

# Into the Abyss: The Arc of Revolution and the “World Crisis”

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The events covered in the chapters contained in this fifth volume in the series *Russia’s Great War and Revolution, 1914–22* carry profound significance, not least for their contemporary ideational resonance. In an era where a growing consensus recognizes the breakdown of the post-1991 liberal-value-based international system in general, and the possibility of a new “Cold War” between Russia and the West in particular, the striking collapse and remapping of the international system generated by the events of 1917 cannot fail to acquire a degree of relevance once again.<sup>1</sup> In many ways the series of events that sprang from the revolution of 1917 in Russia—the “arc of revolution” inspired by those events which swept from Finland in the north to as far south and east as Iran, Mongolia, and China—marked the true beginning of the Cold War. Then, as now, contemporaries saw these events, and their consequences, in terms of a systemic crisis—E. H. Carr subsequently and most famously reviewing the entire post-World War I period as one long single “Twenty Years’ Crisis,” shaped by profoundly malign and unrealistic sets of ideas about how to govern the international system.<sup>2</sup> So doing, this renowned subsequent historian of the Soviet Union also inadvertently helped give birth to the entire modern discipline of international relations theory, just as his close contemporary Sir Halford Mackinder, whose efforts we shall also encounter here in reviewing this period, helped birth the modern theory of geopolitics. By way of providing context to the work of the many scholars which will follow in this book, this introduction will therefore examine the thinking and reactions of the “system,” against which “the arc of revolution” was perceived as an

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<sup>1</sup> On the “New Cold War,” see, for different perspectives, Richard Sakwa, *Russia against the Rest: The Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); and Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces both Russia and the West* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (1939; Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2001).

antisystemic challenge, as well as seek to demonstrate that the ideational echo of these events in relation to our own era is neither coincidental, nor benign.

The main factor in producing the “arc of revolution” that is examined in this volume of the Russia’s Great War and Revolution series was, of course, the Russian Revolution of 1917 itself. In the main, this first book examines the geopolitical impact of the Russian Revolution on the borderlands of the former tsarist empire itself, from Helsingfors (Helsinki) to Ulaanbaatar. The subsequent two books will widen this examination of the legacy of the Russian Revolution both on a more global geographical scale, and in terms of its cultural and sociological aspects as well. The very notion of the arc itself, however, also draws on contemporary responses to the effect the Russian Revolutions had on the international system. From the moment the Bolsheviks seized power, the regional and global consequences of the revolution began to be discussed. Contemporaries of liberal, conservative, and socialist political persuasions at the time displayed near unanimity in their belief that the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had profoundly reshaped the existing map of international relations and world order. One of the most prominent contemporary conservative reactions was embodied in the speeches and writings of the future British prime minister Winston Churchill. When Churchill’s work *The Aftermath* was first published in 1929, the author remarked in the preface that “there is scarcely any period about which more has been recorded, more has been forgotten, and less is understood, than the four years which followed the Armistice.”<sup>3</sup> Churchill nonetheless perceived developing and communicating such an understanding as an urgent priority; his was therefore already a viewpoint critically informed by retrospect and reflection about the international system that had in practice emerged during the 1920s. By the time Churchill wrote his book—much of it cannibalized from his own earlier speeches, newspaper articles, and ministerial papers—about the international repercussions of the events of 1917–22, the bloom around both Allied victory in 1918, and the Versailles Peace Treaty that followed had already faded. Churchill’s account in 1929 was one therefore already founded upon a narrative of lost opportunities. In this work, he accordingly also allowed himself a personal retrospective “Armistice dream” of what “might have been” in 1919 in terms of creating an “enduring peace”—a vision within which President Woodrow Wilson had secured in advance the presence of a US Senate delegation to accompany him to Europe, and one where (perhaps most tellingly) the League of Nations had also received a cast-iron mandate to intervene militarily in Russia to overthrow the Bolshevik regime. In this dream, Germany, the recently defeated

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<sup>3</sup> Winston Churchill, *The Aftermath: Being a Sequel to the World Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1941), 9.

major power, would also have been invited, as a gesture of reconciliation, to "aid in the liberation of Russia and the re-building of Eastern Europe."<sup>4</sup>

To the present-day reader and student, Churchill's emphasis on political events in Russia and the failure to unseat the Bolsheviks via violent military intervention as *the* major factor undermining the subsequent establishment of a viable postwar world order may appear unbalanced, even when taking into account that he also demonstrated no more foresight than many other contemporaries when it came to predicting the wider repercussions of the rise of the Nazi regime after 1933.<sup>5</sup> Confounding the popular post-1945 image of him as a far sighted prophet of antifascism, Churchill in reality openly admired Mussolini's achievements in 1926, was an isolationist in 1933, and as late as 1935 stated on the record that

[w]e cannot tell whether Hitler will be the man who will once again let loose upon the world another war in which civilization will irretrievably succumb, or whether he will go down to history as the man who restored honour and peace of mind to the great Germanic nation and brought it back serene, helpful and strong, to the forefront of the European family circle.<sup>6</sup>

In regard to Bolshevism, Churchill was by contrast from the very outset far more openly hostile and uncompromising, remarking in 1920 that

there will be no recovery of any kind in Russia or in eastern Europe while these wicked men, this vile group of cosmopolitan fanatics, hold the Russian nation by the hair of its head and tyrannizes over its great population. The policy I will always advocate is the overthrow and destruction of that criminal regime.<sup>7</sup>

If not an early antifascist, Churchill was therefore an early and ardent anticommunist. He was not entirely alone at the time either; the autumn of

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 22–25.

<sup>5</sup> On Churchill's views on the Bolshevik regime, see David Carlton, *Churchill and the Soviet Union* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); and Antoine Capet, "'The Creed of the Devil': Churchill between the Two Totalitarianisms, 1917–1945," available at <https://www.winstonchurchill.org/publications/finest-hour-extras/the-creeds-of-the-devil-churchill-between-the-two-totalitarianisms-1917-1945-1/>.

<sup>6</sup> David Carlton, "Churchill and the Two 'Evil Empires,'" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 11 (2001): 336–37.

<sup>7</sup> Carlton, *Churchill and the Soviet Union*, 26.

