

**“THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS”:
LORD CURZON’S PERCEPTION OF RUSSIA**

by

Brenda Lynn Smith

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1995

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS**

in the Department

of

History

© Brenda Lynn Smith 1998

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

November 1998

**All rights reserved. This work may not be
reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or by other means, without permission of the author.**

ABSTRACT

George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (1859-1925) was not the virulent Russophobe that he is often reputed to have been. He was an ardent imperialist whose ultimate objective was to protect India from any and all threats. Russia, due to its geographic proximity, posed the greatest threat to India. Yet Curzon's attitude towards Russia was not static; it evolved to respond to changes in the Anglo-Russian relationship.

Based on Curzon's published articles and monographs, and on British diplomatic papers, this thesis studies the development of Curzon's views on Tsarist Russia from his education at Eton and Oxford through to his Asian travels and his early political and diplomatic posts as Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office (1895-1898) and Viceroy of India (1898-1905). It also considers the influence of events such as the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907, the Great War, and the Bolshevik Revolution on his beliefs.

This thesis also examines how Curzon influenced British policy towards Russia as a member of David Lloyd George's War Cabinet (1916-1919) and as Foreign Secretary (1919-1924). After the demise of Tsarist Russia, Curzon became a staunch anti-Bolshevik when he realised how the Soviets' revolutionary policies could threaten his beloved Eastern Empire. Consequently, Curzon endeavoured to implement policies that would minimise the Soviet danger to the East. Although Lloyd George was largely responsible for the direction of policy towards Soviet Russia during his premiership, Curzon still played an important, albeit subordinate, role. Curzon's influence was felt

directly through his undisputed control over Asian policy and indirectly through his ability to compel the Prime Minister to incorporate various issues into his policy objectives. Under Lloyd George's successors, Andrew Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin, however, Curzon was the undisputed architect of British foreign policy. Thus from the 1870s to the 1920s, Lord Curzon's feelings about Tsarist and Soviet Russia were principally based upon his view of Britain's imperial role in India.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been supported and encouraged by many individuals throughout the researching and writing of this thesis. My thanks to Professor Richard Debo for encouraging me to enter the graduate program in the first place, for introducing me to Lord Curzon, and for his patience and his insight as my argument took shape. I am also grateful for Professor Martin Kitchen's thoughtful suggestions for improving this thesis. The staff of the History Department, especially Mary Ann Pope, provided invaluable assistance as well. I would like to acknowledge and thank my parents, Douglas and Ellen Smith, and my fellow graduate students, especially Peter van der Meer, Julia Gelardi, and Matt Barlow, for their unflagging encouragement. I am also grateful to Joanne Moon and to Don and Christina Neigel, for trying to keep me sane, especially during the past six months. And, last but not least, special thanks to my brother, Trevor Smith, for his continuous support and for his efforts to restrain his sister's workaholic tendencies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval Page		ii
Abstract		iii
Acknowledgements		v
Chapter One	Introduction	1
Chapter Two	The Asian Chessboard: Curzon's Views on Anglo-Russian Relations	8
Chapter Three	From Eton to the War Cabinet: The Evolution of an Imperialist	26
Chapter Four	"Grasping the Hairy Paw of the Baboon": Curzon, Lloyd George, and the Bolsheviks, 1917-1922	60
Chapter Five	Foreign Secretary in Name and Deed: Curzon under Bonar Law and Baldwin, 1922-1924	97
Chapter Six	Conclusion	114
Bibliography		122

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Among Britain's foreign policymaking elite at the turn of the twentieth century, George Nathaniel Curzon First Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (1859-1925) has become one of its most misunderstood statesmen. Posterity tends to regard him as an arrogant "superior person" who was "inconsistent, unreliable, untruthful, and treacherous."¹ He is also remembered as an archimperialist and a virulent Russophobe. It is true that he could be extremely arrogant and that he was an outspoken critic of Russia. He was also, on occasion, a political opportunist. Lord Curzon, however, does not deserve this unquestioned notoriety as a fickle statesman and bitter Russophobe. This reputation not only unnecessarily simplifies the views of this complex and intelligent man, but has also reduced him to a historical cliché.

This thesis studies the origin and the evolution of Curzon's perception of Russia throughout his life and examines how these views and experiences shaped his approach to Soviet Russia during his years as Foreign Secretary under David Lloyd George, Andrew Bonar Law, and Stanley Baldwin. It also considers the motivations behind Curzon's recommended policies and his influence in British policymaking towards Russia. Curzon's attitudes were not static; they evolved to respond to changes in the Anglo-Russian relationship. However, his views did not always correspond with those of his

¹ Lord Beaverbrook, *The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George and Great was the Fall Thereof* (London: Collins, 1963), p. 46.

peers and they did not always adequately take into account the limitations of British influence and power. It was only when his beliefs diverged from the prevailing dogma that Curzon's opinions about Russia became an issue.

Like many aristocrats who came of age in the late Victorian era, Curzon firmly believed that "the British Empire is, under Providence, the greatest instrument for good that the world has ever seen."² He was convinced that Britain's greatness rested on the continued existence of its empire. Thus defending imperial frontiers and communications not only protected the empire itself, but also preserved Britain's pre-eminence. He also believed that every Great Power was poised to menace Britain's imperial position:

In my opinion, the most marked feature in the international development of the next quarter of a century will be, not the advance of Russia – that is in any case inevitable – or the animosity of France – that is hereditary – but the aggrandisement of the German Empire at the expense of Great Britain; and I think that any English Foreign Minister who desires to serve his country well, should never lose sight of that consideration.³

Despite this understanding, however, Curzon focused most of his attention on Russia's advance in Asia. He regarded India as "Jewel of the Imperial Crown." His lifelong fascination with India provided the basis for Curzon's attitude towards Russia. Due to geographic proximity, Russia posed the most immediate danger to the empire and hence to Britain's international ascendancy.

Curzon's enchantment with India and his views on Russia began during his years

² George N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East by the Rt. Hon. George Curzon, M.P.: Japan-Korea-China*, new rev. ed. (London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1896.), dedication page.

³ Curzon to Lord George Hamilton, 25 September 1901, quoted in Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon: Being the Authorized Biography of George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.*, 3 vols. (London: Ernest Benn, 1928), III, p. 117.

at Eton and Oxford. Deciding to capitalise on his interest in imperial issues, he travelled extensively in the East between 1887 and 1895 to become an acknowledged expert on India and its surrounding regions. He not only published articles and monographs, but also gave lectures on the need to defend the empire from all threats, especially against the Russian “menace” from the north-west of India.

Throughout his distinguished career, Curzon held numerous political positions, including Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office (1895-1898), Viceroy of India (1898-1905), Lord President of the Council in David Lloyd George’s War Cabinet (1916-1919), and, ultimately, Foreign Secretary (1919-1924). His diplomatic experiences, as well as events such as the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907 and the Great War, also shaped his perceptions of Russia and the importance of India.

The Russian revolutions of March and November 1917, however, forced Curzon to re-evaluate his views on Britain’s errant wartime ally. Although he initially regarded the 1917 demise of the Tsarist Empire as the elimination of the Russian menace to India, this perception was short-lived. He became increasingly concerned about Soviet attempts to undermine British influence in Mesopotamia, Persia, Afghanistan, and India because he realized that Soviet policy in this region threatened the existence of Britain’s Eastern Empire. Ultimately, therefore, Curzon became an ardent anti-Bolshevik.

As Foreign Secretary during this period of change and upheaval, Curzon had the opportunity to help shape Britain’s attitude and policy towards the Bolsheviks. Although his ascendancy over British foreign policy was circumscribed during the Lloyd George Coalition due to the Prime Minister’s insistence on controlling Britain’s policy towards

Russia, Curzon was not without influence. Policies such as the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement often reflected Curzon's imperial preoccupation with the East. And, after the fall of Lloyd George in October 1922, Curzon dominated Britain's Russian policy. His more belligerent form of diplomacy was illustrated by the infamous Curzon ultimatum of May 1923.

Despite his active role in and comments on British foreign policy towards Russia from the 1880s to the 1920s, little of the historiography on Anglo-Russian relations during this period focuses on Curzon's views on and contributions to Britain's Russian policy. He is often treated as a hysterical or incidental character until the fall of Lloyd George in the autumn of 1922. The literature which does centre on Curzon tends to focus on his role in India during his viceroyalty. His approach to Russia, therefore, is treated merely as sideline.⁴ Yet Curzon's views on Russia were an important component of his imperial ethos and influenced the policies that he advocated.

Compared to his viceroyalty, Curzon's role in the War Cabinet and his tenure as Foreign Secretary have been less thoroughly explored. Richard H. Ullman's three volume series *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921* provides a comprehensive study of Britain and Russia's relationship in the years immediately following the Russian Revolutions as it attempted to come to terms with the new Russian regime. Yet although he discusses the policies that Curzon undertook during his tenure as Foreign Secretary, Ullman does not really analyse the reasoning behind Curzon's decisions. Stephen

⁴ David Dilks, *Curzon in India*. 2 vols. (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1969-1970).

White's *Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Study in the Politics of Diplomacy, 1920-1924* essentially begins where Ullman's trilogy ends, with the signing of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement in 1921. White, however, does not delve deeply into Curzon's motivations and influence on policymaking because he is interested in examining the influences of labour and business on British policy.⁵

Harold Nicolson's rather dated 1934 study *Curzon: The Last Phase* and G.H. Bennett's 1995 work *British Foreign Policy during the Curzon Period, 1919-1924* are the only monographs which deal specifically with Britain's foreign policy under Curzon.⁶ These books, however, do not focus on Curzon's views on and policy towards Soviet Russia because they are more concerned with examining his general views on foreign affairs than with scrutinising his approach to an individual country or region.

This study is based upon a variety of sources, including contemporary writings, parliamentary debates, and diplomatic papers. Curzon wrote numerous articles, monographs, and speeches on India and the Anglo-Russian Question prior to the First World War. These sources chart the development of his Russian sentiments. On his deathbed, Curzon asked that his papers not be published because, being written in the "temper and mood" of the moment, they might not put their authors or their recipients in

⁵ Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921*, 3 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, 1968, 1972); Stephen White, *Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Study in the Politics of Diplomacy, 1920-1924* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979).

⁶ Harold Nicolson, *Curzon: The Last Phase, 1919-1925: A Study in Post-War Diplomacy* (London: Constable, 1934; reprint, New York: Howard Fertig, 1974); G.H. Bennett, *British Foreign Policy during the Curzon Period, 1919-1924* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

a positive or accurate light.⁷ Consequently, the memoirs and diaries of his peers have been relied upon to provide personal insight into Curzon and his policies.

This thesis is also based upon published collections of British diplomatic documents, specifically *Documents on British Foreign Policy* (DBFP) and *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (FOCP). Some unpublished documents were also obtained from the Public Record Office. Curzon openly articulated his opinions in telegrams, dispatches, minutes, and interview records. These official papers offer insight not only into the diplomatic challenges of Anglo-Russian relations, but also into the policies that Curzon advocated and his reaction to those which were implemented. Available Soviet documents, such as Jane Degras' *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, were also utilised to discern the Soviet reaction to Curzon's attitudes and policies.

Due to space limitations, many interesting facets of Anglo-Russian relations had to be omitted or simply alluded to in this thesis. Issues and events such as the Great Game, the First World War, the Russian Civil War, the Russo-Polish War, and the Genoa Conference are dealt with superficially and only as far as they influenced Curzon's perception of Russia.

This study begins with a discussion of Curzon's perception of India and the Anglo-Russian Question. It then traces the evolution of his attitude towards Russia from his days at Eton through to his years of travel and his early political posts and from his viceroyalty to the War Cabinet. The fourth chapter chronicles Curzon's years at the

⁷ Nicolson, p. vii.

Foreign Office under Lloyd George and his views on Britain's intervention in the Russian Civil War and on the Prime Minister's efforts at rapprochement through initiatives such as the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement. The fifth chapter examines Curzon's policy towards Russia during Bonar Law and Baldwin's premierships. Although he was one of the most consistent and outspoken critics of Russia of his era, Curzon's criticisms were not simple manifestations of Russophobia. Rather, they were based on his obsession with India as the basis of Britain's international pre-eminence. Lord Curzon, therefore, was less a Russophobe than a fervent imperialist and British patriot.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ASIAN CHESSBOARD: CURZON'S VIEWS ON ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

George Nathaniel Curzon's strong feelings about Russia were principally based upon his view of Britain's imperial role in India. A self-confessed imperialist, Curzon perceived India to be "the noblest trophy of British genius, and the most splendid appanage of the Imperial Crown."¹ He thought that Britain had a mission to rule India for the benefit of its people and that the highest honour of an Englishman was to serve India in any capacity.² Yet his obsession with Britain's control of India was not simply based on ruling India for its "benefit." He earnestly believed that both countries would suffer from a separation and that Britain's strength and greatness rested on its hold over India. For Curzon, "without India the British Empire could not exist. The possession of India is the inalienable badge of sovereignty in the eastern hemisphere. Since India was known its masters have been lords of half the world."³ For Curzon, therefore, Britain's pre-eminent status depended upon the existence of the British *Raj*. Indeed, he was so focused on India as the basis of Britain's renown that in his numerous speeches and articles throughout his career he seldom referred to his country's contributions in other areas, such as constitutional or industrial development.⁴

¹ George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Question* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1889; reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967), p. 14 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

² Curzon, speech, 28 October 1898, *Speeches by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1898-1901* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1901), p. 5. Hereafter cited as *Indian Speeches*.

³ Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892; reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), I, p. 4 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁴ David Gilmour, *Curzon* (London: John Murray Publishers, 1994), p. 93.

Due to his firm belief that Britain's power lay in India, Curzon maintained that India must be defended at all costs "not merely from attack, but from peril of attack." He was certain that this perception was a fundamental principle that no Englishman would dispute because it was the "first condition of our imperial existence."⁵ He believed that the foremost duty of English statesmen was "to render any hostile intentions futile, to see that our own position is secure, and our frontier impregnable."⁶ Russia, due to its expansion into Asia in the nineteenth century, posed the greatest danger to India.⁷ Given Curzon's perception that India represented the basis of Britain's greatness, Russia's threat to India constituted a menace to Great Britain's international ascendancy. Curzon remarked that:

Turkestan, Afghanistan, Transcaspia, Persia – to many these names breathe only a sense of utter remoteness or a memory of strange vicissitudes and of moribund romance. To me, I confess, they are the pieces on a chessboard upon which is being played out a game for the dominion of the world.⁸

For George Curzon, therefore, the threat to India was a metaphor for the rivalry between Britain and Russia for international pre-eminence.

Curzon, however, saw himself as being "very far indeed from being a Jingo," and maintained that he cared not "a snap of the fingers for the tawdry lust of conquest."⁹ He felt that he was an objective source, neither Russophile nor Russophobe, who could

⁵ Curzon, "India between Two Fires," *Nineteenth Century* 34 (August 1893), p. 177.

⁶ Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 13-14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

⁸ Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, pp. 3-4.

⁹ Curzon to Morley, 17 June 1900, quoted in Gilmour, p. 165.

thoroughly analyse and discuss the subject of the Eastern Question.¹⁰ In *Persia and the Persian Question*, for example, he prefaced his discussion of Anglo-Russian policies in Persia with the statement that he hoped his previous writings would “have absolved me from the charge of Russophobia; and in this case it will equally be my endeavour to handle the subject fairly and with justice to those whose interests in the East undoubtedly clash with our own.”¹¹

This “objectivity” aside, Curzon had very strong ideas on how to protect India from the Russian peril. Believing that Russian advances into Central Asia impaired India’s security, Curzon believed that, in order to protect India, Russia must be kept at a safe distance. He feared that a common Anglo-Russian border would increase tensions between the powers, necessitating a larger military force on the frontier to maintain security. Yet he also questioned a simple reliance on buffer states as the key to India’s security because they lacked permanence, depending upon the ability and the willingness of their rulers to act as buffers and of the stronger powers to accept them as such. In 1893, for example, Curzon argued that Afghanistan could not play the role of buffer for a sustained period of time and that Russia would not tolerate such a situation. He believed that the concept of an Afghan buffer would probably only be respected as long as the

¹⁰ In *Russia in Central Asia*, Curzon wrote: “I am as far from echoing the hysterical shriek of the panic monger or the Jingo as I am from imitating the smug complacency of the politician who chatters about Mervousness only to find that Merv is gone, and thinks that imperial obligation is to be discharged by a querulous diplomatic protest, or evaded by a literary epigram. Whatever be Russia’s designs upon India, whether they be serious and inimical or imaginary and fantastic, I hold that the first duty of English statesmen is to render any hostile intentions futile, to see that our own position is secure, and our frontier impregnable.” (pp. 13-14.)

¹¹ Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, II, p. 588.

present Amir, Abdur Rahman, lived and that in the meantime Russia was expanding into the Pamir to circumvent the buffer and to achieve a relationship with Afghanistan that was as strong as Britain's.¹² Curzon accepted the concept of buffer states, but only if they remained genuinely independent not only of Russia, but also of other European powers. Thus his opposition to a common frontier between Russia and India and his reservations about relying solely upon buffer states led Curzon to conclude that any Russian moves southward had to be countered, partly through closer relations with Persia, but ultimately through the threat of military action.¹³

Curzon believed that the best way to protect the existing empire was to strengthen Britain's political position in all the regions adjoining India. He felt that an active frontier policy based upon a "scientific frontier" which demonstrated military strength and activity was the best means of discouraging Russia from taking action in Asia and of ensuring India's, and hence Britain's, safety.¹⁴ Although he realised that this approach to frontier defence was expensive, he believed that its outlay was worthwhile because it would be less costly than the expenditure that would be required to defend an unprepared India in the event of a Russian attack. Curzon believed, therefore, that an active frontier policy would be "precautionary in character and peace-making in effect."¹⁵ Curzon felt

¹² Curzon, "India between Two Fires," p. 182.

¹³ Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, II, pp. 605-606, 619-621; Gilmour, p. 80.

¹⁴ For Curzon, a scientific frontier meant "a Frontier which unites natural and strategical strength, and by placing both the entrance and the exit of the passes in the hands of the defending Power, compels the enemy to conquer the approach before he can use the passage." See Curzon, *Frontiers: The Romanes Lecture, 1907: Delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, November 2, 1907* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 19. Hereafter cited as *Frontiers*.

¹⁵ Curzon, "The 'Scientific Frontier': An Accomplished Fact," *Nineteenth Century* 23 (June 1888), pp. 916-917.

that only a clearly stated policy, based upon Britain's needs and abilities to defend them, would provide peace in Asia.¹⁶

Although he identified Russian expansion as the main threat to India and was interested in shoring up its defences, Curzon did not believe that Russia strove to conquer India. He scoffed at the idea that the Russian advance towards India was the result of an "unswerving and Machiavellian purpose" to overthrow British rule in India and to which every forward movement was subordinated. He did not think that "a single man in Russia, with the exception of a few speculative theorists and here and there a giddy subaltern, ever dreams seriously of the conquest of India. To anyone, Russian or English, who has ever superficially studied the question, the project is too preposterous to be entertained."¹⁷ Thus Curzon believed that a Russian conquest of the Subcontinent was impossible and would not be attempted.

Nevertheless, he maintained that Britain must be prepared for the possibility of a Russian diversionary attack that might be launched to dissuade Britain from interfering in Russia's schemes for Constantinople. For Curzon, therefore, Russia flaunted its strength and powers of assimilation in Central Asia primarily to make Britain feel less secure in

¹⁶ Curzon believed that Britain must decide what part it would play in Central Asia according to "considerations of her own advantage, the security of her Indian dominions, and her ability or resolution to defend the position which she takes up. ... Instead of nervous anticipation of an advance which we do not mean to prevent, and petulant protests when it is accomplished, let our statesmen make up their minds what they mean to hold and what they are prepared to abandon. If we do not intend Russia to advance beyond a certain line, let us be prepared to advance up to it ourselves. Let it be clearly understood what will be a *casus belli*, and what not. Let a responsible Government declare: 'Thus far and no farther.' Short of that point, let England and Russia, so far as is possible, co-operate in the great work of subduing the East to the West." (Curzon, "The Fluctuating Frontier of Russia in Asia," *Nineteenth Century* 25 (February 1889), pp. 282-283.)

¹⁷ Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, p. 320.

India with the rationalisation that the more insecure Britain felt in Asia, the more conciliatory it would be towards Russia in Europe. He perceived that the main object of Russian policy was “to keep England quiet in Europe by keeping her employed in Asia.”¹⁸ Despite this understanding, Curzon remained preoccupied with defending India against Russia because he equated India with British ascendancy. Hence if Russia ever succeeded in genuinely threatening India, Britain’s international prestige would be damaged. Thus in order to maintain Britain’s global status, Curzon felt that Russia could not be allowed to acquire a position that it could use as leverage.

Despite this perception of Russian policy in Asia as having a European basis, Curzon viewed Russia’s advance in Central Asia as “compulsive [and] without far-seeing policies.”¹⁹ He believed that the Russian frontier, unlike Britain’s border in Asia, lacked a “scientific” basis, and hence was artificial, imprecise, temporary, and unstable.²⁰ He believed that “the passion for territorial aggrandisement is one which ... no one with his eyes open can believe to be other than a dominating influence on the Russian mind.”²¹ He regarded Russian foreign policy as “a hand-to-mouth policy, a policy of waiting upon events, of profiting by the blunders of others, and as often of committing the like herself.”²² He maintained that since the 1870s Russia had been drawn “partly of her own free will, sometimes against it, into conquest after conquest” until she possessed a great

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 314-321.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 318-319.

²⁰ Curzon, *Frontiers*, p. 19.

²¹ Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, p. 216.

²² Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, p. 315.

empire, and that this process did not show any sign of stopping.²³ Curzon also believed that the extension of Russian dominions, particularly in Central Asia, was due to “the personal ambition of individuals, acting in rash independence of orders from home.”²⁴ Thus even if the Russian government did have a set policy for Central Asia, frontier officers, known for their “notorious impetuosity,” would act independently, aware that officials in St. Petersburg would accept the fruits of their expeditions and award them accordingly.²⁵ Given these circumstances, Curzon believed that Russia’s Central Asian confines had yet to be fixed and that Britain must be prepared for a redistribution of existing political forces and boundaries.²⁶ His perception of Russia’s unstable borders and lack of defined policy contributed to his constant emphasis on Russia’s threat to India. Had Russia followed a clearly defined policy in Central Asia that limited its expansion towards India, Curzon might not have been as obsessed with the Tsarist Empire.

Although most of Curzon’s comments about Russia were based upon his perception of its insatiable territorial appetite, he also criticised the nature of Russian imperial administration. He felt that Russian imperialism lacked “that moral impulse which induces unselfish or Christian exertion on behalf of a subject people.”²⁷ He also believed that Russians were corrupt, slack and incompetent administrators who lacked

²³ Curzon, “The Fluctuating Frontier of Russia in Asia,” pp. 268-269.

²⁴ Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 316-317.

²⁵ Curzon, “India between Two Fires,” p. 181.

²⁶ Curzon, “The Fluctuating Frontier of Russia in Asia,” pp. 268-269.

²⁷ Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, p. 401.

interest in native education.²⁸ This view was based upon his opinion that Russia was more Asian than European. In Curzon's eyes, "the conquest of Central Asia is a conquest of Orientals by Orientals, of cognate character by cognate character ... [in which] barbarian Asia, after a sojourn in civilised Europe, returns upon its former footsteps to reclaim its own kith and kin."²⁹

Yet Curzon was far from condemning all aspects of Russian influence in Central Asia. Although he regarded the conquest as brutal and the subsequent administration as lacking any moral or enlightened impulse, he felt that Russia had imposed order on a "barbarous" region and that its government was not unpopular. He believed that Russia had "conferred great and substantial advantages" upon the Central Asia by abolishing raids and providing security. He also admitted that their frank and amiable manners, their respectful treatment of native chiefs, their tolerance of Islamic religions and social practices, and their conciliation of native peoples through moderate taxation, security, and access to manufactured goods made the Russians popular with their Asian subjects.³⁰ Curzon's ability to see the positive attributes of Russian imperialism illustrates that labelling him as a resolute Russophobe is too strong a condemnation. If Curzon was as parochial as his reputation, he would not have been able to see anything positive about Russia's presence in Asia. His criticisms of Russian imperial administration were based more upon a sense of British superiority and of the "civilising" purpose of empire than

²⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 392-402.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 392.

³⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 385-395.

upon Russophobia. It is important to remember that when he went to India as Viceroy in 1898, Curzon firmly believed that he was taking “our share in that noble work which I firmly believe has been placed by the inscrutable decrees of Providence upon the shoulders of the British race.”³¹ In his eyes, any imperial administration that did not aspire to “civilise” its subjects should be criticised. Curzon, therefore, was fanatically pro-British rather than violently anti-Russian.

To a great degree, Curzon’s philosophies represented common tenets of thought amongst the British elite of his time. In the 1870s, the years in which Curzon’s youthful political ideals began to take shape, British patriotism was wedded to a new nationalist, imperialist, and royalist ideology and to a new romantic treatment of the Indian Empire. The proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India in 1876 signified this growing preoccupation with Empire. A variety of new rituals and invented traditions were instituted during these years to diffuse patriotic intentions and ideologies to the British public. These imperial vehicles included architecture, statuary, public ceremonies, parades, displays, advertising, theatre, youth organisations, juvenile literature, and sermons. Moreover, the British elite felt that serving in the army and the Empire were more socially acceptable occupations than business. Public schools were dedicated to educating future imperial administrators to bear their authority and their status humbly, to dedicate themselves to the good of the population committed to their charge, and to be ever ready to sacrifice themselves to duty. J.E.C. Welldon, the headmaster at Harrow in the 1890s, exemplified this attitude towards education. In an 1895 address to the Royal

³¹ Curzon, speech, 28 October 1898, *Indian Speeches*, p. 3.

Colonial Institute, Welldon argued that education must relate to the administration of the empire:

The boys of today are the statesmen and administrators of to-morrow. In their hands is the future of the British Empire. May they prove themselves not unworthy of their solemn charge! May they scorn the idea of tarnishing or diminishing the Empire which their forefathers won! May they augment, consolidate, and exalt it! May it be given them to cherish great ideas, to make great efforts, and to win great victories! This is my prayer.³²

As public schools became persuasive and persistent propagators of imperialism, chapel sermons, prize day speeches, magazine editorials, and classroom lectures were used to impart the glory and duty of Empire. Thus throughout the late nineteenth century the British elite was taught to believe in the glory of empire and the perception that they must serve the state.³³

This public school image of empire extended up through the British elite to high political officials, Tory and Liberals alike. As Cecil Rhodes commented in 1899: "They are tumbling over each other, Liberals and Conservatives, to show which side are the greatest and most enthusiastic Imperialists."³⁴ British patriotism during these years also included a strong sense of British superiority. Joseph Chamberlain remarked in 1895: "I

³² J.E.C. Welldon, "The imperial aspects of education," *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, XXVI, 1894-1895, p. 839, quoted in J.A. Mangan, "'The Grit of our Forefathers': Invented Traditions, Propaganda and Imperialism," *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 120.

