russians in destroying the intelligence systems and courier networks that linked so often the peoples of occupied Europe with their governments-in-exile in London.

That having been said, nonetheless, disturbing news of alarming developments in Russian occupied Poland did reach western readers. On 1 February 1941 Ann Caldwell in the Christian Science Monitor reported on the Siberian exile of the two and a half million Poles who "had been herded like cattle from every district of Soviet controlled Poland. On 5 February a leader in The Manchester Guardian commented on the fact that "Today both Poland's conquerors carry off the unhappy Poles to work for them upon an Assyrian scale",and noted with special reference to eastern Poland, that "The methods by which the unhappy people are seized and transported are modelled on German plans". On 9 February 1941 F.T. Birchall reported in the New York Times that "mass deportations" were still continuing in eastern Poland and noted that these deportations always commenced, Nazi fashion with the intelligentsia and the professional classes. he further reported many heart-rending scenes and dozens of suicides as a whole people was forcibly uprooted.

Russia Enters The War

Though sensational in terms of their historic importance the events of 22 June 1941 should not have come as any surprise to close readers of the British press for that press had carried many signs for several months beforehand of a steady deterioration in German-Soviet relations. Of course it is perfectly possible that the more sceptical elements within the attentive foreign policy public put these press reports down to wishful thinking on the part of the press or, as Tass itself frequently did, to British government inspired "provocations". Whatever the case the British press in the spring and early summer of 1941 carried repeated rumours of an impending clash between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. As we have seen the British press had long portrayed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as "unnatural" masking as it did fundamental ideological, territorial and strategic differences between the two powers. The press took the view that Stalin would go a very long way to appease Germany, but as Hitler was insatiable, inevitably there would come a time when Russia could appease no more without being reduced to satellite status. This was when the break would come. In particular it simply could not be in the long term security interests of Russia to allow Germany to establish herself as the mistress of eastern Europe. At some time Stalin would have to make a stand as others had been compelled to do before him. It was then that Germany would attack, and Russia would be ready.

This last point is of some little interest in view of what we now know of the confusion that reigned at the top in Russia under the immediate impact of the German onslaught of 22 June 1939 from Soviet historical sources.⁵² For in the months running up to the German invasion of Russia the British press took it as axiomatic that a ruler as experienced and cunning as Stalin, whatever Tass might say in public about British "provocations", would privately place no credence at all in the profuse declarations of goodwill towards Russia emanating from Berlin.

The probable flashpoint of increasing Russo-German tension was seen to be the Balkans. This region traditionally had been an area of maximum sensitivity for Russian policy-makers both in terms of security and prestige. Therefore Soviet inaction in the face of the most open and insolent German moves in regard to Bulgaria and Yugoslavia was watched with fascination. The Times would note the careful repudiation by Tass of all post hoc German claims that Russia had connived at or condoned each forward German move in the Balkans. It also noted the admiration that the Soviet press was freely allowed to express for British morale and resolution in the face of sustained

German bombing. On 12 March 1941 the newspaper's diplomatic correspondent reported that "once again German officers and diplomats are whispering 'in the strictest confidence' that the Wehrmacht will invade Russia" and that all that remained unsettled was the precise day of reckoning. On 1 May 1941 the same correspondent reported that German diplomacy's immediate task under Hitler's directive was to get Germany's potential allies, like Rumania and Finland, into line for what German propaganda intended to present as an international crusade to save European civilisation from the scourge of Bolshevism. German troops throughout Europe were being moved to concentrations in the east with little apparent attention to secrecy. Senior German military and diplomatic figures throughout Europe's capitals were openly boasting of the coming day of settlement with Bolshevism. All of this according to the correspondent faithfully reflected Nazi diplomatic method where before resorting to military means you first attempted to force concessions by intimidation. Even at this late stage Hitler would prefer the fruits of war without war, of course, though the German dictator had by now little confidence that Germany's difficulties could be settled or resolved by "diplomatic" methods. As for Stalin himself, the correspondent was confident that little of all of this would be lost upon the Russian leader, treating his readers to a quotation from "Dombey And Son" to emphasise his point, "Rough and tough is old Joe, sir but sly - deviously sly."

In fact in these months the British government had been receiving a stream of intelligence reports from a variety of reliable sources all pointing to an impending German strike against Russia. On 10 June 1941 the Soviet ambassador was summoned to the Foreign Office where Cadogan dictated to him full details of German troop movements towards the Russian frontiers together with instruction from H.M.G. that this most sensitive military information be transmitted immediately back home to the highest levels of his government. This Maisky did. In retirement he would record his personal astonishment at the outcome.⁵³ On 14 June 1941 the Soviet news agency Tass published the following communique which was itself reproduced in most of the British press,

"Even before the arrival of Sir Stafford Cripps, British ambassador in the U.S.S.R., in London, and particularly after his arrival, there began to appear in the British and foreign press generally rumours about 'the imminence of war between the U.S.S.R. and Germany'....In spite of the evident senselessness of the rumours, responsible circles in Moscow have nevertheless thought it necessary in view of the stubborn circulation of these rumours to authorise Tass to state that such rumours are clumsily cooked up propaganda by forces hostile to the U.S.S.R.

and to Germany....

....Tass therefore states that....Germany is just as unswervingly observing the conditions of the Soviet-German Pact of Non-Aggression as is the Soviet Union; in view of which, in the opinion of Soviet circles, the rumours about Germany's intention to tear up the Pact and undertake an attack on the U.S.S.R. are devoid of any foundation, while the movement in the recent period of German troops, set free from operations in the Balkans, to the northern and north-eastern districts of Germany is due, it should be supposed, to other reasons, not connected with Soviet-German relations."⁵⁴

The response of the British press to this communique is interesting. Nobody appears to have accepted it on its surface value, as being a genuine reflection of Soviet perceptions of Nazi intentions. So strong was the belief that amongst Stalin's defects of character credulity was not to be included, that this most straightforward of interpretations of the communique, that Stalin simply believed the German reassurances, was entirely excluded from press discussion.

The events of 22 June 1941 made German intentions concrete for all to see. That same evening Churchill broadcast over the B.B.C. promising aid to Russia in her moment of trial. The past was the past. Though this speech was entirely Churchill's own work it followed discussion of his response over lunch with his guests, Cripps, Cranbourne and Beaverbrook, all of whom were in broad accord with his message. The press the following day gave the speech its unanimous approval. In doing this the press reflected public opinion. Whilst the Gallup opinion poll taken in April 1941 had shown that 82% of the population were against the opening of any peace negotiations with Germany, the same poll had shown that 70% of the population were in favour of any moves that might encourage friendlier relations with Soviet Russia.⁵⁵

Britain And Russo-Polish Rapprochement 1941

Quite apart from the question of material aid to Russia the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the war had presented H.M.G. with an immediate diplomatic problem. A state of war still existed between Russia and Britain's ally Poland. This situation was rapidly resolved by the Polish-Soviet Agreement of 30 July 1941, an agreement to regularise the situation that owed much to Eden's mediation. Eden was widely praised in the press for this and the Polish government-in-exile was also congratulated for its evident willingness to bury the

hatchet in regard to past Soviet conduct. The Agreement itself was however based upon a significant degree of studied ambiguity in order that both sides would sign it.

By the terms of the Agreement the Soviet government promised to seek out and return all Polish citizens in due course. At the same time it accepted that the boundaries of the Soviet Union in Poland as of June 1941 "had lost their validity". The Agreement led to the resignation of several ministers from the Polish government-in-exile, led by August Zaleski, formerly Foreign Minister, on the grounds, in particular, that the refusal of the Soviet Union to give explicit recognition to Poland's frontiers as of August 1939, as established by the Treaty of Riga of 1921, could only store up dangerous confusion for the future. It was the opinion of this group that Sikorski was making a major tactical blunder in this matter for Russia was likely to be at her most yielding precisely at this time when she was still staggering from the opening German onslaught.

The resigning Polish ministers got little sympathy from the British press and some of them were portrayed as intransigent Polish landlords and militarists unable to meet the challenge of the times and rise above the traditional Polish Russophobia, as had Sikorski himself. Even the Daily Mail on 31 July welcomed the Russo-Polish Agreement as a "victory for commonsense". The following day the same newspaper described Zaleski's resignation from the Polish Foreign Ministry as "no real loss" but "on the contrary a gain" noting sourly that Zaleski had long "not been a helpful member of the Polish cabinet."

The official attitude of the British government was expressed in a Commons statement on 30 July by Eden,

"It is stated by paragraph 1 of the Soviet-Polish Agreement that the Soviet Government recognise the Soviet-German treaties of 1939 concerning territorial changes in Poland as having lost their validity. The attitude of His Majesty's Government in these matters was stated in general terms by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on 5 September 1940 when he said that His Majesty's Government did not propose to recognise any territorial changes which took place without the free consent and goodwill of the parties concerned. This holds good with the territorial changes which have been effected in Poland since August 1939, and I informed the Polish Government accordingly in my official Note."⁵⁶

Close listeners to Eden's statement would note how carefully the Foreign Secretary avoided committing the British government to the restoration of Poland's 1939 frontiers in the east.

Aid To Russia

When Churchill had succeeded Chamberlain as Prime Minister in the summer of 1940 his succession had been met with gratification by the Poles for Churchill unlike the other leading candidate, Halifax, was entirely untarnished by any history of appeasement. Nonetheless there were certain aspects of Churchill's character that gave the Poles cause for concern. Prominent amongst these was Churchill's friendship going back thirty years with Beaverbrook. There was much discussion at the time as to what would be the part that Beaverbrook would play in a Churchill administration. It was generally accepted that he would be appointed to high office. Scarcely less alarming were the rumours circulating at the same time that Churchill intended also to call again upon the services of his old chief Lloyd George in some important capacity.

For twenty years the Poles had regarded Lloyd George as amongst their most influential enemies in the English-speaking world. As Prime Minister Lloyd George had bitterly opposed what he had regarded as Polish imperialism⁵⁷ at Versailles. And as we have seen he had opposed Pilsudski's adventure in Russia after the war. From the Opposition benches he had bitterly attacked Polish foreign policy at the time of Locarno. He had opposed Polish membership of the Council of the League Of Nations. More recently readers had been reminded of the Welsh statesman's animosity towards Poland when as his contribution to the 'battle of the memoirs' he had published in 1938 his history of the peace conference. This history had been syndicated for world wide publication in extract form in the press. In the U.K. these extracts had been published in the Beaverbrook press. This is how Lloyd George portrayed Poland at the Versailles Conference,

"No one gave more trouble than the Poles..... Drunk with the new wine of liberty supplied to her by the Allies she fancied herself once again the resistless mistress of Central Europe. Self-determination did not suit her ambitions. She coveted Galicia, the Ukraine, Lithuania and parts of White Russia. A vote of the inhabitants would have emphatically repudiated her dominion. So the right of all peoples to select their nationhood was promptly thrown over by her leaders. They claimed that these various races belonged to the Poles through the conquering arm of their ancestors."⁵⁸

As we have seen, Lloyd George would be the first leading public figure in April 1939 to point to the central weakness of Chamberlain's new policy of guarantees in eastern Europe - the failure to achieve as a first, not a last step, an understanding with Russia. In the process he had made it clear that in his opinion this vital understanding with Russia which alone would give credibility to the new course of British foreign policy must on no account be placed in jeopardy by British indulgence of Polish sensitivities. And at Bracken's house in the early summer of 1939 he had accused Raczynski of conspiring with Chamberlain to sabotage all prospects of an Anglo-Soviet Treaty.⁵⁹ The outbreak of war stilled Lloyd George's criticisms of Polish policy but only temporarily as long as the fighting lasted. As soon as that was over Lloyd George returned to the attack again. Having paid a somewhat perfunctory tribute to the gallantry of the ordinary Polish soldier, Lloyd George offered the readers of Beaverbrook's Sunday Express his conclusions as to the real reasons for Poland's rapid collapse. These were largely internal and had much to do with the "wretched class government" of the state. Poor military leadership combined with the general inefficiency of Polish society had done the rest.⁶⁰ Even more provocative was Lloyd George's attitude to the Russian action in eastern Poland. On 24 September 1939, within days of the Soviet aggression against Poland, Lloyd George asked readers of the Sunday Express,

"What about the Russian invasion?...At first it was regarded as a stab in the back....Nothing has occurred to justify the first impression that it is another partition of Poland between Russia and Germany. White Russia is not Polish. Neither is the Ukraine. They are both inhabited by a totally different race from the Poles. White Russia was conquered by the Poles from Russia in the war of 1920. The Polish Ukraine was annexed by the Poles in 1919 by force of arms, despite the armed resistance of the Ukrainian people of that province. The Supreme Council Of The Allies in Paris in 1919 protested vehemently against the action of Pilsudski in forcibly annexing this territory. The Russians are not claiming one square yard of purely Polish ground."

Having challenged in this way the legitimacy of Poland's title deeds to her eastern provinces Lloyd George then moved on to place wider political considerations before his readers, confessing his own doubts about the policy followed by the inter-war British governments of excluding Russia from participation in the management of European affairs, and quoting approvingly from the Balfour Note of 1916. According to that Note,

"If Germany were relieved of all fears of pressure from Russia, and was at liberty to turn her entire strength towards developing her western ambitions France and Britain might well be the sufferers: and I am by no means confident that cutting off Russia from her western neighbours might not divert her interests towards the Far East to an extent which British statesmen could not view without some misgivings. The more Russia is made a European power rather than an Asiatic power the better for everyone."

Alarmed that Lloyd George's prejudices might win over uninformed opinion if they remained unrefuted Raczynski immediately penned a reply to Lloyd George's charges, a reply that the Sunday Express declined to print. However the Polish ambassador coupled this with an open letter to Lloyd George rebutting the former Prime Minister's views which was widely published elsewhere in the press.⁶¹

As the weeks and months passed after Churchill's accession to the Premiership it in fact grew steadily clearer to the relief of the Poles that, for whatever reason, Lloyd George was not about to return to high office.

Beaverbrook, however, was another matter. On 14 May 1940 Churchill appointed Beaverbrook Minister For Aircraft Production with cabinet rank. From the Polish perspective this was not good news but they were at least able to take some comfort from the fact that Beaverbrook's new brief would keep him busy and was some distance from the field of foreign policy. Raczynski had long been troubled by the unfriendly attitude of the Beaverbrook press to Poland, a concern which dated back to the days of peace.⁶² More recently, writing above his own name in the Sunday Express of 31 March 1940 upon British war aims, Beaverbrook had made it abundantly clear that in his view there could be no question of a return to the status quo ante in eastern Europe; that in particular there could be no question of replacing upon their pedestals such inherently unstable states as inter-war Czechoslovakia and Poland.

The announcement at the beginning of September 1941 that Lord Beaverbrook would be the leader of the British half (the American half to be led by Harriman) of the high-powered Anglo-American Aid delegation to Russia was therefore met with profound misgivings in Polish quarters. By the time of the announcement the Poles had gained a further reason for their general interest in the composition of the delegation to Russia.

Under the terms of the Russo-Polish Agreement of 30 July 1941 both parties had agreed to the formation of a Polish army to fight under over-all Soviet military direction beside the Red Army on the eastern front. This Polish army was to be assembled from the remnants of the Polish forces taken into captivity in Russia in September 1939 and now newly released under the terms of the Agreement. The Polish government had long had fears about the physical condition of these men, quite apart from their general fears as to the condition of the Polish civilians who had suffered dispersal throughout Russia following the mass deportations from Poland's eastern provinces. As the former prisoners of war began in dribs and drabs to arrive at the agreed assembly points throughout Russia and contact was established with the representatives on the ground of the Polish government-in-exile, Polish alarm at their distressed condition grew. The government-in-exile passed on their intelligence in this matter to Whitehall so that their own policy in regard to the fulfilment of their obligations under the terms of the Russo-Polish Agreement be not misunderstood. For their own part they would grow over time insistent that there could be no question of throwing a Polish army into battle on the eastern front until that army had been restored to proper physical condition, properly trained and properly equipped. It was at this point that the question of aid to Russia came into the picture.

The Polish objective was quite simple. They wished to see an element of any aid to Russia agreed by the Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission earmarked for direct onward transmission to the new Polish army being formed in Russia.

The Poles impressed their position directly upon the British and the American governments. To the best of their abilities they sought to impress it upon both Beaverbrook and Harriman. In the event their attempts were to prove completely unavailing, the historical record showing that in negotiations with the Russians over aid neither Beaverbrook nor Harriman chose even to raise the matter of a possible special provision for the projected Polish army for discussion. Though at the time the Poles could have no direct knowledge of just how black the picture was they were soon informed of the outcome of the aid negotiations in so far as their direct interests were concerned. No aid would be specially earmarked for the Polish army in Russia. The new Polish ambassador to Russia, Kot, had no doubt as to whom was chiefly responsible for this outcome. In the ambassador's view not only had Beaverbrook completely dominated the British delegation to the extent that it had become a one-man band but Beaverbrook had dominated Harriman too. And Lord Beaverbrook had at no time disguised his indifference to the whole position of the Poles on aid and his intention

that nothing at all be allowed to jeopardize the success of the aid talks.⁶²

Whatever the significance of Beaverbrook's personal views on the outcome of the aid talks we here touch upon a more general difference at this time between British and Polish perceptions of the Russian position. The Poles believed that Russia's perilous military position rendered her more susceptible to pressure carefully applied from the west to act in all inter-Alliance matters in a reasonable and civilised manner (as the Poles saw these things). In this sense, to borrow a phrase, they saw Russia's difficulties as Poland's opportunity. In contrast, Churchill was obsessed throughout the first year of the war on the eastern front with the danger that Russia might be forced to leave the war. She might be simply overwhelmed by the force of German arms as had so many other countries earlier, dismembered and colonised as Nazi ideology prescribed. Or there might be a repetition of Brest-Litovsk. Worst of all from the British perspective if there was no rapid military decision one way or the other in the east, Germany and Russia might agree to a sudden compromise peace, whereby the U.S.S.R. entered the war on the German side as an effective satellite of Germany, Stalin had surprised the world once before and might be forced to do so again.

Churchill had the best of reasons for his fears about Russia. In his first message to Churchill after the German invasion Stalin on 18 July 1941 had pressed upon Churchill the urgent need for a second front in Europe. In his reply Churchill had tried to explain why this was not yet possible in any immediate terms. Stalin had not allowed the matter to rest there but on 15 September 1941 Stalin had made the following remarkable suggestion, a suggestion that would never be repeated in the two leaders long wartime correspondence,

"It seems to me that Great Britain could without risk land in Archangel twenty-five to thirty divisions, or transport them across Iran to the southern regions of the U.S.S.R. In this way there could be established military collaboration between the Soviet and British troops on the territory of the U.S.S.R."⁶³

The historical irony of this episode was not lost upon Churchill. The chief villain of western capitalist military intervention in Russia at the time of the Revolution found himself embarrassed at having to explain in 1941 to a sceptical Stalin just why he was compelled to decline the latter's pressing invitation to send a fully equipped British army into Russia. This was role reversal with a vengeance.

From the more immediate perspective of the policy-maker this event further impressed upon Churchill just how desperately Stalin viewed the military situation at the front. Everything therefore must be done to keep Russia in the war at this desperate juncture and nothing must be done that might possibly sour or damage Anglo-Soviet relations. From the British perspective therefore it would be highly dangerous to attempt to pressure Russia on any issue, great or small, at the time of Russia's maximum military peril. The Poles never seem to have fully appreciated this basic distinction between their views on how negotiations with Russia were best conducted and the British view. Indeed the British view could be said to be quite the opposite to their own. For the British response to Russia's peril from 1941 was to very seriously consider making yet further concessions to Russia as desperate inducements to keep Russia in the war.

This is graphically illustrated by an issue of far greater long term importance to the Poles than their disappointment at the cavalier treatment given to their interests by the Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission.

From the first moments after Russia's entry into the war the British had been pressed to recognise the 1941 frontiers of the Soviet Union by the Russians. In September 1941 the Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission had found themselves pressed on the same issue though the matter fell entirely outside their remit. In December 1941 Eden when he went to Moscow found himself almost as much pressed on the issue of frontiers as on the issue of the second front. All of these pressures the British government had withstood on the general grounds that Churchill had previously laid before the House of Commons, viz. that H.M.G. would extend recognition to no frontiers changed under the impact of war which were not the result of freely arrived at agreements between the states concerned. That Britain should stick to this position was obviously a matter of the most direct concern to the Polish government-in-exile. Moreover whilst by the secret protocol of the Anglo-Polish Treaty of Mutual Security of 25 August 1939 Britain might have detached herself from the position of guaranteeing Poland's eastern frontiers, she had also pledged herself by that same protocol not to enter into any agreement with any third power whereby Polish interests might be compromised.

Despite all this, by the spring of 1942 so desperate had become the position on the eastern front that the British government was forced to re-examine its hitherto inflexible position of principle on the question of postwar frontiers. The loudest voice in the cabinet in favour of strengthening Russia's resolution to continue the war by granting British

recognition of Russia's 1941 frontiers was Beaverbrook's. The cabinet minutes for 6 February 1941 record him as urging,

"We should therefore (subject of course to the views of the U.S.) agree to Stalin's request....we should hold out the hand of friendship. So far Russia has contributed far more to the war effort than the U.S.A. to whom we have made such frequent concessions."⁶⁴

Within a month, unknown to the Poles, Churchill himself had moved to the same position. On 7 March 1942 Churchill wrote to Roosevelt,

"If Winant is with you now he will no doubt explain the Foreign Office view about Russia. The increasing gravity of the war has led me to feel that the principles of the Atlantic Charter ought not to be construed so as to deny Russia the frontiers she occupied when Germany attacked her. This was the basis on which Russia acceded to the Charter, and I expect that a severe process of liquidating hostile elements in the Baltic States etc., was employed by the Russians when they took these regions at the beginning of the war. I hope therefore that you will be able to give us a free hand to sign the treaty which Stalin desires as soon as possible. Everything portends an immense renewal of the German invasion of Russia in the spring, and there is very little we can do to help the only country that is heavily engaged with the German armies."⁶⁵

In his memoirs Churchill records "The President and State Department however, held to their position, and, as will be seen, we eventually arrived at a better conclusion. A more cordial period now intervened in Anglo-Russian relations."⁶⁶ In the face of this clear evidence of the United States refusal not only to move herself at this stage in the war from the clear principle of non-recognition of boundary changes that were the result of the war itself, but of her refusal to condone a British move in that direction, Russian pressure on Britain in the matter of frontiers temporarily relaxed.

By the time that Churchill wrote to Roosevelt Beaverbrook had resigned from the cabinet and had launched his press campaign for the immediate opening of a second front to the irritation and embarrassment of Churchill and his colleagues. However, in the context of this study there is also an element of irony about Beaverbrook's campaign. For although they were scrupulous in not interfering in domestic British politics by participation in the

campaign, the second front issue was perhaps the only issue on which the Poles agreed with Beaverbrook (and indeed with the Russians). The Poles too did not believe that strategic bombing could win the war, nor did they believe that it could be won on peripheral battlefields outside Europe. The war would be decided upon the battlefields of Europe and nowhere else. Accordingly, the Poles had always made it clear, scrupulous though they were to avoid any direct criticism of the British government, in interviews with the press, on which side they stood in the greatest strategic debate of the Second World War.⁶⁷

The Poles themselves looked upon Beaverbrook's "Second Front Now" campaign with some suppressed sympathy. However, their reasons for favouring the early opening of a second front in Europe were quite different from those of Beaverbrook and, of course, those of the Russians. Quite simply, the Poles, in view of their suspicions of Russia had the most obvious interest that when the day of final victory of the Grand Alliance over the Axis dawned, the Anglo-American armies should be positioned as far to the east as possible. These of course were not reasons that the Poles could articulate publicly through the British press.

Katyn And The Russo-Polish Rupture

Throughout the rest of 1942 and into 1943 Russo-Polish relations continued troubled. As the situation on the eastern front stabilised Russia proved less and less accommodating to the Poles. Difficulties were made for the Poles in the matter of recruitment to the projected Polish army on the eastern front. This army had by now become a cause of contention rather than cooperation between the parties. As, according to the Russians the Poles were unwilling to fight in the east without their army being allocated an entirely unfair share of the severely limited resources of military equipment and provisions available, then it was perhaps better, as the British by this time had come to suggest, that the Polish army in Russia be evacuated through Iran. In August 1942 all the Polish welfare offices in Russia were suddenly closed down by the authorities and 150 Poles were arrested and their archives seized on suspicion of espionage and other anti-Soviet activities.

One factor contributing to this steady deterioration in Russo-Polish relations was the mystery of the fate of several thousand Polish officers who had fallen into Russian hands in September 1939. Under the terms of the Russo-Polish Agreement of July 1941 all Polish prisoners of war were to be released. Yet none of the Polish officers from the

camps concerned had for some reason managed to arrive at the Polish assembly points in Russia. The Poles approached the Russians directly on the matter, to little effect. They kept the British government well informed as to their profound concern as to the fate of these men. As the thousands of Polish private soldiers, together with those Polish officers who had been interned in camps and prisons elsewhere in Russia, were debriefed as to their experiences since their first capture, by the Polish authorities, the mystery of the missing Polish officers grew. They simply seemed to have disappeared from the face of the earth.

On 13 April 1943 German radio broadcast the news of the discovery of mass graves containing the bodies of several thousands of Polish officers in the forest near the village of Katyn. All the evidence according to the German radio pointed to the fact that these officers, all with their hands bound behind their backs, had been executed at the time that Katyn and its surrounding region were under Soviet, not German control. On 15 April Moscow radio repudiated Goebbels "foul fabrications" together with all his "lies and calumnies" and placed the responsibility for the fate of the fallen Polish officers squarely upon the "German-Fascist hangmen" who had occupied the region to the west of Smolensk where Katyn lay in the summer of 1941.⁶⁸ On that same day General Anders cabled the Polish government in London from his H.Q. with the Polish army in the Middle East to say that the news confirmed his worst fears. He reminded his government that his own persistent enquiries about the whereabouts of the missing officers made upon his own release from captivity in Russia had been met by a wall of evasion, and that Sikorski's own direct appeal in person to Stalin when the former had been in Moscow had been met by the response from the Soviet leader that the Polish officers "had probably escaped".⁶⁹ On 17 April the Polish government issued an official communique denouncing the German propaganda machine's exploitation of the affair but which then continued, "The Polish Government have instructed their representative in Switzerland to request the International Red Cross to investigate the true state of affairs on the spot."⁷⁰ In a note to the Soviet ambassador on 20 April the Polish Government made one more direct appeal to the Soviet Government for an explanation of the fate of the missing officers. The Polish request to the I.R.C. had in fact been delivered on the day of its announcement, 17 April. Unknown to the Poles on the previous day, 16 April, the I.R.C. in Geneva had received an invitation from the German Red Cross inviting the I.R.C. to investigate the Katyn discoveries promising all help with facilities. The I.R.C., however, could only act in such a matter with the concurrence of all parties concerned. It pointed out therefore to both Germans and Poles that no approach had yet been received from the Soviet Union in this matter, to complete the circle so that the I.R.C. could then

commence action.

In fact no such approach to the I.R.C. from Moscow would be forthcoming. Instead in an editorial of 19 April 1943 under the heading "Hitler's Polish Collaborators" Pravda charged that the coincident approach of both the Germans and the Poles to Geneva in a common act of provocation provided the final proof of the long suspected collaboration that had existed between the German and Polish fascists. On 26 April Russia severed diplomatic relations with Polish government-in-exile.

The Katyn affair promised to provide Goebbels with perhaps his greatest propaganda coup if it could be exploited to poison not simply relations between Russia and the Poles but if the whole Polish issue could be exploited to poison relations between Moscow on the one hand and London and Washington on the other. In default of an I.R.C. investigation the Germans therefore went ahead with launching their own investigation of the background to the massacres at Katyn Wood, being very careful to ensure that the investigating team included distinguished experts from the neutral countries and that their investigations were well covered by representatives of the neutral press. Meanwhile the German press and radio gave the operations at Katyn priority coverage over a period of several weeks.