1918 in general saw the world's first global "Red Scare," with graphic narratives around Bolshevik subversion playing a pivotal role in several key 1919 election campaigns, as well as in popular discourse in France, Germany, and the United States alike. In Germany as early as 1917–18, as Mark Jones impressively demonstrates in this volume, "Russian conditions" had already come to be associated in popular discourse with anarchy, violence, famine, and terror, in a narrative that increasingly married German orientalist views of Eastern Europe as a whole—a racist vision which had grown over the course of the war, spurred on by the lived experience of militarily occupying eastern lands—with longer-running elite fears over the unhygienic and inherently savage nature of the domestic German working class. The savage repression and extraordinary levels of extrajudicial violence which were then meted out in response to any attempts by German communists to create a revolution of their own in Germany in 1919–23 were accordingly strongly influenced by what Jones identifies in this volume as an already well established "revolutionary script" of what "Russian conditions" would mean, were they were to be reproduced and replayed within the borders of Germany itself. Fears regarding the revolutionary savagery the Bolshevik government was taken to represent were, however, not confined to the British, French, or German political elites; US president Woodrow Wilson also declared that the Soviet government represented the "negation of everything that is American."<sup>8</sup> Though seen even by colleagues like Lloyd George as somewhat extreme in his anti-Bolshevik views in 1917–20, Churchill's subsequent 1929 text therefore captured (in lurid terms) the systemic threat that the new Bolshevik state appeared to present in the eyes of many at the time:

We saw [in Russia] a state without a nation, an army without a country, a religion without a God. The Government which claimed to be the new Russia sprang from Revolution and was fed by Terror... Just when the worst was over, when victory was in sight, when the fruits of measureless sacrifice were at hand, the old Russia had been dragged down, and in her place there ruled "the nameless beast" so long foretold in Russian legend.... Thus there was to be no Russia in the Councils of the Allies—*only an abyss which still continues in human affairs.*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Stephen White, *The Origins of Détente: The Genoa Conference and Soviet-Western Relations, 1921–1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 21. On this rhetoric and the posters of the time, see Michael Jabara Carley, *Silent Conflict: A Hidden History of Early Soviet-Western Relations* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 17–20.

<sup>9</sup> Churchill, *The Aftermath*, 71, emphasis added.

To Churchill, the consequences of the German decision in 1917 to grant Lenin safe passage back to Russia on a sealed train, "like a plague bacillus," thereby unleashing "the most grisly of all weapons," were consequently politically and ideologically profound, not only for Russia, but for the international system as a whole.<sup>10</sup> The conservative narrative of the "arc of revolution" produced by the Russian Revolution in fact resorted in most cases to conflating the military threat represented by the Red Army itself (which in fact was rather weak for much of this period) with the perceived far larger threat of Bolshevik ideas, for which analogies to plague or epidemic disease were commonplace.<sup>11</sup> Baron Rosen, the former Russian ambassador to America, struck a characteristic tone by informing his American audience in 1919 that Bolshevism represented a form of "moral insanity," and a "virulent form" of that "old, chronic, and incurable disease—the everlasting strife between those who "have" and those who "have not." Bolshevism could accordingly be repressed only by "all civilized mankind acting in concert to put it down," and in practice by the establishment of an effective military dictatorship in Russia.<sup>12</sup> Churchill followed this conservative narrative when remarking that what the Russian Revolution ultimately produced was

a poisoned Russia, an infected Russia, a plague-bearing Russia, a Russia of armed hordes not only smiting with bayonet and with cannon, but accompanied and preceded by swarms of typhus-bearing vermin which slew the bodies of men, and political doctrines which destroyed the health and even the souls of nations.<sup>13</sup>

In 1920 he accordingly also remarked that "I am accustomed at the present time rather to judge world events and world tendencies from the point of view of whether they are Bolshevik or anti-Bolshevik," and asked,

[W]hat of India, Egypt, and Ireland? Do you not think it possible that there is some connection between all the revolutionary and subversive elements by which we are now being assailed? When we see all these

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>11</sup> On this theme, see Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, "Bolshevism as Fantasy: Fear of Revolution and Counter-Revolutionary Violence, 1917–1923," in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, ed. Gerwarth and Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 40–51.

<sup>12</sup> Baron Rosen, "The Menace of Bolshevism," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 84, 1 (1919): 98–100.

<sup>13</sup> Churchill, *The Aftermath*, 263.

movements from so many different quarters springing up simultaneously, does it not look as though there is a dead set being made against the British Empire? Why, for instance, should the Egyptian extremists give money to the *Daily Herald*? [Cheers.] Why does Lenin send them money, too? Why does he also send money to Sinn Fein? ... In fact there is developing a world-wide conspiracy against our country, designed to deprive us of our place in the world and to rob us of the fruits of victory. Whether it is the Irish murder gang or the Egyptian vengeance society, or the seditious extremists in India, or the arch-traitors we have at home, they will feel the weight of the British arm.<sup>14</sup>

The “Miracle on the Vistula,” the battle which marked the turning point of the Soviet-Polish conflict of 1920, was accordingly a signal event in Churchill’s account of the postwar settlement in Eastern Europe, one which averted the dawn of a new “Dark Age”; Russia tragically fell back into “Communist barbarism,” but Europe at least was spared.<sup>15</sup>

Significant evidence also suggests that Churchill’s aversion to the threat that he perceived Bolshevism posed to the international system was lifelong, transcending the alliance of convenience later generated by the Second World War, and even the division of Europe into identifiable spheres of influence that he subsequently attempted to facilitate with Stalin while that latter conflict was still raging. The year 1948 witnessed the return of confrontational rhetoric, with Churchill even urgently advocating a military showdown with the Soviet Union, before they too acquired an atomic weapon, and cajoling General Eisenhower to compel a complete withdrawal of Soviet forces not only from Germany but from the whole of Eastern Europe, with the threat to “raze their cities” to the ground if they refused. In the subsequent assessment of one of the preeminent scholars of Churchill’s overall views on this subject, Churchill’s

anti-Nazi phase, for which ironically he will always be principally remembered, was for him something of a digression, however necessary, in his extraordinarily long career. Thus, once the Battle of Britain had been won and the Americans had entered the war, the struggle to defeat Germany became for him no more than a second-order crusade.

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<sup>14</sup> Winston Churchill, “Bolshevism and Imperial Sedition,” 4 November 1920, speech at the United Wards Club Luncheon, Cannon Street Hotel, London, available at <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1915-1929-nadir-and-recovery/bolshevism-and-imperial-sedition/> (accessed 14 June 2018).

<sup>15</sup> Churchill, *The Aftermath*, 272.