³³ John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 2-11, 253-258; MacKenzie, introduction to *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, pp. 1-16.

³⁴ Quoted in MacKenzie, introduction to *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, p. 5.

believe that the British race is the greatest of governing races that the world was ever seen.”³⁵

These understandings of patriotism, imperialism, and superiority shaped the British public's perception of Russia. Prior to the First World War, the British public believed that Russia was brutally governed, semi-civilised, and alien to the European mind. These impressions coloured British views of Russian life, literature, and culture. The competing imperial ambitions of Britain and Russia which had been manifested through the “Great Game” since the 1830s also led the British public to view Russia as Britain's principal enemy.³⁶ Clashes between the two rivals in the Near East and in Central Asia in the 1870s and 1880s, the very decades in which British imperialism was being fervently nurtured, further stimulated the British public's interest in the Tsarist Empire. British adventure fiction written during this period vividly portrays Russia as a military threat to the British Empire, as a despotic land ruled by an arbitrary and brutal government, and as the home of new creeds that threatened the established order. George Griffith's books, for example, consistently depicted Russia as an international threat to

³⁵ Quoted in Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-1983*, 2d ed. (London: Longman Group, 1984), p. 135.

³⁶ For information on the development of Russophobia, see J.H. Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain, A Study of the Interaction of Policy and Opinion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950).

British interests. The British public, therefore, had a generally unfavourable view of Russia.³⁷

In many ways, the views of the British policymaking elite reflected this perception of Russia. British officials generally accepted the tenet that Russian veracity was questionable and that certain ingrained defects in the Russian character affected its foreign policy. Sir Thomas Sanderson, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office from 1894 to 1906, believed that “when sober they tell us less than the truth, when tipsy they tell us more than the truth” and that “Russians do not see any harm in these deviations from the brutal facts. ... [That] Russian diplomacy will not take every advantage they can within those limits is, I fear, not to be expected – and a certain amount of deception is part of their ordinary stock in trade.”³⁸ Cecil Spring Rice’s comment that the Russian “eagle is double-headed; one for Europe and one for Asia; one to ‘explain’ and one to ‘perform’” also provides a vivid description of the British perception of the Russian character in foreign policy.³⁹ Political and diplomatic figures such as Francis Bertie, Lord George Hamilton, and Sir Charles Hardinge concurred with this perception

³⁷ For example, in Griffith’s *The Outlaws of the Air*, an Anglo-Russian war broke out over the Russian seizure of “Port Lazareff” in China. Defeated, Russia was forced to abandon her “pretensions in Central Asia south of the 40th parallel.” (George Griffith, *The Outlaws of the Air* [London: n.p., 1897], p. 141) In *The Angel of the Revolution: A Tale of the Coming Terror*, war broke out over a border incident in the Hindu Kush. (George Griffith, *The Angel of the Revolution: A Tale of the Coming Terror* [London: n.p., 1893], p. 101.)

³⁸ Sanderson to Scott, 26 April 1899, quoted in Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia, 1894-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 22; Sanderson to Scott, 17 June 1903, *ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁹ Spring Rice to Cromer, 11 Sept 1908, *ibid.*, p. 42.

of the untrustworthiness and the low moral quality of Russian diplomacy.⁴⁰ Thus Curzon's notion that "one of the commonest features of [the] Russian character is a constitutional incapacity for exactitude of statement"⁴¹ and that Russian diplomacy was "one long and manifold lie"⁴² was not an uncommon sentiment amongst the British foreign policymaking elite.

Although most British officials tended to echo Curzon's assessment of Russian veracity and diplomacy, they were much more sympathetic towards rapprochement. By the 1890s, statesmen such as Lord Salisbury began to realise that Britain's international position was weakening and that, consequently, Britain and Russia needed to come to terms diplomatically because it was too costly to be in constant antagonism.⁴³ After the Boer War and into the early years of the twentieth century, this perception became more and more prevalent. The Boer War shook the confidence of many ardent imperialists by revealing alarming deficiencies in Britain's military capabilities and dangers to its international position. It was widely believed that if it took Britain so long to beat a small group of untrained peasants, how could the mighty Lion defeat any of the more efficient Great Power rivals threatening the Empire? By 1901, therefore, many enthusiastic imperialists began to have a sense of fear and foreboding about the British Empire's future and to seek new ways to ensure its safety. It was in this context that statesmen

⁴⁰ Bertie to Lansdowne, 17 January 1905, *ibid.*, p. 31; Hamilton to Curzon, 15 March 1901, Lord George Hamilton Collection, India Office Library (microfilm, University of British Columbia Library); Hardinge to Goschen, 30 June 1908, quoted in Zara S. Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 97.

⁴¹ Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, p. 230.

⁴² Curzon to Selborne, 4 May 1903, quoted in Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar*, p. 17.

⁴³ Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar*, p. 8.

began to seek a rapprochement with Russia.⁴⁴ It was commonly believed that an alliance with Russia would preserve the balance of power because if Russia felt isolated at any time and turned to Germany, France would follow, leaving England isolated.⁴⁵ It was also understood that in order to protect India, Britain needed to have good relations with Russia. Sir Charles Hardinge felt that “our whole future in Asia is bound up with the possibility of maintaining the best and most friendly relations with Russia.”⁴⁶ Sir Arthur Nicolson also valued good Anglo-Russian relations as a means of protecting Britain’s position in Asia.⁴⁷

Thus many high-ranking policymakers supported rapprochement with Russia as a means of ensuring British security in India. They were not starry-eyed Russophiles who believed that an agreement would solve all of Britain’s problems with Asia, and who would accept any Russian actions in order to maintain an agreement. They were fully aware of the limits of British influence and power and sought to work within those boundaries. The main difference between Curzon and many of his peers was that he was generally unwilling or unable to accept the fact that Britain had limited resources to devote to Russia and India. Thus they shared his perception of India’s importance to

⁴⁴ Bernard Porter, “The Edwardians and Their Empire,” *Edwardian England*, ed. Donald Read (London: Croom Helm, 1982), pp. 128-144.

⁴⁵ Sir Charles Hardinge, memorandum, April 1909, BD, V, appendix III, pp. 823-826.

⁴⁶ Hardinge to Nicolson, 29 March 1909, quoted in Zara Steiner, “The Foreign Office under Sir Edward Grey,” *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey*, ed. F.H. Hinsley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 28.

⁴⁷ Nicolson thought that the Anglo-Russian Entente would “keep Russia at a distance from our land frontiers, and bind her to pacific engagements. This is important, as on land she might conceivably be stronger than we are and cause us serious embarrassments. But as regards the Gulf it seems to me that our position is thoroughly assured so long as we retain our sea supremacy: and if we lose our sea supremacy we lose our Empire.” (Nicolson to Hardinge, 19 June 1908, quoted in Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar*, p. 27.)

Britain's international status, but differed with him as to the best means of protecting the jewel of the empire's crown.

Although scepticism about Russian characteristics and diplomacy was more prevalent amongst the British foreign policymaking elite, Russophile tendencies were also well represented. One of the foremost Russophiles, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, was considered to be an expert on Russian issues. Throughout his career, Wallace wrote monographs and articles for *The Times* and for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* on Russian issues. He was also private secretary to two viceroys of India from 1884 to 1889, foreign editor of *The Times* during the 1890s, and an unofficial adviser to Sir Arthur Nicolson for the negotiation of the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907.⁴⁸

Yet, surprisingly given their antithetic reputations, the views of Curzon and Wallace had significant similarities. Like Curzon, Wallace believed that Russian expansion into Central Asia and its consequent threat to India was a serious matter, but that official Russia had never seriously contemplated the conquest of India. He was also aware that Russia could use the threat of invading India as a diplomatic counter or as a military diversion, and was confident that Britain was well able to defend its interests. Nevertheless, Wallace felt that Britain "should keep a watchful eye on her irrepressible tendency to expand, and that we should take timely precautions against any unprovoked aggression, however justifiable it may seem to her from the point of view of her own

⁴⁸ Douglas G. Morren, "Donald Mackenzie Wallace and British Russophilism, 1870-1919," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 9, no. 2 (1967): 170-183.

national interests.”⁴⁹ Yet Curzon, who argued essentially the same points, was labelled a Russophobe.

Perhaps Curzon and Wallace’s reputations lie more in their emphasis than in real differences. Whereas Curzon focused on the threat to India and the impetuosity of Russian frontier officials, Wallace emphasised the lack of official Russian plans to conquer India. Moreover, while Curzon used these facts to try and convince Britain to take a stand and to illustrate British strength, Wallace used them to assure Russophobes that there was no cause for alarm. In 1914, for example, Wallace suggested that Britain and Russia’s imperial expansion had similar methods and results, implying that both were benign. Curzon would never have agreed with such an interpretation of Russia’s aims. Curzon and Wallace, however, did differ in one important respect: the possibility of good Anglo-Russian relations. For many years Curzon believed that it was a fallacy to believe that Britain could come to an agreement with Russia. Wallace, on the other hand, believed in the possibility of improved relations between the two rivals. He wanted to “cultivate friendly relations with our great rival, and ... [for Britain to] learn to appreciate the many good qualities of her people.”⁵⁰ Thus although Wallace and Curzon are often touted as opposites, the renowned Russophile and infamous Russophobe, the similarity of their ideas illustrates that such labels may be misleading and simplify their viewpoints.

The English elite, therefore, had similar sentiments regarding Russian methods and veracity, but differed on what policy approach should be adopted. They disagreed on

⁴⁹ Donald Mackenzie Wallace, *Russia*, 2 vols., rev. and enl. (London: Cassell & Co., 1905), II, p. 439.

⁵⁰ Wallace, II, p. 439.

how to work with the bear and whether rapprochement was possible. For men such as Curzon, Bertie and Spring Rice, efforts to come to an understanding were doomed to failure since Britain and Russia had conflicting interests and since Russia could not be trusted to observe any undertaking that she made. Nicolson and Wallace, on the other hand, thought that an understanding with Russia was essential and that Russia could be trusted.⁵¹

Thus despite Curzon's reputation as an archimperialist and Russophobe, his sentiments were not unrepresentative of his class. Curzon agreed with the view that Russia could threaten the British Empire and that the Russian government was arbitrary and brutal. Yet he does not appear to have been very interested in Russian revolutionary creeds. If Curzon had been a true Russophobe, would he not have expounded upon all of Russia's threats? Curzon was very vocal and not at all demure about sharing his views. He had a well-deserved reputation for talking incessantly and for having pronounced views on most subjects.⁵² Yet his numerous speeches, articles, and volumes dealing with Russia do not really discuss this issue.⁵³ Thus to ascribe the simple Russophobia of the British public to Curzon would be misleading. His ideas were much more complicated. Moreover, the public tended to shape their views according to what they read in newspapers and in fiction and what they were taught in school. Curzon, however, went

⁵¹ Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar*, p. 48.

⁵² Lord Birkenhead provided a very illustrative description of Curzon's oratory style: "His speeches are well-conceived, well-argued, and well delivered. The manner is perhaps a little pontifical, almost pedagogic, so that the less reverent among the young peers commonly refer to him as 'The All-Highest'; and, indeed, in great controversies he does speak a little with the air of Zeus, the Cloud-Compeller." Earl of Birkenhead, *Contemporary Personalities* (London: Cassell & Co., [1924]; reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1969), p. 88 (page citation is to the reprint edition).

out and researched the subject by travelling to the affected areas to form or to reinforce his own opinions. Although other members of the elite travelled to Asia, albeit primarily to perform diplomatic services, few of them made the concerted effort to travel to remote areas, such as the Pamirs and Afghanistan, that Curzon did. Curzon, therefore, was not simply a recipient of accepted convention, but also, and more importantly, a shaper of public opinion about Russia and India.

⁵³ See Chapter 3, pp. 5-8.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM ETON TO THE WAR CABINET: THE EVOLUTION OF AN IMPERIALIST

Curzon's strong feelings about India and Russia were longstanding and consistent. His lifelong passion for Asia originated in 1877 when Sir James Stephen gave a lecture to the Literary Society at Eton. Stephen's lecture described how Britain held an empire in Asia which was "more populous, more amazing, and more beneficent than that of Rome."¹ The adolescent George Curzon enthusiastically accepted Stephen's view of Britain's imperial mission, and came to believe that its rule of India was the greatest thing that his countrymen had achieved. As an offshoot to this growing fascination with empire, Curzon became interested in the Russian threat to India. A meeting of the Rev. Wolley Dod's House Debating Society at Eton on 7 May 1877 illustrates this youthful interest. The debating society questioned whether Britain was "justified in regarding with equanimity the advance of Russia towards our Indian frontier." Curzon, the president of the society and the chair of the meeting, commented that although "the policy of Russia was a most ambitious and aggressive one, . . . he did not imagine for a moment that the Russians would actually invade India, and were they to do so, we need have no fear for the result." Nevertheless, if a question of diplomacy arose in Europe in which the two powers had conflicting views, Russia might "send out an army to watch our Indian

¹ George N. Curzon, speech, 28 October 1898, *Speeches by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1898-1901* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1901), p. 4. Hereafter cited as *Indian Speeches*.

frontier. In such a case as this England's right hand would obviously be tied back." In this address, Curzon also discussed the importance of Persia and Afghanistan and the recent advance of Russia on Khiva, "but want of space forbids him to commit it to writing."² This 1877 minute essentially summarises Curzon's position on Russia and India which persisted for the next thirty years. Thus Curzon's imperial sentiments, and its Russian offshoot may be traced back to his adolescence.

At Oxford, Curzon's views about and interest in the empire and in Russia's threat to India remained consistent with those formed at Eton. He believed that "there has never been anything so great in the world's history as the British Empire, so great as an instrument for the good of humanity. We must devote all our energies and our lives to maintaining it."³ Curzon could not understand how anyone who attended Oxford could not be an imperialist, and strongly believed that he had a duty to serve the empire.⁴ He later articulated his sentiments about Oxford and the empire in a speech to the delegates of the Imperial Press Conference in 1909.⁵ He said that Oxford had played a great role in empire building and consolidation by training future governors, administrators, judges,

² Rev. W. Dod's House Debating Society, journal book, 7 May 1877, quoted in Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon: Being the Authorized Biography of George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.*, 3 vols. (London: Ernest Benn, 1928), I, p. 144.

³ Sir James Rennell Rodd, *Social and Diplomatic Memories*, vol. 3, 1902-1919 (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1925), p. 393.

⁴ Curzon believed that "at a place and amid institutions whose roots are buried in the past, and whose history is intertwined with that of the nation, whose sons have carried its name to the corners of the World and stamped their own on the fabric of imperial grandeur, it would, indeed, be strange were there found any acquiescence in the sordid doctrines of self-effacement, in a policy of national or territorial disintegration, in the new-found obligation to shirk admitted duties, or in the application of the system of a parochial vestry to the polity of a colossal empire." (Curzon, "The Conservatism of young Oxford," *National Review* 3, no. 16 [June 1884]: 515-527.)

⁵ Curzon was elected Chancellor of Oxford University in March 1907.

teachers, preachers, and lawyers.⁶ During his years as a student at Oxford, Curzon took an active interest in imperial affairs. For example, his speeches at the Oxford Union included defences of the Conservative government's policy on Afghanistan.⁷ He also bet in the All Souls' Betting Book⁸ on whether England would be, or would have been, at war with Russia within a year of May 1885.⁹ Thus even before embarking on his political career, Curzon's abiding interest in and views on the empire and Russia had formed.

Like most people, Curzon's views of the world were shaped during his late teens and early twenties, the years he spent at Eton and Oxford. Given Britain's fixation on the Eastern Question throughout the mid to late nineteenth century, it is not surprising that Curzon was so interested in this subject. The Eastern Question in the latter half of the nineteenth century had various aspects, many of which stemmed from the ramifications of the Crimean War. After its defeat, Russia turned to the East, searching for compensation and a desire to protect its empire's Asian holdings against attack by the Great Powers that had allied themselves against Russia during the war. Russia began to expand in the Caucasus, along the military border in Central Asia between the Aral Sea and the "New

⁶ Curzon, *Subjects of the Day: Being a Selection of Speeches and Writings*, ed. Desmond M. Chapmam-Huston (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1915), p. 10.

⁷ David Gilmour, *Curzon* (London: John Murray Publishers, 1994), pp. 28-29; Ronaldshay, I, p. 39.

In September 1878, the Indian Viceroy, Lord Lytton, tried to force an entry into Afghanistan, fearing the Russia was intriguing at Kabul. To avenge this insult and to reassert British prestige, Disraeli declared war in November 1878. The Afghans were defeated, and in July 1879, a British envoy was installed at Kabul and a new Amir was persuaded to accept British control of his foreign policy. That September, the envoy was murdered by mutinous Afghan soldiers, and the British army again resorted to arms. In 1880, a new Liberal government came to power, ended the war and Britain took control over Afghanistan's foreign relations, effectively making Afghanistan a British protectorate.

⁸ Curzon was elected a Fellow of All Souls College in 1883.

⁹ Kenneth Rose, *Superior Person: A Portrait of Curzon and his Circle in late Victorian England* (New York: Weybright & Talley, 1969), p. 109.

Siberian Line," and in the Far East to the Pacific coast. As the khanates and emirates of Turkestan and the Transcaspian desert were brought under Russian suzerainty, Anglo-Russian animosity became a constant factor in world politics. The invasion of Central Asia was politically and militarily connected to this antagonism, and was based on the question of the future of the Straits. In rivalling Britain's international position, Russia hoped to satisfy its thirst for prestige and to prove its continuing status as a world power. This craving for equal status could best be satisfied in Central Asia where Britain could penetrate only with difficulty and Russia was essentially invulnerable.¹⁰ Given the British public's growing interest in Asia and Russian intentions in the region following events such as the Balkan crisis which culminated with the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the Afghan wars of 1878-1880, and the Penjdeh crisis of 1885, it is not surprising that Curzon became intensely interested in the subject. He came to believe that this aspect of foreign affairs was so important that a man who did not know the Near East and Asia was unfit for statesmanship.¹¹

Curzon was a man of supreme ambition. After leaving Balliol College in 1882, Curzon travelled in the Near East in 1882-1883, was elected a fellow of All Souls College in 1883, and unsuccessfully ran for a seat in the House of Commons as a Conservative candidate for South Derbyshire in 1885. The next year, at the age of twenty-seven, he entered the House of Commons as Conservative member for Southport. In 1887, with the

¹⁰ Dietrich Geyer, *Russian Imperialism: The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1860-1914*, trans. Bruce Little (Leamington Spa, UK: Berg Publishers, 1987), pp. 64-100.

¹¹ David Dilks, *Curzon in India* 2 vols. (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co, 1969-1970), I. p 28.

blessing of Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, Curzon neglected his parliamentary duties and undertook a journey around the world.

Curzon had decided to capitalise on his interest in imperial issues to become the most knowledgeable politician of the age on India and its surrounding regions. Between 1887 and 1895, therefore, he travelled extensively in the East to report on those areas where he believed the future of the British Empire would be decided.¹² For example, the principal aims of his voyage to Central Asia in the autumn of 1888 were to visit the Central Asian khanates, to observe Russia's strength in the area, and to assess the threat that Russian expansion posed to Britain's position in India. His book on this journey, *Russia in Central Asia*, focused upon "the achievements, policy, and objects of Russia, as well as upon the becoming attitude and consequent responsibilities of England."¹³

Russia in Central Asia was one of a series of works that Curzon undertook to write as a means of achieving his objective of becoming an expert on Asia. He decided that each volume would survey a region where British interests might be threatened, particularly by the Russian Empire, and would cover various geographical, historical, ethnological, and political aspects of that territory. These areas included Central Asia, Persia, China, Japan and Korea, Indo-China, the Indian Frontier, and Afghanistan. However, only the volumes on the first three regions were published. Although the works on Indochina and Afghanistan were never completed, fragments of each were later

¹² Gilmour, p. 65.

¹³ Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Question* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1889; reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967), p. xi (page citations are to the reprint edition).

included in collections of essays on his travels.¹⁴ His volume on the Indian Frontier was ready to be published when Curzon was appointed Viceroy to India in 1898. However, in deference to Lord Salisbury's belief that its publication would jeopardise the Viceroy's freedom of action, the book was never published. This suppression was not the only time that Curzon subordinated his written opinions to his political ambitions. In 1892, Salisbury directed Curzon, his new Under-Secretary at the India Office, to edit criticisms of the Persian Shah in *Persia and the Persian Question* because he felt that the reproaches would upset the Shah. Salisbury did, however, leave Curzon's criticisms of Russian designs in Asia uncensored.

In addition to the publication of his lengthy volumes, Curzon gave lectures, published articles, and wrote letters to newspapers such as *The Times* on all issues affecting Britain's position in Asia. His primary theme was the defence of the empire, especially against the Russian menace to India from the north-west. In his published works, Curzon would thoroughly analyse and evaluate possible avenues of approach to India by which a Russian army might advance: through Kashmir on the north; through Afghanistan on the north-west or west; and through Persia. He also emphasised that the best means of discouraging Russia from taking action would be to improve the strength of Britain's frontier. Ultimately, Curzon fulfilled his dream and became one of the leading experts on Asian affairs. In the years after his expeditions, he worked hard to sustain his

¹⁴ Curzon, *Tales of Travel* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923; reprint, Century Hutchinson, 1988).

reputation as an Asian expert, maintaining an enormous correspondence with consuls and other British officials stationed in the countries he had visited.¹⁵

During his years of travel, Curzon's views on India's security and Russia's intentions remained substantially the same as those that he had expressed at Eton. He did, however, adapt his beliefs to allow for the changing strategic aspects of Central Asia, such as the completion of the Transcaspian Railway in 1888. He believed that the railway was "the mark of a definite policy, imperial in its quality and dimensions, . . . a menace to England and a warning to Asia." He understood that railways would provide Russia with the power of swift concentration and movement in Asia, connecting the region to the arsenals of European Russia. Despite his broadening perception of Russian capabilities in Asia, Curzon's convictions about India and the Russian threat remained essentially the same as those that he expressed at Eton and at Oxford. He still believed that Russia could not successfully conquer India because the "key to India is the spirit and determination of the British people."¹⁶

By the 1890s, Curzon's vocalism about his Indian and Russian thoughts led to his growing reputation as a Russophobe. Not surprisingly, St. Petersburg accepted neither *Russia in Central Asia* nor *Persia and the Persian Question* as completely objective appraisals of Russian foreign policy. Thus when Curzon asked to be attached to a Government of India Mission to Kabul for talks on the demarcation of the frontier with Afghanistan in the autumn of 1893, the Secretary of State for India, Henry Fowler, denied

¹⁵ Rose, pp. 237-241, 203-204; Dilks, I, pp. 34-35; Gilmour, pp. 83-93.

¹⁶ Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 44, 294, 121.

his request.¹⁷ British officials did not want to assist or to encourage George Curzon to visit to the sensitive areas of the Pamirs and Afghanistan because they did not want to induce Russia into sponsoring similar expeditions. Curzon, however, felt that his programme of Asian travel would be incomplete without a visit to these regions, which were central to the question of Russian designs for India. For example, he wanted to visit Chitral in the Pamirs because of "its great importance, owing to its geographical position, in the scheme of frontier defence of the Indian Empire." He was convinced that "this small chink in the mountain palisade" needed to be closed against Russia.¹⁸ Eventually, the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, withdrew his objection to Curzon's excursions as long as he modified his itinerary to avoid Victoria Lake and the Great Pamir. Elgin also extracted a promise from Curzon that he would try not to inflame political or diplomatic passions in the letters and articles which he planned to write for *The Times*. Curzon proceeded to Chitral as a private citizen, becoming the first Englishman not on official duty to visit the area. He also visited Abdur Rahman, the Amir of Afghanistan, with whom he discussed Russian aggression in Asia. Curzon's dogged persistence in his efforts to achieve his travelling objectives illustrates his absorbed interest in every aspect of Indian defence and his desire to achieve knowledge through firsthand experience.¹⁹

His Asiatic travels, however, ended in 1895 with his marriage to Mary Leiter and with his increased political responsibilities. When Lord Salisbury's Conservatives won

¹⁷ Elgin to Fowler, 17 July 1894, quoted in Rose, p. 253.

¹⁸ Curzon, *Leaves from a Viceroy's Notebook and Other Papers* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1926), p. 93.

¹⁹ Rose, pp. 253-271.

the general election of July 1895, Curzon was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and became a member of the Privy Council. In the former position, Curzon was essentially Salisbury's House of Commons mouthpiece on foreign affairs; he saw the important telegrams and despatches, but he was generally not asked to comment on or to direct foreign policy. Salisbury, who was both Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, considered himself to be a Russian expert, and generally brushed aside his Under-Secretary's opinions on the subject. For example, when Salisbury revived the possibility of an agreement with Russia in 1897, Curzon questioned the feasibility of the idea and whether, if by some miracle it did succeed, Russia would observe its terms. Disregarding Curzon's vocal reservations, Salisbury continued to make overtures to the Russians.

Curzon and Salisbury's conflicting positions towards Russia was based upon their differing approaches to diplomacy. Although both men regarded the defence of the empire as the most important task facing British statesmen, Curzon was willing to adopt a more belligerent brand of diplomacy to settle international disputes. Salisbury, however, understood that foreign affairs had to reflect the realities of power and of diplomatic circumstances. He realised that Britain's international position in the late 1890s was weakening due to the overseas expansion of other powers and due to its reluctance to increase expenditures to support adventurous foreign policy initiatives. Consequently, Salisbury wanted to work within the existing state system to protect British interests, and realised that Britain and Russia needed to come to terms diplomatically.

Although Curzon came to resent his secondary role in the Foreign Ministry, he obediently and enthusiastically expounded the Prime Minister's policy to the House of Commons, even if he disagreed with it.²⁰ Privately, however, Curzon expressed his dissatisfaction with official policy. In a personal letter to Lord Selborne, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, he commented: "I can't tell you how anxious and even how miserable I am. And next week I have got to be defending all this [Britain's policy towards French aggression in West Africa] without the slightest idea what the Cabinet really think or by what steps they arrive at their mysterious conclusions."²¹

Despite his circumscribed role as Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Curzon was able to influence foreign policy on at least two occasions. Because both these events involved Russia and Asia, Curzon was able to help shape policy in the area that most interested him. Curzon's first opportunity to shape policy concerned Britain's stance on the issue of Chitral in 1895.²² Prior to the election, he had written numerous letters to *The Times* between March and June 1895 in which he publicly scolded military and civil opinions that favoured the abandonment of Chitral.²³ These articles echoed his principal theme of the need to retain, to protect, and to strengthen a chain of outposts along India's

²⁰ Dilks, p. 55; J.A.S Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: The Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Athlone Press, 1964), pp. 16-20; Ronaldshay, I, pp. 251-252; Rose, pp. 294; 309-310; 316; Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia, 1894-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 8-9.

²¹ Curzon to Selborne, 3 February 1898, quoted in Rose, p. 310.