The Katyn affair gave the Germans their best occasion so far in the war to attempt to execute a basic tactic in their diplomatic strategy viz. the shipwrecking of the Grand Alliance on the rock of Poland. One element necessary for this strategy to succeed was the successful engagement of Allied public opinion. The Katyn affair promised, if well handled, to provide just that issue that might re-awaken those traditional fears of the horrors of Bolshevism that still lay just below the surface consciousness of important sectors of public opinion within the liberal democracies. If that atavistic response could be excited then any attempt that might be made by the western policy-makers themselves to smooth over inconvenient passions inflamed anew by the clear evidence of a Soviet atrocity at Katyn, might itself be frustrated. If the Katyn affair could be exploited so that the policy-makers in London and Washington lost control of public opinion then it might prove impossible for them to set aside their private doubts about Russian conduct from considerations of real-politik.

In this strategy the Germans of course prescribed a certain role for the western press. Insofar as the London press is concerned the behaviour of that press from the German perspective must be judged profoundly disappointing. Following the principle of asking

"Cui bono?" several newspapers quite simply judged the German allegations Nazi fabrications too convenient to be true. The majority however simply gave the barest of details of the original German investigations and pronounced the matter too confused for a definitive judgement in wartime, whilst contriving to suggest that any impartial postwar judicial inquiry would in all probability find the Germans responsible for the massacre. In short Fleet Street refused to play the role cast for it by Berlin.

Such restraint might suggest official censorship. And indeed one of the grounds on which the defence regulations permitted official censorship was in the coverage by the press of matters that might serve to exacerbate relations between the Allies. Katyn was potentially precisely such a matter. However, there was no official censorship over the Katyn affair. Later both the News Department of the Foreign Office and the Ministry Of Information would be gratified that the press had acted so responsibly over Katyn and over the Russo-Polish rupture as a whole. "Guidance" had proved enough. This is in fact only a part of the whole story and the smaller part at that. What operated above all else over the Katyn affair was voluntary or self-censorship on the part of Fleet Street. Newspapers in the main did not need the Foreign Office to point out the dangers of Fleet Street exciting some kind of national debate about the rights and wrongs of the Katyn massacre. Fleet Street saw for itself the supreme importance of maintaining the unity of the Grand Alliance.

This meant that press coverage of Katyn had a special character. Fleet Street was much more concerned to discuss the possible diplomatic implications of the affair than its moral implications. The lead in this process was taken by The Times. This was doubly unfortunate for the Poles, for as we have already seen, from the first days of Russia's and America's entry into the war The Times had repeated in leader after leader one simple message. This was that ultimate Allied victory was assured as long as harmony between what the newspaper liked to call the "Great Allies" (a phrase which excluded by implication "lesser allies" like Poland) prevailed. Consequently, it would be a major objective of German diplomacy and of German propaganda to seek to divide the western democracies from the Soviet Union. Accordingly the western democracies must be prepared beforehand to repel such strategies when in due course they made their inevitable appearance. The Times therefore found from the start in the Katyn affair merely confirmation of its own prophesy. The Poles however, by their precipitate conduct had fallen completely into the German trap, thus demonstrating their political gullibility, their diplomatic ineptitude and their Russophobia. The Times was little interested in attempts from a distance to assign criminal responsibility for the murders. It

focussed its attention almost entirely from the beginning upon the alliance implications of the whole affair. Moreover, it judged the Polish Government-in-exile seriously at fault in not having done the same, in having acted impulsively in not thinking through a policy, so that a correct order of priorities could determine that policy. The Times editorial line over Katyn however, was not totally at one with what its Moscow correspondent was saying in the foreign news columns, for the latter made it clear that Katyn provided the occasion but not the cause of a diplomatic rupture long contemplated from the Soviet side on other more general grounds.⁷¹

Where The Times led the rest of Fleet Street followed. The only newspaper to refrain from lecturing the Poles on the need for greater maturity and realism in their conduct of diplomacy and the need to avoid impulsive and "romantic" gesture politics was The Daily Telegraph. This newspaper was also one that came nearest to any kind of serious analysis of the Katyn affair itself in terms of the weighing up of the evidence at the scene of crime as it emerged, though even this newspaper carefully avoided pointing its finger at the Soviet Union as the most likely guilty party in the affair.

The policy-makers therefore, could take some satisfaction in Fleet Street's responsible handling of the Katyn affair. However, the affair itself left them with a first class diplomatic crisis on their hands, a crisis they had to respond to.

In fact Sikorski had visited Churchill before the sensational German broadcast to inform him that compelling new evidence had come into the hands of the Polish government about the missing officers pointing clearly to a Soviet perpetrated massacre of the men. Churchill's own response, whilst not questioning the "wealth of evidence" that the Polish leader presented before him, was severely pragmatic. "If they are dead", he said, "nothing you can do will bring them back."⁷² Sikorski warned Churchill that there was nothing he could do to hold back his own people on such an issue and that the press had already been approached but he told Churchill nothing about a possible Polish approach to the International Red Cross.

When the German broadcasts propelled the whole business suddenly into the public domain the British government immediately set about trying to retrieve the situation by a process of damage limitation. Pressure was applied to the Poles to make some kind of conciliatory gesture towards Russia in the face of Soviet anger. At the same time Churchill stressed to Stalin the difficulties of Sikorski's position, pointing out that Sikorski was the most pro-Russian of the leading Poles, and that "If he should go we

should only get somebody worse".⁷³ On 25 April 1943 Churchill wrote to inform Stalin of the results of his mediation with the Polish government-in-exile,

"As a result of Mr Eden's strong representations Sikorski has undertaken not to press the request for the Red Cross investigation and will so inform the Red Cross authorities in Berne. He will also restrain the Polish press from polemics. In this connection I am examining the possibility of silencing those Polish newspapers in this country which attacked the Soviet Government and at the same time attacked Sikorski for trying to work with the Soviet Government.....His appeal to the International Red Cross was clearly a mistake though I am convinced that it was not made in collusion with the Germans."⁷⁴

Churchill's promise in regard to the Polish language press in Britain has an obvious interest in the context of this study. It was made in response to Stalin's earlier letter to him of 21 April 1943 informing the British government of the U.S.S.R.'s intention of severing diplomatic relations with the Poles. In the course of that earlier letter the Soviet leader had complained,

"The fact that the anti-Soviet campaign has been started simultaneously in the German and Polish press and follows identical lines is indubitable evidence of contact and collusion between Hitler - the Allies enemy - and the Sikorski Government in this hostile campaign."⁷⁵

The cabinet of 27 April 1943 was dominated by discussion of Katyn and the Russo-Polish rupture. The cabinet minutes record that "The Prime Minister said that in his view no Government which accepted our hospitality had any right to publish articles of a character which conflicted with the general policy of the United Nations and which would create difficulties for this Government."⁷⁶

The Minister of Information said that his ministry would ask the British press not to take sides or canvass the issue of Katyn but Bracken pointed out the situation was not without difficulty for "some sections of the press might be urged by the Russian ambassador to take a certain line."⁷⁷ In the event the cabinet decided that the Ministry Of Information be required to offer the press guidance along the lines agreed, that the same ministry be asked to draw up a memorandum listing all journals published by foreign governments resident in this country, and that the Foreign Secretary should speak to the Soviet ambassador about his activities."⁷⁸

The Katyn affair was by no means the first occasion when Maisky's activities in this regard had attracted the attention of the British government. No Soviet ambassador before or since has succeeded in cultivating such a friendly relationship with the British press as Maisky did during the war years, or to be more precise, in view of what has been previously said, than did Maisky after 22 June 1941. Moreover, Maisky himself was a publisher in a manner of speaking. From the earliest days of Russia's entry into the war the Soviet embassy, with British permission, had published a daily news bulletin, "Soviet War News" which had been circulated free of charge to prominent public figures and opinion leaders in this country. Its main function initially was to combat what Maisky saw as "the defeatist moods regarding the U.S.S.R. which at that time were widespread in the British Isles" penetrating all ranks in society "from Ministers to taxi drivers".⁷⁹ The apparently incompetent performance of the Red Army against the Finns had particularly damaged the Soviet Union's reputation for military efficiency in many British minds. In time, as it became clearer and clearer that the Soviet Union was not going to collapse in six weeks under the impact of Teutonic military superiority, as some doubtful souls had predicted, it became less necessary for the Soviet embassy to concentrate exclusively upon convincing British public opinion as to the fighting qualities of the Red Army and the political resolution of the Soviet Union to see victory over Germany achieved. Therefore the Soviet Union founded in addition a weekly journal called "Soviet War News Weekly" (later "Soviet Weekly") to cover not merely the Red Army's performance in the field but also the civilian achievements of a socialist state at war, in the economy, culture, music, science, literature etc. This weekly was also made easily available to the general reading public by distributing through ordinary commercial channels. In so far as it was aimed at a particular public it was aimed at that section of the British public whose interest in international affairs extended beyond news of the latest battles won and lost on the eastern front. By the end of the war the daily bulletin (itself now expanded to give diplomatic as well as war news from Moscow) had an elite circulation to opinion leaders of 2,000 daily copies whilst the journal, Soviet War News Weekly sold 50,000 copies through normal commercial channels. Maisky took a modest personal pleasure in the success of these publications in projecting a more positive image of the Soviet Union.

The attitude of the British authorities towards Maisky and the wartime activities of the Soviet embassy in regard to opinion formation in this country was ambivalent. In general terms they wished to encourage all attempts to improve Allied harmony and in this matter British public opinion was of course one factor. At the same time they were suspicious

of the excellent relations that the Soviet ambassador had succeeded in cultivating in Fleet Street. In particular the British government was irritated on a number of occasions by what it saw as Soviet embassy intervention in the domestic political affairs of this country intended to stimulate public pressure on the policy-makers to adopt a policy in accordance with the military or foreign policy needs of the Soviet Union. Soon after Russia's entry into the war the cabinet discussed the improper activities of Maisky in regard to the public campaign to increase British aid to Russia. The cabinet of 5 September 1941 decided that the Soviet ambassador be given a warning to desist.⁸⁰ A few months later Eden had been irritated by Maisky's attempts to mobilise sympathetic sections of the press in support of British recognition of Russia's 1941 frontiers by leaking to journalists details of Stalin's supposedly secret correspondence with Churchill. As Eden would ruefully note in his memoirs this kind of thing had happened many times before with Maisky and would happen many times again.⁸¹ Indeed it would, most notably from the spring of 1942, when the great campaign for "a second front now" got seriously under way, to the intense embarrassment of the British government. Churchill's government had little doubt at the full implication of the Soviet embassy in this campaign. Yet the real leadership in that campaign in Fleet Street came from Express newspapers, and in the country, from the Prime Minister's oldest political friend, Beaverbrook.

Arrangements having been made at home to still a press polemic over the Katyn affair in the meantime, Churchill wrote again to Stalin on 30 April 1943, telling the Soviet leader amongst other things that,

"The Cabinet here is determined to have proper discipline in the Polish press in Great Britain. The miserable rags attacking Sikorski can say things which German broadcasts repeat open-mouthed to the world to our joint detriment. This must be stopped and it will be stopped."⁸²

On 8 May 1943 Stalin replied to Churchill thanking him for the measures that were to be taken against the Polish language press in London and rebutting all "rumours, circulated by the Hitlerites, that a new Polish Government is being formed in the U.S.S.R." However, Stalin continued,

"This does not rule out Great Britain, and the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. taking measures to improve the composition of the present Polish Government in terms of consolidating the Allied united front against Hitler. The sooner this is done, the better."⁸³

To this Churchill replied on 12 May 1943,

"I am much obliged to you for your message about the Polish affair. The Poles did not tell us about what they were going to do and so we could not warn them against the peril of the course which they proposed to take. The Polish press will be disciplined in future and all other foreign language publications. I agree that the Polish Government is susceptible of improvement, though there would be great difficulty in finding better substitutes. I think like you that Sikorski and some others should in any event be retained. If Sikorski were to reconstruct his Government under foreign pressure he would probably be repudiated and thrown out and we should not get anyone so good in his place. Therefore he probably cannot make changes at once, but I will take every opportunity to urge him in this direction as soon as may be. I will discuss this with President Roosevelt."⁸⁴

The position with regard to the Polish language press proved in fact more complicated than Churchill and the cabinet at first appreciated. In the first place Raczynski argued that long before the Katyn crisis his government had responded loyally to Ministry of Information and Foreign Office pleas for them to seek to exercise restraint over the Polish language press as difficulties with Russia grew. Indeed any study of the record would show the Polish press to have been much more restrained during these months than the Soviet War News or the Soviet War News Weekly, emanating from the Russian embassy. There was considerable sympathy for Raczynski's point in this regard within the Foreign Office. In the second place Raczynski and Sikorski promised after Katyn the full cooperation of the Polish government to help restrain the Polish language press from attacking the Soviet Union in an attempt to repair the breach with Russia. But there was a limit to what any democratic press could be expected to deliver. Moreover, it was a fact that the pro-government Polish press had already responded in a highly responsible manner to official guidance. The trouble lay with the opposition Polish language press as it always had done from the first days of the formulation of the Sikorski government. For that press in the main was in opposition precisely because it had always distrusted what it saw as the pro-Soviet orientation of the Sikorski government. Naturally it had seized upon the Katyn revelations as confirming all of its worst fears about Soviet Russia's attitude towards Poland and the Poles. Indeed after Katyn the Polish authorities would demonstrate their continuing goodwill by providing the British authorities confidentially with full lists of those Polish publications judged reliable and unreliable. And in time the British government would indeed act against some elements in the

"unreliable" category of Polish language publications in the way that Churchill had intimated to Stalin. In doing this the British government had available a number of possible weapons. It could use its powers under the defence regulations. It could manipulate the flow of essential newsprint over which the wartime rationing regulations gave it control. It could threaten the disobedient with the introduction of new stricter controls. Each of these methods was invoked. One oppositionist Polish language newspaper was suppressed.

Meanwhile Churchill sent for Maisky on 30 April 1943 to protest at an article taken from Izvestia published in Soviet War News attacking the Polish government for being completely out of touch with their people under the heading "Emigrés And The People". Churchill pointed out to the Soviet ambassador that the "emigré" character of Sikorski's government was "not unconnected with a double occupation of his country."⁸⁵

At the same time Churchill instructed that the British ambassador to the Polish government-in-exile, Sir Owen O'Malley draw up a critical assessment of all the evidence available on the Katyn massacres so that the British government itself be properly briefed. O'Malley delivered his report on 24 May 1943. It pointed overwhelmingly towards Soviet guilt. Whilst O'Malley acknowledged that the cruel constraints of the hour meant that it was impossible that his report be given general publication he did very strongly urge that it be included in the confidential print for internal circulation within the Foreign Office, as well as, of course, for circulation to the cabinet itself. O'Malley had a number of reasons for this. In the first place he was concerned that whatever illusions the general public might entertain about the state with which Britain found itself allied against Nazi Germany, these illusions about the true nature of the Soviet Union did not extend to the policy-makers themselves. Secondly, he was concerned to argue that foreign policy, or at least British foreign policy, for all the hard-headed wartime talk about the need for "realism" in external affairs, could not and should not be based purely upon considerations of realpolitik. Morality did have a place in international relations. Indeed one of the reasons why Britain had always carried more weight in international affairs than her military power itself would allow, was precisely because she was seen despite her admitted occasional lapses to stand for civilised standards in international conduct. This reputation would be severely compromised if she appeared to condone all that the Soviet Union did from fear of imperilling the alliance. Thirdly, O'Malley was alarmed at what the Katyn affair had shown about the condition of British public opinion. A potentially dangerous gap had grown up between popular perceptions of the Soviet Union and what the policy-makers themselves knew, or ought to know, about the real

character of the Soviet regime. Careful official guidance of the press and the B.B.C. along the lines that the media were naturally inclined to follow in any case, from a desire to think the best of the Soviet Union, had had a disturbingly sedative effect upon the public conscience. The ironic result of this was that the victims of an international atrocity, the Poles, were receiving a far worse press than the perpetrators, the Russians. The uncritical attitude of the press and the public towards the Soviet Union might be highly convenient for the moment but over the longer term it could only be damaging to British foreign policy to have a public opinion which had been encouraged to believe what it wanted to believe.

Within the Foreign Office there was little disagreement that O'Malley had demonstrated Soviet culpability for the massacre of the Polish officers in a dispatch that Denis Allen would describe as "brilliant, unorthodox and disquieting" and Orme Sargent would find "very disturbing" confessing that "in a cowardly fashion, I had turned my head away from the scene at Katyn - for fear of what I should find there."⁸⁶ With the second part of O'Malley's report, the disquisition on the role of morality in international affairs, and the dangerously uncritical attitude of the press and public opinion to Soviet Russia, the Foreign Office had greater difficulties. Whilst it was fully accepted that it was essential that the policy-makers themselves should not be deceived by wishful thinking about the nature of the Soviet regime it was not clear what precisely could be done about the condition of British public opinion at large as long as the first and overriding priority of British policy remained, and rightly remained, the defeat of Hitler's Germany. As to O'Malley's disquisition on the role of morality in international affairs this clearly came as a new reading experience, insofar as official reports were concerned, to O'Malley's Foreign Office readers, an experience they found it difficult to handle.

In the event O'Malley's report was printed and circulated on a "need to know" basis within the Foreign Office. Churchill himself saw to it that it was circulated to each member of the cabinet on a careful "read and return" basis. He also saw to it that a copy was passed to Roosevelt at the Quebec conference though there appears to be no conclusive evidence that the American President actually read it. This direct method reflected British concern that a report that was seen as potentially political dynamite should not fall victim to the notoriously leaky (in British eyes) processes of the State Department.

Despite all the security safeguards adopted over O'Malley's Katyn Report the Foreign Office would grow alarmed as the summer of 1943 passed by what they saw as signs in

some press comments and in rumours circulating in the diplomatic community that the confidentiality of the document had in fact been breached. This alarm had the unfortunate result for O'Malley himself that his reputation for integrity was damaged within the Foreign Office. On 11 September 1943 William Strang would note in an Office minute,

"Sir Owen O'Malley's Katyn Despatch (c 6160) and in particular the disquisition on morals at the end of it, is part of his campaign against our Soviet policy. He has written other despatches on the same theme which unlike the Katyn despatch, have not been given circulation. The Katyn Despatch itself is highly explosive material. There are signs that it has been getting talked about in London and I suspect that Sir Owen O'Malley himself has done some of the talking.... we ought to give Sir Owen O'Malley a word of warning about talking at large about an official paper, the circulation of which is a matter for the Secretary of State to settle."⁸⁷

Indeed O'Malley had informed the Foreign Office via Frank Roberts quite voluntarily earlier that he had quoted the concluding paragraphs of his Katyn Report to his friend, the writer Robin Maughan. These were the paragraphs dealing with the general question of the relationship between morality and international relations not the sensitive paragraphs dealing with the Katyn massacre findings. The two men had discussed this abstract issue in connection with Maughan's work for the Army Education Council. O'Malley contacted Roberts lest any rumours of indiscretion got back to the Foreign Office in some garbled form. Nonetheless Strang saw O'Malley to caution him about being careful in the future. Clearly Strang thought O'Malley's explanation of his behaviour to Roberts implausible. For in Strang's view the paragraphs of O'Malley's Katyn Despatch dealing with the role of morality in international affairs were in isolation "jejune".⁸⁸

Naive or not O'Malley persisted in propagating his views within the Foreign Office on the role of ethical considerations in international relations in the abstract and in regard to British policy towards Poland in the concrete. In November 1943 he wrote to the Permanent Under Secretary, Cadogan to express his growing concern at media treatment of the Russo-Polish dispute since Katyn. he urged the necessity of securing "a distinct change in the tone of B.B.C. and British press references to Polish-Russian affairs", repeating his view that "I still think as I have thought all along, that we incline to underestimate the force of our moral authority exercised out of a firm and clear conviction of what is right and what is wrong, and overestimate the risks of using plain language to the Russians."⁸⁹ In O'Malley's view the "guidance" offered by the Foreign Office News Department and by the Ministry of Information to the media had helped to cultivate an

uncritical attitude towards Soviet Russia and to thereby blunten the moral sensibilities of the nation.

Yet O'Malley knew that official guidance could accomplish only so much. The problem ran much deeper. As Churchill himself put in on occasion the Russians were simply killing more Germans than anyone else. This is why the Russian alliance had to be given a higher priority than the Polish alliance in British foreign policy. The press knew this and the British public sensed it. It was highly convenient for all concerned to believe the best of the Russians or to pretend to do so. In such circumstances O'Malley's insistent views were unwelcome in the Foreign Office, many of whose officials clearly preferred to avert their eyes from Katyn. O'Malley on the other hand could not forget Katyn and would not allow others to do so. His inquiries into the affair remained persistent long after he had made out his personal report in May 1943. He would go to such lengths as approaching Professor Adrian, the distinguished Cambridge scientist, and Sir Bernard Spillsbury, the great forensic scientist, expert witness in so many of the court-room dramas of that age, for their assessment of the evidence in the Katyn affair. At the beginning of 1944 the Russians published the report of their own official investigation into the Katyn murders now that the Katyn area had fallen once again under Soviet control. The report place responsibility firmly on the Germans. A worried Churchill again instructed that O'Malley be required to report on the Russian investigation. O'Malley found nothing new in the Russian report to change his earlier conclusions in the matter. The conclusions in the Russian report quite simply did not fit the evidence.

By this time O'Malley had grown concerned at growing insinuations in the press as to his professional integrity. Rumours were circulating in Fleet Street that he was encouraging the Poles in their "intransigence" in part because he himself was a natural reactionary and in part because he was opposed to the policy of H.M.G. on the Russo-Polish dispute. In short it was alleged he had suffered that classic role reversal that was a professional hazard of diplomacy. Appointed as H.M.G.'s ambassador to the Polish government-in-exile, he had become in fact the ambassador of the Polish government-in-exile to H.M.G. For he was misleading the Poles about British policy and in particular about British policy in the matter of the Curzon Line. In a report to the Foreign Office of 22 November 1943, O'Malley tried to get to the bottom of this particular "legend" but did so in language that could be considered gratuitously offensive and damaging to his cause, which he knew by this time to be a minority cause both within and beyond Foreign Office,

"I may differ with the Foreign Office about quite a lot of things....but the Polish frontier is not a question....on which I and the Foreign Office have any difference of view....I do not know where to look for the origin of the story...It is possible that it may originate somewhere in the Ghetto. Namier, for instance, whom I cannot refrain from teasing sometimes, lectures me in the Athenaeum about Poland and Russia; and gets so hysterical that saliva dribbles out of the corner of his mouth. Because I am not so passionately attached to the Curzon Line (which he drew) as he is, he may genuinely think that I encourage the intransigence of the Poles. Working along ^{side} Barbara Ward of the "Economist" is a Polish Jew called Deutsch (sic-AJF), and at the head of a little group of very active pro-Russians in the Ministry of Information there is Smollet/Smolka, a Czech Jew. Both of these men may for all I know be in relations with Namier. Then again there is my old friend E.H. Carr who thinks Russia's frontier lies on the Oder. And finally there is the whole bunch of left intellectuals and citizens of the brave new Beveridge world who consider me quite rightly to be a traditionalist and reactionary."⁹⁰

Irrespective of the particular canard that caused O'Malley to draft this report the ambassador did in fact increasingly recognise that his own position on the Polish Question and on the broader issue of how best to deal with the Russians was in fact running counter to the spirit of the times. Whether they were guilty or not of seeking to undermine his position with the Foreign Office O'Malley was right to see in men like Namier and Carr individuals whose views on the Polish Question and on the correct way to handle the Russians ran diametrically opposite to his own. Moreover, these views of these men, unlike those of O'Malley, suited the needs of the hour, in the sense that they offered a rationale for accepting the realities of power in eastern Europe. Furthermore their press positions and connections gave them an important platform in the press from which they could propagate these views to the attentive foreign policy public. We must now turn to examine these views. O'Malley himself would grow increasingly bitter at what he regarded as a dangerously mistaken British policy of appeasement of Russia in eastern Europe as the war moved towards its end, and the "betrayal" of Poland that this policy involved. He also believed, as his memoirs written during the Cold War make clear, that he had damaged his own career by advocating the right policy at the wrong time.⁹¹ he never rose above the modest eminence of the diplomatic backwater of the Lisbon embassy, whilst others more careful to tell their masters what their masters wanted to hear rose far higher.

The Times And The Russo-Polish Dispute

The most influential opinion leader that advocated that policy of recognition of the realities of power in eastern Europe that O'Malley and the Poles so deplored was, in Fleet Street, The Times newspaper. The Times' general line on international relations and its model for a stable, peaceful, new order in Europe once the war was won have already been examined earlier in this study and so do not require rehearsal here. However, as the major beneficiary of the Versailles settlement in eastern Europe, the Poles in wartime London could not help but be worried by the constant insistence by Printing House Square that one lesson of the recent past had been that the Versailles settlement was inherently unstable, that Britain was not fighting to restore the status quo ante in Europe. Equally alarming for the Poles was The Times repeated advocacy of a great power directorate to manage the affairs of the European continent and of the wider world. Moreover, no attentive Pole could forget the unease of The Times at the seemingly sweeping nature of the Guarantee that Chamberlain had extended to Poland.

The Poles were singularly unfortunate in the fact that throughout the war years, after he joined the newspaper early in 1941, the chief architect of The Times line on eastern Europe was E.H. Carr. Carr was a man who firmly believed that the chief weakness of both the academic study of international politics, and the practice of diplomacy between the wars, particularly insofar as the Anglo-Saxon democracies were concerned, was their failure to address the reality of power in international affairs. In his Foreign Office days Carr had been well known for his impatience with small powers and their interests, and his profound scepticism as to the longer term viability of most of the successor states of eastern Europe. In the special context of this study it is highly significant that Carr's scepticism about Poland in particular extended right back to the resurrection of Poland as a sovereign state.

Carr had served as a junior member of the British delegation to Versailles. In this capacity he had been sent in the summer of 1919 to survey on the spot conditions in Poland, or more precisely conditions in the disputed plebiscite areas contested between Poland and Germany, and in Danzig. In June 1919 Carr reported back to the British delegation and to Whitehall, under the title, "Notes On A Tour To Danzig, Warsaw And The Eastern Plebiscite Areas".

"The one prevailing feeling in Danzig is terror of the Poles from the highest official to the uneducated workman or peasant....Poland the heir of all the qualities of the

German military machine except its efficiency....reign of terror....organised by the Polish military authorities and the Polish government....In the almost simultaneous collapse of her three great neighbours Poland enjoyed what is perhaps the most striking piece of fortune that ever befell a country. Distinguished from the multitude of those who have been born free or have achieved freedom from Poland has had her liberty thrust upon her. It is just this fact - the variety of elements, accidental and transitory, which have contributed to Poland's greatness, which makes it so difficult to estimate how solid and durable this greatness is. To Germany, Poland owes her material life - her means of transport from the electric tramways of her capital installed during the German occupation, to her western railways and nearly all her rolling stock: all that she has of scientific training and practically all of her industry. She owes little to Russia but the latter's timely disappearance from the scene; to Austria nothing but a horde of experienced but lazy and incompetent officials. The Polish contribution to Poland's condition consists in her man-power, which places at her disposal a large reserve of excellent fighting material and unskilled labour; in her past sufferings and splendid national spirit, largely the result of those sufferings; and above all in the sentiment her name evokes in western Europe and America.

So many of these advantages being of a temporary or accidental nature it is necessary before basing on them any estimate of Poland's future to look at her present position external and internal. To take the former first Poland has by her foreign policy brought things to such a pass that her downfall is the wish of all her neighbours great and small.....She has embarked upon a war with Russia when the latter was willing to offer a favourable and equitable peace...."92

This document is initialled as seen and read by the Permanent Under Secretary, Tyrrell and by Curzon himself. As interesting as the sentiments expressed by Carr himself is the reception that Carr's report received within the Foreign Office. We gain some indication of this from the marginal comments the document attracted. In these, one Foreign Office official refers to "Mr Carr's well-known dislike of everything Polish" and pronounces him to be for that reason "a misleading guide" whilst a second official comments upon the paper's "strong anti-Polish bias." Yet a third finds that "Mr Carr is rather convincingly anti-Polish". From this internal evidence it is therefore clear that Carr was seen within the Foreign Office as a man who was predisposed against the Poles before he set foot in Warsaw or the disputed regions.