For in his own eyes at least the contest with Soviet Bolshevism was what gave his political life the greatest continuity and meaning.<sup>16</sup>

In 1917–20, Churchill's views were, however, also regarded as extreme by many of his contemporaries, and constituted a significant point of tension within the British government of the day over Allied support to the White cause in Russia. Having opposed military intervention in Russia from the outset, Lloyd George in January 1920 would come to lament to Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the British General Staff that, with regard to Russia, "Winston has gone mad." British troops had already been withdrawn from Archangel and Murmansk, over Churchill's objections, in 1919, a development related to the fact that, with the end of the First World War, concerns over maintaining some form of still-active "eastern front" against Germany ceased to be a major Allied preoccupation.<sup>17</sup> Churchill's ongoing personal political "crusade" against Bolshevism, while serving as secretary of state for war and air in 1919–21, therefore lacked majority support within the British Cabinet of the day, which instead became increasingly split over the issue as the First World War itself ended.<sup>18</sup> Allied military support to the Whites nonetheless endured long enough to shape profoundly the nature and dynamics of the Russian Civil War.

On 3 December 1917 the British Cabinet had already set in motion the financial spearhead for their future intervention in the Russian Civil War, by authorizing the British ambassador in Petrograd, Sir George Buchanan, to establish Ukrainian, Cossack, Armenian, and Polish banks, with a view to funding any local anti-Bolshevik force that emerged. By February 1918, when this policy first came under review, over half a million pounds had already been committed to this cause.<sup>19</sup> In December 1918, the White leader General Denikin also dispatched the war hero, military veteran, and former head of the Russian General Staff Academy, General Shcherbachev, to Paris, in order to negotiate more direct military aid and support for the White armies in Rus-

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<sup>16</sup> Carlton, "Churchill and the Two 'Evil Empires,'" 351.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>18</sup> On these developments, see most recently Clifford Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia, 1918–20* (London: Continuum, 2006); Ian Moffat, *The Allied Intervention in Russia, 1918–20: The Diplomacy of Chaos* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); and Damien Wright, *Churchill's Secret War with Lenin: British and Commonwealth Military Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918–20* (West Midlands, UK: Hellion, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Occleshaw, *Dances in Deep Shadows: Britain's Clandestine War in Russia, 1917–20* (London: Constable & Robin, 2006), 28.



sia.<sup>20</sup> Shcherbachev inherited a situation which was already chaotic, due to the institutional framework of wartime supply contracts to Tsarist Russia being liquidated, at the same time as Scherbachev's personal authority as plenipotentiary was contested by A. A. Ignat'ev, the Russian military agent already present in Paris. Britain and France between them were by this stage also increasingly undertaking personal charge of supplying both Kolchak's forces in Siberia and the forces of General Miller in north Russia, and in the end Shcherbachev's attempt to coordinate and centralize Allied military supplies to the White cause ended in failure, undermined by a complex web of overlapping political, institutional, financial, and logistical challenges.<sup>21</sup>

During the last major phase of the Civil War, this military aid also became predominantly British. Britain and France had divided South Russia between them into two respective "spheres of activity" in December 1917, leading to a French deployment of troops from neighboring Romania into the Ukraine, but following local mutinies amongst her troops, France had then rapidly evacuated Odessa and the Crimea during April 1919. Though she initially also raised up to one hundred million francs of credit to support anti-Bolshevik activities of various kinds in Russia, France's contribution to the military fight against Bolshevism was destined to be expressed more in her substantial effort in training and militarily modernizing regional allies—Poland and Romania—than in boots on the ground.<sup>22</sup> Four hundred French advisers, led at first by General Paul Prosper Henrys, joined the Polish army after January 1919, and during 1919 the Quai d'Orsay also authorized the extension of 375 million francs worth of credit to Poland to buy arms. Such conditions meant that in the battles of 1920 with Soviet Russia, half of Poland's rifles and machine guns, and a large proportion of her artillery, were of French manufacture.<sup>23</sup> The Romanian army, which subsequently intervened to overthrow the Soviet government in Hungary led by Bela Kun in 1919 (an episode dealt with by Ignac Romsics in this book), had meanwhile already been on the receiving end of substantial French military aid and assistance since 1916–17, when the

<sup>20</sup> A. V. Shmelev, "Missiia Generala D. G. Shcherbacheva i problema snabzheniia belykh armii soiuznikami," in *Rossiiia: Mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie i voennyi potentsial v seredine XIX–nachale XX veka. Ocherki*, ed. I. S. Rybachenok (Moscow: Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 2003), 329.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 352.

<sup>22</sup> On French policies of the period, see J. Kim Munholland, "The French Army and Intervention in Southern Russia, 1918–1919," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 22, 1 (1981): 43–66; and Kalervo Hovi, *Cordon sanitaire or Barriere de l'Est? The Emergence of the New French Eastern European Alliance Policy, 1917–1919* (Turku: Turun Yliopisto, 1975).

<sup>23</sup> Michael Jabal Carley, "Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy: The Crisis in Poland in 1920," *International History Review* 2, 3 (1980): 414.



wartime restructuring and re-equipping of the Romanian military occurred under the mentorship of the French General Berthelot. It was Berthelot in 1918 who was meanwhile also charged by Clemenceau with heading a military mission responsible for operations in Romania and the Ukraine. In 1917, French supplies to Romania already amounted to 199 airplanes, 300 vehicles, 220,000 rifles, 4,500 automatic rifles, 2,700 machine guns, 80 75mm cannon, 85 120mm cannon, 1,945,000 artillery shells, 101,500,000 rifle cartridges, 1,370,000 hand grenades, and 600,000 gas masks.<sup>24</sup> Large-scale military assistance was eventually followed up by attempts at coordinated political action, as part of a conscious "containment" strategy in Eastern Europe. By 1921, with French encouragement, Poland and Romania would eventually sign a military mutual assistance pact in the event of either party being attacked by the Soviet Union.

The White cause itself, however, was in 1919 being largely abandoned by France, becoming a solely British responsibility. With Churchill's ongoing enthusiastic support, British military aid during this final phase of the Civil War at last focused entirely on Denikin; 56 Mark V British heavy tanks and 18 light Whippet tanks were, for example, gathered from depots in Britain and France, and shipped to Novorossiisk. In July 1919, the British War Cabinet also approved a six-month plan to provide Denikin with military surplus not in use by the British armed forces themselves, as well as a War Office reserve fund of £100,000 to purchase and transfer such equipment as could not be outsourced from the British army's own depots.<sup>25</sup> The final total of British military supply to Denikin's forces amounted to full British army kit for half a million men, 1,200 field guns with almost two million rounds of ammunition, 6,100 machine guns, 200,000 rifles with 500 million rounds of ammunition, 629 lorries and motorcars, 279 motorcycles, 74 tanks, six armored cars, 200 aircraft, twelve 500-bed hospitals, 25 field hospitals, and a vast amount of signal and engineer equipment.<sup>26</sup> This was ultimately far more equipment than Denikin's own forces were themselves ever able to deploy or use effectively,

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<sup>24</sup> On Berthelot, see Glenn E. Torrey, *Henri Matthias Berthelot: General of France, Defender of Romania*. (Oxford: Centre for Romanian Studies, 2001). For these figures, see Glenn E. Torrey, *The Romanian Battlefield in World War One* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 183–84.