²² In 1898, the pro-British ruler of Chitral, the Mehtar, was murdered. A small British force from Gligit then deposed his assassin, and then a large army of Pathans and Chitralis encircled that force. The arrival of a British relief column finally ended the siege. After all of these events, Rosebery's Government decided to withdraw from the region. (Gilmour, p. 128)

²³ See Curzon, *The Times*, 28 March 1895, 1 April 1895, and 6 April 1895.

frontier. When the Conservatives came to power in the summer of 1895, therefore, Salisbury invited his new Under-Secretary to prepare a Cabinet minute on the question of the Indian frontier. In this document, Curzon argued that the proper Indian frontier was the Hindu Kush and that no hostile influence must be allowed to pass it. He called for the maintenance of a British Political Officer and a military escort at or near Chitral. He felt that this outlay would be “cheap insurance against the future troubles and expenditure that present evacuation will some day involve.”²⁴ Salisbury and the Cabinet accepted Curzon’s argument, and a Political Officer was stationed at Chitral. Curzon’s zealous opposition to the evacuation of Chitral both in the press and in his Cabinet minute cemented his public reputation as a Russophobe.²⁵

Curzon also persuaded the Cabinet to adopt his policy to counter a Russian move in the Far East. In November 1897, Germany seized the port of Kiaochow, and soon after, a Russian naval squadron arrived in Port Arthur ostensibly to spend the winter. On 29 December 1897, Curzon warned Salisbury that Russian and German domination of the Gulf of Pechili, due to its relative proximity to Beijing, would harm British interests in China. Port Arthur was considered to be the “key” to Beijing, and it was commonly believed that whoever controlled the region could become the master of China. Curzon recommended that the China squadron be sent to Wei-hai-wei, the third most important naval port in the north, to protect British interests. He felt that this action would serve as a warning to Russia that Britain would not acquiesce to any aggressive Russian actions

²⁴ Curzon, *Leaves from a Viceroy's Notebook*, p. 143.

²⁵ Rose, p. 266; Dilks, I, p. 58-59; Gilmour, pp. 199-200.

and would also provide a base for any possible future operations. Salisbury refused to adopt Curzon's recommendation because he was more concerned about a possible Anglo-French clash in Egypt, and he realised that Britain could not fight France and Russia simultaneously. Curzon, however, persisted. He prepared a memorandum on the advantages of taking the lease of Wei-hai-wei, and in March 1898, he was permitted to address the Cabinet, primarily because Salisbury was ill and Balfour was temporarily heading the government. Curzon's presence and arguments proved convincing, prompting the Cabinet to adopt his policy. Salisbury also finally granted his approval. The lease of Wei-hai-wei was a triumph for Curzon; he designed a policy and persistently pursued it until he had convinced a hostile Cabinet to adopt it.²⁶

Despite his exposure to the Prime Minister's more pragmatic approach to Russian relations, Curzon's years under Salisbury did not change his ideas regarding Russian aggression and expansion. He had little opportunity to implement his views, and when a chance to shape policy did surface, his opinions were further reinforced. For example, his critics predicted that Curzon's Chitrali policy would lead to huge expenses, large garrisons, and revolt. The feared pillage in the area did not materialise, and the region remained calm in the frontier risings of 1897. In *Leaves from a Viceroy's Notebook*, Curzon remarked that the story of Chitral in 1895 was a "tale from which I may extract a certain amount of modest satisfaction since I staked much upon a solution which was denounced and derided by the Pacifist school at the time, but which has since been

²⁶ Gilmour, pp. 130-131; Rose, p. 316; Dilks, I, pp. 57-58; Ronaldshay, I, pp. 270-290.

attended with an unbroken success.”²⁷ Moreover, on the few occasions that Curzon was able to influence policy, such as the policies he advocated with regard to Chitral and Weihai-wei, he was more concerned with protecting British interests than with striking a blow at Russia. Thus Curzon’s experience as Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office only served to reinforce his perception of the unqualified validity of his beliefs. This growing egotism became even more explicit in his next political position: the Viceroy of India. On 11 August 1898, Curzon was appointed Viceroy of India. He had dreamed of attaining this position ever since his adolescence, and had written to Lord Salisbury in 1897 and again 1898 to request the post. Curzon’s appointment, however, was not met with unanimous approval. Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, was alarmed at the idea of Curzon as Viceroy because he had been misinformed that Curzon was “a regular Jingo, with Russia on the brain,” and he feared that the appointment would lead to trouble with India’s neighbours. Hamilton felt that “our dangers in India are internal rather than external, and Curzon’s mind will be concentrated on foreign affairs, where if he makes a mistake he will aggravate domestic as well as external complications.”²⁸ Hamilton was not the only one to have qualms about the new Viceroy. On hearing of Curzon’s appointment, Liberal politician Sir William Harcourt jokingly begged Curzon as “a personal favour” not to make war on Russia during his lifetime.²⁹

²⁷ Curzon, *Leaves from a Viceroy’s Notebook*, p. 140.

²⁸ Hamilton to Salisbury, 4 June 1898, quoted in Dilks, I, pp. 64-65.

²⁹ Harcourt to Curzon, 13 August 1898, quoted in Gilmour, pp. 198-199. Also see Ronaldshay, I, p. 296

Hamilton's reservations and Harcourt's remarks reveal that Curzon was a well-known advocate of a "forward" policy in Asia, which many feared would lead to a military confrontation with Russia, and that his reputation as a Russophobe was firmly established.

Part of the reason for the mixed reaction to the news of Curzon's appointment may be attributed to the fact that by the late 1890s the British foreign policymaking elite was beginning to re-evaluate Britain's traditional policies, and Curzon's ideas about Russia and Asia were no longer as prevalent. The Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894, which united Britain's two most formidable adversaries, and the sudden enthusiasm by all of the Great Powers for imperial and naval expansion left Britain in a much more vulnerable position. For example, Lord Selborne declared that he would "much rather not quarrel with [Russia] if I could honourably or wisely avoid it" because "there is speaking generally and roughly no part of her territory where we can hit her."³⁰ This evaluation of Britain and Russia's relative position was becoming accepted dogma. Salisbury and various Liberal Imperialists wanted to seek agreements with the powers that seemed most likely to threaten British interests: i.e., with France in Africa and with Russia in Asia. Liberal Unionists and a growing number of Conservatives also felt that Britain needed to reconsider its traditional policy of isolation from the European power blocs.³¹

³⁰ Selborne to Curzon, 19 April 1901, quoted in George Monger, *The End of Isolation: British Foreign Policy, 1900-1907* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963), p. 7.

³¹ Paul Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865-1980* (London: Fontana Press, 1985), pp. 110-111.

Curzon's ideas, however, had not evolved in the same manner. He continued to advocate a forward policy. In a May 1899 letter to Hamilton, Curzon stated that although his chapter in *Russia and Central Asia* on Anglo-Russian relations and their future was eleven years old, "I do not think that there is a statement of opinion in it that I would now withdraw, or a prediction that has so far been falsified."³² Thus by the late 1890s, Curzon's rigid beliefs were becoming out of step with those of his peers. This growing chasm caused many people to view the new Viceroy with apprehension.

Curzon's reputation as the man who would take Britain to war with Russia, although understandable given his outspoken support on the need to defend India, simplified and exaggerated the Viceroy's sentiments. While he advocated a forward policy, he did not want to extend the empire's boundaries and responsibilities. He succinctly summarised his "forward" frontier policy in a 1903 letter to Hamilton:

If we are not to defend our own frontier, to ward off gratuitous menace, to maintain our influence in regions where no hostile influence has yet appeared, until the national honour has been grossly affronted, the practical result will be that you will not be able to take a step upon your frontiers until they have actually been crossed by the forces of the enemy.³³

Thus to protect the existing empire in Asia, Curzon advocated strengthening Britain's political position in all the regions adjoining India, not expanding its boundaries. Moreover, he was content to be surrounded by buffer states provided they remained genuinely independent of other European powers. The British government shared this

³² Curzon to Hamilton, 3 May 1899, Lord George Hamilton Collection, India Office Library (microfilm, University of British Columbia Library).

³³ Curzon to Hamilton, 12 March 1903, Hamilton Collection.

desire for independent neighbours. For example, Godley, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the India Office, remarked, "We don't want [Kuwait], but we don't want anyone else to have it."³⁴

Curzon was also dissatisfied with Britain's existing policy. He felt that the British Foreign Office lived "from hand to mouth" and lacked any settled principles of policy in relation to any part of the world."³⁵ In his view, "If [a forward policy] is called Jingoism, I can only conclude that people's ideas have been changed by the [Boer] war. . . . Forward views have, it seems to me, become a synonym for trying to look ahead; and there is not much place for that in our system."³⁶ Thus Curzon and the British government both wanted to protect British interests and the independence of surrounding states. The Viceroy, however, wanted a much firmer approach to achieve that objective. In the words of Lord Ronaldshay, "what Lord Curzon could not obtain by negotiation, he was prepared to wrest, or to attempt to wrest, by force; what the Government at home could not secure by diplomacy they were usually ready to forego."³⁷

Whereas the Cabinet was pessimistic about Britain's ability to consolidate its power in Asia, Curzon advocated a forward policy in Tibet, Persia, and Afghanistan. He wanted to pressure the British government into framing a firm and consistent policy in Asia. He decided to use Persia as his prototype because he regarded the Persian Gulf as the most vital region where Britain's ascendancy was being challenged. Curzon believed

³⁴ Godley to Curzon, 6 January 1899, quoted in Gilmour, pp. 199-200.

³⁵ Curzon to Hamilton, private, 6 September 1899, Hamilton Collection.

³⁶ Curzon to Brodrick, 29 August 1900, quoted in Dilks, I, p. 90.

³⁷ Ronaldshay, II, p. 206.

that France, Germany, and Russia were engaged in a de facto conspiracy to infringe upon Britain's dominant position: France wanted a station in Muscat; the Germans desired a base in Kuwait; and Russia threatened Persia. Because of his primary interest in and knowledge of the latter, he decided to focus on Russia's menace to Persia. He objected to the perception that Russia's expansion to the northern part of the Persian Gulf was inevitable and should not be opposed. He adamantly declared: "I will no more admit that an irresistible destiny is going to plant Russia in the Persian Gulf than at Kabul or Constantinople. South of a certain line in Asia her future is much more what we choose to make it than what she can make it herself."³⁸

Curzon felt so strongly about this issue that he sent a despatch to London in September 1899 that analysed Britain's position in Persia. He argued that if Russia either appeared in Eastern or Southern Persia or reached the Gulf, Indian defence would become more costly and would have to be modified. He maintained that Britain should endeavour to prevent these developments from occurring and that to achieve this objective Britain needed to form a coherent and active policy. He felt that Britain should try and reach some sort of an agreement with Russia regarding Persia. In addition to these efforts, however, Britain needed to decide upon which steps should be taken to safeguard British and Indian interests in the so-called British sphere in Persia. For Curzon, simply trusting in Russian assurances about Persia's integrity and independence was not enough to safeguard either Persia itself or British interests in the region. He also believed that Anglo-Russian co-operation to reform Persia was impractical because Russia desired

³⁸ Curzon to Godley, 12 April 1899, quoted in Ronaldshay, II, p. 99.

Persia's decay and thus would not want it to revivify. Although he felt that dividing Persia into spheres of influence would be a more realistic approach to solve this problem, he did not think that such an agreement would end Russian designs in Southern Persia or in the Persian Gulf. He also feared that because the Persian capital, Teheran, would lie in the northern or Russian sphere, "Russian influence there, already predominant, could hardly fail to become supreme."³⁹ In Curzon's note to Hamilton, he was not so much advocating belligerence as desiring a consistent and dynamic policy which would protect British interests.

Although the premise of Curzon's despatch was initially rejected,⁴⁰ it was eventually accepted. In late 1901, Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, wrote a despatch that clearly stated the Government's position towards Persia because he realised that what Curzon was calling for essentially involved the collation of miscellaneous statements which were scattered throughout various despatches into one coherent policy.⁴¹ Lansdowne's despatch was sent in January 1902. It accepted Russia's "superior interest" in the north, but maintained that Persia must understand that Britain would not allow Russia to penetrate into the south. It also stated that a military or naval station in

³⁹ Curzon to Hamilton, 21 September 1899, *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, ed. G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley (London: HMSO, 1929), IV, no. 319. Hereafter cited as BD.

⁴⁰ Curzon's Persian despatch arrived in London only weeks after the Boer War broke out. When Hamilton finally responded to it in July 1900, he said that it was futile for Britain to commit itself to Persian independence because Russia could easily annex northern Persia and that Britain could not prevent other countries from establishing their influence in the Persian Gulf. (Hamilton to Curzon, 6 July 1900, BD, IV, no. 320.)

⁴¹ Lansdowne commented that Curzon's complaints "led me to look up the papers, and I found that upon one occasion or another you had virtually said almost everything which according to Curzon it was necessary that H.M. Government should say – but these important statements are hidden away in various despatches, and I see a good deal of advantage in bringing them together." (Lansdowne to Salisbury, 22 October 1901, quoted in Grenville, p. 425.)

the Persian Gulf would be regarded as a threat to India and would not be tolerated.⁴² In other words, it clearly stated how far Russia could go without risking war. Lansdowne's despatch was a triumph for Curzon because it sanctioned the firm policy that he been pressing Hamilton, Salisbury, and Lansdowne to adopt and because its wording virtually copied the letter that Curzon had written to Hamilton. Thus Curzon's recommendations for Persia became British policy, and his objectives were achieved without any real threat of war.⁴³

Curzon's efforts to implement a more active policy towards Afghanistan and Tibet, however, were much less successful. Beginning in 1901, he wanted to negotiate a new agreement with Afghanistan because he did not feel that the existing one adequately dealt with the Russian menace to Central Asia. He wanted to reach a clear settlement that would commit the Amir Habibullah to the British and would allow troops into Afghanistan in the event of a Russian invasion. The British government, however, was unwilling to back this offshoot of Curzon's forward policy, and objected to anything more ambitious than renewing the agreement that had been made with Habibullah's predecessor, Abdur Rahman.⁴⁴ The Viceroy was not surprised at the Cabinet's decision: "You may imagine also what are my sentiments about the Afghan surrender, but I have known all along that with a moribund Government, with fear of Russia on the brain, there would be no other ending."⁴⁵

⁴² Lansdowne to Hardinge, 6 January 1902, BD, IV, no. 321(a).

⁴³ Gilmour, pp. 201-202.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 286-287; Rose, 358-359.

⁴⁵ Curzon to Brodrick, 2 March 1905, quoted in Rose, p. 359.

Yet it was Tibet, not the disputes over Persia and Afghanistan, which was the true harbinger of the dissension between Curzon and the British Cabinet. Tibet was the one corner of Asia in which Britain held an overwhelming political and strategical advantage over Russia. Whereas India had a long coterminous border with Tibet, Russian and Tibetan territory did not touch at any point. Curzon wanted to flaunt British authority in the region to serve as a warning to Russia and to Asian potentates. The Cabinet, however, wanted to avoid complications on or beyond the frontier. Thus London opposed the Viceroy's desire for a forward frontier policy. This disagreement over Tibet illustrated Curzon's growing alienation from British diplomatic thought.

In late 1902, Lord Curzon became convinced that a secret understanding, perhaps even a secret treaty, existed between Russia, China and Tibet, and he felt that it was his "duty to frustrate this little game while there is yet time."⁴⁶ He believed that Tibet was a source of Russian influence and mischief on India's borders. Whitehall, on the other hand, trusted the assurances of Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador to Britain, that Russia was not penetrating Tibet. Benckendorff assured Lansdowne that Russia had not made an agreement with Tibet and that Russia did not have any intention of sending either a mission or an agent to Lhasa. Nevertheless, the Ambassador warned that if the status quo in Tibet were ever seriously threatened, Russia would be forced to take action elsewhere in retaliation. Fearing this possibility, the Cabinet promised that Britain only wanted local predominance in the area and became determined to frustrate Curzon's

⁴⁶ Curzon to Hamilton, 13 November 1902, quoted in Ronaldshay, II, p. 273.

efforts to institute a forward policy in Tibet. As Lansdowne wrote Balfour: "George Hamilton has very properly told the other George that he must not send his little army to conquer Lhasa."⁴⁷

This decision did not surprise the Viceroy. After his experience over Afghanistan, he realised that the Cabinet would not support anything in the nature of a forward policy. However, he did feel that the Cabinet was "seriously impregnated . . . both with ignorance and timidity about Asiatic foreign affairs."⁴⁸ He sent Colonel Younghusband to negotiate trade and frontier agreements with Tibet, and the resulting treaty of September 1904 fulfilled Curzon's expectations. The British Government, however, feeling that the agreement's terms were tantamount to annexation and far exceeded Younghusband's instructions, publicly repudiated the British soldier. The Cabinet was victorious in the battle over Britain's Tibetan policy. Thus although Curzon had been able to convince London to adopt an active policy in Persia, he was less successful in his efforts towards Afghanistan and Tibet.⁴⁹

Curzon's experience as Viceroy to India further reinforced his own preconceived ideas about India and Russia. He refused to believe that Britain's relative influence could not support an active forward policy, even though that was clearly the perception of the British Cabinet. He had made his decision and nothing would change his mind. He felt that because he was in India as the man on the spot, his evaluations were indisputably

⁴⁷ Lansdowne to Balfour, 12 April 1903, quoted in Monger, p. 116.

⁴⁸ Curzon to Hamilton, 8 January 1903, quoted in Ronaldshay, II, p. 273.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, II, pp. 272-280, 287-288; Rose, pp. 357-358; Monger, pp. 115-118, 169-171.

correct. Godley provided an illustrative characterisation of this tendency. In Godley's view, when disputes arose, "the thought that seems to rise in [Curzon's] mind is not 'I will prove to the Cabinet, or to the Council of India, that they are wrong about this and that I am right', but 'I have given my opinion, I have even reiterated it in two or more despatches, I am the Viceroy of India, and, confound you, how do you dare to set your opinion against mine?'"⁵⁰

Curzon's perception of Russia did not differ from that of his colleagues in London; they all agreed that the tsarist empire was a threat. However, the Cabinet was weary of friction in the area and sought a *modus vivendi*. Curzon, on the other hand, felt that intimidation and a policy of prestige was the best means of safeguarding India. Although he concurred that an agreement would in theory curtail Russian ambitions, he felt that Britain's vacillating policies would not induce Russia to honour it. Only an active policy, such as the one he advocated, would achieve this objective. The distance between Curzon and the Cabinet, therefore, was much more than geographical.⁵¹

After his resignation from the viceroyalty in 1905, Curzon remained out of the political spotlight for the next few years.⁵² The Anglo-Russian Entente, however, furnished him with the desire to return to public life. Curzon deplored the agreement, and felt that "it gives up all that we have been fighting for for years, and gives it up with a

⁵⁰ Godley to Ampthill, 17 June 1904, quoted in Rose, p. 359.

⁵¹ Dilks, II, pp. 51-53.

⁵² Curzon resigned after a quarrel with the Commander-In-Chief of the Indian army, Lord Kitchener of Khartoum. Confident that the government would side with him, he offered his resignation unless his views were accepted. To his surprise, his resignation was accepted. He returned to London feeling disillusioned and betrayed by his government and by his friends.

wholesale abandon that is truly cynical in its recklessness. . . . The efforts of a century sacrificed and nothing or next to nothing in return.”⁵³

Realising that the question would be debated in the two Houses of Parliament, Curzon stepped up his efforts to acquire a peerage to enter the House of Lords.⁵⁴ He decided that upon his entrance into the Lords, he would:

on a very early day . . . call attention to the Anglo-Russian Agreement and to make a speech upon it. My views are unfavourable. But I shall express them with reasonable moderation and shall criticise not the policy or the principle involved, but only the nature of the bargain made. I cannot, of course, remain silent having devoted my whole working life to the subject.⁵⁵

True to his words, he dissected the agreement in an hour and a half long address on 6 February 1908, his first major speech in the Lords. In this oration, he analysed the Anglo-Russian Convention’s clauses on Persia, Tibet, and Afghanistan. He felt that the bargain was “doubtful in respect of Afghanistan, bad in respect of Tibet, and worse in respect of Persia.” Britain had made concessions over Afghanistan with nothing in return and had effectively surrendered Tibet by giving up the Chumbi Valley, which acted like a wedge into India. His greatest criticism, however, was directed at the agreement’s Persian aspects. Curzon had always maintained that any increase of Russian influence in

⁵³ Curzon to Lord Percy, 25 September 1907, quoted in Ronaldshay, III, p. 38.

⁵⁴ When Curzon was appointed to the Viceroyalty, he accepted an Irish barony so that he could either return to the House of Commons or stand for election to the House of Lords. When he returned to England in 1905, he accepted the King’s argument that a returning Viceroy should not plunge into the strife of the House of Commons, and he was not offered a peerage. In addition, he was not awarded the earldom which was usually bestowed upon retiring viceroys because the Tories were out of office. Later, health problems prevented him from returning to the Commons. In January 1908, he was elected to the Lords as an Irish peer. (Ronaldshay, III, pp. 40-42.)

⁵⁵ Curzon to Lansdowne, 23 January 1908, quoted in Ronaldshay, III, p. 42.

southern Persia or near the Persian Gulf should not be tolerated. He felt that Britain had been outmanoeuvred because Russia's sphere of influence in Persia included eleven of the twelve largest cities and seven out of eleven recognised trade routes, whereas Britain's sphere only had one city and one trade route. Britain, therefore, lost immediate commercial, political, economic, and telegraphic interests.⁵⁶

In his address, Curzon was more concerned with criticising the details of the agreement than with considering the overall advantages of limiting Russia's territorial expansion and ending the "Great Game." Ironically, however, some of the convention's resolutions reflected Curzon's recommendations in his Persian Despatch of 1899. In this document, he had suggested that "the experiment of an understanding with Russia as to future spheres of interest in that country is worthy of being made, in the interests both of Persia itself, and still more of harmony between the two great Powers, upon whose relations the peace of Asia may be said to depend."⁵⁷ Yet when this suggestion materialised less than ten years later in the Anglo-Russian Entente, Curzon criticised the agreement.

His opposition to the 1907 convention may be partially attributed to his exclusion from negotiations. As a renowned expert on Asian affairs, it must have been galling not to have played any role in the solution to the "Great Game." Curzon also understood the significance of the 1907 agreement:

⁵⁶ Curzon, Speech to the House of Lords, 6 February 1908. *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords, 4th series, vol. CLXXXIII (1908), cols. 999-1024. Hereafter cited as *Debates*.

⁵⁷ Curzon to Hamilton, 21 September 1899, BD, IV, no. 319.

I regard this treaty as the most far-reaching, the most important treaty that has been concluded by the British Government during the past fifty years. It must profoundly affect the future of three Asiatic countries. It must leave an indelible mark, let us hope for good, on the relations between Great Britain and Russia, and it must exercise an almost inexpressible influence upon the future of the British dominion in Asia, a problem which, I think, with the most intense conviction of which I am capable, is the most momentous which can come before the minds of British statesmen.⁵⁸

Given the circumstances of 1907, however, Curzon would not have been allowed to participate in policymaking. The Liberals were in power, and a Liberal government would not have included a Conservative statesman in negotiations, especially one with a reputation for Russophobia. Moreover, even if the Conservatives had been in power and had negotiated the agreement, Curzon would still most likely have been excluded from negotiations given his status as a political outcast after the debacle in India.

Yet Curzon's response to the Anglo-Russian Convention also reveals that his views regarding Russia and Asia had undergone a subtle shift. Prior to 1907 he had been a vocal sceptic on whether an agreement was even possible. In his view, "Russia has no conceivable advantage in making a settlement with us. The latter can only mean a surrender of a portion of her ambitions. I have pointed this out for years; but an Agreement with Russia is one of those sentimental hallucinations that it is impossible to remove from the British mind."⁵⁹ By 1907 Curzon no longer believed that it was impossible to reach a settlement with Russia in Asia. He proclaimed in a 1907 speech at Oxford that "the most urgent work of Foreign Ministers and Ambassadors, the foundation

⁵⁸ Curzon, Speech, 6 February 1908, *Debates*, col. 1023.

⁵⁹ Curzon to Selborne, 21 May 1903, quoted in Ronaldshay, II, p. 312.

or the outcome of every *entente cordiale*, is now the conclusion of Frontier Conventions in which sources of discord are removed by the adjustment of rival interests or ambitions at points where the territorial borders adjoin.”⁶⁰ He reiterated this sentiment during his address to the Lords when he declared that he “approved cordially of the general policy of understandings and alliances which has in recent years been substituted for the attitude of isolation.”⁶¹ By 1908, therefore, Curzon was more accepting of the idea that an understanding with Russia would protect Britain’s interests.

Russia’s defeat in the Russo-Japanese War and the subsequent 1905 revolution served as the catalyst for the shift in Curzon’s views regarding the possibility of rapprochement with Russia. He had always been less fearful about Russia’s strength in Asia than his Cabinet colleagues. As he said to Godley in 1905: “I see no reason why we should tremble like an aspen leaf at every faint growl that emanates from the bear’s den. Sometimes they are only the stertorous breathings of physical repletion and obesity, frequently the premeditated snarl that is merely intended to warn the rival denizens of the forest away.”⁶² He also felt that Russia did not want to annex more territory because the empire was already straining military and financial resources. Instead, the tsarist empire was more interested in maintaining existing authorities and sovereigns, albeit as Russian vassals rather than as independent rulers, than in further subjugation.⁶³ Curzon, therefore, understood the practical limits to Russia’s power in Asia. The revelations of Russian

⁶⁰ Curzon, *Frontiers: The Romanes Lecture, 1907: Delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, November 2, 1907* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 7. Hereafter cited as *Frontiers*.

⁶¹ Curzon, Speech, 6 February 1908, *Debates*, col. 1000.

⁶² Curzon to Godley, 23 March 1905, quoted in Neilson, *Russia and the Last Tsar*, 17.

⁶³ Curzon to Brodrick, 4 September 1904, quoted in Dilks, II, pp. 70-71.

weakness in 1905 would have only further cemented his view that Britain's position in Asia was more secure than many supposed. After all, the events of 1905 succeeded in convincing Tories and Liberals alike that Russia was now impotent in Asia.

Thus Curzon resented the 1907 agreement because it did not capitalise on Russia's weakness. He felt that there should be a price limit for the guarantee of Britain's security in Asia and that the cost of the 1907 convention had been too high. For example, he felt that the neutral zone in Persia was "carved exclusively out of the regions in which British interests have hitherto been and ought to remain supreme."⁶⁴ For Curzon, the agreement neither adequately protected British interests in Asia nor advanced or protected Britain's international prestige. Thus his response to the Anglo-Russian Entente does not support his reputation as a Russophobe, but as an ardent imperialist who was dedicated to protecting Britain's international position and reputation.

Despite his re-emergence as a public figure in 1908, Curzon did not play an active role in British foreign policymaking until late 1916. After the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 he volunteered his services to Lord Asquith, but the Liberal Prime Minister did not take Curzon up on his offer. The former Viceroy found it "rather pitiful ... that at 39 one was thought fit to rule 300 millions of people, and at 55 is not wanted to do anything in an emergency in which the national existence is at stake."⁶⁵ As the hostilities progressed, however, Curzon was gradually offered various government posts

⁶⁴ Curzon, *Frontiers*, p. 31.