However, what is important in the special context of this study is that Carr was one of those Englishmen who from the very inception of the Polish state saw the resurrection of an independent, fully sovereign, greater Poland as something "accidental" and "transitory" which, like independent eastern Europe as a whole, was unlikely long to survive the inevitable recovery of the natural great powers of that region. Nothing in the subsequent inter-war history of independent Poland would cause him to change his views. This in turn made the turn of fortune that would place him in control of the foreign policy line of The Times on eastern Europe in the nineteen-forties a particularly ominous one for the Poles.

Though perhaps exceptional Carr's views were by no means unique in that early period. In our earlier study of The Times and Anglo-Soviet relations we have already noted the important contribution made by Lewis Namier to The Times' attitude towards the Polish Question during the Second World War. From his position twenty years earlier within the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office during the First World War, Namier had made a major contribution to Foreign Office understanding of the problems of eastern Europe, as a temporary civil servant at a time when the Foreign Office had possessed, for obvious reasons little "in-house" expertise on that region. Though his advice was welcomed (and most freely given) on the whole of that region Namier was regarded in particular as the Foreign Office's expert advisor on Poland. In this connection it is of crucial importance that Namier was anti-Polish, or rather that Namier was seen as being so by most Poles. In his work at the Foreign Office Political Intelligence Department Namier was indefatigable. He poured out minute after minute and report after report for his superiors all of which revealed Namier's detailed knowledge of Poland, her history and her geography, together with the minutest knowledge of that contested area, Eastern Galicia where he was born. For all their immense scholarly detail Namier's reports and minutes have a relatively straightforward political message and it was this message that, as an expert advisor to the Foreign Office, he was seeking to implant in the official mind so that his views would exercise an influence on policy when British policy towards Poland came to be made.

Namier believed that Polish imperialism posed a greater threat to peace and stability in Europe at the end of the First World War than did Russian Bolshevism. In his view the exaggerated territorial claims of the Poles threatened to cast central and eastern Europe into a new round of conflict. In their territorial pretensions and political ambitions the Poles according to Namier enjoyed two great psychological advantages. The first of these was the widespread sympathy for Polish nationalism that existed in western Europe

and in the United States, where the Poles were universally seen as history's losers. The second was the immense ignorance that existed in western Europe, and more particularly in the United States about eastern Europe and Poland. This meant that an uncritical and benevolent western opinion was only too likely to accept at face value the territorial claims of the Poles and thus condone the creation of new injustices in eastern Europe to replace old ones. Moreover a Polish state whose boundaries were drafted to conform with the ambitions of the Polish nationalists could not but be unstable in itself and a source of instability for the rest of eastern Europe. Namier therefore saw it as his duty to prevent British policy-makers from being so misled by the plausible nature of the Polish claims and by their natural and understandable sympathy for the heroic element in the Polish nationalist tradition that they allowed an inequitable settlement in eastern Europe to receive the endorsement of H.M.G. In the performance of this self-imposed duty Namier entered upon a prolonged feud with the great Polish nationalist leader, Roman Dmowski, and earned for himself in inter-war Poland in some quarters an infamy less only than that accorded to David Lloyd George.

Namier's attitude to independent Poland was also influenced by factors additional to the ones already mentioned which would be of lasting importance. In the first place he believed that anti-semitism was an endemic feature of certain sections of Polish society. It was in a word an authentic Polish phenomenon and not something that, accordingly, a brave new and independent Poland could be expected to cleanse away lightly. The full significance of Namier's views on Polish anti-semitism can only be properly appreciated when we place them in the context of his attitude towards Russia. For as the late Leonard Schapiro observed, "It would not be far wrong to regard Russia as the classical home of anti-semitism".⁹³ This indeed is the conventional wisdom on anti-semitism, and in 1919, long before Hitler had disfigured Germany's reputation in this regard, could be said to reflect faithfully the view of the ordinary enlightened Englishman. Yet Namier, this most exacting of critics of the new Poland, was a most indulgent and forgiving student of Russian history and observer of the contemporary Russian scene. Anti-anti-semite that he was, Namier nonetheless contrived to be a Russophile. In reading Namier's P.I.D. reports and minutes for the Foreign Office at the time of the First World War, together with his later journalism when he had become one of the leading English Zionists, insofar as both of these touch upon the topic of anti-semitism (as in fact they often do) one is presented with a highly distinctive vision of the old Russia. As Namier saw things there would appear to be no significance in the fact that "pogrom" was a Russian word. Indeed as Namier read the history of Tsarist Russia that anti-semitism for which the old Empire was renowned amongst contemporary liberals would appear to

have been the work almost entirely of Polish landlords and Baltic German barons serving as Imperial ministers, and therefore, alas, in a position to indulge their private vices on the public stage.

Namier's Russophilia also showed itself in another way that had important implications for the advice he offered the Foreign Office on Poland. He would argue in minute after minute that, whatever the historic crimes of German and Austrian imperialism against Poland, Polish nationalists tended to exaggerate wildly the offences of Russia. Thus Namier's view of the "infamous" eighteenth century partitions of Poland in terms of Russia's responsibility was unconventional. According to Namier, "In the three partitions of 1772, 1793 and 1795 Russia did not appropriate to herself any ethnic Polish territory; she did not get the district of Bialystock until 1807 and so-called Russian Poland until 1815."⁹⁴ Thus in Namier's opinion despite the loud clamour with which the extreme Polish nationalists were attempting to bamboozle an ignorant western public opinion into accepting spurious Polish claims to territories "stolen" by Russia from Poland by the three partitions, in fact the Poles themselves had no legitimate claim to these disputed territories on the ground of nationality either in the eighteenth century or in the twentieth century. Admittedly, the Russians had occupied ethnic Poland, including Warsaw, after 1815 but this was not unconnected with Polish participation in Napoleon's invasion of Russia a few years earlier and was sanctioned by the international community by the Congress of Vienna. However, in 1918-1919 there was no dispute that ethnic Poland should be reconstituted as a state. What was in dispute was whether "historic" Poland should be resurrected as a state. To do the latter would be according to Namier, to fly in the face of that principle of national self-determination that the peace-makers were proclaiming as the basis for a new, just and stable European settlement.

The obverse side of the coin of Namier's Russophilia was his Germanophobia. In his policy advice to the Foreign Office he shows himself always aware that his prime responsibility was to protect and enhance British national interests. At the heart of those national interests was national security. Namier was unconvinced that in November 1918 Germany had finally abandoned her ambitions in Europe and, given the natural authoritarianism of her people, he was sceptical of the long term prospects for liberal democracy within Germany. Therefore, British foreign policy, whilst profoundly hoping that the League experiment might confound the doubters, must be based also on contingency diplomatic arrangements against the likely danger of the resurgence of German power and ambition. This is where the Polish Question came to the centre of the diplomatic equation. Below their spurious ethnic and historical arguments that "justice"

for Poland involved the recreation of a greater Poland, that medieval empire that Polish nationalists still dreamt about, was a hidden agenda that the Poles were seeking to sell the western powers. According to this a greater Poland would perform two invaluable functions for Europe. In the first place it would insulate central Europe from the infection of Bolshevism. Secondly it would impose a major restraint and check upon a revived Germany if that country were tempted to return to her old ways. This scenario had been successfully sold to the French. Indeed the French had played their own part in its construction. Namier was determined to play what part he could to ensure that British policy-makers were not taken in by a strategy that was both unrealistic and dangerous.

Namier believed that the claims of that great power status by the more extreme Polish nationalists for an independent Poland were inherently preposterous. Only one power was able to contain a resurgent Germany on her eastern frontiers and that power was Russia. He firmly believed, despite that country's lamentable condition in 1918-1919, that Russia would one day recover her natural status as a great power. Moreover, he advised that British policy should be based upon that assumption. On no account therefore must Britain jeopardise her future standing with Russia by in any way associating herself with spurious and unjust Polish claims to Russian territory at the moment of Russia's extremity. Still less should Britain associate herself in any way with that wider Franco-Polish strategy of which these territorial claims merely formed a part. We note here another interesting aspect of Namier's approach to Russia. As a firm English Tory, Namier of course would have preferred that Russia should be something other than a Bolshevik Russia. Yet, that having been said, Namier's approach to Russia whilst he was at the Foreign Office's Political Intelligence Department was, as it would remain after he left, almost entirely non-ideological. Russia's internal arrangements were for the Russian people to squabble over, and ultimately, decide. What was important for all British policy-makers to remember was that there was a natural coincidence of interests between this country and Russia in international affairs which transcended ideological considerations. Germany was the key to this coincidence of interests. After all there had been little in common between the domestic political arrangements of Edwardian Britain and those of the Russia of Nicholas II but the common German danger had, quite rightly led the statesmen of both country's to come together in mutual defence. The logic of the past must operate in the future too.

As for the Poles themselves Namier also believed that the exaggerated territorial claims of the Polish nationalists ran contrary to the true interests of Poland itself over the longer term, when both Russia and Germany had recovered from their prostration. For in a

common sense of grievance against an over-weaning Poland would lie the grounds for cooperative action by these two great powers whose interests on any other issue than the Polish issue might reasonably be expected to be in conflict. On 3 December 1918 Namier concluded a long memorandum exposing Polish territorial claims in the following manner,

"If at the Peace Congress any large stretches of genuinely Russian (or German) land or any territory whose inhabitants desire union with Russia (or Germany) was conceded to Poland, and if her demand for a continuous territorial access to the Baltic Sea was granted, we should run the risk of recreating the conditions which in the eighteenth century led to the partitions of Poland. Russia would have once more "to gather in all Russian lands", Germany to restore the connection between Pomerania and East Prussia. Both Russia and Germany are bound in the end to recover, and in view of their numbers are bound to be the two strongest Powers in Eastern Europe. Should their national unity be broken up and their most vital interests be injured, they would undoubtedly combine with a view to redressing what they would look upon as wrongs inflicted on them in the hour of defeat, and Poland would then be likely to suffer even in her legitimate interests, Against a combination of Russia and Germany the League of Nations itself might prove powerless because neither naval forces nor a blockade could be effective against them, and on land their military forces would be extremely formidable. For the sake of Poland's own future we must firmly oppose exaggerated Polish claims... Poland, a nation which in its contiguous settlements numbers less than twenty millions, inhabits an open plain without strategic frontiers, is placed between the two greatest nations of Europe, the Germans and the Russians, and has no possible access to the sea (the Baltic being in wartime a mare clausum). Poland will always to some extent have to lean either on Russia or Germany - at least as long as politics are transacted in terms of force...."⁹⁵

To sum up, an intelligent analysis of the genuine long term interests of Poland meant that /Poland herself would be ultimately best served if Britain opposed the Polish nationalists. By acting in her own interests Britain would be acting in Polish interests though she could not expect, of course, the present Polish leadership to appreciate this, drunk as they were on the wine of liberty in a world of a severely weakened Germany and Russia, which they seemed fondly to imagine would be permanent. Moreover, opposition to the outrageous Polish claims on Russian territory would also be just and morally correct. It was not always the case Namier suggested that a great power had the privilege, as did

Britain in the present matter, of urging a policy where its own national interest the real interests of both disputants, and ethical considerations, all pointed neatly in the same direction. Nonetheless the British must not expect to be popular if they stood out against the inflated territorial claims of the Poles for "the Poles with the support of the French have succeeded in capturing by their propaganda a large part of the European press."⁹⁶

The inter-war experience of eastern Europe served merely to confirm Namier in these views. Moreover, in view of the remarkable passage quoted above he at least could properly claim not to have been taken by surprise by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939. However, Namier's prime concern was British policy and British national interest. An independent eastern Europe was, as he had suggested in his observations on Poland, conditional upon the collapse simultaneously of both Russian and German power, a condition that was highly artificial and temporary. The real choice for British policy-makers therefore was not between an independent and dependent eastern Europe. Throughout modern history that region had been dominated by the regional great powers of eastern Europe acting either in concert or in competition. The real question for British policy-makers was whose domination of eastern Europe, Germany's or Russia's, best served or least harmed British national interests. The outbreak of the Second World War simply presented this same question anew for British policy-makers. For his part Namier had no difficulty in answering the question. Germany had demonstrated by her two bids for power in the twentieth century that her ambitions extended far beyond a legitimate regional predominance to continental mastery and world power. The two world wars would always be for Namier "the German wars". By this designation he did not merely mean to assert that Germany was responsible for initiating both wars as deliberate acts of policy but that that war guilt was genuinely collective. He would always impatiently brush aside all talk of "good Germans" and suggestions that the whole German people could not be held responsible for the actions of the Kaiser or Hitler. To Namier these individuals were genuinely representative of the collective will to domination of the German people as a whole and stood squarely in the mainstream of the German political tradition.

Manifestly therefore it was in the British interest that Russia rather than Germany be conceded the leading role in eastern Europe. The events of 22 June 1941 served to simplify matters in this regard. Hitler's folly had placed Britain and Russia firmly on the same side. Yet this welcome new relationship inevitably raised the problem of Poland in a new form. On no account must Britain allow her obligations to Poland be so interpreted as to imperil her relationship with Soviet Russia. Politics was a matter of

priorities, international politics even more so.

Namier operated at two levels. His Foreign Office contacts gave him access to the policy-makers. His contacts with the quality press gave him access to the attentive foreign policy public. He cultivated both sets of contacts assiduously throughout his life but most particularly in the thirties when the position of European Jewry deteriorated so tragically and his own commitment to Zionism grew correspondingly more urgent. Though it had allowed him to strengthen those contacts he had enjoyed with *The Manchester Guardian* since the First World War, and given him a valued financial security, Namier had always regarded his Chair at Manchester as a form of internal exile. Manchester was too remote from the real centres of influence in the England of the thirties which were, as Namier saw them, London and Oxford. Indeed for that reason even in the thirties Namier having spent two or three days delivering his lectures at the University, would spend most of his week in London, aided in those more tolerant days in this matter by an indulgent university prepared to pass over Namier's complete lack of interest in all matters of university government and administration. Namier after all was perhaps the most distinguished and original historian of his age and brought lustre to Manchester. He knew his value and was not above trading on it.

The war itself eased the personal inconveniences which Namier still suffered. The Foreign Office wanted Namier to act as liaison man between it and the Jewish Agency together with the rest of the Zionist Organisation in London as Namier was the leading English Zionist best known already to the Foreign Office. Upon the initiative of the Foreign Office therefore Namier was given secondment to these "diplomatic" duties by agreement with the University for the duration.

This official status and permanent wartime residence in London gave Namier opportunities of influence that were not confined to the narrow field of Zionism. In particular it gave him the opportunity to press the views on eastern Europe in general and upon Poland in particular previously described in this study on those who decided British foreign policy. Within the Foreign Office he was still recognised as an expert on Poland and as the real author twenty years earlier of the Curzon Line, though this must not be taken to mean that Namier's views, always expressed forcefully as they were, were accepted uncritically by all Foreign Office officials. They were not. The Foreign Office archives contain in their Polish section many examples of records of meetings and conversations with Namier with reference to Poland. These meetings were sometimes at the Foreign Office itself but just as often at the various London clubs where officials and

ministers frequently dined. Thus as early as November 1939 we find Namier submitting to the R.A. Butler, the Minister of State at the Foreign Office, and Halifax' spokesman in the Commons, a memorandum offering a critical appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Polish government-in-exile, then in Paris, and of the Polish parties in opposition to that government. This memorandum gives very well the flavour of Namier's views,

"....among the so-called National Democrats... there are nationalists of a Fascist or semi-Fascist mentality who opposed the late dictatorship in Poland only because it was not their own, and would have run a much worse one if they had had the chance....

.....Emigre governments are essentially weak because they depend on strangers, are therefore amenable to foreign influence, and can be made into instruments of a foreign policy.

News which percolates from Poland seems to indicate that conditions in the parts occupied by the Russians are comparatively tolerable. On the contrary, in the part occupied by the Germans conditions are downright appalling....."⁹⁷

The reminder that Polish political culture was not naturally a democratic one, the implied warning that the Polish government-in-exile might prove too susceptible to French influence, the contrast between Russian and German occupation policies in Poland, to the advantage of the former, all of these attitudes conform precisely with the picture of Namier presented already in this study. These attitudes recur in the Foreign Office records of discussions held with Namier in mid 1940 after the collapse of France when the Polish government had sought refuge in London. Frank Roberts of the Central Department of the Foreign Office (responsible for Poland) recorded on 19 July 1940,

"Mr Butler asked me to see this afternoon Dr L.B. Namier, the well known historian who worked in the P.I.D. as a Polish expert at the end of the last war. He was born in Poland and has many connections with prominent Poles. It is clear that Dr Namier was extremely well informed about the recent Polish crisis and he is kept fully au courant of Polish affairs by Mr Zaleski, who is a close friend of his."⁹⁸

On the same document Roberts confesses to considerable sympathy with Namier's view that "Poland could only exist in the long run if assured of either German or Russian support and it was clearly much safer for us if she turned to Russia rather than to Germany" and that accordingly "they (the Poles) should be directed towards the

Russians". It is clear that Namier believed that that very susceptibility to influence at the hands of the host government that any government-in-exile experiences, which had concerned him when the Poles were in Paris, was now looked upon more positively now the Polish government-in-exile had been forced to move to London. Here was his opportunity to seek to influence the Polish government through influencing British policy and opinion on Poland so that the Poles would adopt that Russian orientation in their foreign policy which he had favoured for twenty years and which he believed to be in the interests of British foreign policy and in the true interests of the Poles themselves.

Not all Foreign Office officials, however, were as impressed by Namier's views as was Roberts. In a comment upon Roberts interview, Victor Cavendish-Bentinck - subsequently to be the first British ambassador to communist Poland - urged caution in the face of Namier's forceful and persuasive arguments,

"I knew and mistrusted Dr L.B. Namier twenty-one years ago. He is a fanatical Hebrew. His views on Poles are largely dictated by whether or not they are in his opinion friendly to Jews. I am not surprised to see Dr Namier's criticism of Horoditsky: he has hated him like poison for a quarter of a century."⁹⁹

R.A. Butler's comment upon this difference of views was that it would be "a pity to underestimate Mr Namier, but he is a fanatical Hebrew".¹⁰⁰ Namier's outraged reaction at the publication of the 1939 British government White Paper on Palestine, it should perhaps be recalled here, was a very recent memory in Whitehall, as was his tenacious advocacy of the Zionist cause in general in peacetime. After all Namier tended to measure the worth of British politicians not just Polish politicians by their attitude towards Zionism and the Jewish Question.

Many more similar examples could be quoted by way of illustration of the way in which Namier was assiduous in propagating his views on Poland and Russia in the Foreign Office, which survive in the Foreign Office archives. However as all these other examples show Namier to be totally consistent in arguing the case here outlined, further quotation would be superfluous.

The second of the levels at which Namier operated was at the level of the attentive foreign policy public and it is this level which is the chief concern of this study. Namier was a prolific occasional journalist throughout his life, never more so than in the nineteen forties. Much of his journalism was of course devoted to propagating the Zionist cause

but a considerable body of it was devoted to wider questions of international relations, at the centre of which stood Anglo-Soviet relations. And as the Polish Question threatened more than any other issue to undermine that postwar Anglo-Soviet harmony that he judged essential to the recovery of European tranquility it is not surprising that Namier seized upon every occasion that came to hand to propagate as widely as possible his views on the Russo-Polish rift. In addition to *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian*, Namier also contributed to a whole variety of journals and weeklies, including *Time and Tide*, *The Contemporary Review*, *The Nineteenth Century And After*, and *The New Statesman And Nation*.

Indeed it would be a rejection of a piece proffered to the editor of the last-named journal that would provoke Namier into pronouncing his personal credo. On and off Namier had written and reviewed for the *N.S. & N.* (or its constituent parts, before their merger) for over twenty years. However, Kingsley Martin had judged it prudent to turn down the piece in question from Namier on the grounds that in damning the whole German nation for the crimes of Hitler and his henchmen Namier had been carried away by the passions of the hour. The impulsive attribution of collective and historic guilt to a whole people was offensive to the liberal mind. Namier protested,

"I held the same views in 1918 as in 1910, and as I hold today in 1942....Pro-Russian and anti-German, a Conservative by instincts, predilections and doubts, but not from material interests or fear - in short a Tory Radical - I carefully watched the Russian Revolution without being affected by the hysterics which drove certain types of Conservative into the dangerous absurdities of a home and foreign policy dominated by the fear of Soviet Russia. I did not believe in a "change of heart" in the Germans, and agreed with the view which the French and Poles took of them: but it seemed to me stark lunacy to attempt a settlement of Europe against both Germany and Russia - to proscribe them both, to despoil Russia of White and Little Russian provinces to draw round her "un cordon sanitaire", and thus to create a common interest between her and Germany."¹⁰¹

The most important platform however, from which Namier could project his views in the war years was undoubtedly *The Times*. Barrington-Ward also saw now the need to educate British opinion, particularly sections of Conservative opinion, into acceptance of the fact that no permanent settlement of Europe could be achieved unless Russian leadership in eastern Europe was not simply grudgingly acknowledged but was welcomed. No newspaper was better placed than *The Times* to perform that task of

political education in the places where it was most needed. In the leader columns of the newspaper E.H. Carr had the freedom to argue this position in general terms and in doing so he frequently angered the Poles. On the leader page Namier was given the opportunity in a series of articles to speak his mind on what potentially was the biggest issue that could divide the Allies - the Polish Question. At the heart of the Russo-Polish dispute lay the quarrel over Poland's eastern provinces. In his articles Namier explained to Times readers the justice of the Russian claims and thus reassured those readers that in taking the Russian and stronger side on this issue they and the British government would not be acting merely out of expediency.¹⁰² Strangely enough the strong were also sometimes in the right in international disputes even though the liberal mind was naturally predisposed to take the side of the underdog. According to the Curzon Line, a line after all drawn by a British foreign secretary, Curzon, who could not be suspected of undue partiality towards the Bolsheviks, the disputed provinces had all been awarded on the principle of nationality to Russia. Times readers, of course, given the then impersonal and anonymous character of the newspaper, were not to know that these articles were written by Namier. Even had they known this fact, they would not have known that these articles carried a special authority, written as they were by the real author of that line that bore Lord Curzon's name, for this fact was known only to the Foreign Office cognoscenti.

At Teheran in November/December 1943 unknown to the Poles it would be Churchill who would raise the possibility of a settlement of the Russo-Polish dispute on the basis of the Curzon Line, not Stalin. Poland it was suggested might be compensated in the west at the expense of Germany. When he subsequently gave his backing publicly to a settlement on the basis of the Curzon Line he was strongly supported in Fleet Street by The Times. Indeed not a single national newspaper would take the side of the Poles on this issue.

Barrington-Ward and Carr were the men who decided the main lines of The Times' approach to the Polish Question within the general context of its approach overall to Anglo-Soviet relations. In addition a crucial contribution was made to the evolution of The Times' line over Poland, as we have seen, on an occasional basis by Lewis Namier. That line frequently angered the Poles and sometimes irritated and embarrassed the Foreign Office which found itself constantly having to reassure the Poles that The Times' views were not officially inspired. However, no treatment of the foreign policy position of The Times in these years with particular reference to Poland would be complete without saying something about the role of its Moscow correspondent, Ralph Parker. As

we have seen already in our study of The Times and Anglo-Soviet relations Parker's sympathies for the Soviet experiment in socialism would grow so warm that after the war, married to a Russian wife, he would settle permanently in the Soviet Union and his links with The Times would be severed.

In terms of western public opinion Parker's position was in many ways pivotal. For not only did he represent The Times in Moscow during the war years but he also represented the New York Times. Insofar as any single newspaper in the U.S. could be said to fulfil a role analogous to that filled in the field of foreign policy in England by The Times that newspaper could be said to be The New York Times - though, admittedly, one does not wish to press the analogy too far, for obvious reasons. Parker had been introduced to Sulzberger, in all but name Foreign Editor of the New York Times, by Julian Amery, and being pleased by the work that Parker had done in the early stages of the war for the New York Times as a "stringer" from Belgrade, Sulzberger had subsequently appointed Parker to represent the New York Times on a permanent basis as its man in Moscow.¹⁰³

If Barrington-Ward and Carr sometimes embarrassed the British government by their attitude towards Russia and the Russo-Polish dispute, Parker sometimes embarrassed The Times itself, for reasons that require explanation. Having come out squarely in favour of Russian "leadership" in eastern Europe, and in favour of the Russo-Polish boundary dispute being settled in Russia's favour, The Times thereafter supported what it considered to be the chief objective of British policy, viz a Poland reduced in size, and bound to the Soviet Union by a 'friendly' foreign policy, but a Poland still enjoying internal sovereignty and so free to make its own domestic political and constitutional arrangements. To this end the British government, after the death of Sikorski in an air crash in May 1943, had backed his successor as Polish Premier, Mikolajczyk, the Peasant Party leader. Mikolajczyk was pledged, against much opposition in the Polish political community particularly after the Katyn affair, to follow faithfully Sikorski's line of seeking, despite all disappointments, a friendly but just settlement of all difficulties with Russia, as a prelude to working with Russia in the postwar world. Indeed once it was established that privately the Polish Premier did not himself take a rigid position on the eastern frontier question, though he dared not say so publicly, Churchill hoped in time to build upon this fact so as eventually to bring around the whole of the Polish government to adopt a realistic position on the Curzon Line. Once reassured over its frontiers the Soviet Union might then be persuaded to restore diplomatic relations with the London Poles. The British government were well aware of the weaknesses of Mikolajczyk's political position. They therefore did everything possible within the

parameters of their own policy on the Russo-Polish dispute to strengthen the Polish Premier's political position. This policy had a press dimension. The Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office News Department took every opportunity possible to encourage the British press to adopt a positive and constructive approach to the Russo-Polish dispute and discouraged them from being a partisan. Helpful interviews were arranged with friendly journalists like Vernon Bartlett of the News Chronicle by the News Department so that something might be done to alleviate the popular image of the Poles as obstinate and unbending, and careless of Allied unity. Needless to say Mikolajczyk's Polish critics were not given such help to state their case.

In the end, in part because of the hardening of the Russian position on the Polish Question as their military position strengthened, and in part because of the increased obduracy in the position of the London Poles that was the response to this hardening of the Soviet attitude, Churchill's hopes were to be disappointed. In November 1944 having failed to persuade his colleagues to declare their acceptance of the Curzon Line Mikolajczyk resigned.