<sup>25</sup> The National Archives (TNA), Cabinet Office Files (CAB), CAB 23/11 (Minutes of War Cabinet 599, 25 July 1919, and War Cabinet 601, 29 July 1919).

<sup>26</sup> Major-General Sir H. C. Holman's Final Report of the Military Mission, South Russia (TNA, War Office [WO] 33/971).

but it proved particularly critical in the spring of 1919 for temporarily reviving the military fortunes of the Volunteer Army in South Russia.<sup>27</sup>

If Churchill continued to favor overthrow of the Bolsheviks altogether, an effort symbolized by British financial and military aid to the Whites, this period of intervention nonetheless also gave birth to the first attempts at “containment” of the perceived Bolshevik menace, creating a pattern (and legacy) in international relations that would continue to dominate European (and eventually even world) affairs for the majority of the rest of the 20th century. Indeed, if Western strategy towards the Communist Bloc after 1948 can be characterized as falling generically into one of three main conceptual positions—attempted normalization via *détente*, containment, or attempted rollback/overthrow—then British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon and his friend Sir Halford Mackinder were arguably the Anglo-Saxon founding fathers of containment, just as much as Churchill was one of the earliest and most vocal advocates of “rollback.” The entire array of policy possibilities was in fact laid out as early as November 1918, in a review by the British chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Henry Wilson, on possible Allied policy towards Russia.<sup>28</sup> Wilson laid out three variants in his memorandum—complete military withdrawal from Russia, with the establishment of a geographical *cordon sanitaire* around the Bolshevik regime (what in fact would broadly become France’s main strategy after 1919); direct overthrow of the Bolsheviks, via a massive conventional military intervention (for which Wilson argued resources were lacking); or the support of local anti-Bolshevik forces to the stage they were able to topple the Bolsheviks themselves—a proxy war. Wilson himself at the time favored the third scenario. These paradigms on how to tackle the perceived threat of the Soviet state were revised and revisited, and commonly perceived as novel debates at the time, during the late 1940s and early 1950s; in reality, however, such intellectual positions were arguably already well established by the early 1920s.<sup>29</sup> Here one must also distinguish between how

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<sup>27</sup> A classic account by a British officer on the ground tasked with helping administer and distribute this military aid as part of the British Military Mission in South Russia remains the journal of Brigadier H. N. H. Williamson, *Farewell to the Don: The Journal of Brigadier H. N. H. Williamson*, ed. John Harries (London: Collins, 1970).

<sup>28</sup> Sir Henry Wilson, “Memorandum on Our Present and Future Military Policy in Russia,” 13 November 1918, Cabinet paper G.T.6311 (TNA, CAB 24/70).

<sup>29</sup> The policy of containment, for example, is often seen to have been born by George Kennan’s infamous “Long Telegram” in 1948, when in reality many of its key ideas had already been expressed by Curzon and Mackinder after 1919, in relation to safeguarding central Europe and the gates to India. Stephen White has meanwhile also pointed to Lloyd George’s efforts at the Genoa Conference in 1922 as the earliest attempt at *détente* in Western strategy towards the Soviet Union (*Origins of Détente*, *passim*).

policy was made at the time, and the intellectual and ideational legacies it left in its wake. Policy at the time, as Matthew Schwonek (amongst others) emphasises in this book, was often in practice a prolonged improvised response to events—the collapse of empires, the emergence of a power vacuum in the whole of Central and Eastern Europe, the anarchic redistribution of military resources, competing national and political strategic visions, and the need to generate multiple new sources of authority and legitimacy. In terms of *strategy*, however, the concepts outlined in basic terms in 1918 for “managing” the Russian Revolution within the existing international order have undoubtedly also carried a profound longer-term resonance. Although they carried their own ideational and personal specifics unique to their own time and place—neither Churchill, Curzon, nor Mackinder are necessarily interpreted here as bearers of “eternal wisdom” with regard to Russia—these intellectual paradigms therefore nonetheless do also qualify as “persistent factors” in Western strategies towards Russia as a whole since 1917.<sup>30</sup>

British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon ensured at the time that the *cordon sanitaire* strategy was pursued in parallel to strategies aimed at a purely conventional military overthrow of the Bolshevik regime; if Bolshevism was a plague, an alternative method of treatment was quarantine and containment. In 1919–20, Sir Halford Mackinder was accordingly appointed British high commissioner to South Russia, tasked with investigating the viability of a new geopolitical design for the containment of Bolshevik Russia. Mackinder had been active in prewar and wartime public debates over both the changing balance of power in Eurasia, and the emergence of new nations in central and Eastern Europe. 1904 had seen the publication of the first iteration of his paper “The Geographical Pivot of History” through the British Royal Geographical Society. This paper famously posited the existence of a Eurasian “heartland,” or “world-island,” geographically congruent with both the present Russian Empire and former Mongol Empire, rich in natural resources, inaccessible to the major maritime powers, and now about to be logistically transformed by the ingress of modern railroad networks such as the Trans-Siberian railroad. Control of the heartland would come to be seen by Mackinder, as well as by

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<sup>30</sup> The definition given here of “persistent factors” draws directly on the work done by Alfred J. Rieber on this issue: “How Persistent Are Persistent Factors?” in *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century and the Shadow of the Past*, ed. Robert Legvold (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 205–78. In considering “persistent factors” in Russia’s own historical development, Rieber enumerates three major recurring elements—(relative) economic backwardness, and the political order created and required by the need to extract vital strategic resources; geopolitical rivalry for control of Russia’s borderlands from the side of Germany, Britain, and Japan; and the multicultural nature of the “shatter zone” in the borderlands of the Russian Empire/Soviet Union itself, with related persistent challenges in terms of stable governance.

many of his later followers and acolytes, as the key to international relations in general in the modern world. Both Colin S. Gray and Robert D. Kaplan, for example, continue to uphold the merits of Mackinder's thoughts and ideas even today, while in contemporary Russia, Aleksandr Dugin has also become the key intermediary in communicating Mackinder's main ideas to modern organizations like the Russian General Staff.<sup>31</sup>

