Foreign Office memorandum: «PROBABLE POST-WAR TENDENCIES IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AS AFFECTING BRITISH INTERESTS», 29 April 1944[[1]](#footnote-1).

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SOVOET UNION TOP SECRET.

Part I

[1]. The probable long-term impact of Russian strategic policy on British interests depends upon Russia’s power, her major interests and her general outlook on world affairs. Of her power, and her capacity to use it, if she wishes, there can be little doubt. In, say, ten years in man-power, in economic resources, in industrial capacity she will be immensely strong and, almost certainly, well organised.

2. Of her major interests and outlook in ten years’ time it is far more difficult to predict. But certain fixed points can be discerned. Internally, the fixed points are that the U.S.S.R. will remain a highly-centralised federation where all the means of production are publicly owned and centrally planned and controlled; and that Russia’s major interest will be to devote her main energies for many years to come to the colossal task of post-war rehabilitation and the further development of her own territories. Externally the fixed point will be in the future, as it has been in the past (at any rate, since Stalin’s victory over Trotsky[[2]](#footnote-2)) – the search for security against any Power or combination of Powers which might threaten her while she was organising and developing her own domain. In particular, after her narrow escape and tremendous losses she will fear a German recovery[[3]](#footnote-3).

3. The result of Germany’s attack upon the Soviet Union has been (*a*) to consolidate the régime; (*b*) to retard her internal development; (*c*) to face her with a vast task of rehabilitation in the occupied areas which must take her, one would suppose, at least five years; (*d*) to cause her an enormous loss of man-power in the younger generation; (*e*) to give her the chance of exorcising for an indefinite time her fear of Germany and Japan; (*f*) to give her the chance of getting on to terms of equality, confidence and co-operation with the remaining principal world Powers. In other words, the war has complicated or at any rate retarded her task of internal organisation and development, but will have given her the opportunity of devoting herself to it without fear either of aggression from without or of counter-revolution from within.

4. The logical deduction seems to be that, provided the British Commonwealth and the United States do not appear to the Soviet authorities to wish to deprive Russia of the means of eliminating the menace from Germany (and Japan), do not appear to be supporting a combination against her and give reasonable consideration to her views, Russia will welcome a prolonged period of peaceful relations with the British Commonwealth and the United States. She will need at least five years for rehabilitation, and many further years for the development of her internal resources and for industrialisation and social development. During this period it is unlikely that she would be prepared to risk the interruption of a major war, whether during that period she had adopted a policy of co-operation or had decided to play a lone hand.

5. But this prediction is based on the assumption that the Russians do not suspect us of having designs hostile to her security, and that largely depends on whether she is satisfied with the measures taken to render Germany (and Japan) innocuous. Should she not be so satisfied (and her demands are likely to be high and her methods perhaps very drastic to British and American eyes), she will always be in fear of an eventual combination with Germany against her, her attitude to this country will be suspicious and potentially antagonistic, she will be more preoccupied with her own security and will take her own measures to provide for it. She would then probably become an intensely disruptive force in Europe. She would be unlikely, save as a last resort and in exceptional circumstances[[4]](#footnote-4) (see paragraph 37 below), to combine with Germany, for this would lead to a German revival and would thus be dangerous to herself. But she would be constantly manœuvring to increase the strength of her own position in Europe by establishing her influence in European countries through Left-wing Governments and by interfering in their internal affairs both through intrigue and through power politics. Outside Europe, too, she would no doubt follow a similar policy .

6. One may predict, then, with some confidence, that, during a period of at least five years after the termination of the war with Germany, Russia will be preoccupied with her post-war rehabilitation and will constitute no menace to British strategic interests. During this period she almost certainly will experiment with the policy of co-operation with the British Commonwealth and the United States in whatever world organisation may be set up after the war. If this gives satisfactory results from the Russian point of view and in particular if she is satisfied that we have no intention of allowing Germany’s power to be restored, this experiment may become an established feature of her foreign policy and the period during which she would constitute no threat to major British strategic interests may be indefinitely prolonged, while she continues her internal development. Even if through the withdrawal of the United States or any other reason post-war schemes for a world organisation should fail, the Soviet Union would not necessarily withdraw from co-operation with Great Britain. If, on the other hand, she finds the experiment of co-operation a failure, she will almost certainly seek to weaken British and American influence, but she will not necessarily become expansionist and her policy may well still not directly threaten British strategic interests, especially if the British Commonwealth can rely on American support. Russia, however, will almost certainly keep herself immensely strong on land and in the air. So far as can be judged at present she is most unlikely to be troubled by internal disorders. Her influence throughout the Eastern hemisphere is likely to be great and she could develop an overwhelming threat to our position in the Middle East.