In this matter The Times, like the rest of the British press, the Daily Worker apart, had tried to be helpful to British policy. In its many discussions of the Polish problem it had always distinguished between the open and flexible position of the Polish Premier and the obduracy of some of his colleagues, stressing Mikolajczyk's basic goodwill towards the Soviet Union. However the line pursued by the newspaper's leader writers and its diplomatic correspondent had not been helped in any way by the reports of its Moscow correspondent. Far from attempting to be constructive on the Russo-Polish dispute and avoid taking a partisan stance, all of Parker's reports on the dispute had adopted quite uncritically Moscow's line. Parker's reports therefore were completely unhelpful to British policy in seeking to strengthen the position of the Polish Premier. Indeed so partial and negative did some of Parker's reports pertaining to Russo-Polish difficulties become that they were censored within Printing House Square on political grounds, as opposed to the normal journalistic grounds that applied to any sub-editing. All of this was known within the Foreign Office and that for a very simple reason. The Times did in fact enjoy a special relationship with the British government though this relationship was not perhaps as intimate as the newspaper's critics alleged. Nonetheless the newspaper enjoyed a number of privileges not extended to Fleet Street at large. One example that might be cited is the privilege of telephoning the News Department that was granted to the newspaper from 1937, a privilege that was extended to no other newspaper.¹⁰⁴ This special relationship also meant that Printing House Square had access to the diplomatic

bag and the Foreign Office's communication system when specially sensitive messages had to be passed to its correspondents. Moreover, The Times could on occasion solicit the direct help of embassy staff to help get a message across. These facilities were made use of with reference to Parker. On 8 August 1944 the Foreign Office informed the Moscow embassy that it had been approached by Printing House Square seeking help. It had been attempting for some time to encourage its Moscow correspondent to take a more constructive and balanced line on Mikolajczyk's attempts to pursue a rapprochement with Russia but had been so perturbed by the tone and content of Parker's last cable on these attempts that they had not been able to use it. In these circumstances The Times News Editor, Mr Deakin, had approached the Foreign Office to see if the Moscow embassy might itself speak to Parker to add its weight to the advice that he would be receiving at the same time through the diplomatic bag from Printing House Square. As the embassy had had instructions in general terms in any case from London to exercise what influence it could upon the British press corps in Moscow to project a positive image of Mikolajczyk's forthcoming visit to the Russian capital, it was happy to do what it could.¹⁰⁵ However, it was not confident of its ability to easily influence Parker, not least because of the fact that the ambassador, Clark-Kerr, and Parker were scarcely on speaking terms. In fact by mid-1944 relations between the two men had long been very poor and Parker made as little use of the embassy facilities as he decently could.¹⁰⁶

These therefore were humiliating circumstances for Parker. His reply of 10 August 1944 was passed through the Foreign Office to The Times News Editor,

I have been informed by the Embassy that part of my Friday dispatch was unused and that it was considered to lack constructive spirit needed to ease Mr Mikolajczyk's task.....my personal opinion that optimism would have been untimely if the Premier did not shift his attitude which now seemed to show an undue suspicion of Russia's aims and a serious miscalculation of the importance that Moscow attaches to Council of National Liberation...As for "party line" which is suggested I am too prone to accept...you are assuming too much if you think that all my sources are tarnished...I do not think that a fully balanced view is obtainable here or that it would pass the censors unscathed but I will attempt to take a more objective attitude in a leader page article on which I am working....I still feel that cuts you have made in placing Friday's dispatch have left your readers ignorant of the snags...Polish Premier....It seems to me that he will have to shed his own suspicions of Moscow and take the Committee more seriously if he is to be successful."¹⁰⁷

This was by no means the first time that Parker had received a warning from Printing House Square of the need for greater "balance" in his work. A few months earlier he had received a similar warning though couched in friendlier terms from E.H. Carr. On 18 April 1944 he had responded to that through the diplomatic bag in a manner which, whilst promising amendment, gives us a good idea of the difficulties The Times faced in seeking to contain the pro-Soviet sympathies of its Moscow correspondent in that correspondent's coverage of the Russo-Polish dispute,

Dear Carr,

....I deplore the British ambassador's decision not to have permitted a military representative to visit Polish Division last month....

I hope my despatch on the Union of Polish Patriots was published....I believe this organisation is much less an instrument of Russian foreign policy than it was a year ago and it can claim the loyalty of the majority of Poles here....I shall bear in mind your general advice about phrasing of opinion, and seek to avoid expressing a partisan viewpoint. And I will try to write to you more frequently. This letter is accompanying one to Geoffrey. (Geoffrey Wilson of the FO-AJF)

Yours sincerely,

Ralph Parker.¹⁰⁸

The Times And The Foreign Office: Differing Perspectives On Eastern Europe

The Foreign Office archives for the Second World War contain innumerable references to The Times. Many of these references themselves refer - usually adversely - to The Times general line on foreign policy. This general line was usually characterised as one of "spheres of influence", a phrase that the Foreign Office itself avoided in public as it inflamed liberal opinion and was judged offensive in particular to American opinion. For reasons of space not all of these can be quoted here. However, one particularly telling one will because in this one the "alternative" foreign policy advocated by The Times was put directly to the Foreign Secretary, Eden.

Quite early on in the war the British government began to grow concerned at the evidence of the increasing role being played by communist organisations and communist front

organisations in the various resistance movements in the Balkans. In January 1943 the Foreign Office submitted a memorandum on this problem to Eden. The Deputy Under-Secretary, Sir Orme Sargent attached to the memorandum the following minute inviting the Foreign Secretary's response,

"There is I am afraid no cut and dried way of guarding against these unpleasant possibilities but I agree that we ought to take steps so to direct our present policy as to lessen the chances of our losing control of the general situation in Central and South-East Europe at the critical moment. For I assume that H.M.G. are definitely opposed to the policy advocated by Professor Carr in the "Times" that we should tacitly disinterest ourselves from Central and South-East Europe and that now and at the peace conference we should recognise all this part of Europe as falling within the exclusive Russian sphere of influence."¹⁰⁹

Against the second sentence of this pithy precis of The Times' position Eden has initialled in the margin in his usual red ink an emphatic "Yes".

However, by this time Eden would have been in little need of any guidance from helpful officials as to the foreign policy position of Britain's leading newspaper. Though it was usually satisfied that it could rely upon its ideas percolating to the decision-makers by the conventional indirect means of public presentation The Times could also on occasion take a more direct route particularly when sensitive issues might be at stake. On 16 January 1942, shortly after Eden's return from Moscow where it was common knowledge that the Foreign Secretary had been hard pressed by Stalin and Molotov for British recognition of Russia's 1941 frontiers, Barrington-Ward sent to Eden the following discussion paper for consideration within the Foreign Office.

"After the collapse of Russia and Germany the Baltic States enjoyed an almost accidental independence during the twenty years interregnum from 1919 to 1939. Apart from this interval of history it was always true that they would fall within the orbit of Russia or of Germany, and it is now more certain than ever in an age which has exposed the illusions of neutrality in Europe. The winning of this war means that they will fall within the orbit of Russia. Here and elsewhere the problem is that of reconciling the demands of self-government and self-development with the

strategic requirements of security on a continental scale. Russian interest in these states is primarily strategic. In the west it is, or ought to be, inconceivable that the Scandinavian states and the Low Countries - France must be left aside for the moment - will relapse into the illusions of independence. If all goes well they will presumably form part of the United Nations system and that system will establish advanced (British) bases in those territories with the consent and by the desire of the nations concerned.

If the Baltic States remained in the German orbit they would be part of a highly centralised Reich under the domination of Berlin. The Russian system, which at least professes to be a Union of Republics and has in fact allowed of a fair amount of devolution, offers at any rate the possibility of effecting some reconciliation between local aspirations and the larger military requirements.

It is in any case important for Britain that we should not stand committed to any particular view of territorial rearrangements in eastern Europe. If we agree in advance to specific solutions proposed by Russia, we shall by implication be committed to defend the justice of these solutions and their compatibility with the Atlantic Charter. If we oppose specific solutions, we are violating two fundamentals of a sound foreign policy: (a) by protesting against things that we shall be powerless to prevent, and (b) by offending a power whose collaboration is vital to us.

The realities of the balance of power in Europe are as clearly exposed today as they were in 1905. The end of the war will leave only two potential great powers on the continent. It will be a cardinal principle of British policy after the war not to antagonise these two powers simultaneously. Germany and Russia are natural antagonists so long as no strong power intervenes between them, but they have a common interest in turning against any third power which tries to intervene in eastern Europe. If we were to oppose Russian policy in eastern Europe after the war, we should quickly reconstitute the German-Russian alliance. It follows that Russia must be regarded as the chief arbiter of the destinies of eastern Europe in the peace settlement and thereafter. At the same time she is a signatory of the Atlantic Charter and could not act in flagrant contradiction of it without injury to her own interests, above all to her claim to be a civilising and progressive influence in contrast to the purely nationalistic conception of the Nazi Reich.

It may be regrettable that we should at this stage have to make any reply at all to a question concerning dispositions in eastern Europe but since a reply is inevitable, it might

perhaps take some such form as the following:

"We have all accepted the guiding principles of the Atlantic Charter, providing for the largest independence compatible with the dominant requirements of security and well being, which admittedly demands some measure of common military and economic organisation. The application of these principles will clearly vary with the differing conditions in different parts of the world. We consider that it will fall to Russia to interpret and apply them in eastern Europe just as it will fall to us to interpret and apply them, in conjunction with other powers in parts of the world where we have a special share of responsibility for common security."

Clearly a reply has to be given. Silence would give rise to worse suspicions."¹¹⁰

Barrington-Ward, in passing this Times position paper over to the Foreign Office, clearly intended to make a contribution to the foreign policy making process. In doing so he had represented the paper as the fruit of the collective wisdom of Printing House Square. However, within the Foreign Office there was little doubt that the chief architect of the paper was in fact E.H. Carr, whose impatience with the interest of small powers, and advocacy of European solutions based upon some kind of European directorate of great powers, were well remembered from his days as a permanent official. Furthermore, the Foreign Office had already been embarrassed by a stream of Times leaders since Russia had entered the war which had had alarming implications for Britain's lesser allies, as the Times commented on the causes of Anglo-Soviet misunderstanding.

The Foreign Office therefore, saw The Times' suggested formula for ending Anglo-Soviet difficulties as typical of Carr's cast of mind. It was single-minded and ruthless. In concentrating on Anglo-Soviet relations to the exclusion of all else, it ignored the multilateral nature of Britain's foreign relations. In particular, The Times seemed to ignore completely the single greatest reason why Britain could never publicly do the kind of "spheres of influence" deal with Russia which, behind the euphemistic language, Printing House Square was in fact advocating. Such a deal would have outraged American opinion. Was not the American relationship at least as important to Great Britain as the Russian relationship? As for the effect of such a formula on neutral opinion, this would be disastrous. Moreover, the declaration of such a formula would have been leapt upon with delight by German propaganda. Most of Hitler's early diplomatic successes in eastern Europe had sprung to a large degree from the fact that Russia had been more widely feared in that region than had Germany. Finally, as Anthony Eden himself concurred in a marginal note on the Foreign Office minutes on The

Times' position paper, "The Times solution does not seem either to follow logically from their own premises or be at all practicable."¹¹¹ In paragraph three of the document itself The Times had explained reasonably enough why Britain could not be bound in advance by territorial solutions proposed by Russia in eastern Europe. Then, in its proffered formula for a settlement of Anglo-Russian difficulties, it had proposed that we solve this impasse by simply handing eastern Europe over to Russia, lock, stock and barrel. Who did The Times think it was deceiving? Or was it perhaps deceiving itself? Orme Sargent, the Deputy Permanent Under Secretary offered the following comment for Eden to consider before framing a reply to Barrington-Ward,

"This looks to me like an attempt by Mr Carr to revive his theory of recognising a Russian sphere of influence in eastern Europe. This it will be remembered was the theme of the disastrous article in The Times last August (The Times 1.8.1941 - AJF) which caused such alarm and despondence among the Poles, the Turks and the Czechs. I sincerely hope that Mr Barrington-Ward will not be allowed to reventilate this view. Surely it is clear that if we are to establish a successful and fruitful system of cooperation with the Soviet government, this must be based on the results of close bargaining in which we shall try to maintain all our rights and interests, and not on a series of abdications such as Mr Carr seems to contemplate. Such a policy of appeasement would I am sure defeat its own ends.

In any case it would be altogether too disingenuous to think that we could successfully hoodwink the Americans and placate the Russians by means of the particular formula of abdication proposed by Mr Carr in his memorandum. As for the effect of such a formula on the Poles, the Turks, the Balkans and Scandinavia generally, there is no doubt it would be catastrophic."¹¹²

Though Carr's formula as submitted by Barrington-Ward to the Foreign Office would never be released, in so many words, by The Times into the public domain, Orme Sargent was to be proved decidedly over-confident in the months and years that followed if he thought that Printing House Square could be induced by the normal Foreign Office procedures of "guidance" into taking a less provocative and controversial line on eastern Europe. In leader after leader Carr would be allowed the freedom to preach his message that tranquility in postwar Europe could only be achieved if Russia was freely accorded the responsibility for exercising "leadership" in eastern Europe. Indeed Barrington-Ward was not displeased by the controversy that these leaders were sometimes caused as he firmly believed that the press in general, and The Times, in particular, had an important role to play in the policy process, both acting as an agent of, and a stimulator of public

opinion. Foreign policy could not be and should not be the exclusive concern of the Foreign Office. And in any case that institution was itself not monolithic. British foreign policy had always been the product of an internal debate, to one degree or another. That internal debate could only be enriched itself by an intelligent outside contribution. On 23 March 1943 Barrington-Ward wrote to the British ambassador in Moscow to thank him for the help he had promised in the matter of Ralph Parker's coverage of sensitive issues,

"Dear Clark-Kerr,

I have heard from Parker since you got back and am glad to feel that he will be able to call upon your help and counsel....You will, I expect, have noticed that we have been ventilating the question of the Russian share in Europe after the war. We have fluttered some doves and there are those who think the discussion premature but that is not, I gathered, the view universally held at the Foreign Office and I certainly do not agree with it. I venture to think that it has already done good to get the matter registered in public discussion in the U.S. I do not expect to get any "reactions" from Moscow, nor have any been forthcoming. Maisky rang me after the appearance of the first article. He was grateful for it but insisted that the only immediate service which could be rendered to Anglo-Russian relations was the opening of a second front....Carr sends his greetings...

Yours etc

R.W. Barrington-Ward 113

Barrington-Ward's newspaper had indeed "fluttered some doves". On 10 March 1943 it had published the most controversial leading article on foreign affairs that it published throughout the war, under the title "Security in Europe". In this leader Carr put forward the essence of his views on postwar Europe. No similar leader would be so much quoted. Indeed it has entered into the general history of the period. Carr had written,

If Britain's frontier is on the Rhine, it might just as pertinently be said - though it has not been said - that Russia's frontier is on the Oder....The sole interest of Russia is to assure herself that her outer defences are in secure hands: and this interest will best be served if the lands between her frontiers and those of Germany are held by governments and peoples friendly to herself. Everything goes to show that she will be in a position after the war to shape the settlement on lines consistent with this conception of what her security demands. But it will make all the

difference to the future of Anglo-Soviet friendship whether they are freely approved and welcomed by Britain in advance, or whether they are grudgingly accepted as a *fait accompli* after victory has been won.¹¹⁴

This leader aroused violent indignation amongst the Poles but not only amongst the Poles, for it had alarming implications for the government-in-exile in London of the east European peoples in general. Inevitably Raczynski protested to *The Times* itself and to the Foreign Office, which latter dissociated itself from the sentiments contained in the controversial *Times'* leader. As for the United States, Eden, on an official visit there at the time, found himself faced by demonstrators and pickets with placards protesting at British "appeasement" at the expense of the peoples of eastern Europe. In response Eden disavowed the article before American opinion.¹¹⁵

The Polish Government-In-Exile And The British Press

From the time of Katyn and the Russo-Polish rupture the diplomatic position of the Polish government-in-exile steadily deteriorated in the face of increasing Soviet pressure upon it. As the Soviet military position in the east improved so the Polish diplomatic position in the west grew weaker, as it became clearer and clearer that the British government, whilst doing everything else that it could to help restore diplomatic relations between the Poles and the Russians, would take no course of action that might imperil Anglo-Russian relations or Russia's contribution to the war effort. From time to time the Poles would place their hopes in Roosevelt's capacity and willingness to put pressure on the Russians over the Polish Question in a way that the British would not or could not do. Sometimes they aired these hopes before their British hosts, as though suggesting an unflattering comparison, to the irritation of Churchill and Eden. For the latter would themselves have welcomed a firmer American position on Poland but were convinced that Roosevelt had even less intention of alienating Russia over Poland than they had themselves. In the event the Poles would allow themselves to be deceived by Roosevelt's charm and rhetoric into grossly exaggerating both what Roosevelt was in fact prepared to do for Poland and the diplomatic weight that they themselves had in Washington.¹¹⁶ Unknown to the Poles Roosevelt had raised the Polish Question at Teheran before Stalin as though for him it was primarily a matter of electoral calculation in the forthcoming 1944 Presidential elections. And indeed the Polish-American vote was an important element in that "ethnic" vote which itself formed a key constituent in Roosevelt's election winning formula. Throughout 1944 therefore it was in Roosevelt's interest that the Polish government-in-exile be treated with every deference so that the

Polish Question should not become a Presidential election issue, for in all normal circumstances the Polish-American vote was overwhelmingly Democratic. Faced with Roosevelt's fulsome but unspecific reassurances as to what he intended to do to help Poland the London Poles kept scrupulously out of the 1944 Presidential election. The alarm was not sounded over Poland and Roosevelt went on to begin an unprecedented fourth term, after a decisive election victory. In his study of the part played by foreign policy issues in U.S. Presidential elections Robert A. Divine bluntly accuses Roosevelt of deliberate deception and double dealing during these months in order to prevent the Polish Question from becoming an election issue.¹¹⁷

Even before the Katyn affair had provoked the Russo-Polish rupture an organisation called the Union of Polish Patriots had made its appearance on Soviet soil under the leadership of Wanda Wasilewska. This organisation devoted much of its time from its inception to questioning the degree to which the Polish government-in-exile in London actually represented the Polish people and to accusing that government and its army of being unprepared to face the Germans on the battlefield whilst practising anti-semitism at home. During the summer of 1943 the Kosciuszko Infantry Division would be formed from Polish volunteers to fight alongside the Red Army on the eastern front. In March 1944 this would be upgraded to become the First Polish Army under the Polish general Zygmunt Berling. Under both titles this unit fought under overall Red Army command.

On 21 July 1944 the Union of Polish Patriots was subsumed under a new organisation, the Polish Committee of National Liberation. On 27 July 1944 Pravda announced Soviet recognition of the Committee of National Liberation as "the only lawful organ of executive power" in liberated Poland. This organisation first assembled at Chelm but then immediately transferred to Lublin, from which city it thereafter took its name. At the same time as these developments proceeded Stalin was calling for the creation of a new Polish government upon a wider basis with representatives from liberated Poland as well as from the Poles in the west.

Throughout this process the Polish government in London went through a prolonged crisis. Pressure was exerted by the British government on the Poles to make limited concessions to the Soviet Union as Churchill fought to retrieve the situation. In the matter of composition this pressure would meet with some very modest success. On 30 September 1944 General Sosnkowski (a particular bete-noir of the Soviets) was dismissed as Supreme Commander under British pressure. In the matter of their eastern frontier however, the Poles proved obdurate. Mikolajczyk, the Polish leader having

failed to get any party except his own to accept the Curzon Line as the basis for a settlement, resigned on 24 November 1944 as Polish Premier.

Throughout this steady deterioration in their diplomatic position the London Poles found themselves faced with a press which was uniformly either unsympathetic to them, or at best detached, as their political conflict with Russia passed through its various phases. The only exception to this generalisation was the Catholic press but this was little comfort as the Poles knew that that press carried little political weight in this country. Other than that not a single British national newspaper can be said in broad terms to have taken the Polish "side" in the greatest diplomatic conflict of the Second World War. The Polish government found itself portrayed as intransigent and unrealistic in its attitude towards Russia, and as incapable of transcending its own tradition of "romantic" nationalism in the interests of Allied harmony. All kinds of criticisms were made of the Polish position and all kinds of constructive suggestions were made as to ways by which the Poles might redeem themselves. In contrast the Soviet position on Russo-Polish differences tended simply to be baldly reported as that position developed. There was little comment and no critical comment. Whilst there was open discussion as to the best way that the Polish government might be reconstructed so as to purge itself of those "militarist", "reactionary" and "anti-Soviet" elements who stood in the way of Russo-Polish reconciliation there was no similar discussion as to how the Soviet government might be improved in the interests of Allied unity by reconstruction.

In the face of such a uniformly unfriendly British press the Poles felt that their position was being further undermined by the damaging effect such Fleet Street coverage of their affairs had on their standing with British public opinion. Moreover, they constantly suspected official inspiration.¹¹⁸ From time to time they put these suspicions to the Foreign Office itself. Thus on 8 January 1944 Frank Roberts would record in a minute for the Foreign Secretary,

The Counsellor of the Polish Embassy who is a reasonable Pole complained to me that these articles (in *The Times*) had struck many Poles as almost identical with the line taken in this country towards the Czechs just before Munich. I made the obvious replies. The Poles evidently suspect that the London press became less favourable to them on higher direction.¹¹⁹

Against this minute in a marginal comment Eden has written "Of course they do; but it ain't true." (sic). A month earlier a highly placed Polish official had voiced the same

suspicious to O'Malley, for him to pass on to the Foreign Office and Eden, to the effect that certain Poles had come to believe, in view of the flood of calumnies of Poland appearing in the British press, that the British government were priming the press to prepare British public opinion for a second Munich over eastern Europe. This time Poland was cast to play the role played earlier by Czechoslovakia. This time Eden had indicated in a marginal comment his complete agreement with a minute written by Denis Allen in which the latter argued,

If the British press tend on the whole to be more friendly to the Russians than to the Poles this is to be ascribed not to official direction but rather to a general realisation that the Soviet contribution to the war and the friendship of the Soviet Union are even more important to this country than Poland's. While some Poles scent "appeasement" in the air in our attitude towards the Soviet Union many of the more sensible of our Allies see that not only our moral authority but also the future security of Europe depend upon close collaboration between ourselves and the U.S.S.R. 120

This of course, was a difficult lesson for the Poles to learn. As Churchill occasionally put it the Russians were simply killing more Germans than the Poles (and, he might have added, than anyone else). The Poles were simply deceiving themselves if they thought that the British press and the British people were in need of instruction from the Foreign Office News Department or the Ministry of Information in the brutal arithmetic of war. They could do all the key calculations for themselves and their natural inclination in the case of the press, even in the absence of Foreign Office "guidance", would have been to treat Russo-Polish differences with discretion and circumspection. Yet the brutal arithmetic of war was only one of the reasons for the poor standing of the London Poles with the British press. For there was in fact no neat and tidy correlation between an Allied government-in-exile's standing with Fleet Street and its services to the Allied cause and the war effort. After all, to use Churchill's dramatic language, if it were true that the Russians were killing more Germans than the Poles, it was also true that the Poles were killing through their fighting men alone, on both the western and the eastern fronts far more Germans than the Free French, the Norwegians, the Dutch, the Czechs etc. Yet the government-in-exile of these countries seemed to enjoy a better image in the British press than did the Polish government and all this despite the fact that Poland alone amongst them had produced no Petain or Quisling. This was a constant source of irritation to the Poles. In fact what it illustrated was that the brutal arithmetic of war sometimes gave way to the equally brutal realities of geography. France and Norway did not lie as did Poland

between Russia and the Red Army's advance and Germany. As for the Czechs Benes had given public acceptance of the fact that he was undisturbed by the prospect of a postwar eastern Europe where leadership would inevitably be provided by Soviet Russia. Czech "realism" in this matter was much more welcome to both British policy-makers and to British press and public opinion than the "obstinacy" of the Poles. The Czechs had of course always been the most Russophile amongst the Slavs. In contrast the Poles had always been the most Russophobe of Slav nations. According to much of the British press the Polish government-in-exile had failed to transcend atavistic suspicions of Russia which had no proper place in the modern world.

For their part the Poles did what they could to counter this negative image in Fleet Street. Raczynski and Mikolajczyk seized upon every opportunity to present the Polish case in the British press either directly or by interview with friendly journalists. Indeed here we touch upon one of the ironies of the situation. The Foreign Office was sometimes concerned that its attempts to prevent the Russo-Polish dispute from dividing the Grand Alliance had in fact been too successful in that the Polish case was going by default in the British press where the Poles were sometimes being portrayed as mindless trouble-makers. From time to time therefore the Foreign Office News Department would use its good offices to secure favourable press interviews for the Poles with sympathetic journalists like Vernon Bartlett.¹²¹ This facility of course extended only to those Poles, like Mikolajczyk and Raczynski, who in Foreign Office parlance were regarded as "reasonable" and "realistic" as opposed to those who were seen as "intransigent" or "romantic". This kind of conduct to some extent appeased that sense of grievance about the performance of the British press that the Poles were constantly expressing to the Foreign Office.

However, although this kind of News Department cooperation could help the Poles with friendly journalists like Bartlett or friendly newspapers like The Sunday Times it could be of little assistance with what the Poles always recognised to be their most formidable critic in Fleet Street, The Times. The Foreign Office News Department never deceived itself that it could carry much influence with men like Carr and Barrington-Ward over the Polish Question. Nor did it deceive the Poles in this sense, though it was never able to totally disabuse the Poles of the notion that the Foreign Office in fact carried a great deal more influence in Printing House Square than it liked to let on. This was a problem that the News Department had with all of the government-in-exile to a greater or lesser extent. At the same time the News Department impressed upon the Poles that The Times diplomatic correspondent Iverach McDonald was far more approachable and

open-minded than the more powerful figures at Printing House Square. This was a relationship that the Poles were in fact able to use to some very modest effect. That having been said the best way to characterise the relationship between the Poles and The Times during the war years is one of mutual distrust. This distrust in the main sprang from diametrically opposed interpretations of the sources of Soviet conduct. The Times' attitude to Russia proved unsusceptible to influence by the Poles, as the following example will show.

In January 1944 Jan Nowak was in England as emissary between the Polish underground and the Polish government-in-exile. He reported also directly to Anthony Eden on conditions in occupied Poland. One of the things that struck him whilst he was in England was the alarming gap between the actual standing of the Poles with British public opinion and the perception of that standing that the Polish underground entertained. Nowak was particularly struck by the cool and detached attitude taken towards the Poles in their difficulties with the Russians by so much of the British press. With the help of his government he resolved to do what one man with fresh news could do towards improving the Polish image. He was particularly alarmed by The Times unfriendly attitude towards Poland. To help counter this he gave Iverach McDonald a two hour interview on the activities of the Polish underground in organising resistance against the Germans. This account duly appeared in a full column on the news page of The Times to his gratification. At the same time he secured an invitation to one of The Times lunches, editorial lunches that were held each Thursday. Here Nowak found himself seated next to Barrington-Ward. He seized his opportunity,

"Taking advantage of my proximity to the editor-in-chief of the most important English newspaper, I turned the conversation to a recent series of articles by Professor E.H. Carr and his concept of a division of Europe into zones of influence, which would place Poland under Soviet control. That prospect caused deep disquiet among my fellow countrymen. I asked if Professor Carr's views as put forward in The Times were a reflection of the position of the government or the paper, or whether perhaps they reflected only the opinion of the author. Barrington-Ward denied that The Times had ever represented the view of the government or been inspired by the Foreign Office. In the past, he said, the reverse had frequently been the case. It occasionally happened that the opinions voiced in The Times editorials later emerged as government policy, although this was by no means always the rule. As for a division of Europe into zones of influence, he pointed out that Anthony Eden had publicly denounced the notion. What mattered

was a realistic understanding of the postwar possibilities for Great Britain. "Influence" was not the same as "control" or "domination". Soviet influence in eastern Europe after the war would be a logical outcome of geography and the balance of power. Carr did not mean that Poland would cease to be an independent country. At most, it would remain, like the other east European countries, a "junior partner" of Russia tied to its powerful neighbour by treaty. "Benes and Czechoslovakia don't fear a partition of Europe into spheres of influence" he said. I asked my neighbour to imagine the situation in Poland, with both a Soviet occupation and the fate that had befallen our Ukrainian neighbours incorporated into Soviet Russia much in our minds. "You Poles" said Barrington-Ward with a smile, "remind us of the Irish. You possess too long a historical memory, too many prejudices and attitudes inherited from the past. Under the influence of war and the alliance with the western nations, Russia is undergoing a tremendous revolution. For the moment there is no reason to disbelieve Stalin when he assures us that he wants a strong and independent Poland. You will see, my friend, that your fears are groundless." "Everybody believes what he wants to believe", I said to myself; Poland is not alone in living on illusions." The difference was that in Poland our illusions resulted from lack of information, while the British government had a superb apparatus for collecting facts from all over the world."¹²²

The Warsaw Rising And The British Press

In August 1944 the city of Warsaw rose in revolt against its German oppressors in a demonstration of national will which has no parallel in the Second World War. In large part the motives behind the Rising were political. If Warsaw itself could be held in the name of the Polish government-in-exile then it was hoped the negotiating hand of that government with the western powers, and therefore with the Soviet Union, would be immeasurably strengthened. These hopes in turn depended on demonstrating both to the policy-makers in the west and to western public opinion at large that Poland, given her size and position, nonetheless was capable of making sacrifices in the common struggle against fascism more than comparable to those of any other occupied power.