⁶⁵ Curzon to Lamington, 22 August 1914, quoted in Ronaldshay, III, p. 121-122.

in the war effort.⁶⁶ Yet these positions did not allow him to influence the strategy of the war; his work on the councils such as the Shipping Control Committee and the Air Board was organisational and his strategic advice was largely ignored. For most of the war, Curzon was not one of the instrumental figures in the formulation of Britain's wartime policy, including its dealings with Russia. British policy towards Russia was created by an elite group of men, including, at various times, Sir Edward Grey, Herbert Asquith, Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, Winston Churchill, General Sir William Robertson, David Lloyd George, and A.J. Balfour.⁶⁷ Curzon's policymaking clout did not begin to increase until he joined Lloyd George's War Cabinet in December 1916.

Throughout the war, Curzon focused on the need to protect Britain's imperial status. He came to regard Germany, not Russia, as the greatest possible challenger to Britain's position in the East, and his obsession with Asia led him to stress the importance of the Eastern theatre during the war. Consequently, he opposed the withdrawal of British troops from the Dardanelles in 1915 because he felt that leaving the area would endanger the Near East and India and compromise Britain's prestige.⁶⁸ In his view, the Russian army and people were "already suspicious . . . of our earnestness, and to a large extent ignorant of our sacrifices," and they would be upset if Britain withdrew

⁶⁶ Curzon was Lord Privy Seal in the Asquith Coalition from May 1915 to December 1916; member of the Dardanelles Committee from June to November 1915; chairman of the Shipping Control Committee from January 1916 to December 1916; chairman of the Air Board from May 1916 to December 1916; and Lord President of the Council and Member of the War Cabinet from December 1916 until it was disbanded in October 1919.

⁶⁷ For a discussion on the men who dominated Britain's wartime Russian policy, see Keith Neilson, *Strategy and Supply: The Anglo-Russian Alliance, 1914-17* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), pp. 1-35.

⁶⁸ Charles à Court Repington, *The First World War, 1914-1918*, 2 vols. (London: Constable & Co., 1920), I, p. 51.

from the Dardanelles because “they will see the one spoil which we were to have placed in their laps snatched away.”⁶⁹ This statement not only reflected the aura of mistrust that existed between the two allies, but also illustrated that Curzon was no longer adamantly opposed to allowing Russia to control Constantinople.

Curzon had finally accepted Russia’s claims to Constantinople because in March 1915, in return for this concession, Petrograd accepted British desiderata in Asiatic Turkey and Persia. Russia agreed to give Britain a free hand in Arabia and the neutral zone of Persia as defined under the Anglo-Russian pact of 1907.⁷⁰ Curzon told C.P. Scott that the addition of the neutral zone into the British sphere would strengthen Britain’s eastern position and “balance the Russian Cossacks in the North.”⁷¹

For Curzon, the Russian collapse in 1917 further increased the importance of the Eastern Front because it provided Germany with a new avenue of approach to India via the Caucasus. Curzon also feared that the Baghdad Railway would “place at the disposal of Germany the resources of Asia Minor and [would]... take the Germans by easy stages to the head of the Persian Gulf and the frontiers of India.” To counter this danger, Curzon

⁶⁹ Curzon memorandum, 25 November 1915, Great Britain, Public Record Office, Cabinet Office, Cabinet 37/138/12. Hereafter cited as CAB.

⁷⁰ See *Documents in British Foreign Policy*, First Series, ed. E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (London: HMSO, 1948-), IV, pp. 635-638; F.S. Northedge, *The Troubled Giant: Britain among the Great Powers, 1916-1939* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 10; V.H. Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 26.

⁷¹ C.P. Scott diary entry, 19-21 April 1917, *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott, 1911-1928*, ed. Trevor Wilson (London: Collins, 1970), pp. 279-280.

Charles Prestwich Scott (1846-1932) was the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* (1872-1929), a Liberal MP (1895-1906), and a friend and advisor of David Lloyd George.

was adamant that neither Germany nor her Allies should be allowed to occupy Palestine or Mesopotamia.⁷²

Although Curzon's comments on Russia's imperial objectives were somewhat muted during the war, his critiques of Russian veracity and motivations continued. At a War Committee meeting in February 1916 he declared that the Shipping Control Committee should determine Russian tonnage resources since Russian information about this matter was "never honest." Moreover, he felt that the Russian members of the *Commission Internationale de Ravitaillement* (CIR) had agreed to allow Britain to control the arrangements for Russian shipping "chiefly . . . because it presented a way out of the difficulty for the Russians and threw the onus of responsibility on to the British." Despite these less than flattering comments, Curzon did not want Britain's former rival to be seen as paupers. He felt that tsarist pride needed to be respected because the Russians were sensitive about appearing to be reduced to the position of beggars.⁷³ Thus Curzon wanted to preserve his former rival's dignity, not leave it prostrate. Had he been as Russophobic as his reputation, he would have jumped at the chance of placing Russia in a humiliating position.

The March Revolution allowed Curzon to play a greater role in policymaking towards Russia. Recognising that the overthrow of the tsarist regime meant that Allied plans would have to be reconsidered, the War Cabinet commissioned Curzon on 21 March to investigate the "probable effect" of the secession of "one or more" of Britain's

⁷² Curzon, Address to the Imperial War Cabinet, 25 June 1918, quoted in Ronaldshay, III, p. 210.

⁷³ War Committee minutes, 29 February 1916, quoted in Neilson, *Strategy and Supply*, pp. 178-179.

allies from the Entente.⁷⁴ As Britain began to understand the Russian internal situation – the apathy about the war, the desire for peace, and the army’s loss of morale and discipline – the War Cabinet was forced to reconsider Russia’s position in the alliance. Consequently, on 8 May Curzon was asked to complete his report “in view of the fact that news from Russia continued to be of an unsatisfactory nature.”⁷⁵

On 12 May 1917, Curzon, Lord Hardinge, Lord Robert Cecil, Maurice Hankey, and Leo Amery met at the Foreign Office to discuss the probable effects of Russia’s secession from the war. They agreed that there was no motive for any of the Central Powers to try and make a separate peace despite the War Cabinet’s desire to exert “every possible effort” to secure one with Austria.⁷⁶ Two days later, Curzon presented his memorandum on Britain’s policy in view of the events in Russia to the War Cabinet. Curzon assessed the reasons for and against Russia making a separate peace with the Central Powers and concluded that because of the effects of the Revolution, Russia would probably remain “both in the War and outside of it.” Advocating a “wait and see” policy, Curzon felt that British leaders should support moderate elements within Russia, listen to peace proposals, and encourage Allied socialists to meet in London rather than Stockholm in order to try and block the influence of extremist groups within Russia. Finally, Britain must be willing to accept the less than absolute victory in the war.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ War Cabinet minutes, 21 March 1917, CAB 23/2.

⁷⁵ War Cabinet minutes, 8 May 1917, CAB 23/2.

⁷⁶ Leo Amery, diary entry, 12 May 1917, *The Leo Amery Diaries*, vol. I, 1896-1929, ed. John Barnes and David Nicholson (London: Hutchinson, 1980), p. 155. For the decision to try and negotiate a separate peace with Austria, see War Cabinet minutes, 9 May 1917, CAB 23/13.

⁷⁷ Curzon, “Policy in View of Russian Developments,” 12 May 1917, CAB 24/13. For a summary of the 14 May War Cabinet meeting, see Neilson, *Strategy and Supply*, p. 263.

Britain understood, therefore, that the Russian Revolution of March 1917 held profound consequences for the war. Initially, the British regarded it as a protest against tsarist mismanagement of the war rather than against the war itself.⁷⁸ The fallacy of this perception was gradually comprehended. Furthermore, many in Britain welcomed the revolution for removing a patently reactionary element on the Allied side and for providing an opportunity for the possible revision of the secret treaties with Russia which contradicted Britain's traditional diplomatic aims and gave Allied policy a distinctly annexationist tinge.⁷⁹

Curzon, on the other hand, was not a great supporter of the March Revolution. C.P. Scott wrote that when he mentioned the change in Russian policy since the tsar's abdication:

Curzon became rigid and sitting up in his chair proceeded to explain thus "*ex cathedra*" (speaking on end for I think a good half-hour) that it was a delusion to suppose there was any real change and quite unsafe to build upon it, that all the talk of the revolutionaries about peace and the rights of subject peoples would come to nothing, that the commanders and officials on the frontiers would go on just as before and that, for us, the only practical result of the revolution was a reduction of 50 per cent in the efficiency of the Russian armies and the probable great prolongation or loss of the war.

Thus Curzon continued to believe that, regardless of Petrograd's avowed policy, frontier officials would continue to act independently. Moreover, although the revolutionary government had declared its disinterestedness in the war's prosecution, Russia had not

⁷⁸ Andrew Bonar Law, Speech to the House of Commons, 15 March 1917, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5th Series, vol. XCI, col. 1421.

⁷⁹ Bonar Law, Speech to the House of Commons, 22 March 1917, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5th Series, vol. XCI, col. 2086; Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "Note from the Russian Provisional Government and the British Reply respecting the Allied War Aims," Cd. 8587 (1917), p. 5.

renounced its claim to Constantinople, claiming that it was “impossible that we should surrender the object of our secular ambition” and that the official declaration was simply “something [that] had to be said to satisfy the revolutionists.” Furthermore, Scott had the distinct impression that rather than welcoming the “profound change . . . in the whole spirit of Russian internal and external policy . . . and its immense assistance to a sound British policy” Curzon actually “regretted” it.⁸⁰

At first glance, this opposition to the new Russian regime is surprising given Curzon’s views on tsarism. Upon a closer look, however, it makes sense. As an ardent imperialist, talk of the rights and desires of subject peoples, especially in a time of growing nationalism, would be offensive to Curzon. Furthermore, because Russia did not renounce its claims to Constantinople, these assertions on the rights of subject peoples would seem hypocritical. In addition, the new revolutionary government could renounce the secret pact by which Britain acquired more control over Persia, an agreement which Curzon regarded as increasing imperial security. Moreover, even though Curzon advocated constitutional monarchy and parliamentarianism, revolution against the established order would have been frightening and unacceptable for a man raised with Victorian aristocratic values. Finally, for Curzon, Russia’s effective withdrawal from the war was disloyal. In a letter to Lord Robert Cecil in June 1917, Curzon called Russia “an ally who is really at heart a traitor” and he opposed any concessions on war aims to Britain’s erstwhile partner.⁸¹ Thus for Curzon, the Great War and the March Revolution

⁸⁰ C.P. Scott diary entry, 19-21 April 1917, *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott, 1911-1928*, pp. 279-280.

⁸¹ Curzon to Cecil, 1 June 1917, quoted Rothwell, p. 100.

served both to moderate and to reinforce his longstanding perception of Russia as acquisitive and fickle. The years immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917, however, compelled Curzon to undergo the most extensive re-evaluation of his views on Russia and provided him with a greater opportunity to shape Anglo-Russian relations.

CHAPTER FOUR

“GRASPING THE HAIRY PAW OF THE BABOON”:¹ CURZON, LLOYD GEORGE, AND THE BOLSHEVIKS, 1917-1922

The Bolshevik revolution of 7 November 1917 opened a new chapter in Anglo-Russian relations and forced Lord Curzon to re-evaluate his perceptions about Russia. Initially, however, Curzon and his War Cabinet colleagues assumed that, like the other Russian uprisings that had occurred since the fall of tsarism in March 1917, the Bolsheviks would ultimately be unsuccessful, and thus pose little threat to British interests.² They also tended to evaluate Russian developments almost exclusively within the context of the war. Although they were angered by the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, regarding it as an act of wartime desertion and as a repudiation of the September 1914 vow not to conclude a separate peace, their primary concern was how the treaty would affect the battle with the Central Powers. The War Cabinet realised that the treaty would enable the Germans to transfer troops from Russia to the Western front, to access the Caucasian oilfields, to supply themselves with Ukrainian grain, and to acquire the military stores at Murmansk, Archangel, and Vladivostock.³

Consequently, the British became more involved with Russia's internal problems to prevent the Central Powers from capitalising on Russia's withdrawal from the war, not

¹ Hankey, diary entry, 31 May 1920, quoted in Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets* (London: Collins, 1970), II, p. 170. Although this is Hankey's paraphrase of Winston Churchill's comment that the Bolsheviks were baboons, it reflects Curzon's attitude towards the Bolsheviks.

² Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations*, vol. I, *Intervention and the War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 74-75. Hereafter cited as *Intervention and the War*.

³ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, 2 vols. (London: Odhams Press, [1942]), II, pp. 1542-3, 1891-1892.

to dislodge the Bolsheviks.⁴ This focus on the Central Powers led the War Cabinet to endeavour to aid and to encourage Russians who wished to continue fighting the war against Germany. However, they did not want to strengthen anti-Allied feeling in Russia or lead the Russians to welcome German officials and soldiers as “friends and deliverers.”⁵ To balance these concerns, the War Cabinet began to undertake actions in December 1917 to facilitate continued Russian participation in the war. Britain decided to provide financial support for those Russian who were willing to continue to fight against the Central Power and divided Russia into Anglo-French “spheres of activity” in which the two countries would support forces willing to resist the Germans.⁶ Britain was also initially amenable to supporting the Bolsheviks if they would resist the Germans, even though most Russians who were willing to continue the war were also dedicated to ousting the Bolsheviks. In February 1918 Balfour informed R. Bruce Lockhart, Britain’s unofficial emissary to the Bolsheviks, that if the Bolsheviks chose to resist German aggression, Britain would assist them because “in so far as the Bolsheviks are opposing or embarrassing our enemies, their cause is our cause.”⁷ After Germany launched a Western offensive in March 1918, however, Britain discarded attempts to secure Bolshevik approval and decided to reconstitute an Eastern Front. Consequently, British

⁴ Cabinet memorandum, 21 December 1917, quoted in Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, II, pp. 1550-1551.

⁵ War Cabinet, 22 November 1917, quoted in *ibid*, II, pp 1540-41; Balfour, “Notes on the Present Russian Situation,” 9 December 1917, quoted in *ibid*, II, 1545-1547.

⁶ This decision was made on 14 December 1917. See Keith Neilson, *Strategy and Supply: The Anglo-Russian Alliance, 1914-17* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 294; Ullman, *Intervention and the War*, p. 52.

⁷ Quoted in Richard K. Debo, *Revolution and Survival: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1917-18* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 136.

forces landed in North Russia to protect Allied supplies in the region and occupied Baku to prevent the Turks from acquiring the region's oil fields.⁸ Initially, therefore, the War Cabinet, was concerned neither about the composition of the Russian government nor about the aspirations of the Bolsheviks except in how they influenced their attitude to the conflict with the Central Powers.

Although Curzon was a key member of the War Cabinet and was therefore involved in the discussions which formed Britain's approach towards Russia, he played a relatively minor role in formulating policy towards Bolshevik Russia during the Great War. David Lloyd George, A.J. Balfour, Lord Milner, and Lord Robert Cecil were more decisive in this regard. For example, Balfour, the Foreign Secretary, presented a memorandum to the War Cabinet on 9 December 1917 on the nature of Bolshevism.⁹ Milner and Cecil went to Paris in late December to confer with the French Government on what attitude the Allies should adopt in view of the Bolshevik peace overtures to Germany.¹⁰ This conference led to the division of Russia into Anglo-French "spheres of activity." Due to its interest in the Caucasian oil fields and their proximity to India, Britain was allotted the Cossack and Caucasian regions.¹¹

⁸ See Ullman, *Intervention and the War*, pp. 129-135.

⁹ Balfour, "Notes on the Present Russian Situation," 9 December 1917, quoted in Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, II, pp. 1545-1547.

¹⁰ Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, II, p. 1549-1550.

¹¹ Convention entre la France et l'Angleterre au sujet de l'action dans la Russie méridionale, 23 December 1917, *Documents in British Foreign Policy, First Series* (London: HMSO, 1948-), III, no. 256, annex A. Hereafter cited as DBFP.

Under this agreement, France, with its interest in Ukraine's iron and coal mines, would direct all Allied activity in Bessarabia, Ukraine, and the Crimea.

Curzon played little part in the commencement of Britain's activity in the Caucasus during the war, but he soon became more active in this regard. Just as he had been prior to the outbreak of the Great War, Curzon remained dedicated to ensuring the security of the Eastern Empire. He believed that Germany, not Bolshevik Russia, constituted the greatest threat to India and that Russia was in such chaos that it would be years, perhaps generations, before "Russia" would again pose a serious threat to the interests of the British Empire. At the War Cabinet meeting of 6 March 1918, he voiced his fears that, with Russia out of the war, Germany would send forces to the Caucasus and on to Central Asia and Afghanistan. Later that month, he was appointed chair of the newly formed Eastern Committee, giving him a prominent voice on eastern affairs and enabling him to focus his energies on the German-Turkish menace to the region.¹² Curzon feared that Brest-Litovsk would enable Germany to build up a system of puppet states in Russia and menace Middle Eastern security. He expounded on these themes in a War Cabinet speech on 25 June 1918 and in an address to the Imperial War Cabinet on 14 August. Balfour and Lloyd George agreed with Curzon that the destruction of the Brest-

¹² The Eastern Committee was established in March 1918 to determine Britain's policy in the Middle East, Transcaucasia, and Central Asia. Its members included: Curzon (chairman); General Jan C. Smuts of the War Cabinet; Balfour, the Foreign Secretary; Lord Robert Cecil, Balfour's deputy; Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India; and General Sir Henry Wilson, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Lord Hardinge, the Permanent Under-Secretary, and Major-General William Thwaites, Director of Military Intelligence, often attended the meetings. The Eastern Committee was succeeded by the Interdepartmental Committee on Eastern Affairs in February 1919. This new committee was also known as the Eastern Committee, and Curzon remained as chair.

Litovsk treaty needed to be an “essential part” of Britain’s policy because it would dispose of Germany’s threat to the Middle East.¹³

Britain’s intervention in Russia, therefore, began as a wartime measure to achieve specific military and material objectives against the Central Powers. As it developed its own rationale and momentum, however, it gradually became an effort to overthrow the Bolsheviks.¹⁴ Thus intervention continued after the war with Germany ended. The initial decisions that led to post-war intervention in the Russian Civil War were formulated by Balfour, Cecil, Milner, and Lord Hardinge, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, at a conference held at the Foreign Office on 13 November. Endorsing their recommendations the next day, the War Cabinet agreed to maintain British forces in Murmansk, Archangel, Siberia, and along the Batum-Baku railway, to recognise the anti-Bolshevik administration at Omsk as the de facto government for Siberia, and to give aid to Denikin in South Russia and to Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.¹⁵

Britain’s post-war intervention was based upon the justification that Britain owed a “debt of honour” to the Russians who had remained loyal to the Allied cause and that

¹³ Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations*, vol. II, *Britain and the Russian Civil War, November 1918-February 1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 82, 296. Hereafter cited as *Britain and the Russian Civil War*; V.H. Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 186-196.

¹⁴ Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, II, pp. 1550-1551, 1901; Michael Kettle, *The Allies and the Russian Collapse, March 1917-March 1918*, *Russia and the Allies* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), pp. 172-173.

¹⁵ Minutes of a Conference of Ministers, 13 November 1918, Appendix to War Cabinet minutes, 14 November 1918, quoted in Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, pp. 13-15; Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. IV, *The Stricken World, 1916-1922* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1975), pp. 226-227.

they could not be abandoned in their fight against the Bolsheviks.¹⁶ Yet the “debt of honour” was not the only reason that Britain became involved in the Russian Civil War. After the Armistice with Germany, Britain began to fear the spread of Bolshevism. The British realised that the Soviet threat could manifest itself either through a Red Army advance or through internal subversion within Europe or Britain’s Asian Empire. They knew that the Bolsheviks engaged in propaganda against the capitalist governments and appealed to Asiatic subjects to revolt and overthrow the “European imperialist robbers.”¹⁷ Moreover, the Bolsheviks had adopted measures during the war that conflicted with accepted Western governmental practice. They had dissolved the Constituent Assembly, abrogated all agreements and treaties of former Russian governments, and, declaring their opposition to secret diplomacy, published secret Tsarist treaties. They had also repudiated Russia’s debts and nationalised foreign investments.¹⁸ Although these acts had increased Britain’s distrust of the Bolsheviks, their full significance was not felt until after the war with Germany had ended. The disestablishment of the Orthodox Church,

¹⁶ See Balfour memorandum, 1 November 1918 (incorrectly dated 29 November), quoted by Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis: The Aftermath* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1929), p. 165. Also see Lord Milner’s 19 December 1918 letter to *The Times* which states Britain’s aims in Russia.

¹⁷ Appeal of the Council of People’s Commissars to the Moslems of Russia and the East,” 3 December 1917, *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, ed. Jane Degras, 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), I, pp. 15-17. Hereafter cited as *Soviet Documents*.

¹⁸ For a brief account of the Constituent Assembly’s dissolution on 19 January 1918, see Debo, p. 73. A translation of the decree repudiating state debts is printed in United States. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Russia, 1918*, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1931-1932), III, pp. 32-33. At the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers’ and Peasants’ Deputies on 21 November 1917, Trotsky announced that he would begin publishing secret treaties the next day. Extracts of this speech are published in *Soviet Documents*, I, pp. 5-8. For Trotsky’s 22 November statement on the publication of the secret treaties, see *ibid*, pp. 8-9. Extract from the Decree of the Central Executive Committee Annulling State Loans, 10 February 1918, *ibid*, p. 43; Extract from the Decree of the Council of People’s Commissars Nationalising Foreign Trade, 22 April 1918, *ibid*, pp.71-72.

the execution of the Tsar and his family, the murder of the British naval attaché Captain F.N. Cromie in Petrograd on 31 August 1918, and the elimination of opponents to Bolshevism reinforced a growing feeling in Britain that the Bolsheviks were barbaric.¹⁹

After the war was over, Britain began to fear that Russia's economic and social collapse would spread, especially to war-torn Germany. Consequently, the riots in cities such as London, Glasgow, and Belfast by returning soldiers and the working class between January and March 1919 were attributed to the Russian example and inspiration.²⁰ The British government came to believe that efforts to prevent the spread of Bolshevism were an act of self-defence because the Bolsheviks were "revolutionary fanatics whose dream it is to conquer the world for Bolshevism."²¹ Thus the Bolsheviks' anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist notions, which had been of secondary importance during the war, began to dominate British anti-Bolshevism.

Curzon's feelings towards the Bolsheviks, however, were much more specific than his Cabinet counterparts. As the embodiment of the elegant, arrogant, and self-assured lord with a strong sense of *noblesse oblige*, Curzon inherently opposed the social

¹⁹ Peter Rowland, *David Lloyd George: A Biography* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1975), p. 496; Churchill to the Leicester and District Trades Council, 1 September 1920, in Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. IV, 1917-1922, (London: Heinemann, 1976-1977) companion, p. 1203. Hereafter cited as *Churchill*, companion vol. IV.

²⁰ Kenneth O. Morgan, *Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government, 1918-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 48-49; Rowland, pp. 505-507; Thomas Jones to Lloyd George, 8 February 1919, *Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary*, vol. 1, 1916-1925, ed. Keith Middlemas (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 73-74. Hereafter cited as *Whitehall Diary*; Jones to Hankey, 27 February 1919, *ibid*, pp. 79-80.

²¹ Lloyd George memorandum, 25 March 1919, quoted in Churchill, *The World Crisis: The Aftermath*, pp. 193-197.

doctrines of Bolshevism.²² Yet it was his imperial ethos rather than his aristocratic position that shaped Curzon's attitude towards the Bolsheviks. He firmly believed that he had been called upon to spend his life in the "sacred duty" of studying or serving the empire and that the empire was "a pre-ordained dispensation, intended to be a source of strength and discipline to ourselves and of moral and material blessing to others."²³ Thus the Soviets' self-portrayal as the friend and ally of the exploited peoples of the East in the struggle against world imperialism was abhorrent to Curzon.²⁴ He became a staunch anti-Bolshevik when he realised how the social and international revolutionary nature of the Bolshevik government could threaten his beloved empire. Although he appreciated the European dimensions of the "Red Menace" both to Eastern Europe and to the British Isles, he felt that the threat to Asia was more vital because he was convinced that Britain's prestige and wealth depended upon its position in Asia.²⁵ Ultimately, therefore, Curzon came to view Bolshevik designs against India with greater suspicion than he had ever regarded Tsarist ambitions.

Curzon's obsession with protecting India provided the basis for his post-war prescription for Central Asia. The Great War had convinced him that Britain's interests

²² Lord D'Abernon described Curzon as being "born and died in the faith of an aristocrat of the English eighteenth century." (Lord D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace: Pages from the Diary of Viscount D'Abernon [Berlin 1920-1926]*, 3 vols. [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1929-1930], I, p. 48.)

²³ Curzon, *The true Imperialism ... an address delivered in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on Wednesday, December 11th 1907* (Birmingham: Birmingham and Midland Institute, 1907).

²⁴ For an example of Soviet appeals to Asia, see Joseph Stalin, "Don't Forget the East," 24 November 1918, in *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, ed. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, 2d ed. (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 358-360.

²⁵ Curzon, *Problems of the Far East by the Rt. Hon. George Curzon, M.P.: Japan-Korea-China*, new rev. ed. (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1896), p. 414; F.S. Northedge, *The Troubled Giant: Britain among the Great Powers, 1916-1939* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), pp. 199-200.

and India's security demanded some measure of political dominance over Transcaucasia. He was determined that the region would never again be vulnerable to any external threats and that no Great Power other than Britain would control the approaches to India. Curzon wanted to take advantage of the political chaos in Asia caused by the upheaval in Russia to create a chain of states in Central Asia which would act as a buffer between India and any hostile element. He felt that the presence of "some Power with prestige," namely Britain, would not only keep order and prevent conflict among the states, but also protect the Batum-Baku railway and its surrounding oil fields from other powers. Curzon insisted that a British military presence remain in the Caucasus, southern Mesopotamia, and Persia to give "these little peoples ... a chance of standing on their own feet" because he realised that the new buffer states would initially be unable to protect themselves. He believed that supporting the independence of the Central Asian buffer states would not only ensure that they would be pro-British, but also secure the monopoly of British influence in the region.

Curzon presented these ideas at a series of Eastern Committee meetings which he initiated in December 1918 to devise a policy for Britain's role in the Caucasus to be presented at the upcoming Peace Conferences in Paris. As he told his Eastern Committee colleagues, the basis for his policy was self-evident: "Why should Great Britain push herself in these directions? Of course the answer is obvious – India." On 16 December, even though some of his colleagues did not agree with his desire to take responsibility for

the Caucasus, the Eastern Committee accepted Curzon's Central Asian recommendations to be presented as policy.²⁶

Curzon's proposals to the Eastern Committee reflected his convictions that the region would almost inevitably fall to the Bolsheviks if Britain did not have a presence in the Caucasus and that "any sort of anarchy, disorder, or Bolshevism" in the region would "inevitably react" upon Britain's position in Asia from Persia eastward.²⁷ Yet from the beginning his policies were not simply aimed at Bolshevik containment. While he wanted to protect the area from a possible revival of Russian power, either Bolshevik or in some other form, he was "seriously afraid that the great Power from whom we may have most to fear in the future is France."²⁸ He vehemently opposed the proposal that France should take responsibility for the Caucasus on the grounds that French and British political interests often conflicted and that France's power would then extend from the Mediterranean to the Caspian, making Britain's position extremely vulnerable.²⁹ Rather than place France in authority over one of the main approaches to India, Curzon said that he "would sooner the States fought it out amongst themselves, and that Russia ultimately

²⁶ Eastern Committee minutes, 2, 9, and 16 December 1918, summarised in Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, pp. 67-70, 71-75, 76-79.

