The Culture of Russian and Soviet Diplomacy, Lamsdorf to Litvinov, 1900-1939

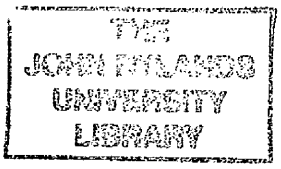
A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of PhD in The Faculty of Humanities

2006

Alastair Matthew Kocho-Williams

School of Arts, Histories & Cultures

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346



Contents

List of Abbreviations

AVP RF	*Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation)
AVPRI	*Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire)
BAR	Bakhmeteff Archive, Columbia University
Comintern	Communist (or Third) international (Kommunisticheskii Internatsional)
DVP SSSR	*Dokumenty vneshnei politiki SSSR*
FO	Foreign Office (Great Britain)
GARF	*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (State Archive of the Russian Federation)
HIA	Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University
MID	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministerstvo inostrannykh del)*
NA	National Archives of Great Britain
Narkomindel (or NKID)	People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (*Narodnyi komissariat inostrannykh del*)
NKVD	People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (*Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennykh del*)
OGPU	Joint State Political Administration (*Ob'edinennoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie*)
Polpred	plenipotentiary representative, a contraction of *polmochnyi predstavitel'*
RGASPI	*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* (Russian State Archive for Socio-Political History)

TASS	Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (*Telegrafnoe agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza*)
USDS	United States Department of State

List of Tables

List of Illustrations

Abstract

This thesis examines Russian and Soviet diplomatic practice during the period of transition from the Tsarist to the Soviet regime and the consolidation of the Soviet state. It looks at how Russia and the Soviet Union used, and how diplomats shaped, diplomacy. This examination includes analyzing how far practices were shaped by factors external to Russia or the Soviet Union, as well as the extent of their origin in domestic social and political conditions.

I argue that diplomacy's international nature exerts a conservative, restraining influence on itself. The Soviets attempted to establish a diplomatic culture that differed from what they saw as a decadent trapping of a bourgeois imperial state, but found that diplomatic practice resisted radical transformation. In the end, for pragmatic reasons, the Soviet Union was forced to compromise its ideals and obliged to conform to the norms of diplomatic behaviour.

Despite the Bolsheviks' desire to break with Tsarist traditions of state rule, Russian and Soviet diplomacy between 1900 and 1939 shows a great deal of continuity. Soviet foreign and domestic imperatives necessitated their integration into the world of diplomacy, forcing them to construct a diplomatic culture more compatible with that of other states.

There were of course changes in Russian diplomatic culture, some due to broad trends, and others to the Soviet Union's internal political culture. Notably, after the First World War, diplomacy became increasingly professionalized in order to deal with changing demands. Soviet culture produced its own type of diplomatic professional, that is discussed at length in the study.

My thesis is a contribution to the literature on the Russian Revolution's impact on political behaviour. More broadly, it is a case study in the culture of diplomacy in the modern world. At a more general level it addresses issues of state practices across revolutions, and the challenge posed by revolutionary states to the established world order.

Declaration

no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning

Copyright Statement

Preface

I have made extensive use of archival sources, many of which have not been used before in the study of diplomacy. My main archival focus for the Soviet period has been the *Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, AVP RF), and the *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* (Russian State Archive for Socio-Political History, RGASPI), both in Moscow. From their collections I have worked with documents from the interwar period, focusing on Britain, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, France and China, and dealing with more general administrative issues. I also used the archives for detailed biographical information from personnel files and personal papers, to form part of the basis for the prosopographical element in my research. In the United States, I used the Hoover Institution Archives (HIA) at Stanford University, which holds papers from pre-revolutionary Russian missions as well as memoirs of Russian diplomats. The Bakhmeteff Archive (BAR) at Columbia University has similar materials, as well as oral history projects on Boris Bakhmeteff and Alexandra Kollontai. In the United Kingdom, I used the Public Record Office's holdings of British diplomatic records and other small collections of personal papers of British diplomats who served in Russia or who had contact with Russian diplomats during the period.

I am grateful to the staff at the above institutions for their help in finding material, and for allowing me to have access to their collections. I would also like to thank Valentina Vasilevskaya for her time and willingness to speak with me about her grandfather, Jan Berzin, and Peter Basilevsky for his time and willingness to speak with me about his grandfather, General Wrangel.

I wish to thank the following for their help and support in the writing of this thesis: Professor Peter Gatrell and Dr. Nick Baron for supervision and the support they have both given me academically over the last five years; Professor Simon Dixon, Dr. Jonathan Haslam, and Dr. James Harris for help and

advice; Dr. Stuart Jones; Alexandra Kocho-Williams, for moral support, help with photographs and the copy-editing of the thesis. Dr. Richard Williams, Jan Williams and Charles Hustwick for financial support without which this thesis would never have been possible; Dr. Bjørn Schellenberg and Mirijana Kocho for their support and help, particularly with Russian language.

Note on transliteration

I have followed the Library of Congress standard for transliteration, except in the case of certain names where familiar anglicizations are used (e.g. Trotsky, Maisky, Bakhmeteff, Nabokoff), or where historical precedent has rendered a name transliterated in a certain way. In some cases where more than one spelling presents itself for a name I have used one spelling, except for where it differs in book or article titles (e.g. Izvolsky).

Where achival sources in Russia are used they are referenced using abbreviations for *fond* (f.), *opis* (op.), *papka* (p), *delo* (d.), and *list* (l.). Not all archives use the entirety of this system of notation, for example RGASPI does not classify documents by *papka*.

The Author

Alastair Kocho-Williams holds a BA (hons) in History (2001) and an MA with distinction in Modern European History (2002) from the University of Manchester. He has experience of research in the UK, US and Russia, both as an undergraduate and graduate student. At the time of submission he is Lecturer in Soviet History at the University of Leeds.

Dedication

For Sasha

Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis examines Russian and Soviet diplomatic practice during the period of transition from the Tsarist to the Soviet regime and the consolidation of the Soviet state. Enquiring how the Tsarist and Soviet states in turn used diplomacy to create and cultivate their international images, my dissertation is a contribution to the literature on the Russian Revolution's impact on political behaviour. More broadly, it contributes to scholarship on the cultural history of modern Russia. At the most general level, my dissertation is a case study in the culture of diplomacy in the modern world.

This is a thesis about the ways in which Russia and the Soviet Union used diplomacy and how it was shaped by the practices of diplomats. Following on from this, the study is concerned with how far the practices were shaped by factors external to Russia or the Soviet Union, and the extent to which we can find some grounding for them in domestic social and political conditions.

I argue that diplomacy's international nature makes diplomatic culture resistant to change. The Soviet Union attempted to establish a diplomatic culture that differed from what was seen as an integral element of the former Russian Empire, but found that diplomatic practice resisted radical transformation. In the end, for pragmatic reasons, the Soviet Union was forced to compromise its ideals and instead obliged to conform to the norms of bourgeois society and diplomatic behaviour. This is not to say that change did not happen. However I argue that the Bolsheviks were not able to effect changes as far-reaching as they had originally intended.

Soviet diplomacy was not, however, shaped solely by external pressure. Soviet ideology and foreign policy aims also played a role in how diplomats were able to behave, as did the domestic policies and political culture of the Soviet Union.

Diplomacy was one aspect of the state machine, and subject to control by it. While there was a desire for a clean break with the traditions of the past in diplomacy, domestic imperatives and their influence on Soviet foreign relations did not necessarily allow this, and instead caused diplomatic culture to be shaped as a result of pragmatism in response to them and contributed to continuity in Russian and Soviet diplomatic culture.

Thus, the foundation of my argument is that Russian and Soviet diplomacy between 1900 and 1939 shows a great deal of continuity, for two main reasons. Soviet foreign and domestic imperatives necessitated Soviet integration into the world of diplomacy and hence influenced the shift towards finding a diplomatic culture compatible with that of the diplomatic field. [1] As a result, in order to be accepted into – and be able to function within – diplomatic circles, there was a necessary compromise of ideology for pragmatic ends. It is through the use of cultural history, related to the politics of diplomacy, that we can see Soviet adherence to the rules of the game of diplomacy, and the continuities that followed from such behaviour.

More broadly, the study addresses questions about state practices across revolutions. Revolutionary states are liable to behave in one of two ways with regards to international politics and the behaviours implicit in its management. They may reject outright what they see to be trappings of the 'old regime', or they may seek to restructure them. Either of these options faces the constraints imposed on the new state by its relationship to the international order. To what extent can it cause change within international society? Does a revolutionary state pose a threat, such as to cause instability beyond its own border, to an established world order? Is 'socialization' inevitable as the new state is forced to comply with established norms?[2]

---

[1] The 'diplomatic field' is a modified concept drawn from Pierre Bourdieu's critical conflict theory, and can be defined as the social space in which diplomacy is conducted, and which is governed by implicit rules. It is discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

[2] David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 1-2.

Diplomacy is defined as 'the management of international relations by negotiation and the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys'.[3] It is governed by rules and norms of acceptable behaviour, with its own distinct set of values and practices encompassing such matters as prescribed behaviour, dress, and ceremony. Diplomatic culture, socially transmitted behaviour patterns, beliefs, and structures with respect to diplomacy, can therefore be defined as the manner in which diplomacy is conducted, as well as the outlook of a state's foreign ministry and of its individual diplomats.[4] Diplomatic culture is created by a foreign ministry's personnel, a nation's diplomatic goals, foreign policy, and the relationship between the foreign ministry and the leadership. Thus, one must examine the values of the leading individuals employed by foreign ministries, as well as those of the organizations and of the state itself. Implicit in this is the need to appreciate the political culture of Russia during the period, in order to appreciate how the Russian Foreign Ministry fitted into the overall political milieu. It was, after all, but one of several departments of state.

What is the *prima facie* evidence for cultures of diplomacy? One visible indicator is diplomats' behaviour and self-representation: this includes stylistic elements to do with dress, etiquette, language, and the discharge of diplomatic formalities. Government instructions to diplomats, and the degree of autonomy granted to them, will also guide our understanding. The values, personal opinions, and outlook, both of the individual and of the institution, are important as they show how diplomats understand diplomacy and hence indicate why they behave as they do. One must also look at how the individual relates to the world of diplomacy, as well as to his own society – here we can be informed by that society's views of the

---

[3] *Oxford English Dictionary* – online edition at http://www.oed.com. This is not the only definition of diplomacy with regards to statecraft. Definitions range from the simple 'negotiation between nations' to the more comprehensive definition above. It can also be defined as tact and skill in dealing with people. For the purposes of discussing diplomacy as a tool of the state, the definition involving inter-state negotiation is more relevant and useful.

[4] Diplomatic culture is a specialized form of political culture.

diplomat, which are useful aids in understanding diplomatic culture. The way in which diplomats fulfil expectations both at home and professionally, or deviate from them, presents a clear picture of how the culture of diplomacy manifests itself.

To ascertain the Bolsheviks' impact on Russian diplomatic culture, we must start by examining the characteristics of the various incarnations of the Foreign Ministry and the diplomatic corps. One needs to analyze the diplomats in the institution – who they were, where they came from and what level of qualifications was normally required. The partial prosopographical analysis, looking at diplomats' backgrounds and careers, in this dissertation is divided into four phases: the late Tsarist period and February Revolution; the October Revolution and the Bolshevik takeover of diplomacy; the expansion of Soviet diplomacy during the 1920s; and finally Soviet diplomacy during the Stalinist era of the 1930s.

It is also important to view the Russian Foreign Ministry in these sub-periods in the light of who was at the helm, because the characteristics and functioning of Russian diplomacy were shaped by the individuals in charge. The opinions held by the men who headed the Foreign Ministry, the careers they forged, and the opinions of others regarding their roles, all offer useful insights into Russian diplomatic culture in the period. These men were in charge of shaping the institution and hence provide a clear picture of the qualities and methods prized by the Russian foreign service, and by extension the state itself, at various stages of its development.

The course of Russian foreign policy is not the concern of this thesis, being well documented in several excellent works.[5] It would, however, be impossible to

---

[5] Valerii Ponomarev and Hugh Ragsdale, *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, 1993); Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1991: a Retrospective* (London, 1994); Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, *Russia and the World, 1917-1991* (London, 1998); Jonathan Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933-39* (London, 1984); Jonathan Haslam, *Soviet Foreign Policy in the 1930s* (Birmingham, 1984); David M. McDonald, *United Government and Foreign Policy in Russia 1900-1914* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992); P. N. Efremov, *Vneshniaia politika Rossii: (1907-1914 gg.)* (Moscow, 1961); S. I. Blinov, *Vneshniaia politika sovetskoi Rossii: pervyi god proletarskoi diktatury* (Moscow, 1973); V. I. Sipols, *Vneshniaia politika Sovetskogo Soiuza : 1933-1935 gg* (Moscow, 1980); Sipols, *Vneshniaia politika Sovetskogo Soiuza: 1936-1939* (Moskva, 1987); L. N. Nezhinskii, *Sovetskaia vneshniaia politika, 1917-1945 gg: poiski novykh podkhodov* (Moscow, 1992); Aleksandr Chubar'ian, *Sovetskaia vneshniaia politika v*

look at the culture of Russian diplomacy without having an understanding of the policy that lay behind it, and the way in which that policy was formed. Foreign policy formation is of interest in studying Russian diplomatic culture because it illustrates the relationship between the Foreign Ministry and the state leadership, thereby helping us to understand diplomats' behaviour as they carried out the tasks entrusted to them.

The Soviet Union presents us with a case study in the establishment of a revolutionary foreign ministry. Other foreign ministries have arisen before and since in revolutionary circumstances, such as in France and China, and show similarities to the Soviet experience.[6] Diplomacy is necessarily changed by the introduction of revolutionary states, as it readjusts to practitioners coming from outside traditional diplomatic backgrounds with a desire to reject traditional diplomacy and its methods. This thesis sheds light on the changes wrought by a revolutionary state that may help to understand similar situations, and also provides insight into a new state's establishment of a diplomatic service following the collapse of a previous regime. This thesis will provide a background for the study of more recent shifts in governments, notably that from the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation following 1991, since many current Russian diplomats previously served in the Soviet Foreign Ministry and current Russian diplomatic practices still bear much similarity to those of late Soviet era.[7]

The Russian Revolution was not the first revolution the modern world had seen, and there is as a result some scope for comparison with other revolutionary regimes and how they dealt with diplomacy. In the wake of the French Revolution,

---

retrospektive, 1917-1991 (Moscow, 1993); A. V. Ignat'ev, *Vneshniaia politika Rossii 1907-1914: tendentsii, liudi, sobytiia* (Moscow, 2000).

[6] Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order,* p. 244.

[7] Conversation with Stephen Wordsworth, British Deputy Ambassador and Head of Mission to Russia, March 1st 2004. All of the Russian Foreign Ministers who have held office since the collapse of the Soviet Union were former Soviet diplomats, as are the bulk of other senior officials in the Russian MID.

diplomacy came under attack for many of the same ideological reasons that are echoed in the Russian case, namely the wish to abolish secret diplomacy and because it was seen as central to the former state.[8] Similarly, comparisons can be made with the establishment of the Nazi Auswärtiges Amt, and the manner in which the Nazis ran a dual Foreign Ministry for some of the 1930s.[9]

There is also a need for comparison between the Russian and Soviet cases and other foreign ministries in the period.[10] Russian and Soviet diplomacy cannot be considered in isolation from the broader diplomatic context into which it fits. As the diplomatic field is supra-national, a state can only hope to participate in it by following practices established as a result of the interplay between all parties.

A survey of Russia's Foreign Ministry in its various incarnations during the period 1900-1939, as the Tsarist *Ministerstvo inostrannykh del* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hereafter MID) and the Soviet *Narodnyi komissariat inostrannykh del* (People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, hereafter Narkomindel), shows the progress of Russian diplomacy. Each successive phase reveals different styles of diplomacy, in addition to and as a result of, changes in internal administration. At the same time, the different phases retain common elements – such as some personnel, and the presence of the Comintern in the last two phases – which must be examined in order to fully appreciate the changing nature of the Foreign Ministry and its servants. We should not, however, assume that regime change necessarily produced profound changes in the culture of diplomacy; as we shall see, there was a great deal of continuity from phase to phase.

---

[8] Linda Frey and Marsha Frey, "'The Reign of the Charlatans Is Over': The French Revolutionary attack on Diplomatic Practice," *Journal of Modern History,* Vol. 65, No. 4 (1993), pp. 706-7.

[9] John Heineman, *Hitler's First Foreign Minister: Constantin Freiherr von Neurath, Diplomat and Statesman* (London, 1979); Hans-Heinrich Herwarth von Bittenfeld, *Zwischen Hitler und Stalin: Erlebte Zeitgeschichte 1931 Bis 1945* (Frankfurt am Main, 1982); Ulrich Sahm, *Rudolf von Scheliha, 1897-1942: Ein Deutscher Diplomat Gegen Hitler* (Munich, 1990); Gregor Schöllgen, *A Conservative Against Hitler: Ulrich Von Hassell: Diplomat in Imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, 1881-1944* (London, 1991); John Weitz, *Hitler's Diplomat: The Life and Times of Joachim Von Ribbentrop* (London, 1997).

[10] Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert, *The Diplomats, 1919-1939* (Princeton, 1953); Zara Steiner, *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World* (London, 1982).

In order to grasp the changes that the October Revolution brought about in the culture of Russian diplomacy, one must understand the late Tsarist MID. Russia's status as an imperial power in the early years of the twentieth century meant that its Foreign Ministry was not dissimilar to those of the other imperial powers of the age.[11] The MID was, however, affected by changes in the political nature of Russia in the period, such as the creation of the State Duma in the wake of the 1905 Revolution. This offered the opportunity for a less autocratic government and opened the public sphere, bringing a relaxation of press censorship as well as a public discussion of government. The MID cannot be examined without considering the effect of these changes on the political structure of late imperial Russia and looking at what specifically this meant for the MID.

Externally, the 'old diplomacy' practised by the late Tsarist MID and its diplomats was seen to be in crisis, culminating in the outbreak of the First World War. Why diplomacy was believed to be in crisis, and the steps taken to rectify the situation, were questions that concerned contemporaries. I look at the several attempts to reform the MID and the motivations behind these reforms, and examine the changes in diplomacy caused by the advent of war in 1914.

The MID suffered not only the challenge to diplomacy brought by the First World War, but also that of the Revolutions of 1917. The February Revolution is discussed in the context of the late Tsarist MID, because there was no immediate break in diplomacy; the Provisional Government was recognized by the Allies almost immediately, and Russian diplomatic personnel (with a few exceptions) remained in place.[12] There were changes at several levels, partly cosmetic, but more importantly Russian diplomacy entered a transitional phase moving towards a type of diplomacy aimed more at pursuing Russia's international interests, than restructuring the MID, in a time of domestic and international upheaval.

---

[11]Michael Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution: Britain, Russia and the Old Diplomacy, 1894-1917* (New York, 1999), p.124.
[12]Ibid., p.82.

At this point, it is necessary to establish what were the norms and expectations of diplomacy on the eve of the revolution, in order to provide a benchmark against which to measure the creation of the Narkomindel and the behaviour of its diplomats. It is also necessary to clarify how the Russian case study fits into the broader context of diplomacy. By looking at the Tsarist MID one can gain an appreciation of the nature of traditional diplomacy, specifically in the Russian case. Additionally, looking at the Tsarist MID will help identify the elements of diplomacy that the Bolsheviks found so objectionable when they came to power.

After October 1917, the Bolsheviks took over the MID and the overseas missions, just as they appropriated the other agencies of state. Diplomacy was one activity that the Soviet leadership believed it could do without, seeing it as a trapping of the Tsarist regime that it wished to abandon and that ran counter to the ideals of international socialism. The realization that there was a need for diplomacy and the abandonment of the earlier ideological standpoint influenced the subsequent development of the Narkomindel. The problem then became how to create a foreign service from scratch (as former diplomats were neither desirable nor willing servants of the state), and particularly whom to recruit. The Bolshevik attitude towards diplomacy, and the ways in which the Bolsheviks sought to subvert its traditional form, using it as a means to export the revolution, had a clear but short-lived impact on the culture of Russian diplomacy. The use of diplomacy to hide illegal revolutionary activities reveals much about the regime's foreign policy aims, and how the diplomatic service was a tool for them. In the light of the Soviet acknowledgement that illegal activity in diplomacy did not fit with being accepted in diplomatic circles, I consider the creation of the Comintern, questioning the extent to which it can be seen as a diplomatic agency (or foreign service), and looking at the personnel similarities between it and the Narkomindel.

The Bolsheviks also suffered the challenge of other claims to authority in Russia. Intervention by the allied powers in the Civil War in Russia and the

political actions of émigrés presented problems for Soviet Russia in being accepted in the international arena. In terms of diplomacy, Tsarist diplomats established the Council of Ambassadors, which functioned for a time as a parallel diplomatic agency claiming legitimacy, confounding Soviet attempts to secure international recognition. Here the Soviets demonstrated their need not just to destroy the trappings of the Tsarist regime within Russia, but also to remove them from the international scene.

The Soviet realization that diplomacy was a necessary state practice gave rise to the drive for diplomatic recognition that characterises much of the Soviet diplomatic efforts in the 1920s. Soviet diplomacy turned away from its revolutionary approach, making it acceptable for foreign powers to engage in dialogue and agreements with the Soviet state. What changed, both from the Soviet point of view and in diplomacy more broadly, reveals much about Soviet diplomatic culture and how it was shaped.

In the 1930s, Soviet diplomats needed to address the challenges that Stalinism brought, both domestically and internationally. Stalinism had a distinct political culture, and so one must ask whether there was also a distinct Stalinist diplomatic culture, as well as how diplomats interacted with Stalinist political culture. Representing a regime which had unleashed terror on its people posed problems for diplomats, as did the fear that they too might perish in the purges of the late 1930s. How diplomats met Soviet expectations brings to bear the importance of how Soviet diplomats related to Soviet society. Much like the world of diplomacy, Russian and Soviet society had frameworks of rules that were to be adhered to. Just as it was important that a diplomat conformed in terms of dress, language and behaviour to the norms of the diplomacy, so too it was important that he conformed to the rules of his domestic society in the same ways. The Soviet diplomat was faced with the question of how to effectively combine the two, which were frequently at odds with one another, so as to be able to maintain his membership of both groups. Thus, Soviet culture had an effect on how diplomats presented

themselves and how they were perceived which needs to be considered when looking at the culture of Soviet diplomacy.

Soviet diplomats faced challenges not only from their own regime, but also from the rise of Nazi Germany. Attempts to contain Nazi Germany became the major preoccupation of Soviet foreign policy in the 1930s, and this had a definite effect on Soviet diplomatic culture. Ultimately, the policy of containing Nazi Germany would fail, and the Nazi-Soviet pact would be concluded, again bringing change to Soviet diplomatic culture. This last action displays the constant in Soviet diplomatic practice – that ideology was always sacrificed for the sake of effective engagement in the diplomatic field.

Theoretical Approach

The theoretical basis for my analysis of the culture of diplomacy is a modified version of Pierre Bourdieu's critical conflict theory. Bourdieu uses the concept of a field: a social arena in which individuals struggle over desirable resources.[13] The field is a system of social positions, which are structured internally by means of power relationships based upon capital – accumulated assets (tangible and intangible forms) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e. exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy.[14] Bourdieu talks of a number of different forms of capital: economic, social, cultural, and symbolic.[15] Central to Bourdieu's argument is that one form of capital is convertible into another as agents discover the 'powers or forms of *capital* which are or can

[13] The desirable resources are specific to the field. In the case of diplomacy, these resources are diplomatic status, i.e. what allows a diplomat to be recognized and function as a diplomat.

[14] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in John Richardson, (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, 1986), pp. 241, 245.

[15] In essence economic capital is that which is 'immediately and directly convertible into money'; cultural capital is educational credentials; and social capital is social connections. Symbolic capital is acquired through titles, such as diplomatic ranks, or generated by a conversion of other forms of capital into an intangible granting of status within a field. Bourdieu, "Forms of Capital," p. 243; Craig Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History, and the Challenge of Difference* (Oxford, 1995), p. 140.

become efficient' in a given field.[16] The most important form of capital, not just for Bourdieu but for the study of diplomacy, is symbolic capital, 'which is the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognized as legitimate'. That is to say symbolic capital is the outward display of an amassing of all types of capital.[17] Symbolic capital, it should be noted, can also be generated through titles as well as by converting other forms of capital. Possessing and exploiting capital grants access and allows for gains specific to the field to be achieved. The field can only be defined in relation to its constituent parts and as a result cannot be detached from individuals.[18]

The field can be usefully understood as a place where a game takes place.[19] In a given field, as in a game, interaction is only possible between players who understand how, and are inclined, to play. The game and its stakes must be understood as the relationship of participants in the field and their varying ability. To play a game requires an investment in generating a specific value or skill which functions both as an ability to play and an inclination. The structure of the field is determined by the position of agents within it; their positions in turn are a product of the volume and type of capital each agent possesses. It is important here to be clear that 'capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field.' Thus, what has an effect in one field may not have an effect in another.[20]

---

[16] Bourdieu, "What makes a Social Class?" *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* vol. 22 (1987), pp. 1-18. p. 3.

[17] Ibid., p. 4. Symbolic capital can be amassed by holding titles or ranks. An individual is granted status as a result of an ascribed social position that determines where he fits into the social order. For diplomats there is a defined status attached to each diplomatic rank, and these ranks must be achieved in order to gain access to various levels of the diplomatic field.

[18] Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1984), p.147; J. D. Loic Wacquant and P. Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 97, 106.

[19] Toril Moi, "Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture," *New Literary History,* 22 (1991), p. 1021.

[20] Wacquant and Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p. 101. This issue is of great pertinence to the Soviet case where diplomats were obliged to possess capital relevant to the field of diplomacy and relevant to the field of the Soviet Union, which were frequently at odds with one another.

Having defined the field, Bourdieu uses the notion of habitus – a set of intrinsic dispositions which shape practices and locate the individual in a given social position. The habitus is formed in relation to the field in which it is created, namely social and economic conditions of existence, and in turn is constituted as meaningful by the schemata of thought embodied in agents.[21] The agent's habitus can be thought of as active sediment of past experiences which functions in the present, shaping their perception, thought and actions and thereby shaping social practice in a regular way.

An account of fields must be related to the concept of habitus. On the one hand we need to combine the agents' dispositions (habitus) and their resources (capital) with a grasp of the state of play of the game (field). But more importantly, the habitus is that which realizes the possibilities for action of any given position in social space. It is because of their habitus and the way that it shapes perception, motivation, and action, that agents are predisposed to recognize and participate in the field.[22]

Bourdieu's theory is useful for analyzing diplomatic culture, since the diplomatic world presents us with a field. Diplomats are the agents within this field and achieve membership by acquiring the relevant levels of capital, which in the case of diplomacy are largely social and symbolic.[23] Social capital manifests itself in behaviour and etiquette, while symbolic capital can be seen to be conferred from the status of the office held by a diplomat. The diplomatic habitus is a construct created from the traditions of diplomacy and – to focus on our particular case study - understood by its practitioners before the Russian Revolution. To what extent Soviet diplomats, as new entrants to the diplomatic field, acquired the same habitus, and how successfully they engaged in the game of diplomacy, is central to the analysis in this thesis. Were there multiple habiti in the diplomatic field as outsiders entered for the first time? How effectively did Soviet diplomats achieve status

[21] Ibid., p. 133.
[22] Ibid., p. 105.
[23] Social capital is composed of economic and cultural capital. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 114.

within the diplomatic field? Did they learn the game and adopt the traditional diplomatic habitus, or did they create a new one?

Furthermore, there are questions as to how Soviet diplomats – representatives of a new and unprecedented workers' state – gained admission to a field from which they might be thought to have been excluded by virtue of their background. Access to the diplomatic field was traditionally based on high levels of capital. While the symbolic capital of holding a diplomatic post was one element of achieving this, they also needed to acquire the relevant level of social capital to be able to interact effectively with foreign diplomats also occupying the field. Although almost certainly necessary, the symbolic capital granted by the title of Ambassador would not be enough, particularly as an established elite tends to protect the value of its titles.[24] One must ask, therefore, how Soviet diplomats could successfully convert other forms of capital to provide them with sufficient status within the diplomatic field. Education and training could provide the requisite amount of cultural capital, but Soviet diplomats would appear to have lacked the economic capital that so many of their foreign counterparts possessed and thus would fall short of the necessary level of social capital.[25] The question is whether Soviet diplomats were obliged to increase their social capital to a level that would make them acceptable as participants in the diplomatic field, whether they caused standards to change (such that the necessary level of capital was lowered), or whether they were able to create the illusion (by displaying high levels of symbolic capital through dress, titles and language) of having the necessary level of capital by engaging in the diplomatic game.

---

[24] Bourdieu, *Distinction,* p. 161. This can be done by the old elite either abandoning its titles for rarer ones, or by making differences between title holders linked to seniority in accession to the title, such as how they came to possess it.

[25] That this is the case can be seen by a comparison of expense accounts for the Narkomindel and other foreign ministries. Among archival sources for this are: NKID Budget, 1934-5, GARF f. R-5446, op. 15a, d. 1023; op. 16, d. 3961; Budget for the Overseas missions, GARF, R-5446, op. 15a, op. 1024; Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service Administration Office: Chief Clerk's Department and successors: Records, 1719-1967, National Archives (UK), FO 366; Treasury: Imperial and Foreign Division: Registered Files (IF series), 1914-1961, NA, T220.

The potential to create an illusion of possessing a given level of capital such that individuals can enter the diplomatic field is particularly relevant to diplomacy, and the way in which its public practices are displayed. Diplomacy has elements that are highly theatrical and thus it might be possible to create the impression that one was worthy of acceptance by assuming the persona of a diplomat, much as an actor might assume the role of a character in a play. The actor's aim is to make his audience believe that he is what he appears to be, not that he is simply a man in a mask; success requires the guise to be total, and to be maintained.[26] Dress, language, and behaviour are all visible indicators of an individual's standing and character and contribute to the construction of the outward identity. In this context, the 'full dress-coat' of the diplomat could be interpreted as a costume worn in order to assume that persona.[27] Coupled with this assumption of the character is the script, both for language and for behaviour, which forms part of the discourse of diplomacy, and with which diplomats are presented.[28] Indeed, such scripts govern the diplomatic habitus and how diplomats are able to present themselves within the diplomatic field. Self-presentation with regards to diplomatic society requires that diplomats understand, and are able to engage with, the discourse of diplomacy. Of course, they do not necessarily have to internalize it, but they must demonstrate mastery of it.

International relations theories are also relevant to the understanding of diplomatic practice.[29] These subject foreign policy actions to various frameworks of analysis such that events can be understood and anticipated, or that policy can be formulated. In relation to Russian and Soviet diplomatic practices, these theories are

---

[26] Konstantin Stanislavsky, *Building a Character* (London, 1968).

[27] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London, 1972), p. 17; Alexandra Kollontai complained about the requirement to continually present herself in the 'full dress-coat' in a letter to Litvinov, 1925 as quoted in Anna Itkina, *Revoliutsioner, tribun, diplomat: stranitsy zhizni Aleksandry Mikhailovny Kollontai* (Moscow, 1970), p.226.

[28] I use Michel Foucault's meaning of discourse here to mean the way in which 'experts speak when they are speaking as experts'. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault, Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, 1982).

[29] Valerie Hudson, "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations," *Foreign Policy Analysis,* vol. 1, no. 1 (2005), pp. 1-30; Scott Burchill (ed), *Theories of International Relations* (Basingstoke, 2001).

of some use in understanding the reasons behind the outlook of a given individual with regards to foreign policy desires and the steps that might reasonably be taken to achieve them. It is difficult to separate international relations theory from political or social theory and there are clear overlaps in them, meaning that international relations theory can only be of use in the analysis of diplomatic culture as one of a number of considerations. For the purposes of this thesis, while international relations theories are an important consideration, their emphasis on foreign policy behaviour means that they are less significant than theories that deal with the social and cultural aspects of political behaviour.

A partial prosopographical analysis of the diplomatic corps yields information about diplomats' backgrounds and career patterns and shows what influenced their presentation of self. When looking at the diplomatic corps from this angle, one should ask a number of key questions: What was diplomatic officials' class origin and nationality? What level of education had they received? What (after 1917) was their party affiliation? How were individuals selected for diplomatic service, and what motivated them to join the foreign service? When did they enter the diplomatic service and for how long did they serve? How did they progress within the Foreign Ministry? Finding answers to these questions will help paint a picture of the Foreign Ministry's personnel make-up, as well as giving us an appreciation of the regime's objectives when making appointments to the Foreign Ministry. Applying these questions to each successive phase of the Foreign Ministry's history will help us interpret the differences and similarities between the various periods.

In looking at how Soviet diplomats secured entry into the world of diplomacy one must determine to what extent Soviet diplomats and the Narkomindel inherited practices, as well as physical assets, from the Tsarist MID. While Soviet diplomats saw themselves as representatives of a new Russia, their foreign counterparts did not always reach the same conclusion. Bourdieu suggests that inheritance contributes to the 'spiritual reproduction of a lineage,' and one should

consider this in analyzing whether there is any great shift in the culture of diplomacy as a result of the Narkomindel's creation, or whether in fact Soviet diplomats were unable to escape filling their Tsarist predecessors' shoes. [30]

Historiography

The existing historiography to which my thesis contributes comprises works on diplomatic history for the period of 1900-1939. These have tended to deal with issues regarding Russian and Soviet diplomacy on one side of the revolution, but not both. No prior work on diplomacy has attempted to bridge the revolutionary divide, asking what changes and continuities we might see in diplomacy across the period. In some works on Soviet diplomacy, Russian diplomacy's heritage is mentioned, but the issue of inherited forms and practices is never dealt with explicitly.[31]

There are works which have bridged the revolution with regard to other state practices.[32] Joshua Sanborn has recently looked at the Tsarist and the Red Army, analyzing the continuities between the two.[33] Like the foreign ministry, the army presented an area of state practice constrained by pressures inherent in military matters, the way in which the army related to Russian society, and how the state was forced to try to evolve new methods to deal with the shortcomings of traditional practices that were highlighted by the First World War. Both the Tsarist and Bolshevik states had the same objectives, and encountered the same problems in creating and organizing the army, and as a result there are marked similarities in the case of the Red Army to that of diplomacy, as well as other areas of state building,

---

[30] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 76-77.
[31] Vladimir Potemkin (ed.), *Istoriia diplomatii* (Moscow, 1945), 3 vols.; Teddy Uldricks, *Diplomacy and Ideology: the Origins of Soviet Foreign Relations, 1917-1930* (London, 1979).
[32] George Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize: Agrarian Reform in Russia, 1861-1930* (Urbana, 1982); David Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (eds.), *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices* (New York, 2000).
[33] Joshua Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905-1925* (DeKalb, 2003).

as ideology was sacrificed for the sake of creating an effective armed force with which to defend the Soviet state.[34] The imperatives of state management therefore, would seem to outweigh ideological concerns, and Sanborn also argues that it was in such a way that security drove the Bolsheviks to adopt tactics similar to Tsarist practices with the army. As we shall see, diplomacy followed a similar course.

Another recent work on the cross-revolutionary change in Russia, with respect to aspects of Russian and Soviet political life, Peter Holquist's *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921*, sheds light on the political practices surrounding the emergence of the Soviet state in relation to the crisis of 1914-1921.[35] Focusing on state control of the food supply, coercion and surveillance, he concludes that the Soviet state emerged not just as a result of ideology, but also from Russia's experience of total war and the state practices adopted during it, which were inherited from the Russian Empire by the Soviet Union. Holquist argues that all movements in the revolution had a shared heritage of political practices emerging from Russia's experience of total war.[36] Citing de Tocqueville's work on the French revolution that the revolutionaries 'took over from the old regime not only most of its customs, conventions, and modes of thought...in fact, though nothing was further from their intentions, they used the debris of the old order for building up the new', Holquist makes the point that these practices, predating 1917, could be employed to accomplish new ideological ends.[37] After 1917 some of these practices were incorporated, consciously and unconsciously, into the Bolshevik state's operations. There is here the point that the same two practices may be the same, but may stem from quite different motivations. With regards to diplomacy then, how far diplomatic practices were inherited from the Tsarist MID

---

[34] Ibid., p. 203; Francesco Benvenuti, "Armageddon Not Averted: Russia's War, 1914–21," *Kritika* vol. 6, no. 3 (2005), p. 545.
[35] Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921* (Cambridge, MA., 2002).
[36] Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution*, p. 6.
[37] Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (New York, 1983), p. 192, as quoted in ibid., p. 284.

by the Narkomindel, and why they might have been, should be in our minds as we analyze Bolshevik diplomatic culture.

These works prompt the question as to whether it was at all possible for the Bolsheviks to make a successful break with Tsarist traditions in certain areas of state practice. State practices evolved in Russia under Tsarist rule, and the Bolsheviks had no choice but to adopt them in some form, both consciously and unconsciously. There are also questions here, which can be addressed by looking at diplomatic culture, as to whether there were any real alternatives to certain traditional state practices, particularly when they involved external factors. Could it be the case that for certain state practices, only one model proves to function effectively? If so, the Soviet Union (or indeed any revolutionary state) would be fated to adopt tactics similar to those used by its predecessor, sooner or later.

Other historians have also sought to address questions of Soviet political practices in the 1920s and 1930s. Amongst this approach is literature on the building and training of a Soviet technocracy and on the way in which other commissariats and agencies established themselves and developed under Soviet rule.[38] Don Rowney's study of the Russian and Soviet civil service analyzed its trans-revolutionary development, and highlights three distinct generations of civil servant, all of whom can be seen in the diplomatic institution.[39] His work shows that Russian and Soviet administration moved forward in a generally consistent manner, inheriting centralized administrative structures. That he carried out his research of the civil service as a larger body than just one ministry provides evidence of general trends in Russian and Soviet administrative development in which one can locate a given agency. Thus, the development of the Narkomindel can be analyzed as a case study of the development of a Soviet institution.

---

[38] Kendall Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technical Intelligentsia, 1917-1941* (Princeton, 1978); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, 1992); Stephen Hanson, *Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions* (Chapel Hill, 1997).

[39] Don Rowney, *Transition to Technocracy: the Structural Origins of the Soviet Administrative State* (Ithaca, 1989).

Although not dealing expressly with state agencies, other historians have looked at the development of society under Soviet rule, particularly with regard to the Stalinist era. The work of historians in this context is invaluable to our deeper understanding of Soviet life and culture, without which a study of diplomatic culture would scarcely be possible. Of particular interest to the culture of diplomacy are discussions regarding self-presentation and the extent to which the individual internalized the discourse presented to him by the regime, or simply wore a mask of conformity. For diplomacy, there are also questions about the extent to which Soviet diplomats were able to use the tactics learnt in the Soviet field in the diplomatic field, in order to successfully engage in diplomacy and appear suitable as diplomats. These works form part of the discussion of the 'everyday' practices of Soviet life, both political and social, that Soviet citizens engaged in on a daily basis, and while some of these practices bear little relation to diplomacy, many of them are important in understanding the Soviet diplomat as a Soviet citizen.[40] Additionally, historians have provided us with accounts of the purges that swept the Soviet Union in the late 1930s, which allow for analysis of the purge of the Narkomindel to be analyzed in the light of the broader context of the purges, and the political culture surrounding them.[41]

Diplomatic historians have also shed light on aspects of Soviet diplomacy in the period. Sabine Dullin addresses Soviet diplomats in the 1930s in her book.[42] Her work rests on a strong basis of archival work in Russia, France, Switzerland and elsewhere, concentrating on the relationship between the central Party apparatus and the Narkomindel in the 1930s and Soviet relations with France and Germany.

---

[40] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford, 1999); Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, CA., 1995); Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1934-1941* (Cambridge, 1997); Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks! : Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton, N.J., 2005).

[41] J. Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938* (New York, 1985); Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (1990); J. Arch Getty and Roberta Manning (eds), *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (New York, 1993); R. W. Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934-1941* (London, 1996); J. Arch Getty and Oleg Naumov, *The Road to Terror : Stalin and the Self-destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939* (London, 1999).

[42] *Les hommes d'influences: Les ambassadeurs de Staline en Europe, 1930-1939* (Paris, 2001).

Dullin's work concerns itself with an institution already established and makes little reference to the Narkomindel's formative years beyond an account of the Litvinov and Chicherin feud in the late 1920s, or to the nature of the institution. Instead she focuses on Soviet-European relations (particularly French) with regards to policy formation and the role of the Narkomindel as a political agency in the process

Michael Hughes's work considers the British Foreign Office and the Tsarist MID.[43] He suggests that the 'old regime' had a distinct diplomacy, with slight national variances, but fitting into a similar mould. He works with a case study (in his example of two states) to create a picture of diplomacy in the period and to determine why diplomacy was seen to be in crisis and to have failed, resulting in the outbreak of the First World War. His work provides a good basis from which to engage with the history of the Tsarist MID, and a strong analysis of the British Foreign Office, from which one can start to look at the development of diplomacy and the diplomatic world in its international context beyond the years of the Russian Revolution.

Teddy Uldricks's looked at the development of the Narkomindel from its birth through to the beginning of the Second World War.[44] He lacked the archival sources now available, and his analysis is largely of how the institution was shaped and structured with relation to foreign policy, rather than dealing with the issue of diplomatic practices. His discussion of the Tsarist MID is limited to providing the background to the activities of the Narkomindel. In the same vein, Eugene Magerovsky's PhD thesis provides a comprehensive overview of the Narkomindel's structure and staff during the interwar period.[45] Like Uldricks, his work predated the release of archival material.

There are also histories dealing with Soviet diplomacy from the point of view of the individual. These provide little in the way of analysis, being rather pure

---

[43] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution.*
[44] Uldricks, *Diplomacy and Ideology.*
[45] Eugene Magerovsky, "The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, 1917-1946", PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 1975.

biographies, some of them aimed at a popular rather than academic audience.[46] More recent works by Russian and western scholars have produced biographies of diplomats grounded more in archival research.[47] The biographies all falter, however, in the study of Russian and Soviet diplomacy, as they shed light only on matters of relevance to the biography of the individual concerned. Additionally, with the subjects of some of these biographies, diplomatic work was but one aspect of their public life.[48]

I have made extensive use of the autobiographical writings of Tsarist and Soviet diplomats, as well as of those who came into contact with them in both official and unofficial capacities. These types of sources provide insight into individual diplomats' experiences, and shed light on the culture of diplomacy as seen through their eyes. However, personal accounts present problems of authenticity where they purport to be authoritative. *Notes for a Diary* was allegedly Litvinov's autobiographical writings, although in reality it was a KGB-sponsored forgery, penned by Grigori Besedovsky, a former Soviet diplomat who defected in the 1920s.[49] It appears that Litvinov was working on his memoirs, but they are believed to have been destroyed during the 1940s.[50] Soviet culture had an effect on the way in which individuals shaped their self-expression and the way in which they

---

[46] Stanislav Zarnitskii and L. Trofimova, *Sovetskoi Strany Diplomat* (Moscow, 1968); Itkina, *Revoliutsioner, Tribun, Diplomat*; S. Zarnitskii and A. Sergeev, *Chicherin* (Moscow, 1975); I. Khovratovich, *Georgii Vasil'evich Chicherin* (Moscow, 1980); Nikolai Zhukovskii, *Diplomaty novogo mira* (Moscow, 1986); Zinoviev Sheinis, *Maksim Maksimovich Litvinov: Revoliutsioner, Diplomat, Chelovek* (Moscow, 1989).

[47] Barbara Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist: the Life of Aleksandra Kollontai* (London, 1979); Cathy Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai: a Biography* (London, 1980); Timothy O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution: G.V. Chicherin and Soviet Foreign Affairs, 1918-1930* (Ames, 1988); Francois Conte, *Christian Rakovski, 1873-1941: a Political Biography* (Boulder, 1989); P. S. Kol'tsov, *Diplomat Fedor Raskol'nikov* (Moscow, 1990); Hugh Phillips, *Between the Revolution and the West: a Political Biography of Maxim M. Litvinov* (Boulder, 1992).

[48] The best example of an individual whose biographers tend to be interested in elements of life other than their diplomatic career is Alexandra Kollontai, whose status as a hero of the women's movement has led to a focus on that aspect of her life. Indeed, in the case of Kollontai this is carried through in her autobiographical works.

[49] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (London, 2000), pp. 601-2.

[50] Elena Danielson, "The Elusive Litvinov Memoirs," *Slavic Review,* vol. 48 no. 3 (1989), pp. 477-483.

portrayed their contemporaries: this is reflected in the evidence of heavy self-censorship in Alexandra Kollontai's *Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman.*[51] Other memoirs are keen to promote the protagonist's role in unfolding historical events, and should not be taken at face value. Sometimes diplomats wrote with the goal of attacking a rival or predecessor, while at other times their professional caution against revealing too much of the truth led them to hide it beneath a veneer of untruths.[52] Thus, while autobiographical writing is clearly useful, it must be treated with a great deal of care.

Other historical literature affords an opportunity for comparison with the Russian and Soviet cases and sets them in a broader context. As diplomacy functions on a supra-national level, non-Russian players in the field also contribute to diplomacy's culture. While many of these works take the form of edited volumes of collected essays, there are a number of works focusing on individual countries' foreign ministries.[53] These are of use in building a broader picture of diplomacy and its practitioners in the period, and for providing a basis for comparison, but frequently indicate little that can be related specifically to the Russian or Soviet cases.

Some of the works mentioned above seek to explain foreign policy decisions and the roles of diplomats in making them. The works of a number of historians specifically deal with Russian and Soviet foreign policy.[54] These are of use in

---

[51] The English edition (London, 1972) includes, in italics, the original text of the galley proofs and the changes made by Kollontai.

[52] Alexander Izvolsky, *The Memoirs of Alexander Iswolsky: Formerly Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to France* (London, 1920); Andrei Kalmykow, *Memoirs of a Russian Diplomat: Outposts of the Empire, 1893-1917* (London, 1971), p.3.

[53] Edited volumes of collected works include Craig and Gilbert, *The Diplomats*; Steiner, *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries*. Studies of single institutions include Michael Dockrill, *Diplomacy and World Power: Studies in British Foreign Policy, 1890-1950* (Cambridge, 1996); Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (London, 1986); Paul Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865-1980* (London, 1981); Lamar Cecil, *The German Diplomatic Service, 1871-1914* (Princeton, 1976).

[54] Ponomarev and Ragsdale, *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*; Gorodetsky, *Soviet Foreign Policy,*; Kennedy-Pipe, *Russia and the World*; Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security*; Haslam, *Soviet Foreign Policy in the 1930s*; McDonald, *United Government and Foreign Policy in Russia*; Efremov, *Vneshniaia politika Rossii*; Blinov, *Vneshniaia politika sovetskoi Rossi*;

looking at diplomatic practices, as on some level policy objectives determine these practices. In using this literature, however, great care must be taken to extrapolate from the debate on foreign policy the extent to which diplomats were able to control it and shape their own practices around it, or whether they were merely executors and therefore had policy and rules for behaviour imposed upon them from above. On the whole, studies of foreign policy tend to view the policies as monolithic, stemming from the upper levels of the regime and aimed at achieving goals that had only limited relation to the diplomatic institution. As a result, in these studies diplomatic conduct is outside of the policy process, with an emphasis on its aims rather than on how these were implemented by diplomats.[55]

Keeping these points in mind, we can turn to an analysis of the Russian Revolution's impact on the culture of Russian and Soviet diplomacy, addressing the neglected question of how diplomats conducted diplomacy as the Soviet Union established itself on the world stage. Much has been made of the foreign policy and the reasons behind it, but little before now has addressed the case of diplomatic culture. As we shall see, diplomatic culture is vital to understanding the course of Russian and Soviet diplomacy in the first half of the twentieth century.

Sipols, *Vneshniaia politika Sovetskogo Soiuza: 1933-1935 gg*; Sipols, *Vneshniaia politika Sovetskogo Soiuza: 1936-1939 gg.*; Nezhinskii, *Sovetskaia vneshniaia politik*; Chubar'ian, *Sovetskaia vneshniaia politika v retrospektive*; Ignat'ev, *Vneshniaia politika Rossii*.

[55] Jonathan Haslam does attempt to address the conduct of Soviet diplomacy in the 1930s, but focuses on Litvinov's role in the policy making process.

Chapter 2

Before The Bolsheviks:
The culture of pre-revolutionary diplomacy

In order to understand how the culture of the Russian MID was shaped, and what similarities and differences it bore to those of other states in the last years of the Russian Empire, as well as to assess the impact of the Russian Revolution on the culture of diplomacy, we must ask a number of questions regarding the institution and its personnel. What was the background of Tsarist diplomats and how were they recruited to the MID in the early years of the twentieth century? How did they compare to their foreign counterparts? Did changes in Russia's political culture have an effect on the MID's culture?

The MID at the turn of the century looked much like the foreign ministry of any other imperial power. Diplomacy was internationally the preserve of the upper classes, and Russia was no exception to this, with some members of the MID seeing diplomacy as the 'special sphere of the nobility'.[1] As a part of the Tsarist bureaucracy it was one element of the late imperial civil service, and among the more prestigious agencies in which to serve. In contrast to other imperial powers, however, the Russian bureaucracy was inefficient, interventionist and not subject to parliamentary control before 1905.[2] In addition, despite his lack of formal diplomatic training, the Tsar played a significant role in selecting the MID's staff – sometimes on a whim – and in formulating foreign policy. While the MID at the very beginning of the twentieth century can be seen as functioning in a bubble

---

[1] The dominance of the aristocracy in non-Russian diplomatic institutions is made clear in Robert Nightingale, "The Personnel of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, 1851-1929," *The American Political Science Review,* vol. 24, no. 2 (1930), pp. 314-22. The Russian view is related in Dmitrii Abrikossov, *Revelations of a Russian Diplomat: the Memoirs of Dmitrii I. Abrikossow* (Seattle, 1964), pp. 78-9. This was related to Abrikossov by Prince Golitsyn shortly after he had joined the MID.

[2] Dominic Lieven, *Empire: the Russian Empire and its Rivals* (London, 2000), p. 242.

beneath the Tsar, answerable only to him, the 1905 Revolution resulted in greater accountability of state agencies. Theoretically, this made the MID accountable to the Duma (the newly-formed parliament), as well as to the Tsar. We shall look at how the opening up of a public sphere as a result of the revolution affected the MID, and what pressures were placed on it to reform by both the press and the Duma.

The culture of the MID and late Tsarist diplomacy is best exemplified by individual diplomats during the period 1900-1917. Individual diplomats' experiences are important for what they tell us about the culture of diplomacy with regards to the MID, but we can also learn much by looking at the head of the Foreign Ministry. Within the MID, the personality and administrative style of the Foreign Minister exerted a great deal of influence on the culture of diplomacy; the individual at the head of the institution had the potential to shape it, either by preserving the order of things, or through espousing a programme of change aimed at reforming the system.

In the broader chronological and international context, the Tsarist MID can be seen as a prime example of what liberal contemporaries across Europe criticized as the 'old diplomacy'. However, the term 'old diplomacy' is somewhat problematic and needs to be clearly defined if it is to be of any use in analyzing the late Tsarist MID. As used by contemporaries, the term lacks precise definition, instead being used as part of a polemic that was aimed at driving institutional and political change. This is compounded by the fact that all journalists and politicians had something slightly different in mind when using the term, and assumed that their readers understood what they meant.[3] Critiques of 'old diplomacy' concerned autonomy and control, particularly pressures on the Tsar to allow the Duma to influence foreign policy, rather than remaining the sole originator of policy.[4] Other attacks centred on diplomats' privileged social backgrounds. There were criticisms that individuals were recruited purely as a result of their social background, rather than for their abilities, and that this in turn led to the third characteristic of 'old

[3] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p. 9.
[4] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

diplomacy' – the supposed incompetence of foreign ministries and diplomats. While incompetence is hard to define, it is clear that contemporaries believed that diplomacy was failing to keep up with the modern world, and was run by men whose ideas were no longer appropriate.

Thus, we come to a working definition of 'old diplomacy', as understood by people using it during the period. It generally referred to three aspects, in varying proportion: the autonomy of the MID, and who controlled foreign policy; the diplomats' backgrounds and how this influenced their selection; and finally the diplomats' and the institution's alleged incompetence.[5] Even when individuals tried to defend pre-1917 diplomacy, they were obliged to use a language that had been created as part of the discourse of the critique, the term 'old diplomacy' only having arisen as a critical term to describe the system of pre-war diplomacy.[6] When defending the 'old diplomacy' though, it became clear that its problems were much the same in European capitals as in Russia, with international diplomacy based 'on a more or less identical model'.[7]

The attack on old diplomacy in Russia appears to have come later than elsewhere. Only after political changes were affected by the 1905 Revolution was there a forum that allowed for criticism of diplomats and foreign policy.[8] To be sure, it was not just the MID that came under public scrutiny after 1905, but the entire Tsarist system of government, and the criticism of the MID must be seen in the context of growing attacks on the regime. Critics of Tsarist diplomacy called for changes in the MID to meet the demands of the new international environment in the early years of the twentieth century. While they acknowledged that all the major

---

[5] 'Old diplomacy' was criticised outside Russia as well. Woodrow Wilson wanted a 'new diplomacy' to address the challenges of the twentieth century, which in part was fulfilled in the creation of the League of Nations. The Boer War had brought criticism of the old diplomacy in Britain in the early years of the twentieth century, as had the Dreyfus Affair in France. Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* pp. ix-x, 3-8.

[6] Ibid., p. 13.

[7] Harold Nicholson , *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* (London, 1953), p. 72.

[8] George Bolsover, "Isvol'sky and Reform of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs", *Slavonic and East European Review,* vol. 63, no. 1,(1985), pp. 23-24; Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p. 126. The process had begun earlier in Britain and France.

European powers needed to overhaul their diplomatic establishments, they saw the need in Russia as particularly pressing as the MID was 'in a state of complete chaos'.[9] Full and public debate was called for to deal with questions of how the MID should be reorganized, with particular attention brought to the gulf that existed between the central ministry and the overseas missions.[10] The 'snobbism' and laziness of MID officials was also the subject of criticism.[11] The onslaught against the MID from journalists and Duma members following 1905 meant that it had become widely accepted by 1908 or 1909 that the MID was failing to carry out its duties effectively and was in need of serious reform.[12]

With this in mind, this chapter will look at Russian Foreign Ministers in the early years of the twentieth century – Lamsdorf, Izvolsky, and Sazonov – in order to see what they inherited upon taking the post, how they responded to calls for reform and shaped the MID during their tenure, and what they passed on to their successors. Inheritance is extremely important in diplomacy, where rituals and protocol can be seen as the legacy of generations of diplomats who have gone before. The staffing of the MID, and the allegation that social standing was more important than ability, will be looked at, as will the nature of MID officials' education and training. Progression within the MID was also based on prestige, and we will analyze how this prestige was cultivated and used before the October Revolution of 1917 swept the Tsarist MID aside.

---

[9] *Novoe vremia,* 20th August 1907, as quoted in ibid., pp. 127-8.
[10] *Rech',* 23rd June 1907, as quoted in ibid., p. 128; *Novoe vremia*, 20th January 1908, as quoted in ibid., p. 128.
[11] *Novoe vremia*, 13th May 1900, as quoted in ibid., p. 128.
[12] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p. 129.

The Foreign Ministers

Lamsdorf[13]

Count Vladimir Nikolayevich Lamsdorf was regarded by contemporaries as 'an honest, conscientious and competent civil servant who spent his entire career in the central office of the ministry'.[14] However, informed observers believed that he lacked breadth and initiative.[15] Following the traditions of Russian autocracy, Lamsdorf saw himself as an executor of the Tsar's policy, rather than as a formulator of foreign policy in his own right.

It is clear that Lamsdorf was extremely committed to the bureaucratic system of the late Tsarist period. He had profited as a member of the nobility. He had been educated in the Corps of Pages before joining the Chancellery of the MID where he cultivated connections with senior officials, among them three or possibly even four Foreign Ministers.[16] He can almost be seen, in contemporary terms, as the ideal Tsarist diplomat, who had the ideal career. Coming from an aristocratic family, he joined the MID in 1866 at the age of twenty-two. By 1882, he had become Director of the Chancellery, where he continued to serve until 1896 when he was appointed Deputy Foreign Minister. It seems that his appointment as Foreign Minister in 1900 was virtually guaranteed after his earlier career. He had been a part of the system, had followed its rules, and was to be rewarded for his diligence.