In this strategy the London press was cast in a key role for if western public opinion were to be mobilised in support of the Poles that mobilisation depended upon a full and sympathetic treatment of the Rising by Fleet Street. At the same time the Warsaw Rising presented British policy-makers with their most delicate problem of news guidance of the entire war. Already they had for eighteen months struggled to repair the Russo-Polish

diplomatic rupture. The Rising had been decided upon by the Poles themselves acting as a sovereign power without coordination with the British government still less with Moscow. As the Rising progressed it became clear that the Red Army had halted its military advance on the opposite side of the Vistula pleading military necessity. When this became clear to the Germans the German army itself halted its retreat in order to suppress the Rising. In the face of the dire peril that faced the civilian population of the city the western powers looked into their own capability to help the insurgents with supplies from the air. Warsaw was at the extreme limit of the range of bombers operating from Allied airfields in the west, so landing and refuelling facilities were sought on Soviet occupied territory to allow western bombers to overfly the city with the maximum payloads and greatest security possible in such difficult circumstances. The request for these facilities was denied. Such was Churchill's anger at Russian conduct in this matter that he proposed to Roosevelt that the western powers present the Russians with a fait accompli by overflying Warsaw and simply landing on the Soviet airfields without permission. In such circumstances it would have been impossible in the face of an alerted public opinion in the world at large for the Soviets to refuse to cooperate. Churchill failed to secure the President's support for so dangerous a ploy. At the same time Churchill wrote to Stalin pointing out that it might not be possible much longer for him to contain British public opinion on the issue,

The War Cabinet wish the Soviet Government to know that public opinion in this country is deeply moved by the events in Warsaw and by the terrible sufferings of the Poles there. Whatever the rights and wrongs about the beginnings of the Warsaw rising, the people of Warsaw themselves cannot be held responsible for the decision taken. Our people cannot understand why no material help has not been sent from outside to the Poles in Warsaw. The fact that such help could not be sent on account of your Government's refusal to allow United States aircraft to land on aerodromes in Russian hands is now becoming publicly known. If on top of all this the Poles in Warsaw should be overwhelmed by the Germans, as we are told they must be within two or three days, the shock to public opinion here will be incalculable. The War Cabinet itself finds it hard to understand your Government's refusal to take account of the obligations of the British and American Governments to help the Poles in Warsaw. Your Government's action in preventing this help from being sent seems to us at variance with the spirit of Allied co-operation to which you and we attach so much importance both for the present and the future.¹²³

From the very beginning of the Rising the London Poles were dissatisfied with the extent and character of its coverage by Fleet Street. This was doubly the case because it occurred at the same time as Mikolajczyk was in Moscow making, largely at Churchill's behest, what would prove to be his last desperate attempt to repair fences with the Russians. In these circumstances it was essential that everything should be done that might in Russian eyes serve to enhance the standing of the Polish Premier and the government he led with British opinion. Indeed the News Department of the Foreign Office had given all the guidance that it could to the London press to be supportive of the Polish Premier in his diplomatic endeavour. And as we have seen this extended to directing the Moscow embassy staff to work towards the same end by encouraging the Moscow press corps to adopt a constructive and positive attitude in their reporting of Mikolajczyk's activities in Moscow. Yet the Warsaw Rising vastly complicated matters in this regard. Ever since Katyn the British press had been encouraged not to take a partisan stance on Russo-Polish differences. Stalin's conduct over Warsaw suddenly cast a new shaft of sunlight over the darker side of Soviet policy, particularly after Vernon Bartlett revealed in the News Chronicle that landing rights had been denied in Soviet occupied Europe when the project for the relief of Warsaw from the air had been considered by the western powers.¹²⁴ At the same time the fundamental strategic truths of the Second World War still pointed in the same direction, even after the Normandy landings. The great bulk of the German army both in manpower and in firepower remained on the eastern front, even after a second front in the west had been opened.

In the matter of Stalin's conduct over Warsaw there was no rush to judgement on the part of the British press. Full tribute is paid to the heroism of the insurgents and to the indomitable national spirit of the Poles. The official Soviet explanation for the halting of the Russian advance before Warsaw is passed on to readers with little comment and less questioning. After the Rising moves to its tragic conclusion criticism grows of the role of the Polish government-in-exile. The criticism, frequently expressed, that is addressed towards that government is that in launching the Rising it failed to co-ordinate its strategy beforehand with its Allies. Not a single British national newspaper saw fit to openly challenge the Soviet version of events in its leader columns, though some journalists in their individual columns like Vernon Bartlett in the News Chronicle clearly took an even more sombre view of Soviet conduct after Warsaw than they had done before. Excluding for obvious reasons the Daily Worker, the least friendly newspapers in Fleet Street towards the position of the Polish government-in-exile were The Times and the Express group.

Within days of the outbreak of the Rising Raczynski wrote privately on 5 August 1944 to Barrington-Ward to protest at "the marked coldness, if not unfriendliness, shown by your great paper to my country at a decisive turning point of its destiny."¹²⁵ This he did on two grounds. The first was the failure of The Times to give adequate backing to Mikolajczyk's diplomatic efforts in Moscow. The second was the inadequate coverage given by The Times to events in Warsaw. By return post Raczynski received a personal reply from Barrington-Ward seeking to reassure him on both points.

Despite Barrington-Ward's reassurances, if the Poles expected or hoped that the spectacle of the Warsaw Rising would produce a change in tone towards them on the part of Printing House Square they were to be bitterly disappointed. For by this time The Times was growing to see the Polish government, so intransigent in the matter of its eastern frontier, as little more than an embarrassment in a world where business must still be done. According to The Times leader of 31 August 1944 the whispered suggestion that was beginning to circulate in London to the effect that the Russian forces had been halted outside Warsaw as a deliberate act of policy to allow the Germans and the Poles to fight a war of mutual destruction was a "malicious and unfounded rumour".¹²⁶ On no account should the western powers allow themselves to become embroiled with the Soviet Union over Poland. Moreover, they should avoid applying double standards for:

Both Great Britain and the United States have shown themselves to be sensitive traditionally to the direct intervention of any other power in certain regions that they have considered vital to their security. It would therefore be all the more unreasonable if they were to blind to an equally legitimate sensitiveness of Russia towards independent action by other powers anywhere in the territories that lie between her frontiers and Germany. The long and tragic record of the nineteenth century shows that the attempted intervention of western powers in relations between Poland and Russia, however well intentioned, has rarely brought credit to those powers or - what is more important - advantage to the Polish nation.¹²⁷

From the beginning of the Russo-Polish dispute the newspaper had supported concessions to the Soviet Union by Poland on what it understood to be the two issues in the diplomatic conflict. In the first place, the Polish government-in-exile must publicly accept the Curzon Line as the international boundary between the two countries. Secondly, that government must purge itself of those reactionary and militaristic elements with the Soviet authorities found so objectionable. According to The Times these latter blemishes on the democratic legitimacy of the Polish government were a consequence of

that government's dubious origins, successor as it was of the "regime of the colonels" and ultimately of the Pilsudski military dictatorship. At no time during the war was The Times to subject the democratic credentials of Britain's Soviet ally to the same searching scrutiny. By its discreet silence in the latter case it demonstrated an altogether more charitable understanding of the complexities of history.

Two months before Yalta, The Times, in an important leader, returned to the spirit of Geoffrey Dawson's controversial leader on Chamberlain's announcement of the Guarantee to Poland in subjecting the obligations assumed by Great Britain under the Anglo-Polish Mutual Security Treaty of 25 August 1939 to the closest scrutiny.¹²⁸ Indeed this time the scrutiny was so close that it enabled the leader writer to read between the lines of the published treaty. According to the published text of that treaty, it will be recalled, it was directed against aggression by "a European Power". According to the leader writer the treaty was directed against Germany and German aggression alone and did not therefore have an eastern dimension at all, least of all a commitment by H.M.G. to restore Poland within its 1939 frontiers. What the leader writer was more than hinting at, of course, was the existence of those secret protocols to the treaty that have already been considered earlier in this study and would be released in full after Yalta by the British government. Earlier in 1944 The Times had departed from its standard practice in publishing in its correspondence columns an anonymous letter¹²⁹ drawing readers' attention to the little remembered Commons reply by the then Minister of State at the Foreign Office, R.A. Butler, in the charged circumstances of October 1939, to a question on the sensitive issue of the diplomatic implications of the Russian aggression in eastern Poland. As we have seen earlier in this study, Butler, in this reply, had given every indication, short of outright revelation, of the existence of the secret protocols of the Anglo-Polish Treaty limiting that treaty's application specifically and exclusively to the case of aggression by Germany. Therefore before Yalta The Times was arguing that only a misplaced sense of honour bound Britain to the London Poles, the great majority of whom, following the resignation of Mikolajczyk in November 1944, "were blindly faithful to a fatal and discredited tradition".¹³⁰ Moreover, the newspaper put aside the contractual niceties of international law to declare that "the British government and peoples.....obligations.....are to the Polish people as a whole, and not to any one group."¹³¹

If the Poles gained little satisfaction from The Times' coverage of the Warsaw Rising and that Rising's ominous implications for Poland they gained even less from that Rising's coverage in the Beaverbrook press. Like The Times Express newspapers expressed the

strongest admiration for the patriotism and valour of the people of Warsaw but this admiration fell well short of any extension to the Polish government-in-exile. Beaverbrook's newspapers saw that government, as it long had done, as engaged in playing a dangerous wrecking game within the Grand Alliance. His newspapers accepted without question the Soviet explanation that the Red Army had been halted outside Warsaw at the time of the Rising from reasons of military necessity. Moreover, they were even more brusque than The Times in rejecting as malicious and unfounded all suggestions that political considerations might have played a part in Stalin's decision. In private Beaverbrook was prepared to go even further than his newspapers did in public. On 26 August 1944 Beaverbrook, disturbed by anti-Soviet rumours that were beginning to circulate in London in the light of Soviet inaction before the gates of Warsaw as the Germans set about the brutal suppression of the Rising, wrote to Eden,

I am disturbed by the present state of our relations with Russia. So I write this letter, not in any way as a complaint, but as an attempt at argument, for I am responsible for the situation along with others who take decisions.

- (1) The Poles have always been unsatisfactory. They seized Teschen at the time of Munich, etc. I need not make the case.
- (2) The Polish war effort has been consistently overvalued in the press.
- (3) The Polish newspapers have been a constant source of worry. They have excited anti-semitism in a virulent form. Their political attitude was a major factor in the break of Soviet-Polish relations.
- (4) Our hope for days to come, so far as relations with the United States are concerned, depends on a close measure of friendship with Moscow. I need not argue this point.
- (5) We have given the Russians many opportunities for suspicions. We delayed too long in taking decisions.

Now the issue of Poland rises between us.

For my part I believe the story of the Red Army officer as related in Clark Kerr's telegram no. 2219. If it is true that the Polish underground made no attempt to interfere with the movements of the German armoured divisions towards the Warsaw front then any support we give the Poles in the present controversy would be paralleled if the Germans had occupied Dublin and an uprising by the I.R.A.

interfering with our plans for recapturing the city became the subject for similar controversy with Moscow.

Of course the truth of the Warsaw tragedy is that the Russians met with an unexpected and serious reverse almost at the gates of the city, due to the arrival of those armoured divisions which, they say, the Poles allowed to pass. The Russians got so near that it needed no exhortation from Moscow or London to make the citizens rise.

But whatever the cause of the tragedy the friendship[of Russia is far more important to us than the future of Anglo-Polish relations.¹³²

This letter must be seen in the context of Beaverbrook's formula for a postwar settlement, a formula that his newspapers took every opportunity to propagate. In essence this formula was little different from that proposed by The Times though it was usually expressed in homelier language and shorn of theoretical elegance and historical allusion. On 27 September 1944 Beaverbrook wrote in typical vein to Bernard Baruch,

I continue to pursue my simple policy in relation to Britain, the United States and Russia. It is in fact, too simple to be appreciated by any but a very simple man. That policy is to be one of a mutual admiration society of three.¹³³

Yalta And Beyond

On 31 December 1944 the Committee of National Liberation at Lublin announced its transformation into a Provisional Government of Poland. On 5 January 1945 the Soviet Government recognised the Provisional Government at Lublin. Early in February 1945 the "Big Three" Allies assembled at Yalta to decide the fate of Europe. More time was spent at Yalta in discussing the Polish Question than was spent on any other issue. Having come to agreement Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill issued a communique to the world's press and radio on 11 February. The Polish provisions of that communique contained two key provisions. In the first place it was decided that,

A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of

the western part of Poland. The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganised on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and Poles abroad. The new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity.

In the second place it was agreed that,

This Polish Provisional Government of National Unity shall be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. In these elections all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates.

On 13 February the Polish government-in-exile in London issued a communique to the press announcing that as the decisions of the Three Power Conference at Yalta in regard to Poland had been made without participation, the authorisation, or the knowledge of the Polish government those decisions could not be recognised by the Polish government nor could they bind the Polish people.

Few international agreements can have received a more rapturous Fleet Street reception than the Yalta Agreement. After the Cold War developed Yalta would become the source of more contention than any other of the wartime conferences. Yet at the time the contemporary London press met the conclusions announced at Yalta with universal enthusiasm. At the very centre of these conclusions lay the agreements with regard to Poland. The Times found "the most remarkable achievement of the Crimea Conference" to be "the agreement upon the future attitude of the three Powers to Poland."¹³⁴ Six years earlier The Times had surprised the political nation by subjecting the form of words chosen to signal an earlier British commitment in regard to Poland to a remarkable test of textual exegesis. It chose to brush aside such pedantry in regard to the Yalta accords whose meaning and implementation could clearly be safely left to the great powers working in harmony.

Not a single national British newspaper took an editorial line over Yalta in support of the Polish government-in-exile or against the Yalta provisions in regard to Poland. In the Yalta debate in the House of Commons Churchill's coalition would be faced by the minor unpleasantness of a division in which twenty seven M.P.'s, twenty two of them Tories, moved an amendment against the government specifically on the Polish provisions of the

Yalta accords. The Prime Minister suffered no similar minor embarrassment at the hands of Fleet Street. Ironically only a few weeks earlier Churchill had suffered the worst Fleet Street press of his premiership, over Greece. Raczynski was struck by the selective nature of Fleet Street's enthusiasms. To judge by the intensity of its reactions it appeared to regard Churchill as a greater threat to democratic liberties in Greece than Stalin in Poland.

From the Polish perspective more generally it appeared that at Yalta the British press had fully succumbed to the doctrine of the appeasement of Soviet Russia at the expense of eastern Europe in general and of Poland in particular. In the very choice of the term "appeasement", much used in Polish circles and particularly offensive to Churchill and his team, was an implied parallel between British policy in the thirties and British policy in the forties. Indeed the Poles themselves frequently claimed, as we have seen, that Poland was cast to play in 1945 the role played by Czechoslovakia in 1938.

Yet insofar as the British press was concerned this analogy was always inexact. In the thirties it is true that Chamberlain could always look to powerful supporters in Fleet Street. Yet even when Chamberlain's pursuit of appeasement was at its most popular he was always faced with a section of the press ranging from the News Chronicle, through The Manchester Guardian, to The Yorkshire Post, that opposed appeasement. Conversely, the "anti-appeasers" in British politics in the thirties could always rely upon this noisy and articulate anti-appeasement press for support.

In contrast in January/February 1945 the position of the London Poles was one of complete isolation in terms of press support for their cause. In this sense in 1945, as opposed to 1938, there was no "anti-appeasement" press. The Yalta rebels in the Commons received no editorial support in Fleet Street.

At Yalta Churchill had objected to documentary references to the Polish government-in-exile as the "emigre" Poles on the grounds that to Anglo-Saxon ears this suggested a government in flight from popular rejection.¹³⁵ Some months earlier George Orwell had made the same objection in the pages of Tribune, asking why so much of the British press had lent itself to this obvious rhetorical trick on the part of the Kremlin.¹³⁶ Why, Orwell had asked, did one become an "emigre" if one emigrated to London but never did if one emigrated to Moscow? Yet after Yalta and before the British government withdrew official recognition from the Polish government-in-exile we find The Times referring Molotov-fashion to the "emigre Polish government." Long before

the shift in diplomatic recognition to the new Warsaw government came about the newspaper was advocating such a move as the only logical outcome of the London Poles failure to reconcile themselves to the changes in regard to Poland agreed to Yalta. One could not save those who would not save themselves. When the shift in recognition came, the Polish government-in-exile was warned by The Times against abusing British hospitality by indulging in what the newspaper chose to call "mischief making" and "wrecking" activities.¹³⁷ Ordinary Polish servicemen were advised to join

Mikolajczyk in returning home, as all patriotic Poles should do, to help build the new Poland and at the same time repeatedly warned against the influence of their own officer class in shaping their decision. Yet these attitudes and this tone was in no sense peculiar to Printing House Square for it permeated much of the rest of Fleet Street. The Manchester Guardian, for example, often appeared more concerned about the allegedly malign influence of the Polish officer class than did The Times. Thus in a stern leader of 14 March 1945 The Manchester Guardian warned that "General Anders and those Polish officers who agree with him are determined to persuade, bully or cajole the thousands of young men under their command to become exiles from their country for an absurd and dangerous dream". The one quality daily newspaper which refrained from all lecturing and admonition in regard to the London Poles was The Daily Telegraph.

On 6 July 1945, acting in concert with the United States, Great Britain withdrew diplomatic recognition from the Polish government-in-exile in London and transferred it to the new authorities in Warsaw as agreed at Yalta. On the same day the Polish government-in-exile lodged with the Foreign Office its formal protest at what it termed this "suppression of Poland's independence". Again this protest by what must now be termed the former Polish government in London passed without gaining the editorial support of a single British national newspaper.

In January 1947 the elections decided upon at Yalta were held in Poland under the auspices of the communist dominated government. The British press faithfully reported the widespread use by the authorities of intimidation and all manner of electoral abuses. Long before the campaign ended the great bulk of the British press was supporting the claim of Mikolajczyk's Peasant Party that in view of these abuses the election result could on no account be considered representative of the popular will in Poland. The Yalta promises of "free and unfettered elections" had manifestly not been delivered.

Yet at the same time the British press still did not draw wider political conclusions about British foreign policy from events in Poland. In this sense Poland was not regarded as

the final test of Soviet goodwill in Europe. The hope was still widely expressed editorially that in spite of everything the wartime allies could still recover their wartime harmony and work together again in the settlement of Europe. Again it was implied, as it had so frequently been suggested in wartime, Poland, whatever its difficulties, must not be allowed to become the cause of a final diplomatic breach between the "Big Three".

Thus, though it may be true as Churchill, Harriman and Truman would later argue in their memoirs, that it is in the Polish Question above all that we find the seeds of the Cold War, it is certainly not true, at least as far as the British press was concerned, that Poland was regarded as providing the *casus belli* in that war. No British national newspaper argued in January 1947 that this should be so. No newspaper leader called for a revolution in British foreign policy on the basis of events in Poland. In this sense Poland slipped entirely into the Soviet orbit with scarcely a murmur of protest aimed at effective action in terms of policy change, by the British press.

It is not until a full year and more later that we get serious discussion in the British press that Soviet conduct in Poland must be seen as part of a wider pattern of Soviet subversion and aggression in Europe, and that that grand design for the domination of Europe will only be frustrated if the western powers pursue the path of collective security and face the Soviet Union with superior power and resolution. The turning point here would be provided not by Poland but by Czechoslovakia. And even then the press would remain deeply divided. Moreover, there would be no question of Ernest Bevin and the postwar Labour government feeling under any pressure from Fleet Street to travel faster along the new course of British foreign policy, as the press had pressured Chamberlain's government to move even faster towards collective security, when in March 1939 Czechoslovakia had provided a catalyst for British foreign policy on an earlier occasion. For in the later forties we find Fleet Street as a whole following behind the rapid evolution of British policy in regard to Russia not acting as a pacemaker. This was one reason why Ernest Bevin and the Foreign Office would find themselves in a position of having to "educate" British public opinion in regard to what they conceived to be the serious threat Russia posed.

Notes And References

1. Lord Strang, Home And Abroad, (1956), p.161.
2. Churchill's report to the cabinet after the Teheran Conference records him as observing to Stalin,
"It had astonished him that Mr Chamberlain, after not having fought for the Czechs at Munich had suddenly given a guarantee to Poland in April 1939, when he had thrown away the other more favourable opportunity. The Prime Minister had been astonished that Mr Chamberlain should go back to a policy of war and guarantee Poland. He had been astonished but he had also been glad."
3. H.L. Dyk, Weimer Germany And Soviet Russia 1926-1933, (1957). Moreover, perhaps Austen Chamberlain's most memorable remark was his observation that the Polish Corridor was something "for which no British Government ever will or ever can risk the bones of a British grenadier", quoted, D. Dutton, Austen Chamberlain: Gentleman in Politics, (1985) p.250
4. W.S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm, (1948), pp. 24-25.
5. K.O. Morgan, Consensus And Disunity : The Lloyd George Coalition, (1979) p137.
6. For the initial reaction of The Times to the Bolshevik Revolution, see K. O' Reilly, "The Times Of London And The Bolshevik Revolution", Journalism Quarterly, No 1 Vol 56 Spring 1979.
7. PRO FO 417-9
8. E. Raczynski, In Allied London, (1962), p.1
9. Interview with Count Edward Raczynski.

10. F.R. Gannon, The British Press And Germany 1936-1939, (1971) p.19.
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CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This thesis began by declaring two main objectives which it is now timely to recapitulate. The first of these was to trace the background to the development in important sections of the British press of markedly sympathetic attitudes towards the security concerns of the Soviet Union in eastern Europe at the onset of the Cold War. The second objective was to analyse the content and the range of press coverage of Anglo-Soviet relations in the mid 1940's with an eye in particular to identifying those lessons drawn by the press as to how in future British policy towards Russia might most wisely be conducted. At the same time as these primary objectives were being pursued it was hoped, more modestly, that some limited light might be cast upon those wider concerns that are of great interest to the political scientist and the political historian viz. the role, or roles, of the press in the whole foreign policy process.¹

In order to facilitate the realisation of these aims it was necessary to isolate and identify the varied roles that the press may be seen to fill in the foreign policy process in a liberal democracy. At this stage the work of Yoel Cohen was drawn upon though in a much modified manner as his categories of press roles under three headings was considered somewhat arbitrary in its neatness as it sometimes grouped together what may properly be considered quite distinct press roles in a mistaken attempt at simplicity.² This process yielded a model in which the press can be seen to fill seven potential roles in the foreign policy process.

In the first place the press may serve as a source of information for the policy-makers. Secondly, because it may fulfil this vital information role, it itself may influence the policy-makers. Thirdly, the press by the relative prominence it gives to foreign policy issues may help set the agenda in international affairs. Fourthly, the press may serve as a channel of communication. In this capacity it may serve as a channel between the policy-makers, between governments, and between the policy-makers and that attentive and activist foreign policy public which may wish to make, or may be encouraged to make, a policy input. Fifthly, the press may be exploited by governments who manoeuvre against other governments in international negotiations and in the run-up to such negotiations. Sixthly, the press may be exploited by the policy-makers to win the support of domestic and of world opinion. Finally, the press may be manipulated in order to test public and foreign government reaction to a contemplated but sensitive

foreign policy initiative without too much loss of face if the reaction is hostile. In short, the policy-makers can use the press to "fly a kite".

The case studies examined in this thesis have afforded us a number of examples of the performance of these varied roles by the press. Now however it is time to assess how the press performance of these varied roles contributed in the wider sense to the shaping of the foreign policy making environment, to the shaping of the climate in which the policy-makers operated.

Fleet Street And The Diplomatic Background To The Cold War

Inevitably this process of assessment takes this study back to the earliest days of Anglo-Soviet relations though no claims are made here that the case studies conducted for this thesis give anything but a partial perspective on Fleet Street's coverage of and attitude towards Anglo-Soviet relations in the twenties and the thirties. British press coverage of Anglo-Soviet relations in those two decades has not been systematically and comprehensively treated over the full range of issues and events where the interests of the two great powers impinged upon each other. Nonetheless such study as has been made suggests that some important qualifications need to be made to the conventional picture of these years hitherto employed by scholars. That conventional picture has suggested that British press treatment of Soviet Russia falls into a neat division along party lines. Thus what in short-hand terms has been called the progressive press (i.e. the Liberal and Labour national newspapers - together with provincial newspapers of a national or international reputation, like The Manchester Guardian) has been seen as advocating the full participation of the Soviet Union in international affairs as an equal partner. In contrast the Conservative press has been conventionally seen as advocating (after the frustration of yet earlier hopes for the suppression of Bolshevism by military intervention) the diplomatic isolation and ostracization of that same country. Moreover, that same Conservative press' near unanimous support in the thirties for the appeasement of Hitler's Germany has been seen as offering further confirmation that the Tory press, like the Conservative Party itself, was in very large part wedded to appeasement because of its preoccupation with the superior danger supposedly presented by Soviet communism. Indeed the unspoken element inspiring the policy of appeasement in the thirties it has often been suggested was precisely the desire to contain, if not roll back, communism by deflecting Hitler's expansionist drive to the east and thus fight fire with fire.

This study suggests a more complicated picture. In fact only one Conservative newspaper's conduct can be said in broad terms to have conformed with this conventional image of Fleet Street's past and that newspaper was the Daily Mail, a newspaper whether under Northcliffe or Rothermere, celebrated for its anti-communist obsessions, and in the thirties for its flirtations, both at home and abroad with the anti-parliamentary right.

Yet Rothermere's Daily Mail, with its early enthusiasm for Mosley and its bizarre enthusiasm for Admiral Horthy's Hungary,³ was far from being in fact in any way typical of the Conservative press. Whilst Beaverbrook for example might find it expedient from time to time to cooperate with Rothermere over specific political campaigns, whether they be to unseat their shared "bogy", Stanley Baldwin, as Tory leader, or whether they be to secure Imperial Preference, Express newspapers retain in the inter-years a distinctive political personality quite different from that of the Rothermere press. Beaverbrook's newspapers were firm and unswerving in their support for parliamentary democracy at home however sceptical they could be about its prospects abroad. Most of all, as we have seen, the Beaverbrook press had a coherent doctrine of international affairs. One consequence of this doctrine was that, alone amongst the inter-war press of the right, it consistently advocated friendly relations with Soviet Russia and the treatment of the U.S.S.R. as a full equal in international affairs.

As for The Times, we are admittedly in its case presented with a much more checkered record than that presented in their different ways by the Daily Mail and the Daily Express. At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution The Times had provided noisy and strident leadership for the cause of intervention in aid of the anti-Bolshevik forces.⁴ Ostensibly and initially this case had been argued on grounds of military necessity - the need to keep Russia in the war - but the newspaper's leader and news columns had soon become strongly coloured by its ideological hostility to revolutionary socialism as such. This became even more evidently the case when the argument from military necessity passed with the successful conclusion of the war in November 1918. In these changed circumstances The Times continued to champion the cause of intervention, this time for wider political purposes and gave strong outside support to the cabinet hardliners on Russia like Churchill. Moreover, when Lloyd George finally overruled his own interventionists and took the decision to withdraw from Russia The Times led the Fleet Street opposition to the new course of British policy, followed in close attendance by the Daily Mail.

However, by the early twenties the attitude of The Times to Soviet Russia had begun to change discernibly. Though it still evidently found Bolshevism a barbarous creed threatening to all civilised values The Times nonetheless now accepted that in the absence of overt aggression by the Soviet state it was indeed up to the Russian people alone to shape their own political destiny. Moreover, it had come by now itself to oppose a "recklessly" interventionist British foreign policy on the European continent. Ironically enough, it would be the pursuit of such a policy, against Turkey rather than Russia, that would provide one of the decisive factors in the fall of Lloyd George in 1922.

This change was first signalled by the attitude adopted by The Times towards the Russo-Polish war. Whilst at no time ruling out the possibility of British help to defend Poland if that country's very existence as a state was threatened, it criticised those in Poland (and in England) who sought to convert the war into an anti-Bolshevik crusade, and it consistently counselled the Poles against policies leading to Poland's over-extension in the east on the grounds that Russia, free or communist, would one day inevitably recover her natural strength as a great power. She would then, equally naturally, exact retribution for any humiliating treatment she might have received during her days of weakness.⁵

From this time onwards The Times reflected pretty faithfully official Conservative policy towards Soviet Russia, that is the reluctant acceptance of communist Russia as a fact of international life, combined with the diplomatic isolation of that country for all practical purposes. These same attitudes were even more faithfully reflected in the pages of The Daily Telegraph. In the later twenties therefore we do not find reflected in the pages of either of these two newspapers that consistent hostility towards Soviet Russia that we do find in the pages of the Daily Mail but neither, on the other hand, do we find reflected that consistently friendly attitude towards that country that we find in the Beaverbrook's newspapers. For example in the matter of the "Arcos" raid whilst the Beaverbrook press, was as we have seen, very critical of Conservative policy, and the Daily Mail supported the idea of going further than a diplomatic rupture by adopting economic sanctions against Russia, the two quality Conservative newspapers believed Sir Austen Chamberlain to have got British policy just about right.