7. Part II of this paper elaborates the argument of the preceding paragraphs. Part III deals with Russian interests in particular areas.

Part II

*Post-War Position of the U.S.S.R. in the World.*

8. The U.S.S.R. will have made immense sacrifices for victory in men and material. The wastage will have been enormous. None the less, the U.S.S.R. will emerge from war (i) as the strongest land Power in the world and one of the three strongest air Powers; (ii) as the very successful exponent of a new economic and social system[[5]](#footnote-5) and a new type of multi-national State; (iii) as the great Slav Power (as in the past) and the heir to much besides from the heritage of the old Russia[[6]](#footnote-6). She will have very great prestige and very great pride in herself. All the indications suggest that the régime will have been strengthened by the war; it will be well adapted to deal with the problems resulting from the dislocation caused by the war: it seems most unlikely that it will be faced with any serious internal dissension. Her war record and the achievements of “planned economy” and “socialism in one country” will continue to arouse very widespread sympathy and admiration abroad in many circles.

9. The U.S.S.R. in 1939 contained a population of 170 million—forty million more than the United States, a hundred million more than Germany, a hundred and twenty-five million more than Great Britain. Although Soviet statistics are very unsatisfactory, it is certain that the coefficient of annual increase is far higher than that in West European countries and the United States, and that there is an exceptionally large proportion of young people. (For instance, in 1939 not much less than two-thirds of the population were under thirty). In the U.S.S.R. war losses and general dislocation have been on a prodigious scale and shortage of labour will remain at least for some years a very serious problem; but within the next twenty-five years there will be a very large increase in population in contrast with prospects in the West—an increase which may bring the total (excluding the western regions incorporated in 1939-40) to something between 210 million and 240 million by 1968 .

10. The effects on Soviet policy of this potential strength are, however, offset to a considerable degree by various factors, including in particular (*a*) the gigantic internal reconstruction tasks that confront the U.S.S.R., (*b*) the prospect of freedom from foreign menace and of co-operation, if Russia desires it, with other Great Powers.

11. The war found the leaders and people of the U.S.S.R. still engrossed in the working out of a great social experiment and of a gigantic economic programme. On the advent to power of Stalin, concentration on the fomentation of world revolution had been deliberately discarded, at least for an indefinite time to come, in favour of the fulfilment of this programme. The fear of attack by Germany and Japan, and the suspicion that other powers including Great Britain would welcome it, dictated a foreign policy designed to avoid being involved in a world war, and an internal policy of which military defence and not prosperity was the first consideration.

*Soviet Internal Policy before and after the War .*

12. In pursuit of the aim of developing the U.S.S.R. as rapidly as possible for defence, industry had to be built up on a huge scale in a country where agriculture had previously been the first consideration. But, because of the demands of defence, the emphasis had to be on heavy industry; light industry was comparatively little developed. Collectivisation of agriculture was forced through against much opposition. Great efforts were being made to extend the area of cultivation by colonisation, irrigation and other means. The transformation of Soviet Asia and the Arctic was under way. The task of improving inadequate communications was being pushed ahead, but very great leeway required to be made up. Only the fringe had been touched of the task of adapting housing and of building new accommodation in the vastly expanded or entirely new cities.

13. The general result of this unrelenting drive to carry out the five-year plans was that the people had already been living and working at war tempo since 1928, and yet the vast programme remained very partially fulfilled and the high standard of living promised as the fruits of the Soviet system had not materialised, when the war burst upon them.

14. The devastation of war and its all-round effects will have set the U.S.S.R. far back from the goal which she was just beginning to attain, namely, the point at which her developing economy could begin to provide a steady rise in the standard of living of the people without ceasing to expand its capital equipment. The war has resulted in:

(i) A destruction of material which is still in progress on a scale unparalleled in history.

(ii) The killing of many millions not only of soldiers but of civilians of both sexes, an abnormally high civilian mortality and an abnormally low birth-rate.

(iii) A further dislocation of population and economic life owing to evacuation eastward before the German advance. Estimates vary greatly, but 15 million such evacuees is a possible figure[[7]](#footnote-7).

(iv) The deportation westwards by the Germans of perhaps 2 million persons and the capture by them of some 3 million prisoners.