Mackinder's ideas nonetheless also grew from the political and social specifics of his own time, and by 1919 these also naturally reflected collective sets of ideas and concepts sparked directly by the First World War. The most obvious impact of the war was a growing interest in East European nationality questions amongst British diplomats, reporters, and public intellectuals like Mackinder. During the war, Mackinder had helped to found the Serbian Society in the United Kingdom, an organization promoting the creation of a new state later called Yugoslavia. He was also by July 1918 listed as a collaborator in the weekly paper *The New Europe*, founded in October 1916 by R. W. Seton-Watson.<sup>32</sup> Mackinder accordingly came to view the closing years of the First World War as the birth pangs of a new geopolitical order in Eastern Europe, and initially greeted the February Revolution of 1917, together with American entry into the war that same year, as marking the final victory of democracy over the "last citadel" of European autocracy—Prussian militarism—creating in the process a bloc of democracies ready to "forge the world of tomorrow."<sup>33</sup> The Bolshevik Revolution that followed, however, raised, in Mackinder's eyes, the renewed importance of cultivating a large regional military-political alliance of local "small nations" to keep the twin menaces of Bolshevism and German nationalism at bay, generating a geopolitical *cordon sanitaire* around the increasingly Bolshevik-dominated "heartland" at the same time in order to ensure political stability. These ideas chimed with those of the British foreign secretary after October 1919, Lord Curzon, who perceived preserving an alliance of sovereign states in the Transcaucasus as key to guarding the gates to British India, and who was accordingly distressed by the political goals of General Denikin's Volunteer Army in South Russia

<sup>31</sup> Simone Pelizza, "The Geopolitics of International Reconstruction: Halford Mackinder and Eastern Europe, 1919–20," *International History Review* 38, 1 (2016): 175. On Dugin, see also Charles Clover, *Black Earth, White Snow: The Rise of Russia's New Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 154–62, 201–02.

<sup>32</sup> Geoffrey Sloan, "Sir Halford J. Mackinder: The Heartland Theory Then and Now," in *Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy*, ed. Colin S. Gray and Sloan (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 25.

<sup>33</sup> Pelizza, "Geopolitics of International Reconstruction," 179.

(which Britain was militarily supporting at the time) to restore a Russia "great, united and undivided."<sup>34</sup>

Curzon and Mackinder had known each other since serving together as undergraduates at Oxford, and both men were leading figures in British geography, Mackinder as an academic, and Curzon as an explorer and president of the Royal Geographical Society.<sup>35</sup> In the autumn of 1919, Mackinder was accordingly appointed high commissioner to South Russia by Curzon, and dispatched on a diplomatic tour of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea, with the goal of persuading Denikin to desist from infringing on the sovereignty of the new, smaller nations emerging along the periphery of the former Russian Empire. Mackinder was also charged to advise Denikin to curtail the antisemitic pogroms by White forces in the Ukraine, which were doing much to damage the White cause in the eyes of British public opinion.

In practice, Mackinder's mission was delayed, both by continuing turmoil in Eastern Europe and by domestic political considerations—he had been elected in 1910 as a member of Parliament, and prior to departing for Russia, via a series of scheduled consultative meetings en route in Paris, Warsaw, Bucharest, and Sofia, he also had to attend to his Glasgow constituency, in order to fend off the serious challenge of a socialist candidate, H. B. Guthrie. This concern with domestic affairs was in fact ideologically interconnected in Mackinder's own mind with his upcoming foreign mission. Mackinder saw Guthrie as emblematic of the latent Bolshevik threat in Britain itself, and the calls of Guthrie's followers for social reform and land redistribution in Scotland, in Mackinder's eyes, threatened the same kind of "civil bloodshed" as created by Lenin's party in Russia.<sup>36</sup> Mackinder's mission also came at a key turning point in general British engagement with the Whites, as Churchill's favored policy of military "rollback" was now formally abandoned. Shortly after Mackinder himself was appointed high commissioner, it was also announced that Britain would cease transferring military arms and equipment to Denikin's forces in South Russia as of 31 March 1920.<sup>37</sup> By the time Mackinder himself

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<sup>34</sup> On Curzon's schemes at the time, see Sean Kelly, "How Far West? Lord Curzon's Transcaucasian (Mis)Adventure and the Defence of British India, 1918–23," *International History Review* 35, 2 (2013): 274–93; John Fisher, "'On the Glacis of India': Lord Curzon and British Policy in the Caucasus, 1919," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 8, 2 (1997): 50–82; and John D. Rose, "Batum as Domino, 1919–1920: The Defence of India in Transcaucasia," *International History Review* 11, 1, (1980): 267–87.

<sup>35</sup> B. W. Blouet, "Sir Halford Mackinder as British High Commissioner to South Russia, 1919–1920," *Geographical Journal* 142, 2 (1976): 231.

<sup>36</sup> Pelizza, "Geopolitics of International Reconstruction," 188.

<sup>37</sup> Blouet, "Sir Halford Mackinder," 232.

finally reached Novorossiisk in January 1920, the military tide in the Russian Civil War had also turned decisively, with the Volunteer Army in full retreat in the face of a powerful Red Army offensive. Mackinder accordingly found himself now pressing Denikin to forge an alliance with neighboring small nationalities—“the Finns, the Esthonians [*sic*], the Letts, the Poles, the Georgians, and perhaps the Roumanians [*sic*] ... with the British and French giving support by economic methods and organising brains” with even greater urgency than was first anticipated, with this agenda now presented as the only way to avert imminent military catastrophe.<sup>38</sup>

Denikin at the time conceded to all of Mackinder’s major proposals, including recognition of the Transcaucasus republics and Poland’s new borders, once the latter were decided on an “ethnographic basis,” in exchange for immediate British military aid. Mackinder was not personally empowered to either promise or deliver the latter, however; he instead returned as rapidly as possible to London, in an attempt to drum up support for a broader general anti-Bolshevik coalition of small states across Central Europe and the Transcaucasus (one wherein Poland would play a dominant organizational role), while also renewing support of Denikin’s government, in exchange for the UK acquiring major commercial concessions in South Russia. The British Cabinet, however, comprehensively rejected Mackinder’s proposals, in favor of politically disentangling itself entirely from South Russia instead.