In part this less alarmist attitude on the part of leading Conservative newspapers to the danger posed by revolutionary Russia owed something to internal developments in Russia at this time. In the press of this period we find from time to time articles and leaders suggesting that the adoption of N.E.P. presages a return to internal economic

rationality in Russia's affairs, a development that would in time lead Russia also to return to conventional standards of behaviour in external affairs. In part this less alarmist attitude towards the Soviet Union also owed something to the improved international climate. After the many crises of the immediate postwar period western Europe by the mid-twenties, for all its remaining problems, seemed to have stabilised itself.

However, the greatest single development that confirmed the majority of the Conservative newspapers in inter-war Britain in a more relaxed attitude towards Soviet Russia occurred with Stalin's triumphant emergence from the Kremlin power struggles after 1928. Stalin was universally seen by the western press as a Russian leader who would henceforth give priority to domestic development over international revolution and his victory was warmly welcomed for that reason. Only the Daily Mail remained faithful to its traditional obsessions into the thirties.

This is the background against which press attitudes towards foreign policy in the later thirties must be seen. With the varying degrees of intensity the Conservative press supported Chamberlain's policy towards Germany. In the later thirties the experience of the First World War exercised a strong influence on both press attitudes and upon official policy. It was widely believed that great armaments, alliance systems and the traditional doctrine of the balance of power had failed calamitously to preserve the peace in 1914 and so no faith could reasonably be placed in them again. It was further believed by the Conservative press that the reconstruction of Europe on the Wilsonian basis of national self-determination and representative government had not secured European tranquility as had been hoped. Moreover, though the League had enjoyed some modest successes it had substantially failed to achieve the settlement of international disputes by peaceful conciliation within a global international organisation. Therefore, when British governments in the thirties moved towards the settlement of European disputes outside the context of the League and, in particular, sought to assuage Germany's legitimate grievances through bi-lateral arrangements, they could safely rely upon the steady support of the bulk of the Conservative press.

Of course the Conservative press when it supported, as it did, the management of European affairs by direct negotiation between the great European powers saw little part in this whole process for Soviet Russia. It would be the Daily Herald, the News Chronicle and The Manchester Guardian which would object to Russia's exclusion from the Munich Conference not The Times or The Daily Telegraph. Russia was still seen as a disruptive force in European affairs whose participation might well make European

settlement more not less difficult. Yet that having been said this did not mean by any means that either The Times or The Daily Telegraph saw Stalin's Russia as a greater threat to European peace or to Britain's own interests than Hitler's Germany. Manifestly they did not. To assume that they did is to elevate out of all proper perspective the role supposedly played by an ideological hostility on their part to international communism. The foreign policy positions of these newspapers, as of the British government itself, were based upon far more general considerations.

To sum up, a close reading of those leaders devoted to foreign policy in the Conservative press, when the official policy of appeasement of Germany was in full flood, provides, the Daily Mail always apart, no basis for the view frequently suggested that it is in fear of Soviet communism that we find the key to unlock the secret of the Conservative press' support for appeasement in the thirties. Stalin's Russia was seen as a cautious defensive actor in the international arena which dabbled in subversion and would snap up such opportunities to expand its influence that came its way but which would back away from situations of real danger. Stalin's Russia after all, as the Beaverbrook press repeatedly pointed out, for all its retained revolutionary rhetoric, was responsible for none of the great international crises of the thirties. Russia was not seen as a dangerously expansionist power whose reckless ambitions threatened to cast all Europe into the abyss of continental conflict. Whilst it is true that the Conservative press, Express newspapers always excepted, supported that aspect of Chamberlain's policy that rested, until March 1939, on the deliberate exclusion of Russia from the management of European affairs, this does not mean that fear of Soviet communism dominated or infused the foreign policy positions of these newspapers.

The events of March 1939 produced a revolution in British foreign policy. Hitler's conduct in occupying the rump Czech state in total defiance of that principle of national self-determination that had been invoked in mitigation of his earlier behaviour provoked popular revulsion against the policy of appeasement. The press saw itself as both sharing and reflecting this feeling. The government itself and the anti-appeasers saw the press as properly reflecting this transformation of the popular mood. At no time do we find any suggestion by any minister that popular revulsion against the German occupation of Prague and the transformed public attitude towards appeasement that flowed from that occupation were all "got up by the press". Rather on all sides it was accepted that Fleet Street had quite impartially reflected the popular mood.

In this revolution in popular feeling the relationship between the press and public opinion is best seen as reciprocal, an endless process of input and feedback. An opinion survey of 1,100 people conducted at the time of the Munich crisis six months earlier by Mass Observation into the factors which helped shape public attitudes towards issues in foreign affairs had found that "Newspapers therefore, easily lead in importance among the factors that make opinion".⁶ As we have seen, in the case study on Poland William Strang from his position within the Foreign Office saw the new policy of guarantees as having "sprung fully grown from the ministerial mind". He would also add that that policy was designed to meet "an imperative demand by public opinion that Poland should not be allowed to go the same way as Czechoslovakia".⁷

The mass public therefore, usually a passive and acquiescent actor in foreign policy, became an important factor in the crisis of March 1939, contributing its own input into the new course of British foreign policy. Even those in the press like The Express group, which believed essentially that the new policy of guarantees in eastern Europe was ill-advised, accepted that the great bulk of the British people strongly favoured such a policy and that in a democracy it would have been wrong for any government to have defied what was so manifestly the public will.

Only a few similar examples of the impact of public mass opinion are to be found in the history of modern British foreign policy. In the thirties one can point, earlier, to the popular reaction against the Hoare-Laval Pact and one can point, later, to the popular revulsion against Russia following Stalin's attack upon Finland. However, this was the first time during Chamberlain's premiership that the Prime Minister found himself compelled to act because of domestic opinion as well as under the impact of events abroad. The infant public opinion polls clearly indicate the extent of the revolution in public opinion that had occurred. Yet it is of interest that the research which forms the basis of this study has thrown up no single example of any of the policy-makers, their advisors, or their key political critics, having been aware of the findings of these polls, despite the fact that the Gallup political opinion polls were commissioned and published contemporaneously on a regular basis in the News Chronicle (a pioneer newspaper in this regard). This serves as a reminder that as far as public opinion is concerned, or more properly the measurement of that opinion, we are still here working in a "pre-scientific" age. Apart from their private assessment based upon routine social and political intercourse the chief measure that the policy-makers had of the condition of public opinion was that provided by the press. This was also true of opinion leaders out of office. Thus a major opinion leader in the foreign policy field like Churchill would often

quote the press, and sometimes denounce it, but never on a single occasion in his many speeches and writings did Churchill ever cite the findings of a public opinion poll.

The press was unanimous in its reporting of popular outrage at Hitler's conduct in March 1939 and in its reporting of popular demands for decisive action on the part of the British government. In this function of expressing an outraged public opinion that rival new branch of the media, radio, provided no serious challenge to the press. In the nineteen thirties the B.B.C. had proved cautious to the point of timidity in the coverage it offered of foreign affairs. Essentially it saw its role as one of straightforward reportage rather than as one of providing a platform for debate over foreign policy. To the limited extent that it did provide a platform for debate over foreign policy the narrow interpretation it placed upon its statutory obligation to "balance" meant that it confined debate to speakers cleared by the two front benches at a time when maverick figures like Churchill and Lloyd George were dominating the prosecution case against official policy. Despite attempts by producers at the workface level to widen the role played by radio in the coverage of foreign policy, higher echelons at the B.B.C. usually proved sensitive to pressure from the Foreign Office that the "semi-official" status of the B.B.C. required it to act "responsibly" on controversial issues as that same "semi-official" status might embarrass the Foreign Office when the national interest was at stake.⁸ Ordinary citizens, provoked into uncustomary activity by Hitler's perfidy wrote to their newspapers not to the B.B.C.

In the nature of things action by this country meant and could only mean the extension by this country of security commitments to eastern Europe in contravention of all previous policy. The press universally recognised this. The Beaverbrook press in accepting, however reluctantly, that in a democracy the popular will must prevail acknowledged also that the majority of its own readership, despite clear instruction to the contrary over two decades, firmly backed a policy of guarantees in eastern Europe.⁹ It concluded that the government had been right to bow before the clear weight of public opinion whilst resolving for its own part to redouble its efforts in the future to educate public opinion out of the illusions that lay behind the new policy.

Any acceptance by Great Britain of security commitments in eastern Europe immediately raised the problem of the role of Soviet Russia. Therefore, towards the end of March 1939 newspapers like the News Chronicle, The Manchester Guardian and the Daily Herald were pressing for the Chamberlain government to abandon any ideological reservations that it might still entertain towards that country in favour of making an

enthusiastic approach to Moscow. Instead on 31 March came the bombshell of Chamberlain's Guarantee to Poland.

Press reactions to this were instructive. The progressive press had no particular attachment to Poland as a state, for reasons that have already been explained. Nonetheless these newspapers enthusiastically applauded Chamberlain's dramatic move. Moreover, they turned angrily upon those of their fellow newspapers which appeared intent upon qualifying the nature of the Guarantee to Poland. This action in itself was symptomatic of a deep suspicion that the Chamberlain government might itself attempt to equivocate once public pressure on it relaxed, as the immediate crisis of the spring of 1939 seemed to pass. Little enamored as they were of Poland as a state what the progressive press was applauding was the conversion, half-hearted and reluctant though it may have been, of the British government to a principle. That principle was the principle of collective security. Moreover, the British government had at last seen that collective security had to be continent wide. There could be no security in western Europe without security in eastern Europe. Therefore, Chamberlain's Guarantee to Poland, followed as it rapidly was by similar guarantees to Greece and Rumania received a warm welcome in the Labour and Liberal press. However, these newspapers nonetheless still saw in the Soviet Union the key to the containment of Germany in the east. Time and again they urged the government on to the final all-important step in a general structure of collective security. The security arrangements made with the lesser states of eastern Europe must be seen as preliminaries to, not substitutes for that general understanding with Russia which alone could confidently be expected to check Hitler's ambitions. What characterised these newspapers in the summer of 1939 was a profound distrust of the Chamberlain government's resolution in the new course of British foreign policy. They suspected that that attempt to make a distinction between the territorial integrity of Poland, and that country's political independence, which had first surfaced in the Beaverbrook press and in *The Times*, had been officially inspired, and was symptomatic of the fact that appeasement was not yet dead in the highest circles. As the summer wore on without any obvious fruit these newspapers grew more and more suspicious not of the sincerity of the Soviet Union but of the sincerity of their own government in the negotiations between London and Moscow.

The reaction of the Conservative press to the new course of British foreign policy was much more mixed. The "Danzig" episode coming so soon after the storm produced by the newspaper's initial interpretation of the Polish Guarantee, confirmed in the eyes of critics of *The Times* that Printing House Square was still secretly wedded to the doctrine

of appeasement. Certainly *The Times* throughout the summer of 1939 never pressed the government for greater urgency in the matter of negotiations with Russia. It accepted without criticism the government's explanation of the measured pace of these exchanges.

In contrast to *The Times* nobody doubted the commitment of the *Daily Telegraph* to the new course of policy. Throughout the summer of 1939 this newspaper was unswerving in its insistence that there should be no equivocation on the government's own part in the policy of guarantees in eastern Europe. On the other hand the newspaper expressed no particular criticism of its own government about the tardy nature of the exchanges with Russia nor did it express concern about the relatively low level of the negotiating team that was eventually dispatched to Moscow. To this generalisation there is one exception for from the spring of 1938 this newspaper had provided a platform for Churchill's regular column on foreign affairs. At that time Churchill had lost his regular platform on the *Evening Standard* when Beaverbrook had decided that Churchill's views on appeasement were so diametrically opposed to the newspaper's editorial line on foreign policy that it was time for the two to part. Churchill had immediately found a new base upon *The Daily Telegraph*, a newspaper at that time still pro-appeasement but by no means uncritically so.¹⁰ Churchill was very critical of the leisurely nature of the Chamberlain government's approach to Russia but was careful, in print at least, not to question the government's good faith in this matter.

As we have already seen the position of the *Express* newspapers was a complex one. On the one hand they remained sceptical of the new course in British foreign policy and yearned for a return to isolation. On the other hand they accepted that the new course must prevail because of the massive popular support it enjoyed. That being so the Beaverbrook press accepted the force of the argument put in the progressive press, and in its own pages by Lloyd George that the real key to any credible system of collective security in eastern Europe lay with an understanding with Soviet Europe. It pressed the government therefore to show greater urgency in this matter.

The British press met the actual outbreak of war with patriotic solidarity and during the Polish campaign newspapers vied with each other in paying tribute to Polish valour. The entry of Soviet troops into Poland's eastern provinces met with universal condemnation. Yet more significant than Fleet Street's moral outrage at Soviet perfidy over the longer term was the fact that no newspaper, despite the apparently open nature of the British Guarantee to Poland, seemed to regard Soviet conduct as constituting a *casus belli* with Russia. And, as we have seen, despite the acres of print that Fleet Street devoted to the

implications of the British Guarantee for Poland's borders in the west during the summer of 1939, no single newspaper had thought to raise the question as to whether the Guarantee had any implications for Poland's frontiers in the east. In the summer of 1939 the eyes of the press, as of the British people at large were exclusively on the danger that threatened Poland from the west. In the event after the Soviet aggression against Poland of 17 September 1939 not a single voice in parliament or the press argued that we should as a deliberate act of policy add Russia to our enemies, though a number of voices expressed concern that this evidence of collusion between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia might prove the prelude to a full-blown military alliance between the two powers.

This makes the British response to Stalin's next adventure a couple of months later, the invasion of Finland, all the more remarkable. Britain after all had a treaty obligation to Poland and in September 1939 the qualifications in the Anglo-Polish Treaty limiting that treaty's application exclusively to the case of aggression by Germany were entirely unknown to the British people or press. Yet there was at that period no popular or press demand for sanctions, least of all for military sanctions, against Russia in defence of our Polish ally. An independent Finland had never been seen as a vital interest of this country. Moreover, such was the prickly neutrality of the Scandinavian states in the inter-war period that, in the entirely academic circumstances of assuming that Britain and France had been prepared to extend a system of guarantees to the Scandinavian countries, including Finland, aimed at either Russia or Germany, it is more than likely that all of the Scandinavian countries would have repudiated such guarantees as increasing their insecurity rather than diminishing it.

Despite all this Britain came nearer to war with the Soviet Union over Finland in 1939 than she has done at any other time since the Bolshevik Revolution, such was the force of British outrage at Stalin's conduct. Yet, as we have seen, it would be wrong to see in these events a picture in which the natural caution of the policy-makers was overborne by the violence and strength of an untutored mass public opinion into taking a near-disastrous step in foreign policy. For the policy-makers fully shared the popular attitude towards Russia and were intent upon basing policy upon it. In Fleet Street, as we have seen, in opposing any official move against Russia, the Beaverbrook press stood alone and in doing so freely accepted that it stood in the face of public opinion.

More than forty years later it still remains difficult to explain British policy towards Russia at this time in rational terms, even with all the documentary material which is now available to us. Clearly the needs of the French alliance played a part. The French were

powerful advocates of all help to Finland for compelling internal political reasons. Given the appalling experience of 1914-18 the French government was determined, if at all possible, to fight the Second World War anywhere except in France. This meant at first Poland, and then Finland, and then Norway, until the illusions informing this peripheral strategy were shattered in June 1940. However, this consideration by no means explains that surge in anti-Russian popular feeling in England in December 1939 which forms a remarkable example of the incursion of the mass public into the foreign policy process. By way of further contrast, when six months later Stalin was to show that his appetite for further expansion was by no means sated, by occupying the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia these moves failed entirely to inflame British mass opinion, or indeed the policy-makers themselves against Soviet Russia. Even Churchill, for all his later, and earlier, pragmatism towards Russia appears as First Lord to have joined enthusiastically in all necessary preparations for a course of policy that would have placed this country on a collision course with the Soviet Union. Rarely have the British people, the British press, and the policy-makers been so united over a single issue of foreign policy as they were over Finland and rarely have all three been so wrong.

In the event the obstinate neutrality of the other Scandinavian states and the surprise peace between Finland and Russia of 12 March 1940 put an end to the prospect of Anglo-French military intervention against Russia. In the spring and early summer of 1940 Russia's earlier moves against Poland and Finland were still seen as morally reprehensible but they were also increasingly seen in a wider context. As evidence in particular grew of the fact that Nazi Germany had been distinctly cool in its treatment of the Soviet case for action against Finland, the belief grew in Fleet Street that there was no serious prospect of a Russo-German military alliance. For the two powers, despite their past cooperation, were increasingly seen as being in uneasy rivalry in eastern Europe. Stalin's previous aggressive moves were now more and more seen as forming part of a comprehensible strategy of insurance. He was seen as seeking to protect himself from the perceived threat of German aggression by advancing to the most forward defensive positions. The lead in offering this more forgiving interpretation of Soviet behaviour was taken by The Times but where The Times led the rest of Fleet Street soon followed. This interpretation of the true nature of the Russo-German relationship gathered strength early in 1941 when Fleet Street began to report signs of what it saw as clear signs of a struggle over spheres of influence between the two powers in south-eastern Europe. In the case of Yugoslavia in particular Fleet Street saw evidence not simply that Russian and German policy were no longer coordinated but that the two countries had in fact entered upon a diplomatic collision course. The whole situation was only "resolved" by the German

invasion of that country and the bitter public humiliation of Russia before the watching world. By April 1941 the British press was beginning to report signs of a coming military clash between the two countries and in May and June several British newspapers reported intelligence, some of it coming from the reports home of correspondents of the neutral press, of German troop concentrations in the east along the frontier with Russia. These reports would be angrily repudiated by the Russians as "provocations" inspired by the British. Unknown to the press by June 1941 Stalin was receiving warnings to the same effect about German intentions from the highest official sources in this country, to supplement the reports he was receiving from his own secret intelligence about an impending German strike against Soviet Russia.

From War To Cold War

The events of 22 June 1941 clarified these matters. Stalin's policy of acquiring buffer territory earlier against the clear prospect of a German attack now seemed to many in Fleet Street to have been justified by events. Fleet Street chose not to dwell upon the clear evidence of Soviet unpreparedness when the German blow actually fell,¹¹ nor upon the evidence that as late as 21 June the Russians, for all Stalin's alleged cunning, had appeared much more inclined to accept German reassurances than they were inclined to heed British warnings.

After Russia's entry into the war the policy-makers inevitably had to give priority to the conduct of the war. Moreover, it would be Churchill's clear policy to discourage too much debate aimed at planning for the peace. This applied both to domestic policy and to foreign policy. For just as too much public discussion over domestic policy could have imperilled the Coalition so too much public airing of differences over the future shape of Europe and the world could in time have imperilled the emerging Grand Alliance.

For these reasons the attention that the Foreign Office was naturally inclined to give to the longer term question of the preferred character of a postwar peace settlement tended to be limited, intermittent and discreet. However much though it might have preferred in the circumstances to have put such questions aside for more deliberate treatment in the future, it found that it was not entirely free to do so. For within weeks of Russia's entry into the war the Foreign Office found that it was under strong pressure from Moscow to recognise Russia's 1941 frontiers. This question bristled with obvious difficulties for the British government. In the event Churchill came perilously near the official recognition of Russia's 1941 frontiers early in 1942 in a desperate attempt to keep Russia in the war

and was only saved from this action by American insistence that the matter of frontiers would have to await a general postwar peace settlement.

Whilst British policy-makers therefore wished to concentrate all energies on the immediate problem of winning the war, and relegate all potentially embarrassing questions as to the desired character of a postwar settlement until that war had been won, they could only be inconvenienced and irritated by any attempts that might be made to upset that strategy. Yet precisely such an attempt was made and it was made by *The Times* newspaper. For within days of the German invasion of Russia *The Times* was moving in its leader columns away from exclusive concern with those immediate issues being decided daily upon the battlefields, to, in Olympian fashion, a consideration of the qualities that would be required in a peace settlement if that settlement were to endure. From the very beginning two assumptions characterise the newspaper's thinking. The first is that in the titanic struggle being waged in the east Russia would emerge as the victor, despite all initial indications to the contrary. The second assumption is that in any new settlement there can be no return to the status quo ante bellum in Europe for there must be no attempt to revive the Versailles settlement.

From the summer of 1941 onwards the insistent treatment given by Barrington-Ward and Carr in the leader columns of *The Times* to the whole question of postwar security in Europe, involving as it did, the deliberate anticipation in public of a whole range of difficult foreign policy choices, proved embarrassing to the Foreign Office, whose own discreet and limited speculations of course took place carefully behind closed doors. Indeed the whole tendency of the Ministry of Information and of the Foreign Office News Department during the war was to discourage damaging discussion of all of those longer term policy problems that might tend to divide the Allies and thus aid the Germans whilst the war had yet to be won.

The attitude of Barrington-Ward and E.H. Carr was quite different. Where others wished to procrastinate they wished to anticipate. Through the influential newspaper they controlled they sought to change the agenda of international politics. In their view one of the chief reasons for the disastrous failure of the Versailles settlement was precisely because during the First World War Allied statesmen of that time had failed to develop a master strategy for the peace. Moreover, they had failed entirely to prepare public opinion for the difficult choices that peace would undoubtedly bring, a cardinal error in a democratic age. In consequence at Versailles they had found themselves entirely overwhelmed by the sheer rush of events and by the innocent enthusiasms of the

Americans. The end result of their labours was the creation of a Europe that was more troubled, dangerous and insecure than the old Europe it had replaced. On no account according to The Times must these errors of the past be allowed to repeat themselves. If millions were again to die in Europe, as seemed likely, this sacrifice must be to create a future world that would be more secure than the one that was passing. Indeed, if there is one concept that is central to the whole political programme expounded by The Times during the war that concept is the concept of "security". This concept bridges the domestic and the external programmes advocated by the newspaper. According to Barrington-Ward and Carr what modern man yearned for above all else was security - social and economic security at home and national security abroad. For this reason according to leader after leader emanating from Printing House Square during the war years, just as there could be no returning to the old and discredited system of unbridled capitalism at home, with its terrible attendant cost in terms of suffering and waste, so also there could be no returning to the Versailles system in international affairs, a system in which instability had been inherent. At home the power of the state must be harnessed to remove permanently those features of liberal democracy that had disfigured inter-war Britain. Therefore the wartime Times gave the fullest of support to Keynesian schemes of economic demand management and to Beveridgeian plans for postwar social security. Moreover, for reasons already suggested above, it gave strong support to all those who opposed Churchill's policy of letting sleeping dogs lie and who demanded urgent action during the war itself in planning for the peace. Here it is perhaps apposite to recollect that the reputation The Times was to earn for itself during the war years as being a "threepenny edition" of the Daily Worker owed perhaps more to its line on domestic policy than it did to its line on international policy, unpopular though the latter certainly made the newspaper in some quarters. This was Carr's own view.¹² Whatever the case in that regard such a philosophy of action, and of action now, could not expect to recommend itself to a wartime coalition whose leader's whole inclination during the struggle with Hitler's Germany was indeed to let sleeping dogs lie.

One measure of the influence of a newspaper is the number of times we find it cited or employed in confidential official papers. Research conducted for this study confirms in this respect what common sense would suggest. In terms of the foreign policy makers' perceptions The Times had no rival in Fleet Street in the years covered. It is quoted, cited, employed for information, record and background, and discussed far more than any other newspaper in, for example, the Foreign Office papers. The same can also be said, incidentally, of the memoir material. Moreover, foreign governments and their ambassadors manifestly took it more seriously than any other newspaper. In this respect

The Times was both victim and beneficiary of its own myth, for foreign governments and their ambassadors saw the newspaper as enjoying a special relationship with all British governments despite the occasional protestations of both parties to the contrary. Furthermore, if an ambassador wished to "go public" on an issue and communicate to the foreign policy elite more widely in this country, and to the attentive public, his natural platform was the correspondence columns of The Times. In this regard the foreign policy position of the newspaper itself is also significant as foreign observers could never be quite certain to what degree the attitudes expressed in Times' leaders reflected the position of the British government, or represented the independent voice of The Times on foreign affairs. That having been said there is no doubt that The Times provided an important channel of communication on foreign policy affairs for the policy-makers, for the activist or participant foreign policy publics and for the attentive foreign policy public more widely in what was a set of reciprocating relationships.

Furthermore, the newspaper, though its natural constituency remained that of a quality newspaper, possessed nonetheless the capacity to reach indirectly the mass public through the leadership role that it played in Fleet Street. It could also therefore provide at one remove a channel to the mass public as its news and views were so often quoted by the mass circulation newspapers and by the B.B.C.

The correspondence columns of the wartime Times contain many examples of ambassadorial letters as well as letters from press attaches etc. However, what is of especial interest in the context of this special study is that a significant number of these are written not in response to material appearing in the news columns of the newspaper but in response to ideas and views appearing in the leader columns of The Times. One persistent theme in these letters is the concern expressed by the ambassadors of the smaller exiled governments in London at what they understood to be The Times advocacy of a great power directorate to manage international affairs once the war was won.

This itself suggests a further distinction. Whilst the departmental and cabinet papers do refer frequently to newspapers other than The Times it is almost invariably the case that the reference is then to a news item, or indeed, in a famous case involving the Daily Mirror, to a cartoon. However, in the case of The Times the reference is not only to the news columns of that newspaper. As often as not the reference will be to the leader columns and to the ideas expressed therein. And it would often be these which caused difficulties with the wartime government.

A second measure of the influence of a newspaper is the frequency with which it is quoted by other newspapers. By this criterion too in the years under consideration The Times has no wartime equal. Again it is the views of the newspaper as expressed in the leader columns and elsewhere that attract the attention of Fleet Street as well as what might have appeared in its news columns. The Times' line on international relations attracted as much comment in the rest of Fleet Street, both favourable and critical, as did its line on domestic affairs.

In a sense the wartime Times provided not only a platform for debate but also an agenda of debate over foreign policy considered over a long term perspective in circumstances when the British government would have preferred no debate at all. In particular it provided a model scheme for postwar security when the British government was most reluctant to discuss, publicly at least, any such thing. For its part the newspaper did not believe that during a war discussion of foreign policy should be suspended for the duration by voluntary agreement. For this reason some observers saw The Times as offering an alternative foreign policy. It is more correct to say that the newspaper attempted to do what, perhaps understandably, the government, engaged as it was with a life and death struggle with Nazi Germany, could not easily do, that is educate public opinion about the nature of international relations. If the policy-makers themselves benefited to some modest degree from this process then that was all to the good. Barrington-Ward genuinely believed in the educative role of the quality press in a liberal democracy and saw in The Times the natural leader of Fleet Street.

Certainly the views and opinions expressed in The Times penetrated the rest of Fleet Street. In these years it would have been very difficult for any member of the attentive foreign policy public to avoid encountering them in one guise or another. The Beaverbrook press, Michael Foot in the Tribune and the Daily Herald, A.J. Cummings and Vernon Bartlett in the News Chronicle, all made frequent references to The Times line on international affairs. Its admirers commended it for advocating "realism" in international relations whilst its critics saw it as preaching "power politics".

According to E.H. Carr himself, writing in 1945, "the glaring and dangerous defect of nearly all thinking, both academic and popular, about international politics in English speaking countries from 1919 to 1939" was "the almost total neglect of the factor of power". For a period of several years chance had given him an unrivalled platform from which to correct that "defect" and introduce the attentive foreign policy public in particular to a view of international relations which claimed to eschew moralising, utopianism and

sentimentality. This approach was also based upon the conclusion, again in Carr's own words "that the small independent nation-state is obsolete or obsolescent and that no workable international organisation can be built on a membership of a multiplicity of nation-states". 13

In the leader columns of *The Times* during the war years Carr had been able to advance the case that in a postwar international order responsibilities had to be aligned with effective power. This meant that as the great powers would carry special responsibilities so also would they merit special privileges for the only possible basis for an enduring international order lay in great power cooperation. Great power cooperation in its turn depended upon the great powers themselves feeling confident in their own regional security. For this confidence to be achieved therefore each of the great powers had to be freely accorded what the old diplomacy had been disposed to call a sphere of influence. In particular this meant that Britain had to concede, and concede gracefully, the "leadership" of postwar eastern Europe to Soviet Russia for this was indubitably the zone of maximum security sensitivity to the Soviet Union.