15. With the huge pre-war programme still unfinished, the Soviet Government will thus, when peace comes, be faced with immense additional problems. The primary essential will be the colossal tasks of repatriation and resettlement, of the rebuilding and re-equipment of the ruined cities, industrial plants and transport, of the reconstruction of villages and agriculture in the devastated regions and of the transformation of the eastern industries to meet peace-time needs. There is every reason to suppose that the U.S.S.R. will not alter the basic pattern of her economic life. She will continue to plan her economy as before, looking primarily to the development of her own resources to provide directly for the increasing satisfaction of her own needs. But the internal problems of relief and reconstruction will cause certain modifications. Despite the efforts of the Government to mobilise resources and reinforce discipline, it is improbable that, after all that the Soviet people have gone through in the war, the immediate tempo of economic rehabilitation and development can be geared to the same pitch of intensity as during the first three five-year plans. If it were, the task of rehabilitation would take at least five years. If not, it will almost certainly take longer[[8]](#footnote-8). The continued development of her internal resources, industrialisation and social development will occupy the Soviet Union’s energies for far longer. Victory will probably bring a certain relaxation and a greatly increased demand for consumers’ goods, while there will be at first a greatly decreased capacity to meet such a demand from internal Soviet resources.

16. During the first year or two after an armistice with Germany, the U.S.S.R. will be unable from her own resources adequately to meet the needs either of relief or of reconstruction and one of the objects of her foreign policy will be to get the maximum available help from outside sources.

17. The chief sources from which any immediate supplies of relief goods may be expected are the United States and the British Commonwealth. The needs of reconstruction and of further economic expansion will require substantial imports particularly in the following fields: (i) coal, (ii) electrical and other power equipment; (iii) machine tools and other industrial plant and equipment; (iv) oil and mining machinery; (v) certain non-ferrous metals; (vi) tropical goods and animal produce, such as leather, hides and wool; (vii) certain types of foodstuffs and consumers’ goods. In all these fields both the United States and Great Britain and the British Empire could be very important contributors. In the first three categories another source of supply (apart from smaller sources of supply such as Czechoslovakia or Sweden) will be Germany.

18. Germany, together with her allies, is the only source from which the U.S.S.R. can get what she wants without incurring any kind of obligation. She will have no inhibitions about letting Germany get “a foothold in her markets.” She will undoubtedly wish to exploit Germany to the full while keeping her as weak as possible. But however great the value of Germany to Russia may be, it will not be such as to neutralise the importance of the United States to the Soviet Union during the years following the war.

19. The need of the U.S.S.R. for relief supplies and capital goods will be so great and her capacity for absorbing the latter (owing to the nature of her economic system) so unlimited that the policy of the Soviet Union is unlikely to be one which would jeopardise the flow of these supplies. Indeed, the United States, and to a lesser extent Great Britain, will, theoretically, be in a position to exercise a considerable influence over the U.S.S.R. so long as they are willing to continue to supply goods on advantageous terms. But in view of the intense competition for overseas markets which may develop not only between this country and the United States but also between the United States manufacturers themselves, the Russians may well think that they will get the imports they need, irrespective of the foreign policy which they pursue. Therefore arguments based on the influence of economic considerations on Soviet foreign policy cannot be pushed too far.

20. Increased economic collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and overseas countries will make her additionally interested in expanding her mercantile marine and in security of access to open seas during the period of relief and reconstruction. Thereafter, however, it is possible that the importance of maritime communications may diminish, as Soviet economic internal development progresses. This will depend upon whether the U.S.S.R. ultimately decides upon a large foreign trade expansion or prefers to adopt a policy of comparative autarky. It is not possible to make a profitable prophecy as to which course will be adopted; but it should be borne in mind that the Soviet Union, because of her economic structure, does not look upon foreign trade as good *per se* and keeps her exports down to the minimum necessary to pay for what she has to import; and that once reconstruction has been more or less completed, (i) the resources of the U.S.S.R. are so great that foreign trade will then play at best but a small part in her total economy; (ii) her dependence on the outside world is then likely to be relatively small; (iii) foreign trade considerations will therefore not be likely ultimately to determine the general lines of Soviet foreign policy.