²⁷ Eastern Committee minutes, 2 December 1918, quoted in Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, 67.

²⁸ Eastern Committee minutes, 2 December 1918, quoted in Maisel, p. 36.

²⁹ For this proposal, see Sir Eyre Crowe, "Memorandum on a Possible Territorial Policy in the Caucasus Regions," 7 November 1917, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print, Part II, From the First to the Second World War, Series A: The Soviet Union, 1917-1939*, ed. Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984), I, no. 6. Hereafter cited as FOCP. Under the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 16 May 1916, France was already scheduled to receive control over Syria, Lebanon, and Turkish Cilicia, and was likely to be granted a mandate over Turkish Armenia.

come back."³⁰ Hence Curzon believed that there were reasons for stationing British troops in the Caucasus which were unrelated to opposing Bolshevism.³¹ His desire to control the Caucasus after the Great War, therefore, was not simply an effort to impede Bolshevik control of the region, but an attempt to secure the approaches to India against any possible rivals.

Curzon's attitude towards eastern affairs shaped his approach towards the Russian Civil War. Although he is often depicted as a zealous and untiring advocate of intervention,³² this classification is somewhat misleading because Curzon had very specific objectives. His interest in creating a chain of buffer states out of portions of the former Russian Empire was inherently incompatible with the Whites' desire to recreate a Great Russia. Consequently, he was, at best, a half-hearted supporter of Kolchak and Denikin, and was even less enthusiastic about Yudenich.³³ For example, in April 1919 his opposition to the reconstruction of a Great Russia led Curzon to recommend that the Kolchak regime should be recognised as the Provisional Government of Siberia, not of all Russia.³⁴ Curzon did not want Britain to do anything that would lead the "furiously anti-Russian and furiously anti-Bolshevik" Caucasian republics, especially Georgia, to

³⁰ Eastern Committee minutes, 2 December 1918, quoted in Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, p. 70.

³¹ See the summary of the minutes of the Imperial War Cabinet meeting of 23 December 1918 in Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, pp. 88-93.

³² For example, Northedge, pp. 76, 84-86.

³³ Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, p. 260; See for example, Curzon's remarks in War Cabinet minutes, 4 July 1919, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, pp. 726-731; Churchill to Curzon, 5 January 1920, in *ibid*, pp. 990-991.

Admiral Aleksandr V. Kolchak was the leader of the Whites in Siberia. General A.I. Denikin led the Whites in South Russia. And, General Nikolai N. Yudenich was the leader of the Whites in North Russia.

³⁴ Curzon to Balfour (Paris), 15 April 1919, FOCP, I, no. 16.

suppose that their claims to independence were being ignored “in favour of a possible revival of Russia in the future.”³⁵ Thus he was opposed to sending British troops to any part of Russia except Georgia. Lloyd George remarked that the thought of abandoning the Caucasian republics to “the despotism of Lenin and Trotsky” filled Curzon with horror, and “he fought to the end for the retention of British forces in Georgia.”³⁶

Throughout 1919 and 1920 Curzon pressed the Cabinet to leave a British presence in the Caucasus, Batum, and northern Persia. Although he was able to secure political support for the Caucasian republics in 1919, his Cabinet colleagues were disinclined to use British military resources to defend them, preventing the long-term success of Curzon’s policies and leading Britain to withdraw gradually from its Caucasian commitments.³⁷ Winston Churchill, the War Secretary, was probably the greatest opponent to Curzon’s eastern prescriptions. He believed that Britain should support the White leaders rather than Baltic and Transcaucasian aspirations for national independence because he felt that the future stability of Europe required a powerful Russia as a counterweight to Germany.³⁸ Churchill realised that the small forces which Curzon

³⁵ Eastern Committee meeting minutes, 2 December 1918, quoted in Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, p. 68.

³⁶ David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, 2 vols. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), I, pp. 324-330.

³⁷ Churchill to Lloyd George, 2 March 1919, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, pp. 560-561. War Cabinet minutes, 6 March 1919, *ibid.*, pp. 577-580; War Cabinet minutes, 25 July 1919, *ibid.*, pp. 757-764.

³⁸ On 22 September 1919, Churchill circulated a long memorandum, dated 16 August 1919, as a Cabinet paper which fully expressed his views towards intervention. Excerpts of this memorandum are printed in Churchill, *The World Crisis: The Aftermath*, pp. 251-253. Churchill was Curzon’s most powerful opponent over the Caucasus. He sought to reduce Britain’s military expenditure everywhere except in Russia, where he was prepared to spend whatever might be necessary to destroy the Bolshevik regime. If troops and money were available, he believed that they should not be used to protect Persia or the Caucasian states, but to defeat the Bolsheviks. Even after his pro-Denikin policy failed, Churchill had little sympathy for Curzon’s Caucasian schemes.

advocated would be ineffective in the vast expanse of Russia and that the Allies should either withdraw completely or invade with enough volunteers to overthrow the Bolsheviks.³⁹ Consequently, Churchill and his Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), Sir Henry Wilson, lobbied throughout 1919 to remove Britain's military presence from the Caucasus. When the Cabinet decided to withdraw British forces in the summer of 1919, Curzon was outraged: "I disapprove of the entire Caucasian policy of HMG. The decision to evacuate is a military decision, and was concurred in by Mr. Balfour."⁴⁰ He was convinced that disaster would ensue because the government had not followed his advice of occupying the Caucasus for a limited time until the local republics could "stand on their own legs."⁴¹

Britain's haphazard intervention in the Russian Civil War ended in December 1919 because Lloyd George was unwilling to give further assistance to the anti-Bolshevik forces. He had decided that since the sword had not suppressed Bolshevism "other methods" must be attempted to restore peace. In his November 1919 Guildhall speech, the Prime Minister announced that Britain had settled its debt of honour to the Whites with £100 million worth of material and support and that Britain could no longer afford the costly intervention in an "interminable" civil war.⁴² Notably, only Churchill objected

³⁹ Excerpts from Imperial War Cabinet minutes, 23 December 1918, quoted in Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War*, pp. 88-93.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Briton Cooper Busch, *Mudros to Lausanne: Britain's Frontier in West Asia, 1918-1923* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1976), pp. 159-160.

⁴¹ Curzon to Balfour (Paris), 12 August 1919, DBFP; no. 367.

⁴² Lloyd George's Guildhall speech was printed in *The Times*, 10 November 1919. In addresses to the House of Commons on 13 and 17 November, he reiterated his argument that intervention had to end. See Lloyd George, Speech to the House of Commons, 13 November 1919, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 5th Series, vol. CXXI, cols. 471-75; 17 November 1919, *ibid*, cols. 715-26.

to the decision to end intervention.⁴³ Curzon's silence on the subject illustrated not only his lack of support for the Whites, but also his satisfaction that he had managed to secure some support for the Caucasian republics. Curzon had convinced Lloyd George and the Allies to provide the border states with "moral and material assistance."⁴⁴ Moreover, when Denikin's retreat meant that the Caucasian republics were at risk of being overwhelmed by the Bolsheviks in January 1920, he persuaded the Allied Supreme Council to accord de facto recognition on Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, hoping that it would increase the Caucasian states' willingness to resist the Soviets.⁴⁵ Lloyd George, however, disagreed with Curzon's perception of the Soviet's military threat. He felt that the real danger posed by the Bolsheviks was the undermining of other societies through "gold and propaganda."⁴⁶

Although Curzon was unable to prevent Britain's departure from the Caucasus in mid-October 1919, he continued to fight for his policies and to urge the necessity of holding the region as a barrier against Bolshevik encroachments eastward. He managed

⁴³ Cabinet minutes, 12 December 1919, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, pp. 974-975; Churchill uncirculated Cabinet memorandum, 15 December 1919, *ibid*, pp. 975-978.

⁴⁴ Secretary's Notes of an Anglo-French Conference in London, 13 December 1919, DBFP, II, no. 58, min. 10; Resolutions adopted at the Allied Meetings in London, 11-13 December 1919, *ibid*, no. 62, res. A.

⁴⁵ Notes of a Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, 10 January 1920, DBFP, II, no. 65. For Georgia and Azerbaijan's recognition, see Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the American, British, French, and Italian Governments, 16 January 1920, *ibid*, no. 74, min. 3. For Armenia's recognition, see Allied Supreme Council minutes, 19 January 1920, *ibid*, no. 77. The existence of the buffer states, however, was short-lived: Azerbaijan came under Soviet rule in April 1920, Armenia in November 1920, and Georgia in February 1921.

⁴⁶ Lloyd George, Curzon, Bonar Law, Churchill, Long, Montagu, Birkenhead, Admiral Beatty, Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, and Hankey met in Lloyd George's room at Claridge's Hotel in Paris on the 16, 18, and 19 January 1920 to co-ordinate British policy. These meetings describe the varying approaches to the Soviet threat. For summaries of the first two meetings, see Wilson's diary entries, 16 and 18 January 1920, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, pp. 1003-1004, 1006-1007. For the last meeting, see Cabinet Conference minutes, 19 January 1920, *ibid*, p. 1007.

to convince the Cabinet to leave a garrison at Batum until a decision about the region's future was made, and he fought Churchill and the War Office throughout 1920 to maintain this remaining presence. Curzon wanted to prevent Batum from becoming an object of hostilities among the Georgians, Armenians, Turks, and Bolsheviks, and hoped that a British presence would strengthen the area's anti-Soviet resistance. Churchill and the War Office, on the other hand, realised that Britain lacked the financial and manpower resources to secure its dominance over the region militarily.⁴⁷ Churchill regarded the existing policy to be "mere bluff" and wanted to withdraw the remaining British battalions from Batum and Persia.⁴⁸ Curzon, however, felt that withdrawal represented "an act of betrayal" to the independent Caucasian states which Britain was supporting and would have widespread political implications. He feared that if the Bolsheviks were allowed to occupy even a single British point, such as Batum, the rest of the Caucasus would fall, opening the road to Persia, and ultimately bringing about end of British rule in India.⁴⁹ He and Milner even threatened to resign if British troops were withdrawn from the area.⁵⁰ Eventually, however, Churchill convinced the Cabinet that British forces should leave the area; on 11 June 1920 instructions were issued to hand

⁴⁷ See, for example, Wilson diary entry, 12 January 1920, *ibid*, p. 997; Churchill, memorandum, 7 February 1920, *ibid*, pp. 1030-1034; Churchill to Curzon, 22 May 1920, *ibid*, p. 1105; Churchill to Lloyd George, 5 August 1920, *ibid*, p. 1161.

⁴⁸ Churchill to Curzon, 20 May 1920, *ibid*, p. 1103. Note that this letter was written two days after the British garrison at Enzeli had been surrounded and overtaken by the Bolsheviks.

⁴⁹ Curzon memorandum, 9 February 1920, DBFP, XII, no. 497.

⁵⁰ Wilson diary entry, 6 August 1920, in Major General Sir C.E. Callwell, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: His Life and Diaries*, 2 vols. (London: Cassell & Co., 1927), II, p. 256.

over Batum to Georgia and on 4 January 1921 the decision was made to retire from Persia.⁵¹

Although Curzon was not always able to convince his colleagues to support his policies, he did have considerable influence on the Cabinet. For example, given the War Office's opposition to the maintenance of British forces in the Caucasus, it is a measure of Curzon's prestige that he was able to postpone the decision to withdraw from the region for so long. Curzon was not only able to postpone changes to Britain's policy with which he disagreed, but also to ensure that certain conditions were included as an integral part of the new approach. For example, when Churchill and Wilson first obtained sanction for the withdrawal of Britain's military presence from the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea in March 1919, essentially reversing the December 1918 recommendations of Curzon's Eastern Committee, Curzon was able to secure certain political conditions as components of the withdrawal. Denikin was not to be "permitted to invade Trans-Caucasia or to absorb the small States" and the War Office was required to consult the Foreign Office about setting up the frontier line that Denikin had to respect as a condition for British support.⁵² In some ways, therefore, Curzon was a political realist – if he could not achieve his objectives directly, he would negotiate a compromise agreement, sacrificing some things to achieve his principal goal.

⁵¹ Curzon to de Robeck (Constantinople), Telegram, 11 June 1920, DBFP, XII, no. 577. The actual evacuation of the garrison took place 9 July; Wilson diary, 4 January 1921, Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, p. 1287.

⁵² Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs minutes, 6 March 1919, *ibid*, pp. 573-577; War Cabinet Minutes, 6 March 1919, *ibid*, pp. 577-580.

There were, however, limits on Curzon's authority over Russian policy. Although his appointment as Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on 3 January 1919 increased his control over Britain's intervention in the Russian Civil War because Balfour was in Paris with Lloyd George negotiating the peace treaties, the ultimate foreign policy decisions still rested with Balfour and Lloyd George, not Curzon. For example, in a memorandum to Balfour in August 1919, Curzon called for a special Allied conference to reach "a revised and more concerted arrangement" for the "future political, military, and financial responsibilities in Russia."⁵³ Because Balfour disliked the proposal and disagreed with Curzon's assessment, however, he did not present it in Paris and nothing came of the suggestion.⁵⁴

Yet even when Curzon became titular Foreign Secretary on 29 October 1919, he continued to play a very specific role in Anglo-Russian relations during Lloyd George's premiership.⁵⁵ After the Great War, the Prime Minister regarded international affairs as his chief priority, and he was determined to play an active role in policy formation, especially towards Soviet Russia. When, for example, Lloyd George announced in his November 1919 Guildhall speech that intervention must end, he had consulted neither Churchill nor Curzon.⁵⁶ This act reflected the Prime Minister's tendency to make foreign policy decisions without consulting his Foreign Secretary. Lloyd George had little

⁵³ Curzon to Balfour (Paris), 21 August 1919, DBFP, III, no. 399.

⁵⁴ Balfour, undated minute, *ibid.*, no. 399, n. 2.

⁵⁵ When Curzon became Foreign Secretary, Balfour took his place as Lord President of the Council.

⁵⁶ Davis (London) to Lansing, telegrams 3394 and 3486, 15 November and 3 December 1919; United States, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Russia, 1919* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1937), pp. 122, 128-129.

respect for diplomatists or Foreign Office experts, and he relied upon his own intuition and upon his own circle of advisors, specifically the Cabinet Office under Sir Maurice Hankey and the Garden Suburb of private advisors under Philip Kerr and Sir Edward Grigg, to achieve his influence on foreign policy.⁵⁷ Lloyd George believed that the heads of governments should dictate the major outlines of foreign relations and that the Foreign Office should then settle the details of these negotiations.⁵⁸ Curzon, on the other hand, believed that the Foreign Office should be the only channel through which all business relating to Britain's foreign relations should run, and that the traditions of diplomacy should be upheld. He regarded the Prime Minister's insistence on playing an active role in foreign policymaking as a threat to his own position, and complained that Lloyd George exercised "an unusual and illegitimate influence on foreign affairs."⁵⁹

Nevertheless, Lloyd George's determination to be active in the formation of policy does not necessarily mean that the Prime Minister completely usurped the Foreign Secretary's position. While Curzon recognised the limits to his authority, he also exaggerated the constraints on his influence. He complained about his Prime Minister in a letter to Lady Curzon in 1921: "I am getting very tired of working or trying to work with that man. He wants his For. Sec. to be a valet almost a drudge and he has no regard

⁵⁷ For more on Lloyd George's influence on policymaking, see Morgan, pp. 110-116.

⁵⁸ Lloyd George to Curzon, 8 March 1921, quoted in Alan J. Sharp, "The Foreign Office in Eclipse, 1919-1922," *History* 6, no. 202 (1976), p. 202.

⁵⁹ Curzon made this comment in a speech to the City of London Conservative Unionist Association on 8 November 1922. See *The Times*, 9 November 1922.

for the conveniences or civilities of official life.”⁶⁰ Moreover, in Curzon’s eyes, Lloyd George was not the only offender. He also resented the “unauthorised and sometimes not too helpful incursions into Foreign Affairs” by his colleagues, especially Churchill, and the fact that although he reported all of his activities to Lloyd George and the Cabinet, the Garden Suburb was not similarly constrained.⁶¹ He accused Lloyd George’s personal secretariat of “operating behind the back of the F.O., conducting intrigues, sending messages, holding interviews of which we were never informed until it was too late,” and felt that these acts “sapped the strength of the Foreign Office.”⁶²

Curzon’s perception that his position was under siege was partially due to Lloyd George’s refusal to allow Curzon to control the European aspects of Britain’s Russian policy. Preoccupied with fostering European reconstruction, the Prime Minister feared that his Foreign Secretary would attempt to hinder any improvement in Anglo-Russian relations and thus largely excluded him from this policy area. Consequently, when the Allies accepted E.F. Wise’s proposal to resume trade through the Russian co-operatives in January 1920, Lloyd George not only made this decision to present and to accept this policy without prior Cabinet approval, but also excluded the Foreign Office from the

⁶⁰ Curzon to Lady Curzon, 22 April 1921, quoted in Lord Beaverbrook, *The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George and Great was the Fall Thereof* (London: Collins, 1963), p. 251.

⁶¹ Curzon to Lloyd George, 13 June 1921, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, 1502; Curzon to Lloyd George (unsent), 5 October 1922, quoted in the Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon: Being the Authorized Biography of George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.*, 3 vols. (London: Ernest Benn, 1928), III, p. 316.

⁶² Curzon to Austen Chamberlain, 7 May 1919, quoted in Morgan, p. 113.

discussions.⁶³ Curzon was neither allowed to attend the meetings nor informed of the details of its proceedings because Lloyd George claimed that they were the business of the Ministry of Food, not the Foreign Office.⁶⁴ This argument is interesting since the decision to trade with the co-operatives represented an important step towards the normalisation of relations with the Soviets. It is more likely that the Prime Minister wished to present Curzon with a *fait accompli* because he believed that his Foreign Secretary would raise strong objections to opening any sort of relations with Soviet Russia. Yet if Lloyd George was master of Britain's European Russian policy why was it necessary not only to bar him from the negotiations themselves, but also to prevent him from discovering their details? Thus does Curzon's exclusion represent his lack of influence or, on the contrary, does it illustrate that his authority was more far-reaching than it is generally assumed to have been? After all, had Lloyd George truly been maestro of Britain's Russian policy he would not have had to conceal his decision to trade with the Russian co-operatives. On the other hand, perhaps Lloyd George was simply trying to avoid a scene with his temperamental Foreign Secretary.

Although Curzon's efforts to influence Britain's Russian policy in Europe were generally restricted, he controlled the eastern aspects of Britain's Russian policy. This

⁶³ E.F. Wise, "Economic Aspects of British Policy Concerning Russia," 6 January 1920, DBFP, II, no. 71, n. 2; Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the British, French, and Italian Governments, 14 January 1920, *ibid*, no. 71; Note respecting the Decision to Permit the Exchange of Goods on a Basis of Reciprocity between the Russian People and Allied and Neutral Countries, 16 January 1920, *ibid*, no. 76, appendix A. In the latter document, the Allies emphasised that "these arrangements imply no change in the policy ... towards the Soviet Government."

⁶⁴ Hardinge to Derby [Paris] for Curzon, 20 January 1920, and Curzon through Derby to Hardinge, 22 January 1920, *ibid*, II, no. 76, n. 5.

focus, however, does not necessarily represent his banishment from European affairs; Curzon prided himself on being an expert on Asia, and he relished the opportunity to shape policy in the east largely without interference.⁶⁵ In 1919, for example, Curzon was the architect of the Anglo-Persian treaty of 1919. This treaty was intended to stabilise relations between the two countries and to strengthen the defensive boundaries of India against Russian ambitions. Curzon negotiated this treaty not only on his own initiative, but also without consulting the British Delegation at the Peace Conference.⁶⁶

Yet Curzon's absorption in eastern affairs does not necessarily represent a disinterest in European policy; he welcomed the challenge of controlling Russian policy in both its Asian and European aspects after the fall of Lloyd George in the autumn of 1922. Thus it was not a lack of interest, but a realisation of the futility of trying to direct European affairs that led Curzon to accept Lloyd George's interference into matters which were normally under the Foreign Office's jurisdiction. Curzon remembered his long exclusion from public life after his resignation from the viceroyalty in 1905, and he understood that he would not return to power if he resigned his position because there were many other younger competitors waiting to take his place. Thus although he had a formal letter that he had "more than once drawn up for presentation to the P.M., threatening my resignation unless these indefensible tactics were stopped," he never

⁶⁵ Ullman, *Intervention and the War*, p. 326.

⁶⁶ Curzon memorandum, 9 August 1919, DBFP, IV, no. 710; Harold Nicolson, *Curzon: The Last Phase, 1919-1925: A Study in Post-War Diplomacy* (London: Constable, 1934; reprint, New York: Howard Fertig, 1974), pp. 129-138 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

followed through with his threats.⁶⁷ In other words, Curzon accepted Lloyd George's insults and acts of interference rather than relinquish office.

Moreover, Curzon largely objected to the protocol of Lloyd George's policies, not their substance.⁶⁸ They both opposed the reconstitution of the old Russia either under Kolchak-Denikin or under the Bolsheviks.⁶⁹ In addition, Lloyd George and Curzon agreed that the chief danger of Bolshevism was propaganda.⁷⁰ The Prime Minister, however, realised that Britain could not afford the financial burden of intervention and that the British public, like himself, opposed interfering in Russia's internal affairs.⁷¹

The decisions of late 1919 and early 1920 not only marked the end of intervention, but also opened the question of coming to terms with the Soviet regime. Lloyd George wanted to renew trade links with Russia because he believed that commerce would "bring an end to the ferocity, the rapine, and the crudities of Bolshevism surer than any other method" and that the restoration of the Russian market was vital to European prosperity.⁷² The collapse of Denikin and Kolchak, the impending peace between the Baltic states and the Soviet government, and the Bolsheviks' renewal

⁶⁷ Curzon, quoted in Leonard Mosley, *Curzon: The End of an Epoch* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1961), p. 236.

⁶⁸ See Morgan, p. 114.

⁶⁹ On 30 November 1919, Lloyd George remarked to C.P. Scott that "Bolshevik Russia would make a state of 70 millions – as large as Germany – and that was enough. A Russia of 200 millions would be a menace to the world." (Quoted in Rowland, p. 505.)

⁷⁰ Riddell diary entry, 22 January 1920, *The Riddell Diaries, 1908-1923*, ed. J.M. McEwan (London: The Athlone Press, 1986), p. 303.

⁷¹ Lloyd George to Churchill, 16 February 1919, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, pp. 538-539.

⁷² Lloyd George. Speech to the House of Commons, 10 February 1920, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5th ser., vol. CXXV (1920), cols. 40-46; Lloyd George, Speech to the House of Commons, 7 June 1920, *ibid.*, vol. CXXX (1920), col. 170.

of formal peace offers to the Allies helped to create a more favourable climate for a movement towards Anglo-Soviet rapprochement.⁷³ At the San Remo Conference on 26 April 1920, Lloyd George convinced France and Italy to hold negotiations in London with the Soviets to restore trade relations.⁷⁴ However, they later declined to participate in the trade talks, rendering the May 1920 to March 1921 negotiations strictly an Anglo-Soviet enterprise.⁷⁵

Although Lloyd George inspired the trade talks, he did not have a free hand to negotiate. His Cabinet colleagues were resolute that there could “be no question of entering into Peace negotiations with the Bolsheviks until they have demonstrated their capacity to conduct an orderly, decent administration in their own country and their intention not to interfere, by propaganda or otherwise, in the affairs of their neighbours.”⁷⁶ Yet Churchill was the only Cabinet member to reject the idea of negotiating with the Soviets unequivocally. Curzon regarded trade talks as an opportunity to secure certain objectives and favoured “an all around settlement.”⁷⁷ He believed that Soviet Russia was on the verge of collapse and was “ready to pay almost any price” for British assistance. For Curzon, the price for this British aid was simple: the repatriation of British prisoners still in Russia; an armistice for the Whites; and, most

⁷³ E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, 3 vols. (London: MacMillan & Co., 1953), III, pp. 148-155.

⁷⁴ Notes of Meeting of the Supreme Council at San Remo, 26 April 1920, DBFP, VIII, no. 20. France and Italy, however, later declined to participate, rendering negotiations a British enterprise. See Curzon to Lloyd George, 28 May 1920, *ibid*, XII, no. 709.

⁷⁵ For the principal meetings of the trade delegates, see *ibid*, VIII, nos. 24, 25, 37, 102, and pp. 866-878.

⁷⁶ Cabinet minutes, 29 January 1920, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, p. 1020.

⁷⁷ Churchill memorandum, 11 May 1920, *ibid*, p. 1089; H.A.L. Fisher diary entry, 27 May 1920, *ibid*, p. 1108.

importantly, a “cessation of Bolshevik hostility” in Persia, the Caucasus, Afghanistan and India. He believed that a “reasonable arrangement” with the Soviet authorities was possible, and he convinced the Cabinet that an “essential condition” of an Anglo-Soviet trade agreement must be a comprehensive political settlement based on the repatriation of British prisoners and on the cessation of Bolshevik propaganda.⁷⁸ Curzon, however, insisted that the trade talks were not intended to make peace with the Soviet Government or to accord them *de jure* recognition.⁷⁹

Curzon was prepared to deal with the Bolsheviks if it would result in greater imperial security. Nevertheless, he was less than gracious about meeting the Russian Trade Delegation. In an oft-recounted scene, Lloyd George had to force Curzon to shake hands with Leonid Krassin, the head of the Russian Trade Delegation, on the opening day of negotiations, 31 May 1920.⁸⁰ Yet this incident does not necessarily mean that Curzon opposed negotiations. He had a very pragmatic view about negotiating with the Bolsheviks:

Suppose a powerful brigand captures an innocent victim, carries him off into captivity, and demands a large ransom for him; you do not because you enter into negotiations with him, because you consent to meet him, even because you consent to pay the price, recognise him as an honourable or as a respectable man – and it is exactly the same in the case of the Bolsheviks.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Curzon memorandum, 27 May 1920, DBFP, XII, no. 708; Conference of Ministers, 28 May 1920, summarised in Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations*, vol. III, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 93-95. Hereafter cited as *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*.

⁷⁹ Curzon to Sir Auckland Geddes, 24 June 1920, DBFP, XII, no. 730.

⁸⁰ Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, p. 97. The minutes of this meeting are printed as “Secretary’s Notes of a Conference of British Ministers with the Head of the Russian Trade Delegation,” 31 May 1920, DBFP, VIII, no. 24.

⁸¹ Curzon, Speech to the House of Lords, 11 February 1919, *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords, 5th ser., vol. XXXIII (1919), cols. 38-47.