Despite his bureaucratic diligence, Lamsdorf was clearly entrenched in a world based on contacts, and he used his position to further them in an obsessive fashion. In his diaries covering the late nineteenth century, he stresses his

---

[13] Vladimir Nikolayevich Lamsdorf (1844-1907). He joined the MID in 1866, rising to be Director of the Chancellery between 1882 and 1896, before becoming Deputy Foreign Minister in 1897 and then Foreign Minister between 1900 and 1906.
[14] Nicolas de Basily, *Nicolas de Basily, Diplomat of Imperial Russia, 1903-1917: Memoirs* (Stanford, 1973), p. 19.
[15] Ibid., p. 19; Kalmykov, *Memoirs of a Russian Diplomat: Outposts of the Empire, 1893-1917* (New Haven ; London, 1971), p. 140.
[16] Ibid., p. 3.

connections to senior officials, particularly Nikolai Girs, Foreign Minister 1882-95, whom Lamsdorf had served as personal secretary.[17] Lamsdorf routinely engaged in name-dropping and underpinned his own position through means of association with great men in the MID. He enjoyed Girs's patronage, having been trained by him as a Tsarist servant.[18] Lamsdorf presented himself in his diaries as something of a dilettante and a social climber, keen to associate with important figures and to be prominent at court.[19] From this it is apparent that the MID had a culture of the use of social connections and patronage as a means of progression that could be used by individuals to further and legitimize their positions. It is notable that Lamsdorf, who believed in promotion through diligence as a bureaucrat, chose to use this method to consolidate his position. Despite what he may have hoped could be the case for the MID, social connections were a reality in its culture and he became complicit with that system, hence helping it to persist.

He was, in retrospect, accused of being a deferential servant of the Tsar by Bolshevik diplomats, and of being typically aristocratic in his interest in intrigue and court affairs.[20] According to Izvolsky, he was extremely well versed in the subtleties of traditional diplomacy, and carried out the necessary affairs of state in an antiquated fashion, obsessed with pomp and ceremony.[21] Indeed, Izvolsky accused him having the 'manners of another age', although these comments need to be taken in the context of Izvolsky's scrabbling for personal renown, and showing his time as

---

[17] Ibid., p. 140; Lamsdorf, *Dnevnik V. N. Lamsdorfa (1886-1890)* (Moscow, 1926), p. 2. Nikolai Karlovich Girs (1820-1895). A graduate of the Alexander Lycee, Girs joined the MID in 1838. He was Consul General in Egypt, 1856-8, Moldavia and the Balkans, 1858-63, before becoming Ambassador to Iran, 1863-9, Switzerland, 1869-72, and Sweden, 1872-5. In 1875 he became Deputy Foreign Minister and was in charge of Asiatic affairs, before becoming Foreign Minister between 1882 and 1895.

[18] Lamsdorf, *Dnevnik (1891-1892)* (Moscow, 1926), p. viii.

[19] Lamsdorf's diaries make much of his connections to important individuals within the MID and court circles. He indulges in frequent name-dropping as a means of securing his own position. It appears as though his diaries were written with the intention that they might one day be published, cementing his place in history. When the diaries were in fact published they were used as anti-Tsarist propaganda by the Bolsheviks, discrediting the high society of diplomacy.

[20] Lamsdorf, *Dnevnik (1886-1890)*, pp. iv-v. Theodore Rothstein wrote the introduction for the publication of Lamsdorf's diaries in 1926.

[21] Izvolsky, *Memoirs*, p.140.

Foreign Minister in a favourable light, by denigrating Lamsdorf's character.[22] Overall, the picture one gains of Lamsdorf from his contemporaries is that he embodied, and was perpetuating, a diplomatic culture of the 'old order', born out of the nineteenth century and outdated by the early years of the twentieth.

The accusation that Lamsdorf's loyalty was simply to the Tsar would seem to be false. The MID was Lamsdorf's entire life. He had no social life outside the institutions of diplomacy, and was unmarried, instead devoting his life to the MID.[23] As a result of his total dedication to the MID, he became a master of diplomacy's minutiae. Izvolsky informs us that 'the least important billet that [Lamsdorf] addressed to a foreign ambassador, always on gilt-edged paper and delicately perfumed, was a model of style and elegance'.[24] Lamsdorf's command of protocol and etiquette was exemplary, and diplomats were fearful of offending should they misapply them. We see this utter commitment to the Foreign Ministry again in the case of Georgi Chicherin (Foreign Minister 1918-1930), which raises reasonable questions about the extent to which the Russian Foreign Minister's position becomes all-consuming. There is certainly the suggestion in both cases of a belief that subordinates were incapable of carrying out the delicate tasks of diplomacy themselves, and that the Foreign Minister needed to take control and be permanently at his post. That this might be a form of the diplomatic habitus acquired by Foreign Ministers bears some consideration. Absolute commitment to the Foreign Ministry appears to be a trait manifested by more than one individual who headed the Russian institution and so one can take that on some level there is a habitus relevant to being the supreme diplomat of Russia. Lamsdorf's total commitment to the MID, and his mastery of diplomatic technique, demonstrates his dispositions with regards to his, and the MID's, role in Russian diplomacy.

---

[22] Ibid., p. 3.
[23] Kalmykov, *Memoirs*, p. 140.
[24] Izvolsky, *Memoirs,* pp. 136-7.

Lamsdorf's dedication to the MID explains why he desired the appointment of individuals on the basis of merit rather than the whims of the Tsar.[25] He was, at some level, seeking to change the system, making it more bureaucratic and less subject to the autocratic order of the late nineteenth century. He attacked the arbitrary appointment of well-connected individuals who were preferred to those who had worked hard for years, as he himself had done. In his view, this practice damaged the bureaucratic system which he sought to uphold, and which he felt the Tsar should support. Despite having profited from personal connections, he defended the system of bureaucratic structure in appointments when the Tsar appointed favourites to posts.[26] Lamsdorf was afraid that an example of patronage from the Tsar would encourage all members of the MID to seek to gain favour and hence advance their careers by means of it, rather than by diligent service to the state.[27] Lamsdorf referred to the nobility surrounding the Tsar as a 'little clique of parasites', and felt that as it was the bureaucrats who worked, it was they who deserved prestige, rather than the aristocracy.[28] In attacking the Tsar's patronage and the hold the aristocracy had over the MID Lamsdorf was, albeit to a limited extent, trying to modernize the MID and introduce a system that relied on the bureaucratic order rather than on the aristocracy. For Lamsdorf, and by extension the MID, diplomats needed to be loyal to the state, not simply to the personality of the Tsar, and one means of achieving this was by strict adherence to a bureaucratic system.[29]

The culture of the MID under Lamsdorf suggests that his attempts to shape the institution along these lines enjoyed mixed success. Appointments continued to be made on the basis of factors other than bureaucratic diligence, but his successor,

---

[25] Lamsdorf, "Dnevnik," *Krasnyi Arkhiv,* 46 (1931), p. 27.
[26] Lamsdorf, *Dnevnik (1886-1890),* p. 341.
[27] Ibid., p. 238.
[28] Ibid., pp. 100-1; Helen Dittmer "The Russian Foreign Ministry under Nicholas II: 1894-1914," PhD Thesis, University of Chicago, 1977, p. 162.
[29] The British system of Permanent Under-Secretaries of State is a similar bureaucratic tactic designed to ensure that despite change in governments there is a continued adherence to Britain's foreign policy process.

Izvolsky, sought to address what he saw as an inefficient bureaucracy – suggesting that the MID was undergoing some level of modernization, that by the time Lamsdorf left office it had not achieved to the extent that he might have wished. The great tragedy for the MID was that Lamsdorf's ardent desire to preserve a bureaucratic system made him very resistant to change in other areas, and as a result he did nothing to address the institution's many inefficiencies. Lamsdorf was clinging to a system in decline, working on established tradition and failing to respond to the new pressures in Russia's political life. Other ministries were increasingly being 'modernized', listening more to public opinion than simply to the Tsar, although this could be a dangerous policy for an individual to follow.[30]

Izvolsky[31]

Count Alexander Petrovich Izvolsky, Foreign Minister from 1906-1910, was a major, early proponent of reforming the MID. Looking at why he, and others, deemed reforms necessary will help us understand the problems Tsarist diplomacy faced in the period. Izvolsky became Foreign Minister after nearly thirty years of service in foreign missions. He had enjoyed great prestige as Ambassador to the Danish court, but had no experience of life in the MID's central administration.

We see here a contrast with Lamsdorf, who based his prestige on the system, while Izvolsky searched for it in personal renown. The two also displayed very different patterns of service before becoming Foreign Ministers.[32] Izvolsky drew his

[30] Lieven, *Russia and the Origins of the First World War* (London, 1983), pp. 50-6.
[31] Count Alexander Petrovich Izvolsky (1856-1919). Izvolsky joined the MID in 1875 and held a sequence of short-term postings in the consular service before being appointed First Secretary in Bucharest in 1881, and then First Secretary in Washington in 1885. From 1888 he was involved in establishing relations with the Papacy, becoming Minister in Residence at the Vatican in 1894. Between 1897 and 1899 he held posts in Serbia and Bavaria, before becoming Ambassador to Japan 1899 and then to Denmark in 1902, a post he held until he became Foreign Minister from 1906 until 1910. Following his time as Foreign Minister, Izvolsky was Ambassador to France until the February Revolution.
[32] Dittmer, "The Russian Foreign Ministry," p. 182.

perceptions of statesmanship from his time at the Royal Alexander Lycée at Tsarskoe Selo – one of the schools that prepared individuals for the civil service (discussed later in the chapter), as well as a sense of subscribing to the legacy of great men.[33] He valued the privileges of aristocracy in terms of education and the extent to which it could advance a career in state service through the use of contacts. Indeed, much of his career would be based upon his connections – his father-in-law had been Ambassador to the Court of Denmark, and his wife was a close friend of the dowager Empress, Alexander III's wife.[34] These contacts not only secured his own posting to the Court of Denmark, but also placed him in a position to meet other rulers, and in court circles where he might meet and impress the Tsar. In support of the advantages that aristocratic society gave Izvolsky, he was a fervent supporter of the Tsar, and viewed the bureaucracy with suspicion.[35]

That Izvolsky had served exclusively abroad before becoming Foreign Minister was the root of his distrust of the MID's central bureaucracy, and his time as Foreign Minister was marked by his attempts to reform the MID. Believing the bureaucrats and the organization to be hopelessly inefficient, he set about a programme of reforms. He was keen, it seems, to rid the MID of what he described as its 'bureaucratic plodders' and organize the institution so that it could more effectively carry out diplomacy in the early years of the twentieth century.[36] Izvolsky had a clear drive to reform, born out of his belief that the MID had stagnated as a diplomatic institution and needed to be dragged into the necessary shape for diplomacy in the new century. His reforms will be discussed later, in order to trace the impact of his efforts on the culture of the late Tsarist MID.

Izvolsky blamed the MID's inefficiencies on an ineffective bureaucratic system. His understanding of diplomacy, drawn from his experience in foreign service, led him to believe that it was a field for men of ability and status and that

---

[33] Izvolsky, *Memoirs*, p. 161.
[34] Dittmer, "The Russian Foreign Ministry", p. 187.
[35] Izvolsky, *Memoirs,* p. 85.
[36] M. Taube, *La politique russe d'avant-guerre et la fin de l'empire des Tsars (1904-1917): mémoires du baron M. de Taube* (Paris, 1928), pp. 92-3.

the bureaucrats in St. Petersburg had no understanding of it. This is in stark contrast to Lamsdorf's view of the MID, and can be explained by the differences in their careers before they became Foreign Ministers. Izvolsky demonstrated a different habitus to Lamsdorf's, one which was influenced by his understanding of diplomacy in an international context, as opposed to work entirely in the central ministry. That two men with different habiti held the same position in succession displays that not only was there more than one potential diplomatic habitus at the time, but that the habiti were constructs of the different patterns of diplomatic service that existed within the MID at the beginning of the twentieth century. Part of Izvolsky's reforms sought to address the difference, and remedy it by ensuring interchange between home and abroad in the MID, and hence it appears that he realized the shortcomings of dual habiti in the MID which represented fundamentally different outlooks on diplomacy, one at the centre and one in the overseas missions, and sought to redress the balance.

Sazonov[37]

Sergei Dmitrievich Sazonov was appointed Foreign Minister in 1910 and held the office until 1916. Sazonov was perhaps better suited to the office than either of his predecessors, as his early years of service had been spent in the central ministry, but his experience was then rounded off with twenty years of service abroad. He claimed his reaction was that after serving abroad for so long, he welcomed the opportunity to return home.[38] Sazonov was conveying a sense of attachment to Russia, not simply to the MID or the Tsar, which is relevant to his continued involvement in Russian affairs after the Revolution. Sazonov's time as Foreign

[37] Sergei Dmitrievich Sazonov (1860-1927). Sazonov's diplomatic career began with a brief period of service in the MID's Chancellery in 1883-90, before becoming Second Secretary to the Embassy in London and then Secretary of the Mission to the Vatican in 1894, where he remained for ten years. In 1904 he returned to London as Counsellor and in 1906 was appointed Minister in Residence at the Vatican. He became Foreign Minister in 1910.

[38] Sergei Sazonov, *Les années fatales: souvenirs de S. Sazonov, ancien ministre des affaires étrangères de Russie (1910-1916)* (Paris, 1927), p. 12.

Minister was to be blighted by the outbreak of the First World War, which forced him to make Russia's progress in the war his first priority, again displaying his commitment to Russia. This left him little opportunity to achieve much in the way of institutional reforms.

Russia's lack of success in the war, although not Sazonov's fault, cost him his position. That his peers considered him successful becomes quite apparent after the Revolution, when he became head of the Council of Ambassadors. Much like Izvolsky, Sazonov believed that the MID's decadent central bureaucracy was filled with men who were out of touch with those who served abroad. While he may have been influenced in his thinking along these lines owing to his time serving under Izvolsky at the Vatican, this points again to there being a specific, separate habitus for those who served overseas rather than in St. Petersburg, one aspect of which was the belief that the central ministry was ineffective in the task of international diplomacy. In Sazonov's case this habitus appears to have overridden any habitus he may have acquired during his earlier service in the central ministry.[39]

Sazonov, unlike his predecessors, expressed sorrow at his failure to achieve his aims.[40] He felt that the coming of war and the subsequent revolution in Russia were crises of old diplomacy, and that he was powerless to stand in the way of the process. In this light, his involvement in Russian diplomacy after 1917 can be seen as an attempt to rectify past failings. It is clear that Sazonov as a diplomat developed a great deal of attachment neither to the system, nor to personal fame, but to the relationships cultivated during his service.[41] Like those before him, he can be seen to have progressed through social contacts, but in what appeared to be a far less aggressive manner than others in the MID, his prime concern being how he could serve Russia's interests.

---

[39] Ignat'ev, "Sergei Dmitrievich Sazonov", *Voprosy istorii* 1996, no. 9, p. 25. Sazonov was Secretary of the Mission to the Vatican while Izvolsky was Minister in Residence.

[40] Sazonov, *Vospominaniia* (Paris, 1927); Sazonov, *Les Années Fatales.*

[41] Boris Bakhmeteff, *Oral History* (1950), Bakhmeteff Collection, box 37, Bakhmeteff Archive, Columbia University (hereafter BAR). Sazonov was a close friend of Aristide Briand, the French Prime Minister at the time of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

Sazonov lacked the opportunity to address the problems of the MID in his own way as Foreign Minister. He inherited Izvolsky's reform programme, and then faced the challenges brought by the First World War. That he did not turn back on reform suggests that he was of a similar outlook to Izvolsky and committed to reforming the MID along the lines set out by his predecessor. War, however, created a pressing need for the MID to change rapidly to deal with the circumstances, and did not allow for reform to continue, but Sazonov showed himself to be committed to Russia's interests and hence allowed the MID's structure and culture to be shaped in order to best serve them during the war years.

A Diplomat's Career – Recruitment and progression

As we look at career Tsarist diplomats, we should analyze their recruitment into and progression through the MID, taking note of the various paths to advancement. Recruitment into the institution could happen either through social contacts, or, for less well-born individuals, through education and obvious aptitude. Once in the service everyone was on a similar, structured, track of progression, but elevation could be achieved through a number of means.

As diplomacy was traditionally the preserve of the upper classes and revolved around the court, the easiest and most common route into and up through the ranks of the Tsarist MID was through social contacts – family, school and government.[42] Of these, family connections were the most useful. Nikolai Girs, the former Foreign Minister, had two sons serving at high levels in the MID in the early 1900s who remained prominent as a result of their father's connections.[43]

---

[42] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p. 137. Diplomacy in a broader context was dominated by members of the aristocracy. In Britain members of the aristocracy dominated the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service. Robert Nightingale, "The Personnel of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, 1851-1929," *American Political Science Review,* vol. 24, no. 2 (1930), p. 316.

[43] Dittmer, "The Russian Foreign Ministry", p. 94.

Sazonov's brother-in-law was Pyotr Stolypin (Prime Minister, 1906-1911), while Izvolsky's father-in-law was a former Russian Ambassador to Copenhagen.

Individuals tried to use their connections to further careers for their families as well as themselves. Nelidov, Ambassador to Paris in 1906, asked Izvolsky to admit his son, who was about to graduate from the Alexander Lycée, to the MID, and Muravyev (Foreign Minister 1897-1900) asked his cousin Izvolsky to promote his son.[44] Nepotism was rife in the MID, with diplomatic dynasties clearly visible; as has been mentioned above, Girs had two sons in the MID, but many more families had established themselves in the MID in the early 20th century.[45] Also, individuals in the MID frequently had family serving elsewhere in the government or the army. In total, during Nicholas II's reign, no fewer than 29 families were represented in the MID's staff more than once.[46]

Other contacts were also established during service in the MID. Some examples include Benckendorf and Izvolsky gaining entry to court circles during their service at the Danish court, and Savinsky becoming Lamsdorf's favourite during his time serving as his assistant.[47] The Chancellery was probably the best place to establish good contacts in the MID (although entry required good contacts in the first place), as it was the most important office in the institution. Bureaucrats needed to serve for two years before they could apply to be considered for a position in the Chancellery, and even then appointments were few.[48] Diplomatic lists included in *Ezhegodniki,* the annually published Russian diplomatic handbook, indicate that those who had served in the Chancellery were more likely to rise high in the MID.[49] In addition, those who served in the Chancellery received court titles,

---

[44] Izvolsky, *Au service de la Russie: Alexandre Iswolsky, correspondance diplomatique* (Paris, 1937), vol. 1, pp. 197, 269.
[45] Columbia University Archives, as tabulated in Dittmer, "The Russian Foreign Ministry," pp. 280-3.
[46] Dittmer, "The Russian Foreign Ministry," p. 94.
[47] Ibid., p. 95.
[48] Yuri Solovyev, *Vospominaniia Diplomata 1893-1922* (Moscow, 1959), p. 11.
[49] *Ezhegodnik Ministertsvo inostrannykh del. Annuaire diplomatique de l'empire de Russie* (St. Petersburg, 1861-1917). These are a series of annually published volumes detailing diplomatic postings, foreign diplomats in Russia, and agreements concluded in the previous year. The

regardless of their *chin* (rank – these ranks will be discussed at greater length below). Thus, the Chancellery was an excellent office to make connections and to further one's career.

If an individual did not have these social contacts, how could he enter this elite sphere, and what would motivate him to do so? It would appear that careers in the foreign service were frequently motivated by a desire to move within high society. Dmitrii Abrikossov, Russian Ambassador to Tokyo in 1917, came from a family which had made its money in commerce. He sought a career in the foreign service as he felt it promised a level of social prestige greater than that which he could achieve if he were to pursue a life of commercial activity, other bureaucracies, or the army.[50] Andrei Kalmykov, according to his memoirs, wished to enter the foreign service in order to further explore the interest he had developed in the Far East while at university.[51]

Progression through the MID was not guaranteed. Private incomes were needed to afford St. Petersburg society and there was still a demonstrable need for patronage and connections within the MID in order to progress.[52] Abrikossov tells us in his memoirs that he sought to enter the MID through employment in the archives section, enlisting the help of officials in securing his entry 'by this door'.[53] While the 'usual application' was filed, he started work in the archives, filing documents in which he found little of interest. His service in the archives tells us about the attitudes of diplomats to those who were not of noble birth. The head of the archives department under whom Abrikossov served, Prince Golitsyn, found it hard to understand why an individual from the merchant classes could ever dream to

---

publication of such volumes is common practice for diplomatic services. The Narkomindel continued the tradition publishing its own *Ezhegodniki* between 1924 and 1936.

[50] Abrikossov, *Revelations,* p.3.

[51] Kalmykov, *Memoirs,* p. 13. Kalmykov served as Ambassador to Tehran 1893-8, Bangkok, 1898-1900, before returning to serve in the MID's Asiatic department.

[52] Hughes, *Inside the Enigma: British Officials in Russia, 1900-1939* (London, 1997), pp. 21-2; Charles Hardinge, *Old Diplomacy: the Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst* (London, 1947), p. 62. Both these accounts relate to British officials and how a posting to St. Petersburg was seen by them as problematic owing to the personal expense incurred in St. Petersburg society as opposed to other postings.

[53] Abrikossov, *Revelations,* p.77.

compete with the nobility in their special sphere.[54] Ultimately sympathizing with Abrikossov's opinions that the twentieth century had different needs to the nineteenth, Golitsyn befriended him and decided to teach him what was expected of a diplomat.[55] Nevertheless, Abrikossov continued to feel isolated as a result of his background. When the time came for his diplomatic service examination, he claimed to have felt that everyone was 'asking himself what this merchant from Moscow was looking for' in the MID, and was disheartened by it.[56]

What we learn from Abrikossov's memoirs about the examination for entry to the MID tells us much about how the institution's recruitment functioned. There was supposed to be a written exam, with prescribed texts on history and international relations, but in reality examinations were carried out face-to-face by a panel of senior officials rather than following the route of the formal written tests.[57] This naturally favoured more socially adept candidates, and the exam was concerned less with knowledge than with evaluating behaviour, appearance and quick thinking, reducing the examinations to 'repartee and mind-reading'.[58] This approach was defended on the grounds that character and personality were of great importance in a diplomatic career, but it still relied heavily on those who had learnt the necessary social skills. In the end, Abrikossov tells us that he attributed some of his success in the exam to the deputy minister's admiration for his aunt's estate in the Crimea.

If Abrikossov's case was representative of how individuals were examined for entry into the MID, then it appears to have been a preserve of social ability rather than intellectual capability in the early years of the twentieth century. However, even if they were at something of a disadvantage, we can clearly see from his case that those who did not have aristocratic origins or connections were able to progress in the foreign service of late Tsarist Russia, as long as they were keen to enter into such a world and subscribe to its values.

---

[54] Ibid., pp. 77-9.
[55] Ibid., p. 79.
[56] Ibid., p. 80.
[57] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p.135.
[58] Abrikossov, *Revelations,* pp.80-81.

Once inside the MID, diplomats were officially ranked, as were all civil servants, on the *chin* (ranking) system introduced by Peter the Great in 1722, which set out the fourteen ranks of the civil service and the means for progression. An individual entered at the bottom (rank 14) and could expect to progress through the ranks at a set rate. Achieving certain ranks required service for a certain number of years (set out in the table below); by the 19th century, promotion had become automatic on the basis of length of service up to rank five, after which imperial approval was needed. In general, the system was quite strict and ranks could not be skipped, although in some cases, individuals could enter a few rungs up the ladder based on educational achievements.[59] *Chinovniki* (bureaucrats) could not be promoted more than one *chin* above their post and could not be given a post two *chin* above their own rank. The rigidity of the system and its fixed time frame presented problems for the MID; staff clearly expected to be able to progress through the institution without needing to display any aptitude for the work.

Table. 2.1 The *chin* and length of time to achieve rank.

From rank 14-12	3 years
From rank 12-10	3 years
From rank 10-9	3 years
From rank 9-8	3 years
From rank 8-7	4 years
From rank 7-6	4 years
From rank 6-5	4 years
From rank 5-2	20 years

Source, *Ustav o sluzhbe*, article 326.

[59] *Ustav o sluzhbe*, article 250, as quoted in Dittmer, "The Russian Foreign Ministry," p. 75.

Table. 2.2. Correlation between ranks and post, 1913

Deistvitel'nyi Tainyi Sovetnik (rank 2)	Ambassador
Tainyi Sovetnik (rank 3)	Ambassador
Deistvitel'nyi Statskii Sovetnik (rank 4)	Minister Minister resident Assistant Ambassador
Statskii Sovetnik (rank 5)	Assistant Ambassador Minister First Secretary Diplomatic agent
Kollezhskii Sovetnik (rank 6)	Secretary
Nadvornyi Sovetnik (rank 7)	Secretary
Kollezhskii Assessor (rank 8)	Secretary
Tituliarnyi Sovetnik (rank 9)	Secretary
Kollezhskii Sekretar (rank 10)	Secretary

Source: *Ezhegodnik MID, 1913*

While acquiring a certain *chin* was no doubt essential to progress, advancement could still be facilitated by other factors. The MID was seen as the preserve of the privileged and the well-connected. While this was certainly the case, by the early twentieth century the nobility's stranglehold on ministry positions was beginning to weaken, as individuals from other backgrounds entered the institution.[60] Still prevalent was the hereditary line of succession in the MID, whether through family or patronage, but a few unconnected individuals were nevertheless able to find appointments, albeit through slightly different channels.

[60] Abrikossov and Kalmykov were examples of 'outsiders' to the traditional servant of MID.

Educating a Diplomat

Education offered an opportunity to acquire contacts that could be of use in a diplomatic career. The late Tsarist MID drew heavily on graduates of two schools that prepared individuals for state service, the Imperial Corps of Pages and the Tsarskoe Selo Lycée (also know as the Alexander Lycée).[61] Graduates from other schools, according to their own writings, believed themselves to be at a disadvantage when seeking overseas postings or promotion within the MID, so one must determine what sort of advantages these two schools granted.[62]

These schools share several characteristics which are important when looking at their impact on the MID staff. Before 1906, both schools were reserved for the sons of nobility, or high-level civil servants or military officers, ensuring a student body loyal to the Tsar and filled with desire to serve the state.[63] The schools' task in preparing individuals for civil service was to inculcate certain values and norms – namely 'sober' judgment; readiness to carrying out orders; humanity; fidelity in the service of the Tsar; enthusiasm for the general good; zeal at one's post; honesty, disinterestedness, abstention from bribes; just and equal judgement for every situation; and protection of the innocent and grief-stricken – into the consciousness of future bureaucrats.[64] Sternheimer suggests that this process created an administrative culture that shaped not only the way in which individuals perceived information, but also presented a number of ways in which they might

---

[61] Dittmer, "The Russian Foreign Ministry," p. 42.

[62] Sergei Botkin, *Kartinki diplomaticheskoi zhizni* (Paris, 1930), p. 24; Abrikossov, *Revelations*, p. 85. Abrikossov's views need to be taken with some caution as he was one of the outsiders, and although he may well have perceived himself to be at a disadvantage one must ask whether he presents this fact in order to make his achievement of entering the MID and rising to become an ambassador more impressive by virtue of not having relied on the patronage available to some of his contemporaries.

[63] Allen Sinel, "The socialization of the Russian Bureaucratic Elite, 1811-1917", *Russian History* 3 (1976), p.30.

[64] Ibid., p. 11. Sinel cites 'official proclamations' regarding these values but provides no concrete reference for them.

act.[65] What we see is institutions creating a type of individual pre-shaped in certain ways, and hence prepared for service in the Tsarist bureaucracy. That there was a clear socializing force in these schools furthered the creation of the bureaucratic type, as individuals clung to the same set of core values, and hence functioned in similar ways and built relationships with each other as a result.

The Alexander Lycée had been established expressly to produce personnel for the civil service, and for the MID in particular. Nicholas de Basily, a 1903 graduate of the school, states that 'the function of the school was to prepare the sons of noblemen for the service of the state'.[66] The Corps of Pages was similarly aimed at moulding individuals suitable for state service, primarily for the army but also for civil service.

Education was one aspect of the Alexander Lycée experience, but there was another, possibly even more important, dimension and advantage – that of networking. A disproportionate number of the most prestigious overseas posts and the senior positions in the ministry were occupied by graduates from the Lycée, who used contacts with each other and with other alumni to further their careers. Between 1894 and 1914, four of the six Foreign Ministers (Girs, Lobanov-Rostovskii, Izvolsky and Sazonov) and half of the men who served as assistant minister were Lycée graduates. When war broke out in 1914, the Foreign Minister, his assistant, and the heads of missions in Paris, Berlin, Athens, Bucharest, Peking, and Tehran had all studied at the Lycée.[67] While perhaps unsurprising, given that the Lycée was created to educate civil servants, especially for the MID, the large number of its graduates suggest that attendance at the Lycée provided a clear opportunity for achieving high ranks within the MID.

Outside of Russia, schools also offered the opportunities for socialization and gaining contacts, and some comparison with the Russian case is of use here.

---

[65] Stephen Sternheimer, "Administration and Political Development: An Inquiry into the Tsarist and Soviet Experiences," PhD Thesis, University of Chicago, 1974, part 1, p. 143 as quoted in Dittmer, "The Russian Foreign Ministry," p. 44.
[66] Basily, *Memoirs,* p.8.
[67] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* pp. 135-6.

Robert Nightingale's study of Foreign Office personnel gives an indication of where British diplomats were educated, both with regards to school and university. He demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of the 249 men who held senior positions or ambassadorial posts in the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service between 1851 and 1929 had attended major British public schools (150) with the over one third having been at Eton College (85).[68] University education shows itself to have been less important than school in the British Foreign Office, with almost half of senior officials having not been to university. Of those who did, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge had the highest attendance rates, particularly Oxford with 72 officials educated there.[69]

Nightingale equates 'attendance at one or other of the great English public schools [as] the hallmark of a high social position', reinforcing the fact that diplomacy was populated by individuals with high levels of social capital. Traceable from school attendance it is clear that there is also an element of public schools producing graduates with a set of values that fitted with those of the Foreign Office, just as the Russian schools produced them for the MID. As in Russia, these schools offered the opportunity to build a network of contacts and to gain access to positions as a result of the 'old school tie'.

Although attendance at one of the major British public schools could be a pathway to the Foreign Office, Britain had a system beyond school to prepare individuals specifically for entry into the diplomatic corps, indicating that the schools did not necessarily aim to produce graduates who were explicitly suitable for service in the Foreign Office. In Britain, almost all those hoping to perform well in the Foreign Office's entrance exams attended Scoone's Academy on the Strand in London where they 'crammed' subjects for the entrance exam for months.[70] In

---

[68] Robert Nightingale, "The Personnel of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service," pp. 315-6. Nightingale gives Eton College and Harrow School as separate institutions for the purposes of his analysis, and lists the leading public schools as Winchester College, Westminster School, Rugby School, Marlborough College, Haileybury, Clifton College, and Charterhouse.
[69] Ibid., p. 317.
[70] Hughes, *Inside the Enigma,* pp. 16-17.

contrast to the Russian case, British officials attended an institution specifically aimed at performing in exams, rather than a preparation for state service. Further, the exam-orientated approach probably resulted in less of the socialization process, compared to the Alexander Lycée or Corps of Pages, with regards to inculcating the values for state service, and provided less of an opportunity for the cultivation of connections useful for entrance and progression in the foreign service.

The exam demonstrates a crucial difference between the two systems. The fact that entering the British Foreign Office in the early years of the twentieth century actually relied on passing an exam that was what it purported to be, rather than the Russian reality of a test of social repartee, suggests that the Foreign Office had moved on from judging its potential recruits purely on the basis of social ability, acknowledging that diplomacy had changed such that diplomats needed a 'high degree of professional competence and dedication', while the MID still lagged behind.[71]

Dinner and Dancing – The Social Side of Diplomacy

That Russian diplomacy in the early twentieth century was the preserve of high society is well demonstrated by the nature of its social functions and events. As we shall see, autobiographical accounts by Tsarist diplomats, and the souvenirs they kept, attest to the importance of such events in their lives and in the culture of diplomacy. Social diplomatic functions are perhaps the most visible form of the social network in which diplomats are engaged, and one of the more obvious instances of the ostentation involved in diplomatic service. Display, etiquette and expenditure are all important to the analysis of such occasions and their influence on diplomatic culture.[72]

---

[71] Abrikossov, *Revelations,* p. 85; Hughes, *Inside the Enigma,* p. 17.
[72] Bourdieu, *Distinction,* pp. 1-2, 6, 280; Barthes, *Mythologies,* pp. 17-18; Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: an Economic Study of Institutions* (London, 1924), ch. 4.

Diplomatic functions fall into different categories, and have different aims. Concerts, exhibitions, seminars and the like are a means of promoting one's home nation by displaying economic and cultural accomplishments to foreigners. While not exclusively employed by diplomatic circles, this type of event must be seen as one which involves a display to others. Other forms of diplomatic functions such as balls, dinners, receptions, and lunches are quite different. Here, the participants are indulging in ostentatious displays of wealth, and demonstrating their command of social etiquette. Such functions help to cultivate contacts, both political and personal, and hence are highly important in diplomacy.

Tsarist diplomats held, and were invited to, a great number of diplomatic functions. Lev Urusov's papers yield a large amount of information on diplomatic functions held during his tenure as Ambassador to Paris.[73] The files contain numerous concert programmes, both of concerts given by the Russian Embassy and of those he attended elsewhere, as well as dinner invitations, menus and table plans.[74] The preservation of these items suggests that Urusov attached great importance to them as souvenirs of his time serving as an ambassador of the Tsarist state. Furthermore, the extent to which some of the table plans appear to have been agonized over emphasizes the need to conform to an accepted and implied set of rules. It was important not only that these events took place, but that they went entirely to plan. Table plans were (and remain) very codified for diplomatic functions, but the manuals detailing these conventions were only published after the

[73] Prince Lev Urusov (1877-1933) came from a family with a long tradition of diplomatic and state service. His own career began at the Vatican, and subsequently he served in Bucharest (1880-1886), Brussels (1886-1898), Paris (1898-1903), Rome (1903-1904), and Vienna (1904-1910). Leaving Russia's diplomatic service he remained involved in Russian affairs, working with the International Red Cross during the First World War and promoting Russia abroad as a member of the Russian and then International Olympic Committee (IOC) from 1915 until his death in 1933. In 1923 he made an attempt to include Russia in the Olympic Games, trying to convince the IOC members to allow two independent teams (the Soviet Union and Russian émigrés) to take part in the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris. http://www.moscow2001.olympic.ru/rom/source/kuberten/kuberten2.html on 31st December 2005.

[74] Banquets folder, Urusov Papers, BAR.

First World War.[75] It appears that Tsarist diplomats worked not to a manual, but to an internalized social and professional code when planning events and organizing seating arrangements. While part of this social code for the majority of Tsarist diplomats was implicit in their accustomed ways of socializing as members of the nobility, the protocol relating specifically to diplomacy needed to be learnt. From this it can be inferred that Tsarist diplomats, as a result of their backgrounds, through their education and their time in the MID, internalized diplomacy's traditions and actively maintained them, showing us that diplomatic culture was something that could be learned.

Patterns of Service – Home vs. Abroad

There was a distinct difference between serving in overseas missions and serving in the Ministry in St. Petersburg. Case studies allow us to look at these differences and the opinions of those who worked in the various positions. Even confining our attention to the heads of the MID, we find a great deal of variation: Lamsdorf only ever served in the central ministry, while Izvolsky and Sazonov both served abroad before and after their appointments as Foreign Minister.

Izvolsky was highly distrustful of bureaucrats in the central ministry, which is attributable to his thirty years serving abroad which had rendered him suspicious of the MID's central administration. Even contemporaries such as Savinsky (Director of the Chancellery) spotted his antagonism.[76] Izvolsky's attacks on Lamsdorf appear to have originated in part from the fact that the latter served only in St. Petersburg. There was no mechanism for the regular exchange of staff between home and abroad, meaning that careers in the MID could be spent entirely within the ministry or entirely abroad, and as a result diplomats could end up with little

[75] Ernest Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice* (New York, 1922); John Wood and Jan Serres, *Diplomatic Ceremonial and Protocol* (New Haven, 1970), pp. 151-161; D. S. Nikiforov and A. F. Borunkov, *Diplomaticheskii protokol V SSSR: printsipy, normy, praktika* (Moscow, 1985).
[76] Alexander Savinsky, *Recollections of a Russian Diplomat* (London, 1927), p. 136.

understanding of the nature of the half of the foreign service of which they had no direct experience.[77]

The experience of serving abroad clearly had an effect on diplomats that led to this lack of understanding in the central bureaucracy. As an outsider to traditional diplomacy, Boris Bakhmeteff's observations of senior Tsarist diplomats in Paris are particularly interesting.[78] He claimed that these men were not like the Tsarist bureaucrats he had expected to meet. They were, in his opinion, extremely liberal and enlightened in their attitude, which he attributed to their contact with western civilization while living abroad.[79]

The impact of living abroad on diplomats is a central aspect of diplomacy in general, and visible throughout Russian diplomacy, in the case of the Tsarist diplomatic corps and right through to their Soviet successors. The experience of serving in overseas missions shaped individuals and how they functioned as diplomats as they came into contact with other cultures and other diplomatic corps.

What stands out in all of the references to the acquisition of diplomatic manners is that this is seen as something distinctly western, specifically European. The deliberate honing of these types of manners and behaviour demonstrates the concerted Russian outlook on the west as being more 'refined' than the east. There is doubtless an undertone of what Edward Said terms 'orientalism', a viewpoint held by most Russian officials, despite certain Tsarist diplomats who bore some sentimental attachment to the Middle and Far East, although there was an element of

---

[77] George Bolsover, "Izvol'sky and Reform of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs," *Slavonic and East European Review* 63, 1 (1985), pp. 21-40
22.

[78] Boris Aleksandrovich Bakhmeteff (1880-1951). Bakhmeteff was head of the Industrial Mission in the US, involved in procuring arms for Russia's war effort. In 1917, following the resignation of the Russian Ambassador to the US, he was appointed as Ambassador to the US of the Provisional Government. Following the October Revolution of 1917 he became the Russian Ambassador to the United States and was a member of the Council of Ambassadors. He resigned his post in 1922 although he was to remain in contact with Tsarist diplomats for the remainder of his life.

[79] Bakhmeteff, *Oral History*, p.414.

belief that they were performing a civilizing role.[80] An east/west split in the Russian worldview makes itself known in inter-state relations in the period. With the major world players being the western imperial powers, the focus of the diplomatic circle was, quite logically, in the west. Western diplomatic postings were, on the whole, more prestigious for Russian diplomats than those in the east, and ambassadorial postings in Europe accordingly enjoyed a greater level of seniority than their eastern equivalents.[81]

It is also interesting to ask, by looking at individual careers, how highly diplomats were specialized in one direction or another, and whether they moved between east and west. While we know that Lamsdorf served entirely within the MID and not at all in overseas missions, it is notable that Izvolsky served his long career abroad in both spheres, having been in the Vatican, Copenhagen and Tokyo.[82] Certainly the Council of Ambassadors was largely composed of diplomats of high status from the western missions.[83] On the whole it seems that western appointments were more prestigious, affording as they did greater access to European high society. This might also have been influenced by the fact that in the east, only two posts – Tokyo and Tehran – were seen as prestigious appointments, as opposed to the numerous desirable locations in Europe. What becomes apparent is that, for the diplomats of the Tsarist MID, prestigious posts were those which involved being accredited to an imperial power, and which involved a higher level of responsibility, as a result of acute Russian interest in particular areas. A sense of common

---

[80] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978); Kalmykov, *Memoirs*; Konstantin Taube, *Moi vospominaniia o sobytiakh v Persii, 1914-1917,* Taube Papers, BAR; Abrikossov, *Revelations*; Lieven, *Empire*, p. 217.

[81] Anatoli Nekliudov, *Diplomatic Reminiscences Before and During the World War, 1911-1917* (London, 1920), p. 493.

[82] *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (Moscow, 1984-86), p. 132; Edward Crowley, *The Soviet Diplomatic Corps, 1917-1967* (Metuchen, N.J., 1970).

[83] M.M. Kononova, "Deiatel'nost' diplomatov Tsarskogo i Vremennogo pravitel'stv v 1917-1938 godakh", *Voprosy istorii* no.3 (2002), pp. 105-18. The Council of Ambassadors is discussed in detail in chapters 3 and 4.

experience, and hence mutual understanding, seems to have developed between officials who viewed themselves as having had similarly prestigious assignments.[84]

What arises from the differences in service at home and abroad, particularly given that it was uncommon for individuals to have experience of both, is that within the MID, multiple habiti were being acquired that showed different outlooks on diplomacy, possibly as a result of the existence of more than one diplomatic field.[85] Individuals who served abroad acquired a diplomatic habitus that was relevant to the diplomatic field in their specific function, that is to say engagement in foreign diplomatic circles. This lends support to the sense of common experience and outlook that diplomats who had occupied similar positions developed. Those who served exclusively in St. Petersburg demonstrated a lack of understanding of overseas service, thereby implying that they did not possess the habitus of overseas diplomats, but another.[86] These habiti may not have functioned within the same diplomatic field – possibly it was the case that there was one that related to overseas service and one for domestic – but they may have overlapped in some respects as certain practices were common to both areas of diplomatic affairs. Part of the steps taken by Izvolsky to address the MID's inefficiency though, was an attempt to unify these multiple habiti and fields in order to create a ministry that could more effectively deal with the problems of representing Russia in the twentieth century.

Moves to Modernize – Attempts to reform

Izvolsky set himself the task of reforming the MID, attempting to modernize it with the intention of making it better-suited to the tasks of diplomacy in the twentieth

---

[84] Tsarist diplomat papers that demonstrate this common experience include Botkin Papers, BAR; Urusov Papers, BAR; Girs Papers, BAR; Girs Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University (hereafter HIA).

[85] This may go some way to explaining why, in the early years of the twentieth century, the British drew a distinction between the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service.

[86] Savinsky, *Recollections,* p. 136.

century. In analyzing these reforms, the institution's prevalent culture before and after the proposed reforms becomes apparent. One can gain an understanding of why some saw the MID as such an inefficient agency, and why it needed to be reformed.

One of the MID's major weaknesses was that appointments were based on social status and influence, mostly in court circles. Aptitude for the task of diplomacy, measured in terms of intellectual capacity, knowledge and experience of foreign affairs, was of lesser consideration.[87] Yet the means by which personnel entered and advanced in the late Tsarist foreign service were not the only problems facing Izvolsky in his drive for reform. The institution was structured in such a convoluted way that it was sometimes unclear which department should handle a given issue.[88] A 1906 statute had set out that the MID should be composed of the Minister, Deputy Minister, Deputy Council, the Chancellery (responsible for western affairs), and three departments, for Asiatic Affairs, Internal Relations and staffing.[89] This, however, did nothing to clarify departmental responsibility. Political matters were supposed to come under the Chancellery, but if they concerned the east then they were passed to the Asiatic Department.[90] Thus the questions of which members of the MID were responsible for certain issues became greatly confused, matters were left unattended, and there was overall a distinct lack of control. It should, however, be noted that this was caused not only by organizational problems, but also by staff simply not ensuring the timely resolution of matters, as a result of their own disinterest or lack of ability. While the MID doubtless suffered as a result of its poorly defined structure, it would be incorrect to interpret this as the sole cause of its inefficiency.

The problems the MID faced in the implementation of foreign policy in fact went beyond both its departmental organization and its lackadaisical staff; they also

---

[87] Bolsover, "Izvol'sky and Reform," p. 21.
[88] Ibid., p. 22.
[89] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution*, p.131.
[90] Bolsover, "Izvol'sky and Reform," p. 22.

stemmed from the nature of the relationship between the Foreign Minister and the Tsar. The traditions of the autocratic regime held that the Tsar was the sole originator of policy and that the MID, like other ministries, existed only to carry out instructions passed down from above.[91] As in other ministries, policy was created *ad hoc* and the Foreign Minister's role in this process was ill defined.[92] This ambiguity was reflected in the way that Foreign Ministers at the turn of the century conceived their roles. Mikhail Muravyev, Foreign Minister 1897-1900, saw his position as little more than the implementation of the Tsar's will, and, according to his successor Lamsdorf, considered himself 'more a man to carry out his sovereign's wishes than as a counsellor responsible for his own decisions'.[93]

The 1905 Revolution gave government ministers, including the Foreign Minister, more scope to formulate policy, but constraints remained.[94] The Foreign Minister was obliged to justify the ministry's budget to the Duma, as well as to conform to their legislative conditions.[95] Izvolsky's appointment to the post brought a fresh approach to the conduct of foreign policy formulation, although this lies as much in changes to the nature of the Russian political arena as it does in the new Foreign Minister. Certainly, the creation of the Duma provided a forum for the Foreign Minister to discuss reform and to answer questions on the conduct of Russian foreign policy, but he was by no means afforded free rein to do so. The Foreign Minister still required the Tsar's permission to make statements on foreign policy to the Duma, and this does not seem to have been particularly forthcoming – Izvolsky was granted permission to address the Duma on only three occasions in 1908. Of these only one was a matter of policy, regarding the transformation of the

---

[91] Basily, *Memoirs*, pp.19-20; Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia and the Russians* (London, 2001), p. 372.
[92] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p.125; Lieven, *Empire,* p. 242.
[93] Izvolsky, *Memoirs*, p.77; Basily, *Memoirs,* pp.19-20. Count Mikhail Nikolayevich Muravyev (1845-1900) began his diplomatic career in 1864 when he entered the Chancellery. From there he went on to hold a series of overseas postings beginning in Stuttgart, before holding posts in Berlin, then Stockholm, and Berlin again. In 1877 he was appointed second secretary at The Hague and became involved in the International Red Cross during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. After the war he was appointed First Secretary in Paris, Chancellor of the Embassy in Berlin, and then Minister in Copenhagen. In 1897 he was appointed as Foreign Minister.
[94] Lieven, *Russia and the Origins of the First World War, pp. 50-59.*
[95] Bolsover, "Izvol'sky and Reform," pp.25, 39.

Tokyo mission into an embassy, while the other two were over financial estimates for the coming years.[96] Thus, while the creation of the Duma following the 1905 Revolution appears to have given the Foreign Minister greater constitutional freedom, he in fact remained subject to the Tsar's whims in the conduct of Russia's foreign policy. The Tsar still saw himself as the supreme ruler of Russia, and the dominance of aristocrats and courtiers in the MID appears to have upheld this order.

Izvolsky may have believed his role to be that of a formulator of foreign policy, rather than merely an executor, but as a result of his detachment from the MID's central bureaucracy while abroad, it seems he misjudged the position of Foreign Minister. His memoirs show that he thought of himself as a professional diplomat rather than the courtier his predecessors had been, and as such can be seen as part of a new political order, outside traditional social categories. Izvolsky was, however, in the minority in his conception of the role, for the 'old guard' of aristocratic diplomats remained in Russia's foreign service, perpetuating the culture of subservience to the Tsar based upon a system of social hierarchy.

The commission established in 1907 under K. A. Gubastov, Izvolsky's deputy, to investigate and suggest reforms necessary for the MID presents a very clear picture of the hindrances that beset the ministry. There remained a faction of the MID's 'old guard' of which the institution never seemed to be able to rid itself. Yuri Solovyev states that senior officials were opposed to the idea of reform, largely because they feared that Izvolsky, who was known to be suspicious of those who served in the central administration, would want to replace them.[97] The late Tsarist MID shows itself to have been greatly divided, both in terms of the infighting and intrigue in the corridors of the ministry itself, but also in the way in which the

---

[96] Ibid., p. 32.

[97] Solovyev, *Vospominaniia* pp.177-78; Savinsky, *Recollections,* p.136. Yuri Yakovlevich Solovyev (1875-1934) Joined the MID in 1893, becoming Secretary of the mission to China until 1895 and then First Secretary of the mission in Greece between 1898 and 1904. From then he was First Secretary in Romania (1904-8) and then in Stuttgart (1909-1911) before taking up the post of Counsellor in the embassy in Spain, which he held until 1917. In 1918 he joined the Narkomindel, offering his services to the mission in Bern, and then continuing to work in the Central Ministry until 1922.

central bureaucracy related to the wider diplomatic corps. It is clear that the MID remained dogged by the inertia of those who were well-established and well-connected, and hence well placed to act as a brake on reforms. Izvolsky proposed improving the MID's efficiency by streamlining its structure – reducing the number of departments – and by clearly assigning responsibility for given tasks to specific individuals. While he did not achieve the full scope of his programme, his reforms did change the shape of the MID, with a partial reorganization.

The table (table 2.3) below shows the structure of the MID when Izvolsky became Foreign Minister, representing the inefficient system he felt compelled to reform. He was unable to begin on the reform process until 1907, as agreements with Japan and Britain occupied his early months in office. Izvolsky was, judging from statements made to the Duma in 1908, aiming to concentrate first on reorganization of the central bureaucracy of the MID, leaving the overseas missions largely untouched until that had been achieved. Beyond this, reform of the diplomatic establishment abroad would involve an interchange of personnel between posts in St. Petersburg and posts abroad, similar to the staffing model used by the British Foreign Office.[98] Izvolsky was aware that this second level of reform would take many years, in fact a whole generation, and so his reforms must be understood in the light of an attempt to set in motion change within the MID, rather than an abrupt reorganization strategy.[99]

In the spring of 1907 Izvolsky began to implement reforms, although the Gubastov commission's report was not approved by the Duma until 1910, removing the head of the First Department by appointing him envoy to Bulgaria, and making clear the division of sub-departments to handle Near Eastern, Far Eastern and Central Asian affairs reporting directly to the Foreign Minister and his deputy.[100] He also expanded the MID press department's operations beyond producing a digest

---

[98] Bolsover, "Izvol'sky and Reform," p. 24.
[99] *Gosudarstvennaya Duma, Tretiy soyuz. Stenograficheskii otchoty 1908 g. Sessiya pervaya,* chast 2 (St. Petersburg, 1908), pp. 112-14, 1763-4.
[100] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p. 129.

of news for the Tsar, creating an office that by early 1910 was covering more than one hundred and fifty Russian and foreign newspapers and providing a comprehensive overview on a daily basis, as well as acting in a public relations capacity for the MID.[101]

The main thrust of Izvolsky's reforms was to define the responsibilities of departments such that there was a clear sense of responsibility for given matters and clearer lines of communication. The effect on the MID's structure brought about by these reforms can be seen in the table (table 2.4) below. As is clear, none of the major departments were fundamentally changed, but minor and technical departments were combined. The principal change was the clearer definitions of the Chancellery's sub-departments, leaving less scope for uncertainty as to which department was responsible for what. At this stage, as Izvolsky had envisaged, the foreign missions remained untouched by his reforms, but plans to reform them were in preparation and were ready to submit to the Duma by the summer of 1914 with the intention that they should be implemented by the end of that year.

The outbreak of and Russian involvement in the First World War caused the reform programme to be abandoned, and in response to the new pressures the MID became even more complex in its structural organization, as shown in the third table (table 2.5). From this, we can see that wartime placed greatly increased demands on diplomacy in terms of levels and responsibility of personnel.

Izvolsky saw a pressing need to reform the MID and attempted to do so. Despite the possibilities that arose following the changes wrought by the 1905 Revolution, resistance from within the MID made reforms difficult to implement. Although some reforms were achieved, the outbreak of war brought the process to a halt. The MID was reorganized along different lines more suited to the demands of the war, and became once more a highly complicated institution.

---

[101] Bolsover, "Izvol'sky and Reform," pp. 25-6; Izvolsky, *Au service de la Russie*, vol. 1, pp. 365-7; Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii (hereafter AVPRI), f. DLS I KhD "Reorginisatsiia MID", d. 192, l. 31-3; Solovyev, *Vospominaniia,* pp. 177-8.

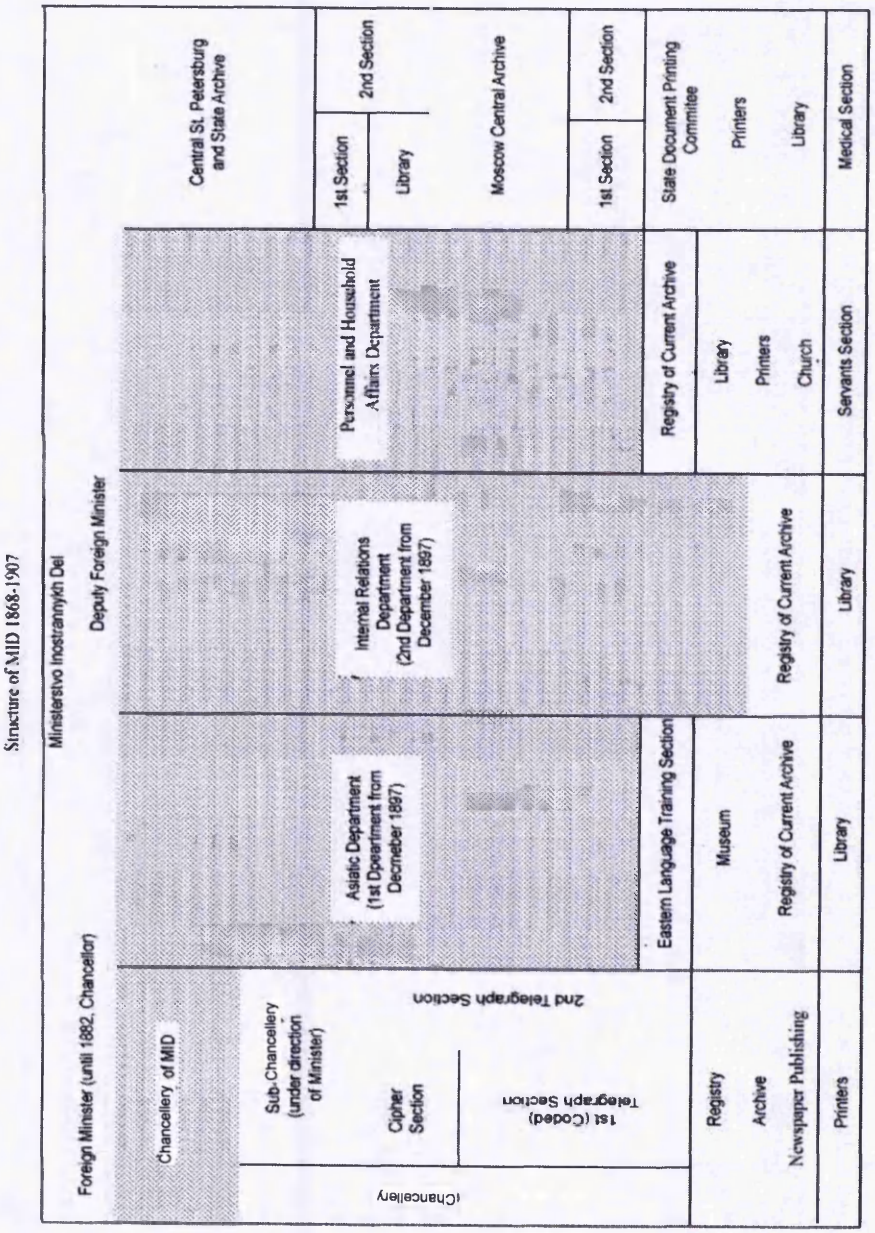


Table 2.3 Structure of the MID 1868-1907[102]

[102] Tables translated from *Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del Rossii v 1856-1917 gg.*, at http://www.ln.mid.ru on 30th December 2005.