Several things are remarkable about the model of a new postwar international order propounded by Carr in *The Times*. The first is the rapidity with which the model was produced - within weeks, as we have seen, of the German onslaught upon Russia. The second is the ruthlessness of its symmetry, particularly where the interests of the lesser powers were concerned, most especially the lesser powers of eastern Europe. The third is the consistency with which *The Times* stuck in all essentials to this model, in particular with reference to eastern Europe and Russia. Thus when the two "Great Allies" became the three "Great Allies" after America's entry into the war in December 1941 this in no way affected the deference that *The Times* accorded to the security interests of Russia as it conceived them. Indeed on a number of occasions, as we have seen, the newspaper felt compelled to advise the western powers about the avoidance of even the appearance of "ganging up" against Russia. According to *The Times* a victorious Russia would insist upon assuming the "leadership" of eastern Europe, come what may, as this region was vital to the Soviet Union's national security. However, everything depended upon the response of the western powers to that situation. If Britain in particular accepted it only grudgingly and reluctantly then the prospects for a future European settlement based upon a great power concert, in which Russia would play a positive role, were bleak indeed. If on the other hand Britain welcomed such an outcome in eastern Europe by embracing it ahead of events then not only would Russian resolution in the conduct of the war itself be strengthened but the prospects for a stable postwar European settlement

would be immeasurably improved. In order to achieve this goal what was needed was what E.H. Carr himself would on a number of occasions call a "cards on the table" approach to the relationship with Russia. This would involve the abandonment of the traditional conventions of the diplomatic poker-game in an honest and open declaration of the British hand in reference to eastern Europe in particular. This was the way to remove once and for all that suspicion and distrust that had poisoned Anglo-Russian relations for a generation. Moreover, it was a policy that was eminently realistic. For whatever the outcome of the war it was an illusion to believe that Britain could over any long term play a decisive role in the affairs of eastern Europe. The leadership of eastern Europe was inevitably the privilege and the responsibility of one or other of the great powers of that region. The whole of modern history testified to the fact that Britain herself had a best a "bluffing hand" in regard to eastern Europe. Furthermore, history also showed that an independent eastern Europe, itself a very recent creation, had not usually been seen as vital to Britain's own national security or status as a great power. In short Britain should cease to meddle where she could not mend.

What Carr saw as "realism" the Foreign Office saw as naivete. They were profoundly sceptical as to the gains that Carr assumed would flow from such a one-sided demonstration of "goodwill" by Great Britain. Moreover, Carr's tunnel vision with regard to the Soviet Union led him to disregard nine-tenths of the practical difficulties surrounding the course of action he advocated. Carr was himself being hopelessly unrealistic in his assumption that Britain public opinion could be "educated" to go along with a policy that wide sections of that opinion would see quite simply as a policy of betrayal of Britain's friends and allies in eastern Europe. Moreover, the effect on neutral opinion would be disastrous. The entry of the most important neutral, the United States, into the war in December 1941 had only compounded the obstacles before such a policy. Could anybody reasonably assume that the United States would uncomplainingly associate itself with such a shameless exercise in "power politics" and "spheres of influence" as Carr seemed to envisage? Dressing up such a scheme in a new vocabulary which talked euphemistically of "leadership" and "special responsibilities" would not fool anybody for very long as to its essentially ruthless character. There were in fact limits to what could be achieved by words. In Foreign Office eyes the policy that Carr propounded in *The Times*, for all its vaunted "realism" was built upon a whole series of illusions. And these objections to the programme were all quite separate from any objections that might be advanced upon purely moral grounds.

Throughout the war therefore The Times received no encouragement in its forward thinking about the shape of a postwar settlement from official quarters. This applied both to its thinking on international affairs and to its thinking on domestic reconstruction. Others, including some in Fleet Street, scoffed at the newspaper's pretensions. This did not deter Barrington-Ward. A modest man in private life, with an impressive war record from the First World War, Barrington-Ward had a very elevated conception of the role that The Times had played in British history. As editor of that newspaper he saw himself as the natural leader of Fleet Street, or rather of all that was best in Fleet Street. He believed deeply that an informed public opinion was essential to the proper working of the policy process in a liberal democracy. He saw his newspaper as performing a key role in educating and informing the attentive public and the policy-makers. Traditionally, The Times had given a special attention to the fields of foreign policy and international relations. Barrington-Ward therefore brushed aside all suggestions that the newspaper should exercise some kind of self-denying ordinance and avoid all discussion of the difficult choices inevitably raised by any serious discussion of international affairs until the war was safely won. Indeed it was his view to the contrary that it was the duty of the press and particularly of The Times to do what for all kinds of reasons the government in the middle of a great war could not always do for itself. It was therefore Barrington-Ward's general inclination to give Carr his head as far as foreign policy was concerned, intervening only when he thought that Carr's preferred vocabulary was gratuitously ruthless or offensive.

It is this high sense of the proper function of The Times and of his own position in the general scheme of things that marks out Barrington-Ward's editorship of the newspaper. There is no question that as far as foreign policy was concerned, in the relationship between the two men, Carr's was the dominant personality. However there were at no time any substantial differences between the two men as to their shared vision of a new international order in which Russia would play a positive role as an equal partner, Barrington-Ward certainly hoped to influence the foreign policy process through his newspaper so that this vision could be more easily realised. When Brendan Bracken, for example, ended a telephone conversation with Barrington-Ward on a quite separate matter with the genial throwaway remark that he was glad to see "The Times is running the country as usual",¹⁴ the editor made due allowance for the flattering ways of a minister he anyway liked. Nevertheless the Minister of Information's casual flattery was well-directed. Barrington-Ward genuinely believed that The Times in itself, and The Times as the acknowledged representative of the press as a whole, did indeed have an important part, though only a part, in the policy process.

This was an attitude to The Times that Barrington-Ward shared with his great friend Stanley Morison, the historian of The Times. Morison, a man who managed to reconcile Marxism with Roman Catholicism (at least to his own satisfaction) took the view that even in a post-capitalist England the policy-makers would need The Times just as their predecessors had done.¹⁵ The Times was a newspaper but it was also something more than a newspaper to his mind. In particular it had a special responsibility in respect to Britain's place in the world. It is no accident that, as organised by Morison, the published volumes of the official history of The Times would give so much space to The Times treatment of foreign policy. As an autodidact himself, much of whose own remarkable store of knowledge had been garnered through reading the serious press, Morison like Barrington-Ward believed that one of the chief distinguishing characteristics of a newspaper of quality lay precisely in the coverage that it gave to international affairs.

The philosophy of international affairs propagated by The Times in the nineteen forties must of course be seen in context. As we have seen what it sought to avoid at all costs was a situation arising where in the postwar world an exhausted Britain faced alone across a devastated Europe a hostile and alienated Russia. This itself touches upon an important distinction between the newspaper's fundamental assumptions and the hopes and aspirations of the policy-makers themselves. Throughout the war years and after the latter sought, through many disappointments and rebuffs, to develop what Churchill in particular liked to term the "special relationship" with the United States. The men who controlled the foreign policy line of The Times saw for their part great dangers in this strategy. The Times constantly advised British policy-makers to avoid even the appearance of "ganging up" against Soviet Russia. And though The Times did appear to see the international system, in Vansittart's words as an "aristocracy of power" it always was also most careful to argue that within that aristocracy democracy of conduct must prevail between the great powers. Only in circumstances of perfect equality was there any prospect of converting Russia from being a disruptive force in international affairs into being a constructive force.

In this matter The Times itself was a prisoner of the past in its thought patterns. Given the precedent of 1919 it assumed quite unswervingly that the pressure of American public opinion would prevent any Administration (whatever that Administration's private inclinations) from assuming any kind of permanent security commitment in Europe in peacetime. The most that could reasonably be expected of the United States in the postwar world outside her own hemisphere was membership of the projected world

association of states, the United Nations. Whilst wishing the schemes for this organisation well, The Times took the view that until that scheme proved its worth, natural prudence required Britain to make all necessary interim provision to guarantee its security. Britain could not afford to take the same kind of relaxed attitude to this matter as the United States herself because of her less privileged geographical, strategic and economic position. Fundamental to Britain's postwar security would be the creation of friendly relations with Soviet Russia. To do this she had to show that she regarded Russia's claims that her security interests required the existence of "friendly governments" in eastern Europe as fully legitimate. In short Russia had to be conceded her own sphere of influence. There was, after all, nothing exceptional or improper in such claim on behalf of a great power. America claimed just such a position in the Pacific and in the western hemisphere, as did Britain herself in the Middle East and in western Europe. In a word Soviet Russia was claiming no more for herself than she was prepared uncomplainingly to allow others. However, what she was claiming as a great power was the right to be treated as an equal in international affairs. Given the unrivalled contribution of Russia to the defeat of Nazi Germany this might be seen as a modest enough claim.

This was the case put forward with great lucidity and some eloquence by E.H. Carr in the leader columns of The Times for the willing accommodation of Russia's legitimate postwar security aspirations. One of Carr's academic admirers in pointing to these "many editorials for The Times, in which he explained to the British public the need for a better understanding of Russia and its rightful place in the council of nations after the war" has suggested that this exercise in the enlightenment of public opinion on international affairs on the newspaper's part "will be used extensively by future historians". Moreover, the same editorials "will remain the anonymous contribution of Carr to history".¹⁶

However, logical Carr's argument for the equal treatment of Soviet Russia might have appeared to some sections of the readership of The Times it could hardly be expected to appeal in the same degree to the representatives of the lesser powers of Europe, particularly to the lesser powers of eastern Europe. In counselling them to forget their historic prejudices and accept the need to construct postwar governments that would be "friendly" to the Soviet Union. The Times constantly sought to reassure them that their ancient fears of Russian imperialism and their more recent fears of Soviet communism were exaggerated.

This counsel was of special relevance to the Poles, that greatest but most Russophobe of the lesser nations of eastern Europe. Implicit in this line of reassurance was The Times' belief that a postwar Russia would be fully satisfied by a situation in eastern Europe in which the lesser states of that region, in return for their acceptance of the need to align their foreign and defence policies with the security needs of the Soviet Union, would then be accorded full freedom to make their own domestic political and constitutional arrangements as consistent with their national character and prevailing political culture. Whether The Times really believed that this would be so or whether the newspaper was engaged in an exercise in wishful thinking is difficult to say. Whatever the case what Carr was invoking here was what might be termed the classical concept of the sphere of influence (a phrase incidentally which Times' leaders usually avoided by the employment of some euphemism) i.e., a situation in which lesser powers, falling within a geographical area vital to the security needs of a neighbouring great power, were allowed full or nearly full internal sovereignty in return for their acceptance of limited external sovereignty.

The Poles for their part believed that in this matter The Times, for all its "realism" and its unwelcome advice to them to abandon their "romanticism" was quite simply living in a past age. It was an illusion to think that Stalin would ever be satisfied with an effective veto against an otherwise independent Poland's full freedom of manoeuvre in foreign affairs. He would insist, unless actively opposed by a resolute west, upon the installation of a puppet communist regime in Poland, as a very minimum. He might go further and incorporate Poland in the U.S.S.R. by a "plebiscite" on the pattern of his earlier plebiscites in the Baltic states. The more alarmist Poles even feared the biological extinction of the Polish nation, not by genocide but by its dispersal across thousands of miles of Russian territory on the pattern of what had happened to the Polish population of Poland's eastern provinces after the Soviet occupation in the days of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Whatever the possible outcomes men like Carr and Barrington-Ward were either deluded or dishonest if they thought that Poland would be allowed to enjoy relative to Russia a relationship comparable to that between Mexico and the United States or that between Britain and Belgium and they had paid little respect to the intelligence of their readers by constantly inferring such misleading analogies.

In this matter subsequent events would prove Polish fears, though not all of Polish fears, to have been more accurate than The Times' reading of Stalin's intentions for Poland and for eastern Europe more widely.¹⁷ We have moreover in regard to the matter of differing conceptions of spheres of influence in the twentieth century the record of Stalin's direct

testimony to Djilas. The Soviet leader would explain to the Yugoslav communist that modern wars differed from wars of the past for in modern war the victor imposed his own social system on the territories he had conquered.¹⁸ That having been said it must also be noted that Stalin, despite his words to Djilas, did not in fact invariably impose his "social system" in all countries in postwar eastern Europe where he had the power to do so and had little cause to fear reaction from the west. There is in this regard the striking example of Finland. Stalin's postwar policy towards Finland would demonstrate clearly that Soviet foreign policy could still find a place in special circumstances for the application of the sphere of influence in the traditional understanding of that term. Indeed the Soviet-Finnish relationship after the Second World War could be said to provide the world with an almost perfect model of the operation of a sphere of influence relationship in its classical form. On the other hand it can be powerfully argued, and has been powerfully argued, that what would subsequently be called "the Finnish option", was never seriously on offer to the Poles, largely for strategic reasons. Here yet again Poland was a victim of her geography. Beyond Finland lay the Baltic Sea and neutral Scandinavia (before that is postwar tensions led Denmark and Norway, though not Sweden, to abandon their traditional neutrality in foreign policy). Beyond Poland lay Germany which state had twice devastated European Russia in a generation. Moreover, talking a longer term perspective, Poland provided the natural land invasion route for any power or alliance of powers intent upon attacking Russia.

The contemporary Times was unmoved by the Polish argument that Stalin would in fact insist upon control of Poland's internal policy as well as her external policy through imposing a communist system on Poland to guarantee such total control. Or at least the newspaper chose to appear unmoved by such arguments. And here we should perhaps be reminded that The Times saw, quite naturally, the first obligation of Britain's policy-makers to be towards the safeguarding of British interests, primary amongst which was Britain's national security. One of the most pathetic delusions of the Poles had been the belief that they could use the United States against Soviet Russia. How much more tragic it would be if Britain herself repeated this error on a far grander scale. The United States was far away and Russia was very near. Britain would have to live with Russia in postwar Europe in a way that the United States would not have to.

In the final analysis therefore, what distinguished men like Carr and Barrington-Ward from many of their contemporaries, and eventually would distinguish them from the policy-makers themselves was as much their scepticism about the United States as their optimism about Russia as a possible partner in the constructive management of

international affairs. This meant in concrete terms, as we have seen, that Russia's leading role in eastern Europe after the war must be freely and gracefully conceded by Britain. Such was the unsentimental rapidity of Carr's thought process in this matter that he had for his part argued for just such a course of action on the part of British policy-makers six months before Russia herself had entered the war. In a lecture delivered at Chatham House on 10 December 1940 he had argued that Russia would be bound to claim after the war a large measure of control in eastern Europe and that this claim could hardly be resisted.¹⁹ From this initial position, taken before Russia was herself a belligerent power, flowed quite logically certain consequences, which Carr at first propounded before the participant foreign policy public that patronised the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and some months later set before that wider attentive foreign policy public that formed part of the readership of *The Times*. In particular any attempt to resurrect in eastern Europe the status quo ante bellum of a community of fully sovereign independent nation states, including in particular a revived Poland enjoying total freedom of action in foreign affairs, on the pattern of 1919, would be foolish, misguided and doomed to fail in itself. Such an attempt by Britain herself was not only unlikely to achieve anything for the peoples of eastern Europe but to the contrary might well prove counter-productive, inducing a suspicious Russia to exercise a firmer control than she would have otherwise felt necessary in circumstances where she did not feel that her position in eastern Europe was under challenge from outside. And what would be the consequences for Britain herself of such "gesture politics", as Carr described them, in the postwar world? That was obvious. By alienating quite gratuitously a victorious Soviet Union through a quixotic defence of lost causes in eastern Europe Britain would have immeasurably undermined her own security for no good cause as a deliberate act of policy. These would be the views that Carr would press repeatedly in the leader columns of *The Times* from Russia's entry into the war onwards. Necessarily however they would become all the more controversial as the war moved towards its conclusion, and the true scale of the Soviet triumph in the east became obvious.

It was precisely these beliefs that made men like Churchill and Bevin come to regard *The Times* when Carr and Barrington-Ward were at the controls of that newspaper's policy line as an engine of defeatism in anything pertaining to the long term threat posed by international communism. The newspaper had shown itself particularly unreliable when the British government had been disposed to demonstrate firmness and resolution. The Greek affair had been particularly instructive in this regard. The attitude of *The Times* in this affair had proved more embarrassing to British policy-makers than had the attitude of *Pravda*. Moreover, on that occasion *The Times* had demonstrated its capacity to

undermine the domestic basis of support always particularly necessary when British foreign policy objectives necessitated the employment of armed force. For amongst other things the Greek affair had shown the remarkable capacity of The Times to give leadership to the rest of Fleet Street, and to divide public opinion against a government on a foreign policy issue, when the coalition nature of that government had led to the suspension of the normal restraints imposed on any government by the conventions of parliamentary opposition. For the policy-makers The Times' line on Greece was very significant. The Times which had advocated the appeasement of Germany in the thirties was now intent upon advocating the appeasement of international communism in the forties. The Times yet again was preparing the ground with public opinion in mind for a second betrayal of the peoples of eastern Europe. This was a sorry record in the making. The pernicious influence in this matter of E.H. Carr was recognised by Churchill but Churchill found Barrington-Ward's peculiar mix of personal and public character puzzling. Lord Moran, Churchill's doctor, would confide the following comment to his diary at the time of the Greek crisis,

"The P.M. said that Barrington-Ward had done well in the last war; he had been given two decorations. It was a little like the judge saying the little he could do for the prisoner in the dock before passing sentence."²⁰

In March 1946 at Fulton Churchill would give one of the greatest demonstrations of his roles of opinion leader and opinion maker. He spoke out of office, in a foreign country, from a university podium. Neither Bevin nor the Foreign Office had prior knowledge of the speech, though Churchill cabled immediately after its delivery to let them know that the speech had been cleared first by the Truman administration.²¹ In essence Churchill's speech was an appeal to American public opinion to encourage its own government to assume a role of responsibility for world security in peacetime in a situation where Soviet conduct appeared to be growing daily more menacing. It was a role that only the United States had the military and economic resources to fill. Churchill rested his right to make such an incursion into the American political process upon the "special relationship" that he believed to exist between Britain and the United States. Furthermore, he advanced this relationship as the basis for the construction of a more formal defensive arrangement between the western democracies as a whole. Although, largely for party reasons, Bevin affected in public to be irritated by Churchill's presumption in appearing to act and speak for Britain as though the 1945 general election had never been fought and lost, the Foreign Secretary in fact privately welcomed Churchill's intervention as strengthening his own hand.

Churchill's speech received massive coverage in the British press. Historians have seen the Fulton address since as a "marker" in modern history, the first salvo in the Cold War from the western side. In that speech, amongst many other things Churchill had said that whilst he did not believe that Russia wanted war, he did believe that Russia sought the fruits of war without the risks and costs of war; that she was intent upon so demoralising opinion in western Europe in the face of her massive power and existing territorial advance in eastern Europe that a spirit of defeatism would sweep western Europe. In these circumstances there would not be lacking, as in the nineteen thirties, siren voices advocating the easy road in foreign policy of accommodating the aggressor's demands. To counter such voices resolute leadership was needed immediately in the west. Of western difficulties with the Russians, Churchill said in particular,

"They will not be removed by closing our eyes to them. They will not be removed by mere waiting to see what happens not will they be removed by a policy of appeasement... From what I have seen of our Russian friends and allies during the war I am convinced that there is nothing which they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than military weakness."²²

This was the first time that Churchill (or any public figure of stature) had used the word "appeasement" (by now of course already a pejorative term in the political vocabulary) in the context of relations with Soviet Russia from a public platform. The Times for its part did not show offence. Indeed it politely complimented Churchill on the grandeur of his grasp of international affairs and upon a vision still undimmed after five years of the strain of supreme office in wartime. However, it then promptly made clear to its readers that its own position remained unchanged. For the most understandable of reasons Churchill's natural romanticism and his family background might well lead him astray in the matter of what might and what might not be expected of the "special relationship" with the United States,

"To most of his fellow countrymen there will seem to be logic and good sense in Mr Churchill's plan. But it is still understandably easy to excite prejudice in the United States against specific commitments overseas; and nothing could be more calculated to put American friendship in jeopardy than to attempt to frame British foreign policy on the presumption of assured American backing. Anglo-American friendship is an essential element in British policy. It can never be its sole and all-sufficient foundation or an excuse for failing to pursue independent action along

lines British interests and prosperity require.... Nothing that Mr Churchill said yesterday at Fulton was incompatible with these underlying factors."²³

Though its disagreement with what it understood to be the intention behind Churchill's foreign policy initiative at Fulton was diplomatically expressed it is nonetheless clear that Printing House Square saw the Churchill strategy as replete with danger. That danger was that Britain would alienate Soviet Russia without winning over the United States. And to lose Russia without winning the United States would be to place Britain in a position of intolerable danger. The rapidity with which The Times distanced itself from Churchill's position did not pass unnoticed in Moscow. In an important leader of 12 March 1946, subsequently broadcast in full over Soviet radio, under the title "Churchill Rattles His Sabre", Pravda responded to the Fulton Address of a few days earlier by first pointing to Churchill's past,

"one involuntarily remembers Churchill during the period of the First World War.... when he slanders the U.S.S.R..... by saying that Soviet Russia "desires the fruits of war and indefinite expansion of her power and doctrines" and when he demands that "one should not wait to see what happens" nor content oneself with a policy of "appeasement"".

However, Pravda thereafter drew some comfort from the fact that Churchill's speech had by no means met with an uncritical reception in London. It drew particular attention to the reaction of The Times,

"In Britain various political groups are critically appraising Churchill's speech. For example, the London Times does not recommend reliance on help exclusively from America and emphasises the primary importance of solving the question of Anglo-Soviet relations.... Mr Churchill's plans are old tunes played in a new way."

Insofar as the press was concerned Pravda was quite right to point to the mixed reaction to Churchill's great speech in Fleet Street. Alan Bullock has merely been the latest of the scholars who have pointed to this phenomenon.²⁵ Three newspapers strongly endorsed Churchill's speech. The Daily Mail took a strongly ideological line in supporting Churchill, free as it now was of the wartime need to curb its natural inclinations. The Daily Telegraph supported the Tory leader loyally but without, it must be said, much by way of serious analysis of Churchill's speech. Much the strongest and most closely reasoned support for Churchill, however, came from The Manchester Guardian, now

under A.P. Wadsworth's editorship rapidly returning to its libertarian traditions, after a wartime spell when, under Crozier, it had so often read, in its coverage of international affairs, like a country cousin of The Times. The News Chronicle and the Daily Herald were both irritated by Churchill's intervention in British foreign policy in this way, which ~~they~~ deemed to be improper in an Opposition leader who had just been so decisively rejected by the British electorate. If anything the News Chronicle was more irritated by Churchill's conduct than was the Daily Herald. Both newspapers were particularly irritated by the wide coverage given to Churchill's speech by Fleet Street, a coverage to which of course they both handsomely contributed themselves in their petulance. Both newspapers questioned the soundness of Churchill's judgement and made significant asides on his age. They pointed to his record and reminded their readers that Churchill, despite his recent incomparable service to the state, had been wrong before on foreign and imperial policy and had been wrong many times. He had been wrong over British military intervention in Russia in 1919; he had openly expressed admiration for Mussolini; he had taken the "wrong" side in the Spanish Civil War; he had been wrong over India in the thirties; he had been too complacent for too long over the rise of Japan. As for his record on domestic matters, this had often verged upon the reactionary. For all these reasons Labour's policy-makers must not allow themselves to be intimidated by Churchill's overseas reputation into taking an automatically anti-Soviet and pro-American stance in foreign policy. As for foreign opinion it would be well advised, according to the Daily Herald, to ignore this "posthumous" speech from a party leader already politically dead²⁶ for British foreign policy was and would remain in other and safer hands.

The Express group newspapers' attitude to the Fulton Address was far more ambivalent. On the one hand no newspapers showered more plaudits upon Churchill's head than these newspapers. Here was the greatest Englishman of his time speaking his mind upon the key issues of the hour in unforgettable language. No man had better earned a right to do so and it was the highest impertinence for lesser spirits to attempt to silence him.

Yet with every encomium it bestowed upon the man, the Beaverbrook press contrived to distance itself from the substance of what Churchill had actually said and this it did in two ways.

In the first place Express newspapers repeatedly reminded their readers that the Soviet Union's extreme sensitivity about its security needs in eastern Europe was neither necessarily a cover for aggressive intent nor simply a sign of national paranoia. For in

the light of modern military history such sensitivity was both understandable and legitimate. Accordingly everything should be done to reassure the Soviet Union on this point. Was everything in fact being done on the western side in this respect? Was it not perhaps the case that the western powers with their happy inexperience of foreign invasion were inclined to treat these Soviet fears too lightly, and that this casual attitude, or the appearance of a casual attitude, had fired Soviet suspicions of the long term intentions of the western power? Was it not perhaps the case that much of the increasing tension between the wartime allies sprang from misunderstanding rather than from any genuine clash of objective interests? From a misperception in the west as to the limited nature of Soviet intentions in eastern Europe? In a word Beaverbrook remained more sanguine of Stalin's essential goodwill than Churchill had become.²⁷ On 11 March 1946 the Daily Express rejoiced in the findings of its own public opinion poll published that same day on British popular attitudes to Russia, findings demonstrating that at the level of the man in the street in this country there existed massive benevolence towards Russia and its people together with considerable gratitude for their sacrifices in the war.

In the second place the Beaverbrook press remained more sceptical of the United States than did Churchill. Indeed in matters of imperial and financial affairs their attitude is best described more strongly as one of suspicion of that country, an attitude that of course long pre-dated the immediate concerns raised by the Fulton Address. As to these latter concerns the reaction of the Beaverbrook press to Churchill's speech is best characterised as one of caution. If Britain needed to act at all in Europe in the field of collective security (a step that the Beaverbrook press of course still hoped would prove unnecessary) then it would not be for her to take the lead in this matter. She must move only in step with the United States. Better still she must allow the Americans to take the lead and follow thereafter a step behind the United States. This attitude of extreme caution would continue to characterise the attitude of Beaverbrook's newspapers throughout the later forties. Of course what the Beaverbrook press was expressing were the same fears that we have already encountered in regard to The Times. Given the traditions of American foreign policy, given the inherent isolationism of the American people, given the foreign policy provisions of the American constitution, Beaverbrook doubted the capacity of the United States to offer sustained leadership in international affairs in peacetime. In particular, quite apart from the innate wisdom of such a project, the Beaverbrook press doubted the capability of any American administration to deliver a security commitment on a permanent basis to Europe in peacetime. In these circumstances for Britain herself to take a lead, as Churchill appeared to be suggesting, and base her own foreign policy on the presumption of ultimate partnership with the

United States in some kind of system of collective western defence was a policy full of risk. Like The Times the Express group feared that British foreign policy, if it followed the lines set out for it by Churchill at Fulton, might very well fall between two stools. To lose Russia without winning the United States would leave this country perilously exposed in a dangerous world.

To sum up, what distinguished the attitude of The Times and the Beaverbrook press at the onset of the Cold War was their alarm at a strategy, first advanced by Churchill from Opposition but then to be pursued later at the official level by Ernest Bevin, which they saw as a high-risk one. For it would become Ernest Bevin's view, as it was Churchill's, that in matters of international security it was much more likely to be the case that the United States would be influenced by example than by instruction. If western Europe, under British leadership, were first to demonstrate its political will to act collectively in the interests of its own security in the face of Soviet displeasure, then the United States might very well then be prepared to come in, to help those who were helping themselves. For such a strategy to be successful western Europe must therefore take the initiative in its own defence. In the circumstances then prevailing this meant de facto that leadership had to come from one source - London. Britain must first demonstrate her own willingness to make a permanent security commitment in peacetime to western European defence before she could expect the same of the United States. In this sense a revolution in American foreign policy was premised upon something approaching a revolution in British foreign policy.