Curzon, therefore, was willing to deal with the Soviets in order to achieve his imperial objectives – liking and respecting them was not a prerequisite for negotiations.

Curzon, however, did not play an active role in the trade talks; Austen Chamberlain, Lloyd George, and Sir Robert Horne, the President of the Board of Trade dominated the negotiations. Nevertheless, Curzon's presence was felt throughout the talks – from the beginning of negotiations until the final signing of the agreement. For example, Krassin headed the Russian Trade Delegation because Curzon had adamantly opposed allowing Maxim Litvinov into the country.⁸² More importantly, the terms that he set out in his Cabinet memorandum of 28 May and the subsequent Cabinet decision which was based on that note largely dictated the conditions for the political settlement: the release of British prisoners of war in Russia; the cessation of hostile propaganda; and the recognition of Russian debts and obligations.⁸³

In June 1920 Anglo-Soviet relations began to deteriorate as a result of the Russo-Polish War.⁸⁴ The war not only interrupted Anglo-Soviet trade negotiations, but also served to deepen Curzon's distrust of the Soviets. In April 1920 the Polish army, anxious to recapture territory that had been Polish prior to the kingdom's dissolution in 1772,

⁸² See Gilbert, *The Stricken World*, p. 392. Litvinov had been expelled from England in 1918 for trying to foment a strike and had been permanently denied readmission.

⁸³ Secretary's Notes of a Conference, 31 May 1920, DBFP, VIII, no. 24; Secretary's Notes of a Conference, 7 June 1920, *ibid*, no. 25.

⁸⁴ Note that no trade talks took place between the end of June and the middle of November 1920. On 29 June Krassin handed Lloyd George a note which stated the Soviet terms for the resumption of economic and commercial relations. Two days later, he embarked on a British destroyer *en route* to Moscow with Lloyd George's reply. Although the Soviet Trade Delegation, renamed the Peace Delegation, returned to Britain in August, tense Anglo-Soviet relations precluded any negotiations until November 1920.

invaded the Ukraine and quickly advanced against the war-weary and demoralised Bolsheviks. A Soviet counter-attack in late June forced the Poles into retreat. In desperation, the Poles sought assistance from the Allies, who were meeting at Spa to discuss German reparations. To aid the Poles, the British proposed that armistice negotiations should be opened immediately between Soviet Russia and Poland and that their frontier boundary should be based on the line that the Supreme Council had drawn up at Paris on 8 December 1919.⁸⁵ On 11 July 1920, therefore, Lord Curzon sent Soviet Foreign Commissar Georgii Chicherin a telegram to inform of him of these decisions and to advise him that the British were “bound by the Covenant of the League of Nations to defend the integrity and independence of Poland within the limits of her legitimate ethnographical frontiers.”⁸⁶ This ethnic boundary became known as the Curzon Line –not because the Foreign Secretary had anything to do with its definition, but because he signed the telegram which outlined it. Curzon, therefore, has been credited with the authorship of a “line he never drew in an area he knew little about.”⁸⁷

Although the British regarded the Polish attack on the Soviets as “reckless and foolish,” they realised that a vanquished Poland would threaten European stability. If the Bolsheviks defeated Poland, they would be able march right up to the German frontier.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Notes of a Meeting at Spa, 6 and 9 July 1920, DBFP, VIII, nos. 46, 55; British Secretary’s Notes of a Conversation at Spa, 10 July 1920, *ibid*, no. 59.

⁸⁶ Curzon’s note to Chicherin is reprinted in *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 5th ser., vol. CXXXI (1920), cols. 2372-2374. For the Soviet reply, see Chicherin to Curzon, 17 July 1920, *Soviet Documents*, I, pp. 194-197.

⁸⁷ James R. Hooker, “Lord Curzon and the ‘Curzon Line,’” *Journal of Modern History* 30 (1958), p. 137.

⁸⁸ Lloyd George, Speech to the House of Commons, 21 July 1920, *Parliamentary Debates, Commons*, 5th ser., vol. CXXXII (1920), cols. 481-86.

Consequently, the British Cabinet unanimously supported the Prime Minister's efforts to maintain Poland's independence.⁸⁹

Curzon was responsible for communicating Britain's policy to Chicherin in Moscow,⁹⁰ but he did not play a decisive role in the Russo-Polish War. For example, the British Foreign Secretary attended the negotiations with Poland at Spa, but he was not present at either of Lloyd George's meetings with the Soviet peace delegates, Lev Kamenev and Krassin, on 4 and 6 August.⁹¹ The Prime Minister conducted Britain's approach to the crisis with little reference either to the Foreign Office or to his Foreign Secretary; he relied upon the assistance of Philip Kerr, head of his Private Secretariat.⁹² In Kerr's view, the Foreign Office "had no conception of policy in its wider sense" and "did not understand the necessity for achieving a Russian settlement" before European recovery could take place.⁹³ Thus Churchill's charge that the "P.M. is conducting the business of the Foreign Office with Kerr's assistance" and that they were formulating these schemes which would affect "the lives of millions and the destinies of the world ... behind the scenes" was legitimate in regards to Britain's approach to the Russo-Polish War.⁹⁴ Indeed, the Russo-Polish problem was so far removed from the hands of the

⁸⁹ British Secretary's Notes of a Conference, 27 July 1920, DBFP, VIII, no. 79.

⁹⁰ See for example, Curzon to Chicherin, 20 July 1920, *ibid*, VIII, introductory note, pp. 649-650.

⁹¹ Draft Notes of a Conference, and Appendices, 4 and 6 August 1920, *ibid*, VIII, nos. 81, 82.

When Krassin returned to London in late July 1920, Kamenev, the president of the Moscow Soviet and the head of the Moscow Communist Party organisation, accompanied him as chairman of a "peace delegation" to enter into negotiations with Britain to sign a peace treaty. (See Kamenev to Curzon, 3 August 1920, DBFP, VIII, p. 669.)

⁹² Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Accord*, p. 155.

⁹³ Riddell, diary entry, 12 July 1920, *Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After, 1918-1923* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933), p. 219.

⁹⁴ Riddell, diary entry, 22 July 1920, *ibid*, p. 223.

Foreign Office that Sir Horace Rumbold, the British Minister at Warsaw, complained to Curzon that he had to rely upon press reports and upon what the Poles and the Italian Minister told him for information.⁹⁵

Curzon's exclusion from the settlement of the Russo-Polish War illustrates Lloyd George's determination to control the European aspects of Britain's Russian policy. Yet Curzon did not resent his lack of authority in this policy area. During the summer of 1920, he was preoccupied with trying to maintain a British military presence in Persia. His only interest in the Polish difficulty related to how the war delayed his efforts to settle Britain's policy in the East.⁹⁶

Soviet actions in the Russo-Polish War served to reinforce Curzon's inherent distrust of the Bolsheviks. On 10 August, Kamenev informed Lloyd George that the Soviets would be willing to withdraw from the Polish front and to reduce their troop levels if the Poles demobilised immediately. The Soviets also declared that they would be satisfied with a frontier which was even less favourable to themselves than the Curzon Line. Poland was to limit its armed forces to 50,000 men, together with not more than 10,000 officers and administrative personnel, and a civilian militia to maintain order. No reparations were demanded, but the Polish government was to distribute land to the families of Polish citizens killed or disabled in the war. Lloyd George felt these terms

⁹⁵ Rumbold (Warsaw) to Curzon (Spa), telegram 12 (514 to London), 14 July 1920, DBFP, XI, no. 329.

⁹⁶ Wilson diary entry, 6 August 1920, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, p. 1164; Hooker, p. 138.

were reasonable, and advised the Polish government to accept them.⁹⁷

When the Soviets' terms were finally presented to the Polish delegation on 17 August, however, they included a proviso, which had not been included in the summary communicated to Lloyd George on 10 August, to the effect that the proposed civilian militia should be recruited exclusively from the workers. This stipulation and the provision for the distribution of land were regarded as attempts to facilitate a revolution in Poland. Lloyd George and Curzon protested this manifestation of Soviet duplicity.⁹⁸

These Soviet terms, however, were soon irrelevant. On 16 August the Poles launched a powerful counteroffensive and within a few days the Red Army was in retreat. Chicherin informed Britain that Russia was prepared to waive the demand for an armed militia. Russo-Polish talks resumed at Riga on 20 September, and an armistice and preliminary peace treaty were signed on 12 October.⁹⁹ The Poles' late summer military success rendered the Curzon Line superfluous until the Second World War.

The Russo-Polish War served to deepen Curzon's mistrust of Soviet Russia. Throughout the trade talks, Curzon constantly suspected that there were certain respects in which the Soviet authorities "have either been guilty of a breach of faith or are behaving in a manner which renders friendly negotiation with them very difficult."¹⁰⁰ For

⁹⁷ For a summary of the terms that Kamenev presented Lloyd George, see *The Times*, 11 August 1920; Lloyd George, Speech to the House of Commons, 10 August 1920, *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., CXXXIII, (1920), cols. 253-272, 351-51; Louis Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs: A History of the Relations between the Soviet Union and the Rest of the World, 1917-1929*, 2 vols., 2d ed. (New York: J. Cape & H. Smith, 1951), I, p. 267.

⁹⁸ Notes of a Conversation Held at Lucerne, 23 August 1920, DBFP, VIII, no. 89; Curzon to Chicherin, 23 August 1920, *ibid*, no. 89, n.3.

⁹⁹ The definitive treaty fixing the Soviet-Polish frontier was signed on 18 March 1921.

¹⁰⁰ Curzon memorandum, 27 May 1920, *ibid*, XII, no. 708.

example, in spite of the O'Grady-Litvinov agreement of February 1920 to exchange prisoners, most British prisoners were not repatriated until November 1920.¹⁰¹ The Soviet actions during the Russo-Polish War only exacerbated his hostility. Curzon was outraged by the revelation of the discrepancy between the Soviet peace terms that were presented to Britain on 10 August and to Poland on the 17th.¹⁰² And, like many of his peers, he was outraged by Kamenev's efforts to prevent Britain from helping the Poles through his encouragement of the Council of Action. These acts were discovered because the British government had broken the Soviet cypher codes and was closely monitoring the Soviet delegation's activities.

On 2 September, armed with information from the Soviet intercepts, Curzon called for the expulsion of the Trade Delegation for deception and continued propaganda.¹⁰³ Lloyd George was aware that Bolshevik propaganda was being circulated in Britain, but he was unwilling to sacrifice the prospect of a trade agreement.¹⁰⁴ As the price for continuing negotiations, however, the Prime Minister was forced to denounce

¹⁰¹ Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "Agreement Between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government of Russia for the Exchange of Prisoners, February 1920," Cmd. 587 (1920). Note that Curzon was very concerned about the conditions under which British prisoners were held in Russia. He appointed a special committee in May 1920 to investigate the issue. (See Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "Interim Report of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia," Cmd. 1041 [1920]; Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "Report (Political and Economic) of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia," Cmd. 1240 [1921].)

¹⁰² See note 98 above.

¹⁰³ Christopher Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London: Heinemann, 1985), pp. 262-269; Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Accord*, pp. 270-273, 288.

¹⁰⁴ Rear Admiral Hugh Sinclair, Director of Naval Intelligence, warned J.T. Davies that "strenuous efforts" were being made "to spread Bolshevism among officers and men," and he urged the PM to publish Government Code and Cypher School intercepts to prove that the Trade Delegation was acting in bad faith. See Sinclair to J.T. Davies, 9 September 1920, quoted in *ibid*, p. 289. For Lloyd George's stance, see excerpts of Lloyd George to Bonar Law and Balfour, 29 August 1920, *ibid*, pp. 293-295.

the Russian Trade Delegation's subversive intrigues on 10 September.¹⁰⁵ Five days later, Curzon convinced his colleagues to suspend formal talks until the Soviets had ceased domestic propaganda and had released the remaining British prisoners in Russia.¹⁰⁶ Although this stance led to an acrimonious exchange of notes with Chicherin during the autumn of 1920, Curzon refused to be swayed.¹⁰⁷ The Cabinet did not debate the question of offering the Soviets a draft Trade Agreement until after the exchange of prisoners began on 5 November.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, preparations and discussions continued via the Inter-Departmental Russian Trade Committee under E.F. Wise. Opposed to concluding any agreement until the Soviets had ceased all activities which were hostile to Britain's eastern issues, Curzon refused to take any part in the process by which the terms of the agreement were settled.¹⁰⁹

The release of British prisoners in Russia in November, the conclusion of a Russo-Polish armistice, and the worsening British economy contributed to an improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations. By the autumn of 1920 the British economy was faltering and rising unemployment made the renewal of trade with Russia a political and economic necessity. Lloyd George realised that unless trade with Russia reopened the

¹⁰⁵ Secretary's Notes of a Conference with the Russian Trade Delegation, 10 September 1920, DBFP, VIII, no. 90.

¹⁰⁶ See Roger Thomas Schinness, "The Tories and the Soviets: The British Conservative Reaction to Russia, 1917-1927" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 1972), p. 113; Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, p. 308; M.V. Glenny, "The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement, March 1921," *Journal of Contemporary History* 5, no. 2 (1970), pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁷ For example of these telegrams, see Chicherin to Curzon, 24 September 1920, *Soviet Documents*, I, pp. 211-212; Curzon to Chicherin, 1 October 1920, summarised in DBFP, VIII, p. 866.

¹⁰⁸ Krassin to Curzon, 2 November 1920, DBFP, XII, no. 802; Curzon to Leslie (Reval), 4 November 1920, *ibid*, no. 803.

¹⁰⁹ Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, pp. 411-412.

British public would come to believe that the government's refusal to complete the trade agreement was one of the causes of unemployment.¹¹⁰ Curzon, on the other hand, had mixed feelings; while he would be "glad to see commercial relations established" because of growing unemployment, he feared that an agreement would give the Soviets a "renewed lease of life" which they would use to undermine Britain. He finally decided, however, to sign an agreement provided the Soviets adhered to the terms of the 30 June Anglo-Soviet meeting and to his 15 September memorandum.¹¹¹

Although Curzon was adamant that trade negotiations could not proceed until Bolshevik propaganda ceased,¹¹² Lloyd George disagreed. Consequently, the Prime Minister decided to resolve the issue of the trade agreement at the Cabinet meetings of 17 and 18 November. Whereas Churchill resolutely opposed negotiations even if the Soviet accepted preliminary conditions, Curzon continued to insist upon the cessation of propaganda as a prerequisite to its conclusion.¹¹³ Nevertheless, Lloyd George prevailed, and convinced the Cabinet to conclude a trade agreement with the Soviets.¹¹⁴

Horne and Krassin exchanged draft agreements in early December, and discussions resumed to solve the remaining differences over propaganda and the settling of Russia's debt responsibilities and obligations.¹¹⁵ Progress, however, was slow, and

¹¹⁰ Hankey to Curzon, 12 Nov 1920, quoted in *ibid*, p. 415.

¹¹¹ Curzon, "Russian Trade Negotiations," 14 November 1920, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 416-417.

¹¹² Hankey to Churchill, 9 November 1920, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, pp. 1231-1232.

¹¹³ Churchill memorandum, 16 November 1920, *ibid*, pp. 1237-1241.

¹¹⁴ Cabinet minutes, 18 November 1920, *ibid*, pp. 1242-1246. Also see Hankey diary entries, 17 and 18 November, *Hankey Man of Secrets*, II, pp. 172-173.

¹¹⁵ The Soviet and British draft trade agreements are reprinted in Appendix to a Foreign Office memorandum, 30 December 1920, DBFP, VIII, pp. 869-78.

Curzon and Chicherin exchanged insulting telegrams throughout the winter months.

Curzon was exasperated by the Soviet Commissar's tactics:

With so colossal and finished a liar it is useless to cope. Nor, after my last reply, which I said would be the last of the series, would I propose to do so. The fusilade might go on till the dark-haired among us become grey, the grey-haired white, and the white bald.¹¹⁶

Finally, however, the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement was signed on 16 March 1921. Although Lloyd George had inspired the trade agreement and although Curzon had largely been excluded from its negotiation, both by the Prime Minister and by his own volition, its terms and its tenor reflected the Foreign Secretary's influence. He had doggedly insisted throughout negotiations that any agreement had to safeguard British interests in Asia. Consequently, the agreement's preamble stated that the Soviet government would refrain from encouraging "the peoples of Asia" in actions contrary to British interests, "especially in India and in the Independent State of Afghanistan."¹¹⁷ Thus although Britain had been forced to abandon its other Middle Eastern claims because the Soviet understandings with Persia, Turkey, and Afghanistan and because the Bolshevik control of the Caucasian republics had made them superfluous,¹¹⁸ the British Foreign Secretary succeeded in inserting his propaganda condition into the agreement. Moreover, the agreement paid little attention to Bolshevik activities against the countries of the *cordon sanitaire*, reflecting Curzon's Asian preoccupation and his perception that

¹¹⁶ Curzon memorandum, February 1921, *ibid*, XII, no. 835.

¹¹⁷ Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "Trade Agreement between His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic," Cmd. 1207 (1921).

¹¹⁸ Carr, III, pp. 289-304; Glenny, pp. 80-81.

the Soviet threat to Europe was less important.

The agreement's preamble was not the only way in which Curzon made his presence known on 16 March. Curzon had reminded his Cabinet colleagues on 14 February that they had decided that, if and when a trade agreement was signed, Sir Robert Horne should simultaneously hand a letter to Krassin "indicating in greater detail our evidence as to the steps actually taken by the Soviet Government in propaganda and hostilities in the countries specifically referred to."¹¹⁹ On 16 March, therefore, Horne gave Krassin a letter which detailed Soviet propaganda and subversive activities in Asia, and made it clear that the trade agreement would be short-lived unless such activities ceased.¹²⁰

For the remainder of 1921, Britain and Soviet Russia regarded each other suspiciously while limited trade took place. Opening a file on 1 April 1921 entitled "Violations of the Russian Trade Agreement," Curzon began to gather evidence of Soviet propaganda in Asia. By September he believed that sufficient evidence had been obtained to accuse the Soviet government of breaching the conditions of the trade agreement by inciting subversion in India and its border areas. Consequently, he dispatched a protest note to the Soviet Government on 7 September to draw their attention to the "more flagrant violations" of the agreement.¹²¹ This note led to an

¹¹⁹ Curzon memorandum, 12 February 1921, DBFP, XII, no. 835.

¹²⁰ Horne to Krassin, 16 March 1921, quoted in Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, pp. 479-482.

¹²¹ Curzon to Hodgson (Moscow), 7 September 1921, Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "A Selection of Papers Dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921-1927," Cmd. 2895 (1927), pp. 3-12. Hereafter cited as Cmd. 2895.

acrimonious and fruitless diplomatic exchange between Curzon and Litvinov in the autumn of 1921.¹²² However, there was no real risk that Britain would abrogate the agreement because Lloyd George would never have permitted it.

In December 1921, however, Lloyd George began to plan what would become his final attempt at Anglo-Soviet rapprochement: an international conference on European economic reconstruction. On 16 December the Cabinet gave Lloyd George permission to examine the problem of German reparations and *inter-alia* a scheme to form a syndicate of the Western Powers for the economic reconstruction of Russia, "subject to possible conditions, eg [*sic*] recognition of Russian debts, the control of Russian Railways and Customs and diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Government."¹²³

The Cabinet, however, imposed certain conditions on their possible support for recognising the Soviet government. Although British delegates were given the authority to conduct negotiations at Genoa, they were not to act in isolation or without a general consensus among the states represented at the conference. Furthermore, there could be no advance in British diplomatic relations with Russia unless the Soviet government accepted the Cannes agreements. If the British were convinced that the Soviets accepted these conditions in good faith, Britain would be prepared to receive a Soviet chargé d'affaires in London and to send a British chargé d'affaires to Moscow for a probationary period to facilitate the execution of a formal agreement. Full and ceremonial diplomatic

¹²² See Litvinov to Curzon, 29 September 1921, *Soviet Documents*, I, pp. 257-262; Curzon to Hodgson, 2 November 1921, Cmd. 2895, pp. 17-20.

¹²³ Cabinet minutes, 16 December 1921, as cited in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, p. 1694.

representation would not be granted to the Soviet government by Parliament until they had proven that they had loyally observed the agreement. Moreover, the results of the conference would also be subject to the approval of Parliament.¹²⁴ The Prime Minister's room for diplomatic manoeuvre at Genoa, therefore, was severely constrained by domestic political considerations. Unionist backbenchers opposed formal recognition of the Soviets unless they recognised their debt and other international obligations, and Churchill threatened to leave the Government if *de jure* recognition was granted.¹²⁵

Although Curzon was less hostile to the notion of *de jure* recognition than he had been in the past, he opposed "an unfettered discretion to grant or to refuse recognition," believing that it should depend upon what the Soviets and the other powers did at Genoa.¹²⁶ In the minutes of the 16 December Cabinet meeting which authorised Lloyd George to proceed with the Genoa Conference, Curzon stated that he wanted "to reserve his opinion as diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Government."¹²⁷ Thus Curzon accepted both the spirit of the Cannes Resolutions and the possibility of recognition.¹²⁸ He did not oppose the substance of Lloyd George's policy of recognition; he was simply unwilling to grant it unreservedly.

Curzon did not attend the conference due to illness, and dreading that Lloyd

¹²⁴ Jones diary entry, 28 March 1921, *Whitehall Diary*, pp. 195-197; Cabinet minutes, 28 March 1922, in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, pp. 1834-1835.

¹²⁵ Churchill to Curzon, 24 December 1921, *ibid*, pp. 1699-1701; Chamberlain to Lloyd George, 21 March 1922, *ibid*, pp. 1814-1815.

¹²⁶ Curzon to Chamberlain, 25 March 1922, quoted in Ronaldshay, III, p. 295.

¹²⁷ Cabinet minutes, 16 December 1921, quoted in Gilbert, *Churchill*, companion vol. IV, p. 1694.

¹²⁸ Carole Fink, *The Genoa Conference: European Diplomacy, 1921-1922* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 138.

George might commit Great Britain to some disastrous agreement with the Soviets, he followed the events of the Genoa “debacle” very closely. The conclusion of the Russo-German Rapallo Treaty on 16 April reinforced Curzon’s perception of Soviet duplicity. He wrote to Chamberlain: “Every word that I prophesied about the trade agreement has turned out to be true. The trade has been a farce while the propaganda has continued and is still continuing unabated.” He feared that if the Prime Minister returned with a proposed recognition of the Soviet regime in return for a “patched up and illusory agreement” the party would split and break up the British government.¹²⁹ He also denounced any dealings with the “rascally crew” until their machinations in India ceased.¹³⁰

To Curzon’s relief, Lloyd George did not return from Genoa with an unsuitable agreement with the Soviets. Genoa’s successor conference at The Hague was also fruitless in this regard. The meetings at Genoa and The Hague proved to be Lloyd George’s final attempts to improve Anglo-Soviet relations before his Coalition government crumbled in October 1922.¹³¹ The two states “reverted to a position of mutual distrust and watchfulness.”¹³²

¹²⁹ Curzon to Chamberlain, 13 May 1922, quoted in Ronaldshay, III, pp. 296-297.

¹³⁰ Curzon to Lady Curzon, 13 May 1922, quoted in *ibid*, pp. 297-298.

¹³¹ For the events leading to the end of the Lloyd George Coalition, see Beaverbrook, pp. 170-226; Robert Blake, *The Unknown Prime Minister: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law, 1858-1923*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), pp. 446-501. After Bonar Law was elected Leader of the Unionist party, Parliament was dissolved on 26 October and in the general election of 15 November, the Unionists won a majority.

¹³² G.H. Bennett, *British Foreign Policy during the Curzon Period, 1919-1924* (London: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), p. 72.

CHAPTER FIVE

FOREIGN SECRETARY IN NAME AND DEED: CURZON UNDER BONAR LAW AND BALDWIN

David Lloyd George's Conservative successors, Andrew Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin, were largely content to follow the pattern of Anglo-Soviet relations established by his Coalition government. Much of this continuity may be attributed to Curzon's continuing tenure at the Foreign Office. The fall of Lloyd George, however, allowed Curzon to dominate Britain's foreign policy, including its approach towards Soviet Russia. Bonar Law and Baldwin had little interest in foreign policy and were content to allow their Foreign Secretary to frame it. Moreover, they had both witnessed Lloyd George's treatment of Curzon and were determined not to behave the same way.¹

Bonar Law and Baldwin also reinstated the decentralised mode of government which had existed prior to Lloyd George's administration. Consequently, the "Garden Suburb" was abolished, the Cabinet Secretariat was reduced both in size and in scope, and their duties were assigned back to the Foreign Office.² These rivals to the Foreign Office's supremacy, therefore, largely disappeared. Ever sensitive, however, Curzon continued to regard his general position as under siege by his Cabinet colleagues.³ His control of Britain's Russian policy, however, was unquestionable. He dictated Britain's

¹ Stephen Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets*, 2 vols. (London: St. James Place, 1972) II, pp. 214-215; Robert Blake, *The Unknown Prime Minister: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law, 1858-1923*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), pp. 466, 482; Keith Middlemas and John Barnes, *Baldwin: A Biography*, (London: Macmillan Co., 1969), p. 178.

² Ephraim Maisel, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1919-1926* (Brighton, East Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 1994), p. 84.

³ Curzon to Baldwin, 22 October 1923, quoted in Maisel, p. 87.

approach at Lausanne and he was both the architect and the builder of the May 1923 ultimatum to Moscow.

Although the change in government provided him with the opportunity to take a more hostile and forceful line towards the Bolsheviks, Curzon did not immediately transform Britain's Russian policy. When Bonar Law's administration was formed in October 1922, Curzon declared that the world's ills would be cured "not by startling dramatic strokes, not by a policy of haughty isolation, but by compromise, by co-operation, and by goodwill."⁴ This sentiment, however, did not apply to Russia for very long.

Curzon's diplomatic independence was first illustrated at the Lausanne Conference (20 November 1922 – 4 February 1923) that was convened to set a final peace with Kemalist Turkey.⁵ Although the Foreign Secretary did not want to invite Russia to the conference, he reluctantly bowed to French and Italian pressure and agreed to Soviet participation. However, he insisted that the Soviets could only participate during the proceedings on the future of the Straits.⁶ Nevertheless, Curzon remained convinced that their "special and inveterate hostility towards the British Empire" would

⁴ *The Times*, 24 October 1922, p. 18.

⁵ See Briton Cooper Busch, *Mudros to Lausanne: Britain's Frontier in West Asia, 1918-1923* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1976) pp. 384-389; Michael L. Dockrill and J. Douglas Goold, *Peace without Promise: Britain and the Peace Conferences, 1919-1923* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational, Ltd., 1981), pp. 243-247. For a comprehensive account of the Lausanne Conference from the British perspective, see Harold Nicolson, *Curzon: The Last Phase, 1919-1925: A Study in Post-War Diplomacy* (London: Constable, 1934; reprint, New York: Howard Fertig, 1974), chs. 10 and 11.