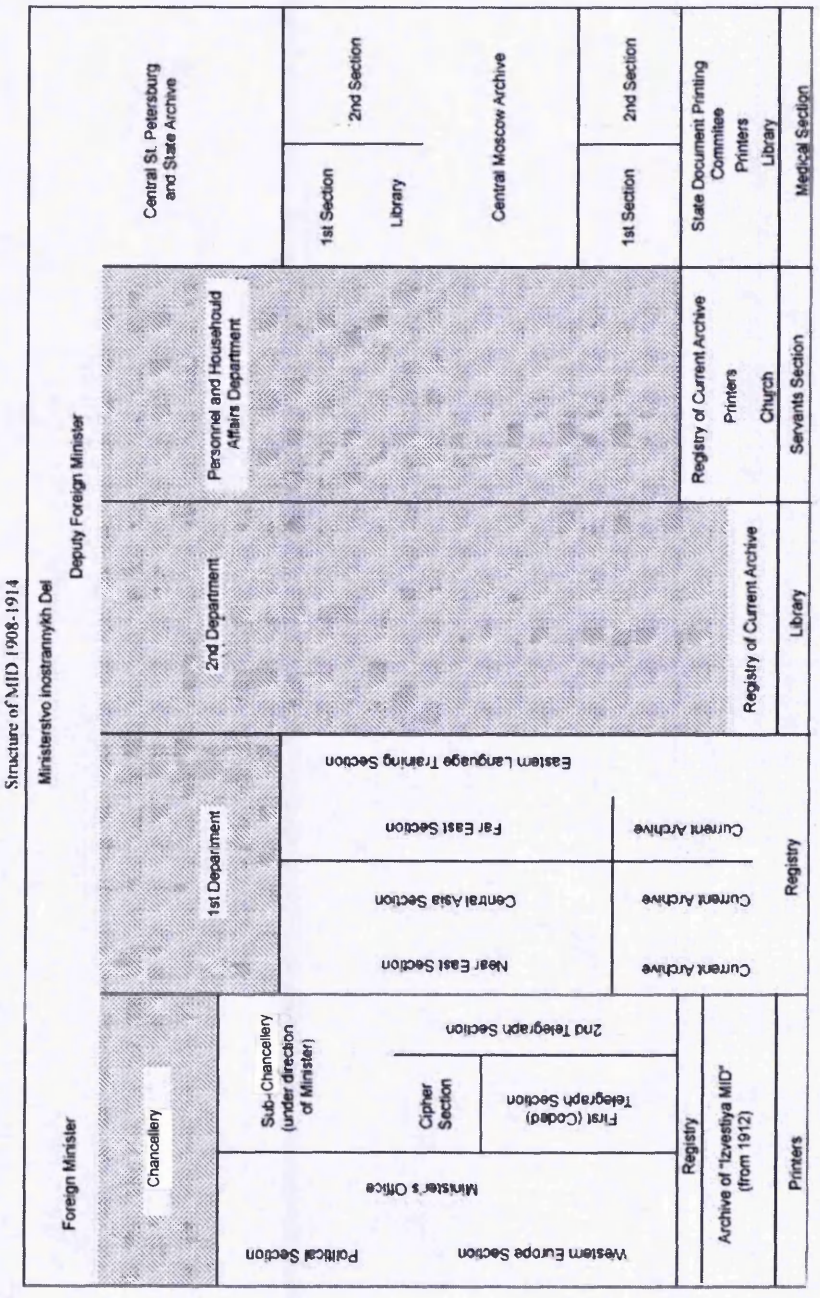


Table 2.4 Structure of the MID 1908-1914

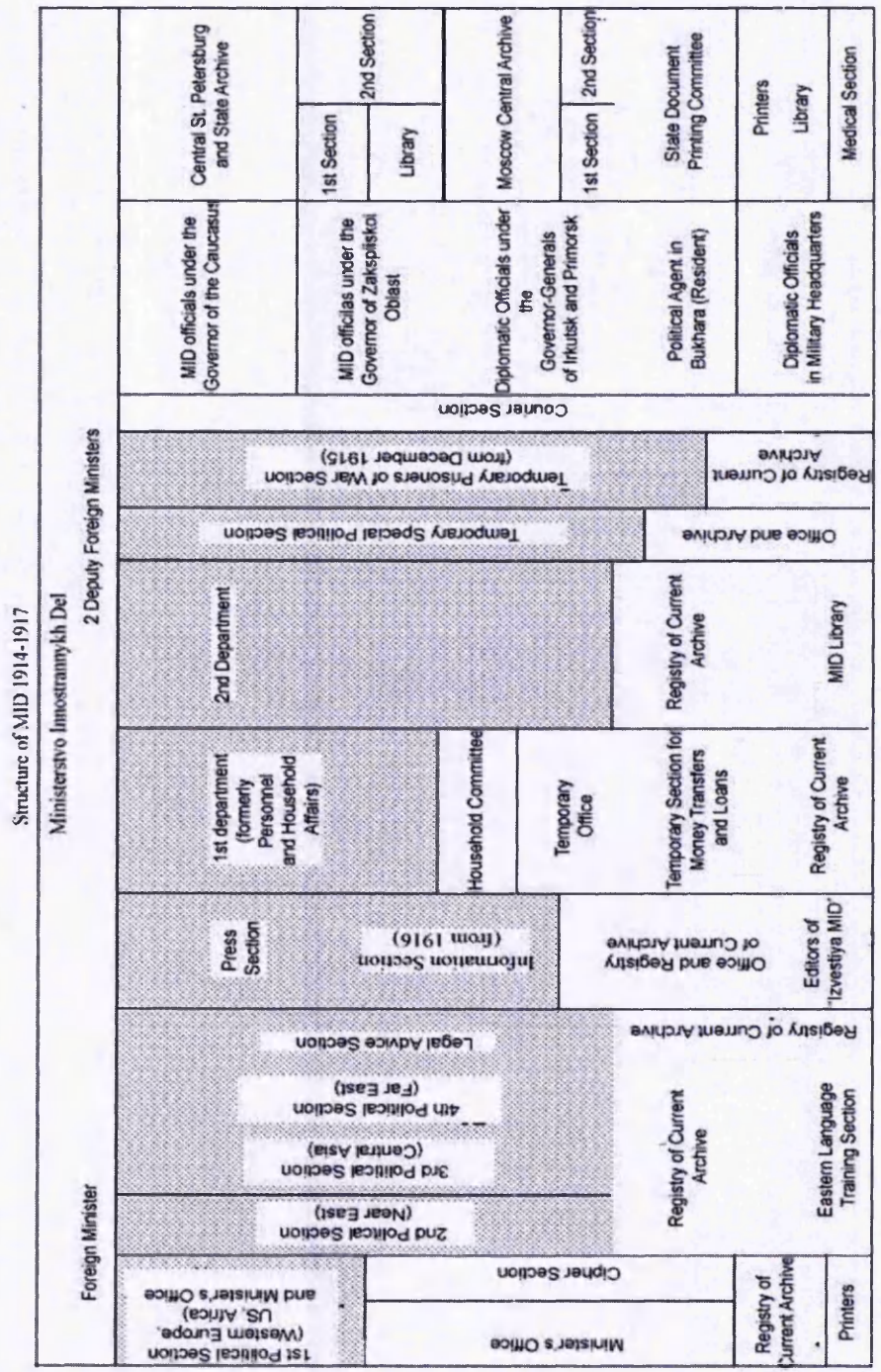


Table 2.5 Structure of the MID 1914-1917

A New Kind of War Demands a New Kind of Diplomacy

If diplomacy is defined as international relations conducted by peaceful negotiation, then war can be seen as its failure. The First World War was certainly regarded by contemporaries as the failing of 'old diplomacy'.[103] It is important to examine what precisely these failings were, and how the war affected Russian diplomacy. It is perfectly reasonable to assume that entering into war greatly limits the potential to reform a bureaucracy, as the priority is to successfully prosecute the war. Further, there are the complicated issues of diplomats posted to enemy territory, and relations with enemy diplomats posted to friendly states.[104]

In addition to the diplomat's changing status in light of the outbreak of hostilities, his role also began to change. As the pressures of war increased, politicians took to meeting each other to discuss tactical and financial matters directly; diplomats found themselves no longer the main conduit for inter-governmental communication, and had to adapt to the intrusion of other ministries onto what they saw as their turf.[105] Count A. K. Benckendorf in London and Yuri Bakhmeteff in Washington worked to cultivate sympathy for Russia in the war, and to enlist support from allied nations through their diplomats in Washington.[106] Bakhmeteff clearly felt a need to describe Russia's plight in the war to the American public and gain support from the US government. Russian diplomats in the US involved themselves with propaganda in the press and through exhibitions, and

---

[103] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p. 3.
[104] Letter from Yuri (Georgii) Bakhmeteff to Sazonov, 15th August 1914, AVPRI, f. 133, op. 470 (fond Kantseliaria MID),1914g., d. 49, l. 1-4.
[105] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p. 178.
[106] Dispatch from Yuri Bakhmeteff to Stürmer , 18th July 1916 AVPRI f. 133, op. 470, d. 54 1916g l. 120-123; Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p. 181.

sought money and equipment to help with Russia's war aims.[107] Included in these efforts was a new department in the embassy to represent the Military Supply Committee and secure arms for Russia. The individual who headed the department in Washington, Boris Bakhmeteff (no relation to Yuri Bakhmeteff), was not a diplomat. Neither were the majority of the individuals who staffed similar commissions in embassies elsewhere.[108] While there was no direct challenge to diplomats' authority, they were less involved than they had been in the functions of international relations, and their roles had changed. Benckendorf struggled with the change; he had no interest in the minutiae of procurement, being more concerned with the traditional elements of diplomacy regarding Allies' war aims and the position of neutral states.[109] It would seem that, at least in part, Benckendorf was dealing with what he understood and was comfortable with as a diplomat, the finer details of technical and financial questions being beyond his competence, and indeed beyond that of most diplomats.[110]

In the MID the situation was much the same. Sazonov and his officials in Petrograd were not involved in the bulk of exchanges between Russia and her allies with regards to supplies and tactical matters. All of this demonstrates diplomacy's declining role in interstate relations. This may have been based on the widely-held belief that 'old diplomacy' had failed and that diplomats had proved themselves to be less than ideal agents in international relations. The war clearly raised issues for Russian diplomats about which they lacked knowledge and in which they had little interest, and which were better dealt with by the agencies that had the relevant specialists. The First World War brought sweeping changes to diplomacy and to how individual diplomats functioned. No longer were they at the centre, or in control, of international negotiations.

---

[107] Note of the First Secretary of the Russian Embassy in Washington, Loris-Miliukov, 17th March 1930, AVPRI, f. 134, op. 473 (Arkhiv "voiny"), d. 170, l. 5-15.
[108] Bakhmeteff, *Oral History*; Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution*, p. 180.
[109] Konstantin Nabokoff, *The Ordeal of a Diplomat* (London, 1921), p. 37.
[110] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* pp. 181-2.

That the First World War wrought changes in the organization of the MID is unsurprising, particularly when comparison is made to the effect of the war on other foreign ministries. The British Foreign Office adjusted to deal with the changed international situation. New staff entered the institution as departments grew and new ones were created. As in Russia, the influence of the Foreign Office on policy decisions declined sharply during the war, with much of the power over decisions passing to other ministries such as the War Office.[111] The experience of total war placed new demands on diplomatic institutions and removed some of their pre-war functions from them, but for Russia, the war was to result in revolution, again causing the MID to adjust.

The Effects of February – Diplomacy in Transition

Following the tumultuous events of 1917, Russian diplomacy entered a period of transition. It is important to understand the very different effects on the MID caused by the two separate revolutions: while the most dramatic changes were wrought by the later, October Revolution, the process of transition began in February. Diplomats serving abroad found themselves suddenly isolated. Telegrams were circulated making it clear that the imperial flag and portraits of the Tsar were to be taken down, and the word 'imperial' was to be removed from diplomatic passports.[112] Diplomats, confused and clinging to the trappings of the Tsarist state from which they drew the legitimacy for their positions, were reluctant to do so.[113]

---

[111] Ibid., pp. 183-6; George Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memories* (London, 1923), vol. 2 pp. 52-4; Francis Lindley papers, Leeds Russian Archive (hereafter LRA), MS. 1372/2, p. 28.

[112] Hardinge Papers, Cambridge University Library Manuscripts Division, vol. 32, p. 168; Solovyev, *Vospominaniia,* p. 287; Kononova, "Deiatel'nost' diplomatov", pp. 105-6.

[113] Maxim Litvinov called on the Russian Embassy at Chesham House, discovering that the portraits of the royal family were still on the wall. Ivy Litvinov, *Autobiography,* (manuscript), "Revolution, (and the birth of Misha)", p. 33, Litvinov Box, St. Antony's College Oxford. At the same time there was an iconoclastic movement with regards to Imperial symbols taking place in Russia; Orlando

The February Revolution demanded the international diplomatic community's attention and drew swift reactions. With the end of one regime and a new government to replace it, the traditions of diplomacy dictated the need to re-establish relations with the country in question. In the case of the United States, George Lansing (Secretary of State) instructed David Francis (US Ambassador in Petrograd) to visit Pavel Miliukov (the newly appointed Foreign Minister), and announce American recognition of the Provisional Government and a desire to continue diplomatic relations with Russia under the new government.[114] Miliukov was 'delighted' that the US had recognised the Provisional Government and that it had been the first to do so, shortly followed by Britain and France.[115]

Aside from the brief gap between the overthrow of the Tsar and the establishment of the Provisional Government, little appeared to have changed in the international diplomatic community. Indeed, as far as Miliukov was concerned, revolution at home should not lead to changes in Russia's relations with foreign powers.[116] This attitude seems to run counter to the other ways in which the Provisional Government reformed Russian politics.[117] Miliukov did not wish to risk upsetting established relationships with Russia's allies by drastically changing the Foreign Ministry or the style of Russian diplomacy.

Of great interest is why the MID officials, for the most part, were content to serve the Provisional Government, in direct contrast to the subsequent mass refusal and exodus when asked to serve the Bolsheviks following the October Revolution. It

---

Figes and Boris Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: the Language and Symbols of 1917* (London, 1999), p. 48.

[114] Miliukov held the post of Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government from February to May 1917; Telegram from the Secretary of State to Francis, 20th March 1917, no. 861.00/284, reproduced in United States Department of State (hereafter USDS), *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918. Russia.* Volume I, p. 12.

[115] Telegram from Francis to the Secretary of State, 22nd March 1917, no. 861.00/294, reproduced in ibid., p. 12; Telegram from Francis to the Secretary of State, 22nd March 1917, no. 861.00/296, reproduced in ibid., pp. 12-13.

[116] Zbynek Zeman, *A Diplomatic History of the First World War* (London, 1971), p. 209.

[117] Prince Lvov, Prime Minister of the Provisional Government between February and May 1917, launched a series of political reforms regarding civil liberties, an overhaul of the legal system, creating local organs of self-government and preparing for the election of a constituent assembly.

would seem that Tsarist diplomats felt more loyalty to the system and to Russia than they did to the Tsar himself. They were asked to remain at their posts by Miliukov, who saw no great need to change the diplomatic establishment, or policy, stating that he 'valued the existing machine from the point of view of technique and tradition'. Notwithstanding their commitment to the service, there was a degree of uncertainty at what to do when news reached the embassies about the Revolution. With Russia involved in a war, there also appears to have been a commitment to pursuing her war aims, and diplomats saw it as their duty to continue to serve until the conclusion of the war.[118]

There is another dimension to this, which Solovyev (Secretary of the Embassy in Madrid in 1917, and one of the few Tsarist officials to serve in the Narkomindel) mentions – that of personal security.[119] While some served out of patriotism, Tsarist diplomats had an interest in remaining in Russia's diplomatic service owing to the fact that they defined themselves in relation to it, and that given the recognition of the Provisional Government by foreign states, they still expected to be given normal diplomatic privileges and protection. In short, it was safer for Tsarist diplomats to remain in the service of Russia under the Provisional Government, than to venture outside the world they knew. Aside from the adjustments required to serve a new government, they generally expected everything to proceed as it had previously.

Although the February Revolution did not have such traumatic effects as the October Revolution, there were significant changes in staff in the MID. In addition to the change in Foreign Minister, there were a number of changes in ambassadorial posts, despite the fact that only Yuri Bakhmeteff actually refused to continue his service (see below). In London, Benckendorf had died of pneumonia in February,

[118] Solovyev, *Vospominaniia*, pp. 286-7; Miliukov, *Political Memoirs*, p. 427.
[119] Ibid., p. 287.

and Konstantin Nabokoff took charge of the embassy, happy to take his orders from the Provisional Government.[120]

Upon assuming his post, Nabokoff encountered problems at the London embassy, created by the change of regime in Russia, leading him to declare that the embassy had taken on an entirely different character.[121] Émigrés with whom the embassy had avoided contact were now being repatriated, and embassy staff became heavily involved in the process. Maxim Litvinov (at the time a Bolshevik exile based in London) speculated that some of the younger officials were sympathetic to the revolution and the plight of the émigrés.[122] The repatriation effort was one of Nabokoff's major concerns: despite his complaints to the MID that the repatriation of Bolshevik émigrés was dangerous to the Provisional Government, he received no response, and indeed he never received any private letters from Miliukov.[123] This left Nabokoff and the rest of the embassy staff feeling isolated, and uncertain how to deal with complex issues as they arose. Even when communications between the missions and the MID's central bureaucracy improved under Mikhail Tereschenko (Foreign Minister from May to September), the press continued to represent the situation in Russia as extreme, leaving staff unable to gauge the situation accurately.[124]

Recognition of the Provisional Government by the British had been speedy, but Nabokoff questioned the sincerity of the commitment. He was aware that British diplomats seemed sceptical about the changes in Petrograd, even believing that the

---

[120] Konstantin Nabokoff (1872-1927). Member of Russian delegation during peace negotiations with Japan 1905. He served as a diplomat in Belgium in 1907, the US in 1911, before being appointed Ambassador to Britain in 1913, where he served until 1919. On resigning his position in London Sazonov suggested he take up a post in Norway, which he refused.
[121] Nabokoff, *Ordeal,* p. 74.
[122] Ivy Litvinov, *Autobiography,* (manuscript), "Revolution (and the birth of Misha)", p. 33. Maxim Maximovich Litvinov, né Moshe Wallach (1876-1951). One of a small number of Jews in the Narkomindel, Litvinov had a prominent revolutionary career before the Revolution. He was involved in émigré affairs in London and was appointed Soviet representative to Britain in 1918. He was Ambassador to Estonia in 1920 and then Deputy Foreign Commissar 1921-1930, responsible for western affairs. In 1930 he was appointed as Foreign Commissar until 1939, when he was replaced by Vyacheslav Molotov. His diplomatic career ended as Ambassador to Washington, 1941-3.
[123] Nabokoff, *Ordeal*, p. 103; Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution*, p. 195.
[124] Ibid., pp. 113-4.

British suspected him of being pleased with the regime change.[125] Nabokoff found that as Russia's contribution to the war lessened, he was excluded from meetings in London. Despite outward professions of support for the Provisional Government, it is clear that Russian diplomats were in fact held at arm's length, lest radicalism take hold in Russia and the revolution be exported.

The plight of Provisional Government diplomats and the changes in ambassadors in European capitals were no less problematic elsewhere: several embassies saw major staff changes. In Washington, Boris Bakhmeteff stepped into the Ambassador position vacated by his namesake, Yuri Bakhmeteff, who had decided not to serve the Provisional Government. Vladimir Maklakov was appointed to Paris in place of Izvolsky, who was felt to have overly strong ties to the Tsarist regime.[126] In Madrid, the Ambassador changed twice under the Provisional Government: Kydashev returned to Russia, stepping down in favour of Polovsev, who was in turn replaced by Anatoli Nekliudov who had previously been the Tsarist Ambassador in Stockholm.[127] It would seem that the Provisional Government felt a need to replace, or remove from close proximity to Russia, those it saw as potentially loyal to the Tsarist regime, as opposed to the new order that had been established in Russia, in order to make the transition from one government to another as smooth as possible.[128]

While the majority of those who moved into various ambassadorial positions were already diplomats, this was not universally the case. Indeed, Boris Bakhmeteff, the new Ambassador to Washington and the first diplomat appointed by the Provisional Government, had up to that point been head of the Military

---

[125] Ibid., p. 82; Robert Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent: Being an Account of the Author's Early Life in ManyLands and of his Official Mission to Moscow in 1918* (London, 1932), p. 173.
[126] Nadia Tongour, "Diplomacy in exile: Russian Émigrés in Paris, 1918-1925," PhD Thesis, Stanford University, 1979, p. 13.
[127] Solovyev, *Vospominaniia,* pp. 287-8. Anatoli Vasilevich Nekliudov (1856-1934). He had been Ambassador in Sofia (1911-1914), then in Stockholm between the outbreak of the First World War and the February Revolution. He was then sent as Ambassador to Madrid, believing that Miliukov wanted to avoid a clash of opinion with him that could prove problematic for the MID.
[128] Nekliudov, *Diplomatic Reminiscences*, p. 493.

Supply Committee's US branch.[129] He is, therefore, quite distinctive and his case can be used to understand what the Provisional Government was hoping to instil in its diplomatic culture following the February Revolution.

A New Breed of Russian Diplomat? – A Case Study of Boris Bakhmeteff

Boris Bakhmeteff was something of an anomaly among Russia's representatives immediately following the revolution. Neither a member of the Tsarist diplomatic corps, nor a revolutionary diplomat, he fitted into the void left by his predecessor Yuri Bakhmeteff, who was the only Tsarist ambassador to refuse to serve the Provisional Government. (It is unclear precisely why.) Boris Bakhmeteff's case sheds light not only on how the Provisional Government responded diplomatically following the February Revolution, but also at a broader level it reveals how foreign powers perceived the Russian government in the period.

Bakhmeteff's political background and development were as striking as his diplomatic career. He had been a Menshevik initially, but by the time of the February Revolution was a member of the Kadets (Constitutional Democrats).[130] But, despite his involvement with these political groups early in the revolutionary period, Bakhmeteff is almost unique in the degree to which he avoided politics as his diplomatic career developed. It is interesting that he chose not to serve in the Narkomindel following the October Revolution, instead continuing to work for the Council of Ambassadors.[131] This could be attributable to his desire to avoid becoming a political pawn in the post-revolutionary world. In any event, Bakhmeteff never showed himself, either during his years of state service or later, to be overtly political.

---

[129] Ibid., p. 291.
[130] "Index of Names" in Edward Acton et al (eds.), *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution 1914-1921* (London, 1997), p. 744.
[131] The Council of Ambassadors is discussed in detail in chapters 3 and 4.

A rare example of a purely Provisional Government diplomat, in that he served neither the Tsarist MID before it nor the Soviet Narkomindel after it, Bakhmeteff's motivation seems to have been entirely to aid Russia and her war effort. Unlike Tsarist diplomats, he was not desperately trying to retain his previous identity, and unlike his Bolshevik successors, he was not engrossed in the politics of revolution; he was a civil servant in the purest sense. This attitude can help us understand why Tsarist diplomats continued to serve under the Provisional Government, but not under the Soviet Regime.

Bakhmeteff's service in the Military Supply Committee (whose chief plenipotentiary in the US he had been since 1915) had made him part of the Tsarist bureaucracy.[132] This seems to have inculcated in him a sense of duty to the system, similar to that of Tsarist diplomatic officials. Bakhmeteff's main reason for taking up the ambassadorial reins under the Provisional Government, but not under the Bolsheviks, was his commitment to Russia's success in the First World War; it can be inferred from this case that this same sense of civic duty drove other, Tsarist officials. Bakhmeteff, it seems, was keen to pursue Russian war aims as he had done before the revolution, bolstering US support for the Russian war effort, and for him, diplomatic service under the Provisional Government was a means of continuing to do this. As such, despite his liberal political stance, Bakhmeteff showed the same outlook towards diplomatic service as his Tsarist colleagues.

Bakhmeteff also represents an important shift in the MID's staffing practices, away from those of the Tsarist MID and more akin to those used by the Soviets in the 1920s. Like the Soviet diplomats who would follow him, he was selected primarily due to his command of English and his familiarity with the United States, and contacts there, as a result of having spent time there.[133] These (as opposed to the social contacts favoured by the Tsarist MID) were the sorts of criteria on which many of the first and second waves of officials recruited for the Narkomindel and its foreign missions were chosen. Bakhmeteff presented himself

[132] Bakhmeteff, *Oral History*, p. 156.
[133] Ibid., p. 156.

as the first Russian diplomat to be appointed solely on his aptitude for the task and not on the basis of social connections, or grooming for diplomatic service. This all demonstrates that the needs of diplomacy, with respect to the type of men who were its practitioners, had been changed by the First World War and the crisis, and ensuing loss of faith, in 'old diplomacy'. Bakhmeteff represented a new breed of diplomat, recruited for his intellectual and practical ability. The fact that Soviet diplomats during the 1920s were recruited largely for the same reasons, that is their aptitude, and that the professional diplomat was ascendant elsewhere in Europe, demonstrates that by this point diplomacy's requirements had changed.[134]

Even though he was an outsider, Bakhmeteff gained access to the inner circle of Tsarist diplomats and was to be accepted by foreign diplomats.[135] His service under the Provisional Government resulted in life-long friendships with his former Tsarist colleagues, with whom he would correspond frequently, as well as with American diplomats.[136] Bakhmeteff's capability and success as a diplomat engendered trust and a sense of a common goal for the circle of diplomats who made up the Council of Ambassadors, which brought them together as a close-knit group of individuals. There is every indication that by being appointed Ambassador, Bakhmeteff had achieved the necessary level of social capital to be allowed access to the diplomatic sphere, despite the fact that he did not originally come from the same elite world. He had not attended the schools that prepared one for service in the Tsarist bureaucracy, nor had he worked his way through the MID by means of intrigue or patronage. Bakhmeteff was thrust into the ranks of the diplomatic elite by necessity, and he found a home there.

---

[134] Kononova "Deiatel'nost' diplomatov," p. 105.

[135] Telegram from B. Bakhmeteff to MID 14th/27th June 1917, AVPRI f. 133, op. 470 1917g, d. 61, l. 233-4; telegram from B. Bakhmeteff to MID 17th/30th June 1917, AVPRI f. 134, op. 473, d. 170, l. 18.

[136] Oleg Budnitskii (ed), *Sovershenno lichno i doveritelno!: B. A. Bakhmeteff-V. A. Maklakov: perepiska (1919-1951) v 3 tomakh* (Moscow, 2001-3).

Conclusion

Pre-revolutionary Russian diplomacy was dominated by individuals from the nobility. While noble heritage was not always the only path to the top, aristocratic heritage and connections were routinely used to gain access to and advancement within the MID, and this system was actively supported by the senior officials. In the few cases of individuals who did not come from the aristocracy and who were successful in the MID (and wrote memoirs), education was important, especially in the case of individuals with specialities, such as eastern languages.

In the early years of the twentieth century, the various Foreign Ministers exhibited different styles of leadership – most notably in how they perceived their own role, and in the staffing policies they initiated born out of differing diplomatic habiti. Lamsdorf's commitment to bureaucratic diligence lent support to the *chin* system, which set out a clearly codified progression for individuals within the MID. His stance showed him clinging to the past and the traditions that had been prevalent in the late nineteenth century. He was of course a product of his class, and unable to completely turn his back on the world of social prestige, acknowledging its usefulness from time to time. On the whole, however, Lamsdorf led the organization with a strong commitment to the system rather than to the Tsar. In contrast, Izvolsky felt that bureaucratic diligence did not necessarily lead to efficiency, and he took a greater interest in performance as a marker for the promotion of individuals in the MID. His reforms must be seen as an attempt to rid the MID of superfluous officials with unclear duties, and aimed at streamlining the institution. He still attached a great deal of importance to prestige, but he clearly did not feel that it could be earned simply through rigid adherence to the bureaucratic system in place when he became Foreign Minister.

The First World War brought new pressures to the MID, and indeed to diplomacy at the international level, as it became apparent that the 'old diplomacy' was no longer appropriate. Diplomats failed to effectively adjust to their new roles

in the war, and were in many cases simply incapable of dealing with the technicalities of organizing economic and supply issues, requiring new agencies to be involved in which the MID and the diplomats had little involvement beyond coordinating the negotiations between Russia and other states. The war revealed an organization still attached to antiquated and inappropriate methods in diplomacy, among them recruitment and staffing policies. With these issues in mind, it is easy to see why diplomats were accused of incompetence, and how the First World War was seen as a product of their failure.

The penultimate challenge for the MID was the February Revolution of 1917, which brought Russian diplomacy into a period of transition. As has been seen, the February Revolution marked the beginning of the process of change, starting with the abandonment of the visible trappings of imperial service, and moving on to some significant staff turnovers. What the period of transition plainly shows is an institution committed to serving Russia, rather than the Tsar, and keen to pursue Russia's aims in the war. In the case of Boris Bakhmeteff, the first diplomat appointed under the Provisional Government, one can see a progression in the MID towards a professional diplomat better able to represent Russia and pursue her interests overseas than able to fit into comfortably the diplomatic society of the pre-war years. In this, one can see an attempt by the Provisional Government to abandon the 'old diplomacy' and appoint men better suited to the demands of diplomacy in the twentieth century.

Chapter 3

"In diplomacy such a sharp revolution as in internal affairs is of course impossible": The Soviet Takeover of Diplomacy[1]

Following the October Revolution of 1917, the new Soviet state found itself with a need to create a diplomatic service *ex nihilo* in order to negotiate with foreign powers. There had, prior to this, been no plan of action for a diplomatic service. The reasons behind this lay largely in revolutionary ideology. Trotsky's famous statement when he was appointed as Foreign Commissar that he would 'issue a few revolutionary proclamations to the people and then shut up shop' betrays the Bolsheviks' belief that they would not have to deal with the world via conventional diplomatic means.[2] They set about diplomacy in their own way, at times displaying a complete disregard for its norms, at others displaying some degree of acceptance of them.

Given that the Bolsheviks initially had no desire, and felt no need, to involve themselves in diplomacy, what happened to change their minds? The assumptions made by the Soviet state and the individuals who entered the diplomatic corps in the years following the revolution need to be analyzed in order to answer questions about how the Soviet diplomatic service gained acceptance outside of Russia and the extent to which they were obliged to compromise their ideals for pragmatic ends.

This chapter will examine the shift from the Tsarist and Provisional Government MID to the Soviet Narkomindel. It will look at the Soviet takeover of the central ministry and the overseas missions, asking how this was achieved, and how it shaped the behaviour of the individuals involved. It is important to look at the staffing and structure of the Narkomindel for the similarities and disparities it displays with the MID. The behaviour of Soviet diplomats is also of importance here, and attention will be paid to the use of propaganda as a tool of diplomacy,

---

[1] Pavel Miliukov, February 1917, quoted in Rex Wade, *Russia's Search for Peace* (1969), p.11.
[2] Leon Trotsky, *Moia zhizn': Opyt avtobiografii* (Berlin, 1930), vol. 2, p. 64.

owing to its dominance in Soviet diplomacy and the level of discussion that foreign powers engaged in with the Soviet state regarding its use.

It would, however, be foolish to look at the shift from the Tsarist MID to the Soviet Narkomindel without taking into account the actions and perceptions of the diplomats who had served Russia before the revolution. The Russian Empire's former diplomats presented strong resistance to the Soviet establishment of diplomatic relations by forming the Council of Ambassadors, and questions must be asked concerning the extent to which this resistance shaped the behaviour of Soviet diplomatic officials.

Resistance also came from foreign powers presented with the prospect of having to deal with a hitherto unknown type of state. Opinions of radical states and the lengths to which they might go in order to subvert diplomacy for their own ends clearly had an effect on the way with which the Narkomindel and it servants were dealt.

There is in all of this the issue of dual power, and of real and supposed power.[3] There are instances of foreign powers dealing with both Soviet and former Russian diplomats. With multiple diplomatic agencies attempting to claim authority – an unprecedented occurrence in diplomacy – one must ask questions as to how this shaped the actions of Soviet diplomats, former diplomats and foreign diplomats, as well as looking for its effect on diplomacy in its broader context.

There is also the issue of capital, both in terms of tangible assets and as social capital. Soviet diplomats needed to acquire both types in order to gain access to the diplomatic milieu. Soviet diplomats of course gained the symbolic capital of being diplomatic representatives. For the Soviets, however, ideological steps proclaiming that there was to be only one diplomatic rank – that of *polpred* (a

[3] I use the term 'dual power' with regards to tandem claims to authority from the Tsarist and Bolshevik Foreign Ministries. This differs from usage of the term to describe the period of dual power held the by Provisional Government and the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies between February and October 1917.

contraction of *polmochnyi predstavitel',* meaning plenipotentiary representative) – led to a depletion of that symbolic capital.[4]

Trotsky's Grand Design – The Bolsheviks Try Diplomacy

Trotsky's blunt statement about shutting up shop, and his assertion that the Soviets did 'not belong to the diplomatic school' – encompasses what the Bolsheviks expected their involvement in diplomacy would be following the revolution.[5] Indeed, the Bolsheviks appear to have believed that if they threw open the doors of secret diplomacy, it would simply wither away. They certainly did not entertain the thought that they might need to be heavily involved in it.[6]

The view that diplomacy was a bourgeois activity was perhaps the biggest psychological obstacle to Soviet diplomacy immediately after the revolution. The Bolsheviks saw little need for diplomacy, seeing it to be a trapping of the Tsarist regime that they wished to abandon. Indeed, the mere concept of diplomacy – states resorting to negotiating with one another – ran counter to the ideals of international socialism. One must, therefore, look at how this ideological standpoint shaped the development of the Narkomindel as the Soviet Union found itself needing to be involved in international diplomacy. In this light it is important to look at the steps taken by the Bolsheviks to create a type of diplomacy that they found acceptable for the Soviet Union to participate in.

In the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, the Bolsheviks found that there was a need for diplomacy, but in attempting to shape it for their own ends they

---

[4] The rejection of diplomatic titles as symbolic of the old order was a tactic adopted by the French revolutionaries who decided that diplomats should simply have the title of *citoyen* (citizen). Frédéric Masson, *Le Département Des Affaires Étrangères pendant la Révolution, 1787-1804* (Paris, 1877), p. 379 as quoted in Frey and Frey, "The Reign of the Charlatans Is Over," p. 733.

[5] Leon Trotsky, *Moia zhizn',* vol. 2, p. 64; Quoted in Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky: 1879-1921* (New York, 1954), p. 371.

[6] This attitude reflects that of the French revolutionaries who rejected diplomacy following 1789. Frey and Frey, "The Reign of the Charlatans Is Over," p. 707.

demonstrated a 'belief that diplomacy was revolutionary struggle by other means'.[7] The Narkomindel published the secret treaties of the Tsarist MID in a volume entitled *Sbornik sekretnikh dokumentov iz arkhiva byvshevo Ministerstva inostrannykh del* comprising 130 documents, in order that 'the Russian people and the people of the world should learn the documentation' of secret diplomatic plans. Furthermore, at least in theory, Bolshevik diplomacy was to be conducted in the open, with the public informed of diplomats' actions.[8]

It was not, however, simply the case that the Bolsheviks wished to make diplomacy open to scrutiny by the Soviet public. They saw diplomacy immediately after the Revolution of 1917 as a means of furthering the revolution. While there was the opportunity for propaganda presented by publishing details of 'the diplomacy of all imperialists', there was also the opportunity to exploit diplomacy itself for revolutionary ends.[9] Diplomatic privileges allowed the Bolsheviks to insert individuals as part of a diplomatic mission into countries from which they were able to disseminate revolutionary propaganda. The Bolsheviks sent many more diplomatic couriers than would normally be expected, few of whom made return journeys to Moscow, showing that individuals were being sent to carry out revolutionary work under the protection given by their status as diplomatic couriers.[10] In Switzerland, large amounts of publishing and translation took place, and large sums of money were on deposit, almost certainly to fund this and other revolutionary activity. While contrary to the conditions of diplomatic privilege, the Bolshevik regime's ideological foundations legitimated the subversion of diplomacy

---

[7] Armstrong "The Diplomacy of Revolutionary States," p.50; Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order*, p. 263.

[8] L. I. Trofimova, "Pervye shagi sovetskoi diplomatii (chast' 1)," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* 1971, no. 6. p. 40; Jane Degras (ed.), *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy* (Oxford University Press, 1953), vol. 1 p.21; Evgeny Chossudovsky, *Chicherin and the Evolution of Soviet Foreign Policy and Diplomacy* (Geneva, 1973) p. 23.

[9] Trotsky, *Sochineniia* (Moscow, n.d), vol. 3, part 2, p. 178, as quoted in Uldricks, *Diplomacy and Ideology*, p. 153.

[10] Alfred Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution: The Soviet Mission to Switzerland, 1918* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), p.79.

to this end. Soviet diplomats were ordered to engage in attempts to further the revolution in the west. [11]

The Bolsheviks attempted to force their brand of diplomacy on the world, rejecting diplomatic tradition and secrecy. They claimed that they did 'not require recognition from the professional representatives of capitalist diplomacy', and were going to play diplomacy by their own rules.[12]

Coupled with the use of diplomacy for revolutionary ends, we see here the first Soviet attempts to create a diplomatic culture distinct from a more traditional one. A new diplomatic habitus emerged as Soviet diplomats concerned themselves with how diplomacy could be subverted and used to achieve ideological aims, rather than used as a tool for interstate negotiations, diplomacy's traditional purpose. The Soviet Union had accepted that it would have to be involved in diplomacy, but its initial intentions were to engage in it in a 'Soviet fashion'.

Although the Bolsheviks had no formal diplomatic service before the Revolution, a few individuals had gained some experience in diplomatic matters. The political exile endured by many key figures in the party had resulted in a number of individuals becoming involved in émigré politics and negotiations with foreign powers with regard to their status. Litvinov fulfilled such a role in London, establishing a quasi-embassy for Russian émigrés and maintaining a liaison between the Bolsheviks and British socialists.[13] Chicherin was secretary, in 1912, of the Central Bureau of Émigré Organizations, which assisted émigré groups abroad. As secretary, he issued proof of identity to Russian Social-Democrats who found themselves abroad without papers.[14] Other ventures included the maintenance of a foreign bureau in Stockholm, which was used as a window to the west before the revolution.[15]

---

[11] Ibid., p. 97.
[12] Trotsky in Degras (ed.), *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy,* vol. 1, p. 11.
[13] Ivan Maisky, *Vospominaniia sovetskogo posla* (Moscow, 1964), vol. 1, pp. 250-251; Magerovsky, "The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs," p.14.
[14] L. Trofimova (ed.), *G. V. Chicherin: stati, rechi, materialy,* (Moscow, 1961), p.4.
[15] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, pp. 13-14.

From activity such as this, it seems that some Bolsheviks acquired a certain amount of experience in skills, procedures and techniques that prepared them for the operation of the Narkomindel.[16] Thus, the Bolsheviks did not start completely from scratch when it came to setting up a foreign service. Additionally, despite the professed ideas of the state with regard to diplomacy, individuals who served in the Narkomindel in its early days may have recognized that they would indeed have to be involved in diplomacy.

The very involvement in diplomacy meant that the Soviets became unwitting carriers of its discourse. Although they had conceded, shortly after the Revolution, that they would have to be involved in diplomacy they sought to establish a new diplomacy, but by the very act of rejecting and opposing the old they were affirming diplomacy's place in the world order. The Soviets' engagement in diplomacy, albeit in a non-traditional manner, was still an engagement and hence an affirmation of it as a political behaviour. That they were involved in it at all is crucial to understanding the effects of the diplomatic field on shaping Soviet diplomatic culture.

The Struggle for Property and Personnel – the Physical Takeover

Following the creation of the Narkomindel, the Bolsheviks requested that experienced MID employees remain in service under the new regime so that there might be experienced personnel, at least temporarily, in the Soviet diplomatic service and hence some continuity in dealing with foreign powers. A. M. Petriaev, Deputy Minister, expressed his staff's complete unwillingness to follow such a course of action. Trotsky issued an order on 10th November 1917 stating that all those who failed to report for work in the Narkomindel within three days would be dismissed, forfeiting pensions and other civil service benefits. Three days later Trotsky dismissed the bulk of central MID officials for refusing to obey his orders,

[16] Magerovsky, "The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs," p.16.

leaving only a few minor officials prepared to serve the Bolsheviks. These individuals were regarded with much suspicion, but were deemed nonetheless to be a necessary evil, as they were familiar with the functioning of a foreign ministry.[17] As in other areas of state management, hold-overs from the Tsarist regime raised problems with regards to political commitments for the Bolsheviks, but these were tempered by a need for technically qualified officials.[18] Here we see a striking example of the Soviets being forced to compromise their ideals for the sake of pragmatism in diplomacy.

A marked comparison can be drawn with the Nazi takeover of the Auswärtiges Amt in 1933. As in the Soviet case, diplomats were asked to continue in the service of Germany, but instead of walking out as they did in Petrograd, Weimar Germany's diplomats continued to serve under the new regime. In part this was because unlike other government departments, the Auswärtiges Amt was treated gently.[19] Like the Soviets, the Nazis recognized that it would be preferable for the sake of continuity, experience, and connections with foreign officials if diplomats remained at their posts regardless of the fact that they were not entirely trusted by the regime. As in the Soviet case this was a temporary measure until the Auswärtiges Amt became Nazified under Joachim von Ribbentrop.[20] Continuity in diplomatic staffing, from both the Nazi and Soviet points of view, was desirable even if diplomats' ideological commitments could not be counted on, demonstrating a sacrifice of ideology for the sake of effectively managing foreign affairs and engaging in the diplomatic field.

---

[17] Ivan Zalkind, "NKID v semnadtsatom godu", *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'* 1927, no. 10 p. 13, as quoted in Uldricks *Diplomacy and Revolution*, p.18; *Novaia zhizn'*, 9th November 1917, as quoted in ibid p.18; Trotsky, *Sochineniia,* vol. 3, part 2, p.110 as quoted in ibid., pp. 18-19; *Pravda,* 10th November 1917, as quoted in ibid., p.19; Uldricks, "The Soviet Diplomatic Corps in the Cičerin Era", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 23 (1975), p.215.

[18] Stephen Sternheimer in W. M. Pintner and D. K. Rowney, *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, 1979), p. 342.

[19] K. Doß, "The History of the German Foreign Office" in, Steiner (ed.), *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries*, p.241.

[20] David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939* (New York, 1980), p.212.

Firmly breaking with the past and with predecessors was a central aspect of the Soviet creation of government. As was the case for other agencies, the Foreign Ministry's offices were removed from the Tsarist capital – they were shifted from Petrograd to Moscow on 25th March 1918, initially occupying the upper floors of the Metropol Hotel.[21] Other attempts to break with the MID, and avoid the 'spiritual reproduction of a lineage' included the abandonment of ranks and titles, and the renaming of diplomats as *polpredy* – an important symbolic move on the part of the Narkomindel, as was the announcement of the decision to treat all foreign diplomats equally, regardless of rank.[22] However, difficulties in determining the exact position, and gaining the privileges, of a diplomat with such a title forced the Soviet Union to recognize, albeit tacitly, the old titles of the Tsarist regime, eventually making the distinction 'with the title of ambassador' in 1924.[23] As has been noted, diplomatic titles carry with them a level of symbolic capital. By abolishing these ranks, the Soviet state was attempting to render this symbolic capital worthless beyond the most basic of levels. At one level this may have been a strategy to aid the integration of Soviet diplomats into diplomatic society, rather than just an attack on diplomacy. For this to have been successful, however, the entire international diplomatic community would have had to adopt one single rank – this would have created a field of equals in the symbolic capital game. Ultimately, however reluctantly, the Soviets were obliged to concede that they were unable to change diplomacy in this way and that if they wished to participate in the diplomatic field then they would have to conform, at least to some extent, to the conventions of diplomatic titles.

Try as they might, the Narkomindel could not escape the fact that it was a foreign ministry and as such it was impossible to escape certain implied aspects of that status. At a central level, the Narkomindel, despite being able to gain control of the MID, found it difficult to escape the hereditary nature of taking over a

---

[21] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p. 32.
[22] Bourdieu, *Distinction,* pp. 76-7; Armstrong, "The Diplomacy of Revolutionary States", p.53.
[23] Craig and Gilbert, *The Diplomats*, pp. 242-3; Armstrong "The Diplomacy of Revolutionary States," p.53.

government agency that needed to engage with its foreign counterparts. The MID had occupied a space in the international order, and the Narkomindel had stepped into that space: from outside, at least, the institutions both appeared to be and represented much the same thing.

The case of attempting to take over missions abroad, beyond the direct reach of the Bolsheviks, was quite different. Trotsky's telegram sent to Russian embassies abroad on 17th November 1917 demanded an immediate answer on who was prepared to serve the Bolshevik regime. Those who were unwilling to serve the Bolsheviks were required to relinquish their posts and pass them to those next in rank. Trotsky added that any refusal would be seen as an action against the state.[24] In Tokyo, according to Abrikossov, this telegram was met with strong resistance. The Ambassador called together the embassy staff and said that all those who wished to serve the Bolsheviks should leave the embassy immediately as it could not house servitors of an unrecognized regime.[25] Abrikossov claims that this reaction was the same in all Russian embassies, legations and consulates throughout the world. With one exception, all Russian diplomats ignored Trotsky's peremptory demand and remained at their posts.[26]

It is clear that the Narkomindel chose certain battlegrounds where it believed it might achieve success in wresting the missions from the hands of the MID officials, or that it saw as strategically important for the spread of Soviet diplomacy and the world revolution. The first missions to be established, in 1917 and 1918, were in Berlin, Stockholm, London and Bern.[27] These would appear to have been chosen for two major reasons – that they would provide good positions from which to attempt to further the revolution in the west, and that they also had suitable

---

[24] Kononova, "Deiatel'nost' diplomatov," p.109; Telegram from Trotsky to Russian diplomatic missions 17th November 1917, Russia. Posol'stvo (France) Records, 1916-1924, Box 12, folder 13, HIA; Abrikossov, *Revelations*, p.263; Telegram from Trotsky to Russian diplomatic missions 17th November 1917, Russia. Posol'stvo (France) Records, 1916-1924, Box 12, folder 13, HIA.
[25] Abrikossov, *Revelations*, p.263.
[26] Ibid., pp. 263-4.
[27] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p.1.

individuals present at the time, notably Adolf Ioffe in Berlin, Vatslav Vorovsky in Stockholm, Maxim Litvinov in London, and Vyacheslav Karpinsky in Bern.[28]

There were fierce clashes between Tsarist legations that had been maintained and the new Soviet missions. Jan Berzin met considerable resistance in 1918 from Andrei Onu, the Tsarist ambassador to Switzerland, who refused to turn over the embassy or its archives.[29] When Berzin continued to demand that they be relinquished, Onu declared his defiance of the Revolution, and requested that the Swiss government recognize the Tsarist legation as the only Russian diplomatic mission in Switzerland.[30] Litvinov also encountered problems with the British government over the embassy in London when tangling with Konstantin Nabokoff, one of the instigators of the Council of Ambassadors. Litvinov only ever participated unofficially in negotiations with the British government.[31]

---

[28] Ibid., pp.42-5. Adolf Abramovich Ioffe (1883-1927). A career revolutionary who studied medicine and law in Berlin, Vienna and Zurich in the years before the Revolution, where he became friends with Trotsky and was involved in the publication of *Pravda* in Vienna. He joined the Bolsheviks in 1917, and was central in the negotiation of peace with Germany, being involved in both the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Rapallo. One of a small number of Jews serving in the Narkomindel, Ioffe committed suicide in 1927 following the expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev from the party. Vatslav Vatslavovich Vorovsky (1871-1923). The first Soviet representative abroad, Vorovsky was appointed as Polpred to the Scandinavian countries, encompassing Sweden, Norway and Denmark, in 1917. He was involved unofficially in the dialogue of peace with Germany. As economic representative to Italy he established de-facto relations with both Italy and the Vatican. He was part of the Soviet delegation at the Genoa conference. Assassinated by a White émigré in April 1923 while attending the Lausanne conference. Vyacheslav A. Karpinsky. An émigré in Geneva, he was appointed as representative to Switzerland in 1917, but having had no success in removing the Tsarist legation he returned to Russia.

[29] Jan Antonovich Berzin (1881-1938). Ambassador to Switzerland May-November 1918. As a founding member of the Comintern he spent a 1919 as one of the secretaries of its Executive Committee. He returned to the Narkomindel in 1920, serving as Ambassador to Finland, 1910-21, Deputy Ambassador to Britain, 1291-25, and Ambassador to Austria 1925-27. In 1927 he became the Narkomindel's representative to the Ukrainian government until 1929 when he became involved in publishing and organizing Soviet archives, becoming head of the Soviet Central Archives in 1932. He was arrested in 1937 and shot in 1938.

[30] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, pp. 66-70. Andrei Mikhailovich Onu was First Secretary of the Tsarist mission in Bern, but had become head of the mission following the dismissal of the previous Chargé D'affaires, Mikahail M. Bibikov, by the Provisional Government, owing to rumours that he was involved in espionage for the Germans, and as a result of his close ties to the Tsarist secret police.

[31] E. M. Primakov, Iu I. Strizhov et al. (eds.), *Chemu svideteli my byli...: perepiska byvshikh Tsarskikh diplomatov, 1934-1940: Sbornik dokumentov v dvukh knigakh* (Moscow, 1998), vol 2, pp. 383-5.

The concept of ownership is important in the struggle between competing diplomatic missions at this point. Indeed, ownership of the diplomatic archives of a mission shows itself to be central to control of the mission. The buildings physically represented Russia's overseas presence to foreign officials, and there was a very real need to inhabit them. This can be seen as not simply material, but also an issue of practicality. Foreign officials knew the location of Russian missions before the Revolution, and so logically one can see the practical desire to maintain missions in the same locations. Further to this, there is the sense that by taking over the mission's buildings, the Soviet diplomatic missions displaced their predecessors and hence neutralized their ability to negotiate with foreign powers. In this, one can see a clear notion of heredity of the institution, and certain trappings can be seen to define it.[32]

The host governments used the control of property as one a means of holding the Soviet missions in check. Berzin experienced problems with the Swiss government when trying to have the building and archives of the former legation turned over to him, with the Swiss insisting that it was a private dispute between two unrecognized parties.[33] Litvinov had similar problems in London, where the British government sided with the Tsarist legation who had paid the rent on the embassy buildings. Removing the Tsarist legations, and hence the remaining footholds of Tsarist diplomacy, was a priority for Soviet diplomacy immediately following the revolution, while clinging to the wreckage was a priority for Tsarist officials. What the Bolsheviks found, as they had in the case of the central ministry, was that they needed to displace the former MID officials and step into their place if they were to have any sort of diplomatic foothold, and to avoid the persistence of a second diplomatic agency that attempted to claim legitimacy and negotiate with foreign

---

[32] Bourdieu, *Distinction,* pp. 76-77; Boris Kolonitskii, *Simvoly vlasti i bor'ba za vlast': k izucheniiu politicheskoi kul'tury rossiiskoi revoliutsii 1917 goda* (Saint Petersburg, 2001); Richard Stites, "The Role of Ritual and Symbols", in Edward Acton et al. (eds.), *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution*, p. 565.

[33] V. Sokolov, "Ya. A. Berzin – Revoliutsioner, diplomat, gosudarstvennyi deyatel'", *Novaia i noveishaia istoria* 1990, no. 2, p.144; Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* pp. 66-7.

powers. In short, Soviet diplomats had to take on the roles of former Russian diplomats, lest they be eclipsed by them.

Berzin's personal feelings regarding his achievements in Bern are telling as to this realization by individuals, rather than the state, that possession of the material means of diplomacy were essential if anything was to be achieved. This is emphasized by Litvinov's expression of his inability to function as a diplomat without having possession of the Russian embassy at Chesham House.[34] While the Soviet government, and Lenin, clearly expressed their desire that the major aim of the mission be propaganda, Berzin himself made it clear that he saw the mission's greatest diplomatic achievement to have been the removal of the former Tsarist legation under the Tsarist incumbent, Onu.[35] Although he was keen to express his agreement that 'informational work' was of the utmost importance, Berzin's initial concern on coming to Bern was that the Soviet mission should be recognized and that the Swiss government should cease their dealings with the Tsarist legation, and he set about achieving this straight away. On 25th May 1918, Berzin instructed the post office in Bern to forward all post and funds addressed *Russiche Gesandschaft* to Shklovsky, the counsellor of the Soviet mission. On 28th May, five Bolsheviks attended the Tsarist legation and demanded that they be given the premises and archives.[36] Both of these actions met with no support from the Swiss government for either side. As far as the Swiss were concerned, this was a private affair between two private parties and needed to be dealt with recourse to the police, not the government.[37] This immediately provoked a reaction from Berzin, who was insistent that the Soviet mission should be recognized as the 'only Russian legation in Switzerland' and demanded a statement to that effect from the Swiss government.[38]

---

[34] Letter from Litvinov to Rex Leeper, 3rd April 1918, Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (hereafter AVPRF), f. 04, op. 4, d. 234, p. 16, l. 23.
[35] Letter from Berzin to Narkomindel, AVPRF, f. 04, op. 46, p. 281, d. 54035, l. 5.
[36] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, p. 181; Ibid., pp.66-7.
[37] Sokolov, "Ya. A. Berzin," p. 144.
[38] Letter from Berzin to Narkomindel, AVPRF, f. 04. op. 46, p. 281, d. 54035, l. 4; Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, p.67.

This shows a subtle difference in outlook from the point of view of the diplomat. Although Berzin clearly agreed that 'the real purpose of [Soviet] representation in Switzerland' was to inform the workers of Switzerland and other countries as to events and conditions in Russia, he was clearly aware that they needed to remove the Tsarist mission first in order to achieve such ends.[39] Thus, from the diplomat's point of view, one can see two strands of thought in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. There is the desire to further the revolution by subverting the diplomatic establishment and exploiting the privileges that the status affords, but there is also a very clear realization of the need to establish the Soviet mission in order to be afforded these opportunities. Berzin, a committed career revolutionary, demonstrated this pragmatism in Switzerland to achieve some level of diplomatic recognition and acceptance (the Swiss left the entry for Russia in the diplomatic list blank). That it was Berzin and not the regime that made this decision reveals that individual diplomats realized the need to sacrifice ideals for pragmatic ends in diplomacy before the regime did, and acted on this realization, making themselves the shapers of Soviet diplomatic culture.

The Soviet state did not always tread the line of the official establishment of overseas missions. In an unofficial manner, Ludwig Martens established himself as 'representative of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in the Northern United States' with offices in New York and Washington.[40] Ostensibly the mission was a stance 'against the aggressive politics of the Entente and USA' but it appears to have had major objectives in terms of trade as well.[41] On 10th April 1919, Martens sent a letter to Boris Bakhmeteff, claiming that he was Polpred of the RSFSR in the United States, and demanding that all property be turned over to him,

---

[39] Ibid., p. 181.
[40] Budnitskii (ed), *"Sovershenno lichno i doveritel'no!"* vol. 1, p. 502, n. 11. Ludwig Karlovich Martens (1874/5-1948). A former revolutionary, who had lived in exile in Britain. He arrived in the US on 2nd January 1919 to set up the Soviet mission. In December 1920 the US Department of Labor successfully deported him.
[41] *Diplomaticheskii slovar'*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1950), p.107.

including the embassy and its archives.[42] In the following weeks, it became clear to Bakhmeteff that Martens had also written to a number of organizations 'claiming title to all property' belonging to the Russian Government.[43] Some of the firms Martens contacted sought advice from the US Department of State as to what the implications of Martens' communiqués were and how they should proceed.[44] The US Department of State's reply was that Bakhmeteff was the 'only Russian representative recognized by the United States' and that 'claims to the representative capacity put forth by Mr. Martens [were] not to be given credence'.[45]

On 19th April, the US Department of State wrote to the legal representative in the Bakhmeteff embassy stating that they would not recognize Martens' claims, by implication continuing to refuse to recognize the Soviet state. Yet, from the Soviet point of view, Martens was the Soviet representative in the US and hence by implication the Russian representative in the US.[46] This was echoed in the Berzin's mission to Switzerland, where he adamantly demanded that his mission be recognized as the only representative body of Russia.[47] This is a far more aggressive policy than the one adopted by the missions in 1917 and 1918, suggesting that the Soviet state was desperate to end the diplomatic blockade with major foreign powers. It was successful in the US, as by January 1920 Bakhmeteff was referring to Martens as the 'Bolshevik Ambassador', thereby implying that he did represent a

---

[42] Letter from Martens to B. Bakhmeteff, 10th April 1919, Records of Posol'stvo, US, Box 10, folder 13 – Martens, L. - representative of Soviet Russia in the United States, 1919, HIA.