21. To sum up, for at least five years after the end of the war, the Soviet Union will be occupied in an enormous task of rehabilitation; thereafter she will still have in front of her a considerable programme of internal development. However much or little the advantages of economic co-operation with Great Britain and the United States directly influence her foreign policy during the period necessary for its accomplishment, she will avoid the risk of a major war during the period of reconstruction and is likely, unless her security is threatened, to be predisposed towards avoiding war until her development programme is well advanced, and until her people have attained a comparatively high standard of living and have recovered from the stress of a terrible war following on twenty-four years of great strain.

*Soviet Foreign Policy before and after the War.*

22. As stated above, the fixed aim of Soviet foreign policy before the war was to avoid war while carrying out her great schemes of industrial and social development. After Stalin’s victory over Trotsky all else in Soviet foreign policy was subordinated to this object and the aim of spreading bolshevism or of fomenting the world revolution for its own sake was abandoned. But Soviet Russia feared attack by Germany and Japan, suspected that other Powers would welcome such attacks upon her and, while advocating “collective security,” manœuvred to weaken Right-wing forces everywhere in the belief that they favoured her downfall. Throughout the period her foreign policy was entirely subordinated to her internal policy and her Foreign Commissar[[9]](#footnote-9) was not even in the inner circle of Soviet counsels.

23. At the outbreak of the present war the Soviet aim was clearly to stand aside while the contestants weakened each other and, when Germany had overwhelmed Western Europe, to buy time from her. Since Germany’s attack upon her, Russia has concentrated everything upon surviving the war with Germany, while maintaining peace with Japan. The Russian leaders are painfully conscious of the shortcomings and inefficiencies of the Russian system and of the Russian people when matched against the Germans. When they look back they must realise that in spite of the whole Soviet system having been concentrated for ten years in preparing for a defensive war, they were unable in ’41 and ’42 to prevent a nation with 100 million fewer inhabitants than Russia[[10]](#footnote-10), from overrunning in an incredibly short time a greater area than had ever been conquered in history since the campaigns of Alexander the Great. If the tide has now ebbed it is because the Soviet Government has had at their disposal vast reserves of man-power and material and been willing to sacrifice them without consideration for the future. This enormous wastage is going to have its effect not merely upon the material position of Russia after the war, but also upon their mental outlook. The Russians are going to dread the recovery of Germany in a way in which we have never done, even in our blackest moments. This may take two forms, either they will set themselves the task of keeping Germany indefinitely in a state of abject subjection, or, if they find that they are obstructed by other world Powers from applying this policy, they may decide that the best course is to make friends of their enemy while they are still in the way with them. In that case we may see a close German-Russian collaboration growing up against the rest of Europe and Asia.

24. But without looking so far ahead as that we may expect that from the peace settlement onwards any friction there is between us and Russia will not arise so much out of ideological disagreement but chiefly, if not soley, because we and the Russians may take different views as to the post-war treatment of Germany. There is good evidence that Russia desires the most drastic measures to keep Germany in a permanent state of weakness and wishes to see the complete defeat of Japan. Stalin is an advocate of the complete dismemberment of Germany, and there is little doubt that the Soviet Government propose both to exact from German war criminals, from the highest to the lowest, a terrible punishment[[11]](#footnote-11), and to make Germany render, both in labour and in goods, the fullest possible contribution to the rapid restoration of the devastation she has caused in Russia. In other words, Soviet foreign policy is still based on the search for absolute security until she can render herself impregnable. Now will the Soviet Government take any chances (such is not their habit) of any strong Power or combination of Powers growing up on her western frontier which might themselves, or in combination with a revived Germany, constitute a preoccupation to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government have up to the recent past at any rate suspected that the United States and Great Britain wanted to husband their strength while Germany and Russia weakened each other, and that many circles in the United States and this country still desired a barrier between Western Russia and the rest of Europe. It seems to be the Soviet Government’s way to apply simple but somewhat drastic tests of the real intentions of foreign countries, even of her Allies. It is very likely that the final test they will apply to these suspicions is the attitude taken up by this country and the United States on the question of the post-war treatment of Germany and the States that lie between Germany and the Soviet Union, and in the post-war period on the zeal with which we enforce the letter of the treaty on Germany and show ourselves ready to knock Germany on the head every time she shows any sign of recovery either military or economic—Russia is likely to view with grave suspicion the argument that a prosperous Germany is necessary if Europe as a whole, and Great Britain in particular, is to be prosperous. Russia’s post-war attitude is likely also in the same way to be influenced by the effect upon her own security of our post-war treatment of Japan and the post-war settlement we advocate for the Far East generally.