⁶ *Documents in British Foreign Policy*, First Series (London: HMSO, 1948-), XVIII, no. 61 n. 103. Hereafter cited as DBFP; Curzon to Hardinge (Paris), 12 October 1922, *ibid*, no. 121; Peters (Moscow) to Curzon, 27 October 1922, *ibid*, no. 138. For the Soviet reply of 2 November 1922 to the invitation to Lausanne, see Jane Degras, ed., *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 342-345. Hereafter cited as *Soviet Documents*.

ensure that there would be “nothing but hostility” from the Soviet representatives at Lausanne and that they would oppose any British initiatives. Curzon firmly believed that the Bolsheviks were “Communists with wide Imperial aspirations,” and that any non-Russian solution to the Straits problem would be “incompatible with Soviet dreams” of controlling Constantinople.⁷

Although Curzon was less than enthusiastic about Soviet participation at the peace talks, the Lausanne Conference proved to be a victory for the British Foreign Secretary by re-establishing both his renown and his self-confidence as a statesman.⁸ To achieve his objective of restoring the diplomatic reputations both of Britain and of himself, he had a threefold agenda. He wanted to ensure the freedom of the Straits, to procure Mosul for Iraq, and to drive a wedge between Angora and Moscow. He felt that presiding over the conference would enable him not only to control developments, but also to enhance Britain’s prestige. Consequently, he capitalised on his authority and on his experience and secured the presidency both of the conference and of its commission on territorial and military questions.⁹

As he had hoped, Curzon was largely successful in dividing the Turks and the Soviets. Under the terms of its 1921 treaty with the Soviets, Turkey was obliged to regard the question of the Straits as the concern of the states which bordered upon the

⁷ Cabinet minutes, 1 November 1922, quoted in Stephen White, *Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution* (London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1979), p. 150; Conference minutes, 29 September 1922, *ibid*, p. 150.

⁸ For details of the Lausanne negotiations, see Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, “Records of Proceedings of the Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, 1922-1923, and Draft Terms of Peace,” Cmd. 1814 (1923). Hereafter cited as Cmd. 1814; DBFP, XVIII, chs. II-IV.

⁹ Nicolson, p. 282.

Black Sea. The Soviets contended that “the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus must be permanently closed both in peace and in war to warships, armed vessels and military aircraft of all countries except Turkey.”¹⁰ The British, on the other hand, wanted open, demilitarised Straits and to allow the Turks to fortify the southern shores of Marmora. Curzon managed to convince Turkey to accept Britain’s position. Consequently, on 24 July 1923, after prolonged negotiations, the participating states concluded a peace treaty and accepted a Straits convention which was based upon Curzon’s proposal.¹¹ The British Foreign Secretary regarded his success in convincing Turkey to accept Britain’s plan for the Straits as marking “a definite break away by Turks from Russian thraldom.”¹² He regarded the rupture of the growing alliance between Angora and Moscow and the thwarting of Soviet desires as a great victory.

Curzon’s smug superiority towards the Soviets was also revealed at a private meeting with Soviet Foreign Commissar Georgii Chicherin during the Lausanne Conference. Curzon welcomed the opportunity to speak frankly with his Soviet counterpart during this private interview. Chicherin remarked that the Soviets had the impression that the present British government was “more hostile than their predecessors.” Curzon agreed that “no Prime Minister could have been more disposed towards closer relations with Russia and certainly none had worked harder to achieve

¹⁰ Cmd. 1814, p. 129.

¹¹ Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, “Treaty of Peace with Turkey, and Other Instruments, signed at Lausanne on July 24, 1923, together with Agreements between Greece and Turkey signed on January 30, 1923, and Subsidiary Documents forming part of the Turkish Peace Settlement,” Cmd. 1929 (1923). When the Lausanne convention on the Straits was formally signed in Rome on 14 August 1923, the Soviets refused to ratify it or to participate in the International Commission set up for the Straits.

¹² Curzon (Lausanne) to Crowe, 20 December 1920, DBFP, XVIII, no. 284.

them than Mr. Lloyd George.” However, he emphasised that no further progress towards conciliation could be made unless the Soviets desisted from the “pestilent activity” of intriguing in areas such as Afghanistan, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia. He also stressed that he had been “primarily responsible for paragraphs in the trade agreement renouncing political propaganda against the British Empire, notably in the East.”¹³ This meeting not only illustrated Curzon’s rather imperious and belligerent manner in dealing with the Soviets, but also underscored his eastern preoccupation and his interest in Bolshevik propaganda. In other words, it foreshadowed the events of the spring of 1923.

Although the Lausanne Conference and Curzon’s private meeting with Chicherin reflected the Foreign Secretary’s interest in the East and in imperial matters, these issues did not appear to be the focus of his attentions in the diplomatic barrage which preceded the infamous Curzon ultimatum of May 1923. On 30 March 1923 a Soviet court condemned Cardinal Cieplak, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Petrograd, to ten years solitary confinement and sentenced his aide, Monsignor Butkevich, to death for treasonous activities during the Civil and Russo-Polish Wars. The verdict created an uproar in the West.¹⁴ Curzon directed Robert Hodgson, the British agent in Moscow, to ask for a stay of execution.¹⁵ In their reply to this request, the Soviets accused the British

¹³ Curzon to Crowe, 17 December 1922, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print, Part II: From the First to Second World Wars. Series A: The Soviet Union, 1917-1939*, ed. Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984-), VII, no. 5. Hereafter cited as FOCP.

¹⁴ See for example, *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords, 5th ser., vol. LIII (1923), cols. 454-58, 459-60; *The Times*, 28 March 1923.

¹⁵ Hodgson to Chicherin, 30 March 1923, Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, “Correspondence between His Majesty’s Government and the Soviet Government Respecting the Relations between the Two Governments,” Cmd. 1869 (1923), p. 2. Hereafter cited as Cmd. 1869.

of interfering in their domestic affairs and chided them for being hypocrites who were “responsible for the assassination in cold blood of political prisoners” in Ireland, India, and Egypt. Moreover, with calculated offence, the note was signed by a minor bureaucrat, Gregory Weinstein, the head of the Foreign Commissariat’s Anglo-American section, rather than by Foreign Commissar Chicherin or by Deputy Commissar Litvinov.¹⁶ Due to its impertinent tone, Hodgson refused to accept the note, whereupon four days later Weinstein sent a similar message reiterating the Kremlin’s stand.¹⁷

Britain’s request for clemency for the Russian ecclesiastics was disregarded, and the Soviets’ inflammatory notes to Hodgson had significant diplomatic repercussions. Upon hearing from Hodgson about Weinstein’s replies, Curzon seized upon this opportunity and began to examine the possible effects of canceling the trade agreement.¹⁸ Because he often relied upon the advice of his subordinates to help him frame policy, Curzon initiated Foreign Office discussions on the advisability of breaking off relations with Soviet Russia and sent a telegraph to Moscow asking Hodgson for his opinion.¹⁹ Officials such as Owen O’Malley, Ronald Lindsay, and J.D. Gregory compiled lengthy minutes on the issue.²⁰ Gregory, the head of the Northern Department at the Foreign Office, cautioned against abrogation because it was a weapon that could only be used once. He felt that cancellation should be saved until it had a “reasonable chance of upsetting the Bolsheviks or at least of dealing an effective blow at its stability” and that

¹⁶ Weinstein to Hodgson, 31 March 1923, *ibid*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁷ Weinstein to Hodgson, 4 April 1923, *ibid*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁸ Hodgson to Curzon, 1 April 1923, DBFP, XXV, no. 41.

¹⁹ Curzon to Hodgson, 10 April 1923, FOCP, VI, no. 238.

²⁰ DBFP, XXV, no. 46, n. 7.

this moment had not yet arrived. Thus Gregory recommended a continuation of existing policy.²¹ The Department of Overseas Trade also opposed a rupture of relations, fearing a reduction of trade.²² From Moscow, Hodgson reported that a break would have multiple effects. It would increase the power of Soviet extremists and precipitate a return of terror. Moreover, Britain would be excluded from benefiting from Russia's economic recovery and would be deprived of its listening post and its moderating influence inside Russia. Hodgson, however, was willing to convince Chicherin that the threat to cancel the trade agreement was not idle talk.²³ O'Malley suggested an ultimatum: "The fact that we had not acted precipitately but had given the Bolsheviks an opportunity to retreat would be to our advantage."²⁴ Curzon decided to follow O'Malley's advice.

Yet the fate of the ecclesiastics and the public's outcry over the issue was not the primary motivating factor behind Curzon's decision to consider cancelling the trade agreement. During the Foreign Office discussions on the possible approaches to take towards the Soviets, Curzon circulated a memorandum to the Cabinet on 9 April entitled "The Policy of the Russian Soviet Government, March 1921-December 1922."²⁵ Although most of the document criticised Lloyd George's Russian policy, specifically the Genoa Conference, its presentation to the Cabinet at this time signified that Russian

²¹ Gregory memorandum, 31 March 1923, quoted in Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), p. 111.

²² Memorandum by the Overseas Trade Department, 17 April 1923, FOCP, VI, no. 242.

²³ Hodgson to Curzon, 13 April 1923, FOCP, VI, no. 239.

²⁴ O'Malley, minute, 11 April 1923, quoted in Roger Thomas Schinness, "The Tories and the Soviets: The British Conservative Reaction to Russia, 1917-1927" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 1972), p. 178.

²⁵ This memorandum by Owen O'Malley is printed in the Preface of DBFP, XIX, pp. ix-xii.

affairs were the Foreign Secretary's highest priority. Moreover, although Curzon did not believe that Britain's policy should be "guided wholly by what is absurdly called public opinion," he was willing to take advantage of the situation to pester the Soviets and to achieve his objectives. Besides, in his view, the masses were not overly upset by the situation in Russia because of "the amazing apathy of the public about anything short of a murder, a divorce case, or a football match."²⁶ Curzon, therefore, used the fate of the Russian clergymen as an opportunity to act on the issue that truly concerned him - the "overwhelming" evidence of Soviet propaganda in the East which "flagrantly violated" the terms of the trade agreement.²⁷

When he finally broached the topic of cancelling the agreement to the Cabinet on 25 April, the Foreign Secretary did not dwell upon the fate of the ecclesiastics. Rather, he announced that another British trawler had been impounded off Murmansk.²⁸ Referring to "the unsatisfactory and discourteous attitude of the Russian Soviet Government, including ... such matters as propaganda contrary to the Trade Agreement," Curzon requested the Cabinet's permission to send a note to the Russian government citing Britain's various complaints, specifically the trawlers, propaganda, and the Weinstein notes. His colleagues agreed to this request, and the Cabinet decided that if an acceptable

²⁶ Curzon memorandum, 12 April 1923, DBFP, XXV, no. 46, n. 7.

²⁷ Curzon to Hodgson, 10 April 1923, FOCP, VI, no. 238.

²⁸ Whereas Britain recognized the international three-mile zone, the USSR had unilaterally proclaimed a twelve-mile limit. Two British-owned vessels, the "Magneta" and the "St Hubert" were arrested off the northern Russian coast in March 1922. In March 1923 a steam trawler, the "James Johnson," was arrested off the Murman coast. See Louis Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs: A History of the Relations between the Soviet Union and the Rest of the World, 1917-1929*, 2 vols. 2d ed. (New York: J. Cape & H. Smith, 1951), I, pp. 442-443; White, *Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution*, pp. 155-157.

reply was not given shortly, “our present *de facto* relations would be severed.”²⁹ Three days after this Cabinet decision, Curzon minuted: “We have ... decided to throw the responsibility of a rupture – if a rupture there is to be – upon Russia.”³⁰

On 2 May the Cabinet approved Curzon’s draft note which documented the alleged Soviet misdeeds and the ultimatum was sent to Moscow. Significantly, although individual words and phrases were altered in response to Cabinet comments, neither the substance nor the tone of Curzon’s draft was criticised. The ultimatum declared that whereas Britain had “loyally and scrupulously observed” the undertakings contained in the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement of March 1921, the Soviet government had “consistently and flagrantly violated” the agreement’s conditions. It quoted Government Code and Cypher School decodes of intercepted diplomatic correspondence extensively to substantiate its charges of the Soviets’ “pernicious” activities such as arms shipments and Comintern subsidies to revolutionaries in India, Afghanistan, and Persia. Given Curzon’s known predilection for studying the Soviet intercepts “with almost obsessional interest” the use of this information source is not surprising.³¹ He convinced the Cabinet that the advantages of basing Britain’s case on extracts from intercepted Soviet despatches outweighed the disadvantages of possibly disclosing the information’s secret source.³²

²⁹ Cabinet minutes, 25 April 1923, quoted in Schinness, p. 181.

³⁰ Curzon minute, 28 April 1923, DBFP, XXV, no. 46 n. 7.

³¹ Christopher Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London: Heinemann, 1985), pp. 292-293

³² Cabinet conclusions, 2 May 1923, DBFP, XXV, no. 53, n.1.

Curzon's ultimatum called for the cessation of Bolshevik propaganda in India, Afghanistan, and Persia and for the removal of Soviet diplomats in Kabul and Teheran. In addition, hearkening back to the ostensible justification for sending the ultimatum in the first place, Curzon demanded that the Soviets end their interference with British trawlers outside the three-mile limit, the release of those boats and crews that had been arrested, and the unequivocal retraction of Weinstein's notes regarding the ecclesiastics. It also demanded compensation for "outrages" committed against British subjects, specifically the execution of Mr. C.F. Davison and the unlawful imprisonment of Mrs. Stan Harding in 1920. The note declared that unless the Bolshevik government satisfactorily complied with these matters within ten days, the trade agreement would be cancelled.³³

The memorandum was a vivid and supreme example of Curzon's imperious diplomatic style and reflected his political priorities. Its focus on Soviet propaganda in Asia reflected his ceaseless preoccupation with the East. British trawlers and outrages on British citizens were seemingly regarded as lesser matters. Given that the Soviet treatment of British trawlers and the persecution of the Russian ecclesiastics had provided the original justification for sending the ultimatum, the lack of emphasis on these issues illustrates that Curzon probably used them as excuses to justify a possible break in relations with the Soviet Union. Moreover, the death of Mr. Davison and the imprisonment of Mrs. Harding had both occurred in 1920, and there had been continued correspondence between Britain and the Soviet Union regarding these two cases since

³³ Curzon memorandum, 2 May 1923, Cmd. 1869, pp. 5-13.

that time.³⁴ Thus it is more likely that Curzon included these incidents in the ultimatum out of a wish to list additional complaints of Soviet misdeeds rather than out of real concern for ensuring compensation for these indignities. Further, although Russian debts and confiscated private property were still a contentious issue given the failure of the Urquhart agreement,³⁵ they were not even alluded to in the Curzon ultimatum. The government later explained that the subject would “only have prejudiced the more limited issues” in the ultimatum and that the Soviets would have abandoned the trade agreement rather than settle debts.³⁶ Yet if Curzon had truly wanted to abrogate the trade agreement, he would have included the issue of debts in order to ensure that the Soviets were responsible for cancelling the agreement. The fact that the matter of debts was not included illustrates that Curzon did not decide to dispatch the ultimatum with the sole purpose of rupturing relations. Rather, its exclusion is typical of Curzon’s disinterest in

³⁴ In September 1919 Mr. C.F. Davison was arrested and imprisoned by Soviet authorities. Four months later, he was executed for counter-revolutionary activity. Mrs. Stan Harding went to Soviet Russia in June 1920 as a correspondent for the *New York World*. She was subsequently arrested and placed in solitary confinement, accused of being a member of the British intelligence service. In November 1920 she was finally permitted to return to Britain. See Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, “Correspondence between His Majesty’s Government and the Soviet Government respecting the Murder of Mr. C. F. Davison in January 1920,” Cmd. 1846 (1923); Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, “Correspondence with the Russian Soviet Government respecting the Imprisonment of Mrs. Stan Harding in Russia,” Cmd. 1602 (1923).

³⁵ The Soviet government negotiated Leslie Urquhart, Chairman of Russo-Asiatic Consolidate Limited and President of the Committee for British Industrial Interests in Russia, to settle the issue of nationalised property and concessions. Although acting privately, Urquhart was seen by the Soviets as a representative of the British government and they hoped that an agreement with him would influence Britain to move towards full diplomatic recognition. Immediately after the agreement was signed on 9 September 1922, however, the British sought to exclude Russia from the Lausanne Conference. This act induced Lenin to intervene and prevent the ratification of the agreement. (See Sir Curtis Keeble, *Britain and the Soviet Union, 1917-89* [London: Macmillan Press, 1990], p. 89.)

³⁶ Notes respecting an Interview with a Deputation from the Association of British Creditors of Russia, 26 July 1923, DBFP, XXV, no. 126.

economic matters and his focus on political questions, especially imperial issues in the East.

The Curzon ultimatum, therefore, reflected the British Foreign Secretary's belligerent approach to foreign policy and his personal perception of the most important issues in Britain's external affairs. It also bore some resemblance to his 7 September 1921 note to the Soviet Government. Yet although the earlier occasion had led to an acrimonious correspondence between Curzon and Chicherin, the existence of the trade agreement was never at risk in the 1921 notes because Lloyd George would not have allowed it.³⁷ In 1923, however, abrogation was a real possibility. As G.H. Bennett has shown, Curzon had never been a strong advocate for the trade agreement and he was willing to use it as a lever to gain concessions from the Soviet government. Moreover, Curzon would benefit whether the agreement was cancelled or not. If the trade agreement was repudiated, the rank and file of the Unionist Party would applaud him. If on the other hand, the Soviets complied with Britain's terms, he would be acclaimed for publicly humiliating them.³⁸

On 9 May the Soviets received Curzon's ultimatum, and the British press published it the next day. *The Times* reported that the majority of Britain's commercial and industrial interests felt that the government had had no alternative and most Tory

³⁷ See chapter 4, p. 34. For Curzon's 1921 note and for a selection of the resulting correspondence, see Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "A Selection of Papers dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921-1927," Cmd. 2895 (1927).

³⁸ G.H. Bennett, *British Foreign Policy during the Curzon Period, 1919-1924* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 73.

M.P.s were pleased with Curzon's action.³⁹ The Soviets, on the other hand, were indignant. They maintained that the note was simply a pretext to re-impose the blockade or to renew military intervention. After all, the question of propaganda and anti-British activities in the East had long been a subject of diplomatic correspondence, the ill-treatment of Davison and Harding had taken place in 1920, and Moscow did not believe that the trawler issue was serious enough to justify such drastic action. Although offended by the note, the Soviets realised that its tone and its ten-day ultimatum signified that it was not an idle threat and they did not want to cancel the agreement because Moscow feared the economic and political consequences of a break. Since the spring of 1922, Lenin had been incapacitated by multiple strokes, Germany seemed ready to collapse under the Ruhr invasion, Poland and Rumania might take advantage of the situation and launch an invasion, and the loss of the British market might harm the New Economic Policy.⁴⁰ A rupture of the tenuous Anglo-Soviet relationship at this precarious time could be disastrous for the Soviet regime.

The Bolsheviks, therefore, decided to accede to Britain's demands even if they questioned their validity. In their reply to the Curzon ultimatum on 13 May, the Kremlin agreed to withdraw the Weinstein notes, to compensate Mrs. Harding and the family of Mr. Davison, and to submit the question of territorial waters to an international conference to settle the dispute. Moscow, however, cited hostile British activities in

³⁹ *The Times*, 10 May 1923, pp. 14 & 16.

⁴⁰ For representative Soviet comments, see Xenia Joukoff Eudin and Harold H. Fisher, eds., *Soviet Russia and the West, 1920-1927: A Documentary Survey* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), pp. 187-89. For an illustrative discussion on the Russian response to the ultimatum, see Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, I, pp. 443-447.

Russia and Asia and maintained that they did not engage in propaganda in the East. Thus Moscow refused to satisfy the demands regarding the most important issue of the Curzon ultimatum.⁴¹

Krassin spoke with Curzon in London on 17 May in an attempt to prevent a diplomatic rupture and to settle the ultimatum's outstanding issues.⁴² J.D. Gregory noted that when Krassin and Curzon met "there was no recrimination and no bitterness. Lord Curzon was courteous, firm, and extremely clever with Krassin: he was in fact at his best."⁴³ The Anglo-Soviet dispute, however, remained unresolved. Six days later Krassin submitted a note to Curzon which reiterated the concessions listed in the Soviet reply of 13 May, adding that compensation would be paid to British seamen and that the Soviets would observe a three-mile limit until a conference had definitively regulated the matter. Moscow, however, continued to deny that they had violated the trade agreement's propaganda clause.⁴⁴ The British remained resolute. Sir Eyre Crowe minuted:

M. Krassin's note offers satisfaction on all the points in our ultimatum except that relating to propaganda – which is the most important of all. For it is in respect to propaganda that the Soviet government have shown their deliberate hostility to this country, thereby systematically and shamefully violating the trade agreement. If we allow them to ride out on concessions on the other points, and condone their propaganda we shall be admitting that they can continue to break the trade agreement with impunity.

⁴¹ Hodgson to Curzon, 13 May 1923, Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "Reply of Soviet Government to His Majesty's Government respecting the Relations between the Two Governments," Cmd. 1874 (1923), pp. 2-8.

⁴² Notes of a Meeting between Curzon and Krassin, 17 May 1923, FOCP, VI, no. 254.

⁴³ J. D. Gregory, *On the Edge of Democracy: Rambles and Collections, 1908-1928* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1929), p. 14.

⁴⁴ Krassin, memorandum, 23 May 1923, Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, "Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government respecting the Relations between the two Governments," Cmd. 1890 (1923), pp. 3-4. Hereafter cited as Cmd. 1890.

Consequently, Crowe argued that Britain should “persist in our demands being fully met.”⁴⁵ Curzon concurred.

The chance of an Anglo-Soviet rupture, however, became less likely when Stanley Baldwin, rather than Curzon, replaced the ailing Bonar Law as Prime Minister on 22 May.⁴⁶ Baldwin, like his predecessor, gave Curzon almost complete independence in foreign affairs because he knew that Curzon was talented, hardworking, and had a flair for diplomacy. He also understood that he had an implicit obligation to his former rival.⁴⁷ However, the new Prime Minister emphasised that “we must try to avoid a break with Russia” because he understood that Britain relied upon its export trade.⁴⁸

On 29 May Curzon sent a note to Krassin which noted that the Soviet reply of 23 May “in large measure” satisfied Britain’s original claims. Because the “all-important question” of hostile propaganda against the British Empire and British institutions continued, he made some recommendations to solve the impasse. He called for the recall rather than the dismissal of Soviet agents in Kabul and Teheran. He also included the text of a new declaration on propaganda for the Soviet government to endorse which was more specific than the obligations contained in the trade agreement.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Sir Eyre Crowe, minute, 23 May 1923, DBFP, XXV, no. 78 n. 5.

⁴⁶ In May 1923 Bonar Law resigned the premiership because he was dying of throat cancer. Curzon was not offered the premiership because last minute backstairs political intrigue and the belief that, in a democratic age, a Prime Minister could not be in the House of Lords resulted in the appointment of Stanley Baldwin in his stead. For Curzon’s response to the events surrounding Baldwin’s appointment, see Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon. Being the Authorized Biography of Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.*, 3 vols. (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1928), III, pp. 349-354.

⁴⁷ Middlemas and Barnes, p. 179.

⁴⁸ Thomas Jones diary entry, 28 May 1923, *Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary*, ed. Keith Middlemas, vol. I, 1916-1925 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 237-238.

⁴⁹ Foreign Office Memorandum communicated to Krassin, 29 May 1923, Cmd. 1890, pp. 4-9.

Moscow agreed to pay the sum that the British had recommended for compensating for the outrages against Mr. Davidson and Mrs. Harding and to sign the more specific declaration on propaganda. Although the Soviets refused to recall their representatives at Kabul and Teheran, Curzon soon learned that the Soviet chargé at Kabul, who was then in Moscow, would not return to his post. Finally willing to compromise in view of this "capitulation," Curzon accepted that Mr. Shumiatsky would remain at Teheran. He insisted, however, that this appointment would only continue as long as he "fully and consistently" complied with the terms of the new propaganda agreement. With this memorandum, the correspondence relating to the Curzon ultimatum ended.⁵⁰

Thus, with the partial exception of the Soviet representative at Teheran, the USSR eventually complied with all the terms of Curzon's memorandum. *The Times* congratulated the Foreign Secretary on the "refreshing vigour and resolution in dealing with a Government which has displayed special enmity towards the British Empire" and which was a "tyranny more bloodthirsty than that of any Tsar."⁵¹ Curzon regarded the entire situation as a personal triumph. He wrote: "I think that I may claim to have won a considerable victory over the Soviet Government, and I expect them to behave with more circumspection for some time to come."⁵² Characteristically, he did not consider the fact that the Soviet government could also claim to be victors because they had managed to avert the rupture of the trade agreement.

⁵⁰ Krassin to Curzon, 9 June 1921, *ibid.*, no. 3; Curzon to Krassin, 13 January 1923, FOCP, VII, no. 5.

⁵¹ *The Times*, 14 June 1923.

After the resolution of the Curzon ultimatum, Anglo-Soviet relations reverted to a position of mutual distrust and hostility until the advent of the Labour government in January 1924. Although there were recriminations about unfriendly Russian speeches and press articles, as well as altercations over British fishing rights and trawlers and over appointments to the Russian Trade Delegation in London,⁵³ Russia did not dominate Curzon's focus for the remainder of his tenure at the Foreign Office. His entire goal had been to make it clear to the Soviets that Britain would not consider relations with them unless they behaved in a "civilised" manner and respected British interests and nationals. After the success of his ultimatum, he had, in his view, achieved this objective. Yet Curzon never embraced the Bolsheviks. In October 1923, he lamented that Russia remained under a form of government which was unlikely to be displaced even though it was "detestable in its principles and in much of its practice ... because every body or agency that could dispute its strength has been eviscerated or destroyed."⁵⁴ Thus although his hatred of the Bolsheviks persisted, he had come to realise that the Soviet regime was stronger than he had expected and that it would not end any time soon.

⁵² Curzon to Lord Crewe, 13 June 1923, quoted in Ronaldshay, III, p. 356.

⁵³ See DBFP, XXV, nos. 129, 130, 131, 133, 134, 137, 139, 147, 172, 184, 199.

⁵⁴ Curzon speech at Imperial Conference, 5 October 1923, quoted in Ronaldshay, III, pp. 294-295.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Like many people who came of age in the late Victorian era, George Nathaniel Curzon was an ardent imperialist who was dedicated to protecting Britain's international reputation and position. He earnestly believed that Britain's strength and greatness rested on its control of India. Because he linked the *Raj* with Britain's worldwide ascendancy, Curzon was preoccupied with defending India against any and all threats. He was convinced that if India was ever genuinely threatened, Britain's prestige would be damaged.

Prior to the signing of the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907, Curzon's preoccupation with protecting India dominated his perception of Tsarist Russia, Britain's longstanding rival in Asia. Because he believed that Russia lacked a comprehensive Central Asian policy and had an unquenchable passion for territorial aggrandisement, he thought that Russia posed the greatest threat to India. To safeguard India, Curzon felt that Russia must not be allowed to acquire a position in Central Asia that it could use as leverage against Britain. He insisted that an active frontier policy that demonstrated military strength would strengthen Britain's political position and provide the best means of ensuring India's safety.