[43] Letter from Martens to American Locomotive Sales Corporation, 13th April 1919; Letter from Martens to American Locomotive Sales Corporation, 20th April 1919; Letter from New York Dock Company to Bakhmeteff, 15th April 1919; Letter from Martens to National City Bank of New York, 14th April 1919; letter from National City Bank of New York to Bakhmeteff, 16th April 1919, Russia. Posol'stvo (U.S.) Records, 1897-1947, Box 10, folder 13, HIA.

[44] Letter from USDS to Coudert Brothers, 19th April 1919 (reply to NE-M 701.6111/308 – 16th April 1919); Letter from USDS to National City Bank of New York, 19th April 1919 (reply to So 701.6111/306), Records of Posol'stvo, US, Box 10, folder, HIA.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Letter from Litvinov to Martens regarding relations with the US, 27th May 1919, AVP RF, f. 507, op. 5, p. 2, d. 2, l. 1-3; letter from Martens to NKID 14th June 1919, AVP RF, f. 507, op. 5, p. 2, d. 3, l. 2; Letter from Martens to NKID, 2 July 1919, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 3, p. 7, d. 123, l. 16-17.

[47] Letter from US Secretary of State to Coudert Brothers on the status of the Russian Government in the USA, 19th April 1919, AVP RF, f. 507, op. 5, p. 2, d. 6, l. 11-12; Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p. 67.

real power, even if it was one that remained unrecognized by the United States.[48] By asserting a diplomatic presence, even an unrecognized one, the Soviet state demonstrated that it possessed power in Russia and hoped to be seen by foreign powers as the legitimate government of Russia.

The Martens mission and the way in which it attempted to gain recognition can be seen as quite different from the official establishment of relations in its implementation, but it would appear to have had the same aims. There was clearly an element of trade relations implicit in the mission, as indicated by the letters from Martens to various US businesses that Russia had dealings with, but there was also the notion of informing the world as to the events and situation in Russia. Whether officially or not, the Soviet state clearly felt a need to impress itself on the world. The means they chose to achieve this was the creation of diplomatic missions with the express intention of disseminating information regarding the Soviet state.

New Mission, New Men – The First Bolshevik Diplomats

The number of members of the Bern mission who would later be part of the Comintern demonstrates the type of individual that was selected for service in Soviet missions abroad in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution. Berzin himself would become secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern between 1919 and 1920. Ivan Zalkind also had a leading role in the Comintern.[49]

---

[48] Letter from Bakhmeteff to Maklakov, 17th January 1920 reproduced in Budnitskii (ed.), *"Sovershenno lichno i doveritel'no"*, vol. 2, p.157.

[49] *Diplomaticheskii slovar'*, (1984-86), vol. 1, p. 377. Ivan Abramovich Zalkind (1885-1928). Zalkind was one of the founders of the Narkomindel as Deputy Foreign Commissar under Trotsky, and it was to him that the keys to the Central Foreign Ministry were given by the departing MID officials. He was involved in publishing secret documents from the MID archives. In 1918 he was appointed representative in Bern, although was replaced by Berzin. He was a founding member of the Comintern in 1919. He returned to the Narkomindel in 1920, becoming involved in the Narkomindel's administration in Europe and Asia until 1922. From 1922-7 he held a string of consular positions and was the diplomatic representative of the Narkomindel in Leningrad between 1927 and 1928.

The men and women selected for service in Bern were propagandists and revolutionary activists.

The Berzin mission to Switzerland also contained one of the Narkomindel's handful of former Tsarist diplomatic personnel – Yuri Solovyev. Solovyev had served in the MID since 1893 and his career had taken him to the embassies and consulates in China, Greece, Rumania, Germany and Spain, where in 1913 he had risen to the post of Counsellor.[50] Following the Revolution, he remained in Spain before travelling to Geneva in order to help the International Red Cross deal with issues regarding Russian prisoners of war. He approached Berzin when the mission opened in Bern, declaring himself ready to enter the Bolshevik diplomatic service.[51] Berzin was later to defend his recruitment of Solovyev to the mission, stating that men with Solovyev's experience 'were always welcome even if they [did] not fully agree in their political orientation with the goals of the present government'.[52] Again we see an instance of a diplomat responding to diplomatic concerns in a pragmatic fashion in order to further Soviet participation in the diplomatic field, rather than this being a regime policy, suggesting that Soviet diplomats had a better understanding of diplomacy than the Politburo did.

The establishment of the Narkomindel presented the Bolsheviks with the problem of recruiting individuals capable of effectively carrying out diplomatic duties. Few officials remained from the Tsarist MID, despite Trotsky's requests that they remain at their posts, and so the Bolsheviks were forced to find suitable candidates from within their own ranks. A small number of Tsarist officials remained at their posts, or returned to serve in the Narkomindel.[53] They were regarded with suspicion, but seen as a necessary evil given their familiarity with 'the language and practice of diplomacy', diplomatic history and protocol, international

---

[50] Ibid., vol. 3, p. 385.
[51] Solovyev, *Vospominaniia,* p. 334; Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p.83.
[52] Ibid., p. 83.
[53] It is difficult to ascertain from the sources examined how many former Tsarist officials served in the Narkomindel. Soviet accounts stress that there were very few, although it is likely that there were at least a dozen former Tsarist officials.

law and non-European languages.[54] The officials appointed to the Narkomindel in this period show the type of individual that the Bolsheviks believed would be able to carry out the task of conducting international relations. Who were these individuals and what qualities did they have which caused them to be chosen as representatives of the Soviet Regime?

Particularly striking is the number of diplomatic officials in Soviet missions in 1918 who would go on to take part in the founding of the Comintern.[55] From this it is clear that the Bolsheviks looked to men and women who would disseminate revolutionary propaganda and incite revolution in Europe. A significant number of those appointed had been political émigrés in the years before the revolution and so shared common experiences as well as having a command of foreign languages and experience of western culture. Commitment to the ideology of the revolution and the Soviet state appears to have been of great importance to the Bolsheviks when selecting individuals for diplomatic service, which supports the idea that the Bolsheviks saw diplomacy as an area in which the work of the revolution might be continued. Staffing of the Narkomindel in its early days lends the best insight into the diplomatic culture the Bolsheviks were hoping to establish, as it is through the individual that Soviet diplomatic culture can be most easily seen.

The influx of individuals into the diplomatic service in the immediate aftermath of the revolution tells us much about Soviet perceptions of diplomacy. Most individuals who took up diplomatic positions were atypical of what might be expected of a ministry of a workers' and peasants' state. There is in this a clear realization on the part of the Bolsheviks that, despite their distaste for diplomacy and their desire to subvert it, they nonetheless had to outwardly conform to the expectations of the profession. Shklovsky, the Counsellor of the Soviet Mission to Switzerland, was attacked for dressing in a 'primitive Bolshevik fashion'.[56] Mercier, the Swiss Ambassador in Berlin during 1918, commented on Berzin being

[54] Magerovsky, "The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs," p.248.
[55] Ibid., p. 182; *Diplomaticheskii slovar' (1984-6).*
[56] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, p. 95.

'decorously and cleanly dressed' and conducting himself accordingly.[57] Semyon Aralov, on being briefed by Chicherin prior to taking up his diplomatic post, was told that 'diplomats must be cultured'.[58] Aralov had been an officer in the Tsarist army and thus was seen as possessing a command of culture and an ability to deal with the social situations which diplomatic work would present.

Alexandra Kollontai came from an aristocratic family. She was born Domontovich and married a Tsarist general towards the end of the nineteenth century. Photographs of her from the time show her ensconced in an aristocratic world, as a result of which she was seen as well-equipped to function in an upper-class milieu, already possessing the level of culture that Chicherin felt was necessary for diplomats.[59] Chicherin told her that she was being sent 'abroad in the diplomatic service because [she] had the manners from [her] childhood to deal with diplomatic protocol'.[60] As a child and a young woman she had belonged to the upper classes of Tsarist society and had moved in circles similar to those of traditional diplomacy. Chicherin's comments imply that, having once belonged to aristocratic society, she was well equipped to rejoin it through the diplomatic corps in order to serve the revolution. Further, his comments reveal that he was aware of the need for Soviet diplomats to be able to fit easily into the social circle in which diplomatic service would place them, and that it was advantageous if an individual had already had the rituals and expectations of high society impressed upon them from a young age.

---

[57] Ibid., p. 62.

[58] Semyon Ivanovich Aralov (1880-1969). A soldier at the Russian-German front at the time of the Revolution, Aralov played an active role in the revolutionary activity in the army. He was appointed to the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs. He was recommended for diplomatic work by Lenin. Aralov served as polpred to Lithuania in 1920-21, Turkey 1921-3, and Latvia 1923-5 before joining the Collegium of the NKID until 1927. Following this he served in administrative positions; Semen Aralov, *Vospominaniia sovetskogo diplomata. 1922-23* (Moscow, 1960), p.14.

[59] Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai (1872-1952). The first woman to hold a position in government and to serve as an ambassador. A hero of the women's movement, she gained renown for her outspoken views regarding free love. She joined the Narkomindel in 1922 when she was posted to Norway to serve as trade representative. Aside from less than a year's service in 1926 in Mexico, she served exclusively in Scandinavia, rising to become Ambassador to Sweden in 1943.

[60] Account of Kollontai's meeting with Chicherin following her appointment, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 3, d. 31, l. 6; Interview with Barbara Clements (conducted by Sonya Baevsky, Akron, Ohio, September 1976), part II pp.4-5, *Kollontai Oral History Project*, Oral History Research Office, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (hereafter RBML).

Chicherin also came from an aristocratic background, and hence had acquired the knowledge and skills relevant to function within such a society.[61] The Narkomindel needed individuals who could cope and compete in a world 'of highly influential men discussing matters in salons' and those with aristocratic backgrounds were already equipped to deal with such situations.[62] In the diplomatic field it was desirable for the Soviets to use individuals who already, albeit possibly latently, possessed elements of the diplomatic habitus that would aid them in their involvement in the diplomatic field and understood how to present themselves in relation to it. They also possessed a higher level of social capital, owing to their backgrounds, that was advantageous in achieving access to the diplomatic field and presumably made their rejection less likely as they, at least as far as Chicherin was concerned, possessed suitably refined manners.[63]

It was, however, impressed on Soviet diplomats that they should not become absorbed in the trappings of diplomacy and that they should remember always to present themselves as representatives of the workers' and peasants' state, not allowing themselves to be seduced by the excesses of bourgeois life.[64] But it was also stressed to Soviet diplomats that they could not enter diplomacy without some knowledge of the past and hence what was expected in the diplomatic world. While clearly not wishing to be seen as 'successor[s] to the diplomatic policy of the Tsarist government', Soviet diplomats required an understanding of the history of Russian relations with countries with which they dealt and to which they were posted.[65] Chicherin recommended that Aralov look at nineteenth century foreign affairs and gain an awareness of diplomats such as Talleyrand, Metternich and Bismarck.[66] All this points to the realization of the need to be conversant with the history of diplomacy such that the Soviet diplomat could appreciate modern diplomacy's

---

[61] A more detailed biography of Chicherin and his background may be found in the following chapter.
[62] Alexandra Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki 1922-1940* (Moscow, 2002), vol. 1, p.35.
[63] Account of Kollontai's meeting with Chicherin following her appointment, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 3, d. 31, l. 6; Interview with Barbara Clements, part II, pp.4-5, *Kollontai Oral History Project.*
[64] Aralov, *Vospominaniia,* p.15; Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki,* vol. 1, p. 86.
[65] Copy of aide mémoire (no. 306) to Foreign Office 22nd March 1922, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, n. 21, d. 307, l. 5.
[66] Aralov, *Vospominaniia,* p. 15.

heritage. Thus, Soviet diplomats were set the challenge of treading the line between acceptability within diplomatic circles, and acceptable behaviour for a representative of the Soviet state.

Breaking the Rules – Propaganda and Soviet diplomacy

Diplomatic recognition is conditional on a complete absence of propaganda activity by the contracting parties, and the fledging Soviet state was made clearly and repeatedly aware of this.[67] Indeed, the first paragraph of the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement makes this expressly clear and it was a prominent issue in the establishment of Soviet diplomatic relations in the years immediately following the Bolsheviks' rise to power.[68] Questions concerning the Soviet opinion of diplomacy and its limits are raised, as are the extent to which other states dealt with Soviet diplomats with an underlying assumption that they would necessarily be engaged in propaganda activities.

Propaganda, and its use as a tool of diplomacy, had a highly ideological aspect from the point of view of the Soviet state. The ideology of a world revolution, spread by means of agitation and the political education of a worldwide proletariat, was one of the key aims of the state, and one which they felt could be accomplished through the abuse of diplomatic privileges. Important here is the extent to which individual diplomats felt that propaganda was an acceptable activity for them to be involved in, and whether this outlook changed as the nature of Soviet

---

[67] Geoff Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 1.

[68] *Trade Agreement between His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic* (London, 1921), pp.2-3. The paragraph reads: 'That each party refrains from hostile action or undertakings against the other and from conducting outside of its own borders any official propaganda direct or indirect against the institutions of the British Empire or the Russian Soviet Republic respectively, and more particularly that the Russian Soviet Government refrains from any attempt by military or diplomatic or any other form of action or propaganda to encourage any of the peoples of Asia in any form of hostile action against British interests or the British Empire, especially in India and in the Independent State of Afghanistan. The British Government gives a similar particular undertaking to the Russian Soviet Government in respect of the countries which formed part of the former Russian Empire and which have now become independent.'

diplomacy changed. Propaganda was also a major point of contention in the struggle for recognition with foreign powers and as such fulfilled part of the anti-imperialist discourse of the Soviet state.

Of note here are the reactions of foreign powers to the fledging Soviet state and a perception that Soviet diplomats would necessarily be involved in propaganda activity. To be sure, Soviet diplomatic agents would show themselves to be engaged in propaganda, and would be caught engaging in it by foreign powers, but one must ask whether there was a degree of paranoia and suspicion arising at the instance of the creation of a diplomatic service of a revolutionary state. Frequent demands were made on the Soviet state to cease all propaganda activity, but anti-Soviet propaganda carried out by the Council of Ambassadors was allowed to persist. In this, we can see that foreign (non-Soviet) powers displayed a fear of Soviet propaganda, which they saw as being intent on undermining their own national security or inciting revolution within their empire, and hence were wary of granting diplomatic recognition to the Soviet state.[69]

The denial of diplomatic rights and privileges on the basis that propaganda was to be an activity of a Soviet diplomatic agent is a common theme of the Narkomindel's relations with foreign powers in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution. In 1918 Berzin was delayed in Berlin, because the Swiss government would not issue any visas to the staff of the mission without the assurance that there were no agitators among them.[70] Litvinov was denied the use of telegraphs and ciphers out of fear that he would use them to carry out illicit party business.[71] Litvinov saw this as placing him in a position which had 'made purposeless the continued presence of a representative of the Russian Republic' in Britain, and had

---

[69] Telegram from Chicherin to Curzon, 9th November 1920, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, d. 245, p. 17, l. 24; Memorandum in reply to Chicherin's memorandum to Foreign Office of 29th May 1923, 5th June 1923, AVPRF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 23, d. 329, l. 71.

[70] Telegram no. 63 from Swiss legation in Berlin to Swiss Ministry of Foreign affairs, 10th May 1918 (received 11th May 1918), in *Documents Diplomatiques Suisses 1848-1945,* Volume 6 (1914-1918) (Bern, 1986), pp. 734-5; Telegram no. 51 from Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Swiss legation in Berlin, 14th May 1918, in ibid., p. 735; Letter from the Swiss Minister in Berlin, Philippe Mercier to Swiss Premier, Francois Calonder, 15th May 1918, in ibid., p. 736.

[71] Letter from Maxim Litvinov to Rex Leeper 3rd April 1918, AVP RF, f. 04, on. 4, d 234, p. 16, l. 23.

made it impossible for him 'to discharge his duties in [Britain] without detriment to the dignity of the Russian republic and to [his] own self-respect'.[72] Vorovsky was denied the use of ciphers and couriers in Sweden on the grounds that representatives of the Soviet government had abused diplomatic privileges and used them for disseminating propaganda in several countries.[73] On the basis of the expectation that Vorovsky's mission to Sweden involved propaganda as one of its chief aims, the Swedish authorities denied him the rights normally afforded to a diplomatic representative, and saw the search and seizure of Vorovsky's luggage as entirely justifiable.[74] They stopped short of expelling him from the country, but afforded him none of the normal rights a diplomat might expect.[75] Vorovsky, who proved himself to be hot-headed, interpreted the actions of the Swedish government as expulsion.[76] Clearly, the denial of what were seen as basic diplomatic privileges on the grounds that they would be used for illicit purposes was seen by Soviet diplomats as rendering them impotent in discharging their duties (whether they involved illicit propaganda or not) and was, therefore, grounds for them to protest against being treated as outsiders to the diplomatic field.[77]

The involvement of an individual in propaganda activity was also used by foreign powers as a means to deny them entry into a country to serve as a diplomat. The British Government affirmed in a reply to Leonid Krasin (then head of the Soviet Trade Delegation to Britain) that it had 'no intention of debarring any Russian on the ground of his communist opinions provided the agents of the Russian government comply with the normal conditions for friendly international intercourse'.[78] Using this as a basis, the British denied Lev Kamenev's re-entry into

---

[72] Ibid.,, l.23.
[73] Telegram from Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Chicherin no. 285/1068, December 1918, AVP RF, f. 140, op. 2, p. 1, d. 1, l. 13.
[74] Ibid., l. 13.
[75] Telegram from Lundberg to Chicherin, 23rd December 1918, AVP RF, f. 140, op. 2, p. 1, d. 2, l. 43.
[76] Telegram from Chicherin to Vorovsky, 19th January 1919, AVP RF, f. 140, op. 3, p. 5, d. 10, l. 12; Telegram from Chicherin to Vorovsky, 23rd January 1919, AVP RF, f. 140, op. 3, p. 5, d. 10, l. 23.
[77] Letter from Maxim Litvinov to Rex Leeper 3rd April 1918, AVP RF f. 04, op. 4, d 234, p. 16, l. 23.
[78] Reply of the British Government to Krasin's note of 19th June 1920, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 17, d. 246, l.12. Leonid Borisovich Krasin (1870-1926). Krasin had been an active revolutionary, described by Trotsky as "the chief administrator of the revolution" (Victor Topolyansky, "The

Britain, stating that Kamenev had 'engaged in almost open propaganda and attempted to subsidise a campaign in England against the British Constitution and British institutions'.[79] While it is clear from this that the British government felt that they had evidence of Kamenev having been involved in propaganda on their territory, there is a definite sense that they perceived Kamenev as just one example of a Soviet diplomat engaged in illicit propaganda activity at the time. Britain repeatedly demanded that the Soviet state desist from propaganda, both in the British Isles and within its Imperial holdings.[80]

Other instances displayed the suspicion on the part of foreign governments that the spread of revolution was the true aim of the Soviet diplomatic service. This was grounded in prior examples of Soviet diplomacy, where propaganda had been carried out by individuals accredited to the Narkomindel and their beliefs provided foreign host governments with a pretext to control and expel Soviet diplomatic missions from their countries. Prior to granting the Berzin mission the right to enter Switzerland, the Swiss government exhibited a great deal of concern that there might be an agitators within the mission's staff and asked for assurances that there would not be.[81] In a meeting on 17th May 1923, Curzon and Krasin discussed the issue of

---

Legacy of an Engineer Named Krasin", *New Times* September 2005, at http://www.newtimes.ru/eng/detail.asp?art_id=505 on 30th December 2005), and spent time as an émigré in Germany before returning to Russia in 1912 as the head of Siemens-Schuckert keeping himself distant from the Bolsheviks despite their requests for his help in 1917, and decrying the October Revolution as hooliganism. He returned to the Party in 1918, dismayed at the incompetence surrounding the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, taking roles in the Extraordinary Commission for supplying the Red Army, the Supreme Council of the National Economy, as well as becoming People's Commissar for Commerce and Industry, People's Commissar for Transport, and from 1920, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade. While holding the latter position he was Trade Representative (and de facto ambassador) to Britain between 1920 and 1926 and France from 1924-26.

[79] Note from Curzon, 8th October 1920, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 17, d. 246, l. 19. Lev Borisovich (né Rosenfield) (1886-1936). Representative to France in 1918, he is best known as a member of the Politburo, Chair of the Moscow Soviet and part of the triumvirate with Stalin and Zinoviev against Trotsky. He lost his position in the Politburo in 1925 and was sent as Ambassador to Italy between 1926 and 1927.

[80] Note from Curzon, 8th October 1920, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 17, d. 246, l. 19; Memorandum in reply to Chicherin's memorandum to the Foreign Office of 29th May 1923, 5th June 1923, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 23, d. 329, l. 71.

[81] AVP RF, f. 04, op. 46, p. 281, d. 54035, l. 1-2 quoted in Sokolov, "Ya. A. Berzin," p. 143; Telegram no. 63 from Swiss Embassy in Berlin to Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10th May 1918 in *Documents Diplomatiques Suisses*, vol. 6, p. 734; Telegram no. from Swiss Ministry of Foreign

suspicion held by the British government that the Soviet Trade Delegation had been engaging in propaganda from the beginning of its existence in Britain. Indeed, the accusation was that the first condition of the Soviet Trade agreement had been 'systematically violated'. The British government demanded that 'the two Russian officials principally implicated should be disowned and recalled, and an apology offered for their misdeeds'. Refusal would be seen as 'inconsistent with the established cannons of international intercourse' and a rupture of relations was threatened as the liable outcome.[82]

Suspicion shows itself to have been an almost constant factor in the relationship between Soviet diplomatic missions and their host nations in the early years of Soviet diplomatic activity. In 1923, Litvinov attacked the 'suspiciousness of the British Government' towards the Soviet Trade Delegation.[83] In Switzerland there is clear evidence of the persistent suspicion that the Soviet mission in Bern was engaged heavily in propaganda.[84] All this created a discourse of suspicion of the Soviet diplomatic service, which was used to hold it in check, while conversely being used by the Soviets to claim that they were being treated unjustly by the host nation.[85]

The state of suspicion in which Soviet diplomatic officials were held lead to countries requesting that certain individuals not be accredited as diplomatic agents to them. In 1924 the British government requested that the Narkomindel should send individuals 'who have had personal ties with [Britain], or have been known in it for other than political interests'.[86] Chicherin's response to this request was non-committal, stating that 'such ambassadors will be the best who have the greatest influence at home and reflect fully and accurately the views of their Government',

---

Affairs to Swiss Embassy in Berlin, 5163 114th May 1918 in ibid., p. 735; Letter from Mercier to Calonder 15th May 1918 in Ibid., p. 736.

[82] Minutes of the meeting between Curzon and Krasin, 17th May 1923, 11.30 am, AVP RF, f.04, op. 4, p.23, d.330, l. 2; AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 23, d. 329, l. 70-1. The Soviet Union chose not to heed this warning and continued with illicit activity in Britain and the British Empire until the rupture of relations in 1927.

[83] Letter from Litvinov to Johnson, 12th May 1923, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 27, d. 384, l. 21-23.

[84] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* pp.147-60

[85] Letter from Litvinov to Johnson, 12th May 1923, AVP RF f. 04, op. 4, p. 27, d. 384, l. 27.

[86] Letter from Macdonald to Chicherin 1st February 1924, AVP RF f. 04, op. 4, p. 27, d. 392, l. 8.

thereby legitimizing the Soviet appointment of officials.[87] Foreign powers were concerned about the Soviet subversion of diplomacy, and had good reason to be. By 1924, however, the Narkomindel's primary concern was establishing diplomatic relations, and the necessary compromise on propaganda had been made. Soviet diplomats were attempting to engage in the diplomatic field according to its rules, no longer trying to subvert them.

Case Study – Berzin and the Bern Mission, 1918

The case of Jan Berzin's mission to Switzerland in 1918 provides an excellent opportunity to look at the perceptions of the Soviet state and its diplomats with regard to the use of propaganda within diplomacy in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution. The mission was ultimately expelled from Switzerland in November 1918 for engaging in propaganda activities at much the same time as the Soviet mission to Germany was expelled for the same reasons. Clearly the Soviet mission's betrayal of the trust the Swiss had placed in them on the basis of Berzin's assertions regarding the lack of agitators within his staff had a profound effect, as no Soviet mission was granted approval to return to Switzerland until 1945 (although there was a Soviet presence at the League of Nations in Geneva prior to this).[88]

The mission was seen by contemporaries as significant owing to the geographical position and neutrality of Switzerland, a fact that was central to the extensive engagement of the mission in propaganda, at the behest of Lenin. Berzin would later recount that Lenin's advice was concerned chiefly with the propaganda

[87] Letter from Chicherin to MacDonald, undated, AVP RF f. 04, op. 4, p. 27, d. 392, l. 66.
[88] Telegram no. 63 from Swiss legation in Berlin to Swiss Ministry of Foreign affairs, 10th May 1918 (received 11th May 1918), in *Documents Diplomatiques Suisses,* vol. 6, pp. 734-5; Telegram no. 51 from Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Swiss legation in Berlin, 14th May 1918, in ibid., p. 735; Letter from the Swiss Minister in Berlin, Philippe Mercier to Swiss Premier, Francois Calonder, 15th May 1918, in ibid., p. 736.

aspect of the mission. When Berzin accepted his position as envoy to Switzerland, Lenin made it clear to him that his task did not lie in 'purely diplomatic work'.[89]

It was initially unclear who was to head the mission. On 30th December 1917, Karpinsky was named as the Soviet representative in Bern, but returned to Russia almost immediately. Zalkind was appointed in his place, apparently charged with the organization of propaganda in Bern, rather than conducting diplomacy, and he was involved in the establishment of a great deal of publishing activity in Switzerland.[90] In April 1918, Berzin was named representative to Bern. This caused some confusion in Switzerland, as it was unclear whether there were in fact two Soviet envoys to Switzerland.[91] But it is in Berzin's personality that one may find the reasons behind his appointment. While Zalkind was accused of curtness, Berzin was characterized by those who met him as polite and cultured, and thus far better suited to holding a more traditionally diplomatic post. This demonstrates a Bolshevik understanding of how diplomats should present themselves within the diplomatic field in order to be effective, and a policy of appointments that followed from it. Soviet diplomatic culture had, therefore, developed an understanding of what diplomats in the traditional mould should be, and of how to ensure that their diplomats conformed, at least outwardly, to it.

The mission to Bern had every intention of engaging in the dissemination of propaganda, and was instructed to by Lenin. Indeed, as Berzin's health restricted him to working for only two hours per day, on the instructions of his doctor, Lenin instructed him to spend one and three-quarter hours directing agitation.[92] Berzin was also instructed by Lenin to 'pay minimal attention to official formalities' and maximum attention to illegal propaganda and agitation and to spare no money or

---

[89] Solovyev, *Vospominaniia*, p.333; *Pravda,* 21st January 1925; Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p.111.
[90] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p.56.
[91] Ibid., p.59.
[92] Ibid., p.111; Letter from Lenin to Berzin, 18th October 1918, RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 27, l. 149, reproduced in Richard Pipes (ed.), *The Unknown Lenin: from the Secret Archive* (London, 1996), pp. 59-60.

effort in the pursuit of these aims.[93] Switzerland provided the ideal base from which to inform the west of events in Russia as a result of its central geographical position in Europe, and the Bolsheviks were not going to allow the opportunity to disseminate information to pass them by. The propaganda element of Soviet diplomacy at this stage can be taken as part of the aims of diplomacy to present a public image to the outside world, and to inform foreigners about one's home country. In their case, revolution was what the Bolsheviks had to offer the world and propaganda was a tool for the Soviets in this respect that stemmed from their revolutionary outlook and desire to spread revolution outside of the Soviet state. As such it fulfilled the public relations element of diplomacy that other states achieved through the export of other forms of culture.[94]

Soviet diplomats understood that propaganda fell outside of acceptable behaviour in the diplomatic world, and therefore were aware of the need to hide their involvement in propaganda; the Soviet mission in Bern during 1918 is a clear example of this.[95] The mission was presenting a front of respectability to the world, although in reality this masked a hotbed of revolutionary activity. However, the staff were concerned not to be accused of propaganda.[96] Berzin played the part of the respectable, mild-mannered diplomat extremely well, and it was probably these aspects of his character which led to his appointment.[97] With Berzin at the head of the mission it was possible for the Soviet state to be involved in activity away from the light of public scrutiny. Certainly had Zalkind been in charge one imagines that the image presented by the mission would have been quite different, but under Berzin's direction we can see that Soviet diplomats had understood diplomacy's rules and were at pains to present themselves as adhering to them.

---

[93] Letter from Lenin to Berzin, 18th October 1918, RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 27, l. 149, reproduced in Pipes (ed.), *The Unknown Lenin,* pp. 59-60; Letter from Lenin to Berzin, 14th August 1918 RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 24, l. 310, reproduced in ibid., p. 53; Letter from Lenin to Berzin, between 15th and 20th October 1918, RGASPI, f. 2, op.1, d. 25, l. 671, reproduced in ibid., p. 58.

[94] Among these other forms of culture are sport, high culture and displays at international exhibitions.

[95] *Pravda,* 21st Jan 1925; Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki.*

[96] *Pravda,* 21st Jan 1925.

[97] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p. 96.

Even so the mission was ultimately unsuccessful in hiding its revolutionary activities. On 4th November 1918, German railway workers dropped (allegedly by accident) one of twenty-three crates being unloaded as a diplomatic pouch by a Soviet courier.[98] Propaganda material, which the German authorities claimed was aimed at inciting revolution in Germany, spilled from the crate. On 5th November, Ioffe was ordered to leave Germany. Relations with the Soviet regime were broken off. When news of the incident reached Bern, concerns that similar material had been brought into Switzerland resulted in a decision by the Bundesrat on November 6th to expel the Soviet mission from Switzerland. Although the decision was made in the aftermath of the events in Germany, in Swiss eyes what had happened in Berlin merely confirmed suspicions that had been held about the Soviet mission in Bern for some time. The Swiss authorities had been looking closely at the mission hoping to find that it was abusing the diplomatic privileges it had been granted. Francois Calonder, the Swiss premier, ordered large scale-surveillance activity based on his suspicions, which events in Germany confirmed.[99]

When giving his account of the mission to the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets, Berzin stressed that their expulsion showed that they had succeeded in their task of disseminating revolutionary propaganda.[100] He explained that they had taken great pains to avoid being implicated in overt propaganda, but that some members of the mission had probably not exercised the necessary caution and hence they had been caught and expelled. [101]

With respect to diplomatic culture, the work of the Soviet mission to Bern demonstrates that the priority for diplomats in the immediate post-revolutionary period was revolutionary work. That there was less than successful obfuscation of this activity by individuals suggests that they had not at this point been entirely successful at integrating into the diplomatic field. Soviet diplomatic culture,

---

[98] Ibid., p.161.
[99] Interview with Valentina Vasilevskaya (Jan Berzin's granddaughter), Moscow, 30th March 2004.
[100] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p.181.
[101] Ibid., pp.181; p.170; *Pravda,* 21st Jan 1925.

therefore, differed from that more generally accepted in the diplomatic field – it was concerned more with the subversion of diplomacy than with participating in it.

The Bern mission is perhaps unique in that it was used in an exceedingly subversive manner owing to Switzerland's geographical position and neutrality. Switzerland provided the Soviet state with an ideal base from which to launch a propaganda assault on Europe and incite revolution in the West, and so presents us with an extreme example of Soviet abuse of diplomatic privileges in order to further the revolution.

Even given that this may be the case, it clearly demonstrates the Bolsheviks' realization of what could be achieved by playing the game of diplomacy. The Soviet mission to Switzerland was engaging in activities, not just aimed at spreading revolution, but also at gaining recognition for the new Soviet state and a place for it in diplomatic society. These two strands of this behaviour were so far at odds with one another as to be mutually exclusive, according to the rules of the diplomatic field. For Soviet diplomats in Bern, and elsewhere, to achieve both required them to approach behaviour within the diplomatic field as though it were a game – understanding the rules while simultaneously devising strategies to achieve their ends without appearing to be violating them.

The aim, from the Soviet point of view, was to appear to be functioning within the rules of the diplomatic game, and to outwardly display evidence of having acquired the diplomatic habitus, thereby ensuring membership of the diplomatic field, while at the same time hiding their true intentions and covert actions. That the Soviet Union was approaching diplomacy as this sort of game is demonstrated by the behaviour of Berzin and the staff of the Bern mission, and sheds a great deal of light on Soviet diplomatic culture in the period immediately following the revolution. Not only had the Soviets understood the rules of diplomacy, but they had also understood how to subvert them for their own ends. Thus, diplomacy empowered them to carry out illegal activities using diplomatic privileges, while at the same time they carried out, albeit disingenuously, the discourse of the diplomatic field which shaped the public behaviour of Soviet diplomats. To this end Soviet

complicity with an 'old regime' political behaviour could be justified, on the basis that it was little more than a game to be played that could potentially reap them huge rewards.

The Comintern and Propaganda – New Dog, Old Tricks?

While the Comintern should be regarded as a body distinct from the Narkomindel, the number of diplomatic officials in Soviet missions in 1918 who would go on to take part in its founding, and serve within it, is striking.[102] Although not strictly an agency of Soviet diplomacy, the Comintern fulfilled certain functions of diplomacy, namely promoting the Soviet Union abroad. In this respect, it was a direct continuance of the revolutionary diplomacy adopted by the Bolsheviks in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, which may in part account for the number of individuals who served in the early Soviet missions abroad and went on to figure in the foundation of the Comintern. It was founded in response to the continued pressure put on the Narkomindel by foreign powers to desist from propaganda in its diplomatic missions. The British government, referring to the Comintern, alleged that 'when the Russian government desires to take some action more than usually repugnant to normal international law and comity, they ordinarily erect some ostensibly independent authority'. As far as the British were concerned the Comintern was connected to the Soviet government and claims that it was not were falling on deaf ears.

The Narkomindel was at pains to keep connections between itself and the Comintern as minimal as possible, and to distance itself from the Comintern as much as it reasonably could. Litvinov denied any connection between the Comintern and the Narkomindel.[103] Other instances further demonstrate attempts to display the two as distinct from one another. One such case is Berzin, who served as

[102] Ibid., p. 182; *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (1984-86).
[103] Note referring to a letter from Litvinov of 7th September 1921, undated, AVP RF f. 04, op. 4. d. 278, p. 20, l. 23.

Secretary of the Comintern in 1919. Berzin's entry in *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* makes no mention of that fact, despite his high level of involvement in the Comintern.[104] The distancing of diplomats from the Comintern in this way betrays the fact that the Comintern posed problems for the Narkomindel. As has been seen above, the conduct of propaganda using diplomatic missions was a major factor in the problems experienced by the Narkomindel in its efforts to establish relations with foreign states. The Comintern, despite being a distinct organization in its own right, retained its connections with the Narkomindel. A Soviet diplomat about to assume a post abroad was briefed not only by the Narkomindel, but also by the Comintern.[105] This was further complicated by the Soviet practice of giving Comintern agents positions within missions abroad, much as the OGPU did.[106]

The presence of Comintern agencies within embassies caused a great number of problems for the Narkomindel, not to mention clashes between individuals and the two organizations. The major problem arose because the Comintern needed diplomatic immunity and privileges (including the ability to pass materials for its revolutionary activity through diplomatic pouches) in order to carry out its work, while at the same time the Narkomindel needed to distance itself from 'illegal party business'.[107] The Narkomindel was unhappy about such arrangements and took steps to minimize the presence of compromising Comintern agents in its missions abroad, but was never able to fully remove them. Indeed, the closeness of the Comintern to the Narkomindel can be seen by the fact that Georgi Dimitrov, Secretary General of the Comintern between 1935 and 1943, has a lengthy entry in *Diplomaticheskii slovar'*.[108] Clearly such an individual was significant enough, both as an individual and in terms of his work, to Soviet diplomacy that diplomats needed to know who he was; this was surely as a result of the Comintern's close

---

[104] *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (1984-86), vol 1. p. 125. Berzin only appears in the 1984-86 edition, published following his rehabilitation; he was not included in the 1941 edition as he had been executed during the purges.
[105] Grigori Besedovsky, *Revelations of a Soviet Diplomat,* (London, 1931), p. 127.
[106] Theodore von Laue, "Soviet Diplomacy: G.V. Chicherin, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, 1918-1930," in Craig and Gilbert, *The Diplomats,* p. 255, n. 46.
[107] Ibid., p.255; Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki*, vol. 1, p. 36.
[108] *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (1984-86), vol. 1, pp. 306-7.

involvement in the Narkomindel, regardless of the Narkomindel's attempts to distance itself.

While the Comintern was an entity distinct from the Narkomindel, it is clear that it inherited the propaganda aspect of Soviet diplomatic work that had begun in 1918. The Narkomindel and the Soviet state had realized that to have individuals who were publicly displayed as diplomats directly involved in propaganda activities was not a viable option in the quest for diplomatic recognition. In a virtual about-face in diplomatic behaviour, the second wave of Soviet diplomats exhibited far less revolutionary zeal, even though many of them had been prominent revolutionaries in the years before 1917. Those who had, in the early days of the Narkomindel, demonstrated their allegiance to spreading the revolution through propaganda and agitation, moved into the Comintern.[109] Thus the Comintern was staffed, in part, by individuals who had had exposure to the diplomatic world and hence knew how it worked, and more importantly how it could be turned to their purposes.

The Comintern was then, perhaps, the manifestation of what the fledgling Soviet state had envisaged the Narkomindel might have been. The creation of the Comintern can be interpreted to some extent as a turning point in Soviet diplomatic culture, with the realization that revolutionary behaviour was incompatible with traditional diplomacy. Traditional diplomacy and the diplomatic field were immutable on the point of propaganda, but the Comintern offered the Soviet Union a means to continue revolutionary work abroad without directly involving its chosen diplomatic representatives. The exodus of officials from the Narkomindel to the Comintern not only points to this shift, but also to a change in the individuals suitable for roles within diplomacy. The Narkomindel's culture undoubtedly changed following the creation of the Comintern, in part because the revolutionary aspect of Soviet diplomacy was, out of necessity, left behind. The Bolsheviks had realized that they would have to engage in a more traditional form of diplomatic activity.

---

[109] Among them Berzin (although he would return to the Narkomindel in 1920) and Zalkind.

Tsarist diplomacy after 1917

Following the February Revolution of 1917, the United States was the first country to grant diplomatic recognition to the Provisional Government, followed quickly by the Entente powers of Europe.[110] On the international scene the message was clear – nothing had changed in terms of diplomatic representation. Indeed, the affair appears to have been little more than a change in the name of Russia's accredited missions. Following the October Revolution, however, the Provisional Government's missions faced problems originating from the unprecedented situation of diplomats without a government to serve. Funding was to prove a major issue for the missions, as there was no government to provide funds, and all accounts had been frozen. Heads of missions needed to find the money themselves and negotiate for funding from elsewhere.[111] The United States continued to recognize Bakhmeteff's diplomatic status and authority, probably largely to do with the US taking an anti-Bolshevik stance. So long as the US afforded recognition to Bakhmeteff's mission, they were easily able to refuse recognition of the Soviet Union on the basis that Russia already had a mission accredited to Washington. Similarly, Italy and France agreed to continue to recognize the diplomats of the Provisional Government without a practical change in status.[112] What is clear is that diplomatic recognition of a government other than the Bolsheviks was a means of resisting their establishment as the new government of Russia.

With no government to serve under, the former ambassadors of the Tsarist and Provisional Governments existed in a state of limbo. This was reflected in the Paris Peace Conference. Tsarist diplomats were granted the privilege of attending, but not in any official capacity. Rather, it was a privilege granted through lines of friendship and respect. Among those present were Sazonov, who was a personal

---

[110] Bakhmeteff, *Oral History*, p.299.
[111] Ibid., p.391.
[112] Kononova, "Deiatel'nost' diplomatov," p. 110.

friend of Poincaré, Girs and Maklakov, all of whom were the driving force behind the 'Council of Ambassadors', centred in Paris.[113]

What transpired was that in their diplomatic limbo, these diplomats created a body to represent Russia at the Paris Peace Conference, named the Conference Politique Russe, numbering twelve to fifteen men and 'representing the cream of authoritative persons at that time'.[114] That Bakhmeteff, and presumably others at the Paris Peace Conference, saw these men as authoritative shows that they had continued authority as representatives of Russia. It appears that despite the reality of the situation, with former Tsarist diplomats displaced from their embassies, the continued authority of members of the Council of Ambassadors stemmed from the lack of Soviet diplomatic recognition and a lack of familiarity on the part of foreign diplomats with Soviet officials. Sazonov, having been the last Foreign Minister before the revolution, was made the 'official overall diplomatic representative of the whole White movement, meaning both the Denikin and the Kolchak movements' and it was this government which the former diplomats of the Provisional Government served, albeit nominally.[115] Following a coup in Siberia, Kolchak took over the Central Siberian Government, based in Omsk. It was this government that Bakhmeteff, and others, found themselves representing, its Foreign Ministry largely composed of former diplomats of the Tsarist and Provisional governments.[116]

Following the Paris Peace Conference, a council of allied ambassadors was left in Paris to negotiate with the Conference Politique Russe. It was through this that President Wilson offered to recognize the Kolchak government. This was never acted upon owing to Wilson's poor health, but Sazonov did telegram the Kolchak government to gain blanket authorization for the former ambassadors, and for Sazonov as Foreign Minister, to act on behalf of the Kolchak government.[117] The Kolchak government confirmed this position, thereby granting the former

---

[113] Bakhmeteff, *Oral History,* p.409.
[114] Ibid., p.411.
[115] Ibid., p.411.
[116] Ibid., p.394.
[117] Ibid., p.423; Ibid., p.435.

ambassadors a government to represent, and again some form of official status, which was in turn used by the Entente powers as the basis for discussing 'Russian issues' with the former diplomats of Russia.[118] Thus it was that Bakhmeteff served until 1922 as Ambassador to the United States, but unrecognized by the Bolshevik government.

Not only did the Council of Ambassadors continue to be involved in the discussion of 'Russian problems' with the Entente powers, its members were also actively engaged in drumming up support from foreign diplomats for opposing the Soviet regime.[119] In a letter to Girs, Sergei Botkin (former ambassador to Lisbon) stated that he was involved in November 1919 in trying to get foreign diplomats on the side of the Council of Ambassadors, working particularly on the French, German, British and Italian diplomats. The drive to secure allied intervention against the Bolsheviks can be seen as the council's major work in the aftermath of the Revolution. The governments of the Entente powers were lobbied by the various members of the Council of Ambassadors to give support and financial assistance to the anti-Soviet movement.[120]

There are clear cases of the continued diplomatic status of Tsarist diplomatic officials being sustained by foreign powers. Among Nicholas de Basily's personal papers one finds his diplomatic passports (along with his wife's).[121] The folder contains passports issued in 1919 and 1922, signed by Maklakov in his capacity as Minister of Foreign Affairs. These portray Basily as continuing to serve the MID, revealing a sense of the continued existence of the organization. The passports further show, in the form of stamps and visas, that other powers were continuing to afford diplomatic privileges to diplomats of the former Russian regime during that period. There is a clear pattern here of diplomats defining their legitimacy through continued recognition by a foreign power.

---

[118] Kononova, "Deiatel'nost' diplomatov," p.107.

[119] Ibid., p.111; Letter from Botkin to Paris, 17th/30th November 1919, , Box 2: "Arranged correspondence: Botkin to Paris and Girs, 1919-1922," Botkin Papers, BAR.; Tongour "Diplomacy in Exile".

[120] Bakhmeteff, *Oral History*, p. 423.

[121] Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bazili Papers, 1881-1959, HIA, Box 9, "Passports" folder.

Tsarist diplomats' behaviour when faced with a hitherto unknown situation – servants suddenly bereft of their master – raises questions about how diplomacy was perceived by its practitioners. Suddenly, and for the first time, diplomats were forced to consider whether it mattered that the state they served had recently ceased to exist, and how they should proceed in its absence. It seems from personal accounts that diplomacy extended beyond the confines of the state, probably largely as a result of the large number of MID personnel and buildings beyond its borders. The idea that a state's diplomats could continue to function within the structure of the diplomatic world but without the existence of the state they represent, clearly tells us that for the diplomats at least, the world of diplomacy is in fact quite separate from the concept of statehood.

Of importance here is that Tsarist diplomats attempted to preserve the world in which they moved beyond the end of the regime they served. On one level, their motivation was counter-revolutionary, their work aimed at overthrowing the Soviet regime, or at least hampering it severely. The preservation of Tsarist diplomatic institutions, however, continued beyond the failure of the Council of Ambassadors to block Soviet recognition in the 1920s. This is one of the more surprising aspects of the Council of Ambassadors – its continued existence even after Soviet diplomatic recognition by the Entente powers. Individuals, despite having no real accreditation, continued to view themselves as diplomats of the former Russian regime. Circulars dating from the early 1920s, which are much the same in format as those from the Tsarist MID, in collections of papers of individuals who were members of the Council of Ambassadors, indicate that there was a very real effort on the part of the former Tsarist diplomats to preserve the world in which they moved.[122]

One must therefore ask how former Tsarist diplomats perceived themselves following the revolution. Was their identity dependent upon their continued existence as diplomats? Their status was certainly dependent on it, but how far did their own sense of identity rest on their diplomatic post? It is easy to understand that

[122] Box 9: "Materials relating to MID," Botkin Papers, BAR.

certain individuals could not come to terms with being stripped of the coat of the diplomat, given the forces that had been at play in the creation of the Tsarist diplomat.[123] In short, the MID was all that many Tsarist diplomats had known, it was where they belonged, and they had attached a great deal of their own personal identity to it. Thus tied to it, did the former Tsarist diplomats feel the need to preserve the idea of the diplomatic institution to which they had belonged, in order not to feel confused and isolated?

There also arises a very clear sense that the diplomat's personality was extremely important in ensuring his effectiveness. The Council of Ambassadors, at least as evidenced in archival holdings, revolved around a few key individuals who had enjoyed high status in the years before the revolution. Sazonov, Maklakov and Girs provided the council's backbone, and certainly were its most senior members (Sazonov and Maklakov had both held the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs), while others played important roles in representing Russian interests and in anti-Bolshevik activity (Bakhmeteff in the US, Abrikossov in Japan, and Basily in France).

If the diplomat's personality was important, so too were the friends he had made abroad. Bakhmeteff claimed that one of the reasons for the Russian presence at the Paris Peace Conference was that Sazonov was a close personal friend of Arisitde Briand.[124] The cultivation of such friendships during the earlier stages of a diplomat's career proves to have been vital in prolonging the recognition of former Russian diplomats for some time after the revolution. Sazonov's relationship with Briand was central to this, and was used to gain certain concessions long after Soviet power and the presence of Soviet diplomatic agencies had become a reality that could no longer be avoided by pretending they did not exist.

We start to wonder here about how superficial a diplomat's social world was. To what extent were friendships based upon the fact that an individual was an ambassador, for example: was the social circle based entirely on official status, with

[123] Dittmer, "The Russian Foreign Ministry under Nicholas II"; Sinel, "The Socialization of the Russian Bureaucratic Elite, 1811-1917," *Russian History* 3 (1976), pp. 1-33.
[124] Bakhmeteff, *Oral History*, p. 409.

any resulting friendships being simply of a practical nature? If this was the case, when an individual relinquished a diplomatic post, did he then also lose the right and the opportunity to participate in the social circle he had previously inhabited? Key here is understanding the relationship between diplomatic status and social membership, in the diplomatic world. Having seen that highly-placed diplomats frequently had influential friends, as in the case of Sazonov and Briand, the next step is to examine how much the preservation of the quasi-diplomatic status afforded to the members of the Council of Ambassadors depended on social contacts and personal friendships.

What is evident from the preservation of some parts of the Tsarist foreign service is that there was clearly a great sense of common identity, shared experience and common values. It is apparent that service in the Tsarist MID had a huge impact on the individual, and there was still a need for those individuals to belong to that group. Although they had lost control of the material aspects of the Tsarist MID, in the form of buildings and archives, they preserved the lines of communication and relationships that had been constructed from within. The Council of Ambassadors was a refuge for diplomats displaced by the revolution long after it had ceased to have any political sway and its members would remain in contact for the remainder of their lives. In some ways the Council of Ambassadors can be seen as a means for the survival of the individual in a world to which he did not belong, by preserving some of the constructs of that to which he did. It functioned to preserve the institution's sense of identity and by extension that of the individual, as the individual cannot be separated from the institution. The institutionalization of the individual through service in the MID made it impossible for the individual to function without the ministry as a frame of reference, and implied that the individuals who served in the MID had little identity beyond the constraints of service. Nabokoff, one of the Council of Ambassadors, attests to the fact that an individual diplomat needed to be prevented from 'confusing himself with his office', thus suggesting the likelihood that the men who made up the body of former Russian

diplomats may have fallen into this trap and had no real means of functioning in a world without the structure of diplomacy and the status brought by their posts.[125]

In addition to the Council of Ambassadors, and their preservation of a diplomatic institution, not all Tsarist missions were relinquished to the Bolsheviks. It seems strange that Tsarist legations continued to exist following the establishment of Soviet power in Russia, and thus one must ask why they existed and were still dealt with as Russian diplomatic missions. As has been asserted, diplomatic status is dependent on the recognition of a government by a foreign power. How then can one explain the presence of former diplomats who still enjoyed many of their old privileges through the virtue of 'carrying on in their old job'?[126] For explanation, one must realize the extent to which foreign powers chose to deny the reality of the establishment of Soviet power in Russia in the years immediately following the Revolution. Abrikossov attests that the Japanese government saw his embassy as being the servant of the legitimate government of Russia and so agreed to continue to deal with them and not to recognize the Soviet government until it had no choice.[127] The existence of the Council of Ambassadors further demonstrates this attitude, although Nabokoff did predict in 1919 that the 'position of diplomats in Entente capitals would soon become untenable'.[128] Indeed, by agreeing to maintain a relationship with Tsarist missions and diplomats, foreign powers were able to deny the legitimacy of Soviet diplomats as, theoretically, it was not possible for the two to coexist. Why then, did they continue relations with representatives of an overthrown state and seek to deny the Soviets recognition?

The reasons behind the continuing existence of the Russian diplomatic service, and the fact that it existed alongside the Soviet, appear to have been grounded in fear. The Bolshevik ideology was of world revolution, and the Imperial powers in 1917 may have been afraid that by granting the Soviet state diplomatic status and removing the Tsarist diplomats from their positions, they would legitimize

---

[125] Nabokoff, *Letters*, p. ix.
[126] Letter from Nabokoff to Donald Nesbitt, 17th September 1919 in ibid., p. 371.
[127] Abrikossov, *Revelations*, p. 91.
[128] Letter from Nabokoff to Donald Nesbitt, 17th September 1919 in Nabokoff, *Letters*, p. 371.

a revolutionary regime which threatened their domestic security. Surely there is also the notion that in an age of a crisis in imperialism, other imperial nations preferred not to entertain the idea of an empire disappearing so suddenly. The refusal to grant diplomatic recognition to the Soviet state rested heavily on the fear that Soviet diplomatic agents might spark revolution and bring about the collapse of empires beyond the borders of Russia. As has been shown, this fear was grounded in the experience of hosting Soviet diplomatic missions by foreign powers and the fact that diplomacy was seen to have been abused. In addition, there was the fact that Soviet diplomats and Soviet diplomacy represented an unknown. As has been discussed above, imperial diplomacy rested heavily upon personal friendships, which must surely have brought a sense of predictability to diplomatic negotiations. Added to this is the common identity shared with servants of the old order and imperial powers. Soviet diplomats represented a new type of state, different from anything the world had seen. Foreign powers faced with diplomats of a hitherto unseen type of government were clearly concerned about what they might have to face around the negotiating table with servants of the Soviet state.

Conclusion

'While not considering itself in any way a successor to the diplomatic policy of the Tsarist government', the Narkomindel was the successor of the MID in a number of ways.[129] The clear desire to take control of the material side of the MID shows that Soviet diplomacy could not start entirely from scratch and that there was a very real need to control buildings and archives in order to assert diplomatic authority. Thus, ownership of the means of diplomacy was of extreme importance in order to display to the world which government was in control of the diplomatic missions, and by implication the country. As a result of this need, the Narkomindel was unable, and unwilling, to shake off some of the MID's trappings, and inherited

[129] Copy of aide mémoire (no. 306) to Foreign Office 22nd March 1922, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, n. 21, d. 307, l. 5.

at least part of the Russian foreign service's mantle. This arises both as a result of displacing the former Tsarist missions overseas, and as an apparently unavoidable aspect of establishing a foreign service. Despite huge changes in the government of Russia in 1917, diplomacy and the diplomatic world were left largely unchanged and the Bolsheviks were forced to appoint their diplomats to the positions of their predecessors. Thus, the nature of diplomacy and the struggle with the Council of Ambassadors led to the Narkomindel being the inheritors of the MID's infrastructure. The very fact that the Bolsheviks became involved in diplomacy, and complied with some of its rules, made them carriers of its discourse and made it difficult for them to function outside of it. Diplomacy was resilient to any attempts the Bolsheviks made to subvert or change it and as a result there was little choice for the Soviets but to reinvent Russian diplomacy with new personnel and with new policy aims.

There were clear policy differences to Tsarist diplomacy, although the Soviet state came to realize that despite attempts to subvert diplomacy for revolutionary ends, admittedly with some success, there was a very real need to play the game of diplomacy and conform to its rules. The rules – in terms of acceptable activity, behaviour, dress, and manners – were clear in diplomacy, and Soviet diplomats needed to learn the rules and how to conform to them, or at the very least appear to be doing so. As well as constant threats – some of which were acted upon – that disseminating propaganda would have repercussions, the tenets of international law caused the Soviet state to abandon propaganda as an activity carried out by diplomatic agents, subordinating it to the Comintern. There was no abandoning of propaganda on the world stage, but simply a distancing of the Narkomindel from its dissemination, despite the fact that it remained, at least begrudgingly, complicit in it through the presence of Comintern agents in Soviet missions. The Narkomindel could not be a credible diplomatic agency if it continued to engage in agitation, and it is clear that this became apparent to the Soviet government. It was, however, loath to give up all attempts to further the revolution.

Just as the Bolsheviks were keen to create a new diplomatic world in which they held a place, so the diplomats of the old regime were keen to preserve their world from the threat posed by the Soviet state's entry onto the world stage. Their motives for this would appear to lie not only in loyalty to Russia and their former offices, but also out of a selfish desire to protect and preserve their own status and sense of identity. Tsarist diplomats, in leaving their positions behind, were giving up their connection to a state they had loyally served. The disappearance of that state was met with a mixture of denial and a hope that the situation in Russia would be resolved. The unwillingness of Tsarist diplomats to relinquish their posts, and their attempts to block the Soviet diplomatic effort, demonstrate their belief that they still served a Russia that was only temporarily absent from the world. Even beyond the hope that the Soviet regime would be defeated, they continued to cling to the wreckage of the structures from which they derived their sense of identity. The Tsarist diplomat found it hard to define himself beyond the diplomatic position he had held, and hence needed to preserve any vestiges of that world that might be kept.

Foreign powers struggled to deal with multiple diplomatic agencies claiming authority. In some cases they sought to appease them, while in others they simply tried to wash their hands of the situation. What is clear is that the personal connections between former Tsarist diplomats and foreign officials enabled them to continue functioning as some form of group representing Russia. Foreign powers were highly wary of change and the appearance of a new radical state. They too sought to preserve the old order of diplomacy, as a means of self-protection from an aggressive regime intent on sparking world revolution. As time went on, however, the world situation as well as the Russian one gave rise to a greater number of professional diplomats in the 1920s, and the realization that the Soviet Union was a power that could and would be dealt with through diplomacy.

The immediate post-revolutionary phase of Soviet diplomacy displays a Soviet attempt to change the diplomatic field and to establish a diplomatic culture with which they felt comfortable. Diplomatic society, however, proved to be resistant to this and the Bolsheviks were obliged to show outward compliance to the

existing system in order to achieve any gains in diplomacy. What is shown in the period is that the Soviets were beginning to understand how they could present themselves as suitable members of the diplomatic field, and although not as developed as during later phases of Soviet diplomacy, there was definite outward complicity and a realization of how the game of diplomacy might be played.