25. On the other hand, the war has given the Soviet Union the opportunity of transforming themselves from a revolutionary Power, to a great extent isolated from and suspected by the other Great Powers—something of a pariah—into one of the four leaders of the world. If she can achieve a satisfactory co-operation with the other three in ordering the post-war system, this would give her a better assurance than any other of freedom from external preoccupations, while she was carrying out her own internal industrial and social development. It would also open to her a position of respect and even of admiration throughout the world. There are signs that such a transformation from their previous rôle has some attraction for them.

26. The Soviet Government is now clearly ready to give co-operation with the United States and Great Britain a trial. If the post-war settlement in Europe gives her sufficient reassurance against a German revival and sufficient satisfaction to her desires in other directions, she is likely to continue the trial for at least the five or more years required for the rehabilitation of Soviet territory. If reasonably successful, the experiment might well be further prolonged. Soviet ideas are not rigid and it is possible that, with the lapse of time, with the success of her own internal developments and the successful operation of international organisations in which Russia will be playing a leading part, international co-operation might have become something of a habit with the Soviet Government.

27. But in the initial stages at any rate, the Soviet Government will not be easy to satisfy. They certainly require, in the first place, that their western frontiers should be along the lines of those of 1941. In the second place, a settlement in regard to Germany which will “completely exclude the possibility of fresh aggression on the part of Germany” (Stalin, 6th November, 1943)[[12]](#footnote-12). In the third place, Russia will wish to be satisfied that nearby European countries are not in a position or in the mood to threaten her territory either alone or in combination or to prevent her getting at Germany, if the Soviet Government think it necessary at any time to employ force to keep her in a state of docility. This latter consideration dictates the whole of her Polish policy. The Declaration of the Moscow Conference on Italy, which originated with the Soviet delegation, may be taken as an indication of Soviet desires elsewhere. The Soviet Government will no doubt continue to suspect Right-wing Governments. But in their conversations with His Majesty’s Government they have drawn a distinction between the countries to the east of Germany, which they consider should, in friendly relations with the Soviet Government, form the eastern bulwark against the possibility of a German revival, and the countries of Western Europe who should, led by Great Britain, form the western bulwark[[13]](#footnote-13).

28. Soviet interests in particular regions are dealt with in detail in Part III of this paper.

29. Whatever precise shape the new international system may take, it is obvious that the U.S.S.R. must be a permanent member of any World Council that may be set up. She will also, no doubt, be consulted in the initial stages as to any international schemes and invited to participate; for instance, in any general and regional defence scheme, such as a North Atlantic, Mediterranean or Pacific security system.

30. In any international regulation of armaments after the war, the air arm will be the crux as between the Soviet Union and the English-speaking Powers. After the defeat of Germany, the Soviet Union will emerge as unquestionably the strongest land Power in the Old World; and she is unlikely, on her side, to question the naval predominance of the English-speaking Powers. But both the English-speaking Powers and the Soviet Union will—potentially—be immensely strong in the air, and, with the increasing range of the air arm, they are likely to find themselves more and more dangerously exposed to one another’s air power, supposing that co-operation between them were to break down[[14]](#footnote-14). Some agreement for the regulation of air power would therefore seem to be as necessary as it will be difficult.

31. If agreement can be reached between the British Commonwealth, the United States and the U.S.S.R. (and China) in regard to a scheme of world organisation after the war, and if it can withstand the subtle underminings and intrigues to which it will be increasingly exposed from a resurgent Germany always looking for opportunities to play off the Four Great Powers one against the other, then the prospects of a prolonged period without major cause of friction with the Soviet Union, while she devotes herself principally to her internal development, would be good. Even if, by the withdrawal of the United States or for other reasons, a world organisation led by the Four Great Powers in consultation is not achieved, good relations might still be maintained between the British Commonwealth and the Soviet Union so long as the peace settlement in Europe and—to a somewhat lesser extent—in the Far East satisfied the Soviet Union. But the progress of Russia in learning the difficult art of international collaboration would in these circumstances be less probable and our position *vis-à-vis* of the Soviet Union on the one side and the United States on the other might become difficult and delicate.