Curzon's writings and his travels through the East in the 1880s and 1890s reinforced his views on Russia and India that he had developed during his youth at Eton and Oxford, and earned him a reputation as a Russophobe. His experiences as

Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1895-1898) and as Viceroy of India (1898-1905) served to cement not only this notoriety, but also his perception that his views towards Russia and India were indisputable. In both these political positions, Curzon pressured the British government to frame a firm and consistent policy in Asia to serve as a warning to Russia and to Asian potentates. Although he succeeded in convincing Britain to adopt active policies towards Chitral, Wei-hai-wei, and Persia, he was less successful towards Afghanistan and Tibet as the British government became less and less willing to enact forward policies and risk frontier complications.

Although most British diplomatic officials tended to echo Curzon's assessment of India's importance and of Russian diplomatic goals, they did not support the concept of an active frontier policy. By 1900 they had come to realise that Britain's international position was weakening and that persistent Anglo-Russian antagonism was becoming costly. Consequently, they began to consider Anglo-Russian rapprochement as a better means of ensuring British security in India than a forward policy.

Curzon, however, was generally unwilling to accept the fact that Britain had limited resources to devote to India. He opposed the notion of rapprochement with Russia if this policy was being considered because of a perception of British weakness. After Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War and its 1905 revolution, Curzon's perception of the Russian threat to India abated. Consequently, he abhorred the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 not because he opposed the concept of rapprochement, but because the agreement did not capitalise on Russia's weakness sufficiently.

After the signing of the 1907 entente, however, Curzon remained focused on the need to protect Britain's imperial status. Yet the focus of his attention on Russia decreased, and, after the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, he began to centre his attention on Germany's threat to India. Russia's collapse in 1917 further increased the German menace by providing the Central Powers with a new avenue of approach to India via the Caucasus.

The Russian Revolutions of 1917 forced Curzon to re-evaluate his views on Russia. His longstanding perception of Russia as being acquisitive and fickle persisted because revolutionary Russia's provisional government, in spite of its talk of the rights and desires of subject peoples, refused to renounce its claims to Constantinople, making these anti-imperial assertions appear hypocritical. He also feared that the new revolutionary government would renounce the 1907 convention and various wartime agreements that he believed increased imperial security. The Bolshevik Revolution not only confirmed this fear, but also temporarily convinced him that Russia was in such chaos after the revolutions that it no longer posed a serious threat to the interests of the British Empire.

The Russian threat to India ended after the Bolshevik Revolution and the defeat of the Central Powers in 1918, but Curzon remained obsessed with protecting India. This fixation provided the basis for his post-war prescription for Central Asia. For the first time, he was able to play a fundamental role in shaping Britain's external policy in this area, first as chair of the Eastern Committee, and, subsequently, as Foreign Secretary

(1919-1924). Curzon wanted to take advantage of the postwar political chaos in Asia to create a chain of Central Asian states that would act as a buffer between India and any hostile element. He believed that supporting the independence of these states would secure the monopoly of British influence in the region. The Great War had convinced him that the only way to protect Britain's interests and India's security was to ensure that no Great Power other than Britain controlled the approaches to India.

Curzon wanted to secure the approaches to India against any possible rival, not just against Russia. After Germany's defeat, Curzon came to believe that France, Britain's wartime ally and traditional rival, posed the greatest threat to India. Because French and British political interests often conflicted, he was adamant that France must not be allowed to control the Caucasus. Thus although he became convinced that Central Asia would fall to the Bolsheviks if Britain did not have a presence in the Caucasus, Curzon's postwar policies were not simply aimed at Bolshevik containment.

Curzon's fear that the Russian Revolution had dissipated the Soviet threat, therefore, was short-lived, and he came to have very strong views on the Bolsheviks. As a man who believed in the "sacred duty" of serving the empire, the Soviets' self-depiction as the ally of the East's exploited peoples in the struggle against world imperialism was anathema to Curzon. When he came to realise how the social and international revolutionary nature of the Bolshevik government could threaten his beloved Eastern Empire, Curzon became a staunch anti-Bolshevik. Although he appreciated the European dimensions of the Soviet threat, he felt that the menace to Asia was more vital because

Britain's prestige and wealth depended upon its Asian position. Revelations of Soviet duplicity during the Russo-Polish War, the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo, and evidence of Soviet propaganda in Asia which were revealed by Soviet intercepts served to further reinforce his distrust of the Bolsheviks. Ultimately, therefore, Curzon came to view Bolshevik designs against India with greater suspicion than he had ever regarded Tsarist ambitions.

Curzon's attitude towards eastern affairs shaped his approach towards the Russian Civil War. He was not an ardent and tireless advocate of intervention because his interest in creating and supporting a chain of buffer states out of portions of the former Russian Empire was inherently incompatible with the Whites' desire to recreate a Great Russia. Instead, he pressed the Cabinet throughout 1919 and 1920 to leave a British presence in the Caucasus, Batum, and northern Persia. He had come to fear that if the Bolsheviks were allowed to occupy even a single British point, such as Batum, the rest of the Caucasus would fall, and possibly lead to the end of British rule in India. Yet because his Cabinet colleagues were unwilling to use British military resources to defend the region, Britain gradually withdrew from its Caucasian commitments, precluding the long-term success of Curzon's policies.

Curzon, however, did not fully control Britain's policy towards Russia during the first years of his tenure at the Foreign Office. As Prime Minister, David Lloyd George was determined to play an active role in policy formation, especially towards Soviet Russia. Curzon regarded the Prime Minister's insistence on playing an active role in

foreign policymaking as a threat to his own position, but he accepted the Prime Minister's insults and acts of interference because he knew that he would not return to power if he resigned. Preoccupied with fostering European reconstruction, Lloyd George, fearing that his Foreign Secretary would attempt to hinder any improvement in Anglo-Russian relations, largely excluded Curzon from the European aspects of Britain's Russian policy. Consequently, Curzon was excluded from decisions such as the resumption of trade through the Russian co-operatives in January 1920 and the determination of Britain's approach to the Russo-Polish War later that summer. Yet at the same time Curzon also relished the opportunity to shape policies, such as the ill-fated Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1919, in the East, his favourite policy area, without Lloyd George's interference.

Curzon and Lloyd George did, however, share certain conceptions on foreign policy, such as their opposition to a recreated Great Russia and their belief that the chief danger of Bolshevism was propaganda. For Curzon, however, the only reason to negotiate with the Soviets was to achieve greater imperial security. His consistent objective in Anglo-Soviet relations was to demonstrate to the Soviets that Britain would not consider relations unless they behaved in a "civilised" manner and respected British interests and nationals. Thus he was adamantly opposed to concluding and maintaining any agreement unless the Soviets ceased all activities in Asia which were hostile to Britain.

Lloyd George, on the other hand, understood and accepted that Britain had limits to its power and sought Anglo-Soviet rapprochement to facilitate European

reconstruction. This desire was manifested through rapprochement efforts such as the Genoa Conference. In addition, the course of negotiations for the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement illustrated that Lloyd George was willing to override his Foreign Secretary if and when he believed that a different policy approach was required.

Yet although Curzon was not always able to convince his colleagues to support his policies as Foreign Secretary, he did have considerable influence on the Cabinet. He was not only able to postpone changes to Britain's policy with which he disagreed, such as the withdrawal from the Caucasus, but also to ensure that certain conditions were included as an integral part of the new approach, such as the propaganda clause of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement.

After the fall of Lloyd George in October 1922, however, Curzon directed Britain's policy towards Soviet Russia for the rest of his tenure at the Foreign Office. His actions at the Lausanne Conference and the context of the Curzon Ultimatum of May 1923 illustrated his rather belligerent approach to external affairs and his political priorities. In the latter case, Curzon used the fate of Russian ecclesiastics and of British trawlers as an opportunity to act on the issue that truly concerned him: Soviet propaganda in Asia. After the successful resolution of his ultimatum, he had, in his view, achieved his goal of showing the Soviets that Britain would not deal with them unless they were "civilised" and respected British interests. Consequently, Anglo-Soviet relations reverted to a position of mutual distrust and hostility for the remainder of Curzon's tenure at the

Foreign Office, and no further moves towards rapprochement were made until the advent of the Labour government in January 1924.¹

Thus Lord Curzon's reputation as a virulent Russophobe considers neither the prevalence of imperial beliefs in the late Victorian era nor the effect of contemporary political events on those views. Throughout his life, Curzon focused on the need to protect India from any and all external threats. His perception of the principal menace to India, be it Tsarist Russia, Germany, France, or Soviet Russia, changed over the years according to international events and shifts of power. Lord Curzon, therefore, was an earnest, and indeed overzealous, imperialist, not a Russophobe.

¹ When the Conservatives returned to power in October 1924, Austen Chamberlain became Foreign Secretary because Curzon's anti-French sentiments would have hindered an improvement in Anglo-French relations. Curzon was Lord President of the Council, Leader of the House of Lords, and Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence until his death in March 1925.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

Great Britain. Public Record Office. War Cabinet Minutes. CAB. 23. Photocopied.

_____. Cabinet Memoranda. Curzon memorandum. 25 November 1915.
CAB 37/138/12. Photocopied.

_____. Cabinet Memoranda. Lord Curzon. "Policy in View of Russian
Developments." 12 May 1917. CAB 24/13/GT 703. Photocopied.

Great Britain. India Office Library. Lord George Hamilton Collection. Microfilm.

PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

Great Britain. *Parliamentary Debates*. 4th ser.

_____. *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons. 5th ser.

_____. *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords. 5th ser.

_____. *Parliamentary Papers*, "Note from the Russian Provisional Government and
the British Reply respecting the Allied War Aims." Cd. 8587. 1917.

_____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "The War Cabinet: Report for the Year 1917." Cd. 9005.
1918.

_____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism." Cmd. 8.
1919.

_____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Agreement between His Britannic Majesty's
Government and the Persian Government." Cmd. 300. 1919.

_____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "The War Cabinet: Report for the Year 1918."
Cmd. 325. 1919.

_____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Agreement Between His Majesty's Government and
the Soviet Government of Russia for the Exchange of Prisoners, February 1920."
Cmd. 587. 1920.

_____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Interim Report of the Committee to Collect
Information on Russia." Cmd. 1041. 1920.

- _____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Trade Agreement between His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic." Cmd. 1207. 1921.
- _____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Report (Political and Economic) of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia." Cmd. 1240. 1921.
- _____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Records of Proceedings of the Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, 1922-1923, and Draft Terms of Peace." Cmd. 1814. 1923.
- _____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government Respecting the Relations between the Two Governments." Cmd. 1869. 1923.
- _____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Reply of the Soviet Government to His Majesty's Government Respecting the Relations between the Two Governments." Cmd. 1874. 1923.
- _____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Further Correspondence between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government." Cmd. 1890. 1923.
- _____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "Treaty of Peace with Turkey, and Other Instruments, signed at Lausanne on July 24, 1923, together with Agreements between Greece and Turkey signed on January 30, 1923, and Subsidiary Documents forming part of the Turkish Peace Settlement." Cmd. 1929. 1923.
- _____. *Parliamentary Papers*. "A Selection of Papers Dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921-1927." Cmd. 2895. 1927.

PUBLISHED DOCUMENTARY COLLECTIONS

- Bourne, Kenneth and Watt, D. Cameron, eds. *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print. Part II, From the First to Second World Wars. Series A, The Soviet Union, 1917-1939*. Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984-.
- Degras, Jane, ed. *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy. Vol. 1, 1917-1924*. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.
- Eudin, X.Y. and H.H. Fisher, eds. *Soviet Russia and the West, 1920-1927*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957.

Eudin, X.Y. and R.C. North, eds. *Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1927*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957.

Gilbert, Martin. *Winston S. Churchill*. Vol III. Companion parts 1-2, 1914-1916. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973.

_____. *Winston S. Churchill*. Vol. IV. Companion parts 1-3, 1917- 1922. London: Heinemann, 1976-1977.

Great Britain. *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898- 1914*, ed. G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperley. London: HMSO, 1926-1938.

_____. *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*. First Series. London: HMSO, 1947-.

United States. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Russia, 1918*. 3 vols. Washington, DC: Department of State, 1931-1932.

_____. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Russia, 1919*. Washington, DC: Department of State, 1937.

NEWSPAPERS

Times (London)

CURZON'S WRITINGS

Curzon, George Nathaniel. "The Conservatism of Young Oxford." *National Review* 3, no. 16 (June 1884): 515-27.

_____. "The 'Scientific Frontier' as Accomplished Fact." *Nineteenth Century* 23 (June 1888): 901-17.

_____. "The Fluctuating Frontier of Russia in Asia." *Nineteenth Century* 25 (February 1889): 276-83.

_____. *Russia in Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Question*. London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1889. Reprint: New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967.

_____. *Persia and the Persian Question*. London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1892. Reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966.

- _____. "India between Two Fires." *Nineteenth Century* 34 (August 1893): 177-186.
- _____. *Problems of the Far East by the Rt. Hon. George Curzon, M.P.: Japan-Korea-China*, new rev. ed. London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1896.
- _____. *Speeches by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1898-1901*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1901.
- _____. *Lord Curzon in India: Being a Selection from his Speeches as Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1898-1905*. With a forward by Sir Thomas Raleigh. London: Macmillan & Co., 1906.
- _____. *Frontiers: The Romanes Lecture 1907: Delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, 2 November 1907*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.
- _____. *The True Imperialism: An Address delivered in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on Wednesday, December 11th 1907*. Birmingham: Birmingham and Midland Institute, 1907.
- _____. *Subjects of the Day: Being a Selection of Speeches and Writings*. With an introduction by the Earl of Cromer. Edited by Desmond M. Chapman-Huston. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1915.
- _____. *Tales of Travel*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923. Reprint, Century Hutchinson, 1988.
- _____. *Leaves from a Viceroy's Notebook and Other Papers*. Edited by Ian Malcolm and Francis W. Pember. London: Macmillan & Co., 1926.

DIARIES AND MEMOIRS

- Amery, L.S. *My Political Life*. vol. II, *War and Peace, 1914-1929*. London: Hutchinson, 1953.
- Barnes John, and David Nicholson, eds. *The Leo Amery Diaries*. vol. I. 1869-1929. London: Hutchinson, 1980.
- Birkenhead, Earl of. *Contemporary Personalities*. London: Cassell & Co., [1924]. Reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1969
- Buchanan, George. *My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memoirs*. 2 vols. London: Cassell & Co., 1923.

Callwell, Major General Sir C.E. *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: His Life and Diaries*. 2 vols. London: Cassell & Co., 1927.

D'Abernon, Lord. *An Ambassador of Peace: Pages from the Diary of Viscount D'Abernon (Berlin 1920-1926)*. 3 vols. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1929-1930.

Gregory, J. D. *On the Edge of Democracy: Rambles and Collections, 1908-1928*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1929.

Gwynn, Stephen, ed. *The Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring Rice: A Record*. 2 vols. London: Constable & Co., 1929.

Hankey, Lord. *The Supreme Command, 1914-1918*. 2 vols. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961.

Hardinge of Penshurst, Lord. *Old Diplomacy: The Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst*. London: John Murray, 1947.

Jeffery, Keith, ed. *The Military Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, 1918-1922*. London: Bodley Head, 1985.

Lloyd George, David. *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*. 2 vols. London: Victor Gollancz, 1938.

_____. *The War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*. 2 vols. London: Odhams Press, [1942].

McEwan, J.M. *The Riddell Diaries, 1908-1923*. London: Athlone Press, 1986.

Middlemas, Keith, ed. *Thomas Jones: Whitehall Diary*. Vol. 1, 1916-1925. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Repington, Charles à Court. *The First World War, 1914-1918*. 2 vols. London: Constable & Co., 1920.

Riddell, Lord. *Lord Riddell's War Diary, 1914-1918*. London: Nicholson & Watson, 1933.

_____. *Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After, 1918-1923*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1933.

Rodd, Sir James Rennell. *Social and Diplomatic Memories*. Vol. 3, 1902-1919. London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1925.

Vansittart, Lord. *The Mist Procession: The Autobiography of Lord Vansittart*. London: Hutchinson, 1958.

Wilson, Trevor, ed. *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott, 1911-1928*. London: Collins, 1970.

BIOGRAPHICAL

Blake, Robert. *The Unknown Prime Minister: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law, 1858-1923*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955.

Busch, Briton Cooper. *Hardinge of Penshurst: A Study in the Old Diplomacy*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1980.

Butler, J.R.M. *Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr), 1882-1940*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1960.

Churchill, Winston S. *Great Contemporaries*. London: Thornton Butterworth, 1937.

Gilbert, Martin. *Winston S. Churchill*. Vol. IV, *The Stricken World*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1975.

Gilmour, David. *Curzon*. London: John Murray Publishers, 1994.

Middlemas, Keith, and John Barnes. *Baldwin: A Biography*. London: Macmillan Co., 1969.

Mosley, Leonard. *Curzon: The End of an Epoch*. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1961.

Roskill, Stephen. *Hankey: Man of Secrets*. 2 vols. London: William Collins Sons & Co., 1972.

Ronaldshay, Earl of. *The Life of Lord Curzon: Being the Authorized Biography of George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.* 3 vols. London: Ernest Benn, 1928.

Rowland, Peter. *David Lloyd George: A Biography*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1975.

UNPUBLISHED THESIS

Schinness, Roger Thomas. "The Tories and the Soviets: The British Conservative Reaction to Russia, 1917-1927." Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 1972.

ARTICLES AND MONOGRAPHS

Andrew, Christopher. *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community*. London: Heinemann, 1985.

Arnot, Robert Page. *The Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1967.

Beaverbrook, Lord. *Men and Power, 1917-1918*. London: Hutchinson, 1956.

_____. *The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George and Great was the Fall Thereof*. London: Collins, 1963.

_____. *Politicians and the War, 1914-1916*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1968.

Bennett, G.H. *British Foreign Policy during the Curzon Period, 1919-1924*. London: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

Busch, Briton Cooper. *Mudros to Lausanne: Britain's Frontier in West Asia, 1918-1923*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1976.

Carley, Michael Jabara. "Down a Blind Alley: Anglo-Franco-Soviet Relations, 1920-1939." *Canadian Journal of History* 29, no. 1 (1994): 147-172.

Carr, Edward Hallett. *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923*. 3 vols. London: Macmillan & Co., 1951-1953.

Churchill, Rogers Platt. *The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907*. Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Tach Press, 1939.

Churchill, Winston S. *The World Crisis: The Aftermath*. London: Thornton Butterworth, 1929.

_____. *The Great War*. 3 vols. London: George Newnes, 1933-1934.

_____. *The Unknown War: The Eastern Front, 1914-1917*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1941.

- Coates, W.P. and Zelda Coates. *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations*. London: Lawrence & Wishart and Pilot Press, 1945.
- Coleridge, Gilbert. *Eton in the 'Seventies*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1912.
- Craig, Gordon A. and Felix Gilbert, eds. *The Diplomats, 1919-1939*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953.
- David, Hugh. *Heroes, Mavericks, and Bounders : The English Gentleman from Lord Curzon to James Bond*. London : M. Joseph, 1991.
- Dilks, David. *Curzon in India*. 2 vols. New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1969-1970.
- Debo, Richard K. *Revolution and Survival: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1917-18*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979.
- _____. *Survival and Consolidation: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1918-1921*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1992.
- Dockrill, Michael L., and J. Douglas Goold. *Peace without Promise: Britain and the Peace Conferences, 1919-1923*. London: Batsford, 1981.
- Elcock, H.J. "Britain and the Russo-Polish Frontier, 1919-1921." *Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1969): 137-54.
- Faber, Richard. *The Vision and the Need: Late Victorian Imperialist Aims*. London: Faber & Faber, 1966.
- Fink, Carole. *The Genoa Conference: European Diplomacy, 1921-1922*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Fink, Carole, Axel Frohn, and Jürgen Heideking, eds. *Genoa, Rapallo, and European Reconstruction in 1922*. Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Fischer, Louis. *The Soviets in World Affairs: A History of the Relations between the Soviet Union and the Rest of the World, 1917-1929*. 2 vols. 2d ed. New York: J. Cape & H. Smith, 1951.
- _____. *Russia's Road from Peace to War: Soviet Foreign Relations, 1917-1941*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969.
- Fisher, John. "'The Safety of our Indian Empire': Lord Curzon and British Predominance in the Arabian Peninsula, 1919." *Middle Eastern Studies* 33 (July 1997): 494-520.

- Fry, Michael G. "Britain, the Allies and the Problem of Russia, 1918-1919." *Canadian Journal of History* 2, no. 2 (1967): 63-82.
- Geyer, Dietrich. *Russian Imperialism: The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1860-1914*. Translated by Bruce Little. Leamington Spa, UK: Berg Publishers, 1987.
- Gilmour, David. "Empire and the East: The Orientalism of Lord Curzon." *Asian Affairs* 26 (October 1995): 270-277.
- Gleason, John Haves. *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain. A Study of the Interaction of Policy and Opinion*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950.
- Glenny, M.V. "The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement, March 1921." *Journal of Contemporary History* 5, no. 2 (1970): 63-82.
- Grenville, J.A.S. *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: The Close of the Nineteenth Century*. London: Athlone Press, 1964.
- Griffith, George. *The Angel of the Revolution: A Tale of the Coming Terror*. London: n.p., 1893.
- _____. *The Outlaws of the Air*. London: n.p., 1897.
- Hazelhurst, Cameron. *Politicians and the War*. London: Jonathon Cape, 1971.
- Hooker, James R. "Lord Curzon and the 'Curzon Line.'" *Journal of Modern History* 30 (1958): 137-138.
- Hundley, Helen. "Tibet's Part in the 'Great Game.'" *History Today* 43 (October 1993): 45-50.
- Jacobson, Jon. *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.
- Jeffery, Keith. *The British Army and the Crisis of Empire, 1918-22*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.
- Jelavich, Barbara. "British Means of Offense against Russia in the Nineteenth Century." *Russian History* 1, no. 2 (1974): 119-135.
- Keeble, Sir Curtis. *Britain and the Soviet Union, 1917-89*. London: Macmillan Press, 1990.

- Kennan, George F. *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1960.
- Kennedy, Paul. *The Realities behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865-1980*. London: Fontana Press, 1985.
- Kettle, Michael. *The Allies and the Russian Collapse, March 1917-March 1918*. Russia and the Allies. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1981.
- _____. *Road to Intervention, March - November 1918*. Russia and the Allies. New York: Routledge, 1988.
- _____. *Churchill and the Archangel Fiasco, November 1918- July 1919*. Russia and the Allies. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- MacKenzie, John M. *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Popular Opinion, 1880-1960*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.
- _____, ed. *Imperialism and Popular Culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.
- McKercher, B.J.C. and D.H. Moss, eds. *Shadow and Substance in British Foreign Policy, 1895-1939: Memorial Essays Honouring C.J. Lowe*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984.
- Maisel, Ephraim. *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1919-1926*. Brighton, East Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 1994.
- Mangan, J.A. "The Grit of our Forefathers': Invented Traditions, Propaganda and Imperialism." In *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, ed. John M. MacKenzie. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.
- Marriott, Sir J.A.R. *Anglo-Russian Relations, 1689-1943*. London: Methuen & Co., 1944.
- Middleton, K.W.B., *Britain and Russia: An Historical Essay*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1947.
- Monger, George. *The End of Isolation: British Foreign Policy, 1900-1907*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963.
- Morgan, Kenneth O. *Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government, 1918-1922*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.
- Morren, Douglas G. "Donald Mackenzie Wallace and British Russophilism, 1870-1919," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 9, no. 2 (1967): 170-183.

Neilson, Keith. *Strategy and Supply: The Anglo-Russian Alliance, 1914-17*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984.

_____. "‘My Beloved Russians’: Sir Arthur Nicolson and Russia, 1906-1916." *International History Review* 9, no. 4 (1987): 517-688.

_____. "‘Greatly Exaggerated’: The Myth of the Decline of Great Britain before 1914." *International History Review* 13, no. 4 (1991): 661-880.

_____. "‘Pursued by a Bear’: British Estimates of Soviet Military Strength and Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1922-1939." *Canadian Journal of History Review* 28 (August 1993): 189-221.

_____. *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia, 1894-1917*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

Nicolson, Harold. *Curzon: The Last Phase, 1919-1925: A Study in Post-War Diplomacy*. London: Constable, 1934. Reprint, New York: Howard Fertig, 1974.

_____. "George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (1859-1925)." *Dictionary of National Biography, 1922-1930*. London: Oxford University Press, 1937.

Northedge, F.S. "The Ideal Civil Servant? Lord Curzon’s Relationship with Lloyd George." *The Listener* (31 December 1959): 1149-1151.

_____. *The Troubled Giant: Britain among the Great Powers, 1916-1939*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966.

Northedge, F.S. and Audrey Wells. *Britain and Soviet Communism: The Impact of a Revolution*. London: Macmillan Press, 1982.

O’Connor, Timothy Edward. *Diplomacy and Revolution: G.V. Chicherin and Soviet Foreign Affairs, 1918-1930*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1988.

Porter, Bernard. "The Edwardians and their Empire." In *Edwardian England*, ed. Donald Read, 128-144. London: Croom Helm, 1982.

_____. *The Lion’s Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-1983*. 2d ed. London: Longman Group, 1984.

Reynolds, P.A. *British Foreign Policy in the Inter-War Years*. London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1954.

- Rose, Kenneth. *Superior Person: A Portrait of Curzon and his Circle in Late Victorian England*. New York: Weybright & Talley, 1969.
- Rothwell, V.H. *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy, 1914-1918*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Rubinstein, Alvin Z., ed. *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*. 2d ed. New York: Random House, 1966.
- Sharp, Alan. "The Foreign Office in Eclipse, 1919-22." *History* 61 (1976): 198-218.
- _____. "Lord Curzon and the Foreign Office." In *The Foreign Office, 1782-1982*, ed. Roger Bullen, 66-81. Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984.
- _____. "Lord Curzon and Secret Intelligence." In *Intelligence and International Relations, 1900-1945*, ed. Christopher Andrew and Jeremy Noakes, 103-126. Exeter: Exeter University Publications, 1987.
- Steiner, Zara S. *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- _____. "The Foreign Office under Sir Edward Grey." In *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey*, ed. F.H. Hinsley, 22-69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Symonds, Richard. *Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause*. London: MacMillan Press, 1986.
- Thompson, John M. *Russia, Bolshevism, and the Versailles Peace*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- Turner, John. *Lloyd George's Secretariat*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Ulam, Adam B. *Expansion and Co-existence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-67*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968.
- Ullman, Richard H. *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921*. 3 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, 1968, 1972.
- Watt, D. Cameron. *Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place, 1900-1975*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Wallace, Donald Mackenzie. *Russia*, 2 vols., rev. and enl. London: Cassell & Co., 1905.

White, Stephen. *Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Study in the Politics of Diplomacy, 1920-1924*. London: Macmillan Press, 1979.

_____. *The Origins of Détente: The Genoa Conference and Soviet-Western Relations, 1921-1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.