Chapter 4

Change and Compromise: Soviet Diplomatic Culture in the 1920s

The aims of Soviet diplomacy in the 1920s were to expand and strengthen diplomatic connections, in order to emerge on the diplomatic scene as a fully accepted and functioning state equal to the world's great powers, and to allow the Soviet Union the opportunity to develop economically by opening and maintaining channels for international trade. The extent to which Soviet diplomacy had to change and compromise its revolutionary aspects is central to the realignment of the culture of Soviet diplomacy during the 1920s.

The means employed in order to gain the required level of acceptability for Russia's return to the diplomatic scene need to be examined and compared with Soviet diplomatic behaviour during the revolutionary years. One must also consider how the international climate had changed, presenting new opportunities and challenges for the Soviet Union in international affairs.

As Soviet diplomacy moved from its immediate post-revolutionary phase, one sees a change in the attitudes of both the regime and of individual diplomats. Following the civil war, it had become clear to foreign powers that the Soviet state was not going to disappear, as had been hoped, and that there was a very real need to engage with this new Russia. At the same time, there was a shift in Soviet diplomacy's aims – moving towards a policy designed to gain recognition, and away from the propaganda activities that Soviet diplomatic missions had engaged in immediately following the revolution.

Soviet diplomacy's changing aims in the mid 1920s gave rise to a new type of diplomat in the Narkomindel – better suited to the tasks of traditional diplomacy than the revolutionary individuals selected for service in 1918. The diplomats entering the Narkomindel in the mid 1920s are an important key to the change in diplomatic culture in the period, as are those who left the Narkomindel. What

prompted this shift? Was it an abandoning of the attempt to spread world revolution? Was it a step towards conforming to the norms of international diplomacy?

While the Soviet state may have shown itself willing to engage in more 'normal' relations with a view to achieving *de jure* recognition, the Narkomindel did not always demonstrate knowledge of the proper procedures implicit in the conduct of diplomatic relations.[1] Upon his appointment to Britain in 1923, Khristian Rakovskii attempted to present his credentials directly to the Prime Minister rather than to the Foreign Office.[2] While this could be interpreted as a rejection of the traditions of diplomacy by attempting to establish a dialogue with the British government, rather than its diplomats who, through their complicity with bourgeois diplomacy, might be seen as highly suspect, there is also the sense that there was a lack of understanding, at least as far as British observers were concerned, on the part of the Soviets. While Soviet diplomats had learnt, and were expressing, values important to their successful membership of diplomatic society, they had not entirely succeeded in mastering the subtleties of diplomatic etiquette.

Simultaneously with Soviet diplomats showing themselves more willing to conform to the rules of diplomacy, one sees a rise in the number of former Mensheviks appointed to the Narkomindel. While this is perhaps not so surprising, given the Menshevik line regarding armed conflict (most Mensheviks had been against Russia's involvement in the First World War), the noticeable rise in the number of former Mensheviks in the Narkomindel during the 1920s suggests that it was recruiting individuals who had a Marxist pedigree but a slightly different – less militantly aggressive and more moderate – outlook to those it had recruited in the

---

[1] Arthur Marshall, *Memorandum on the Russian Situation and a Suggestion as to British Policy* (London, 1927), in AVP RF, f. 069, op. 12, p. 36, d. 22.

[2] Letter from Edmund Ovey (Foreign Office) to Berzin, 12th October 1923 (copy), AVP RF, f. 069, op. 7, p. 7, d. 14, l. 30. Khristian Georgorievich Rakovskii (1873-1941), a career revolutionary and founding member of the Comintern. In 1919 became head of the Ukrainian Provisional Government, Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian Republic and President of the Ukrainian Defence Council. He was Chargé d'affaires in London, 1924-5, and Ambassador to France, 1926-7. He was arrested in 1937, and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment at the third show trial in 1938.

aftermath of the revolution. That this does not fit with the 'commanding heights' policy of appointing Bolsheviks into critical positions, demonstrates the fact that 'political considerations in Soviet administrative policy were consistently tempered by a sober recognition of the need for [...] qualified officials'.[3] The reality in fact seems to have been that former Mensheviks were possibly better suited to diplomacy than their Bolshevik colleagues.

The major diplomatic aim of the 1920s was to achieve *de jure* diplomatic recognition by foreign powers. A new respectability – such that the Soviets would be seen as acceptable diplomats, not revolutionaries – was necessary for this. Part and parcel of this was a move away from illegal revolutionary activity. The Soviet Union's diplomats were to prove that they could be dealt with, and that they should be considered equal to their foreign counterparts. This was especially the case with the Soviet appointment of Alexandra Kollontai as the first female diplomat the world had seen. Soviet diplomats in the 1920s sought to demonstrate that they could play the game, and that they understood the rules of diplomacy. Even when they flouted convention, they were at pains to deny and to limit the damage they had done. What is apparent is that the 1920s saw the return of Russia as a major, but now revolutionary, power to the European diplomatic arena. This chapter will examine the means Soviet diplomats used to achieve this, and will look at how the culture of Soviet diplomacy was shaped by the changes of the 1920s.

Money Opens the Door – Trade and the Revival of Diplomacy

The Soviet state wanted to establish foreign trade for two reasons: Russia had a real need to expand its overseas trade as an economic necessity, and trade could be used as a prelude to formal diplomatic relations with a foreign power. Bolshevik policy rested on building the Soviet economy by catching up with, and

[3] Stephen Sternheimer, "Administration for Development: the Emerging Bureaucratic Elite, 1920-1930," in Pintner and Rowney (eds.), *Russian Officialdom*, pp. 336, 342.

eventually overtaking, the western industrial powers. Industry could only grow, however, if Russia was able to import materials needed for this expansion and export the goods produced. In conjunction with this, the desire to expand trade was encouraged by the New Economic Policy (NEP), which promoted the use of market mechanisms, albeit limited in crucial ways, and internal trade in order to modernize and industrialize Russia in the 1920s. The NEP can be seen as a product of the realization that the hoped-for worldwide revolution was not going to happen; the Soviet state needed to work on building itself, at least temporarily, establishing a dialogue with foreign imperialist powers through a more traditional approach to diplomacy.[4] Because of the need for foreign trade, the NEP required a revised diplomatic approach. Gone was the drive to instigate world revolution, which was replaced by a new possibility for peaceful coexistence and good relations with foreign powers, coupled with an expansion in trade.[5] The Narkomindel now found it necessary to establish trade relations and to convert its quasi-diplomatic institutions into diplomatic missions in foreign states.

The conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement in 1921 granted the Soviet state its first recognition by any foreign power, and established a framework for relations between the two states. While the Soviet state saw the trade agreement as being of a 'temporary and insufficient character' it nonetheless presented itself as an opportunity for the Soviets to develop diplomatic relations through the establishment of a dialogue with Britain based around trade.[6] This agreement was expanded in 1924 into the Anglo-Soviet General Treaty and Commercial Agreement, granting the Soviet Union official recognition by Britain. That the British had decided to enter into formal relations with the Soviet Union provided a stamp of acceptance, meaning that other powers might then see the Soviets as fit to

---

[4] Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. XLII, p. 22. After 1924 Stalin would announce a policy of 'building socialism in one country'.

[5] *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki SSSR* (hereafter *DVP SSSR)*, Vol., p. 639; Chossudovsky, "Chicherin and the Evolution of Soviet Foreign policy", p. 19.

[6] Letter from Litvinov to Johnson (British Ambassador in Moscow), 12th May 1923, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 27, d. 384, l. 19.

enter into negotiations. It also proved successful the Narkomindel's strategy of establishing diplomatic relations through trade.

Establishing trade relations was a prelude to more formal diplomatic relations with the Entente powers. Chicherin instructed Krasin to use trade as a means of leverage in negotiations with Lloyd-George in 1920.[7] Further, established trade relations with Britain were to be used as a foothold to spread trade in Europe, notably France.[8] Similarly, trade was used as a means to gain recognition from Norway.[9] That trade was the Narkomindel's major activity and was being used as a means to work towards full diplomatic recognition in the early 1920s can be seen in the following table (table 4.1), showing the relative size of Trade Delegations to diplomatic and consular missions (most notably in Britain and Germany). The Trade Delegations were significantly larger in terms of staff, showing that trade was being used as a means of establishing a diplomatic agency in a given country.

[7] Letter from Chicherin to Krasin, 21st June 1920, AVPRF, f. 069, op. 4, p. 3, d. 1, l. 1; Letter from Chicherin to Berzin, 30th September 1920, AVPRF, f. 069, op. 4, p. 3, d. 1, l. 3. (at this point they had established relations with all the Entente powers except France).
[8] Letter from Chicherin to Rakovskii, 1st October, 1923, AVP RF f. 069, op. 7, p. 7, d. 14, l. 3.
[9] Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki*, vol. 1, pp. 58-62.

Table 4.1 Size of Soviet Foreign Missions, 1924

Country	Officers on diplomatic list[10]	Total[11]	Employees	
			Diplomatic & Consular	Trade Delegation
Britain	4	882	22	860
Germany	11	779	19	750
Latvia	5	397	56	341
Turkey	4	84	46	38
Estonia	4	62	9	53
Austria	8	60	28	32
Poland	4	57	25	32
Persia	8	55	15	40
Sweden	4	53	53	
France	9	31	31	
Denmark	6	26	26	
Norway	4	11	11	
Lithuania	4	8	8	
Mexico	3	4	4	

Table compiled by US Diplomatic Service, 701.6100/5, report by Division of Eastern European Affairs, 13th March 1924

Krasin personified the rejection of revolutionary activity in order to pursue Soviet Russia's trade and diplomatic interests. As a result of this, he gained an unfavourable reputation in Bolshevik circles as a protector of bourgeois "specialists".[12] He espoused the normalization of trade relations with Britain in the belief that the expansion of Russia's trade with other countries depended on good relations with the leading European economic power. In order to achieve this, Krasin believed it necessary to minimize propaganda in Britain and in the British

[10] Diplomatic lists are compiled by the states to which individuals are accredited, therefore giving an indication of the number of individuals officially accredited. This means that they do not account for unofficial members, or for couriers.
[11] This figure indicates the total number of employees in diplomatic and consular missions and trade delegations.
[12] Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, p. 138.

Empire, and to give Britain assurances to that end.[13] His abandonment of using diplomacy to pursue revolutionary goals can be seen in his attack, during the Twelfth Party Congress in 1923, on the vestiges of an adventurist revolutionary policy; he was by this time convinced that such a policy would not lead to revolution abroad.[14] Kollontai recalled a conversation with Stalin in 1922 in which he told her to pursue economic and trade relations with Norway in order that Britain might be brought to an agreement with the Soviet Union.[15] Thus, the strategy of pursuing trade as a precursor to further diplomatic recognition stemmed from the Politburo as well as from individual diplomats, whose experiences had made it clear that this policy might yield success. As previously, diplomats came to the realization of the need for change before their masters in the Politburo.

The same was not necessarily the case for the Soviet Union's prospective suitors. From the British point of view, the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement was motivated by Britain's desire to establish trade with the Soviet Union, and did not necessarily pave the way for further recognition.[16] Britain noted with approval that the agreement had yielded some political success; there was a drop in the level of Soviet propaganda 'as compared with 1919-20'.[17] The French economist and politician Eduard Herriot's visit to the Soviet Union in 1922, and his subsequent recommendation for the establishment of relations with the Soviets, was largely motivated by economic concerns.[18] It is clear from this that foreign powers were keen to trade with the Soviet state, and not to be excluded from any trade agreements, lest they be left behind by other European powers. The United States'

---

[13] *DVP SSSR*, vol. 3, pp. 412-3.
[14] *The Twelfth Party Congress, April 1923* (Moscow, 1923), p. 113, as quoted in Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, p. 139.
[15] Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki,* vol. 1, p. 415.
[16] *Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement* (London 1922), p. 2; Marshall, *Memorandum on the Russian Situation*, p. 1.
[17] Ibid., p. 1.
[18] Eduard Herriot, "Exportateur Français" (n.d.), in *Soobshcheniye iz Frantsii*, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 42, p. 259, d. 53619, l. 57.

lack of real need to trade with the Soviet Union helps explain why it refused to recognize the Soviet Union until the 1930s.

The Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement led to the establishment of a trade mission in Britain, with permission to use ciphers, have immunity, issue visas, and enjoy the rights afforded to official representatives of other governments.[19] The Soviet state, as a result of trade and the desire to expand it, had proved that it could be dealt with diplomatically. This was most clearly shown in the series of conferences of the early to mid 1920s, which resulted in *de jure* recognition for the Soviet Union by all the major powers except the United States.

Economics were to prove useful in other ways for the Soviet push for recognition. It is possible that the Soviets realized, in their Marxist reading of politics, that foreign states in the 1920s were extremely interested in economic power, and that playing on this interest might be a means to exploit the weaknesses of the capitalist imperial powers.[20] With this in mind our attention turns to the first conference of the 1920s that the Soviets attended, thereby embarking on their journey to full recognition.

The Road to Recognition – The Genoa Conference

The Genoa Conference in 1922 heralded the Soviet state's indisputable arrival on the stage of international diplomacy, and can tell us a great deal about how Soviet diplomats were beginning to come into line with the necessary outward display of conformity with the diplomatic habitus, such that they could effectively compete in the diplomatic field. The conference was convened to discuss Russia's debts, and

[19] *Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement*, pp. 6-7.
[20] Richard B. Day, *The Crisis and the Crash: Soviet Studies of the West (1917-1939)* (London, 1981), p. 63.

potential Soviet repayment of them.[21] From the Soviet point of view, the Genoa Conference presented an opportunity to work towards recognition by foreign powers and a chance to show the world that they had achieved the necessary level of respectability to move in diplomatic circles.[22] Remaining Tsarist diplomats clearly felt that the Genoa Conference heralded Soviet recognition by foreign powers, at the expense of continued recognition of Tsarist Russia's remaining missions under the Council of Ambassadors.[23] What Nabokoff had seen as inevitable in 1919 was now becoming a reality.[24] Although the issue of debts was clearly important for the Entente powers, the matters discussed at the conference were less important than the fact that the conference included the Soviet Union, and not the Council of Ambassadors.

Initially it seemed that Lenin would lead the delegation to Genoa, and his last minute decision not to go demonstrates that he felt they would gain little from the conference politically.[25] Indeed, Chicherin questioned whether a Soviet delegation should be sent at all, given that the directions from Lenin, regarding using the conference as an opportunity for propaganda, would merely serve to disrupt the conference.[26] In the end the delegation was led by Chicherin, accompanied by Litvinov, Ioffe, Krasin and Vorovsky. Litvinov was personally briefed by Lenin to be cautious and to watch Chicherin, lest he broker a deal that was detrimental to the Soviet Union for the sake of achieving further recognition.[27] The delegation was warned not to be in hurry to conclude any agreements for the sake of re-entry into European diplomacy, although Lenin sanctioned a bona fide

---

[21] Carole Fink, *The Genoa Conference: European Diplomacy, 1921-1922* (London, 1984), p. 148.
[22] Potemkin (ed.), *Istoriia diplomatii,* vol.3, p. 161; Chossudovsky, "Chicherin and the Evolution of Soviet Foreign Policy," p.16.
[23] Letter from Maklakov to Bakhmeteff, 24th May 1922, in Budnitskii (ed.), *"Sovershenno lichno i doveritel'no!* vol. 2, pp. 313-20.
[24] Letter from Nabokoff to Nesbitt, 17th September 1919, in Nabokoff, *Letters*, p. 371.
[25] Arthur Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff* (New York, 1943), p. 182.
[26] Message from Chicherin to Lenin, 30th January 1922, RGASPI, f. 2, op. 2, d. 1106, l. 2-3, reproduced in Pipes (ed.), *The Unknown Lenin,* p. 196.
[27] Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff,* p. 182.

treaty with Germany, with whom preliminary moves had already been made.[28] It appears that the Soviets' aim lay in making the Soviet Union's presence felt and demonstrating to the world that Soviet diplomats were equal to their foreign counterparts. Popular opinion, shown in the Soviet press, saw the invitation to Genoa as a 'major moral victory'.[29] By attending the conference, Soviet diplomats were making a statement that Russia had returned to the negotiating table.

The Soviet decision on who should attend the conference sheds light on how the diplomatic culture was being shaped. Lenin's attendance, and the use of the conference to disseminate propaganda, were clearly not viable actions within diplomacy and Chicherin, and probably others, realized this. More significant as a sign of the prevailing Soviet diplomatic culture in this instance is that Soviet diplomats, in particular Chicherin, desired Soviet entry into official diplomacy, and Lenin clearly feared that this goal could in fact be harmful to the Soviet Union. To be sure though, the very presence of a Soviet delegation at the Genoa Conference which showed itself ready and suitable to be involved in diplomacy with other powers was enough to demonstrate that the Soviet Union's diplomats had acquired the relevant level of capital and were expressing the values of the diplomatic habitus, such that they could be allowed access to the field of diplomacy. Thus, it was important that the Soviet delegation sent out the right message to the diplomatic community regarding its intentions, not with respect to foreign policy, but that they were prepared to play by diplomacy's rules, share in its values, and join the international diplomatic community.

A large part of Soviet attendance at Genoa was about sending the diplomatic community the right message, and making a good impression, and as a result they needed to show that they could present themselves successfully to the diplomatic

---

[28] Telegram from Lenin, Kamenev, Stalin, Trotsky, and Molotov to Chicherin and the Soviet Delegation in Genoa, 25th April 1922, RGASPI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 23098, l. 3, reproduced in Pipes (ed.), *The Unknown Lenin*, p. 161; Recollections of Litvinov, in Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff*, pp. 182-3.

[29] Yuri Steklov, "Editorial," *Izvestiya*, 11th January 1922, as quoted in Stephen White, *The Origins of Detente: the Genoa Conference and Soviet-Western Relations, 1921-1922* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 109.

world. The other representatives viewed the Soviet delegation with curiosity. Their outward appearance did not seem to be 'different' – all appeared in conventional diplomatic garb.[30] Photographs of Soviet delegates to the Genoa conference show them conforming to the norms of diplomatic dress – top hats and frock coats (see photographs, figs. 4.1 and 4.2 below). The adherence to diplomatic dress codes is significant as it demonstrates that the Soviet delegation was making concessions in their dress in order to present themselves as suitable individuals to be involved in diplomacy. As Barthes notes, outward signals such as dress or costume give an indication of what can be expected from an individual and his behaviour.[31] That the Soviet delegation was prepared to compromise on dress, fitting into a bourgeois mould, must have indicated to foreign diplomats at the Genoa Conference that the Soviet Union was serious about joining the ranks of diplomatic society and was prepared to make concessions in order to do so, and signalled that further compliance with the norms of the diplomatic field could be expected. Indeed, the Soviet delegates' behaviour did fit with the expectation provided by their dress as, according to Pope who claims his information came from observers at the time, their 'behaviour was formal, stiff, correct' and their 'manners' were impeccable.[32] Soviet diplomats had learnt the lessons of the previous years – that they needed to play the part of the diplomat if they were to be accepted by foreign diplomats. This represents more than just a realization on the Soviet part that they needed to follow certain rules. It is a clear signal that Soviet diplomatic culture was changing, that domestic desires and international restriction were shaping it, and that ideological concerns were being sacrificed for pragmatism.

---

[30] Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff*, p. 183.
[31] Barthes, *Myhtologies,* p. 17.
[32] Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff*, p. 183.

Fig. 4.1.

Soviet delegates en route to Genoa in 1922. From left: Chicherin, Radek, Litvinov, Bratmann-Brodovski (Photograph courtesy of Roger-Viollet)

Fig. 4.2. Soviet Delegates at the Genoa Conference

The effect that the Soviet delegation had at Genoa was enormous. They scored a major coup at the conference – the right to have a seat on each of the four subcommittees, including those not set up to discuss specifically Russian affairs at the conference – effectively reinstating Russia as one of the great powers of Europe and heralding the way for a seat on the League of Nations council.[33] In addition, they secretly signed the Treaty of Rapallo with Germany, which effectively brought the Genoa conference to a close. Other foreign diplomats were outraged, feeling that the conference had been undermined by Soviet secrecy. The Soviets had gained a resumption of diplomatic and consular relations with Germany and a regulation of economic relations on a basis of mutual cooperation.[34] According to third-party observers, Rapallo was innocuous and did not represent any concrete alliance. Even so, the west had lost Germany as a potential collaborator for a united front against the Soviet Union.[35] Additionally, in concluding formal diplomatic relations with Germany, the Soviet Union had established itself as the legitimate representative of Russia. Significantly, an agreement with Germany drove a wedge into the collective front of the Entente.

George Kennan alleges that the conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo was a shrewd move by the Soviets, and an exploitation of the circumstances presented by the Genoa conference.[36] The Soviet Union had checked anti-Soviet movements in the European diplomatic community, making it impossible to avoid discussion of the resumption of trade and relations with Russia. Kennan, an American specialist on Russia, believed that the major factor for this was the collective 'weakness of the diplomacy of the Western democracies: [diplomacy's] smugness, its superficiality, its national-emotional bias, its dilettantism of execution, its state of enslavement to the vagaries of domestic politics' as well as the lack of US involvement in the

---

[33] Ibid., p. 184.
[34] Chris Ward, *Stalin's Russia* (London, 1999), p. 151.
[35] George Kennan, *Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin* (New York, 1960), p. 211.
[36] Kennan was US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1952-61.

Genoa conference.[37] From this we can see that observers at the time felt that the Soviet Union was successfully exploiting the weaknesses of western capitalist states, and their diplomacy. Kennan would seem to be suggesting that Soviet diplomacy lacked the 'dilettantism of execution' and therefore was in a position to make diplomatic moves quickly and on the basis of how they served the Soviet state rather than how they fitted into a European order of diplomacy.

Soviet diplomatic culture was practical and goal-orientated – the Soviets knew what they wanted to achieve and by this point understood the concessions they needed to do so, even if this meant compromising their ideals to the extent of fully joining the diplomatic field and adhering to its rules. In this light, even if Rapallo was of little significance as an alliance, its significance as a major coup on the road to recognition for the Soviet state is undeniable: it shows the reorientation of Soviet diplomatic culture towards gaining diplomatic status for diplomatic purposes, rather than as a means to further the revolution.[38] Soviet diplomats were keen to secure Russia's re-entry into a world from which she had been excluded, and they were willing to all but abandon their ideology in order to achieve it.

The Genoa Conference's importance as the beginning of the road to official recognition is signalled by the evaporation of the Council of Ambassadors' power. Genoa was the first of several serious blows to the Council of Ambassadors. Not only were their protests at the Soviet presence at Genoa ignored, but they were not invited, even as spectators, as they had been at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. They were allowed no advisory committee to consult with the delegates, and were effectively shut out from any discussion of Russian affairs with foreign powers.[39] When Maklakov tried to advise the French government he was rudely told that the

---

[37] Kennan, *Russia and the West*, p. 212.

[38] The lack of political significance in the Treaty of Rapallo lies in the fact that it did not disrupt European diplomacy as much as initial reactions believed it might, and in fact it granted no concrete concessions to the Soviet Union, leading to the Soviet pursuance of further diplomatic relations with other states.

[39] Letter from Girs to Botkin, 15th March 1922, Botkin Collection, BAR.

French government had no need for the advice of the émigré 'specialists'[40]. Evidently, with the Soviet arrival on the international scene, beginning with the Genoa Conference, the Council of Ambassadors was fast losing its influence upon the Entente powers.

Meanwhile, as the former Tsarist diplomats watched their influence and power slipping away, the Soviets' were gaining confidence as a result of their involvement at Genoa. They had made their debut on the international diplomatic scene and could now be dealt with at further conferences. This demonstrated the ascendancy of the Narkomindel, and the Soviet Union, in the diplomatic arena. The Hague Conference (May 31st- July 23rd 1922) and then the Lausanne Conference (1922-3), convened to discuss the Straits question regarding access to the Black Sea, made clear that foreign powers would from that point negotiate with Soviet, rather than White, representatives regarding Russia.[41] Maklakov was incensed, clearly concerned that this signalled the impending recognition of the Soviet State (both Genoa and The Hague conferences had collapsed, but a discussion of the Straits question was clearly going to result in a treaty). Maklakov voiced concerns that the Soviet delegation would give concessions in order to be included as a signatory on a major international treaty, and thereby achieve recognition.[42]

How the recognition process was handled, and indeed the aims of formal acceptance to the diplomatic field, demonstrate the shift in Soviet diplomatic culture away from revolution and towards pragmatism. Recognition was more than just an aim to be achieved by diplomats – what lay behind it was the goal of ensuring stability for the Soviet Union with the outside world such that it could develop internally. As can be seen domestically with Stalin's proclamation of the building of 'socialism in one country' and with the NEP, by the end of the Civil War in

---

[40] Letter from Maklakov to Bakhmeteff, 5th April 1922, in Budnitskii (ed.), *"Sovershenno lichno i doveritel'no!"* vol. 2, p. 245.
[41] Tongour, "Diplomacy in Exile", p. 355.
[42] Letter from Maklakov to Bakhmeteff, 7th October 1922, in Budnitskii (ed.), *"Sovershenno lichno i doveritel'no!"* vol. 2, p. 339.

Russia the regime's priorities had changed. This caused a shift in diplomatic culture that is well expressed in the light of the recognition progress. Chicherin himself, referring to his Tsarist predecessor A. M. Gorchakov, sought stability in Soviet international relations such that domestic policies could be acted upon without external distractions.[43]

The process shows another change in Soviet diplomatic culture, less policy-based than that mentioned above. While there was a desire to achieve accommodation with the Entente powers, the means to achieve it were dictated by rules that were beyond the Soviets' power to change. Only by entering the diplomatic field and following its established rules could Soviet diplomats hope to achieve their ends. Thus, we see Soviet diplomats displaying the symbolic capital of dress at international conferences and coming into diplomacy expressing their intentions to be dealt with as equals. In doing so, Soviet diplomats elevated themselves into a more suitable position with regards to the diplomatic field than they had previously occupied.

It is difficult to draw a clear distinction between these two shifts in Soviet diplomatic culture surrounding the recognition process. Soviet desire to achieve recognition for the sake of domestic security was the catalyst for the realignment, as diplomats came to realize that they needed to pursue a line of traditional diplomacy, and abandon using it for revolutionary purposes, to achieve stability in foreign relations. The goal-orientated approach of the Soviets led them to change, as the diplomatic field continued to be resistant to any level of change that might be exerted on it. Non-conformism could only lead to Soviet diplomats functioning outside the field, or only very ineffectively within it, as diplomats and states shunned them as unsuitable to be dealt with diplomatically. The shift in Soviet diplomatic culture brought Soviet diplomats in line with the habitus of the

[43] O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, p. 9.

diplomatic field as they showed themselves capable of adhering to its rules and foreign diplomats became prepared to engage with them.[44]

The Council of Ambassadors in Decline

Despite the fact that Soviet diplomats had clearly become the diplomatic agents of Russia, the Council of Ambassadors refused to cease their attempts to act as Russia's representatives. Some individuals recognized and accepted the end of any real power that the Council of Ambassadors had possessed. Bakhmeteff was the first to take action on this, resigning his post as Ambassador to the United States on 30th June 1922. Bakhmeteff abandoned diplomacy, going into business in the US, but other diplomats continued to serve Russia. There is here a shift away from the parallel diplomatic services of Russia, to the creation of a parallel Russia – a Russia that now existed as an idea to which émigrés clung, rather than a reality. Following recognition of the Soviet Union, the Council of Ambassadors became involved far more in émigré matters than in attempting to represent a Russia that no longer existed.[45] It is clear from this that even beyond the end of Tsarist Russia, her servants continued to exhibit a great deal of attachment to the country they had served. How far they defined themselves through their service is surely at play here.

The case of Russian émigrés in France lends itself to helpful analysis of the collapse of the Council of Ambassadors as a body conducting diplomacy on behalf of Russia. Based in Paris, and by that point headed by Maklakov (who had never officially been Ambassador to France, his appointment having coincided with the October Revolution), its last point of influence as an official diplomatic body was

[44] Marshall, *Memorandum on the Russian Situation*, p. 1.
[45] Kononova, "Deiatel'nost' diplomatov ," p. 117.

with the French government.[46] As the Council of Ambassadors lost any credible influence, it was not the Bolsheviks who dealt the Council of Ambassadors its death blow, but rather a French economist and politician, Eduard Herriot. At the invitation of the Soviet leadership, Herriot travelled to Russia, meeting with Soviet officials in September and October 1922.[47] Interested in economic issues, he returned to France with recommendations to resume relations with Russia, beginning with the establishment of trade relations and the exchange of missions, but expanding into complete diplomatic relations.[48]

Despite this, and despite the Soviet participation at international conferences, the Council of Ambassadors continued its attempts to interfere in diplomatic matters, although it was becoming increasingly apparent to the Entente powers that it was providing a heavily skewed picture of Russia, even to the extent of fabrication. Senator de Monzie, following his visit to the Soviet Union in February 1923, launched an attack on the Council of Ambassadors and their tendency to interfere, asking 'is it too much to expect that Frenchmen should be able to discuss Franco-Russian relations on the basis of French interests, without the blatant interference of Russian refugee elements?' Instead he asked for 'the freedom to consider the possibility of resuming relations with Russia without having to consult with Mr. Kokovstev or Miliukov', who had 'inordinate influence [...] with the 'Russian Specialists' at Quai d'Orsay'.[49] France remained the last state in Europe not to recognize the Soviet Union; however, continued association with the Council of Ambassadors was harming French interests by keeping France at a distance from others in European diplomacy and in the 'American camp', where she could not stay forever. The start of the withdrawal of recognition began in December 1922, when

[46] Tongour, "Diplomacy in Exile," p. 11.
[47] Account of first meeting between Herriot, Daladier and Karakhan, 20th September 1922, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 42, p. 259, d. 53619, l. 18.
[48] *Soobsheniya iz Frantsii,* 3rd November 1922, AVP RF f. 04, op. 42, p. 259, d. 53619, l. 53; Herriot, *Exportateur Français,* in ibid., l.57; Herriot, *La Russie Nouvelle* (Paris, 1923).
[49] E. de Monzie, "Du Droit pour un Français de penser a la Russie," in Marc Semenoff (ed.), *Les Ecrits pour et contre, les relations de la France avec les Soviets Russes* (Paris, 1923), as quoted in Tongour "Diplomacy in Exile," pp. 366-7; n. 206, p. 501.

the Quai d'Orsay announced that as of 1st January 1923 the names of Russian (i.e. non-Soviet) diplomatic personnel would no longer appear on the Diplomatic Lists. The Council of Ambassadors started to prepare for the official establishment of Franco-Soviet relations, and to address the issue of how to represent émigré matters thereafter. Prior to recognition, the French government assured Maklakov that he would be allowed to retain certain privileges afforded to White Consuls, such as issuing documents and passports (Nansen Passports for stateless individuals) and handling legal questions involving émigré rights.[50] Despite these last vestiges of diplomatic status, Maklakov was informed on 27th October 1924 that the Soviet state would take possession of the embassy the next day, with France regarding the Soviet Union as the legitimate owners should there be any dispute over ownership.[51] The embassy was swiftly evacuated, leaving the archive behind (to Maklakov's disappointment), thus bringing the Council of Ambassador's official presence in an Entente capital to a close and leaving the former Ambassadors of Russia in a state where 'all ideals had been compromised, all principles made ridiculous, all leaders dethroned, all hope failed, all unity lost...and the very soil gone from under foot'.[52] In losing their official position as representatives of Russia, although they continued to serve émigré interests, the former Tsarist diplomats had been marginalized.

---

[50] Letter from Maklakov to Bakhmeteff, 7th March 1924, in Budnitskii (ed.), *"Sovershenno lichno i doveritel'no!"* vol. 3, pp.159-160; Herriot, *Exportateur Français* (n.d.), in *Soobsheniya iz Frantsii*, 3rd November 1922, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 42, p. 259, d. 53619, l. 57; Letter from Maklakov to Bakhmeteff, 21st December 1922, in Budnitskii (ed.), *"Sovershenno lichno i doveritel'no!"* vol. 2, p. 409 ; Letter from Maklakov to Bakhmeteff, 5th June 1924, in Budnitskii (ed.), *"Sovershenno lichno i doveritel'no!,* vol. 3, p. 191; Tongour, "Diplomacy in Exile," pp.377-8.

[51] Letter from Maklakov to Kuskova-Prokopich, 12th November 1924, Maklakov personal papers, Box 18, HIA.

[52] Tongour, "Diplomacy in Exile", n. 265, p. 506; Vadim Bielov, *The White Morning After: the Russian Émigrés at the Crossroad* (Moscow, 1923), p. 3.

Learning to Play the Game – the Soviets Push Boundaries

On occasion the Soviet state interpreted the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement to afford the Soviets a greater level of privilege than it in fact did, to such an extent that the British accused them of breaking its terms 'almost from the start'.[53] The British government was concerned about the issue of propaganda directed against Britain and her interests, giving frequent warnings culminating in the 'Curzon Ultimatum' in 1923. The Central Committee maintained an interest in pursuing the political ends of world revolution, but it was subordinate to its wishes to pursue the establishment of diplomatic relations. There was continued subversion through the Narkomindel, but this was no longer being carried out expressly by diplomats.[54] It would appear that Soviet diplomats relaxed in their attempts to exploit their positions and the attendant privileges during the 1920s, and revolutionary work was taken over by the Comintern. The Narkomindel was pushing hard for full recognition and all the privileges which that would be gained by it; as a result one can see individuals attempting to function in capacities for which they were not accredited.

The Curzon Ultimatum of 29th May 1923 accused the Soviet Union of continuing to engage in propaganda in both Britain and the British Empire, thus breaking the terms of the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement.[55] Although the British government was aware that there was a drop in propaganda activity as a result of the trade agreement, it had not ceased altogether.[56] The British appear to have remained concerned that propaganda in the east, particularly in China, was a serious risk to British interests and they took steps to minimize it. The Curzon Ultimatum

[53] AVP RF, f. 069, op. 7, p. 7, d. 14, l. 30; Text to be telegrammed from Klishko to Chicherin no. 6066, 9th December 1921 (handwritten), AVP RF, f. 069, op. 6, p. 16, d. 81, l. 18; Minutes of meeting between Curzon and Krasin, 17th May 1923, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 23, d. 330, l. 2.
[54] Letter from Chicherin to Karakhan, 1st January 1926, No. 1, AVP RF, f. 100, op. 10, p. 123, d. 1, l. 2.
[55] Minutes of meeting between Curzon and Krasin, 17th May 1923, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 23, d. 330, l. 2.
[56] Marshall, *Memorandum on the Russian Situation*, p. 1.

must be seen as something of a warning shot from the British, but not one that the Soviets took as seriously as they should have, given the rupture that would eventually occur in Anglo-Soviet relations. The primary reason why the break between Britain and the Soviet Union did not follow immediately on the heels of the Curzon Ultimatum probably had more to do with the Labour victory in Britain in 1924 than it did with a decrease in Soviet propaganda.

The Trade Delegation had been used to get Comintern agents into Britain, and to purchase space for its operations. While Soviet diplomats were aware of the need to steer clear of propaganda and agitation, or to at least keep it hidden, they failed, as had been the case earlier, to be successful in all cases.[57] The Zinoviev letter, which purported to be from Zinoviev instructing the Comintern to incite agitation in the Communist Party of Great Britain, served to make matters worse for the Soviets.[58] When confronted, the Soviets denied the accusations, claiming that they had no knowledge of agents supposedly operating through the Trade Delegation in an illegal manner. Insistent that there was no involvement in anti-British propaganda, the Politburo instructed the Narkomindel to order Krasin to prepare to leave Britain in protest, presumably as they believed there was an impending rupture in diplomatic relations.[59]

The Soviet Union had been warned to desist from propaganda in 1923 by the British government and matters had looked bleak in the wake of the Zinoviev letter:

---

[57] Politburo Protocol no. 64, 24th January 1924, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 412, l. 8, reproduced in Grant M. Adibikov (ed), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Komintern: 1919-1943: Documenty,* (Moscow, 2004), p. 245; Letter from Chicherin to Kollontai, 4th November 1922, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 3, d. 40, l. 1; Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki*, vol. 1, p. 36; Letter from Chicherin to Berzin, 21st September 1921, AVP RF, f. 069, op. 5, p. 4, d. 3, l. 9-10; See previous chapter with regards to the Berzin mission.

[58] Christopher Andrew, "The British Secret Service and Anglo-Soviet Relations in the 1920s, Part 1: From the Trade Negotiations to the Zinoviev Letter", *The Historical Journal,* vol. 20, no. 3 (1977), pp. 673-706; Gill Bennet, "A Most Extraordinary and Mysterious Business: The Zinoviev Letter of 1924" (1999) available at http://www.fco.gov.uk on 30th December 2005; Nick Baron, "Zinoviev Letter" in J. Millar et al (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Russian History,* vol. 4, p. 1733.

[59] Minutes of meeting between Curzon and Krasin, 17th May 1923, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 4, p. 23, d. 330, l. 2; Politburo Protocol no. 9b 31st May 1923, RGASPI f. 17, op. 162, d. 1, l. 1-2, reproduced in *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Evropa: Resheniia "osoboi papki". 1923-1939* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 17-18.

the events of April and May 1927 were to prove the reality of the British threat to break off relations if the Soviets continued to be involved in revolutionary work in Britain and the British Empire. On the supposed evidence of Soviet revolutionary activity in China, which had been passed to the Foreign Office, the British raided Arcos and the Soviet Trade Delegation in London between 12th and 16th May.[60] The premise for the raid was a missing Air Ministry publication that the Soviets supposedly had in their possession. The police found neither this document nor anything else of any real importance, but claimed to have found a list of 'illegals' in the possession of one employee.[61] The British government subsequently published a White Paper containing documents found during the raid, as well as documents already amassed by the Foreign Office on the basis of which they drew conclusive proof that the Soviet Union was engaged in revolutionary subterfuge through the Trade Delegation and Arcos.[62] They subsequently broke off relations on 28th May.

Soviet diplomats protested their innocence and objected to the way in which the matter had been handled. Raids on diplomatic premises raised questions about the violation of diplomatic immunity, and there were accusations of violence towards employees.[63] What we see in these events is that Soviet diplomatic relations could easily be harmed by the activities of other agencies, and that diplomats were saddled with the task of limiting the damage that could be caused for Soviet foreign relations. At times it is clear that they were unsuccessful in masking revolutionary activity, and had perhaps become complacent owing to the lack of repercussions in 1923 following the Curzon Ultimatum.

---

[60] The All Russian Co-operative Society, established in 1920, was a Russian joint stock trading company connected to the Trade Delegation.

[61] Stanley Baldwin's statement to the House of Commons, 24th May 1927, as quoted in William and Zelda Coates, *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations* (London, 1943), p. 277.

[62] 'The Russian Trade Organisation and Revolutionary Organisations in the UK', in National Archives (UK), KV3/17; Coates and Coates, *History of Anglo-Soviet Relations*, pp. 268-9. The raid on the Trade Delegation contravened articles 4 and 5 of the Trade Agreement; Extract from a Statement issued by the Soviet Embassy in London, May 15th 1927 as quoted in ibid., p. 270.

[63] Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, *Raid on Arcos Ltd and the Trade Delegation of the USSR* (London, 1927), p. 50.

There is an irony in the Arcos raid. The British contravened diplomatic immunity in raiding the premises of the Soviet Trade Delegation pointing to Britain believing that it was above 'the established tenets of international discourse', at least when dealing with a perceived Soviet propaganda or espionage threat.[64] In British eyes, Soviet diplomacy remained suspect and hence they appear to have felt that they need not afford the Soviet Union the courtesies and privileges that should have been theirs. Not only was the accusation of espionage an unprecedented cause for a rupture in relations, the Arcos raid also allowed the Soviets to turn the tables on the British with regards to following proper diplomatic conventions.[65] Hitherto other powers, Britain amongst them, had been accusing the Soviets of behaving inappropriately, but on this occasion the Soviet Union was not at fault. Violation of diplomatic immunity in this instance tells us about how the British perceived Soviet diplomatic conduct, and it also provided the Soviets with an opportunity to protest against having their rights trampled on and thereby to display their mastery of the rules and discourse of diplomacy.

It is clear that the presence of agents within the Narkomindel and the foreign missions was problematic for Soviet diplomacy, and dealt serious blows to diplomats' effectiveness. The Soviet state had not ceased its involvement in propaganda activities abroad, and contemporary observers, albeit journalists who may have been prone to speculation, believed its diplomatic missions were still used as a means of inserting individuals into positions which granted them immunity and from which they could carry out propaganda.[66] The Comintern used Soviet diplomatic missions, as did Soviet intelligence agencies, as a means to insert individuals into various places, but it must be seen as distinct from the Narkomindel.

---

[64] Coates and Coates, *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations,* p. 271

[65] *Sunday Express,* 29th May 1927 as quoted in ibid., p. 285.

[66] "Gingering Up by the Cheka: New Jobs for Expert Propagandists," and "True Communists," *Morning Post,* 18th August 1925, as reported in *Obzor Angliskoi pressy*, svodka no. 10, AVP RF, f. 69, op. 13, p. 42, d. 42, l. 11.

While the Narkomindel had turned away from its propaganda role, the regime had not entirely given up on propaganda being organized through Soviet embassies. The regime remained interested in maintaining its overseas missions as bastions of revolutionary activity, according to the British press, sending Cheka agents to 'investigate the state of affairs' in missions, in order to ensure that the officials were 'proving themselves to be "real and true communists", committed to furthering the revolution'.[67] The investigation of the Soviet Embassy in Britain in 1925 deemed Berzin to be 'a harmless non-entity' in the eyes of the Cheka; he was then removed from his post, to be replaced by Arkadi Rozengolz, who was considered an experienced propagandist and agitator.[68] This points to a regime policy of agitation through overseas missions, even in 1925, despite the apparent policy shift following the proclamation of 'socialism in one country' in 1924. It appears the Narkomindel's aims were quite different – seeking recognition and a diplomatic style that mirrored other states' and thus abandoning revolutionary diplomacy.

This policy can be seen in the case of Jan Berzin. Berzin had been appointed to carry out large-scale propaganda activity through the Soviet mission in Switzerland in 1918, and had shown himself to be a committed revolutionary activist. Following his work in the Narkomindel in 1918, he had been appointed Secretary of the Comintern, where he served for two years. It is somewhat surprising then, that in 1925, having returned to the Narkomindel, he should be deemed harmless as a revolutionary. In 1921, Chicherin had warned him to keep agitation secret and to control agitators working in England, lest such activities cause the British to expel the Soviet mission.[69] Berzin, both in his work in Switzerland in 1918, and then in the Comintern, proved himself to be a fervent propagandist, but it is clear that by 1925 his personal opinions regarding how the

---

[67] Ibid., l. 11.
[68] *Izvestiya*, 12th August 1925 as quoted in ibid., l. 11. Arkadi Pavlovich Rozengolz. Counsellor in Britain, 1926-27.
[69] Letter from Chicherin to Berzin, 21st September 1921, AVP RF, f. 069, op. 5, p. 4, d. 3, l. 9-10.

aims of Soviet diplomacy might best be served had caused him to adopt different tactics, leaving agitation to the Comintern and focusing on achieving diplomatic goals.[70] His case shows the realization by diplomatic officials, even those who had previously been committed to the subversion of diplomacy for revolutionary ends, that the Soviet state needed to adopt a line that was not overtly based on the dissemination of revolutionary material, but rather aimed at achieving recognition of the Soviet state by foreign powers. Propaganda was a clear barrier to this, and the diplomats of the Soviet state made definite shifts in policy and activities to ensure that their diplomacy was no longer the diplomacy of revolution.

The Problem with Propagandists – The Comintern

The Comintern, as has been seen in the previous chapter, took over from the Narkomindel some roles of Bolshevik diplomacy, namely propaganda and agitation; it therefore continued to pose challenges for the Narkomindel in the 1920s. Indeed, Chicherin referred to it, in his final letter as Foreign Commissar, as the number one internal enemy (*'iz [...] vnutrennikh vragov – pervyi'*).[71] Staff, such as Berzin, who had left the Narkomindel for posts in the Comintern at its establishment, returned to their diplomatic posts in the Narkomindel during the 1920s. Their motives must be questioned: was it a return to a line of more moderate international work for former Comintern employees, or did the Comintern intend to insert its agents into Soviet missions?

Interestingly, in Berzin's case he did not return to the Narkomindel at the same level he had left it. Having been Ambassador in Switzerland, he returned to diplomacy as deputy Ambassador to Britain, before becoming Ambassador to Austria in 1925. Was he no longer seen as being suitable to head a mission? Was

[70] Interview with Vasilevskaya, 2nd November 2004.
[71] "Posledniaia sluzhebnaia zapiska G. V. Chicherina," AP RF, f. 48, op. 1, d. 66, l. 38-71, reproduced in *Istochnik,* 1995, vol. 6, p. 108.

he just being posted to the embassy in London as a cover for his revolutionary activities? Given that Berzin saw the Narkomindel as his second calling, revolutionary work being more important, why was he seen as being such a moderate in the mid-1920s?[72] Perhaps he had, as his granddaughter believes, realized that the world revolution was not going to be achieved through propaganda and agitation, or perhaps he became more focused on building 'socialism in one country'.[73]

Chicherin attacked the Comintern's involvement in the Narkomindel, claiming that the link between the Comintern and the Party was never a secret, and that it jeopardized the maintenance of embassies, trade missions, economic arrangements and press agencies.[74] Chicherin felt from the outset that the Comintern was at loggerheads with the establishment of a traditional style of diplomacy, which dictated abandoning the propaganda activities of the immediate post-revolutionary period.[75] Furthermore, he was opposed to the accreditation of one agent per mission.[76] He had, however, little choice in these matters as the Politburo had ordered that he liaise with Zinoviev in 1921, in order to attempt to produce a working relationship between the Comintern and the Narkomindel.[77] Chicherin received a great deal of information regarding the Comintern from the Politburo, and from this standpoint it is inconceivable that the Narkomindel was unaware of the Comintern's general activities, although restrictions of circulation of Politburo material and censorship probably meant that the Narkomindel was unaware of the specifics of Comintern activity.[78] Despite being informed of the Comintern's actions both by the Politburo and by Comintern officials, Chicherin

---

[72] "True Communists."
[73] Interview with Vasilevskaya, Moscow, 2nd November 2004.
[74] Ibid., p. 108.
[75] Adibikov (ed), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Komintern*, p. 94.
[76] Ibid., p. 94.
[77] Politburo Protocol no. 55, 25th August 1921, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 194, l. 2 reproduced in ibid., p. 92.
[78] Politburo Protocol no. 9, 31st May 1923, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162m d, 1, l. 1-2, reproduced in ibid., pp. 17-18.

appears to have only tacitly agreed with the Politburo's instructions.[79] It was of course essential that he played no role in Comintern activity himself in the midst of the push for recognition, even if he was aware of its presence in his embassies.

The Narkomindel in the 1920s adopted the policy of denying the presence of Comintern agents in embassies, despite the reality. This is seen in its reactions to British accusations that the Soviet mission was continuing to carry out propaganda activity, and in the pressure on diplomats from the central administration to deny such accusations.[80] The Narkomindel had little choice but to attempt to disassociate itself publicly from the Comintern, and to limit the potential damage to the maintenance of diplomatic relations with foreign powers.

Intelligence Operatives Take Up Residence

Chicherin also saw the OGPU as an internal enemy of the Narkomindel and felt that it tarnished the Narkomindel's image.[81] The Narkomindel had such problems with the agency that it became necessary to create a special liaison commission. Chicherin accused the OGPU of being responsible for 'millions' of international incidents, and of treating the Narkomindel as though it were a class enemy. He had scathing remarks about the competence of OGPU agents, and attacked the wisdom of allowing them to function through Soviet embassies from the early 1920s.[82]

Chicherin claimed that the OGPU residents in the Narkomindel and foreign missions were spying on him, the ambassadors, and employees, and building files on

---

[79] Letter from Zalkind to Chicherin, 19th July 1925, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 42, p. 264, d. 53729.
[80] Letter from Chamberlain to Rozengolz, 23rd February 1927, AVP RF, f. 04, p. 38, d. 538, l. 1; Letter from Foreign Office to Litvinov, September 1921, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 04, d. 278, p. 20; Politburo Protocol no. 24, 10th March 1928, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162 d. 6 l. 78, reproduced in Adibikov (ed.), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Komintern*, p. 519.
[81] "Posledniaia sluzhebnaia zapiska G. V. Chicherina", p. 108; Sokolov, "Neisvestnyi G. V. Chicherin: iz rassekrechennykh arkhivov MID RF," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1994, vol. 2, p. 8.
[82] "Posledniaia sluzhebnaia zapiska G. V. Chicherina," p. 115; p. 109; p. 105.

them, even claiming that his own office was wired with microphones.[83] It was normal practice for there to be OGPU agents operating within Soviet embassies, contained within their own offices as a *rezidentura* (secret police residence), in addition to the third secretary of a mission normally being an OGPU agent, but as with the Comintern, these arrangements proved problematic.[84] Krivitsky claimed that all Soviet diplomatic couriers were secret police agents, and it is clear that the OGPU was using the diplomatic immunity of embassy personnel in the same way as the Comintern.[85]

The OGPU, unlike the Comintern, must have had some positive effect on the conduct of diplomacy, as intelligence is extremely important to diplomacy. OGPU agents, however, fulfilled a dual purpose for the regime, both gathering information on foreign states and keeping tabs on Soviet diplomatic personnel. Chicherin's complaints, though at some level clearly warranted, must have originated from a sense that he was not in complete control of the Narkomindel, as he believed he should be.[86] Chicherin obviously felt aggrieved that the OGPU was policing his Commissariat; he saw this as an intrusion on his territory.[87]

It is well known that most states' overseas missions include intelligence agents, both as a specific tool for diplomacy and to gather intelligence more broadly useful to the home country. Diplomatic officials were frequently former (or current) intelligence officers. Robert Lockhart, the first British diplomatic official in Russia following the revolution, was in fact an intelligence agent. With this in mind, one can see that the Narkomindel was actually conforming to one of the hidden norms of

---

[83] Ibid., p. 110; Besedovsky, *Revelations*, p. 69.
[84] Viktor Suvorov, *Aquarium: the Career and Defection of a Soviet Military Spy* (London, 1985), p. 121. Although this source relates to a later period, it accurately reflects the manner in which the OGPU were working during the 1920s. The 'residence' is in fact not an uncommon element of espionage in a broader context for inserting intelligence personnel into foreign countries.
[85] Craig and Gilbert, *The Diplomats*, n. p. 255; Walter Krivitsky, *In Stalin's Secret Service,* (New York, 2000), p. 38.
[86] "Posledniaia sluzhebnaia zapiska G. V. Chicherina," p. 103.
[87] "Gingering up by the Cheka," and "True Communists," *Morning Post* 18th August 1925 as reported in *Obzor Angliskoi pressy*, Svodka no. 10, AVP RF, f. 69, op. 13, p. 42, d. 42, l. 11.

diplomacy – they were in fact engaging in the same nefarious activities that other states were involved in, and were thereby complying with the expectations of diplomacy.

Chicherin in Charge

Following Trotsky's move to become War Commissar the Narkomindel required a new chief. The man given the post was Georgii Vasilevich Chicherin, a former Menshevik and perhaps not the most obvious man to take it on. Chicherin's suitability lay in his background, and so it is necessary that some consideration of it is made at this point.

Chicherin came from an old and distinguished aristocratic family, traceable back to the fifteenth century.[88] More importantly, though, his father Vasilii Nikolaevich had been in the Tsarist MID, serving as secretary of the Russian mission in Piedmont in 1859 before becoming Counsellor in the Paris embassy in 1862 and then being appointed Ambassador to the United States in 1869. During his diplomatic service he met and married Baroness Meyendorf, whose connections with the diplomatic corps and at court aided her husband's rise within the MID.[89]

Chicherin followed his father into the Tsarist MID, entering its Archival Department in 1898. There was some effort on the part of family and friends to dissuade him from such a course of action – although it had been seen as logical that he would enter the MID, few of them could understand why he had chosen to work in its archives.[90] It is worth remembering that because his father had served in the MID he did not need to enter via this route as others had. The move lay largely in

---

[88] O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, p. 3; D. N. Shilov, *Gosudarstvennye deiateli Rossiiskoi Imperii: glavy vysshikh i tsentral'nykh uchrezhdenii 1802-1917: biobibliograficheskii spravochnik* (St. Petersburg, 2002).
[89] O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, pp. 4-5.
[90] Ibid., p. 8.

his love of history and interest in nineteenth century European diplomacy. Working with another historian, N. P. Pavlov-Silvanskii he produced a history of the MID for its centenary in 1902.[91]

While working in the archives Chicherin wrote, but never published, a biography of A. M. Gorchakov, who had been Foreign Minister between 1856 and 1883.[92] It is apparent that Chicherin admired the man who had been in charge of the MID during his father's diplomatic career and would eventually use Gorchakov as a reference for his own policies and actions as Foreign Commissar.[93] Chicherin writes that Gorchakov tried to establish friendly relations with other states even when their political nature clashed with Tsarist autocracy – for Gorchakov, only in this way could Russia maintain her status as a great power and carry out internal reform without being distracted by crises on the international stage.[94] Chicherin's attitude towards how Soviet international relations should be organized can be seen to have some grounding here – through ensuring security for the Soviet Union from foreign states, the Soviet economy and society could be given the opportunity to develop.

The radicalization of Chicherin, from an aristocratic Tsarist official to becoming a revolutionary fit to hold a Soviet office, is important. The beginnings lie partly in his service in the MID's archives. His colleague, Pavlov-Silvanskii, actively encouraged Chicherin to oppose Tsarism and to seek a doctrine that presented a cause into which he could channel his energies. In addition to this, Chicherin shunned aristocratic society and chose to live in humble accommodation in St. Petersburg.[95] This situation alone did not radicalize Chicherin, but he began to assist an old university friend, V. M. Narbut, who was active in revolutionary circles. Initially this assistance consisted of storing manuscripts and printed material. As a result, Chicherin increasingly came into contact with other radicals,

---

[91] Ibid., p. 9.
[92] The manuscript for this is in *Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv Sankt-Peterburga* (The Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg – TsGIA SPb).
[93] O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* pp. 9-10.
[94] I. Kovalev, "Neisvestnaya rukopis' G.V. Chicherina," *Neva* 5 (1964), p. 221.
[95] Stanislav Zarnitskii and Anatolii Sergeev, *Chicherin* (Moscow, 1975), p. 21.

most of whom were Socialist Revolutionaries, and this spawned in him an interest in revolutionary literature. This interest grew to the extent that he felt the need to travel outside of Russia and study revolutionary writings in western Europe and in 1904 took a leave of absence from the MID.[96]

Chicherin was not to return to Russia until he was appointed Foreign Commissar in January 1918, having fully committed himself to revolutionary work. Some historians have suggested that the incongruity between Chicherin's background and his fierce adoption of revolutionary work is not as surprising as it at first appears.[97] His family's withdrawal from aristocratic society after his father left the diplomatic corps, coupled with their religious non-conformism had already inculcated in Chicherin a sense of rebellion against the Tsarist order. Despite coming from an aristocratic family, their very non-conformist religious views led to a rejection of Tsarism in Georgii Vasilevich.[98]

Chicherin spent the time between 1904 and 1918 living in political exile. During this period he became a Menshevik and came into contact with other émigrés with whom he would later serve in the Narkomindel. Among them were his eventual successor as Foreign Commissar, Maxim Litvinov, and some of the more prominent Menshevik diplomats, Alexandra Kollontai, Ivan Maisky and Adolf Ioffe.[99] During his time in London Chicherin took charge of émigré affairs, even to the extent of organizing the repatriation of émigrés after the February Revolution through Konstantin Nabokoff.[100] The irony here of Chicherin soliciting the assistance of a former Tsarist diplomat cannot go unnoticed, but it hints at

---

[96] O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* pp. 11-12.
[97] Ibid. p. 12; Richard Debo, "George Chicherin: Soviet Russia's Second Foreign Commissar," PhD Thesis, University of Nebraska, 1964, pp. 5-6.
[98] Chicherin's parents were Pashkovites, an evangelical movement which preached pacifism and equality of peoples.
[99] Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky (né Lyakhovetsky) (1884-1975). Director of the Narkomindel Press Department, 1922-23, then Counsellor in London, 1925-27, and Japan, 1927-29. He was Ambassador to Finland, 1929-32, then to Britain, 1932-43. His diplomatic career ended with him as Deputy Foreign Commissar, 1943-46.
[100] Nabokoff, *Ordeal,* pp. 94-7. Nabokoff became embroiled in the dispute with Litvinov over control of the Russian Embassy in London during 1918.