In this sense Mackinder’s paradigm of a broad East European military and political confederation—an “arc of containment”—foundered on political realities at the time, much as did Polish Marshal Piłsudski’s similar scheme for a restored multicultural Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, or “Intermarium” (*Miedzymorze*), which he envisioned stretching from the Baltic to the Ukrainian coast. In the Transcaucasus, as Vadim Mukhanov iterates in two comprehensive chapters in this book, the political consequences of such disengagement were profound. Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, all of whom had become independent states for the first time in history in the wake of the February Revolution, remained internally dysfunctional in economic, political, and military terms, and accordingly also highly dependent on geopolitical balancing with external actors. The terms of Georgia’s initial formal independence had come about via balancing German and Ottoman imperial interests against each other, rendering the first independent Georgian state a German satrap. As the Ottoman “Army of Islam” marched east towards Baku in 1918, Azerbaijan by contrast actively cultivated Turkish (Ottoman) support, under the banner of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islam. With Allied withdrawal by 1920, all three states consequently suffered a severe reversal of fortune, one

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<sup>38</sup> Pelizza, “Geopolitics of International Reconstruction,” 184.



further influenced by the new relationship (and informal territorial division of influence) now being forged between Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey. As Georgia Eglezou's chapter in this volume notes, this alliance allowed the Turkish National Assembly and the military forces assembled around it, with the help of Soviet-supplied gold and weapons, to contest and (via victory over Greek armies in Anatolia) ultimately overturn the major initial postwar settlement for the Greater Middle East, the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. In these circumstances Armenia, the pet political project of American president Woodrow Wilson, perhaps suffered most in territorial terms by its failure (as initially envisioned by the Treaty of Sèvres) to become an Allied protectorate, becoming instead a Soviet republic after imprudently provoking a major Turkish military onslaught.

During this period of geopolitical balancing, Finland and the Baltic states to the north were by contrast in some ways more fortunate than the Transcaucasian republics, in being able to preserve the independence gained during 1917 after 1920, but as Marko Tikka, Geoffrey Swain, and Karsten Brüggemann each demonstrate in their respective chapters in this book, independence there still came at the price of ongoing psychological and territorial trauma, and contested local political memories. The major issues here involved not only foreign intervention from multiple directions, and the famine and societal collapse generated by the First World War; they also included deeply divided domestic populations forced to choose sides in the proxy conflict that the international system was itself generating. The messy territorial division of Eastern Europe in general came to something resembling an interwar final settlement via the Treaty of Riga of March 1921 which formally ended the Soviet-Polish conflict, the results of which, delimiting the Soviet frontiers in Belorus and Ukraine with the newly independent state of Poland, left approximately 5 million Ukrainians, and just over a million Belorussians, still living within the borders of interwar Poland, with consequences that would cause the territorial frontiers to be revisited again after the end of the Second World War.<sup>39</sup> Mackinder's vision of a unified anti-Bolshevik bloc encircling and containing Russia from the Baltic to the Black Sea was therefore stillborn. Even Curzon, though he privately regretted the "premature termination" of Mackinder's mission, declared that conditions on the ground had now changed so radically that pursuit of his own earlier policy of rigorous containment was becoming politically obsolete.<sup>40</sup> Contemporaries in general, in fact, ultimately

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<sup>39</sup> On the Treaty of Riga and its consequences, see Jan Jacek Bruski, *Between Prometheanism and Realpolitik: Poland and Soviet Ukraine, 1921–1926* (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2016); and Jerzy Borzecki, *The Soviet-Polish Peace of 1921 and the Creation of Interwar Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> Pelizza, "Geopolitics of International Reconstruction," 185–86.



rejected Mackinder's project precisely because it lacked realism; in the words of one of the most recent studies of the subject, Mackinder's scheme

was not a clear rational formula on the strategic situation of postwar Eastern Europe, rich in prophetic insights on the future of the region, but was instead a confused set of contradictory assumptions and unrealistic expectations, nurtured by the cultural and diplomatic illusions of other contemporary British policy-makers.<sup>41</sup>

If containment and rollback as systemic strategies for tackling Bolshevik Russia were both facing increasing challenges by 1921, voices calling for détente had yet to fully make their mark. Such voices nonetheless did already exist, for varying reasons and to various degrees, on both sides. In 1919 French military commanders such as Rear Admiral Exelmans and Berthelot were already advocating, even while engaged in the evacuation of French forces from parts of the Ukraine, and still intending to make a last stand in Odessa, that the French government seek a political accommodation with the Bolsheviks instead.<sup>42</sup> After November 1920, Lenin's government also courted foreign investment and then, from March 1921 onwards, launched the internal reform known as the New Economic Policy (NEP) encouraging agricultural surpluses and private sector activity to revive the domestic economy. By 1922 Lenin would be lecturing his own party on the necessity of building the socialist economy "with bourgeois hands," the need to learn to trade, and to conduct and cultivate normal business relations on the international stage.<sup>43</sup> In January 1920 the Allied Supreme Council, meeting in Paris, had already elected to end their economic blockade of Soviet Russia, and though the Polish-Soviet War temporarily delayed further initiatives aimed at normalization, by March 1921 an Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement had been signed. Though this was undoubtedly the agreement with greatest symbolic and strategic importance, signifying the resumption of relations between Soviet Russia and one of the key international gatekeepers of the global capitalist *status quo*, it also ran alongside a string of agreements normalizing trade between Russia and a broader coalition of other states—among them Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland, Norway, Austria and Poland.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>42</sup> Munholland, "The French Army and Intervention in Southern Russia," 55.

<sup>43</sup> Alan M. Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921–1929* (1987; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 19.

<sup>44</sup> White, *Origins of Détente*, 20–21.

The key ideological concept underlining détente was liberal peace theory—the belief that trade in particular, and economic and cultural interchange in general, reduced sources of tension, and possessed an inherently moderative force that would deradicalize even such a seemingly violent belief system as Bolshevism. Lloyd George maintained the view that there were in reality two parties in government in Russia, not one—on the one side extremists, devoted to communism as a holy crusade, and on the other pragmatists prepared to abandon communism in order to deal with other countries. Critical as well in his eyes was the postwar settlement of Europe as a whole, in both the political and economic sense, not least the food question; a representative on the Allied Supreme Economic Council helped persuade the British prime minister of the necessity of restoring Russia to her former position as the granary of Europe as a factor critical to the economic stability of the postwar order as a whole. The scale of tsarist Russia's prewar and wartime debts to its former Entente partners, and the question of how these debts would ever be settled, also figured prominently in what eventually became Lloyd George's signature "Grand Design" for the postwar new European order, a grand bargain, in which Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia would both be finally incorporated into a new concert of Europe.<sup>45</sup> During 1921–22 Lloyd George came forward with a series of new proposals, which included plans for a general disarmament agreement, a ten-year European nonaggression treaty incorporating Russia and the new states of Eastern Europe, and a series of measures designed both to supplant the Versailles Treaty and to reduce the burden upon Britain and France of enforcing it. The Genoa Conference that unfolded from 10 April to 19 May 1922 represented the culmination of attempts to merge and implement both Lloyd George's ideas, and independent initiatives by Berlin and Moscow to establish new political and economic relationships, most notably Berlin's attempts to assure German industry access to British credit in order to capitalize on huge Soviet orders for railway equipment.<sup>46</sup> In the idealized format of this scheme, Russia would recognize her debts and receive diplomatic recognition in exchange; Western credit and technology would revive the Russian agricultural sector; and trade with Russia would in turn rebuild German manufacturing industry, lightening the burden of reparations

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<sup>45</sup> On this, see Anne Orde, *British Policy and European Construction after the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 424–39; and Zara Steiner, *The Lights That Failed: European International History, 1919–1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 211–13.