*Probable policy of the Soviet Union if she decides against co-operation with the British Commonwealth and the United States.*

32. Given Russia’s marked capacity for suspicion on top of 125 years at least of Anglo-Russian hostility, veiled or open, coupled with rapid progress towards self-sufficiency and impregnability, and the fundamental differences of outlook between a weakened, war-weary, kindly and liberal Britain and a vigorous though an intensely nationalistic Soviet Russia, it may be said that a gradual deterioration of relations is almost bound to set in unless confidence can be established during the war and maintained after the war by the constant practice on both sides of consultation, co-operation, and mutual give and take. If confidence is not achieved the Soviet Government may decide within a comparatively short time of the end of the war that a policy of co-operation with the British Commonwealth with or without the United States does not serve Soviet interests. In that case Soviet foreign policy would be directed to giving the Soviet Union the time to attain the main aims of her internal development and the strength to withstand any likely combination of Powers. How long it would take her to achieve this position it is impossible to estimate, but even presupposing that she could maintain in the feverish energy of the last fifteen years it could hardly be less than ten years after the end of the war, having regard to her immense task of reconstruction, and might well be a good deal longer. While dropping the attempt at international co-operation she might until these aims were attained be disruptive and selfish in her foreign policy, but not to the point of provoking a combination of Great Powers against her. She would still seek to ensure the weakness of Germany. With Germany and Japan out of account and the British Commonwealth and the United States not in the mood—nor probably indeed in a position—to harbour aggressive designs against the Soviet Union, she would have no interest in hastening a revival of Germany or Japan by combining with them. Nor would she be likely to follow such a policy in Europe as would lead Western Europe to welcome a revival of Germany as a bulwark against Russia. But see paragraph 37 below.

33. With their internal preoccupations the Soviet Government would be most unlikely to follow a purely expansionist policy. They would more probably be passively un-cooperative and work steadily against schemes of international co-operation favoured by this country, rather than be adventurous and provocative where British interests are concerned. More especially would this be the case if Anglo-American relations were good and the United States had not withdrawn into isolation but seemed likely to support the British Commonwealth. Even when it became clear—and it might not become clear for a considerable time—that Russia had finally decided against a policy of co-operation, Anglo-Soviet relations would not necessarily undergo an immediate and violent reversal. It is, perhaps, more likely that the deterioration would extend over a number of years as instances of Soviet action antagonistic to the interests of this country gradually accumulated. We should probably little by little fall back into a prolonged period of uneasy relations poisoned by mutual suspicions, which would spread to and divide other countries and would hinder the progress of settlement and recovery in war-devastated Europe. This might well lead to very serious divisions of opinion in this country, to which the Soviet Union would not hesitate to contribute.

34. No doubt the Soviet Union’s policy towards British interests will be affected to a major degree by the attitude of the United States both towards this country and towards the U.S.S.R., supposing the United States withdraws from international co-operation in the political sphere. But here it becomes unprofitable to speculate owing to the multitude of factors, internal and external, which would come into play in the United States. Popular feeling towards the Soviet Union is far less favourable now than in our own country, irrespective of anti-Soviet pressure groups such as the Roman Catholics and the Poles. For many ordinary Americans the Soviet Union remains the apostle of communism, and to American organised labour even socialism is regarded as a danger to the American way of life. In the United States, therefore, the Bolshevik bogy is very much alive. This is balanced to some extent by the American respect for Russia’s mere size and for her proved but unsuspected industrial capacity. On the other hand, the Soviet attitude towards the United States is not coloured to the same extent as towards Great Britain by a background of hostility or suspicion. There is a reciprocal respect for American productive capacity and technical and organising ability, and the Soviet Union will almost certainly welcome American help in relief and reconstruction. On the other hand, there is a lively appreciation in the Soviet Union of the social forces dividing the United States and probably a fear of American economic expansionism, a hatred of American big business and high finance and distrust of the international part they may wish to play after the war; also considerable ignorance of the workings of American internal politics[[15]](#footnote-15).

35. After Stalin’s victory over Trotsky the doctrine of the world revolution was dropped and Soviet interference in the internal affairs of other countries was directed to subserving the Soviet Union’s own national ends, by weakening the internal position in potentially hostile countries. Soviet policy will continue to be nationalistic. The Soviet slogan now is democracy, not communism. The present leaders of Soviet Russia are realists and nationalists rather than ideologues, and the internal trend in the Soviet Union during the war is strongly in the same direction. But the Soviet Government will not abandon the international rôle of the workers’ friend. In chaotic conditions after the war the Soviet Union’s appeal for Left-wing circles is likely to be exploited for national ends. While she goes in for a policy of international co-operation, interference with the internal affairs of other countries would no doubt be tempered to suit that policy. It will be exploited to the full, if she abandons that policy .