Chicherin's acceptance that as far as international affairs was concerned, a degree of compromise with respect to ideology were sometimes necessary to achieve one's aims.

Chicherin only held one post in the Narkomindel, but held it for longer than any of his successors or predecessors barring Gorchakov.[101] During his service, despite criticisms from Soviet diplomats, he came to be regarded as one of the leading diplomats in Europe, with a reputation for an impeccable memory.[102] After relinquishing the post of Foreign Commissar in 1930, Chicherin slid into obscurity, playing no role in political life. On his death in 1936 Nikolai Krestinsky delivered a speech, at Stalin's behest, denouncing Chicherin's management of the Narkomindel.[103] Chicherin's legacy to the Narkomindel, however, remained potent as he had laid the foundations of Soviet diplomacy and he was buried alongside other Soviet statesmen, some of them colleagues from the Narkomindel, in Moscow's famous Novodevichy Cemetery with an impressive obelisk marking his grave (see fig. 4.3 below).[104] Clearly, despite being discredited by Stalin and Litvinov, Chicherin had left his mark on the Narkomindel and diplomacy such that he received a monument fit for a hero of the regime, on which flowers are laid on Diplomats' Day (10th February) by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to this day. In his own meticulous way Chicherin had fought for the stability and development of the Soviet Union during his time at the head of the Narkomindel.

---

[101] Gorchakov was Foreign Minister between 1856 and 1882

[102] O'Connor, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p. 169.

[103] Fischer, *Russia's Road from Peace to War: Soviet Foreign Relations, 1917-1941* (New York, 1969), p. 201. Nikolai Nikolaevich Krestinsky (1883 - 1938). A member of the Orgburo, Politburo, and Central Committee from until he became Ambassador to Germany from 1921 until 1930. He held the post of Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs between 1930 and 1937. He was arrested in 1937 and tried at the third show trial in 1938, where he was sentenced to be executed.

[104] His grave is near those of Kollontai and Ioffe.

Fig. 4.3 Chicherin's grave in Novodevichy Cemetery. The flowers were part of an official commemoration, by the current Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of Diplomats' Day, which falls on 10th February. (Photograph: Alexandra Kocho-Williams)

Chicherin was one of a number of diplomats who served in the Narkomindel that could be considered as 'outsiders' in the Soviet Union. Chicherin's aristocratic background, and his time as a Tsarist official, were surely problematic for him from a Soviet point of view. There were, however, other factors which made him suitable as Foreign Commissar and as a member of the international diplomatic elite. His upbringing and exposure to diplomacy, both through his father and his own service in the MID, had inculcated in him an understanding of diplomacy and how it functioned. He knew how to behave and dress appropriately for participation in the diplomatic field. He had absorbed the diplomatic habitus before 1904, and put this inherent knowledge to good use during his time as Foreign Commissar. Despite being an 'outsider' to Soviet society, Chicherin was very much an 'insider' to

diplomacy in many important respects. In appointing him, the Soviet regime was taking the step of having a Foreign Commissar who understood diplomacy and could be trusted to function effectively in the diplomatic field even though his political background was not as strong as some.

Chicherin's contemporaries attest to his complete control over the running of the Narkomindel.[105] He worked, according to observers, like an academic in his own personal library, keeping extremely odd hours and working through the night, keeping his assistants up as well.[106] This may indicate a link, although there is no evidence for it, with Chicherin's pre-revolutionary time in the MID archives, his interest and understanding of diplomacy coming from studying diplomatic documents, suggesting that Chicherin was, as Ivy Litvinov alleged, more an academic than a technocrat.[107]

Believing that the Narkomindel needed to be under his guidance at all times and that he should be constantly at his post, he actually lived in a room adjoining his office, frequently sleeping during the day and rarely leaving the building except for official meetings and functions.[108] This caused awkwardness in dealing with foreign diplomats: they were forced to adapt to his habits and meet with him at night if they wished to see him at all. There were also challenges for his employees, whom he called in the middle of the night, and who would frequently have to leave social engagements or the theatre to attend to business, or find a document he had misplaced in the chaos of his study.[109] His unusual hours and his control of the Narkomindel down to its most minute aspects clearly impacted on the organization in the 1920s, shaping the institutional culture as a result of the work methods imposed on the Narkomindel's officials. Despite the way in which he treated his

---

[105] Maisky, *Vospominaniia,* vol. 1, p. 264.
[106] Ivy Litvinov, "Year of Lenin's Death," *Autobiography* (manuscript, n.d.), p.8, Litvinov Box, St. Antony's College Oxford.
[107] Ibid., p. 8.
[108] "Posledniaia sluzhebnaia zapiska G. V. Chicherina," p. 103; Uldricks, *Diplomacy and Ideology,* pp. 30-31. Chicherin's residence within the Narkomindel's offices caused problems for him when Litvinov took over and he was obliged to move out.
[109] Ivy Litvinov, "Year of Lenin's Death," p. 8.

staff with regard to their personal time, he would apparently frequently follow diplomatic tasks from beginning to end, taking charge of every tiny detail himself rather than delegating duties to other officials.[110] It seems as though Chicherin believed himself to be the only individual capable of managing Soviet diplomacy, never being able to relinquish his control over matters that need not have been his concern. The institutional culture of the Narkomindel under Chicherin was one of centralized management, with little autonomy for individual diplomats, and the Foreign Commissar attempting to conduct every aspect of the diplomatic process himself.

Despite being the supreme diplomat of the Soviet Union, Chicherin was never politically powerful and was unable to formulate foreign policy independently of the Politburo. Only accepted into the Central Committee in 1925, he was never a member of the Politburo, although he frequently appeared before it to discuss foreign policy, and received circulars from its meetings (but he was included on the address lists less often towards the late 1920s).[111] By 1926, Chicherin had become unwilling to discuss matters with the Politburo, feeling they paid little attention to him and the information provided by the Narkomindel.[112] This situation may have been linked to his failing health but probably had more to do with the public feud between him and Litvinov (at the time Deputy Commissar), which seems to have been partly caused by influence from the Politburo.[113] The animosity between the two men stemmed essentially from the difference in the men's temperaments and political outlooks.[114] Chicherin accused Litvinov of being combative, while Litvinov attacked Chicherin for his obsession with carrying out functions of the Narkomindel himself and his inability to delegate, and earlier Lenin had criticized

[110] Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff,* p.130; "Posledniaia sluzhebnaia Zapiska G. V. Chicherina", p. 103.
[111] There are numerous examples of what he received in Adibekov (ed.), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b) - VKP(b) i Evropa.*
[112] Letter from Chicherin to Karakhan, 1st January 1926, No. 1, AVP RF, f. 100, op.10, p. 123, d. 1, l. 2.
[113] "Posledniaia sluzhebnaia zapiska G. V. Chicherina," p. 100; Besedovsky, *Revelations*, p. 95; Litvinov had influence with Radek.
[114] Chicherin had been a Menshevik, while Litvinov was an Old Bolshevik.

his 'insufficient bossiness'.[115] Litvinov, in contrast, was seen more as an overseer and was perceived by the Politburo as an expert technician.[116] Additionally, Litvinov's feelings that he had been passed over for the position of Foreign Commissar in 1918 exacerbated the bad blood between them.[117]

As Chicherin's health failed, in part because of the feud, Litvinov became increasingly dominant in the Narkomindel while Chicherin was forced to spend long periods of time away from his post, ultimately resigning on grounds of poor health in 1930.[118] To be sure, Litvinov had always been a major player in Narkomindel affairs, but the feud with Chicherin reveals a great deal about the nature of the organization in the late 1920s. While Chicherin had headed the Narkomindel as the Soviet state sought to establish relations with foreign powers and to consolidate its position in world affairs, Litvinov came to the fore at a time of uncertainty in Europe. Economic crises and the rising threat of Nazism called for a different approach to diplomacy.

It is therefore no surprise that the two men pursued quite different foreign policy angles. Chicherin was interested in the major concerns of the 1920s – the Treaty of Rapallo and the China question. Litvinov, formerly Deputy Commissar for Western Affairs, held that the Soviet Union should look to the west in the pursuance of her diplomatic aims. They were also divided on where the Soviet Union should look for allies – Chicherin was a Germanophile, with close personal ties to the German Ambassador Brockdorff-Rantzau, while Litvinov preferred to look to Britain.[119]

---

[115] Letter from Chicherin to Karakhan, 22nd April 1924, reproduced in Sokolov, "Neisvestnyi G. V. Chicherin," p. 6; Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff* p.147; Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 50, p.111.
[116] Interview with Tatiana Litvinov in Hugh Phillips *Between the Revolution and the West: a Political Biography of Maxim M. Litvinov* (Boulder, 1992), p. 109.
[117] Dullin, *Des hommes d'influences*, p. 81.
[118] He suffered from diabetes and neuralgia – Meyendorff (his cousin), attributed this to his homosexuality and the pressures of keeping it hidden. B. A. Meyendorff, "My cousin, Foreign Commissar Chicherin," *Russian Review,* 30 (1971), no. 2, pp. 173-178; Alexander Barmine, *Memoirs of a Soviet Diplomat: Twenty Years in the Service of the U.S.S.R* (London, 1938), p. 217; Chossudovsky, *Chicherin and the Evolution of Soviet Foreign Policy,* p.18.
[119] Hilger and Meyer, *Incompatible Allies,* pp. 111-13.

Each of the two men worked to minimize the influence the other had in the Narkomindel. In this respect, Litvinov was particularly aggressive and openly attacked Chicherin. While Chicherin was attending the Lausanne conference, Litvinov remained in Moscow as Acting Commissar and launched numerous assaults on Chicherin.[120] Litvinov formed an alliance within the Narkomindel Collegium with Viktor Kopp.[121] This partnership with Kopp catalyzed the split of the Narkomindel into rival factions as a result of the feud between Chicherin and Litvinov. From this it is clear that the feud between the two men shaped the Narkomindel's culture, as individuals took sides in Litvinov and Chicherin's jostling with one another. Although personal loyalties were clearly at play, it would seem logical, since Chicherin was aging, that some of Litvinov's support stemmed from pragmatism – that he was most likely to become the next commissar and having favour with him could be useful – and this may reveal something of the Narkomindel's culture.

Diplomats have a tendency to work towards practical ends, sometimes compromising their own ideals in the process. Pragmatism was at the heart of Soviet diplomatic culture, as ideology became subservient to matters of practicality. This is seen in the realignment of Soviet diplomatic practices in order to gain acceptance in the diplomatic field, and is shown in choices of allegiance within the diplomatic corps.

The bureaucratic rivalry caused within the Narkomindel by the feud between Litvinov and Chicherin demonstrates that diplomatic culture was largely a product of the men at the top of the organization. Their power over the institution allowed them to shape it consciously as well as unconsciously. That there was a choice between two men, with markedly different backgrounds, outlooks, and methods,

---

[120] Dispatches of Rantzau (German ambassador in Moscow) to the Auswärtiges Amt, German Foreign Office micro-filmed document series, 2860/D552716; 2778-80; 9101/H225068; K281/K09658488 as quoted in Uldricks, *Diplomacy and Ideology*, pp. 88, 94-5n.

[121] Besedovsky, *Revelations,* pp. 218. Viktor Leont'yevich Kopp (1880-1930). Representative to Germany, 1919-21, Narkomindel Collegium member 1923-24. He served as Ambassador to Japan, 1925-27, and to Sweden, 1927-30.

meant that officials within the institution were able to have some effect on the culture of the Narkomindel by choosing which to support.

Diplomatic Legacies of Power

The rivalry and the splitting of the Narkomindel into two camps shows that there was still a dimension within the Narkomindel of diplomatic patronage: a diplomat was sponsored, and recommended for service, by another senior party or Narkomindel official. In the early 1920s, a connection with Lenin was important – there are clear accolades for being described as a 'diplomat of the Lenin school' in articles and biographies – and certain individuals were receiving instructions and communiqués directly from Lenin, rather than through the Narkomindel.[122] Similarly, others had a strong connection with Trotsky and had been drafted into the Narkomindel during his days as Foreign Commissar in 1917. These connections with senior party officials enhanced the influence, and security, of an individual diplomat in his actions, both overseas and at home. In Ioffe's case, the relationship with Trotsky was so close that he took his own life when Trotsky was expelled from the party in 1927.[123]

All of this reveals the presence of diplomatic dynasties, albeit of a slightly different nature than those in Tsarist MID, and of patronage.[124] Maisky was brought to the Narkomindel by Litvinov, and in fact a number of individuals were brought into the ranks of the Narkomindel through sponsorship and as a result of personal friendships, many of which relationships had been nurtured among émigrés in the years before the revolution. Among individuals who came to the Narkomindel at least in part as a result of friendships made during years of political exile were

---

[122] M. Trush, "A Diplomat of the Leninist School," *International Affairs (USSR),* 1972, no. 12, pp. 66-72; Ivan Gorokhov, Leonid Zamiatin, Igor Zemskov and Anatolii Gromyko, *G.V. Chicherin - Diplomat Leninskoi shkoly* (Moscow, 1974).
[123] Martin McCauley, *Who's Who in Russia Since 1900* (London, 1997), p. 104.
[124] See chapter 2.

Kollontai and Maisky, who had been friends of Litvinov's in London and had come into contact with Chicherin there as well, although it would appear that the connection with Chicherin was of far less importance to them.[125]

Just as there was patronage within the Narkomindel, there was patronage from the Politburo for certain individuals. Litvinov had strong connections to the Politburo in the 1920s, through Rykov and Bukharin, which enabled him to influence foreign policy decisions.[126] That Litvinov had a means of access to the Politburo was important in the feud, as Chicherin was less influential and hence enjoyed less support from the centre. He appears to have suffered not only as a result of his feud with Litvinov in the late 1920s, but also as a result of falling from favour with Politburo members. Following Lenin's death, support for Chicherin in the Politburo waned and he clashed with Rykov and Bukharin (who supported Litvinov), as well as with Stalin.[127] By 1927 he found his position so untenable that he indicated his desire to resign his post, clearly signalling that any influence he had held with the Politburo was gone.[128]

---

[125] Maisky, *Vospominaniia*; Extract from Kollontai's diary notes, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 3, d. 31, l. 6. Kollontai makes a point that although she knew Chicherin from her time as an émigré in London, they did not speak about it during her meeting with him shortly following her appointment and discussing her duties. That this source dates from the meeting, and not after her siding with Litvinov, suggests that at least in her case the connection with Chicherin held no implication for her diplomatic service.

[126] Decisions of the Politburo, Special Protocols no. 1-11, RGASPI, f. 17, op, 162, d, 9 as quoted in, Dullin, *Des hommes d'influences, p. 23.*

[127] Chossudovsky, *Chicherin,* p.17.

[128] Ibid., p.17.

Kollontai – The First Diplomat in a Dress

As the Narkomindel sought to regain entry to the world of international diplomacy, from which the Soviets had been excluded, it took the bold step of granting a woman, Alexandra Kollontai, entry to the world of diplomacy, from which women had previously been entirely excluded. The appointment of a woman to diplomatic service was, in 1922, unprecedented. Part of the Narkomindel's mandate was to represent the Soviet Union abroad, and the presence of a female diplomatic official was an opportunity to promote the socialist ideology of equality in all walks of life. However, one can also see the appointment as an attempt to undermine the diplomatic establishment by deviating from the norms of the diplomatic profession. Although not a political attack or a direct flouting of diplomatic conventions, the unprecedented nature of the appointment of a woman to a diplomatic post was a very subtle means of forcing change in the diplomatic milieu. Diplomats had never had to deal with women on an equal footing – they had always been wives, companions, or daughters and had attended diplomatic functions as such, having no function in the conduct of diplomacy beyond the running of the household or administrative work. Diplomatic etiquette, which Kollontai saw as amusing, was not equipped to handle the situation.[129] Matters that had previously been straightforward, such as seating arrangements at functions, became complicated and required more thought, at least in the eyes of British diplomats.[130] The Soviet Union had unleashed a new breed of diplomat, setting a precedent for women in diplomacy that would force the diplomatic world to adjust.

The arrival of a woman in diplomacy for the first time gave the Soviet Union the potential, although it was not explicitly mentioned as such, to exert a great deal of leverage on the diplomatic sphere. First, there was the shock-factor of her

[129] Kollontai *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki*, vol. 1, p. 36.
[130] FCO Historians, *Women in Diplomacy: The FCO, 1782-1999* (London, 1999), at http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/KFile/86cc078ary-2fwomen-2fwomen,0.pdf on 29th December 2005, p.32.

appointment – the Soviet government had broken the tradition of diplomacy being the preserve of men, with women only being employed as typists.[131] Then there were practical matters. Diplomatic dress was concerned with men's clothing, and therefore was not codified for women; Kollontai had the opportunity to define how a female diplomat should dress for her official duties.[132] Additionally, she was in a position to shape how the diplomatic world dealt with a woman in authority and how she was positioned in diplomatic society. As the cartoon below shows, Kollontai was unique in this position, the doors of other foreign ministries remained closed to women, and it took many years before the broader culture of diplomacy would allow women access to the diplomatic field.

Fig. 4.4. Cartoon from *Punch,* 1936, depicting diplomacy as closed to women.

It is clear that Soviet diplomats did not see the appointment of a woman as a diplomatic representative as problematic, although they did they see it as a challenge to tradition, and as propaganda for Soviet egalitarianism. She did not mention her gender having been discussed in her first meeting with Chicherin upon her appointment – rather, the conversation centred on her suitability for a position in the

[131] Unknown Author, "Who is Alexandra Kollontay," p. 3, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 1, d. 510, l. 5.
[132] Male dress is illustrated and clearly codified in Wood and Serres, *Diplomaticheskii tseremonial i protokol*, pp. 180-2.

diplomatic corps, as a result of her social background.[133] Krasin told her that it was 'logical and correct' that women should serve in the Soviet diplomatic corps, an extension of the concept of equality between men and women in Soviet life.[134] From the Narkomindel's point of view, the major requirement for employment in its ranks was capability rather than gender.

In interviews with the foreign press, Kollontai explained her opinion that, as a woman, she was particularly well suited to diplomatic service in the 1920s.[135] She professed the view that while diplomacy of the old order had been based on complex political interplay, post-war diplomacy was far more concerned with economics and mutual understanding between nations. While this certainly echoes Marxist ideas of diplomacy as being based upon the equality and cooperation of nations, Kollontai claimed that as women were born with a greater sense of understanding than men, they were ideally suited to post-war diplomacy.[136] Kollontai, in her writings as well as in interviews, consistently conveys her belief that diplomacy was a human, rather than a purely political occupation.

She was frequently attacked (by both foreign and Soviet diplomats) for being emotional and for not being as objective as she might have been, but the consensus of those who knew her professionally suggests that this was not the case. Her peers frequently painted a portrait of an incredibly warm and friendly woman who was lively and cheerful, and made people around her feel comfortable.[137] At times she may have even appeared to be too friendly, as she was accused of being flirtatious on several occasions.[138] One must wonder whether this was a result of her working as a woman in a man's world, widespread knowledge of her views on sexual

---

[133] Interview with Barbara Clements, September 1976, part II, pp.4-5.
[134] Kollontai, "23 goda diplomaticheskoi raboty", Manuscript, RGASPI, f. 134 op. 3 d. 31 l. 7.
[135] "World's only Woman Envoy Declares Sex Specifically Suited for Diplomacy," *New York Evening World,* 27th December 1926, in RGASPI, f. 134 op. 2 d. 43 l. 130.
[136] Ibid., l. 130.
[137] Interview with Barbara Clements, *Kollontai Oral History Project*, part I, p. 25; part II, pp. 15-16; Ivan Maisky, *Vospominaniia Sovetskogo Posla* (Moscow, 1964), Kniga 1, pp. 285-288.
[138] Interview with Barbara Clements, *Kollontai Oral History Project,* part II, p.4; Interview with Alva Myrdal, p. 4, *Kollontai Oral History Project.*

liberation, or merely a means of attacking the Soviet diplomat. Certainly, she remained aware of the perceptions of the female diplomat, and to avoid gossip preferred tête-à-tête meetings with diplomats to be conducted over lunch rather than dinner.[139] Archibald Clark Kerr did not see her sex as a disadvantage, although he did inform the Foreign Office, when asked for his opinions on the suitability of women as diplomats:

> 'So far as Sweden is concerned a woman, whether diplomatist or consul, would certainly be treated with all respect and consideration. At the same time, she could not escape being the subject of some unpleasant speculation and perhaps also of some bawdy jokes. Much of course would depend on the woman herself. But however suitable she were, she would be greatly handicapped by not being able, as it were, to start at scratch and by having constantly to live down her sex in tête-à-tête dealings with officials and still more with businessmen'.[140]

Kollontai stated that she did not feel that she was treated differently from her male counterparts, and that she was intellectually equally capable of the task of being ambassador, but that she was still aware of the way that preconceptions in the diplomatic world affected her dealings with other diplomats.[141]

The press was certainly very interested in Kollontai, and she was keenly aware of this, as demonstrated by her collection of press clippings.[142] She found the

---

[139] FCO Historians, *Women in Diplomacy*, p. 9.
[140] Clark Kerr, 1933, in FCO Historians, *Women in Diplomacy*, p. 29. Clark Kerr was British Ambassador to Stockholm during the 1930s.
[141] FCO Historians, *Women in Diplomacy*, p. 9.
[142] "Articles from books, newspapers and journals concerning diplomatic career of Kollontai, 1926-9," RGASPI, f. 134, op. 2, d. 34; "Articles concerning Kollontai's duties as *polpred* in Norway, 1922-5," RGASPI, f. 134, op. 2, d. 41; Articles concerning Kollontai's duties as *polpred* in Mexico, 1926," RGASPI, f. 134, op. 2, d. 43, 44; "Press clippings concerning Kollontai's duties in Norway,

press troublesome, feeling that she – and diplomats in general – were unable to have a private life, due to the necessity of always being available for duty and as a result of the intrusions of other diplomats and the press. She was also keen to dispel the image of the diplomatic world as 'privileged and full of intrigue', saying that it involved a lot of dull waiting around for months on end, and afforded little privilege beyond a measure of courtesy.[143]

Kollontai was portrayed in the press in a variety of ways regarding her wardrobe. Some journalists described her as dressing 'lavishly' in clothes that other women envied; 'with an almost Parisian elegance'; as 'a keen follower of fashion'; of using diplomatic funds to buy *haute couture* in Paris; of being extremely vain with regards to her appearance; and of dressing in a most un-Bolshevik manner.[144] Others suggested that her dress was far more utilitarian than fashionable – that it was severe in its simplicity and 'almost a uniform', and that she kept her hair 'bobbed for convenience and not for style'.[145] However, all accounts agree (and photographs demonstrate), that she tended to dress in black, offsetting her dress with a white collar.[146] It seems that Kollontai felt a need to define for the female diplomat a style of dress that was distinct from the clothing of diplomatic wives and from the women who served the embassy in domestic functions. Like her male counterparts in Soviet society, and those in the international diplomatic arena, she frequently wore her medals (she had the Order of Lenin, Red Banner of Labour twice, Norwegian Order

---

1922-30," RGASPI, f. 134, op. 2, d. 45; "Press clippings concerning Kollontai's duties in Sweden, 1930-1," RGASPI, f. 134, op. 2, d. 47.

[143] Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki,* vol. 1, p. 63, p. 365-6.

[144] "A Guest of the King," *New York Times*, November 23rd, 1930, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 2, d. 47, l. 58; "Woman who keeps secrets," *Evening News* 25th May 192?, in RGASPI, f. 134 op. 2 d. 41 l. 85; *New York Sun,* 9th October 1930, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 2, d. 47, l. 95; Barbara Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist: the Life of Aleksandra Kollontai* (London, 1979), p. 243; Interview with Barbara Clements, part 1, p. 59, *Kollontai Oral History Project*; "Worlds only Woman Envoy Declares Sex Specially Fitted for Diplomacy".

[145] Interview with Kollontai, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* 30th November 1930, in RGASPI, f. 134 op. 2 d. 47 l. 61; Isabel de Palencia, *Alexandra Kollontay, Ambassadress from Russia* (New York, 1947).

[146] Unknown "L'ambassadrice Rouge," in *Des Fjords aux Tulipes,* p. 85, in RGASPI, f. 134, op. 2, d.34; "World's only Woman Envoy Declares Sex Specifically Suited for Diplomacy"; *Chicago Sunday Tribune,* May 5th 1927, RGASPI, f. 134 op. 2 d. 45 l. 2; Interview with Kollontai *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 30th November 1930; *New York Sun,* 9th October 1930.

of St. Olav, 1st Class with bar, and the Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle with bar). While this might certainly have raised eyebrows abroad, it was quite normal for Soviet women to have and prominently display medals. On the whole, she tended to dress in a business-like manner rather than an excessively showy one.

Fig.4.5. Kollontai in diplomatic dress in the Stockholm Embassy (Marxist.org Internet archive)

Fig. 4.6. Kollontai. Clearly visible is her limited jewellery – only a silver spectacle chain, as described by de Palencia. (League of Nations Photo Archive)

Kollontai saw her appointment as groundbreaking, and acknowledged that it brought challenges, although it is unclear if diplomacy was in any way destabilized as a result. With such an appointment, the press and foreign diplomats watched closely and levelled a number of accusations against her.[147] Foreign, and Soviet, diplomats were impressed by Kollontai's ability and professionalism, at least in public and to her face. But being a woman brought, in addition to the standard accusations against Soviet diplomats, attacks in other ways. As the first woman

[147] "Who is Alexandra Kollontay", p. 3, RGASPI, f. 134 op. 1 d. 510 l. 5; "Soviet Names Woman for Diplomatic Post", *New York Times* 28th September 1922 in RGASPI, f. 134 op. 2 d. 41 l. 7; "Woman who keeps secrets" ; *New York Herald Tribune* 8th September 1926 in RGASPI, f. 134 op. 2d. 43 l. 8

diplomat she provided a tempting target for those who sought a means to attack Soviet diplomats.[148]

One can therefore see that how Kollontai presented herself in public was important, and aroused a great deal of interest. Her close friend Isabel de Palencia, who served as Socialist Spain's Ambassador to Sweden during the 1930s, praised her for her work. The press was interested in her as a hero of the women's movement; this posed problems for her in her post as a diplomat.[149] Despite such praise, wild accusations by the European and American press were a frequent occurrence.[150] From her own accounts it is clear that diplomacy presented a challenge to her. She found the (figurative) 'full dress coat of the diplomat' very restrictive, and it is clear that initially she felt extremely uncomfortable as a diplomat.[151] The maintenance of the appearance of respectability which movement in diplomatic circles dictated was clearly, at least at first, problematic for Kollontai. Her autobiographies make clear that diplomatic service was something quite different to the life of the revolutionary. Her *Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman* (London, 1972) covers much of her life and then gives a scant overview of the first four years of diplomatic service. Similarly she wrote *Iz moei zhizni i raboty: vospominaniia i dnevniki* (Moscow, 1974) shortly before commencing her diplomatic service, giving the distinct impression that she felt her life was changing from its revolutionary form, when she had been involved in the international women's movement, the Revolution, the Soviet government, and been a leader of the Worker's Opposition. This further confirms that a diplomat's life was not of a revolutionary nature in the 1920s, but rather meant leaving revolution behind and integrating into the world of diplomacy.

---

[148] De Palencia, *Alexandra Kollontay*, p. 209-10.
[149] Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki*, vol. 1, p. 63.
[150] Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist*, p. 249.
[151] Letter from Kollontai to Litvinov, 1925 as quoted in Itkina, *Revoliutsioner, tribun, diplomat*, p. 226; Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist*, p. 245.

Kollontai's autobiographies were written at a time when what was committed to the page was strictly controlled by the contemporary political culture. *The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Woman* was heavily self-censored in order to keep it within acceptable standards. In doing so, she removed everything that was personal from the text.[152] This is typical of Kollontai's autobiographical writings after becoming a diplomat, and there is little personal content until she began again to write her memoirs in 1939, following the purges.[153] In the early 1940s she returned to more personal writing, publishing *The First Steps*.[154] There are questions here about the public and private in autobiographical texts during the 1930s, but there is also the underlying question of why Kollontai started to write about personal matters again in the early years of the Second World War. She had already, on at least two occasions, been recalled to Moscow believing that she was going to be killed in the purges, so it is curious that she then embarked upon a project which she knew could well result in her execution. [155]

In contrast to her more intimate personal accounts, her *Diplomaticheskie Dnevniki,* published in 2001 but drawn from her manuscripts, were daily observations of matters arising during her diplomatic career, many of which were extremely mundane.[156] This was not an uncommon practice for a diplomat to engage in, as is apparent from the wealth of diplomatic diaries that survive.[157]

---

[152] Interview with Barbara Clements, part I, pp. 25-26, *Kollontai Oral History Project.*
[153] Ibid., part I, p. 25; Kollontai *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki.*
[154] Interview with Barbara Clements, part I, p. 26, *Kollontai Oral History Project.*
[155] Ibid., part I, p. 53.
[156] The manuscripts and typed texts for the diaries are held in RGASPI, f. 134, op. 3, d. 1-2 (1922-3); d. 3-4 (1923-4); d. 5-6 (1924-5); d. 7-8 (1926-7); d. 9-10 (1917-8); d. 11-12 (1929-30); d. 13-14 (1930-1); d. 15-16 (1931); d. 17-18 (1932); d. 19-20 (1933); d. 21-2 (1934); d. 23-4 (1935); d. 25-6 (1936-7); d. 27-8 (1938-9); d. 29-30 (1939-40); "Khronika odnogo dnya", 20th November 1929, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 1, d. 16, l. 2; the latter entry even documents what she ate for lunch on that day.
[157] Lamsdorf, *Dnevnik V.N. Lamsdorfa (1886-1890);* Lamsdorf, *Dnevnik, 1891-1892;* Lamsdorf , *Dnevnik : 1894-1896;* Maklakov's diaries (unpublished manuscripts), Maklakov Papers, HIA, Biographical File Box 1, folders 4-19 (1917-1925); Maisky, *Ispanskie tetradi: Voennye memuary* (Moscow, 1962); *Dnevnik Litvinova*, AVP RF, f. 05, op.17, p. 127, d. 4; *Dnevnik Potemkina*, AVP RF, f. 010, op. 10, p. 60, d. 151; *Dnevnik Hirshfelda*, AVP RF f. 010, op. 10, p. 60, d. 152; *Dnevnik Hirshfelda*, AVP RF f. 010, op. 11, p. 76, d. 111; *Dnevnik Sokolina*, AVP RF, f. 010, op. 11, p. 77, d. 112; *Dnevnik Kagana*, AVP RF, f. 010, op. 11, p. 71, d. 57; *Dnevnik Potemkina*, AVP RF, f. 011, op.

While the keeping of a journal is a practice that allows a diplomat to write his or her memoirs at a later stage, diaries serve in many cases as diplomatic log books of events and impressions, recorded in the interests of aiding memories and keeping abreast of affairs.[158] Additionally they served as part of diplomatic record-keeping, being placed in archives, and on occasions in the Soviet case the diary entries were forwarded to the Commissar, the Narkomindel Collegium, department chiefs and diplomats and embassies to whom they were relevant.[159]

Kollontai's writing and record keeping with regards to her diplomatic career shows that diplomats were keeping a personal archive as well as the more formal archives of embassies and the Narkomindel. The motive appears on one level to have been in order to keep a record for future autobiographical writing – some of which was possibly not intended to be published – that is common to diplomats.[160] On another level the keeping of personal records, particularly diaries, provided a realm for Kollontai where her private self could be unfolded as opposed to the public self that diplomatic, and Soviet, society required her to present.[161] Despite being a woman, posing new challenges to diplomacy, Kollontai became a member of the diplomatic field and we can see that in how she presented herself and recorded her time as a diplomat, she successfully integrated herself into it.

1, p. 7, d. 73; *Dnevnik Hirshfelda*, AVP RF, f. 011, op. 1, p. 7, d. 74; *Dnevnik Hirshfelda*, AVP RF, f. 011, op. 2, p. 17, d. 164; *Dnevnik Sokolina*, AVP RF, f. 011, op. 1, p. 7, d. 75; *Dnevnik Maiskogo*, AVP RF f. 011, p. 1, op. 1, d. 9; *Dnevnik Maiskogo*, AVP RF f. 011, p. 2, op. 11, d. 15.

[158] The tradition of diplomatic memoirs suggests that diary keeping with a view to having material to produce an autobiography was at least one motive.

[159] Entry in *Dnevnik M. M. Litvinova*, 26th January 1925, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 42, p. 264, d. 53718, l. 16;,30th January 1925, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 42, p. 264, d. 53718, l. 21; 2nd March 1925, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 42, p. 264, d. 53718, l. 42; 27th April 1925, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 42, p. 264, d. 53718, l. 66; 20th August 1925, AVP RF, f. 04, op. 42, p. 264, d. 53718, l. 87.

[160] Diplomatic memoirs are common, and Soviet diplomats were no exception to this trend.

[161] This is a not uncommon aspect of Soviet diary writing and is discussed in Hellbeck, "Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: the Diary of Stepan Podlubnyi (1931-1939)," Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, vol. 44, no. 3 (1996), pp. 344-373; Hellbeck, "Working, Struggling, Becoming: Stalin-era Autobiographical Texts," *Russian Review*, vol. 60, no.3 (2001), pp. 340-359; Hellbeck, "The Diary Between Literature and history: a Historian's Critical Response," *Russian Review,* vol. 63, no. 4 (2004), pp. 621-629.

Conclusion

The Narkomindel and Soviet diplomats were driven by the Soviet Union's need in the 1920s to ensure that stable diplomatic relations were established with foreign powers. In turn this need caused a realignment of Soviet diplomatic culture, as there was a marked shift in the priorities of diplomacy, with a corresponding change in the requirements of diplomatic behaviour. During the 1920s, Soviet diplomats were intent on being properly accepted as members of the diplomatic field and as a result needed to present themselves appropriately. Taking the Genoa conference as a turning point, we see Soviet diplomats exhibiting that they are aware, and willing, to conform to diplomatic conventions of dress, by extension signalling their acquisition of the diplomatic habitus, and their desire to be taken seriously as diplomats.

With the change in Soviet diplomatic goals the Narkomindel became far more a diplomatic than a revolutionary agency during the 1920s, and its staff changes reflect this. The recruitment of a new wave of diplomats helped build an institution whose aim was representation and negotiation on behalf of the Soviet Union, rather than an agency charged with furthering the revolution. This is not to say that revolutionary individuals no longer served in the Narkomindel, but the fact is that they had changed; diplomats who had been revolutionaries eventually turned their backs on revolutionary activities in order to gain respectability as diplomats.

For the Narkomindel, the 1920s brought a need for professional diplomats – individuals who were capable of fitting into and conforming to the rules of diplomatic society – who understood the priorities of diplomacy and how diplomatic relations should be conducted as a result of training and experience gained through service. In this respect, Soviet diplomats came to resemble the diplomats of other countries as they outwardly displayed the traits of the diplomatic habitus and their mastery of diplomatic discourse.

In appointing the world's first female diplomat, the Soviet Union announced a new policy for filling its diplomatic ranks; the capacity to represent the

government, rather than bourgeois rules, would determine eligibility. The press and foreign diplomats were initially keen to find fault with Kollontai and with her suitability as a diplomat, but she rose above the petty accusations levelled against her and proved to be a strong and capable diplomat. She even, as she had done in her pre-revolutionary work, championed the role of women and their particular suitability for diplomacy in the post World War I world.

The expansion of foreign trade should be seen as facilitating Soviet recognition and diplomacy, both in terms of how the Soviet Union was treated by foreign powers and in how it treated its diplomatic agency. Foreign trade was an imperative for the Soviet Union during the 1920s, and it could only be achieved through the establishment, and maintenance, of relations with foreign powers. Diplomats were aware that trade relations could be used to provide a basis for formal diplomatic relations and worked towards this. Concurrently with this, foreign powers had a desire to trade with the Soviet Union and so became more disposed to the prospect of entering into official relations. Even countries that had been particularly resistant to Soviet recognition, such as France, took the route of establishing relations with the Soviet Union as a result of a desire to trade. By the end of the 1920s, of the major powers only the United States had refused to recognize the Soviet Union.

The Comintern inherited the revolutionary role that the Narkomindel was obliged to cast off, becoming a representative agency for the revolutionary side of foreign affairs which the Central Committee was unwilling to abandon completely. The Comintern presented the Narkomindel with a host of problems, not least as a result of the presence of uncontrollable Comintern agents within foreign missions. The Narkomindel struggled with outside agencies that inserted agents into diplomatic missions. A lack of control over these individuals was one side of this, but far more important was the harm that individuals working for an agency not concerned with nurturing diplomatic relations could do. What the Narkomindel

needed in its missions was individuals focused solely on the furthering of diplomatic relations, and nothing else. The regime was unwilling to abandon all hope of an international revolution, but the Narkomindel and its diplomats set about carving out a place for the Soviet Union in world affairs.

Chicherin left his mark on the Narkomindel, shaping it through his control of the most minute details, and his strange working habits. But the agency then suffered from the internal power struggle between Chicherin and Litvinov. This created a deep division within the organization, and it also served to limit the power of both the Narkomindel's most powerful individuals in the inter-war years. The feud had a noticeable impact on the Narkomindel and its culture, even dividing it into factions. Chicherin was falling from political favour by the end of the 1920s, partly as a result of Litvinov's attacks on him, but probably also due to an attachment to policies which no longer suited the Soviet Union as Stalin took control.

The 1920s closed with Chicherin passing his post as Foreign Commissar on to Litvinov, who was to lead the Narkomindel through the 1930s until the eve of the Second World War. What we shall see in the following chapter is that Soviet diplomacy in the 1930s was built on the foundation of the 1920s, but had to contend with the pressures of Stalinism and instability in Europe brought by the rise of Nazi Germany.

Chapter 5

Stalinist Diplomatic Culture of the 1930s

The 1930s posed a number of challenges to the diplomatic culture established during the 1920s. External factors, notably the rise of Hitler, played a role in shaping Soviet diplomatic culture and presented challenges in foreign affairs. Internal factors also exerted great pressure on the Narkomindel, with Stalinist political culture influencing the institution and its diplomats, particularly with regards to the need to adhere rigidly to a prescribed line of action and self-presentation, at the same time as there remained similar challenges for engagement in the diplomatic field. The manner in which Soviet diplomats responded to pressure both from within and without to conform to two different fields, one Stalinist and the other diplomatic, tells us how diplomatic culture was shaped during the decade. Questions arise as to how diplomats fitted into both fields, and the extent to which Soviet diplomatic culture changed in relation to those fields.

Soviet diplomacy focused on security through relations with the Entente powers during the 1930s, particularly after the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations in 1934, and there was a sustained orientation towards the diplomatic field as a means to fulfil policy aims through diplomatic training in the mid-1930s. This approach was not just politically based, but also to reproduce the habitus of the diplomatic community, which had been a reason behind the recruitment of a number of Soviet diplomats in the 1920s.[1]

The US recognized the Soviet Union in 1933, and we must ask how a state that had hitherto been so reluctant to do so came to change its mind in order to discover what it can tell us about any possible shift in Soviet diplomatic culture. How the Soviet Union became suitable for recognition offers us the opportunity to

[1] Bakhmeteff, *Oral History*, p.414; Account of Kollontai's meeting with Chicherin following her appointment, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 3, d. 31, l. 6; Interview with Barbara Clements part II pp.4-5, *Kollontai Oral History Project*. See also chapter 2.

see whether Soviet diplomatic culture had changed. Was it much the same as the experience with European states in the 1920s, or did it differ significantly?

Not only was there a new leader in place in the Soviet Union, but there was also new leadership in the Narkomindel. Litvinov took over from Chicherin in 1930, and directed the Narkomindel throughout the decade until his replacement by Molotov in May 1939. As we saw in the previous chapter, Litvinov had a quite different outlook from Chicherin with regards to Soviet diplomatic interests, and to how Soviet diplomats should be trained and controlled. While Chicherin had gripped the Narkomindel very tightly, Litvinov appears to have taken a more relaxed approach. What changes, if any, did the new leadership bring to the Narkomindel? Additionally, why did Litvinov fall from grace in the latter half of the 1930s?

After 1936 the Soviet Union started to withdraw from international society. In addition to Litvinov's decline, the Narkomindel was harmed by the purges that swept the Soviet Union in the late 1930s. The effect on diplomats and on Soviet diplomacy will be examined, in particular how Soviet diplomats responded to the purges, what their opinions of them were, and how they dealt with the challenge of explaining the purges to observers abroad. In a challenging time, Soviet diplomats were stretched in new ways by fear and had the task of limiting the damage the purges might have caused to the Soviet Union's diplomatic efforts. The purges brought other shifts in Soviet diplomacy. As part of the Soviet withdrawal from international affairs, limits were imposed on Soviet citizens' contact with foreigners. The Narkomindel was weakened further and was allowed less scope to formulate Soviet foreign policy. Ultimately the purges decimated the Narkomindel, rendering it impotent.

A New Commissar

Litvinov inherited the post of Foreign Commissar from Chicherin in the summer of 1930. In contrast to Chicherin, whose aristocratic lineage was apparent to observers,

Litvinov apparently possessed none of the charm or sophistication of his predecessor.[2] He was perceived by foreign diplomats as coarse and sarcastic, and by his contemporaries in the Narkomindel as possessing a 'great sense of realism'.[3] These two observations could of course have meant the same thing, simply being phrased differently according to the differing viewpoints of the individuals making them. Litvinov had been involved in revolutionary activity long before the revolution, yet his revolutionary convictions were tempered by his pragmatism in the conduct of Soviet diplomacy. His past as a revolutionary and émigré in Europe had given him the skills to carry out his task effectively and won him the credibility necessary to be Foreign Commissar, although it appears that he was not the only man considered for the position.[4] Ultimately, it was his knowledge of foreign languages that made him preferable to men such as Mikoyan and Kirov, who possessed no such knowledge, and secured his position as Foreign Commissar, thus demonstrating that the Soviet Union still required knowledgeable staff to deal effectively with diplomacy.[5]

Litvinov brought with him a new style of management for the Narkomindel, greatly different from that of Chicherin. He was regarded with mixed sentiment within the Narkomindel and the Party as a result of his struggle with Chicherin, the fact that his meetings with staff were kept business-like, and that he exhibited none of Chicherin's personal concern for his employees. Maisky characterized Litvinov's management of the Narkomindel as the exact opposite of Chicherin's. Litvinov was effective at delegating work, the exact thing which he accused Chicherin of being unable to do, and functioned far more as an overseer, checking and correcting where necessary.[6] Litvinov was keen that Soviet diplomats should be able to carry out their functions effectively and without needing to resort constantly to the central

---

[2] Besedovsky, *Revelations,* p.93.
[3] Karl Radek, "Velikii diplomat proletariata," 17th July 1936, quoted in Haslam *Soviet Foreign Policy,* p.12.
[4] Telegram from Sir Edmund Ovey to Henderson, Moscow 28th July 1930, *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-39 Second Series* vol. VII, p.144.
[5] Dullin, *Des hommes d'influences* , pp.23-4.
[6] Maisky, *Vospominaniia,* vol. 1, p.138; Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff,* p.147.

administration.[7] He felt that the Foreign Commissar should not be harassed by his ambassadors about trivial matters and that they should act upon their own initiative and with a degree of autonomy. This did not, however, give them entirely free reign, as seen by Litvinov's irritation at Kollontai's tendency to soften the Soviet line in trade negotiations in order to improve the chances of reaching an agreement with foreign governments.[8]

Soviet diplomats were not permitted to deviate from the official policy or from their instructions, and were subject to the rules both of Soviet society and those which defined their role in the foreign service of the Soviet Union. Soviet diplomats were forced, as was the rest of Soviet society, to operate within a framework of rules that limited their behaviour and to remain inside certain boundaries imposed from above. It was essential for the individual to understand and master these conditions. What this meant practically for Soviet diplomacy was that while Litvinov may have wanted Soviet diplomats to have autonomy in their operations, the reality of the situation was somewhat different. Thus, while there was a culture of diplomacy under Litvinov of diplomats being able, and indeed encouraged, to act upon their own initiative, they were only able to do so within certain limits.

Litvinov had both close allies and enemies within the Narkomindel and the upper echelons of the Party – among Litvinov's allies were Radek, while his enemies included Zhdanov, Molotov, and Beria. Autobiographical accounts suggest that Litvinov surrounded himself with a 'Litvinov team'.[9] He had forged many friendships during his years in exile and he continued to use these during his time as Foreign Commissar. Litvinov's support base is important in two respects. It secured his position as Foreign Commissar and brought support for his favoured policy of

---

[7] Maisky, *Before the Storm: Recollections* (London, 1944), p. 18.
[8] Maisky, *Vospominaniia,* vol. 1 p.138; *DVP SSSR,* vol. 11, pp. 614-16; vol. 12, pp. 99-100; vol. 13, pp. 133-36; 463-65; Itkina, *Revoliutsioner, tribun, diplomat,* p.224.
[9] K. M. Vasil'evna, "Moia zhizn' s Raskol'nikovym", *Minuvshee: istoricheskii almanakh,* 7 (Moscow, 1992), p. 100.

collective security, while at the same time diplomats could use their alliance with Litvinov as a means of ensuring their own security.[10]

Stalin's Diplomats

After the rise of Nazi Germany there was a shift in the Soviet diplomatic corps, a reshuffling of ambassadors in Europe and a change in foreign policy.[11] But was there any deeper change? As diplomats retired, or moved into other roles in Soviet government, the Narkomindel needed new blood. No longer did it have the luxury, as the available numbers decreased, of being able to draw upon individuals who had spent time as revolutionaries abroad before the revolution. There was a new generation of diplomats maturing in the early 1930s who had spent their entire adult lives in the Soviet Union and had little or no experience of foreign languages or cultures, partly as a result of the focus of Soviet education in the 1920s.[12] One way in which the Soviet Union responded to this need was to appoint members of the Soviet intelligentsia as ambassadors in the hope that their intellectual capacity to learn the skills of diplomacy would be sufficient to make up for their lack of relevant experience.[13] By the early 1930s, however, the numbers of individuals that could be recruited in this way were dwindling, while simultaneously Soviet foreign relations were becoming increasingly important, especially after the adoption of collective security as a key policy. New individuals who could be trained in diplomacy were needed, preferably those with the intellectual capacity for the job,

[10] The use (or lack of) of a connection to Litvinov can be seen during the purge of the Narkomindel, which is discussed later in this chapter.
[11] Politburo protocol no. 129, 27th January 1933, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 17, l. 142, reproduced in Adibekov (ed.), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Evropa,* pp. 288-290; Politburo Protocol no. 23, 8th March 1935, reproduced in ibid., p. 321; Politburo Protocol no. 44, 23rd January 1936, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 20, l. 190, reproduced in ibid., p. 343; Politburo Protocol no. 47, 20th March 1937, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 21, l. 1, reproduced in ibid., p. 350.
[12] After 1928 there was a focus on technical education. Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin,* pp. 159-161.
[13] Examples of this policy in action can be seen in the appointment of Potemkin to Athens in 1929, and Troyanovsky to Tokyo in 1927.

but free of 'bourgeois' styles and habits, and resistant to acquiring them through operating in a bourgeois profession.[14]

In many aspects of Soviet life, experts were lacking. There was a need to recruit and properly train a new batch of officials, and diplomacy was no exception to this.[15] In order that diplomats could be effectively trained to behave as Litvinov wanted, the Narkomindel developed its own training facility during the mid-1930s; the Institute for Preparation in Diplomatic and Consular Work opened in 1934, and the majority of entrants into the Narkomindel after its opening were trained there. Also in 1934, the Narkomindel developed a system of entrance examinations.[16] The introduction of exams brought the Narkomindel's recruitment procedures into line with other foreign ministries, and can be seen as a return to the recruitment system nominally used by the Tsarist MID.[17] Simply put, after 1934 the Narkomindel had effectively responded to the need to create trained and competent individuals for foreign service, and set a benchmark for this competence. Additionally, since a prescribed course for diplomatic officials evolved, there surely developed a consistent level of knowledge within the Soviet diplomatic corps. The Institute was aimed at training groups of forty candidates, over a period of three months, who had already gained high level qualifications.[18] Lectures and practical exercises covered areas of history, geography, law, sociology and economics. Lectures on the history of foreign relations and Soviet foreign policy were given by prominent diplomats serving in the Narkomindel, such as Ivan Maisky, Alexandra Kollontai, Alexander Troyanovsky and Boris Shtein.[19] Lectures were given on economic theory,

---

[14] Sternheimer, "Administration for Development" in Rowney and Pitner, *Russian Officialdom*, p. 342.
[15] Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin,* p. 160.
[16] On the organization and activities of the Institute for Preparation in Diplomatic and Consular Work, October 1934, GARF, f. R-5446, op. 15a, d. 1043 as quoted in Dullin, *Des hommes d'influences,* p. 73; Magerovsky, "The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs", p. 394.
[17] For details on other foreign ministries see Craig and Gilbert, *The Diplomats;* See chapter 2.
[18] Letter from Litvinov to the President of Sovnarkom, 19th October, 1934, GARF, f. R-5446, op. 15a, d. 1043 as quoted in Dullin, "Une diplomatie plébéienne? Profils et compétentes des diplomates soviétiques, 1936-1945," *Cahiers du Monde Russe,* 44, 2-3, 2003, p. 453.
[19] Boris Efimovich Shtein (1892-1961), joined the Narkomindel in 1920 where he directed the Trade Department, Polish and Baltic Department, Central European Department, and the Narkomindel's

international law, social theory and the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[20] Almost all the lecturers were established diplomats, or specialists within particular fields, but more notable is that they were people who supported Litvinov and his policies. The institute appears to have been aimed at creating diplomatic officials with a habitus that matched that of foreign diplomats, through training and socialization, thereby making Soviet diplomats able to function in the diplomatic field.[21]

Boris Shtein was a prolific lecturer, and a supervisor of the Institute's training programmes.[22] By looking at his lectures, we can see something of the formal training offered to the Soviet diplomatic corps. Published lectures include teachings on security, the Versailles treaty, the Paris Peace Conference, the Genoa and Hague conferences, the foreign policy of foreign powers, and Soviet foreign policy.[23] While some of these lectures may have been intended for broader audiences, on the whole they were prepared for and delivered to the trainees at the

---

Internal Affairs Department. He was Secretary of the Soviet delegations at the Genoa and Hague Conferences in 1922, and the Geneva Conference in 1927. He served as Ambassador to Finland, 1932-34, and Italy, 1934-39, and was a delegate to the League of Nations, 1934-38. From 1939 until 1959 he was involved in the central administration of the Narkomindel, and the Institute for Preparation in Diplomatic and Consular Work (renamed the Higher Diplomatic School in 1939).

[20] Shtein, *V Sovete besopasnosti. Stenogaramma publichnoi leksii* (Moscow, 1946); *Uroki Versalia*, (Moscow, 1944); *Versail'skii dogovor. Stenogramma publichnoi leksii doktora nauyk B. E. Shteina* (Moscow, 1944); *"Russkii vopros" na Parizhskoi mirnoi konferentsii, 1919-1920 gg*, (Moscow, 1949); *Genueskaia konferensia* (Moscow, n.d); *"Russkii vopros" v 1920-1921 gg*, (Moscow, 1958); *Pochemu Germania i SSSR zakliutchili dogovor o neitralitete* (Moscow, 1926); *Vneshniaia Politika Gitlera* (Tashkent, 1942); *Vneshniaia torgovaia politika SSSR* (Moscow, 1925); *Torgovaia politika i torgovye dogovory Sovetskoi Rossii : 1917-1922 g.g*, (Moscow, 1923); *Vneshniaia Politika SSSR 1917-1923 gg. Leksii* (Moscow, 1945); *Vneshniaia politika SSSR 1924-1927 gg. Leksii* (Moscow, 1945); *Vneshniaia politika SSSR 1927-1934 gg. Leksii* (Moscow, 1945); Kollontai's biographical questionnaire, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 1, d. 18, l. 1-3; Politburo Protocol no. 16, 13th November 1934, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 954; A. Roschin "V Narkomindele v predvoennye gody", in N. Popov and A. A. Iskenderov (eds.), *Otkryvaia novye stranitsy: mezhdunarodnye voprosy: sobytiia i liudi* (Moscow, 1989), p. 45; Letter from Litvinov to Sovnarkom, 26th October 1938, GARF, f. R-5446, op. 22a, d. 219 as quoted in Dullin, "Une diplomatie plébéienne?" p. 453.

[21] Socialization for the Tsarist diplomatic service is discussed in Chapter 2.

[22] Dullin, "Une diplomatie plébéienne?" p. 453.

[23] Shtein, *V Sovete besopasnosti*; *Uroki Versalia*; *Versai'lskii dogovorov; "Russkii vopros" na Parizhskoi mirnoi konferentsii, 1919-1920 gg*; *Genueskaya Konferensia*; *"Russkii vopros" v 1920-1921 gg*; *Pochemu Germania i SSSR zakliutchili dogovor o neitralitete*; *Vneshniaia politika Gitlera*; *Vneshniaia torgovaya politika SSSR*, (Moscow, 1925); *Torgovaia politika i torgovye dogovory Sovetskoi Rossii : 1917-1922 g.g*; *Vneshniaia politika SSSR 1917-1923 gg*; *Vneshniaia politika SSSR 1924-1927 gg*; *Vneshniaia politika SSSR 1927-1934 gg*.

Institute. The lectures give a distinctly Soviet view of foreign policy and diplomacy, fitting in with Shtein's historical works attacking the bourgeois recounting of history.[24] Shtein's publications suggest that Soviet diplomats in the 1930s were educated on Soviet foreign policy, the Soviet view of other powers' foreign policy, and the outcomes of major events in Soviet diplomatic history.

In many respects, this echoed the training received by foreign diplomats, and was a formalized version of what diplomats in the Narkomindel's early years were being instructed to study.[25] The training differed from that of other countries though, as it stressed the Soviet view of diplomacy as a means to an end – that the subordination of ideology for practical reasons was a way to allow the Soviet Union to achieve its objectives at home and abroad through ensuring effective engagement in the diplomatic field.

While formal training provided a basis for individuals to become informed about the norms of diplomacy through studying diplomatic history and international law there was also an element of training in diplomatic etiquette that was learnt in a more practical manner from Soviet diplomats already serving in the Narkomindel. The practice of diplomacy was learnt, largely on the job following a posting abroad, from officials who had experience of how to conduct themselves in diplomatic circles, and in this way the Narkomindel's diplomats can be seen to have helped to continue the diplomatic behaviour of earlier times – some of the more senior officials who were responsible for passing on their knowledge had themselves learnt from officials who had served in the MID before the revolution.[26] Notable in the Soviet context is the lack of Russia translations during the 1930s of handbooks for diplomatic protocol and practice demonstrating that instruction was given in a practical manner and knowledge was being passed on in this manner rather than being codified in manuals during the 1930s.[27] Soviet diplomats were, therefore,

---

[24] Shtein, *Burzhuaznye falsifikatory istorii, 1919-1939,* (Moscow, 1951).
[25] See chapter 2 with reference to Troyanovsky and Arosev.
[26] Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskii dnevniki,* vol. 1, p. 36; Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p.83.
[27] The standard manual for diplomatic practice is Ernest Satow, *A guide to diplomatic practice : by the Rt. Hon. Sir Ernest Satow* (London, 1917). Manuals in Russian were not published until after the.

actively reproducing an understanding of diplomatic etiquette in new recruits to the Narkomindel drawn from their own and others' experiences.[28] In this way the Soviet diplomatic corps was attempting to sustain the practices of diplomacy such that a new generation of diplomats could take them on. In inculcating diplomatic etiquette in new officials, the process was eased by them having experience of foreign languages and cultures, as this had in the past exposed Soviet diplomats to some aspects of etiquette that were transferable to the diplomatic field.