<sup>46</sup> On these orders and the period in general, see Anthony Heywood, *Modernizing Lenin's Russia: Economic Reconstruction, Foreign Trade, and the Railways, 1917–1924* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

payments upon the German domestic economy. Lloyd George also sought for America to underwrite and participate in this new European order, in what was a clear effort to revise and bypass the Versailles settlement.

Multiple factors, however, ultimately undermined the possibility of a diplomatic breakthrough at Genoa. France insisted that neither disarmament nor reparations should ever be on the table for discussion at the conference. France's East European allies vetoed the draft plan for a nonaggression pact. Anglo-French antagonism was growing rapidly at the time, with French premier Poincaré, now privy to British diplomatic correspondence via the successful efforts of French codebreakers, increasingly convinced that the British were seeking to sell out French interests on reparations. In Britain, on the other hand, growing anti-French feeling was reflected in both public debate and war planning and air defense preparations that, by 1923, envisaged the possibility of a future Anglo-French military conflict.<sup>47</sup> The United States for its part refused to send delegates to Genoa, concerned that any new economic arrangements threatened to delay or postpone the payback of Allied war debts to the United States.<sup>48</sup> The parallel signing of the Treaty of Rapallo between Germany and Soviet Russia, which occurred within a week of the Genoa conference opening, created further diplomatic confusion and, by ending her economic isolation, increased Soviet leverage on the terms to be imposed over tsarist debt repayment and trade negotiations. The Soviet delegation to Genoa, comprising as principal negotiators People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs G. V. Chicherin, his deputy, M. M. Litvinov, and Lenin's chief trade and business negotiator, Leonid Krasin, for their part raised counterclaims to Entente demands for debt repayment, calculating that the damage inflicted by Allied intervention and the Civil War generated a collective liability on the Allied side amounting to 50 billion gold rubles (\$3.6 billion).<sup>49</sup> By 23 April Poincaré instructed the French delegate at the conference, Louis Barthou, to make clear that Soviet proposals on recognizing tsarist debt, in exchange for immediate and full economic assistance and diplomatic recognition, were unacceptable. Lenin, in turn, for his part kept a close eye on the activities of the Soviet delegation, with a view to keeping a strict line on nonrecognition of private debt repayment or restoring the private property of foreign capitalists;

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<sup>47</sup> Robert Boyce, *The Great Interwar Crisis and the Collapse of Globalization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 112–13.

<sup>48</sup> On this, see, for example Stephen A. Schuker, "American Policy towards Debts and Reconstruction at Genoa, 1922," in *Genoa, Rapallo, and European Reconstruction in 1922*, ed. Carole Fink, Axel Frohn, and Jurgen Heideking (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 95–122.

<sup>49</sup> White, *Origins of Détente*, 139–40; Carley, *Silent Conflict*, 57.

by 25 April, Chicherin was in receipt of a telegram from the Central Committee underlining the need to make no concessions and no retreat on this issue. On 2 May Lenin reiterated that the delegation must continue to refuse to restore private property, and agree to commercial concessions only on the condition of a financial loan being obtained. Rapallo, where the Soviet government had renounced all claims to war reparations from Germany, in exchange for Germany acknowledging as legal the expropriation of all German state and private assets on Russian soil, represented the diplomatic template Moscow was prepared to accept, and Lenin preferred to see the Genoa conference collapse, and Soviet delegates withdraw, rather than contemplate any further concessions.

The collapse of the Genoa Conference marked the end of both Lloyd George's "grand design" and of the most active stage in the British prime minister's own career; in October 1922 domestic corruption scandals and the Chanak crisis in the Near East combined to cause the collapse of the coalition government he had led since the 1918 election; the "Welsh Wizard" was destined to never again regain such a position of national and international prominence and popularity. Subsequent interwar treaties, most notably those produced by the Locarno conference in 1925, supplanted the Versailles treaty, and by incorporating Germany into the League of Nations, eventually provided the outlines for a new European political settlement. Locarno, however, failed at the same time either to integrate the Soviet Union into Europe's security architecture or to establish a stable and viable security sphere in Eastern Europe. The failure to integrate Russia into European security bore baneful consequences both in the short-term for the interwar European order, and in the longer term as well, as Europe became divided after the Second World War between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact. In this sense the intellectual ideas produced by the systemic response to Bolshevism in 1917–20—the notion of Bolshevism both as a plague-bearing bacillus that generated an arc of crisis, and of the need for its rigid containment or complete destruction—bore a long and toxic afterlife that continues to the present day.

Amongst the ideas that nonetheless contributed to eventually de-escalating the Cold War were the principles of *détente* first explored in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, and the parallel institutional development of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, after 1995 renamed the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe—OSCE). Gorbachev's own policy of *perestroika* after 1985 itself embodied, in foreign policy terms, a search to create a "Common European Home" from the Atlantic to the Urals, along the lines earlier also promoted by French president Charles de Gaulle in 1959. Such a design proposed recognizing the principle of collective security, via

pursuing as far as possible mutual military disarmament; underwriting the principle of peacefully resolving conflicts; and building a common cultural and economic space, including building up ties (and eventually merging) the communist trade bloc Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and the European Community (EC), all to be accomplished via a series of steps that would ultimately render the old divisions imposed by the "Iron Curtain" obsolete. For Soviet policymakers, the common European home concept reflected a conscious attempt to transcend the alienation of the Soviet Union from European affairs that had dogged it since its birth; it was intended to be not merely a system for alleviating military tensions and encouraging greater economic cooperation, but to be an entirely new civilizational concept that would, among other outcomes, mark the "return" of Russia to Europe.<sup>50</sup>