36. The traditional attraction exercised by Russia on the other Slavs (except the Poles) was largely based (i) on the fact that Russia was the only Slav great Power and appeared as the liberator from Turkish or Magyar and Austrian rule; (ii) on the wealth and influence of the Orthodox Church in Russia. There is likely to be some revival of this ecclesiastical influence, but not on a major scale. The appeal of pan-slavism is now again great owing to German domination and the Russian success in resisting it, and the Soviet Government has taken the opportunity to organise the Pan-Slav Conference[[16]](#footnote-16) and other demonstrations of Slav solidarity. The immediate aim of these Soviet moves is obviously to stimulate the Slavs now under German domination to make the maximum effort against their German conquerors. After the liberation of Europe the attraction of Russia is perhaps likely to diminish, if the aftermath of the war does not lead to too prolonged and bloody a chaos in the Danubian and Balkan regions. But in any case the combination of the traditional appeal of Russia with the new appeal of the Soviet Union will remain a powerful potential source of attraction, particularly in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia.

Part III.

*Soviet Union’s Interest in Particular Countries.*

*Germany*

37. The Soviet Union’s main immediate interest will be to extract—through compulsory labour and deliveries in kind—as full reparation as possible for the enormous damage inflicted by the Germans. Russia’s long-term policy towards Germany is that she should be so completely weakened that she will no longer be a potential menace. To this end Stalin has suggested that Germany should be split up into a number of separate units, which should be kept separate, by force if necessary, and that Germany east of the Oder should go to Poland. Provided the Russians can secure this dismemberment of Germany, the complexion of the Governments of the resulting States would be a secondary consideration. The Free German Committee[[17]](#footnote-17) can safely be regarded as a mere propaganda weapon and its doctrines as no indication of the Soviet Government’s real intentions towards Germany. It is to be observed, however, that the Soviet Government, at least in their formal official pronouncements, still qualify the Germans and Germany as “Hitlerite” or “Fascist.” It looks as if this were done in case the Soviet Government at some time might wish to reverse their policy and come to terms with Germany when the latter has rid itself of Hitlerism. Such, however, is Russia’s dread of a German recovery that such an eventuality seems highly unlikely. However, the Soviet Government might take the risk and seek Germany’s friendship if they were to convince themselves that Great Britain and the United States had reversed their present policy and were building up Germany as a defence against the Soviet Union, and if they felt confident of Russia’s recovery of strength and her ability to remain the dominant partner. [...]

[TNA, FO 371/43384]