There was, however, a forced departure from the recruitment of individuals who could simply be inserted into the diplomatic corps as a result of having skills in foreign languages and experience of foreign cultures. This was partly a result of a new wave of diplomats coming into the Narkomindel in the 1930s, who were no longer individuals who had acquired the desirable traits diplomats had in the 1920s as a result of their time as émigrés.[29] The average age of individuals entering the Narkomindel dropped, and there was a new wave of those too young to have spent time as émigrés.[30] The result was a change in the diplomatic culture as the experiences of earlier diplomats, acquired before the Revolution, could no longer be relied upon for these new entrants and formal training was required.

While training for functioning in diplomatic society was important, so too was success in Stalinist society. Knowledge of how the Soviet diplomat interacted with Stalinist society is essential to understanding the changes that occurred in Soviet diplomatic culture in the 1930s. One must question the extent to which Soviet diplomats were affected by their involvement in the diplomatic field, and their reproduction of the diplomatic habitus, and how they were able to square the

---

Second World War. Examples of these are Fedor Fedorovich Molochkov, *Diplomaticheskii protokol i diplomaticheskaya praktika* (Moscow, 1977); D. S. Nikiforov and A. F. Borunkov, *Diplomaticheskii protokol v SSSR : printsipy, normy, praktika* (Moscow, 1985).

[28] Dullin, "Une diplomatie plébéienne?" p. 457.

[29] Dullin, "Sovetskie diplomaty v epokkhe stalinskikh represii. Novie liudi?" *Neprikosnovenyi zapas,* vol. 4, no. 24 (2002), p. 42.

[30] Based on information from *Ezhegodnik Narodnogo komissariata po inostrannym delam: Annuaire diplomatique du Comissariat du peuple pour les affaires étrangères* (Moscow, 1925-1936); *Diplomaticheskii slovar',* 2 vols. (Moscow, 1948); *Diplomaticheskii slovar',* 3 vols. (Moscow, 1985-8); Cadre files, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 100

more bourgeois elements diplomatic practice with Soviet society. Additionally, diplomacy had an implicit hierarchy which was not repeated in Soviet society. Whereas western diplomats enjoyed prestige and elevated social positions in their home countries, Soviet diplomats lived in a nominally classless society; we must therefore explore how they dealt with this dichotomy. Litvinov was hailed as a hero both by foreigners and in Soviet society, but for different reasons.[31] He was praised by foreigners for his work for peace in Europe, while at home being named a 'diplomat-stakhanovets', acquiring the label that hero-workers from other walks of life in the Soviet Union had acquired.[32] Diplomats were at pains to be seen as suitable candidates to be exalted and talked about, on a level with the ideal Soviet worker. In such a way, Kollontai validated Litvinov's position in Soviet society in Soviet terms when she wrote the *Pravda* article entitled "Diplomat-Stakhanovets", presenting Litvinov to Soviet society in terms that were understood, and familiar. It would appear from this that despite the ways in which Soviet diplomats were obliged to differ from their colleagues in other commissariats, they were keen to anchor themselves as full and proper citizens by engaging in the Stalinist discourse. Compliance with the Stalinist system was as important as complying with the norms of diplomacy, and as a result Soviet diplomats were obliged to tread a fine line between the two. This remained challenging, but public expressions of compliance were an effective means of achieving the adherence to Soviet values.

What we see, both with diplomacy and Stalinist political culture, is the creation of two discourses regarding identity and self-presentation that were frequently at odds with one another. The language used by Kollontai to present Litvinov in Soviet terms is an instance of what Stephen Kotkin terms 'speaking Bolshevik' as a means of showing outward compliance to the system as a result of a

---

[31] Swedish Press bulletin no. 57, 2nd – 12th November 1933, AVP RF, f. 140, op. 19, p. 27, d. 5, l. 197. The Swedish press reported on 31st October 1933 that Litvinov was being considered for the Nobel Peace Prize.

[32] "Diplomat-Stakhanovets", *Pravda,* 17th July 1936. Stakhanovites were individuals who excelled in their work in Soviet society. (The name stems from coal miner Andrei Stakhanov).

mastery of its inherent discourse.[33] This did not have to be solely linguistic; other aspects of culture needed to be mastered as well. Some individuals took steps to display different outward signals of compliance with one field or the other, depending on the context in which they were functioning. As an example of this, Maisky recounts that Litvinov dressed according to diplomatic standards when on official business and in a manner more appropriate to Soviet values at other times.[34] This would account, at least in part, for Soviet accounts viewing Litvinov as 'realistic' and westerners seeing him as coarse.

The concurrent discourses of the two fields provides evidence to suggest use of the term 'speaking diplomacy', much as Kotkin uses the term 'speaking Bolshevik'.[35] Diplomacy and diplomatic society present themselves as something to be read and potentially internalized, much like Stalinist culture, such that individuals and a foreign ministry can function effectively within the diplomatic field. The extent to which individuals internalized the culture of diplomacy is an issue: did diplomats – particularly Soviet, but also more widely – merely demonstrate their command of diplomatic culture outwardly? Were they presenting themselves as suitable to participate in the diplomatic field while genuinely perceiving themselves to be otherwise, even to the extent of masking their true self behind a veneer of falsehoods?[36] That a mask of diplomatic respectability might be worn is relevant to

---

[33] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization,* (Berkley, 1995), ch. 5.
[34] Maisky, *Vospominaniia,* p. 247.
[35] Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, ch.5.
[36] This question forms the centre of current historical debate about the nature of the individual with respect to Stalinist culture. Hellbeck argues that the regime aimed for full internalization of Soviet values, attempting to engage its citizens' souls; Hellbeck, "Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: The Diary of Stepan Podlubnyi (1931-1939)"; "Writing the Self in the Time of Terror: the Diary of Aleksandr Afinogenov"; "Working, Struggling, Becoming: Stalin-Era Autobiographical Texts"; "Speaking Out: Languages of Affirmation and Dissent in Stalinist Russia", *Kritika* vol. 1, no. 1 (2000), pp. 71-96. Other historians, notably Sheila Fiztpatrick and Golfo Alexopoulos, have argued that Soviet culture required that individuals wear the 'mask' of conformity with the system, even to the extent of presenting themselves as stereotypes, behind which they could conceal their true identities, potentially gaining from the practice. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks!*, p.5; Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p.132; Fitzpatrick "Supplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s", *Russian Review*, vol. 55, no. 1, (1996), p.95; Golfo Alexopoulos, "Portrait of a Con Artist as a Soviet Man", *Slavic Review,* vol. 57, no. 4 (1998), pp. 774-790; "Letter to Marfa", GARF, f. 7952, op.5, d.303, ll. 3-5 reproduced in Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain,* pp.118-9.

Soviet involvement in the diplomatic field, suggesting that Soviet diplomats had not internalized diplomatic culture and the diplomatic habitus, but had gained, and were able to exploit, an understanding of them. In this way, much as Soviet political culture empowered its citizens to behave in this manner, diplomatic culture had empowered the Soviet Union to function effectively in the diplomatic field, without necessarily having to subscribe genuinely to its rules.

Despite this mastery of diplomatic culture such that Soviet diplomats could present themselves properly in the diplomatic field, it was the field of Stalinist culture that posed the greater challenge for Soviet diplomats. By promoting a rigorous adherence to its values in all of its citizens, including its diplomats, the Soviet Union ensured that withdrawal from international diplomatic society was underway. The regime was shaping diplomacy in its own mould – there was still a concession that there was a need to be involved in it, but the desire was to keep it to a minimum and to use that involvement for purely political purposes.

This adherence to Soviet values was a limiting factor on Soviet diplomats when competing with their foreign counterparts in the diplomatic field. The need to present oneself in a manner acceptable to Soviet society led to problems in achieving the same in diplomatic circles. Soviet diplomats were less free to engage in the social world of diplomacy than were foreign diplomats, in part because of fears that they might be seduced by the bourgeois trappings of the diplomatic world.[37] As a result Soviet diplomatic encounters remained largely official, limiting the interaction that Soviet diplomats could have with 'decadent' society. When connected to other withdrawals from international society, this demonstrates that the Soviet regime was at pains to restrict the contact that Soviet citizens had with foreigners. In the light of the debate regarding the 'Great Retreat' from socialism and its international aspect, the limiting of diplomats' contact with foreigners was

[37] Dullin, *Des hommes d'influences,* pp. 94-6; Proposals for diplomatic clothing, GARF, f. R-5446, op. 20a, d. 902; op. 22a, d. 221, as quoted in ibid., p. 94.

but one possible form of ensuring that the Soviet Union became more introverted, its citizens less able to have contact with the outside world.[38]

There is a particularly poignant aspect to this in the case of diplomacy. As Sheila Fitzpatrick has argued, Soviet citizens wore a mask of compliance with the regime and such concealment was a normal aspect in Soviet life.[39] One of the chief crimes of which one could be held guilty during the purges was concealing one's true nature beneath a veneer of Soviet respectability; there was an imperative to unmask those who were hiding their true selves. This became problematic in the case of diplomats, whose profession required the maintenance of a façade in order to engage effectively in the game of diplomacy. Soviet diplomats were particularly adept at concealing their own identities, since they had learned in the Narkomindel's early years to present a front of outward compliance with the norms of international diplomacy, and thus we can see that Soviet diplomats were possibly employing tactics learnt in one field in the other, in order to maintain their membership of both.

Case study of Maisky, a Litvinov Ally

Maisky's appointment as Ambassador to London, a post which he held throughout the 1930s, gives us an excellent opportunity to look at an archetypal Soviet diplomat. Maisky had come to the Narkomindel at Litvinov's request to work in the press department. He was a former Menshevik who lacked a strong revolutionary past, but he had been friends with Litvinov during their years as émigrés in London and this lay behind his recruitment to the Narkomindel's Press Department in the 1920s.[40]

---

[38] Nicholas Timasheff, The Great Retreat*: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York, 1946); David Hoffmann, "Was There a "Great Retreat" from Soviet Socialism? Stalinist Culture Reconsidered", *Kritika,* vol. 5, no. 4 (2004), pp. 651-74.
[39] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 132.
[40] Maisky, *Vospominaniia,* vol. 1, p. 253.

Maisky was appointed in a reshuffle of ambassadors that occurred in the early 1930s. He replaced Grigorii Sokolnikov in London, while Vladimir Potemkin replaced Dmitrii Kurski in Rome and Iakov Davtyan took over Potemkin's post in Athens.[41] Maisky took up his post in October 1932, and in doing so showed that there was a definite shift occurring within the ranks of the Narkomindel's ambassadors. By the early 1930s, Litvinov was well-established as Foreign Commissar, and was able to ensure the appointment of diplomats who were inclined to support his collective security policies. While he did not entirely succeed in securing places for individuals kindly disposed towards him in Europe – Potemkin was not an ally – the establishment of a 'Litvinov team' in Europe is clear when looking at the Narkomindel, when one looks at who supported him, and which positions they held.[42] Litvinov had clearly pursued the creation of a diplomatic corps that he felt most capable of the task of ensuring security both for the Soviet Union and for himself.

The hand of the Politburo is also clear in Maisky's appointment as Ambassador. Litvinov may have recommended him for service, but the Politburo had clear directives for Maisky regarding his mission in London.[43] It is clear that

---

[41] Politburo Protocol no. 114, 1st September 1932, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 13, l. 82, reproduced in Adibekov (ed.) *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Evropa*, p. 286. Grigorii Yakovlevich Sokolnikov (1888-1939) served as Ambassador to Britain, 1929-32 and held the post of Deputy Foreign Commissar between 1933 and 1934; Vladimir Petrovich Potemkin (1874-1946) was a member of the Soviet Repatriation Commission in France in 1922 and president of the Repatriation Commission in Turkey in 1923. Between 1924 and 1926 he was Consul-General in Istanbul, the Counsellor of the Soviet Mission in Turkey, 1927-29. He held the post of Ambassador to Greece, 1929-32, Italy, 1932-34, and France 1934-37, and was Deputy Foreign Commissar, 1937-40; Dmitrii Ivanovich Kurski (1874-1932). A specialist in international law, he served as Ambassador to Italy, 1928-32; Iakov Khristoforovich Davtyan (1888-1938). A member of the mission of the Russian Red Cross to France in 1919, then First Secretary in Estonia, 1920-21, Director of the Narkomindel's Baltic Department, 1921-22, Ambassador to Lithuania, 1922, Representative to China, 1922-24, Ambassador to the Tuva Republic, Counsellor in France, 1925-27, and Ambassador to Iran, 1927-30, Greece, 1932-34, and Poland, 1934-37.

[42] Vasilevna, "Moia zhizn' s Raskol'nikovym", p. 100. The 'Litvinov Team' comprised a group of diplomats loyal to Litvinov who shared his views on foreign policy and had supported him during his struggle with Chicherin. Among these individuals were Maisky, Kollontai, Stomoniakov and Shtein, all of whom occupied senior positions within the Narkomindel.

[43] Politburo protocol no. 129, 27th January 1933, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 17, l. 142, reproduced in Adibekov (ed.), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Evropa,* pp. 288-290; Politburo Protocol no. 23, 8th March 1935, reproduced in ibid., p. 321; Politburo Protocol no. 44, 23rd January 1936, RGASPI, f.

the Politburo was keen to control Soviet diplomats, and that it used direct channels, namely the NKVD and TASS, to circumvent the Narkomindel and ensure that diplomats in foreign capitals did its bidding. Despite direct instructions from the Politburo, Maisky comes across as a staunch supporter of Litvinov and of collective security. In his reports of meetings with British officials, he appears to have supported collective security and toed the Soviet line of denying any connection between the Comintern and the Soviet government.[44]

What we see in Maisky is loyalty to Litvinov, almost more so than to the Soviet state. Maisky here exemplifies the fact that diplomats appear to have understood the pragmatic concessions necessary in diplomacy better than Politburo members, and were keen to ensure a continued Soviet involvement in diplomacy. Despite a need to follow regime policy, Maisky, like his colleagues in the Narkomindel, was committed to maintaining the Soviet presence in the diplomatic field. As such, he was balancing on the line between conformity with diplomatic and with Stalinist culture.

Maisky's case also sheds light on the changes that recognition by the United States brought to Soviet diplomacy. Aside from political changes, and the opportunities for expansion of trade, there were changes in Maisky's social life as a diplomat. In the build-up to recognition, American diplomats began to change the way they treated their Soviet counterparts. Early in the recognition process, two days before William Bullitt presented his credentials as Ambassador in Moscow, Maisky met with the US Ambassador in London, Robert Bingham. Maisky reported that the Ambassador spoke to him in friendly tones and was interested in there being no major conflict between the US and the Soviet Union.[45]

17, op. 162, d. 20, l. 190, reproduced in Ibid., p. 343; Politburo Protocol no. 47, 20th March 1937, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 21, l. 1, reproduced in ibid., p. 350.

[44] Communiqué from Maisky to Litvinov on his meeting with Simon, 9th-10th November 1934, AVP RF, f. 069, op. 18, p. 55, d. 5, l. 54, 57, 60.

[45] "Remarks of the American Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Bullitt) upon the presentation of his letters of Credence to the President of the All-Union Central Executive Committee (Kalinin), at Moscow December 13th 1933", FRUS 123 Bullitt/c31 in USDS, *Foreign Relations of the United States. The Soviet Union, 1933-1939* (Washington, D.C., 1952), (hereafter *FRUS: Soviet Union,*

Maisky, as part of the 'Litvinov team', embodied the desires of Litvinov and the Narkomindel in Soviet diplomacy and the extent to which there was a need to restrict interference from the Politburo in the Narkomindel's actions. Soviet diplomats sought to safeguard the culture they had created, and the position they had earned in the diplomatic field, as a necessary means to continue their involvement and to conduct foreign policy aimed at ensuring Soviet security in the 1930s.

Litvinov Makes the Case for Peace

In addition to his new approach to managing the Narkomindel, Litvinov was also notable for his arguments regarding Soviet foreign policy in the 1930s, which greatly influenced the culture of Soviet diplomacy throughout the decade. He was a firm advocate of peace, to such an extent that he was happy to compromise his revolutionary ideals – trading the world revolution for European stability so that the Soviet Union might be able to build itself. Desperate for stability in a volatile world, now further threatened by the rise of Hitler, he formulated the policy of collective security, which was aimed at ensuring peace elsewhere, in order to prevent Russia being drawn into war.[46] To achieve this, Litvinov keenly encouraged the formation of bilateral treaties between the major powers, as well as concluding treaties between them and Russia.

This marked a notable shift in the focus of the conduct of diplomacy, as it meant abandoning the exploitation of the frictions inherent in the capitalist world so that it would destroy itself – it was instead a realization of the fact that Russia was part of a world in which war would damage her interests.[47] Additionally, it indicated an increased focus of foreign policy aimed at ensuring peace and

---

1933-1939), p. 49; Note of the meeting between Maisky and Bingham, 11th December 1933, AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 17, p. 130, d. 358, l. 28-30, reproduced in Aldoshin et al (eds.), *Sovetsko-Amerikanskie otnosheniia: gody nepriznaniia, 1927-1933* (Moscow, 2002), pp. 726-728.

[46] Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933-39,* pp.1-2.

[47] Ibid., p.2.

abandoning revolution, drawing Soviet diplomats to align themselves more with the diplomatic field and to become more like their foreign counterparts.

Litvinov's policies in the 1930s brought the Narkomindel into conflict with the regime. His policy of collective security aimed to ensure peace in Europe by containing Nazi Germany; specifically, the Soviet Union sought assurances that it would receive support in the event of an expansionist move by Germany. Collective security as a policy upheld the Versailles settlement, and while it might have seemed strange for the Soviet Union to follow a policy which mimicked that originated by the imperialist Entente powers following the First World War, Litvinov firmly believed it to be in the Soviet Union's best interests.

What was important about collective security is that it was a policy formulated and promoted by Litvinov in the face of opposition from the Politburo; Molotov wanted a policy based on self-reliance and rapprochement with Germany, while Litvinov sought unilateral peace. Of key importance here is that collective security was a policy embraced by the Soviet Union's diplomats, but not by the regime. This demonstrates the practical mindset of Soviet diplomats in the 1930s, as they earnestly sought to promote peace in Europe through negotiations and treaties. Further, it shows that Soviet diplomats had internalized one of the central tenets of diplomacy – to avoid war at all costs.

Soviet interest in the League of Nations appears to have stemmed from its concurrent interest in collective security as a policy to avoid war in Europe and safeguard its borders. Soviet diplomats supported joining the League of Nations – involvement in the supra-national body was a natural progression of diplomacy in the interwar years, and it opened channels for working on collective security. Foreign governments and the foreign press also supported the Soviet Union joining the League of Nations, and worked towards making that happen.[48] The encouragement for the Soviet Union to join the League of Nations was in some respects based on a broader anti-German movement. Its implications for Soviet

[48] Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki*, vol. 2, pp. 253, 258.

diplomacy were that the Soviet Union was drawn deeper into the diplomatic field and had, as a result, a much greater need to align itself with it and its other practitioners, meaning that Soviet diplomatic culture needed to present itself as similar to other diplomatic cultures.

Litvinov's endorsement of collective security was a shift from the 1920s policy of peaceful coexistence with other states, but had the same grounding in preserving Soviet security. In joining the League of Nations, Soviet diplomats moved towards a further compliance with the norms of diplomacy as they came to take part in a supra-national body. Motivated by the need to ensure Soviet security, ideology was again being sacrificed for pragmatism. Collective security drove the need for Soviet membership in the League of Nations, but in joining, Soviet diplomats were obliged to conform more to the diplomatic habitus than they had before. As such, the move to collective security and joining the League of Nations forced Soviet diplomatic culture to move closer towards that of the diplomatic field. Additionally, the adoption of collective security and its dependent shifts in diplomatic culture again demonstrate that Soviet diplomacy was shaped by pragmatic concerns and how it could best achieve them in the diplomatic field.

Latecomers to the Party – The US Comes Round

Litvinov exchanged notes with Roosevelt on 16th November 1933 agreeing on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.[49] The Soviets had finally achieved recognition from the United States, the only major power not to have recognized the Soviet Union during the 1920s. A significant step on the road to collective security, recognition by the United States brought the potential for peaceful relations and the removal of a potential anti-Soviet

[49] Exchange of notes between Litvinov and Roosevelt, 16th November 1933, *DVP SSSR*, vol. 16, pp. 641-9.

bloc headed by America.[50] Almost a decade had passed since the struggles for recognition in the 1920s, and thus one must look at whether the recognition process was handled differently by the Soviet Union this time, and whether there is any indication of a change in Soviet diplomatic culture that brought it about. Had Soviet diplomats mastered self-presentation by 1933 with regards to the diplomatic field, such that they were now suitable for the US to enter into relations with them, and for full Soviet integration into the diplomatic community?

Alexander Troyanovsky presented his credentials as Soviet Ambassador in Washington on 8th January 1934.[51] Troyanovsky's speech differed little from the speech given by Bullitt when he presented his credentials in December to the Soviet government, suggesting that the Soviet Union was effectively mimicking American diplomats and thereby donning a veneer of respectability which smoothed the recognition process.[52] Not only does this show Soviet diplomats had successfully learnt diplomatic culture from foreign diplomats, but it is also clear from the correspondence between Soviet diplomats and US officials that the former were prepared to compromise their ideals in the interest of furthering diplomatic relations with the United States, repeating the pattern of behaviour seen during the recognition process during the 1920s. In communications throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, diplomats had signed their letters to foreign diplomats, as well as Soviet, 'with communist greetings', or 'with comradely greetings', but now shifted to the more universally acceptable 'yours sincerely'.[53] This shift suggests that Soviet diplomats and the Narkomindel could not simply attempt to impose Soviet

---

[50] Telegram from Litvinov to Narkomindel, 17th November 1933, ibid., pp. 658-60.
[51] Troyanovsky's speech to Roosevelt on the occasion of presenting his credentials, 8th January 1934, *DVP SSSR*, vol.. 17, pp. 31-2. Alexander Troyanovsky (1882-1955), served in the Commissariat for Foreign Trade during the 1920s, then served as Ambassador to Japan in 1927 before being appointed as Ambassador to the United States of America in 1933. Returning to the Soviet Union in 1938 he became involved in training diplomats in the Narkomindel.
[52] Telegram from Bullitt to the Acting Secretary of State, 4th January 1934, in *FRUS: Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 55.
[53] Letter from Troyanovsky to Bullitt, 8th February, 1934, AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 17, p. 129, d. 343, l. 69, reproduced in B. Zhiliaev, et al. (eds.), *Sovetsko-Amerikanskie otnosheniia, 1934-1939* (Moscow, 2003), p. 27.

ideals on diplomacy any longer. As before there was a very real need to adhere to the accepted practices of diplomacy.

Hosting American diplomats in Russia added another dimension to Soviet recognition by the United States, as a direct dialogue was established between the two countries. On 11th December 1933, William Bullitt arrived in Moscow as the United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union to begin a ten-day visit. Bullitt had been involved in negotiations with the Bolsheviks in 1918 and 1919, and had been at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.[54] Upon arrival, he was greeted by a group of senior Soviet officials, including Troyanovsky, who was about to become Ambassador to Washington. *Pravda* published favourable comments that Lenin had made about Bullitt when he had visited Russia in 1919 as part of a fact-finding mission for the Paris Peace Conference. Bullitt was received warmly and treated with the utmost courtesy from the very moment he arrived in Moscow to take up his post, and even during his journey. Following his arrival, he met with Litvinov immediately and 'had a brief, friendly conversation' with him.[55] The next day he called on Krestinsky, Karakhan, Sokolnikov, Stomoniankov, and Rubinin, before lunching with Litvinov and his family.[56] On 13th November he presented his credentials to Kalinin before meeting with a number of senior Soviet diplomats.[57]

---

[54] "Bullitt Served as Envoy to Lenin", *New York Times,* 18th November 1933, p. 3.

[55] Telegram from Bullitt to the Acting Secretary of State, 4th January 1934, in *FRUS: Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 55; Dennis Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt & Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow* (Lexington, Ky., 1998), p. 13.

[56] Lev Mikhailovich Karakhan (1889-1937). Deputy Foreign Commissar between 1918 and 1920, and between 1925 and 1934. He served as Ambassador to Poland, 1921-23, China, 1923-27, and Turkey, 1934-37. He was accused of treason, recalled and shot. Boris Spiridonovich Stomoniankov (1882-1941). Trade Representative to Germany, 1921-5, and Deputy Commissar for Foreign Trade, 1924-5, before becoming a member of the Narkomindel in 1926, where he was responsible for managing economic and political affairs between the Soviet Union and Germany, Poland, Rumania, France and Japan. He was Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs form 1934 until 1938. Evgenii Vladimirovich Rubinin. Ambassador to Belgium, 1935-40, and Ambassador to Luxemburg 1936-40.

[57] Notes of the meeting between Karakhan and Bullitt, 13th November 1933, AVP RF, f. 05, op. 13, p. 89, d. 4, l. 51-53, reproduced in reproduced in Aldoshin et al. (eds.), *Sovetsko-Amerikanskie otnosheniia: gody nepriznaniia, 1927-1933*, pp. 732-3; Notes of the meeting between Sokolnikov and Bullitt, 13th November 1933, AVP RF, f. 05, op. 13, p. 89, d. 4, l. 56-57, reproduced in Ibid., pp. 734-5; Notes of the meeting between Stomoniankov and Bullitt, 13th November 1933, AVP RF, f. 05, op. 13, p. 89, d. 4, l. 54-55, reproduced in Ibid., pp. 735-6; Dunn, *Caught between Roosevelt & Stalin,* p. 13.

Throughout the entire process Bullitt was treated to dinners and parties every evening. On 15th December Litvinov gave a formal dinner in Bullitt's honour, which was attended by many of the People's Commissars. The festivities surrounding Bullitt's arrival peaked on 20th November with an invitation from Voroshilov to dine in his apartment in the Kremlin, and to meet Stalin and the communist inner circle. This was a highly unusual manner for the Soviet Union to court a foreign diplomat. Stalin was keen to meet with Bullitt personally, and offered Bullitt the opportunity to call on him personally at any time. This was unprecedented in Soviet foreign relations, and Bullitt was wary of the envy this could incur from other ambassadors in Moscow, and therefore wanted the press to report that Stalin had simply 'dropped in'.[58] This demonstrates that the Soviet Union was very keen to make a favourable impression on Bullitt, more so than it had been with other ambassadors. That Bullitt did not realize that he was being fooled by an elaborate charade conducted by Soviet officials suggests that he was a little naïve, probably believing that he occupied an important and historical position, leading him to neglect the serious study of the problems that had arisen from the new diplomatic relations; this became clear when he returned to Moscow to commence his duties as ambassador.[59]

When Bullitt returned to Moscow in March 1934 the situation had dramatically changed. Bullitt found the Soviet Union to be uncooperative, which surprised him given how recently recognition had been granted.[60] The Soviets found his friendly manner presumptuous and his curtness arrogant. Divilkovsky remarked that Bullitt was 'somewhat spoiled by the good welcome that he [...] met

---

[58]Telegram from Bullitt to the acting secretary of state, 4th January 1934, in *FRUS*: *Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 57; Ibid., p. 59; Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt & Stalin*, p. 13; Telegram from Bullitt to the Acting Secretary of State, 4th January 1934, in *FRUS*: *Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 59-60.

[59] Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff,* p. 402; Telegram from Bullitt to Henderson, 21st March 1934, in *FRUS*: *Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 69; Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt & Stalin,* pp. 40-1.

[60] Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff,* p. 402; Telegram from Bullitt to Henderson, 21st March 1934, in *FRUS*: *Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 69.

[...] and that in the future he might become an obtrusive person'.[61] Despite his early hopes, he found that the 'honeymoon atmosphere had evaporated', and that Moscow had 'turned out to be just as disagreeable as [he] anticipated'.[62] All this points to the Soviet Union having systematically constructed an elaborate façade in order to secure recognition by the United States, and an exchange of ambassadors. It appears as though the overtures made to Bullitt in December 1933 were little more than expertly staged theatrics. He was led to believe he was being allowed privileged access to Stalin and the Soviet elite that other ambassadors were not granted. He was also under the impression that the Soviet Union was prepared to make more concessions than was actually the case in early 1934.

Bullitt had misread the Soviet diplomatic milieu in other ways. We see here an instance of the Soviet mastery of culture – effectively 'masking' true intentions behind a veneer of geniality – of which Bullitt was patently unaware, and unsuspicious. The Soviets had mastered the discourse of establishing diplomatic relations, becoming empowered to behave in a manner which would lure Bullitt into a false sense of security. Many of the same tactics used to hide the reality of the situation from Bullitt were also used in Soviet society; this suggests that diplomats had learnt tactics to deal with effective engagement in the diplomatic field from the necessities of successful participation in Stalinist society. Having been misled, and finding his situation greatly different from what he had expected, Bullitt tried to boost his popularity by being ostentatious and conspicuous. Failing in his attempts, he became steadily less and less popular. His successor Joseph Davies was much more to Soviet tastes, largely as a result of being a man who assured 'a measure of objectivity and reservation of judgement in reports as to what [the Soviets] were

---

[61] Ibid., p. 40; Notes of the meeting between Divilkovsky and Bullitt, 12th March 1934, AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 17, p. 129, d. 342, l. 28, reproduced in B. I. Zhiliaev et al., *Sovetsko-Amerikanskie otnosheniia, 1934-1939,* p. 51.

[62] Franklin. D. Roosevelt and William Bullitt, *For the President, personal and secret: Correspondence Between Franklin D. Roosevelt and William C. Bullitt* (Boston, 1972), p. 83.

trying to do and what they were accomplishing'.[63] What Moscow wanted was a career diplomat with experience who would fit in with the diplomatic conventions to which the Soviet Union was itself attempting to adhere.

In Bullitt's experiences, we see the Soviet Union playing the game of diplomacy extremely well and gaining an advantage through excellent play. This plainly illustrates that the Soviet Union was able to masquerade as a respectable state successfully enough to convince a foreign diplomat that the situation was quite different from the realities he would encounter. This was, of course, nothing new for Soviet diplomacy. Since its beginnings, Soviet diplomats had been learning to project a public image of respectability such that others would accept and deal with them.[64] The tactics used in 1933 to confuse Bullitt were simply an example of this behaviour not just by diplomats, but by other Soviet officials as well.

What we see here is a potential return to the Soviet subversion of diplomacy, but in a rather different manner from the use of revolutionary activity in the immediate post-revolutionary period. Understanding how to present themselves as having acquired the necessary capital for participation in the diplomatic field, and demonstrating that they subscribed to the diplomatic habitus, presented the Soviet Union with an opportunity. They were able to mislead foreign diplomats, such as Bullitt, fooling them into believing that the reality of Soviet diplomacy matched its outward face, when in fact that face obscured something really quite different.

---

[63] Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff*, p. 402; Joseph Davies, *Mission to Moscow: a record of confidential dispatches to the State Department, correspondence, current diary and journal entries including notes and comment up to October 1941* (London, 1942), p. 60; Louis Fischer, *Men and Politics: an Autobiography* (London, 1941), p. 303.

[64] See chapter 2 with reference to Berzin and the mission to Switzerland.

Withdrawal – The Closure of Consulates

In the second half of the 1930s the regime forced a retreat from international society, carrying out policies and actions which withdrew the Narkomindel from the diplomatic field, and causing serious change to Soviet diplomatic culture by 1939. The beginning of this was a process of withdrawal of the diplomatic apparatus and the potential for supposed harm caused through it by contact with foreigners. In the second half of the 1930s, the Soviet Union began a programme of foreign consular closure within its borders, coupled with the closure of some of its own consulates overseas. This seems to have been motivated by the terror following Sergei Kirov's murder in December 1934.[65] Kirov's murder was used by Stalin to promote a threat of counterrevolutionary elements acting within the Soviet Union that needed to be rooted out. The regime sought out class enemies, those guilty of hampering the Soviet Union's economic development, dissidents, and spies. Many of those accused in the latter categories were foreign, making them even more suspect. There was also a concern, as the terror progressed, to restrict the international visibility of the process. In an era of spy scares, the general distrust of foreigners arising during the terror only served to further the policy of closing consulates. An added dimension was the desire to put the Soviet Union on an equal footing with other powers, by having the same number of consulates abroad as foreign powers had within the Soviet Union.[66]

The closures began in February 1936 with the Consulate General in Mukden, China, which was deemed unnecessary. There was a respite until August 1937 when two consulates in Manchukuo were closed, followed by a demand a month later that Japan close its consulates in Odessa and Novosibirsk. During the summer and autumn of 1937, the Soviet Union demanded the closure of fourteen consulates, with

---

[65] Kirov's murder is viewed as the event that sparked the terror in the Soviet Union. It remains a matter of debate as to whether Stalin played a role in Kirov's death, or whether he just used it as a premise to launch a programme of rooting out 'enemies of the people'.

[66] *DVP SSSR*, p. 718 as quoted in Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security*, pp. 154-5.

further demands in early 1938 that Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and Czechoslovakia close theirs. Others had already been closed by Germany and Italy.[67] This was a programme ordered from above, although it is clear that some diplomats supported the move. On 28th January 1938, closure of the British Consulate in Leningrad was discussed in the Politburo, following notes from Potemkin advising that such action be taken. On 27th March 1938, the Politburo decided to liquidate the embassy in Vienna, further stressing that it would not be replaced with a consulate. On 23rd March 1939, it ordered the closure of the Prague embassy, to be changed to a Consulate-General.[68] Litvinov saw this process as damaging to Soviet prestige, in terms of closing the borders, but also because it went against all of the concessions the Narkomindel had worked so hard to achieve. From the point of view of diplomacy, these moves by the Politburo were offensive to the nations with which the Soviet Union had established a dialogue.

These problems extended even to foreign diplomats. Along with the closure of the consulates and resultant problems for foreigners in receiving visas, there also arose problems with receiving foreign diplomats in the Soviet Union. Litvinov handled these situations with caution, and requested permission from the Central Committee for such visits.[69] As has been discussed, Soviet diplomats had been deeply aggrieved in the 1920s by lack of extension of the basic courtesies for diplomats, such as allowing them to enter countries and to be afforded immunity from customs searches.[70] From personal understanding of the issue Litvinov was displeased that the paranoia of the purge era forced the infliction of diplomatic discourtesies on others and he feared the potential repercussions on diplomatic relations.

---

[67] Magerovsky, "The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs," p.337.
[68] Politburo Protocol no. 57, 28th January 1938, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 22, l. 113, reproduced in Adibekov (ed.), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Evropa,* , p. 358; Politburo Protocol no. 59, 27th March 1938, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 22, l. 159 reproduced in ibid., p. 359; Politburo Protocol no. 1, 23rd March 1939, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 25, l. 1, reproduced in ibid., p. 370.
[69] Politburo Protocol no. 67, 18th January 1939, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 24, l. 85, reproduced in ibid., p. 368.
[70] See chapter 2.

These issues placed serious limitations on foreign diplomats working within the Soviet Union. By the end of 1938, the foreign diplomatic community was restricted to Moscow and the NKVD did its best to isolate foreign diplomats from the Soviet people.[71] The Soviet Union adopted a policy of containment in order that it could keep its citizens away from contact with foreigners and to prevent foreign surveillance of the Soviet Union. The restrictions on diplomats and their movements ran counter to accepted norms of diplomacy, and must be seen as further evidence of the harm that the purges and their surrounding paranoia were doing to Soviet diplomatic prestige.

Closing consulates and effectively withdrawing from this aspect of international relations impacted heavily on how the Narkomindel could go about its business. That such a withdrawal was the precise opposite to the intentions of Soviet diplomats at the time is striking, and demonstrates the power that Stalin had over the Narkomindel. The regime, however, did not stop with closing consulates as part of the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from international affairs, as it also turned to purging the Narkomindel and its diplomats.

The Purges and the Narkomindel

Following the Bukharin trial in March 1938, it was rumoured that there would be a 'special trial of diplomats'.[72] The trial never happened, but the Narkomindel was unable to escape the purges that ravaged the party in the late 1930s. Diplomats were recalled and shot, or else killed trying to escape the clutches of the NKVD.[73] The purge of the Narkomindel was, like the closure of the consulates, in part born out of the paranoia that those who had had contact with foreigners had turned against the Soviet Union. With the rash of spy scares accompanying the purges, Soviet

---

[71] Nora Murry, *I Spied for Stalin* (New York, 1951), p. 65.
[72] Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: a Reassessment* (London, 1990), p.423.
[73] Barmin, *Memoirs,* pp.16-17; pp.23-24.

diplomats with their foreign contacts became natural suspects for such activity. The purge of the Narkomindel had much to do with the contacts that Soviet diplomats had established during their service abroad, and policies developed during the purges show steps to limit the contact diplomats had with the outside world. In February 1938, there was a move to have all ambassadors serving in Europe and Asia return to Moscow for six weeks every six months, and those in Japan, the US and China every eight months.[74] There was a palpable aura of distrust, and this was only heightened by those who had contacts overseas. Accusations of foreign espionage and international Trotskyism led to Arosev's arrest as an enemy of the people.[75] In reality, his case appears to have been based on his travels abroad and his vast number of foreign contacts. The Soviet Embassy in Spain was ravaged, as almost the entirety of its staff was accused of collaborating with Franco's regime. All this highlights the Soviet regime's paranoia, with particular emphasis on the supposed threat from outsiders and the effect on the Narkomindel as a result.

This was problematic for diplomats in the purge era: since they had, by the very nature of their profession, had contact with foreign societies, they were seen to have been at least partially seduced by capitalist decadence. In Solzhenitsyn's novel *The First Circle*, one of the characters, the diplomat Innokenty Volodin, is arrested amidst the typical trappings of capitalism – jazz, fine wines, and licentious women.[76] The label 'cosmopolitan' was applied to diplomats as a pejorative term that implied a person was engaged in espionage.[77] Litvinov was frequently labelled an

---

[74] Politburo decision, 28th February 1938, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 996, as quoted in Dullin "Litvinov and the NKID," pp. 137-8.

[75] Arosev to Khrushchev, 22nd March 1937, GARF, f. 5283, op. 1a, d. 342, l. 41-8 as quoted in Michael David-Fox, "Stalinist Westerniser? Aleksandr Arosev's Literary and Political Depictions of Europe," *Slavic Review,* vol. 62, no. 4 (2003), p. 757; Smirnov to Andreev, 22nd March 1938, GARF, f. 5283, op. 2a, d. 1, l. 1-5 as qoted in ibid., p. 757. Arosev had served as attaché in Latvia 1921-2, France, 1924-5, Sweden, 1926-7, Lithuania, 1927-8 and Czechoslovakia, 1928-1933 before becoming head of the All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad (VOKS) between 1934 and 1937.

[76] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The First Circle* (London, 1968), p. 91; Catriona Kelly discusses the work in, *Refining Russia: Advice Literature, Polite Culture, and Gender from Catherine to Yeltsin*, (Oxford, 2001), p.231.

[77] 'Cosmopolitan' was frequently applied to Jews in Russia, from Tsarist times when pogroms had been carried out against them, and had associations with Zionism. During the NEP there had been an association of Jews with the amassing of wealth and there was a return to the use of it in the Soviet

anglophile, largely as a result of his English wife. The regime launched an assault on individuals engaged in foreign relations over their interests and connections to the world outside the Soviet Union, which can only point to a fear of the cultural contamination of its diplomats as a result of their contact with foreigners and non-Soviet ideas.

Regarding contacts with foreigners, there is an almost complete reversal of what were nominally the principles of Soviet diplomacy. The purge era brought a return to Soviet diplomatic isolation, this time self-imposed as a result of their withdrawal from international society. The Soviet Union closed consulates in order to limit contact with the outside world, and the loss of diplomats serving overseas further contributed to this, leading to a diplomatic body returned to the state in which it was between the Revolution and the Genoa Conference, paralyzed by an inability to function in the diplomatic world. Although this time the isolation was caused by the purges rather than by foreign powers, the net result was much the same. The domestic politics of terror held the Soviet Union's foreign service in limbo.

The NKVD directed the purge of the Narkomindel from within. As has been seen in previous chapters, the NKVD (and its forerunners) was already involved in policing the Narkomindel and in rooting out individuals who were not adhering to the prescribed line.[78] Most important in the purges though was the NKVD's direct involvement in the Narkomindel's personnel department. In 1937 Vasili Korzhenko, an NKVD agent, took charge of the department in order to direct the purge.[79] Korzhenko policed the entire institution, from the cipher clerks to the most

---

Union during the latter part of Stalin's reign as *bezrodnyi kosmopolit* (rootless cosmopolitan). That Litvinov and a number of senior diplomats were Jewish should be noted. There is a secondary sense, following the Second World War that 'cosmopolitans' believed that some aspect of western technology or society was superior to Soviet and an implication of involvement in espionage.

[78] See discussion of OGPU in chapter 4.

[79] Barmin, *Memoirs*, p.17.

senior ambassadors, watching for any deviation from the party line.[80] Additionally, the Narkomindel passed lists regarding its personnel to the NKVD, at times denouncing officials, thereby abetting the purge.[81] The same was true of the Comintern, for whom involvement with foreigners was a similar issue. Both the Narkomindel and the Comintern were at times directly instructed by the Politburo to engage in such list-making, but more frequently acted on their own initiative to demonstrate their vigilance in rooting out potentially dangerous individuals from their organizations.[82] Complicity with the purges, and indeed in some respects helping their course, was almost unavoidable.

Litvinov, while publicly obliged to acknowledge those members of the Narkomindel who disappeared as guilty of being traitors, was clearly displeased by the effect that the purges had on the Narkomindel in the late 1930s.[83] In a letter of 3rd January 1939, addressed to Stalin, Litvinov expressed his displeasure and frustration, setting out what the purges had done to the staffing and effectiveness of the Narkomindel. The letter is a clear indictment not just of the purge within the Narkomindel, but of Stalin's lack of understanding of diplomatic courtesy. Litvinov appealed to Stalin in the letter about the harm that was being done to the Narkomindel, effectively demonstrating that Soviet diplomatic culture was being moulded in the period by the actions of Stalin, rather than by the diplomats as they

---

[80] Murry, *I Spied for Stalin*, p. 83.

[81] Politburo Protocol no. 68, 2-28th February 1939, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 24, l. 104, reproduced in Adibekov (ed.), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Komintern*, p. 772.

[82] A list of Communist Party members "formerly in other parties, having Trotskyist and Rightist tendencies," sent by F. Kotelnikov to the NKVD, 4th September 1936, RGASPI, f. 546, op. 1, d. 376, ll. 30-36, reproduced in William Chase, *Enemies Within the Gates? The Comintern and the Stalinist Repression, 1934-39* (New Haven, 2002), electronic edition athttp://www.yale.edu/annals/Chase/Documents/doc21chapt4.htm on 30th December 2005; Denunciations from Walecki to Ezhov, 26th June 1937, RGASPI, f. 495, op. 252, d. 510, l. 1-10 reproduced in ibid at http://www.yale.edu/annals/Chase/Documents/doc34chapt5.htm on 30th December 2005; Lists of arrested former members and candidate members of the party organization of the ECCI apparatus, 1939, RGASPI, f. 546, op. 1, d. 434, l. 25-32, reproduced in Ibid., at http://www.yale.edu/annals/Chase/Documents/doc49chapt6.htm on 30th December 2005.

[83] Report of US Ambassador Davies 4th March 1937, Joseph Davies Papers, Box 7, Manuscript Division, US Library of Congress, as quoted in Phillips, *Between the Revolution and the West*, pp.161-2; Barmin, *One Who Survived: the Life Story of a Russian Under the Soviets,* (New York, 1945), p. 45; Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, p. 167, 262.

would have desired. The letter is reproduced below, showing Litvinov's protests and his readiness to stand up to Stalin in defence of the Narkomindel and Soviet diplomacy.

> 'At present the post of ambassador is unfilled in nine capitals: Washington, Tokyo, Warsaw, Bucharest, Barcelona, Kaunas, Copenhagen, Budapest and Sofia. If Comrade Chernykh, who is now in the USSR, does not return to Tehran, there will be a tenth such case.
>
> In some of the capitals mentioned there has already been no ambassador for over a year. Leaving chargés d'affaires at the head of embassies and legations for a long time assumes political significance and is interpreted as resulting from unsatisfactory diplomatic relations. I consider particularly embarrassing and harmful for our relations the absence of an ambassador in Warsaw, Bucharest and Tokyo. After the rapprochement with Poland which we had begun the Polish press announced the imminent nomination of an ambassador in Warsaw as a certain consequence of this improvement in relations. Owing to the absence of an ambassador in Bucharest we are quite without information on what is happening in Romania, in either internal or external policy matters. We are having to conduct all negotiations with Japan through the Japanese ambassador, as our chargé d'affaires has practically no access to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (as a general rule it is rare for a minister to receive a chargé d'affaires in person).
>
> The situation is no better where counsellors and secretaries of embassies are concerned. Here are the unfilled posts: 9 for counsellors, 22 for secretaries, 30 for consuls and vice-consuls and 46 for the other political post in embassies (heads of press department, attachés and secretaries of consulates).

We cannot recall certain ambassadors to Moscow as required by the [Central Committee's] decision, owing to the lack of colleagues where they are (at the Athens embassy there is not a single one) or, in any case, of persons to whom one could entrust even temporarily the running of the embassy. I do not even mention the gaps in responsible posts in the central apparatus of the NKID. It is enough to say that, of the eight departments, only one has an established head, the seven others being looked after by heads *ad interim*.

There is not sufficient technical staff in the NKID, especially in the embassies. We have received by the last post hardly anything in the nature of a report and information from London owing to the lack of an operator in that embassy.

Recently we have had to suspend the courier service because 12 couriers have not received permission to leave the country until their personal papers have been examined.

This situation is due not merely to the withdrawal by the NKVD's organs of certain number of NKID personnel. The fact is that, generally speaking, nearly all our workers abroad who have come to the USSR on holiday or because summoned by us have not been given permission to return to their posts. The majority of the workers in the central apparatus of the NKID have similarly failed to receive permission to go abroad. As a measure of vigilance a substantial number of our workers have been expelled from the Party by the Party committee. Others have been debarred from the secret sector, and in consequence have lost all usefulness in the service of the 7th Department of the NKVD. Nor have the replacements whom we had prepared through our *cursus* in recent years been allowed the possibility of working abroad. Lately we have not received from the [Central Committee] the new workers whom we needed. The new workers

> enrolled for the courses will be able to begin work only at the end of their training, after eighteen months to two years. Consequently we see no prospect of completing our cadres if the current attitude concerning permission to go abroad and access to secret work is maintained.[84]

Litvinov's first point in the letter, regarding the nine empty ambassadorial posts, raises the question of how foreign states and their diplomats saw the purges. Empty ambassadorial posts, while harmful to Soviet prestige, must surely have implied that the Narkomindel was unable to effectively manage its personnel, let alone carry out diplomatic negotiations, and was withdrawing from the international stage. As Litvinov observed, having a chargé d'affaires heading a mission for any length of time was a signal that diplomatic relations with the host state were less than satisfactory.

The letter gives an impression of the supposed motives behind the purge of many Narkomindel officials, but also indicates that the problem went deeper than the disappearance of individuals. From Litvinov's comments, it appears that there was a complete deadlock on moving new staff into the Narkomindel to replace those whom the purge had claimed. This was created by a lack of clearance for individuals to work abroad or to work with secret documents. The NKVD and the Central Committee had purged individuals from the Narkomindel who had not even begun their service, hence compounding the diplomatic service's problems in replacing lost staff.

The purges not only removed diplomats, but also restricted the Narkomindel's work. US diplomats complained that their Soviet counterparts became impossible to talk to, and that they were unwilling to give any information.[85] Internal channels of communication were harmed as the courier service became impotent, and certain embassies lacked technicians to operate telegraph equipment.

---

[84] Letter from Litvinov to Stalin, 3rd January 1939, *DVP SSSR,* vol. 22, book 1, p. 10.
[85] Henderson to Secretary of State, 10th June 1937, 861.00/11705, in *FRUS*: *Soviet Union, 1933-1939,* p. 380.

Shortly before his defection in 1937, Aleksandr Barmin, who held the post of chargé d'affaires in Athens, observed that he found the Narkomindel in 'a strange torpor', having received no instructions for several months.[86] Barmin remembered that the purges were not discussed within the Greek mission, and the terror process reduced the Narkomindel and the diplomatic corps to the position of silent supplicants. So great was the fear of being recalled that Soviet diplomats began to be perceived as unwilling to make decisions and not to be trusted to accurately convey information to Moscow.[87] The terror paralyzed the Narkomindel into a silent and ineffective organization, a far cry from what it had been previously in the decade, and left it bereft of officials in senior posts.

The letter also highlights the visibility of the purges and the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from international society. Since diplomats occupied high-profile positions which brought them into contact with foreign political officials, the effects of the purge must have been highly obvious as Soviet diplomats began to be swallowed up by the purge and their posts left vacant. In this respect, the purge of the Narkomindel is similar to that of the officer corps of the army.[88] The Narkomindel felt a strong need to limit the visibility of the purge; after 1936, it ceased to publish the annual volume it had published since 1925 in the form of *Ezhegodnik NKID/Annuaire Diplomatique.* This move was clearly a step to avoid embarrassment, as the lists of officials included within the volumes began to read more like a casualty list than a list of where various Soviet officials were serving.[89] As the *Ezhegodnik* was a publication from the organization itself, rather than from the central government, one can see the Narkomindel's move in stopping its publication as a clear step to limit damage to Soviet prestige abroad during the purge

---

[86] Barmin, *One Who Survived,* p.3.
[87] Henderson to Secretary of State, 10th June 1937, 861.00/11705, in *FRUS*: *Soviet Union, 1933-1939,* p. 380.
[88] Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: the Origins and Consequences of Stalinism,* (London, 1971), ch. 6.
[89] *Ezhegodnik Narodnogo komissariata po inostrannym delam: Annuaire diplomatique du Comissariat du peuple pour les affaires etrangeres* (Moscow, 1925-1936).

era. Also telling is the removal of purged diplomats from the pages of history. *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* in its first edition in 1948 contains none of the purged diplomats. Some appear in the second edition (1960-64), a few more in the third (1971), but many were only added in the appendix of the 1984-86 edition, following their rehabilitation.[90] Additionally, names of some of the more prominent diplomats who fell victim to the purge were removed from *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki SSSR*.[91]

Despite the NKVD's grip on the Narkomindel, Litvinov sought to limit the purge of the diplomatic corps. His approach to the purges was largely based on prudence, probably to an extent as a result of institutional self-interest lest he be seen to be protecting individuals during the period. He was present at the Central Committee's plenums, which met to decide the fate of accused individuals, invariably voting with the majority for expulsion from the Party and passing the case on to the NKVD. He worked with the Central Committee, seeking approval for individuals to serve overseas, and to accompany him to assemblies of the League of Nations.[92] Litvinov was being extremely cautious, following the direction that the Central Committee had chosen in the late 1930s.

Litvinov continued to place Soviet diplomatic goals above ideological concerns during the purge era. When the Central Committee tried to recall Boris Shtein, Ambassador in Rome, Litvinov told him on several occasions 'you are

---

[90] *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (1948); *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (1960-64); *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (1984-86).

[91] Uldricks, "The Impact of the Great Purges on the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs", *Slavic Review*, vol. 36, no. 2 (1977), p. 188.

[92] Expulsion from the party of Rudzutak and Tukhashevsky, 24th May, of Yakir and Uborevich, 30th May 1937, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 615; expulsion of Postyshev, 28th February-2nd March 1938; expulsion of Yegorov, 9th-11th January 1939, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 640, as quoted in Dullin, "Litvinov and the NKID", p. 140; Letter from Litvinov to Kaganovich, 20th August 1936, AVP RF, f. 05, op. 16, p. 114, d. 1, as quoted in ibid., p. 140; Letter from Litvinov to Stalin, 5th February 1937, AVP RF, f. 05, op. 17, p. 126, d. 1, as quoted in ibid., p. 140; Telegram from Kaganovich to Stalin, 26th August 1936, RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 93, l. 11, reproduced in O. Khlevniyuk et al. (eds.), *Stalin i Kaganovich. Perepiska 1931-1936 gg.* (Moscow, 2001), p. 647; Letter from Kaganovich to Stalin, 27th August 1936, RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 93, l. 115, reproduced in ibid., p. 650; Letter from Kaganovich and Molotov to Stalin, 9th September 1936, RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 94, l. 80, reproduced in ibid., p. 670.

needed in Rome, forbidden to come back'.[93] In part motivated by the need to maintain diplomatic contact in capitals across Europe in the late 1930s, Litvinov was attempting to preserve the Narkomindel and to keep Soviet diplomacy functioning effectively. On occasion he showed his open disagreement with the Central Committee. When Rykov and Bukharin were denounced by the Central Committee, Litvinov refused to engage in condemning them.[94] Litvinov was concerned that the accusations should be credible, and in this showed the reflex of a diplomat concerned about the Soviet Union's image abroad. This argument is supported by the fact that Litvinov was not the only diplomat who attempted to restrict the purge in the Narkomindel. Potemkin, appointed Deputy Commissar in 1937, also questioned the Central Committee's decisions. In March 1938 he requested a review of the decision against Fedor Veinberg, whose departure from the Western Department he feared would be catastrophic, both in terms of his abilities and his standing in the international community.[95]

Some consideration of the extent of the purge in the Narkomindel must be made if its full impact on Soviet diplomacy is to be understood. It is hard to ascertain from available information the full scale of the purge in the Narkomindel, but it seems, according to Teddy Uldricks' work in the late 1970s and Sabine Dullin's more recent study, that at least 34% of its officials were dismissed. For those holding 'responsible' posts (approximately 100 individuals) the figures are twice as high; 62% fell victim while 16% maintained their posts, with 14% escaped the purge by dying other than in the purges, or through defection. For 8% there is insufficient information to conclude whether they suffered in the purge or not.[96]

---

[93] Zinoviev Sheinis, "Sud'ba Diplomata. Shtrikhi k portretu Borisa Shteina," in N. V. Popov (ed.), *Arkhivy raskryvaiut tainy...: Mezhdunarodnye voprosy: sobitiia i liudi,* (Moscow, 2001), p. 301.
[94] "Materialy fevralsko-martovskogo plenuma TsK VKP(b) 1937 goda," *Voprosy istorii,* 1992, no. 2-3, pp. 3-4 ; no. 4-5, pp. 3-36 ; no, 5-6, pp. 3-29.
[95] Letter from Potemkin to Andreev, 15th March 1938, AVP RF, f. 05, op. 18, p. 138, d. 3, as quoted in Dullin, *Des hommes d'Influences*, p. 243. Fedor Semyonovich Veinberg was Deputy Director, 1935-37, and then Director, 1937-38, of the Narkomindel's Third Western Department.
[96] Uldricks, "The Impact of the Great Purges," p. 190.

The figures are even higher if one takes only those who held positions in which they were in charge of a department or embassy. The extent to which senior officials and ambassadors perished is easier to ascertain, as a result of their higher prominence. From the upper levels of the central bureaucracy, of the twenty-eight senior officials, the Foreign Commissar and his deputies and chiefs of departments, seven were shot, two were relieved of their posts, six were arrested, there are nine on whose fates there is no information, with four surviving including Litvinov. Of the thirty-six individuals who held ambassadorial (including chargé d'affaires in the absence of an ambassador) posts in Europe between 1936 and 1939, nine were recalled from their posts, six were shot, one died in office, one defected, one was arrested, and nineteen survived. From an aggregate of these together, for those who directed embassies or departments we have a total of sixty-three (Astakhov was appointed from the central Narkomindel to be chargé d'affaires in Berlin during the purges), at least half of whom were victims of the purge in some form. From this it can be seen that the risk of falling victim to the purge was proportionally greater with seniority within the Narkomindel. The tables below show the relative percentages of senior individuals purged in the Narkomindel.