The "official" end of the Cold War—the Paris Charter for a New Europe signed in November 1990—represented a further attempt to create a new European security architecture that reincorporated Russia. During the key stages of the transition process, however, Gorbachev's vision of a "Greater Europe" came to be countered by US president George Bush's own countervision of a "Europe whole and free," one based on the historic West and Atlantic order, and institutionally underlined by the existing security architecture of NATO rather than Russia's favored interlocutor of the OSCE. Enlargement of the existing liberal order, and the retention of American leadership and dominance, rather than transformation, therefore became central to the American policy vision of the "New World Order" that was to emerge at the end of the Cold War.<sup>51</sup> Opportunities to reconcile the two positions ultimately foundered in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the precipitous eastward expansion of NATO that followed in 1999–2004. Critically, the absence of institutional innovation and genuine transformation left Russia once again an outsider, forced to observe and react, rather than contribute to or shape events. Subsequent Russian proposals to reopen discussion around a new European security architecture—Putin's raising the issue of potential Russian NATO membership in 2000, or President Medvedev's effort in 2008 to again revisit and redefine European security architecture, along the lines of a "Greater Europe" stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific—met consistent resistance from entrenched interests in both Washington and Brussels. At the same time, the EU's own territorial and legal expansion, though initially viewed benignly by Russia, came to be perceived more negatively after the 1999 Kosovo inter-

<sup>50</sup> On this, see Neil Malcolm, "The 'Common European Home' and Soviet European Policy," *International Affairs* 65, 4 (1989): 659–76; and Marie-Pierre Rey, "'Europe Is Our Common Home': A Study of Gorbachev's Diplomatic Concept," *Cold War History*, 4, 2 (2004): 33–65.

<sup>51</sup> Sakwa, *Russia against the Rest*, 13.

vention and the 2003 expansion of the Schengen Zone to the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Polish integration into EU governance structures, culminating in a Polish presidency in the European Council in 2011, also led to more prominent sponsorship and backing by the EU of geopolitical concepts that ideationally reinvoled the contested designs of the 1917–21 period, not least the desire to establish a buffer zone between Russia and Central Europe. Most notably, Poland took on the role of promoting closer ties between the EU and Ukraine.<sup>52</sup> The launching of a European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2002, and the development of the Eastern Partnership initiative (EaP) in 2008 as part of this process, witnessed a marked securitization of the EU's own foreign policy. The EaP openly targeted Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia as "strategic partners" for the EU, as part of a policy openly acknowledged by the US as intended to "counter Russia's influence in Eastern Europe."<sup>53</sup> Critically, the "hard law" conditionalities of EaP participation—convergence by the designated partners with EU legal and regulatory standards—came to more closely resemble the military bloc-style conditionalities associated with NATO membership. EaP members were essentially precluded from also participating in parallel Russian projects for Eurasian integration, just as with NATO membership only NATO military supply chains became viable subsequent options to upgrade existing border and security infrastructure.<sup>54</sup> The culminating stage of this securitizing convergence process (in Russian eyes) between EU enlargement and NATO enlargement came over Ukraine in 2014. The triggering of a violent conflict within Ukraine itself, as a result of internal dissent over the signing of an EU association agreement (AA), marked the end of Russian faith in the EU as either a viable interlocutor or (in its own way) as a potential convergence bridge for achieving Russia's own ongoing vision of a "Greater Europe." With the 2014 annexation of Crimea, and separatist conflict breaking out in eastern Ukraine as part of a proxy war between the new nationalist government in Kiev and Moscow, EU-Russian trade, already slowing in 2013, now fell dramatically to a wave of sanctions and countersanctions that saw Germany, for example, lose \$832 million worth of trade every month, while the Russian economy for its part shrank by 3.4 per cent in 2015 alone.<sup>55</sup> The

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<sup>52</sup> Artur Adamczyk, "The Role of Poland in the Creation Process of the Eastern Partnership," *Yearbook of Polish European Studies* 13 (2010): 195–204.

<sup>53</sup> Sakwa, *Russia against the Rest*, 140.

<sup>54</sup> Licínia Simão and Vanda Amaro Dias, "The Securitisation of the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood: What Role for Russia?" in *Security in Shared Neighbourhoods: New Security Challenges*, ed. R. Piet and Simão (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 97–118.

<sup>55</sup> Sakwa, *Russia against the Rest*, 176–78.



economic slowdown of the wider European economic area, already visible in relative economic failure in the Western Balkans and the Greek financial crisis of 2010, now also bore increasing blowback in terms of political consequences within Europe itself, in the form of waves of populist nationalist rhetoric in Hungary and Poland, and the election of right-wing demagogues, all of which would have appeared profoundly familiar phenomena to any of the negotiators at the Genoa Conference of 1922. European political stability in 2018 was again in “the abyss” first noted by Churchill nearly 90 years before in relation to the failure to establish a viable postwar European political and economic settlement after the First World War, for reasons that would have also have been broadly familiar to E. H. Carr.

The events recounted in this volume therefore continue to resonate particularly powerfully today. If European stability again appears elusive, and the creation of a viable and stable pan-European security order after the end of the Cold War now increasingly resembles a failed liberal project, as a result of both the disintegration of the Greater Middle East as well as the persistent exclusion of Russia from any place at the table, questions still remain to be asked about all the major and minor players in this long narrative. Perhaps two of the key regional players in this arc of crisis between the historical West and a “Greater Europe” were, and are destined to remain, Germany and Ukraine. As Mark Baker, Mark Jones, Tom Weber, and Harald Jentsch each demonstrate in this volume, these states in 1917–24 were in many ways the fulcrum of the arc of revolution and crisis that emerged in 1917–24. In Germany, the future course of the state after the First World War remained highly contested, between far-right nationalists and demagogues, centrist politicians like Gustav Stresemann who dreamed of European integration, via a close German alliance with Anglo-American capital, and German Communists, who looked to Moscow as the advance beacon for world revolution. In the Ukraine, as Mark Baker masterfully details here, the experience of a first form of true national “independence” in 1917 created the basis for contested identity and memory politics which continues to play out violently in contemporary Ukrainian national politics right down to the present day. If there is a true key to understanding the conflict-prone cul de sac into which contemporary European politics has entered, it therefore resides less in the Cold War itself than in the “original sins” committed in 1917–24, which saw Europe fail to achieve a viable balance of institutions and processes that also accommodated Russia, the essential partner for Europe becoming or remaining a major global player. The errors that first played out in 1917–24, in patterns of attempted roll-back, containment, and failed *détente*, were then repeated, perpetuated and expanded on in the formal Cold War which began after 1948, but the potential lessons learned were likewise lost or indeed never remembered in the process



of again unwinding that more global conflict that began after 1987. The "arc of crisis" detailed in this and the subsequent two books in this volume therefore remains grimly relevant to understanding contemporary European politics even today; we remain in the abyss.