Keywords: Post-war order, post-war Soviet Union, inter-allied relations

1. Received by the British Embassy in Moscow on 23 May 1944. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Trotsky, Leon (born Bronstein, Lev Davidovich) (1879 - 1940) - Soviet statesman and political figure, one of the closest associates of V.I. Lenin during the October Revolution of 1917 and Civil War 1917 - 1922, and Stalin's rival in the struggle for power and influence in the international communist movement in the 1920s - 1930s (in exile since 1929). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Stalin repeatedly expressed his concerns about Germany’s possible revival in talks with Western statesmen and politicians (Churchill, Roosevelt, Mikolajczyk et al.), as well as his "close circle" (with communists from other countries). For example, see: FRUS. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943. p. 510; Rzheshevskiy O.А. Stalin i CHerchill’. p. 479; Sovetskiy faktor v Vostochnoy Evrope. 1944–1953. T. 1. Dokumenty / Otv. red. T.А. Volokitina. M., 1999. p. 87; The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov. p. 368. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The British representative at the FCNL in May, A. Duff Cooper, voiced similar concerns: "It would, indeed, be rash to rely upon sentiment alone to prevent a Russo-German alliance which would certainly present the most formidable menace that Europe has ever had to face”. See: W.P. (44) 409, Memo by Eden, 25/07/1944 // TNA, CAB 66/53. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Later, in April 1945, none other than J.M. Keynes, reflecting on the model of economic development of Great Britain after the war, among other things, said: “Indeed, if the free enterprise alternative breaks down (as it may), it is probably to the Russian model, in my opinion, that we shall have to look; and we may even have to make some experiments in this direction in the near future” (Keynes, Overseas Financial Policy in Stage III, 03/04/1945 (in W.P. (45) 301) // TNA, CAB 66/65). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. A similar idea had been promoted in the Northern Department of the Foreign Office during the war. As British historian M. Foley has noted, the British embassy staff in Moscow and the Northern Department believed that "the war had accelerated changes in Soviet society of a conservative nature. They were very aware that the Soviets had expansionist tendencies, akin to those that brought Russia into conflict with Britain for 125 years, but projecting forward from these internal developments, they appeared to be of a traditional kind with which the Foreign Office felt competent to understand and deal”. (Folly M. "A Long, Slow and Painful Road": the Anglo-American Alliance and the Issue of Co-operation with the USSR from Teheran to D-Day // Diplomacy & Statecraft 2012. Vol 23, No. 3. p. 477). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. According to recent research, "From 1941-1942 about 17 million people were relocated from danger zones to the East by various modes of transportation". (Kumanev G.А., Voyna i evakuatsiya v SSSR. 1941 – 1942 gody // Novaya i noveyshaya istoriya. 2006. №6. p. 27). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Summarizing various British and American assessments from 1943 -1944, Foley notes that they "varied between five and twenty years”. (Folly M. "A Long, Slow and Painful Road" P. 474). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. More precisely, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. However, it is fair to point out that, Germany not only utilized its own human and the military-industrial potential, but also the resources of the conquered countries and satellite states. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. It is possible that these concerns were linked, inter alia, with Stalin’s statement in Tehran, eventually found to be a joke, about a possible execution of 50 thousand German officers. In his memoirs, Churchill vividly described his negative reaction to Stalin’s 'proposal’ (Churchill W.S., The Second World War. Vol. V. Boston, 1985. P. 330). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This is a quotation from Stalin's speech of 6 November 1943 on the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the October Revolution (SAMO. T. 1. p. 432). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Similar ideas were also voiced in the People's Commissariat in the autumn of 1943. B.E. Stein’s note from 22 September 1943, "Questions of the international alliances and blocs in Europe," raised the question of a possible "European federation" in post-war Europe. The author stated that, "the leading role of the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union [in the European Federation] can be thought of only as a theoretical concept. It is obvious that the political and economic interests and aspirations of the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union in relation to the countries of the European continent are unlikely to match. Post-war Western Europe, liberated from the Nazi regime, will be in close orbit of English influence". (АVP RF. F. 0512. Op. 4. P. 31. D. 307. L. 10). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Similar vigilance against UK security from the air in the case of deterioration of relations with the Soviet Union could be seen in the Deputy Chief of Staff report: "Air Defence of Great Britain during the Ten Years following the Defeat of Germany” of 25 May 1944: "We consider that the U.S.S.R. is unlikely to adopt an aggressive policy in the immediate post-war years, and that her main pre-occupation will be security and internal development. It is, however, impossible to foresee how long such circumstances will obtain. If, however, her Government observed any signs of weakness or indecision on our part she might be tempted to further her interests at our expense”. (COS (44) 484 (PHP), 25/05/1944 // TNA, CAB 80 / 84). Subsequently, the awareness of danger in military reports will only increase. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. A number of American officials had similar impressions. In 1946, Robert Sherwood wrote that, "after returning from Tehran, Hopkins told me that President Roosevelt was extremely surprised upon learning just how badly Stalin was informed about the political situation in the United States... But this form of government self-hypnosis is not limited to Moscow". (Mal’kov V.L. Iz lichnoy perepiski R. SHervudaShervuda // Novaya i noveyshaya istoriya. 2008. №1. p. 157). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Apparently, what was intended was a large-scale rally of Slavic soldiers to be held on 23-24 February 1944 in the Hall of Columns in Moscow and organized by the All-Slav Committee (established in October 1941 in Moscow). It was attended by representatives of the Soviet armed forces, Polish, Czechoslovak, Yugoslav military units in the Soviet Union, foreign diplomats and journalists, representatives of civil society and the Church. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. It was formed in July 1943 in Krasnogorsk out of a number of German POWs, as well as anti-fascist German public and trade union officials and Reichstag deputies, who were in the USSR (German Communists had a major presence in the committee). Western diplomats sometimes feared that the activities of the Committee ‘Free Germany’ as well as the Union of German officers (established in Krasnogorsk in September 1943), possibly indicated the Soviet desire to strongly dominate Germany after the war. Soon after the formation of ‘Free Germany’, when answering Kerr’s question, Molotov explained that "the Committee ‘Free Germany’ – [is] a propagandistic committee’ (SSSR i germanskiy vopros. 1941 – 1949: Dokumenty iz Аrkhiva vneshney politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii. T. 1 / Sost. G.P. Kynin i Y. Laufer. M., 1996. p. 227). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)