Given the admitted precedent of 1919, the temper of the American people, and the traditions of American foreign policy, this was not a policy without risks. In such a matter there could be no guarantees. In fact the policy would not achieve final success until the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949. A major factor in achieving Senate confirmation of that treaty would be the resolution displayed by western Europe in the crisis over the Berlin Airlift. Though The Times itself would be "sound" again by that date in its support for the policy of H.M.G. it is significant that the Beaverbrook press would be distinctly "wobbly" in its support of official policy. No newspapers in that crisis would prove more amenable to suggestions for some kind of "compromise" over the position of the western Allies in Berlin.

At the onset of the Cold War there existed a vast reservoir of goodwill towards the Soviet Union in the British press. In part this reflected an appreciation of the part played by the Soviet Union in the defeat of Nazi Germany. This attitude of respect for and gratitude

towards Russia and its people extended far beyond the left-wing and the progressive press. The attitude of that press to Soviet Russia had always been mixed and this mix included important positive elements. Whilst it disapproved of the authoritarian character and brutal methods of Soviet communism, much of Britain's left and progressive press, by way of a certain degree of ideological affinity, approved of what it understood to be the ultimate social and economic objectives of Russian communism. Whilst it condemned Soviet sponsorship of subversion abroad, it had always taken the position that the Soviet Union be encouraged to play a full role in international affairs. The wartime alliance with Soviet Russia had brought these positive strands in the attitude of the left and liberal press to that country very much to the fore. Certain policy changes in Russia itself had also contributed to this process. The evidence during the war of greater toleration of religious practice had received a universally favourable press in the west, as had the abolition of Comintern in 1943.

To some extent this positive coverage of the Soviet Union was also of course the direct result of deliberate British policy. Churchill's government had given absolute priority to the defeat of Nazi Germany. Throughout the war therefore, the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office News Department in offering guidance to the press had encouraged Fleet Street to stress all those common interests and shared values that supposedly united the Grand Alliance. This process inevitably involved the improvement of Russia's image in this country over that it had enjoyed pre-war. However, even without this official guidance from the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office News Department, the natural inclination of much of the press was to walk along the path prescribed for it. Indeed at various times during the war various observers would grow alarmed at the longer term implications of the pro-Soviet enthusiasms of so much of Fleet Street whilst having no very clear idea about what might be done about it by way of corrective action. Moreover, the British press was far less inhibited about criticising British conduct, if that conduct might be seen as damaging to Anglo-Soviet understanding, than it was in its treatment of Soviet conduct of a similar character. In this respect Fleet Street's noisy attack upon Churchill over Greece provides a striking contrast to its discreet treatment of Stalin's conduct in Poland.

Yet what is truly remarkable about the benevolent attitude of the British press towards Soviet Russia at the onset of the Cold War is the degree to which this benevolence extended beyond the progressive and left newspapers to embrace such important sections of the Conservative press. Indeed this fact explains what might otherwise be regarded as the disproportionate attention that has been paid in this study to the Conservative press.

In so far as it can be said of the Cold War that that war was really a struggle between "capitalism" and "socialism" it is a remarkable fact that such substantial elements of the "capitalist" press in the United Kingdom so signally failed to respond in the ideologically appropriate manner when Churchill first sounded the call to arms at Fulton. The most influential Conservative newspaper in the country, The Times, and the Conservative newspaper with the greatest mass circulation, the Daily Express, were equally reluctant to follow where Churchill wished to lead. The Times was traditionally the newspaper which influenced the people of influence. It was widely read by the policy-makers themselves and by the attentive foreign policy public. As for the Daily Express it was by any standard one of the greatest mass circulation newspapers of the time. Indeed the figures produced for the postwar Royal Commission on the Press would show that the Daily Express (by then thriving in a "socialist" Britain) had a larger circulation than any other newspaper, and for its own part the Daily Express would modestly claim the greatest circulation on earth.²⁸ Not the least important aspect of the character of the Daily Express, moreover, was that it was easily the most representative, "classless" and genuinely "national" of the mass circulation national dailies. In terms of income, age and gender the Daily Express appealed to a much more representative cross section of the newspaper reading public than did any of its mass circulation rivals. It was this unique combination of qualities that made Beaverbrook's flagship so attractive to the advertisers.

In the years that followed the Fulton Address these Conservative newspapers would form a significant section within that very substantial element of the press which would lag perceptibly behind the requirements of a rapidly evolving British foreign policy in regard to Russia. Ernest Bevin and the Foreign Office would find that they needed to "educate" broad sections of the Labour Party and broad sections of the left and progressive press to the need in the later forties for the development of a collective defence against the perceived threat posed by Soviet expansionism. Yet it has been one of the major purposes of this study to demonstrate that that putative need for political education was by no means confined to what is conventionally regarded as progressive or left-wing opinion.

The Times might see itself as the newspaper which influenced the people of influence and it was undoubtedly seen by many foreign observers as playing a key role in the foreign policy process in this country, often as an "insider". Yet the coming of the Cold War would show that there were limits to the influence that the newspaper could expect to exert if it took a line too independent of that being currently pursued by the official policy-makers. As British policy towards Russia hardened The Times was increasingly

seen as an incorrigible advocate of appeasement. As we have seen the newspaper managed to antagonise both Churchill and Bevin over its line on Greece in particular. These two men would be the chief architects of British foreign policy at the inception of the Cold War. During the thirties, when The Times had played such a controversial role in British foreign policy, its editor, Geoffrey Dawson had been very much an "insider" as British policy had evolved in the face of the German danger, because of the intimacy of his relationship with both Baldwin and Chamberlain. The same could not be said of Barrington-Ward's role with regard to Churchill or Bevin in the forties. Both men deeply distrusted Barrington-Ward and the foreign policy line he had allowed his newspaper to advocate, under the influence of E.H. Carr and others. Consequently, during this second decade of the advocacy of policies of "appeasement" in Europe by Printing House Square the influence of The Times on the evolution of British foreign policy would be minimal.

As for Express newspapers these had never pretended to exercise the same influence on British foreign policy as did The Times. And though, as we have seen, Beaverbrook freely acknowledged before the postwar Royal Commission that his chief reason for being a newspaper proprietor was to make political propaganda, he also acknowledged on the same occasion that he had been singularly unsuccessful in that regard. Whilst his newspapers had been strikingly successful commercially, being consistently the most profitable mass circulation newspapers in Fleet Street, they had been failures politically in that they had failed to convert the Tory Party to Beaverbrook's brand of imperialism. Beaverbrook had bought newspapers originally to advance his political views not to make money. Ironically in the event his newspapers had made him a very rich man but had not won him the kind of political influence towards which he aspired. He had remained always something of an outsider in terms of British politics. It had been his long-standing friendship with Churchill, not his newspapers and any political influence that they gave him, that had given him the opportunity to come in from the cold and enjoy the experience of high office during the Second World War. This experience had taken him to Russia and his meetings with Stalin had confirmed him in his pro-Soviet line on most issues of Anglo-Soviet relations, a line that his newspapers were not slow to follow. Yet though Beaverbrook's relationship with Churchill might be his strength it was also his weakness. He had no independent power base in the Conservative Party. This would be shown quite clearly after Churchill sounded the alarm on Anglo-Soviet relations at Fulton. Whatever the difficulties that Ernest Bevin would face in his own party as Britain entered the Cold War Churchill faced no similar difficulties with his own party. In this respect the Conservative Party entered the Cold War as one man. Beaverbrook's newspapers might intimate their reservations and hesitations about the

programme outlined in the Fulton Address, and subsequently might warn against the dangers contained in the Truman Doctrine of seeing international relations as a crusade against international communism to be waged in ideological terms. However, we do not see these reservations echoed from the parliamentary benches behind Churchill. Indeed in the later forties there were few policy areas where the Conservative Party was so solidly united behind its official leadership as in the field of external policy as the new course of British foreign policy unfolded. In these circumstances Beaverbrook remained a deeply isolated figure in terms of foreign policy. Moreover, as the Cold War intensified Beaverbrook tended to be much more outspoken in private than he allowed his newspapers to be in public as to his reservations about western policy towards the Soviet Union. This annoyed his left-wing friends who sought to persuade him not to restrain his newspapers from advocating those views he only too freely expressed over the dinner table.²⁹ Of course most of Beaverbrook's left-wing friends were critics of Ernest Bevin. And at this point it is worth noting that Bevin himself, always a good "hater" in politics, detested Beaverbrook as a political intriguer, though this dislike was based upon things other than Beaverbrook's attitude towards Russia.

The benevolent attitude towards the Soviet Union which prevailed in Fleet Street in the immediate postwar period stands in stark contrast to contemporary Soviet attitudes towards the western powers as reflected in the Soviet press. Throughout the period under discussion the Soviet press remained deeply and openly suspicious of the motives inspiring western policy and was uniformly slavish in its complete devotion to the official Kremlin foreign policy line as that line unfolded.³⁰

From the perspective of the policy-makers, operating, as they were, in a situation where relations with the Soviet Union were beginning to deteriorate, Fleet Street's condition could only be seen as a cause for concern. During the war years Fleet Street had helped create a foreign policy environment favourable to Anglo-Soviet cooperation. And, as we have seen, the policy-makers themselves had, ironically enough, contributed to this process by encouraging the press to play down the negative aspects of Soviet conduct in the interests of the preservation of the Grand Alliance. This process had built up a vast reservoir of goodwill towards the Soviet Union in Fleet Street and had contributed towards the creation of a vast reserve of goodwill, some of it uncritical or sentimental, towards Russia amongst the public at large. During the war itself the British government, Churchill's government, had enjoyed in broad terms an astonishingly good press. The contrast with the First World War is most instructive in this regard. In the main Churchill did not have to struggle constantly for public opinion in the way that

Asquith and Lloyd George had had to do against over-mighty press lords, not least because in contrast to his predecessors he had at his disposal the new weapon of broadcasting. However, there were nonetheless occasions when press campaigns were more than embarrassing to him. One of these campaigns, led by the Beaverbrook press was the campaign for a second front. A second such campaign, examined earlier in some detail in this study, was the press campaign against Churchill's policy in Greece. In the first of these, in essence, Churchill's administration stood accused of not doing enough to help Soviet Russia. In the second Churchill stood accused of imperilling the Grand Alliance by conducting an anti-communist campaign in Greece before the German war was won. On both occasions Fleet Street had shown itself more sensitive to what it supposed were the feelings of the Kremlin than it had shown itself to Churchill's.

It would take time to create that new foreign policy environment necessary to the new course of postwar British foreign policy. It would take time to win over the press and public opinion for it. At Fulton Churchill, without the responsibilities of office, and leading a very different party from the Labour Party, could say things that Ernest Bevin could not yet say, nor indeed publicly assent to, though he agreed with most of what Churchill had said. For as Alan Bullock has shown, it would take Bevin and the Foreign Office about a further two years to create a foreign policy mood through the education of public opinion where that opinion as measured by the public opinion polls was massively favourable to the new course of British foreign policy.³¹ The role of the Foreign Office in this process was for the most part open as the News Department encouraged the press to take a more exacting and critical attitude towards Soviet conduct than had been the case a few years earlier. However, as Lyn Smith has shown, the Foreign Office also employed clandestine methods to influence opinion leaders, including prominent newspapers, journals and journalists, as Britain gradually moved over from the defensive to the offensive in the propaganda war with Russia. ³²

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APPENDIX

Public Opinion, The Press And Foreign Policy

On what do you base your opinion on the danger of war?

Newspapers	35%
Friends	17%
Radio	13%
"Own Opinion"	8%
Recent Military History or Travel	8%
Books	5%
Other Factors (instinct, observation, human nature etc)	10%
Negative	4%

(Source: Survey of 1,100 people on the prospect of war conducted by Mass Observation, end of August 1938, and published in: Britain: By Mass Observation, Penguin, 1939, p.30)

What do you rely upon most in forming your opinions - magazines, books, radio broadcasts, or some other source?

Magazines	8%	
Newspapers	68%	(Includes
Books	13%	multiple
Radio	41%	answers)
Other	24%	

(Source: Extracted from Gallup International Public Opinion Polls: Great Britain 1937-75, Random House, Greenwood Press, 1976. Question posed, June 1947)

Have you ever written to your M.P.? To a newspaper?

To M.P.	9%
To Newspaper	16%

(Source: Extracted from Gallup International Public Opinion Polls: Great Britain 1937-75, Random House, Greenwood Press, 1976. Question posed, May 1948)

Which morning newspaper do you usually read?

Daily Express	27%	
Daily Herald	18%	
Daily Mail	16%	
Daily Mirror	21%	
News Chronicle	11%	(Many
Daily Graphic	3%	Multiple
Daily Sketch	3%	Answers)
Daily Telegraph	13%	
The Times	13%	
A Provincial Daily	16%	
Other	5%	
None	7%	

(Source: Extracted from Gallup International Public Opinion Polls: Great Britain 1937-75, Random House, Greenwood Press, 1976. Question posed Aug. 1949)

Public Opinion And Foreign Policy

1939

March

Would you like to see Great Britain and the Soviet Union being more friendly to each other?

Yes	84%
No	7%
No Opinion	9%

April

Are you in favour of a military alliance between Great Britain, France and Russia?

Yes	84%
No	7%
No Opinion	6%

Is the British government right in following a policy of giving military guarantees to preserve the independence of small European nations?

Yes	72%
No	14%
No Opinion	14%

May

Are you in favour of Mr Winston Churchill being invited to join the Cabinet?

Yes	56%
No	26%
No Opinion	18%

1939

July

If Germany and Poland go to war over Danzig should we fulfil our pledge to fight on Poland's side?

Yes	76%
No	13%
No Opinion	11%

Aug

Do you, or do you not, think that the British government is doing its best to secure a pact with Russia?

Yes	50%
No	30%
No Opinion	20%

Sept

Do you think that Russia's recent actions have helped or hindered in making war against us?

Helped	32%
Hindered	8%
Both	30%
Neither	18%
Don't Know	12%

Oct

Should a cabinet minister be sent to Moscow now to discuss our future relations with Russia?

Yes	47%
No	34%
No Opinion	19%

1939

Nov

Do you think that the Russians intend to give Germany such help as will enable Germany to defeat Britain and France?

Yes	14%
No	68%
No Opinion	18%

If Finland, Sweden, Norway or Denmark become involved in a war with Russia should Great Britain help them?

Yes	42%
No	38%
No Opinion	20%

Dec

What do you think is more dangerous to us - Soviet Russia or Nazi Germany?

Russia	24%
Germany	57%
No Opinion	19%

Do you approve or disapprove of Britain's sending arms to Finland?

Approve	74%
Disapprove	18%
No Opinion	8%

1940

Jan

Do you approve or disapprove of Britain's sending troops to help Finland?

Approve	33%
Disapprove	50%
No Opinion	17%

1940

March

Would you like to see our government trying to establish friendly relations with Russia?

Yes	41%
No	30%
No Opinion	29%

1941

April

Would you like to see Great Britain and Soviet Russia being more friendly to each other?

Yes	70%
No	13%
No Opinion	17%

Aug

Are you satisfied with the amount of military aid Britain is giving Russia?

Yes	37%
No	30%
No Opinion	33%

Have events since the German attack upon Russia changed your previous opinion of Russia's policy?

Yes	27%
No	57%
No Opinion	16%

1942

Jan

Would you like to see Great Britain and Russia continuing to work together after the war?

Yes	86%
No	6%
No Opinion	8%

1942

Jan

Do you think they will?

Yes 53%

No 18%

No Opinion 29%

Do you think it possible that Great Britain, the United States and Russia will all three continue to work together after the war?

Yes 60%

No 17%

No Opinion 23%

June

Do you know about the ban on the Daily Worker?

Yes 79%

No 21%

Should the ban continue?

Yes 37%

No 43%

No Opinion 20%

July

Speaking very generally which country do you think is the more popular with the British at the present time, Russia or the United States?

Russia 62%

United States 24%

No Opinion 14%

1943

April

Do you think that Britain, the United States, Russia and China will work together after the war?

Yes	55%
No	22%
No Opinion	23%

June

Do you think that the Labour Party should or should not admit the Communist Party to membership?

Should	27%
Should Not	41%
No Opinion	32%

1944

April

After the war should Britain and the United States concern themselves with Western Europe while Russia concerns herself with Eastern Europe, or should Britain, Russia and the United States cooperate together concerning all Europe?

Russia East, Allies West	9%
Cooperate - all Europe	76%
Don't Know	15%

Aug

Do you think that Great Britain, Russia and the United States will work together after the war?

Yes	51%
No	23%
No Opinion	26%

1944

Oct

Would you like to see the Allies cooperating together after the war?

Yes	90%
No	3%
No Opinion	7%

1945

Jan

Do you approve or disapprove of Mr Churchill's attitude on the Greek question?

Approve	43%
Disapprove	38%
Don't Know	19%

Are you satisfied with Mr Churchill as Prime Minister?

Yes	81%
No	16%
No Opinion	3%

In general, from what you have heard and read, do you approve or disapprove of British government policy towards resistance movements in countries which have been liberated?

Approve	41%
Disapprove	31%
Don't Know	28%

1945

Feb

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with Mr Churchill as Prime Minister?

Satisfied	85%
Dissatisfied	11%
Don't Know	4%

Do you approve or disapprove of Mr Churchill's attitude towards the Greek question?

Approve	46%
Disapprove	28%
Don't Know	26%

March

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with Mr Churchill as Prime Minister?

Satisfied	87%
Dissatisfied	10%
Don't Know	3%

Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin have agreed that Poland's boundary with Russia should be roughly the same as the Allies laid down after the last war. Do you approve of disapprove?

Approve	24%
Disapprove	15%
Don't Know	61%

April

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with Mr Churchill as Prime Minister?

Satisfied	91%
Dissatisfied	7%
Don't Know	2%

1945

May

Have you heard about the dispute concerning the Polish government?

Yes	*78%
No	22%

Those responding in the affirmative to the above question were the asked:

Do you think that Britain and America should recognise the present Polish government in Warsaw, or that Russia should agree to include other Poles?

Recognise present govt	23%
Russia shd. incl. others	27%
Don't Know	28%
(*78% in all)	

Aug

Which country do you think will have the most influence in world affairs during the next five years?

U.S.A.	48%
Russia	31%
Great Britain	14%
No Single Country	1%
Others	1%
Don't Know	5%

Sept

Are your feelings towards Russia more friendly or less friendly than they were a year ago?

More	16%
Same	54%
Less	19%
Don't Know	11%

1945

Oct

Are your feelings towards the United States more friendly or less friendly than they were a year ago?

More	9%
Same	46%
Less	35%
Don't Know	10%

Dec

Do you think that Mr Bevin is doing or is not doing a good job as Foreign Secretary?

Is	47%
Is Not	18%
Don't Know	35%

1946

Feb

Do you think that Mr Bevin is doing or is not doing a good job as Foreign Secretary?

Is	73%
Is Not	12%
Don't Know	15%

Have you read about or heard about Mr Churchill's speech in the United States?

Yes	*89%
No	11%
*(89% in all)	

Asked of those who had heard of the speech:

On the whole do you approve of disapprove of the statements and proposals he made?

Approve	34%
Disapprove	39%
Don't Know	16%

1946

April

Some people say that Russia's foreign policy is concerned with making certain of her security, others say that it is imperialist expansion. What do you think?

Security	42%
Expansion	26%
No Opinion	32%

June

Do you approve or disapprove of the government's decision to allow Polish troops who do not wish to return to Poland to stay in this country?

Approve	30%
Disapprove	56%
No Opinion	14%

Aug

Do you think there should or should not be a public enquiry into the British press?

Should	36%
Should Not	33%
No Opinion	31%

Sept

Are your feelings towards Russia more friendly of less friendly than they were a year ago?

More friendly	8%
Same	41%
Less friendly	41%
Don't Know	10%

1946

Nov

Do you think Mr Bevin is doing or not doing a good job as Foreign Secretary?

Is	58%
Is Not	19%
Don't Know	23%

Dec

Do you think Mr Bevin is doing or not doing a good job as Foreign Secretary?

Is	54%
Is Not	20%
Don't Know	26%

1947

Feb

Do you think Mr Bevin is doing or not doing a good job as Foreign Secretary?

Is	58%
Is Not	21%
Don't Know	2

July

In your opinion, are there any nations which want to dominate the world?

Yes	60%
No	22%
No Opinion	18%

Those responding in the affirmative to the above question were then asked:
Which countries?

Russia	48%	(Multiple
U.S.A.	22%	Answers
		frequent)

1948

July

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with Mr Attlee as Prime Minister?

Satisfied	40%
Dissatisfied	49%
Don't Know	11%

Do you think Mr Bevin is doing or not doing a good job as Foreign Secretary?

Is	58%
Is Not	26%
Don't Know	16%

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the government's record to date?

Satisfied	36%
Dissatisfied	54%
Don't Know	10%

Oct

Do you think that the western powers should get out of Berlin, or should we stay, even if it means going to war?

Get Out	18%
Stay	64%
Don't Know	18%

1949

March

Have you read or heard about the Atlantic Pact?

Yes	77%
No	23%

Those responding in the affirmative to the above question were then asked:
Do you think it is a good or a bad idea?

Good	50%
Bad	4%
Don't Know	23%
(77% in all)	

SOURCE: REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE PRESS, 1949, CMD7700

Comparative Table of the Circulations of National Morning, London Evening,
and Sunday Newspapers in 1930, 1937, and June 1947

	1930 Annual Average	Percentage of Total	1937	Percentage of Total	June 1947	Percentage of total	Percentage increase 1947 on 1930	Percentage increase 1947 on 1937
NATIONAL MORNING NEWSPAPERS								
1. The Times	186,287	2.2	191,271	2.0	268,769	1.7	42.7	40.5
2. The Daily Telegraph Morning post (amalgamated with Daily Telegraph 1937)	175,000	2.0	559,302	5.6	1,015,514	6.6	244.2 ⁵	81.8
3. Daily Express	1,693,109	19.7	2,204,365	22.1	3,855,776	24.8	127.8	74.9
4. Daily Herald	1,118,574	13.1	2,032,847	20.4	2,134,566	13.7	90.9	5.0
5. Daily Mail	1,845,087	21.4	1,579,578	15.9	2,076,915	13.4	12.5	31.4
6. News Chronicle	1,451,510	16.9	1,324,107	13.3	1,623,158	10.5	11.9	22.6
7. Daily Sketch (Graphic)	926,000	10.8	683,508	6.9	772,380	5.0	-16.6	13.0
8. Daily Mirror	1,072,000*	12.5	1,328,449	13.4	3,702,332	23.9	246.1	178.8
TOTAL⁴	8,567,567	100.0	9,903,427	100.5	15,449,410	99.6	80.5	55.9
London Evening Newspapers								
1. Evening News	714,764	40.6	790,806	43.7	1,648,586	47.0	130.8	108.6
2. Evening Standard	397,803	22.4	388,040	21.5	778,992	22.2	95.9	100.5
3. The Star	655,402	37.2	628,064	34.8	1,074,021	30.6	63.9	71.0
TOTAL⁴	1,767,969	100.2	1,806,910	100.0	3,501,599	99.8	98.1	93.8

* Estimate

⁵ Compared with the *Daily Telegraph* only, 479.8 per cent

⁴ The circulation of the *Daily Worker* was available only for 1947 and is therefore not included. The pegged circulation (June 1947) was 118,473.

⁴ Owing to the fact that the percentages are calculated to one place of decimals only, they do not total 100 per cent, exactly.

	1930 Annual average	1937 Annual average	1947 (4 weeks ending 29th June)	Per cent. increase 1947 on 1930	Per cent. increase 1947 on 1937
SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS					
News of the World	3,410,839	3,850,072	7,890,461	131.4	104.9
The Observer	200,808	208,096	384,001	91.0	84.6
The People	2,498,637	3,405,752	4,670,746	87.1	37.2
Reynolds News	283,000*	426,032	720,440	154.4	69.0
Sunday Chronicle	930,000	729,556	1,178,331	26.7	62.2
Sunday Referee (incorporated in Sunday Chronicle 1939)	73,000 ⁵	342,000	--	--	--
Sunday Dispatch	1,197,226	741,166	2,061,315	72.2	178.1
Sunday Evening News	1,284,000	1,446,872	2,068,176	61.3	43.2
Sunday Express	927,926	1,349,787	2,577,792	177.9	89.8
Sunday Graphic	940,000	650,876	1,185,787	26.1	82.3
Sunday Mail	244,000	332,901	587,973	140.6	76.8
Sunday Mercury	55,478	63,564	124,933	125.4	96.8
Sunday Pictorial	1,946,306	1,345,219	4,006,241	106.2	198.5
Sunday Sun	119,000	88,235	202,062	69.7	129.3
Sunday Times	153,000	270,072	568,346	271.2	110.3
Total⁴	14,600,000	15,700,000	29,300,000	100.5	86.5

* Estimated

⁵ March, 1930

⁴ The total includes the circulation of the *Sunday Post* and the *Western Independent*, the proprietors of which declined to give permission for the publication of some or all of their papers' figures. To avoid the disclosure of these figures, the totals are given to the nearest 100,000.

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TABLE 14
 NINE NATIONAL DAILY NEWSPAPERS, MAIN NEWS PAGE
 ANALYSIS OF NEWS SPACE INTO 15 CATEGORIES 1927, 1937, AND 1947

	The Times		Daily Telegraph		Daily Express		Daily Herald		Daily Mail		Daily Worker		News Chronicle (Daily News)		Daily Graphic (Daily Sketch)		Daily Mirror										
	1927	1937	1927	1937	1927	1937	1927	1937	1927	1937	1927	1937	1927	1937	1927	1937	1927	1937									
Home News																											
Political, social and economic	25	21	31	23	15	34	20	10	36	31	12	42	12	5	39	40	54	20	19	38	18	11	15	3	40		
Law, police and accidents	1	2	2	7	4	5	16	16	18	17	20	10	11	18	14	5	6	7	7	15	11	15	22	15	11	30	24
Personalities, Court news, etc.	4	7	2	4	13	8	6	6	1	2	7	2	5	11	6	-	1	6	6	6	5	9	13	3	7	11	5
Sport	2	2	1	3	4	1	8	7	2	2	5	2	8	8	2	1	-	7	8	8	1	4	3	3	12	3	3
Other	4	5	2	5	5	4	5	7	6	14	7	4	9	8	3	3	2	9	8	3	14	10	8	16	16	14	5
Total home news	36	37	38	42	41	52	55	48	63	73	51	60	45	50	64	49	63	49	56	58	60	59	60	61	61	77	
External News																											
Imperial																											
Political, social and economic	11	7	11	5	5	5	6	1	4	6	5	4	5	3	7	-	4	6	4	5	3	5	5	4	4	3	
Other	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	1	2	-	1	2	
Total	13	10	13	6	6	6	7	2	6	7	6	6	6	4	7	-	4	7	4	7	4	5	7	6	4	5	
Foreign																											
Political, social and economic	10	14	10	6	6	6	4	7	3	-	2	8	5	6	5	9	11	6	6	6	2	4	4	5	2	2	
Other	3	4	2	8	5	2	7	9	3	3	7	2	9	8	4	-	-	7	5	2	6	4	4	4	5	17	3
Total	13	18	12	14	11	8	11	16	6	3	9	10	14	14	9	9	11	13	11	8	8	8	8	9	7	19	6
International																											
Political, social and economic	35	30	35	35	39	28	16	26	14	13	29	22	24	26	17	41	20	20	28	22	15	25	14	16	10	11	
Other	2	2	2	3	2	5	7	7	9	2	5	2	7	4	2	1	2	6	1	4	9	3	3	8	6	9	1
Total	37	32	37	38	41	33	23	33	23	15	34	24	31	30	19	42	22	26	29	26	24	28	22	22	22	19	12
Miscellaneous external news																											
Total external news	63	60	62	58	58	47	41	51	36	25	49	40	51	48	35	51	37	46	44	41	37	41	38	37	39	23	
Other News																											
Financial and commercial	-	2	-	-	1	-	3	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Scientific and technical	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-
Total other news	1	3	-	-	1	1	4	1	1	2	-	4	2	2	1	-	5	-	-	1	3	-	1	2	-	-	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Political, Social and Economic News	81	72	87	69	65	73	46	44	57	50	48	76	46	40	68	90	89	52	56	71	39	45	55	37	15	57	

per cent. of news space

SOURCE: REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE PRESS, 1949, CMD 7700

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