Table. 5.1 Fate of upper-level Narkomindel officials and Ambassadors in the purges

Fate	Upper level officials	Ambassadors
Shot	N. N. Krestinskii B. S. Stomoniakov P. S. Nazarov G. N. Laskevich A. F. Neuman A. V. Sabanin M. A. Plotkin	K.K. Iurenev (Germany) E. A. Asmus (Finland) A. A. Bekzadian (Hungary) B. G. Podolski (Lithuania) Y. K. Davtyan (Poland) L. M. Karkahan (Turkey)
Relieved/recalled	E. E. Herschelmann B. M. Mironov	A. F. Merekalov (Germany) F. F. Raskolnikov (Bulgaria) N. S. Tikhmenev (Denmark) M. I. Rosenberg (Spain) M. V. Kobetski (Greece) S. J. Brodovski (Latvia) I. S. Iakubovitch (Norway) M. S. Ostrovski (Rumania) B. E. Shtein (Italy)
Arrested	V. N. Barkov A. V. Fekhner D. G. Stern F. S. Veinberg S. I. Vinogradov E. A. Gnedin	Y. S. Podolski (Austria)
Defected		F. K. Butenko (Rumania)
Died in office		A.M. Ustinov (Estonia)
No information	Y. M. Kozlovski V. V. Egoriev N. E. Rivlina L. E. Berejov G. Y. Bejanov Y. S. Ilinski V. L. Levin B. D. Rosenblum J. M. Morsthein	

The above table takes into account the individuals' fates on leaving the Narkomindel, except in the cases where they were arrested and shot. Some were arrested later, and Raskolnikov defected after being recalled from his post. Sources for this analysis are L. S. Eremina and A. B. Roginskii (eds), *Rasstrel'nye spiski: Moscow, 1937-1941; "Kommunarka", Butovo: kniga pamiati zhertv politicheskikh repressii* (Moscow, 2000); *Ezhegodnik Narodnogo komissariata po inostrannym delam: Annuaire diplomatique du Comissariat du peuple pour les affaires étrangères* (Moscow, 1936); *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (Moscow, 1948); *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (Moscow, 1985-7); Uldricks, "The Impact of the Great Purges," pp. 190-1; Dullin, *Les Hommes D'influence,* pp. 334-8.

Fig. 5.1. Effects of the purges of senior officials in the central Narkomindel

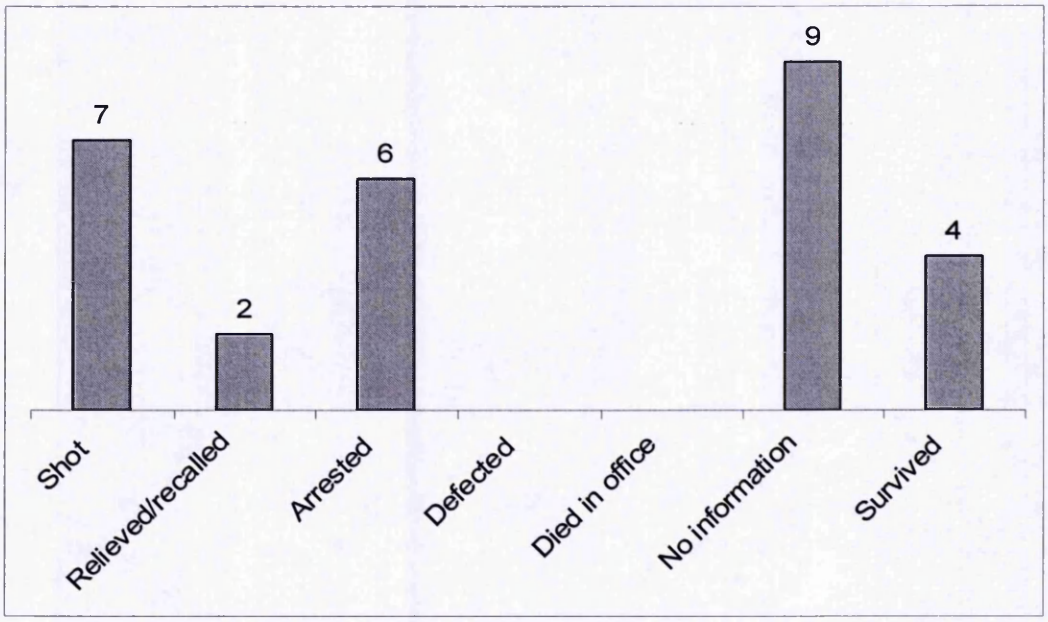


Fig. 5.2. Effects of the purges on those holding Ambassadorial posts 1936-1939

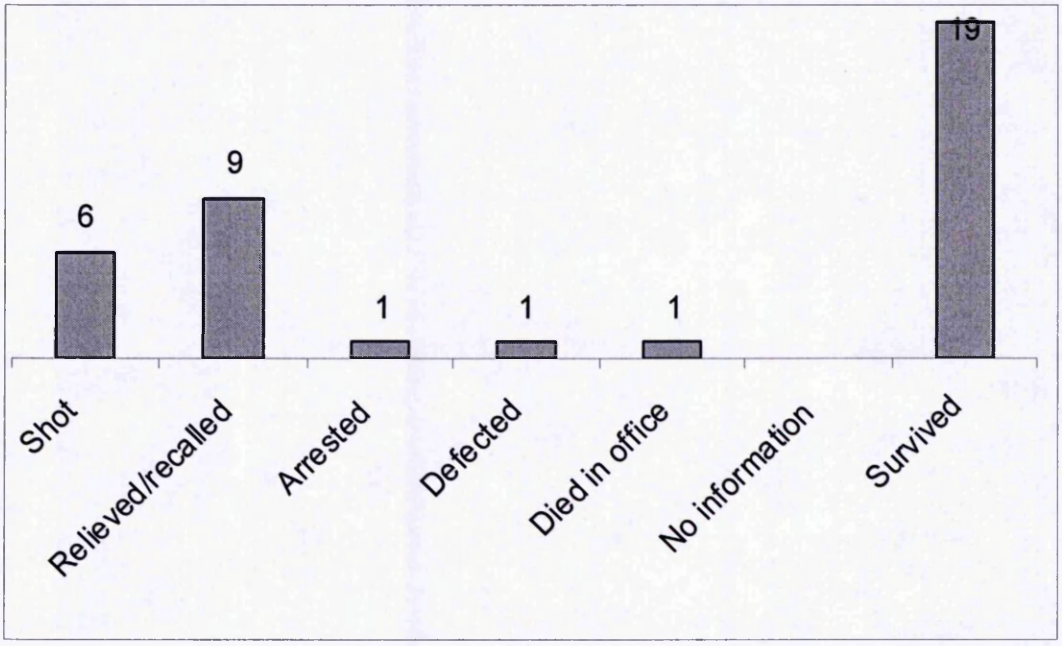
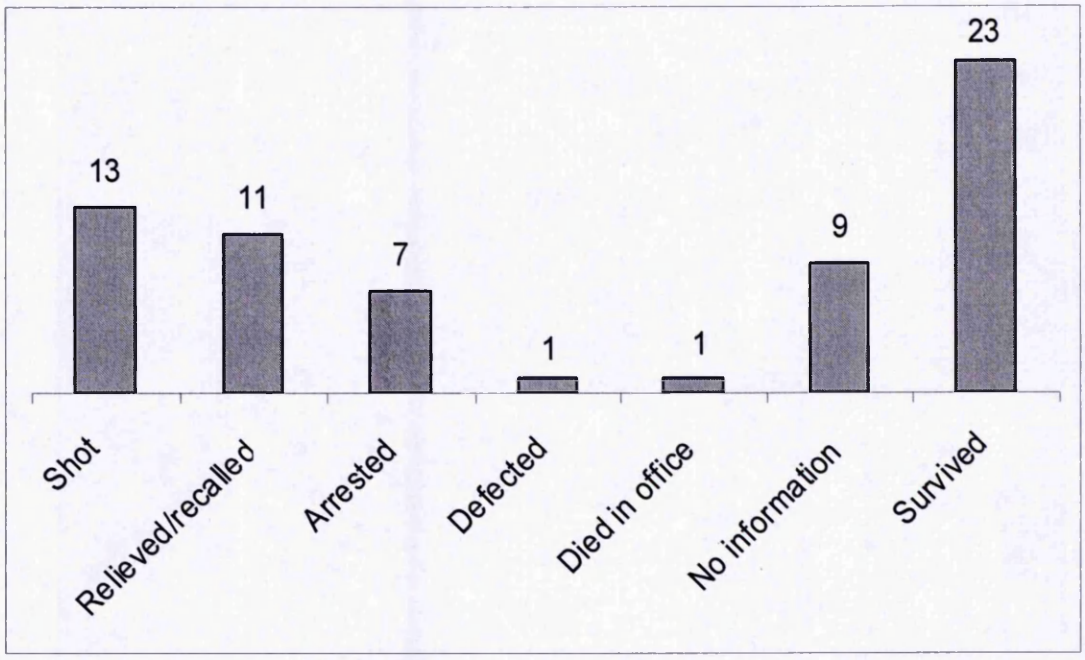


Fig. 5.3. Aggregate effect of the purges on Department Chiefs and Ambassadorial posts



Diplomats React to the Purge

As the reshaping of the Narkomindel progressed, the effect on diplomats serving abroad is important. How concerned were they for their own safety, and how did they represent the purges?

One approach, adopted by Kollontai, was silence and withdrawal. Kollontai's appointment books detail her meetings with foreign diplomats and attendance at social occasions. During 1938 she was much more reserved than previously, the appointment book being half the size from the previous four years, and it is clear that Kollontai dropped out of the active diplomatic circle during 1938. During the first show trial in 1936 her diary writing, which was otherwise almost religiously frequent, stopped for nine months.[97] One reason for this was the damage

[97] *Kniga zapisenii iubileinikh dat, visitov, obedy, priemov Kollontai: Diplomaticheskikh, politicheskikh, gosudarstvenikh i drugikh deyatelei Shvetsii i poslov raznikh stran v Shvetsii i drugie, 1934-9*, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 3, d. 59-64, 67; Kollontai, *Diplomaticheskie dnevniki,* vol. 2; *Diplomaticheskie zapiski, tetrad' trinadtsataya*, RGASPI, f. 134, op. 3, d. 25.

that the purge and the terror had done to the Soviet Union's international image – Kollontai found that problems arose in her interactions with other diplomats.[98] Her solution seems to have been to deliberately disengage from the diplomatic milieu and remain silent about the atrocities of the purge years in the Soviet Union. For her, at least, silence was the best way to respond to what was happening, as she felt unable to support it. There was precedent for such behaviour: she had shunned German diplomats after 1933, refusing to acknowledge their presence at functions or to receive them at the embassy. For Kollontai, silence and withdrawal were the best policy when dealing with matters for which she had no taste and which she could not comprehend.

The silence of diplomats such as Kollontai on the purges was also a means of disengaging from aspects of Soviet society, as well as diplomatic circles. By not engaging in the discourse surrounding the purges there was no way to give affirmation to the regime, as one might by 'speaking Bolshevik' and becoming a carrier of the regime's discourse. Silence on an issue, therefore, was a form of anti-Stalinist behaviour, particularly powerful when translated to the representation of the Soviet Union outside of its borders. Diplomats had been made complicit with the purges, by having to justify them and by providing information to aid the process, and silence was a means of undoing this. While silence was a weaker form of protest – compared to speaking out against the purges – in the context of the era a diplomat who failed to take the party line risked his or her life, and so silence presented itself as a better option.

There were not just changes for those who already served in the Narkomindel at the outbreak of the purges. In addition to the diplomats accused and killed, the wave of terror had another dimension which seriously harmed the Narkomindel. Diplomats removed during the purges were replaced by individuals who lacked the experience or aptitude to function effectively as diplomats. Individuals from outside the Narkomindel stepped into vacant ambassadorial posts,

[98]Swedish Press Bulletin no. 3, 7th January 1935, AVP RF, f. 140, op. 19, p. 27, d. 3, l. 15-16; Clements, *Bolshevik Feminist* p. 252.

as well as more minor official positions. Replacements for diplomats removed during the purges came from two main sources. The first of these sources was the lower levels of the Narkomindel, from which officials moved up into positions vacated higher in the hierarchy. The second source was other commissariats.

This replacement strategy seems to have been a deliberate policy on the part of Stalin and Molotov in the late 1930s as a means of further drawing power away from the Narkomindel and centralizing it. It can be seen in the second wave of purges which swept through the Narkomindel between May and July 1939, following Litvinov's dismissal as Foreign Commissar. Molotov systematically removed almost all of the personnel who had served in the Chicherin and Litvinov eras. One of the first to go was Korzhenko, who had been brought in to direct the purge of the Narkomindel.[99] US diplomats reported that Molotov replaced 'almost the entire staff', including all but two of the department heads and more than 90 percent of the minor officials.[100] Foreigners saw this as being entirely motivated by increasing centralization in foreign affairs as a result of Molotov's appointment and hence a desire to remove every individual connected to the Litvinov administration.[101] It appears that Stalin and Molotov were attempting to destroy all remnants of the Narkomindel's autonomy, to fill it with inexperienced individuals (most of whom had never had any contact with foreigners), and to concentrate all of the power in Soviet foreign affairs in the hands of the central government.

The purge of the Narkomindel removed diplomats from the diplomatic field not only physically but also psychologically, making them unable to present themselves in it effectively because they were too frightened, or obliged to stay silent on the horrors happening in the Soviet Union. A new generation of diplomats unable to function in diplomacy, coupled with the ravages of the purges, destroyed the Narkomindel, and the Soviet diplomatic habitus was reshaped to the point that

---

[99] Murry, *I Spied for Stalin,* p. 126.
[100] Telegram no. 861.021/46 from Grummon to the Secretary of State, 6th July 1939, reproduced in *FRUS: Soviet Union, 1933-1939,* pp. 770-3.
[101] Ibid., p. 772.

compliance with the Stalinist field had taken priority over integration into the diplomatic one.

The purges also hampered decision making in Soviet foreign policy by leading to the Soviet Union becoming pushed out of the diplomatic field. Other states viewed the purges with some distaste, and came to question whether they wished to be involved diplomatically with the Stalinist regime, particularly as Soviet diplomats were no longer seen to be reliable. In addition to this the purge of the Soviet High Command led Britain and France to seriously doubt the Soviet Union's ability to fight a war with Germany.[102] That the Soviet Union was not involved at Munich in1938 was the culmination of these doubts as to whether the Soviets could be trusted to honour their agreements and clearly restricted Soviet foreign policy options as the chances of containing Germany through a tri-partite alliance with Britain and France looked bleak. It was surely becoming increasingly clear to the Narkomindel that the Entente powers were not interested in collective security and including the Soviets in a treaty against Hitler, but were rather leaving them fend for themselves.[103] In this way the purges can be seen to have shaped Soviet diplomacy in the late 1930s not just in the way it shaped the diplomatic corps and the ways in which diplomats were able to behave, but also in terms of the options that remained open to the Soviet Union in its foreign policy.

Purging a Diplomat

A case study provides an interesting look at the accusations levelled at Soviet diplomats during the purges. On the whole, as might be expected, Soviet diplomats were purged as a result of their connections to foreigners. Contact with foreigners was frequently sufficient to confer guilt during the purges, but there were frequent

---

[102] Kennedy-Pipe, *Russia and the World,* pp. 42-43.
[103] Coates and Coates, *History of Anglo-Soviet Relations,* pp. 590-600; *Daily Telegraph,* 5th December 1938 as quoted in ibid., p. 600. Phillips, *Between the Revolution and the West*, pp. 160-164.

instances of trumped up charges making the crimes appear worse. Espionage was a charge frequently levelled at Soviet diplomats as a result of their foreign contacts and the time they had spent abroad. At the beginning of the purge of the Narkomindel, Stern had been arrested in Berlin as a Gestapo agent.[104] Others were accused of espionage. Barmin, before he defected, believed that he was going to be accused of engaging in espionage against the Soviet Union during his time in Greece. The fact that he was an intelligence officer himself made him no less a potential anti-Soviet spy in the regime's eyes.[105] Barmin's case is interesting as he became aware that he was about to be arrested and took flight, defecting to the United States. It would seem that he was acutely aware of the potential to be accused of fraternizing with anti-Soviet individuals and to be accused of involvement in anti-Soviet activity.

Jan Berzin's case differs, as he was purged not because of his contact with foreigners, but as a result of his nationality.[106] While his charge was escalated to accuse him of being at the centre of the Latvian fascist movement, it seems that his major fault lay in not being Russian. He was accused of being a counter-revolutionary spy, of involvement in terrorist activity dating back to his time as Latvian Minister for Education in 1919, and of carrying out espionage during his time working in the Soviet Union's central archives. Accusations of association with Trotsky sealed his fate, and Berzin was executed.[107]

Berzin was taken into custody at his home on 24th December 1937. He believed, perhaps naively, that he was merely assisting the NKVD with their

---

[104] Barmin, *Memoirs,* pp.16-17. Barmin also attests to the fact that Stern effectively disappeared, noticeable by his signature not being present on documents, and it was only later that it became known what had happened to him.

[105] He was a member of the GRU, the military intelligence service. His diplomatic post was his cover for his intelligence gathering activities in Athens.

[106] Arrested in the mass arrest of Latvians living in Moscow during 1937, Berzin was accused of being central in the Latvian Fascist movement. Interview with Valentina Vasilevskaya, Moscow, 1st November 2004; Letter from NKVD to Vyshinskii, regarding file no. 3334, 1938, personal papers in Vasilevskaya's possession copied from FSB archive.

[107] Central Committee of the Soviet Union, *Opredelenie* 4k-I4849/55, personal papers in Vasilevskaya's possession.

inquiries.[108] He seemed unclear as to why he had been arrested, even, allegedly, to the point of not realizing what had actually happened. The night of his detention he wrote a letter to Nikolai Ezhov (head of the NKVD) protesting his innocence. In the letter, he addresses Ezhov as comrade, and asks him to help clear his name.[109] It appears that despite the purge tearing through the Narkomindel, Berzin believed that he was sufficiently removed from it to avoid being accused. He was nearly correct – the accusations against him did not come through his ties to the diplomatic organization, which would have given him the best opportunities to engage in espionage against the Soviet Union.[110] He was arrested as part of a 'Latvian case' and that was all his accusers were interested in.

While the charges with which he was presented were doubtless sufficient to convict him of treason, the lacunae of his years in the Narkomindel and Comintern is interesting. Perhaps Berzin as a diplomat had embodied an ideal which could not easily be attacked – a personal friend of Lenin, recommended for service by him, who had subverted diplomacy and carried out large-scale propaganda in Switzerland, before joining the Comintern, and then returning to serve in senior diplomatic posts in Europe. Certainly he was seen as a committed revolutionary, who had placed the revolution and the Soviet Union above all else, even his homeland.[111] None of this was enough, however, to save him in the end.

Revolution and Radical States – The Comintern in the 1930s

Given the Narkomindel's apparent desire to adhere to the rules of diplomacy during the 1930s, and the regime's withdrawal from international society, it is interesting to

---

[108] Maria Berzin, "Commentary on the "delo" of Jan Antonovich Berzin 1937-38" (1994), p. 1. Unpublished material in Vasilevskaya's possession. Berzin's file contains the arrest warrant, dated 9th December.

[109] Letter from Berzin to Ezhov, 24th December 1937, p. 1, personal papers in Vasilevskaya's possession.

[110] Berzin, "Commentary on the "delo" of Jan Antonovich Berzin", p. 2.

[111] V. V. Sokolov, "Ya. A. Berzin - Revoliutsioner, diplomat, gosudarstvennyi deyatel'", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia,* 1990 no. 2, pp. 140-159; Interview with Vasilevskaya, 1st November 2004.

examine the Comintern's contemporary activities. The organization's continued dissemination of propaganda arose as a major issue in the push for alliances under the banner of collective security, and with the promises made in order to secure US recognition. How the Comintern functioned and its effect on the culture of diplomacy demand further inspection.

Zinoviev fell from grace in the early 1930s, and was replaced by Georgi Dimitrov in 1935. Dimitrov's tenure in the Comintern began after the decision to pursue collective security, and one must look at how this changed the interaction between the Comintern and the Narkomindel. The shift in Comintern policy in order to align with collective security was manifested in the Comintern's congress in 1935. A policy of popular fronts – working with European communist and social democratic parties on populist policies – had been adopted immediately following the embarkation on a policy of collective security. Less radical than in its previous incarnation, the Comintern was seconding the Narkomindel's efforts to pursue peace and stability in Europe, and changing its policies from the aggressively anti-fascist stance of the so-called third period (1928-1935). At the congress, Dimitrov announced that the Comintern's policy would shift towards the creation of a 'wide anti-fascist Popular Front on the basis of the proletarian united front'.[112] At the same time this shift entailed a less militant stance and hence a withdrawal from Soviet foreign activities in a field other than diplomacy.

For some Comintern members, the shift in policy was a betrayal of the revolutionary side of its activity. From the Narkomindel's point of view, the Comintern had finally been brought to heel and the threats it posed to diplomacy were now lessened. The Comintern was given a freer reign to involve itself in the Spanish Civil War, but was still obliged to keep Stalin informed of its contacts in

[112] Chris Ward, *Stalin's Russia,*(Second Edition, London, 1999), p. 174; Georgi Dimitrov and Ivo Banac (ed.), *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933–1949,* (New Haven, 2003), p. xvi; Dimitrov, *Selected Works,* vol. 2, p. 35, as quoted in ibid., p. xxv.

Spain.[113] Recruitment in Spain clearly revealed the problem that the Comintern posed for the Narkomindel in the late 1930s: recruitment to the Comintern and its popular front tactics alarmed many of the states with whom the Narkomindel was attempting to secure anti-Nazi alliances.[114] In short, the existence of a potentially revolutionary body remained a problem for the Narkomindel, particularly given the continued presence of Comintern agents in embassies throughout Europe, which was only exacerbated by the weakening of Soviet diplomats' positions in the diplomatic field.

Like the Narkomindel, the Comintern was ravaged during the purges owing to the contact that its agents had with foreigners. Further, the Comintern was used to restrict contact between Soviet citizens and foreigners, at the same time that the Narkomindel was being obliged to close consulates at the behest of the Politburo.[115] The Comintern's involvement in Spain brought suspicion of collaboration with fascists, much as it did for the Narkomindel officials in the Soviet Embassy in Madrid. In much the same way as the Narkomindel was being treated at the time, the Comintern was drawn out of international society by the regime.

The Comintern's presence on the international scene also helped the Narkomindel to develop its own culture, away from the drive to ferment international revolution. If the Narkomindel, and Soviet diplomats, wished to be accepted in the diplomatic field, then the absence of a revolutionary aspect to their work was advantageous. The Comintern carried out the revolutionary work and so Soviet diplomats were better able to function and compete within the diplomatic field.

---

[113] Letter from Dimitrov to Stalin, 3rd June 1937, RGASPI, f. 495, op. 73, d. 48, l. 69 reproduced in Adibekov (ed.), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Komintern,* pp. 747-8; Dimitrov's diary, 14th March 1937, Dimitrov, *Dnevnik,* p. 125, reproduced in ibid., pp. 746-7.

[114] Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security,* p. 59.

[115] Letter from Maniulsky to Ezhov, 3rd January 1936, RGASPI, f. 435, op. 18, d. 1147a, l. 1-3 reproduced in Adibekov (ed.), *Politbiuro TSK RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Komintern,* pp. 728-30; Resolution of the Comintern Secretariat, 3rd March 1936, RGASPI, f. 495, op. 18, d. 1073, l. 121-3 reproduced in Chase, *Enemies within the Gates?,* digital edition at http://www.yale.edu/annals/Chase/Documents/doc12chapt3.htm on 30th December 2005.

Litvinov's Shrinking Sphere of Influence

Litvinov's own position began to decline in the late 1930s, leading to his dismissal in 1939. After 1936, he felt that power was gradually being taken from him. Evgeny Gnedin, the Narkomindel's press chief in the 1930s, attested to a decline in Litvinov's personal power while Molotov's increased.[116] Following the 18th Party Congress Potemkin, then Deputy Foreign Commissar, published foreign policy articles in the journal *Bolshevik*, on Stalin's instructions and without Litvinov's knowledge.[117] Potemkin appears to have been involved in the process of shifting power from Litvinov towards Molotov. He had returned from his posting as Ambassador in Paris in April 1937 to lead the Western Section of the Narkomindel, which had been Litvinov's preserve. The theory that he had such an effect on the power shift between Litvinov and Molotov is supported by Litvinov's daughter, who claims that Potemkin was known to be a 'Molotov man'.[118] There is the clear implication that Molotov was filling the Narkomindel, especially at high levels, with staff loyal to him rather than to Litvinov. Potemkin certainly understood this – he told Willi Munzenberg when he returned to Moscow that Litvinov's retirement appeared certain.[119]

After 1936, Litvinov's influence with the Politburo began to wane and his attendance at its meetings became less frequent, while at the same time Stalin met

---

[116] Interview with Evgeny Gnedin in Hugh Phillips, *Between the Revolution and the West*, p.111; A. Meerovich, "V Narkomindele, 1922-1939: Interv'iu s E. A. Gnedinym," *Pamiat* 5 (1982), pp. 365-6.

[117] Potemkin's Personal Documents, Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk (RAN), f. 574, op. p. 2 d.9 quoted in Dullin *Des hommes d'Influences,* p.262; Sheinis, *Maxim Maximovich Litvinov: Revoliutsioner, Diplomat, Chelovek* (Moscow,1989) p.360.

[118] Interview with Tatiana Litvinov in Phillips, *Between the Revolution and the West*, p.161. There is further evidence that others held the same opinions. Grigorii Besedovsky, in the fraudulent Litvinov memoirs he wrote, implies that Potemkin aided the shift of power away from Litvinov and thereby secured his own position within the Narkomindel. M. Litvinov (attrib.), *Notes for a Journal* (London, 1955),p. 263.

[119] Willi Munzenberg was a Comintern agent in Paris between 1933 and 1940. Yu. Denike, "Litvinov i Stalinskaia vneshniaia politika", *Socialisticheskii vestnik*, no. 5, May 1952, pp. 86-7, as quoted in J. Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security*, p. 132.

with diplomats more frequently without Litvinov's presence. During the 1930s, Litvinov had attended meetings in Stalin's office in the Kremlin; between 1934 and 1936 these took place approximately two or three times a month.[120] After 1936, reports from ambassadors to the Politburo started to bypass Litvinov. He still received reports, but Litvinov learnt that ambassadors were increasingly sending important telegrams directly to Molotov, indicating that Molotov was by that stage the person in charge of the Narkomindel.[121] By early 1939 all communications were being passed directly to Molotov. Ambassadors were even called to meet with Stalin and the Politburo in Litvinov's absence, a highly unusual course of action.[122] All this indicates that as the end of the 1930s approached and the Soviet Union found itself threatened with war, Litvinov's autonomy and influence – and further the independence of the diplomatic corps as a whole – was waning. The freedom to think and to act on their own initiative, which Litvinov had so keenly encouraged, was taken away by Stalin's centralizing of power and his appointment of Molotov, who seemed likely, at least to Nazi observers (who were far from entirely objective particularly given that Litvinov was Jewish), to obey Stalin unquestioningly.[123] Thus Stalin further stripped the Narkomindel of its autonomy, rendering it considerably less effective in performing its duties.

It appears that Litvinov was ultimately dismissed as Foreign Commissar in order to secure an alliance with Nazi Germany. On one level, he was dismissed because collective security had failed to achieve what he had promised it would and

---

[120] Dullin, "Litvinov and the NKID", p. 137.

[121] Letter from Potemkin to Litvinov, 11th January 1937, AVP RF, f. 011, op. 11, p. 8, d. 76, l. 8-17 reproduced in Primakov et al. (eds.), *Chemu svideteli my byli..:Perepiska byvshikh tsarskikh diplomatov, 1934-1940,* (Moscow, 1998)vol. 2, pp. 449-454; Letter from Potemkin to Litvinov, 26th January 1937, AVP RF, f. 011, op. 11, p. 8, d. 76, l. 56-66, reproduced in ibid., pp. 464-469; Kennedy-Pipe, *Russia and the World*, p.45. Although not dependable as the work is a forgery, *Notes for a Diary* states that Molotov was not the only individual considered as a replacement for Litvinov. Voroshilov and Zhdanov were possibly considered as potential candidates. M. Litvinov (attrib.), *Notes for a Journal,* p. 263.

[122] Sheinis, *Maxim Maximovich Litvinov*, pp. 370-380; Dullin, *Des hommes d'Influences,* p.263.

[123] Telegram no.61from Tippelskirch to German Foreign Office, 4th May 1939 in Richard Sonntag and James Beddie (eds.), *Nazi Soviet Relations 1939-1941* at http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/nazsov/ns002.htm on 30th December 2005.

he had been less than entirely successful in persuading western powers of its advantages, but on a deeper level there was a race issue.[124] The Soviet Union was unlikely to reach an accord with Nazi Germany with a Jewish Foreign Commissar leading the negotiations. Tippelskirch, German chargé d'affaires in Moscow at the time, commented on the fact that Molotov was 'no Jew' when he reported the change in Soviet Foreign Commissar to Berlin.[125] The major shift in policy following Molotov's appointment was the conclusion of the Nazi-Soviet pact – a treaty which could not have been achieved with Litvinov at the head of the Narkomindel. Even after securing rapprochement with Germany, however, Soviet policy continued to work towards alliances with Britain and France.

While the principal reason for Litvinov's dismissal was the policy shift towards Germany, his fall was also likely exacerbated by internal party politics, coinciding as it did with Beria's ascendancy. The NKVD under Beria's direction was closely watching Litvinov, routinely reading his notes and diaries and subjecting his colleagues and friends to 'night discussions'.[126] This shift in surveillance on Litvinov coincided not only with the need to remove Litvinov from office to achieve agreement with Germany, but also with Beria's rise to Stalin's inner circle, where he joined Molotov and Zhdanov, both of whom were Litvinov's enemies.[127] Beria appears to have set about ensuring Litvinov's removal so that Molotov might replace him as a means of securing a party core loyal to Stalin. Litvinov's removal from office ensured that there was no foreign policy specialist with views that differed to Stalin's. In short, Litvinov's dismissal lay, at least in

---

[124] Letter from Davies to Secretary of State, no. 317, 10th May 1939, reproduced in Joseph Davies, *Mission to Moscow: a Record of Confidential Dispatches to the State Department, Correspondence, Current Diary and Journal Entries Including Notes and Comment up to October 1941* (London, 1942), p. 271.

[125] Telegram no.61from Tippelskirch to German Foreign Office, 4th May 1939 in Sonntag and Beddie (eds.), *Nazi Soviet Relations 1939-1941.*

[126] Geoffrey Roberts, "The Fall of Litvinov: A Revisionist View," *Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 27, no. 4 (1992), pp. 642-3.

[127] Amy Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant* (Princeton, 1993), p. 100; F. Tchoev, *Conversations avec Molotov. 140 entretiens avec le bras droit de Staline* (Paris, 1995), pp. 102-6 as quoted in Dullin, "Litvinov and the NKID," p. 143.

part, in political desires to remove those who could potentially oppose the policies of the Stalinist centre.

Litvinov's removal was the culmination of the regime's withdrawal of the Narkomindel from the diplomatic field. Litvinov had shaped Soviet diplomatic culture along lines of engagement in diplomacy, and with him no longer in charge of the Narkomindel, Stalin was not only able to achieve central control over diplomacy, but also to remove the Soviet Union from diplomatic society. Stalinist diplomatic culture became, after Litvinov's departure, very different as the emphasis shifted from Litvinov's desire to create an effective diplomatic body towards one that could be tightly controlled by Stalin.

Conclusion

The Narkomindel in the 1930s faced new challenges as well as old ones. The rise of Nazi Germany led to a shift in policy which required rigid adherence to the norms of diplomacy. Security took priority over the spread of revolution. There was a slip in the Comintern's status as a result, and a drive for the Narkomindel to become more like a traditional diplomatic agency. We see, therefore, Soviet diplomatic practices during the early 1930s coming more into line with those of other powers, as compared to the previous decade. Again though, this shift was born out of pragmatism and a Soviet need to be fully part of diplomatic society. The only way of achieving this was to make concessions on ideology and further align Soviet diplomatic culture with a more general one.

Soviet diplomats during the first half of the decade did not differ greatly from Soviet diplomats of the previous years. After 1934, however, differences become apparent in the individuals joining the Narkomindel's ranks. No longer were they members of the revolutionary intelligentsia from before the revolution, but rather individuals who had come of age under Soviet rule. As opposed to the previous generation, these new individuals lacked experience and knowledge of

foreign cultures; if they were to perform effectively as diplomats, they would need extensive, organized training. Litvinov established the Institute for Training in Diplomatic and Consular Work, hoping that the result of such grooming, combined with his management style of the Narkomindel, would be a diplomatic corps of competent individuals capable of acting on their own initiative. In one respect, the official training of Soviet diplomats was a means of raising their educational capital in direct relation to diplomacy, thereby increasing their social capital, which was necessary for their accession to the diplomatic field.

That this was successful was seen in the Soviet ascension to the League of Nations, and recognition by the United States was a major triumph for Soviet diplomacy in the 1930s. The Soviets were now universally acknowledged as the legitimate representatives of Russia. They had achieved this by learning how to engage effectively in the diplomatic field and how to present themselves as suitable for full membership of international diplomatic society.

After 1936, however, things began to change for the Narkomindel, this time imposed by the regime's behaviour rather than by the need to fit into the diplomatic field, and Soviet diplomatic culture changed significantly. As paranoia regarding Soviet citizen's contact with foreigners rose, so the Narkomindel and its diplomats were withdrawn from the diplomatic field. Personnel and apparatus were removed and not replaced as consulates were closed and the purge swept through the Narkomindel, limiting Soviet engagement in diplomacy. Diplomats, however, remained committed to furthering the Soviet Union's diplomatic efforts and were unhappy at the regime's actions which lead to the retreat from international society.

The purges had other implications for Soviet diplomatic culture. Obliged to represent the Soviet Union abroad, Soviet diplomats were forced to explain and legitimize the purges to foreigners. Some responded by publicly supporting the purges, while others chose to remain silent. Soviet diplomats, like their counterparts everywhere, needed to represent their country in a positive light, and it is clear that the purges restricted their ability to do this effectively.

Effectively crippling the Narkomindel, the purges were at least in part the regime's reaction to a political agency with too much independence and contact with the outside world. While many diplomats before 1936 had had great experience of the world beyond the confines of the Soviet Union, many new appointees in the latter half of the decade had never travelled abroad. The purge of the Narkomindel, while fitting into a broader regime policy, was specifically designed to curb the independence of Soviet diplomats and the Narkomindel, and to bring it under the control of the central government. In this light, Molotov's appointment as Foreign Commissar in 1939 was clearly orchestrated to ensure that Stalin had complete control over the Narkomindel.

What is most striking is the way in which Stalinist culture limited the Narkomindel and its culture in the second half of the 1930s. The Narkomindel was shaped by the regime's desires to limit the extent to which the Soviet population had contact with foreigners in a manner that was harmful to Soviet diplomatic prestige.

Stalinist culture shaped diplomatic culture in other ways as well. The need for diplomats to achieve mastery of two discourses – Stalinist and diplomatic – such that they could function effectively in both fields presented them with a challenge. That ideally they should have been functioning within both fields simultaneously only served to compound the problem. As has been discussed, a balance needed to be struck which was heavily dependent on the context of the field in which the individual was operating at a given time. It is apparent that Soviet diplomats achieved some level of balance with regards to both fields, although there were clearly times when one or the other led to actions that were unsatisfactory from the point of view of the rules and habitus of one of the fields. As the 1930s progressed and the Soviet Union entered the purge era, this issue became more problematic for Soviet diplomats who had worked to learn the rules of the diplomatic field during the 1920s, and now had the pressing concern of conforming to the rules of Soviet society, which lessened their ability to function effectively as diplomats.

In summary, Soviet diplomatic culture in the early 1930s continued to align itself with the habitus of the diplomatic field in order to deal with the challenges posed by external pressures during the decade and a heightened need to become better integrated into it. At the same time, a new generation of officials was entering the Narkomindel, this time acquiring diplomatic competence through systematic training rather than through previous personal experience. Soviet diplomats became increasingly indistinguishable from those of other major powers in terms of behaviour and dress, thereby outwardly showing that they had acquired a similar habitus to foreign diplomats. As the decade drew to a close, however, the many effects of the purges and the large-scale withdrawal from the international scene by the Soviet Union led to power becoming increasingly centralized. Thus crippled, the Narkomindel became incapable of acting independently, and its servants lacked their predecessors' social refinement in diplomatic circles. By the end of the 1930s, Soviet diplomats had ceased to be reliable contacts for their foreign counterparts, and had lost all the independence that Litvinov had been so keen to grant them.

While previously Soviet diplomatic culture had been shaped by the external pressures of the diplomatic field and its norms, causing it to necessarily fall in line, at least outwardly by the late 1930s the Stalinist system was also exerting a force on diplomatic culture. Diplomats desired, and tried to achieve, maintenance of their position within the diplomatic field, learnt by mastering diplomatic culture, but regime policies resulted in a withdrawal from it to some extent.

From having become steadily more like the diplomatic culture of other states, by the end of the 1930s Soviet diplomatic culture had shifted away from it as a result of regime actions. The concentration of power in Stalin's hands, and the manner in which the Narkomindel was paralyzed, brought a return to isolationism and led to the Narkomindel frequently being bypassed as heads of state preferred to speak directly with Stalin and a rise in summit diplomacy became more prevalent,

not only in negotiations with the Soviet Union, but more generally in the post-war years.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The previous chapters have looked at the culture of Russian and Soviet diplomacy between 1900 and 1939 and analyzed what changes and continuities can be seen across the events of 1917. The Revolution's impact on diplomacy manifests itself in a variety of ways.

Diplomacy's international nature meant that little deviation from the general diplomatic culture was tolerated within the diplomatic field. For Tsarist diplomats this posed no real challenge to their participation in it, as their habitus was compatible with the field. For Soviet diplomats, however, it was more problematic particularly as they found diplomacy to be resistant to change. Early attempts by the Soviet Union to subvert or destabilize diplomacy were met with resistance in the form of exclusion from the diplomatic field, and thus Soviet diplomats were obliged to adjust their behaviour, turning away from attempts to achieve worldwide revolution towards taking steps to display the diplomatic habitus and be accepted into diplomacy.

Of course, this did not happen immediately. The October Revolution caused a disruption in diplomacy, as Russia dropped out of the diplomatic field, albeit temporarily, and the Soviet Union attempted to carve out a diplomatic culture that was ideologically suitable. In the short-term, therefore, there was a deviation from traditional diplomacy as the Bolsheviks expressed their distaste for it as a practice and tried to subvert its traditional forms and bend them towards the furthering of revolution. Soviet diplomatic behaviour immediately following the Revolution did not, however, achieve access to the diplomatic field, or cause it to change fundamentally.

There were, however, changes occurring in the diplomatic field at the time. Some had to do with the Russian Revolution, but most had more to do with a shift born out of the realization that diplomacy needed to change. Tsarist diplomats characterized the old diplomacy, and showed its failings in the early years of the twentieth century. Following the First World War, European diplomacy adopted a slightly different character, war having been seen by some as the ultimate crisis of the old diplomacy.[1] An increasing number of professional diplomats arrived on the scene in the early 1920s in Europe, indicating a change in diplomacy.[2] Professionals – men who had been trained for diplomacy – became preferable to individuals who enjoyed their positions entirely on the basis of social prestige and the expectation that they would be able to rise in the diplomatic corps.[3] The First World War had changed diplomacy's requirements – social skills, although still important, were no longer enough, and diplomats showed themselves to be woefully inadequate to diplomacy's tasks before and during the war. While diplomacy retained its reliance on a network of social contacts, the trained and specialized career diplomat was coming into his own in the early 1920s.

The professionalization of diplomacy involved the use of firm entry criteria followed by training in foreign affairs, diplomacy and languages, such that the diplomatic corps might better discharge their duties. Such career diplomats were noticeable among the United States' Russian specialists long before the Soviet Union was recognized by the US. George Kennan, part of the Bullitt mission in the early 1930s and later US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, had been a specialist on Russia since the time of the Revolution. From these examples we can conclude that the rise of the professional, career diplomat was a product more of the First World

---

[1] Hughes, *Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution,* p. 3.
[2] Extensive discussion of this shift in a number of states can be found in Craig and Gilbert, *The Diplomats*.
[3] Further discussion of this shift in the British Foreign Office can be found in Steiner and Dockrill, "The Foreign Office Reforms, 1919-21," *Historical Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1974), pp. 131-156; Steiner, "The Last Years of the Old Foreign Office, 1898-1905," *Historical Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1963), pp. 59-90; Steiner, "Grey, Hardinge and the Foreign Office, 1906-1910," *Historical Journal*, vol. 10, no. 3 (1967), pp. 415-439; Nightingale, "The Personnel of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, 1851-1929," pp. 310-331.

War than of the Soviet Union's emergence on the diplomatic stage. 'Old diplomacy' had failed, largely as a result of its practitioners' incompetence and lack of specialization. The professional diplomat was a step towards resolving this problem, and although there was resistance from the old guard of diplomats, diplomacy was steadily modernizing.

Diplomacy's modernization, however, was constrained by the diplomatic field and the involvement of agents within it who made it resistant to change. Out of self-interest and their understanding of diplomacy embodied in the diplomatic habitus, diplomats' resistance to change became a major limiting factor of the extent to which any diplomatic culture could deviate from the accepted culture of the diplomatic field. While there were some changes, it was this aspect of the field that Soviet diplomats found to be largely immutable and which forced them to align themselves with the values of the habitus and the field in order to be involved in diplomacy.

It is not, however, only in diplomacy that we see this pattern of resistance to change in the period; generally, inherited traditions create a culture of practices outside of which individuals are unable to see any alternative manner of behaviour. This accounts for other areas of state practice following the Russian Revolution being very similar to practices in the late Tsarist period, and to their equivalents outside of the Soviet Union, notably in surveillance and the army.[4] Although attempts were made to change, it seems that there may in practice be only one manner of achieving the functioning of certain state practices as a result of their heritage, both domestically and internationally, and that is by compliance with the accepted practices of an already established field.

---

[4] Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation*; Benvenuti, "Armageddon Not Averted: Russia's War, 1914–21," p. 545; Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution*, p. 6; Holquist, "'Information Is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work": Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 69, no. 3. (1997), pp. 418, 421-3.

The Russian Revolution brought changes to the diplomatic field too, as the situation of two diplomatic agencies, both vying for the representation of Russia, arose. Unprecedented in the modern world, there was no prescribed course of action for the profession of diplomacy to follow in the wake of the Revolution. Never before had diplomats been in the position of having no government to serve and this presented challenges for both Russian and foreign diplomats. Diplomats without an accredited government were a unique anomaly in the diplomatic field, and raised questions about the legitimacy of their position.

The response to this situation was mixed. Imperial powers – the exponents of the 'old diplomacy' – were wary of the new Soviet diplomats, and expected that the Soviet state would be short lived. As a result, a policy of choosing not to deal with the Bolsheviks – keeping them outside the discourse of diplomacy, and indeed of displacing them – was adopted early on. Part of this meant that states continued to deal with, and give some form of diplomatic status to, former diplomats who had served the Tsarist and Provisional Governments. This is a clear example of diplomacy functioning as a supra-national construct, shaped by its practitioners, and resistant to upheaval.

While the Council of Ambassadors did present a post-revolutionary diplomatic agency with which foreign powers could work, it was unofficial. Diplomacy still had rules which the Entente powers were not going to transgress, even in the face of a perceived Bolshevik threat to the stability of diplomacy in the post-war world. The Council of Ambassadors thus occupied a strange position in diplomacy, and became steadily marginalized as time went on; it became clear that governments were going to have to establish relations with the Soviet government. It was conceded that the masters of Russia had changed, and that the Soviets had control. Any political gains, therefore, needed to be addressed through interaction with Soviet diplomats, rather than their predecessors. Although foreign powers allowed the Council of Ambassadors to persist because these powers were familiar with the diplomatic style and personnel of the Tsarist MID, they realized that there

was a need to allow Soviet entry to the diplomatic field and made concessions, such as inviting Soviet delegations to international conferences that would allow Soviet diplomats the opportunity of becoming members of the diplomatic milieu.

Thus, there was a shift within the diplomatic field away from blockading the Soviets (out of fear that they might destabilize diplomacy by not adhering to its rules, and would use diplomacy as a means to spread revolution), to accepting that they needed to be allowed into the diplomatic field. With this shift in the broader diplomatic culture, to entertain at least the possibility of Soviet engagement in the field, we see that Soviet ideas regarding diplomacy changed very quickly. That Soviet diplomats were able to capitalize on this, and demonstrate themselves to be suitable members of diplomatic society, while owing much to a shift in Soviet diplomatic culture, has some basis in changes within non-Soviet diplomatic cultures, which also help explain US recognition of the Soviet Union and Soviet ascension to the League of Nations during the 1930s.

Achieving recognition, and hence full membership of the diplomatic field, was a constant concern of Soviet diplomacy in its early years, and drove the adjustment of Soviet diplomatic culture towards displaying a suitable diplomatic habitus such that Soviet diplomats would be accepted into the field. Soviet diplomatic culture, therefore, despite its beginnings in an attempt to deviate from the diplomatic field, became increasingly aligned with the field. The imperatives of involvement in diplomacy outweighed ideological concerns and there was a realization that the only way to achieve acceptance was to adopt, at least outwardly, the diplomatic habitus and the behaviours associated with it. This involved a rejection of revolutionary ideology in order to pursue the pragmatic goal of acceptance in diplomatic society.

We see, however, marked differences in the Soviet regime's desires for diplomacy and those of the Narkomindel and individual diplomats. The regime saw diplomacy as a temporary accommodation with the capitalist world, at the same time

as it saw domestic policies such as the NEP as temporary deviations from socialist policy. The deviation from policy for pragmatic ends is not unique to the Soviet case and can be seen in other revolutionary regimes as well.[5] That the Soviet regime initially saw diplomacy as temporary, and as a revolutionary tool, is reflected in the inconsistencies in the regime's foreign policy, and in the fact that there was a continuing struggle to find a balance between the export of revolution and the pursuit of national interests. In this light, the creation of the Comintern (following the realization that large-scale revolutionary work could not be conducted through the Narkomindel and its missions) was a pragmatic move for the regime in its efforts to secure diplomatic relations. Not only was the Comintern nominally separate from the Narkomindel, it was theoretically separate from the Soviet government as well. While this was not actually the case, the step to distance the official sides of state management from illegal activity was clearly born out of the realization that in diplomacy at least, the Soviets were not going to be successful if they continued to defy the norms of behaviour.

The Comintern's creation was, therefore, something of a turning point in Soviet diplomatic culture. Once the Soviet state had realized that diplomacy did not realistically present itself as an avenue through which to further revolution, it removed much of this side of Soviet foreign policy from the Narkomindel and created another agency to carry it out. The Narkomindel was, however, a facilitator for the Comintern – it was used to insert Comintern agents into foreign countries, and to provide them with immunity and a means to transport propaganda material across international borders. The establishment of the Comintern and its mission to further the revolutionary aspect of Soviet foreign affairs demonstrates the Narkomindel's attempts to function as a more traditional diplomatic agency. The realization that Soviet diplomats could not be visibly involved in propaganda activity was the main motivation for this, but the continued link between the two

[5] Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order,* pp. 290-1.

organizations remained problematic. The regime's two-pronged approach to foreign policy created this problem, and the Narkomindel never truly escaped it.

The presence of Comintern officials within embassies was one way in which the two agencies were connected, but the staffing similarities are striking. The exodus of individuals from the Narkomindel to the Comintern in 1919 illuminates both the connection and the regime's plans to continue overseas propaganda activities. Individuals who had been recruited to the Narkomindel and the overseas missions for the purpose of agitation and disseminating propaganda moved from the Narkomindel to the Comintern. Among these were prominent revolutionaries who had been ambassadors in the early Narkomindel. Most noticeable, as has been shown, was the exodus from the deposed mission to Bern, as Berzin and Zinoviev both left the Narkomindel for senior Comintern positions.

The Soviet state also shook up diplomacy in the early 1920s with the appointment of a woman. Being the first state to have a female diplomatic representative made the Soviet Union an innovator in diplomacy. The intention was not to upset; to the Soviet eye there was simply no reason why a woman should not be suited to work as a diplomatic representative, any more than to any other job in Soviet life.[6] Intentions aside, the imposition of distinctly Soviet values on international diplomacy did precipitate changes. Kollontai found herself defining female diplomatic dress, and providing a precedent for other women to hold diplomatic posts. By the 1930s, Republican Spain had an Ambassadress in Sweden, and the Foreign Office was considering the suitability of women for the British diplomatic service.[7]

There were continuities as well as changes during the period, which owe a great deal to the nature of the diplomatic field and its resistance to participants who do not comply with its values. International diplomacy is founded on a culture to

[6] Krasin to Kollontai, RGASPI, f. 134 op. 3 d. 31 l. 7.
[7] Isabel de Palencia, diplomat of Republican Spain, was a friend and biographer of Kollontai in Stockholm; FCO, *Women in Diplomacy*, p.32; ibid., p. 29.

which diplomats are obliged to adapt in order to be accepted, and to participate in the diplomatic milieu. This culture is a construct of diplomatic titles, accepted standards of dress, behaviour, communication and locations, among other major points. This creates diplomacy's clear and inescapable hereditary nature. Embassies are imbued with the traditions of the past, notably in the minds of foreign diplomats. In inhabiting an embassy, a diplomat is linked to it, becoming the next representative face in a continuing line. The fact that diplomacy functions through embassies, which have a physical presence that outlives the individuals serving within them, means there are self-perpetuating elements of diplomatic culture. While appearances can of course be altered – paintings and symbols can be removed – an embassy can have a character that endures all of these changes. In this light, we can see why the possession of embassies and archives was so important in the struggle for control over diplomacy in the wake of the October revolution.

History is also clearly important to diplomacy's practitioners. In part, a command of foreign relations in a historical context is necessary for diplomats, and in addition their identity is linked with that history. Agreements in the past helped create the situations in which diplomats found themselves, and age-old alliances gave rise to special relationships enjoyed by the diplomats over certain states with those of others. All diplomats are legitimized by the position they occupy within a lineage, and require validation of their positions.

The Narkomindel, despite attempts to carve out a new niche in the history of diplomacy, stepped by necessity into the space vacated by the Tsarist MID. Soviet awareness of this, and an attempt to limit the effects, can be seen in the move away from the MID's premises and the establishment of the Foreign Ministry elsewhere. Although this was part of a wider move by the Soviet government when it transferred itself to Moscow for much the same reasons, the Narkomindel was aware that there was a hereditary nature to the spaces that diplomats inhabit.

Soviet diplomacy did not entirely escape the world of social contacts that characterized the 'old diplomacy'. Individuals were recruited as a result of their connections to senior officials, within both the upper levels of the party and the Narkomindel itself. Numerous individuals were close to Lenin and recommended for diplomatic service by him.[8] Others were drawn into the Narkomindel as a result of their close ties to senior officials in the agency, such as Chicherin or Litvinov. Frequently used to validate an individual's posting, social ties and patronage maintained a very real presence in the Narkomindel, and certain positions had an almost hereditary line. In addition, postings which traditionally carried particular prestige remained much the same: diplomatic postings simply carried more importance in certain places than in others. Postings to the capital cities of major powers were more prestigious, and were always going to be, as a result of what could be achieved in diplomatic circles there. The Soviet regime came to realize that the perceived status of certain postings required more experienced, cultured individuals to fill them. In this, we can again see the Soviet Union's diplomatic culture being shaped by a construct to which it had to conform.

Many of the continuities in diplomacy during the period can be ascribed to the need for acceptance in the diplomatic field. Membership of the world of international diplomacy required a given level of social capital. In the case of pre-revolutionary Russian diplomacy, this social capital was made up of an individual's social status. Possession of the requisite level of social capital allowed for membership of the diplomatic field. How diplomats who lacked the social standing possessed by the majority of Tsarist diplomats were able to acquire sufficient social capital to enter the diplomatic field is important. Some diplomats already possessed a suitable level as a result of their backgrounds, while others made up for their lack of social standing by having high levels of educational capital, both in terms of

[8] Many individuals were recommended for service by Lenin in the Narkomindel's early years. Most of the first wave of *polpredi* fell into this category. *Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (all editions) usually details when an individual was recommended for service by Lenin.

formal education and in terms of experience acquired in foreign languages and cultures while living in political exile. But this addresses the acquisition of social capital, while in fact some Soviet diplomats were able simply to appear to possess the requisite levels by playing the role of the diplomat. This is shown in the case of Jan Berzin: in Switzerland in 1918, his acceptance as a suitable diplomat had much to do with how he presented himself to other powers' diplomatic corps and to the Swiss government.[9] The fact that contrasts were drawn regarding his and his staff's self-presentation further demonstrates the important role that image played in establishing an individual as a suitable candidate for the diplomatic milieu. Diplomacy has a highly theatrical nature, and this in many instances is used as a façade for government machinations. It therefore makes sense that playing the role of a diplomat was a course of action that could and did yield results for Soviet diplomats.

Soviet diplomats, however, had a deeper problem than simply gaining acceptance into diplomatic circles: they also had to fit into Soviet society and maintain their socialist sensibilities, particularly during the Stalin era. Life in Soviet society required a certain level of conformity; some historians have described wearing a 'mask of conformity' as being a normal condition of life.[10] Thus, the two worlds presented Soviet diplomats with different demands, which were frequently at odds with one another, but to which similar tactics were sometimes applicable. In their struggle to strike a balance, they were often obliged to behave differently at home, or in private, from the way in which they were expected to behave as diplomats, in public.

After 1936, Soviet diplomacy became hampered by the Stalinist regime, and there was a definite withdrawal from international diplomatic society as consulates were closed and vacancies created by the purges were left unfilled. This gives weight to the argument that there was a retreat from international socialism under

[9] Senn, *Diplomacy and Revolution,* p. 62.
[10] Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism,* p. 132;

Stalin. While opinion remains divided on the extent of the retreat, the Narkomindel's withdrawal from international diplomacy was part of a wider Soviet withdrawal from international society: this can be interpreted as isolationist, and as such, a retreat from the principles of international socialism. Of course, it can be argued that engaging in diplomacy at all was a deviation from ideology, and certainly it was ideological compromise that allowed for Soviet diplomacy to flourish, but by rendering the Narkomindel impotent and thereby shutting down contact with the outside world, Stalin's effect on Soviet diplomatic culture in the latter part of the 1930s constituted a jettisoning of the ideological tenets of internationalism.

Not only did this shift entail a retreat from international society, it also involved a centralization of power in Stalin's hands. This caused the Narkomindel to find itself reduced to the role of executor of a centrally conceived policy. This bears a striking similarity to the late Tsarist MID which existed (at least pre-1905) to carry out the Tsar's wishes and execute his foreign policy. Stalin's centralization of control over the various organs of the Soviet state left the Narkomindel similarly impotent: this lends weight to the argument that Stalin aimed for, and to some extent achieved, totalitarianism, and that in many respects his political system was very similar to Tsarist autocracy.[11] Under Stalin the Soviet Union entered a state of absolute political and social domination by one man and his policies, and in foreign affairs this led to a loss of diplomats' relative freedom in their positions, hard-won by the Chicherin and Litvinov administrations. Additionally, capable members of staff were purged: the resulting personnel situation can be seen as a return to MID-like practices, where it was not ability, but rather connections, that earned advancement. The Narkomindel became an institution where skill was devalued, thereby heralding a return to the inefficient MID – whose name it was to inherit in

[11] Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956); Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge: Politics in Soviet Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956); Leonard Schapiro, *Totalitarianism* (London, 1972).

the 1940s – and squandering the gains made by a highly capable and trained diplomatic corps, as Russia's diplomatic agency once more became entirely subject to the direction of the central state leadership.

Thus one can see that the culture of Russian diplomacy in the period 1900-1939 had many continuities, primarily due to the static nature of international diplomacy, as well as changes. What is clear is that the Narkomindel was, for a time, a far more effective body than the MID had been before the Revolution. The championing of professional, career diplomats increased efficiency and eventually achieved international recognition, although it is clear that infighting between agency members remained.

In diplomacy, the Soviet Union was forced to contend with external forces that limited the development of a distinct diplomatic culture. Despite the internal changes to the Foreign Ministry, the Soviet Union found it was unable to significantly alter the field of international diplomacy and was in fact dragged into it, in order to trade with foreign countries and defend its borders. The recognition for which it so keenly fought in the 1920s was necessary for the Soviet Union to act as a major world power, and diplomacy was the only way to achieve it. This meant playing by the rules of diplomacy, adhering to its protocols and traditions. The fact that the Narkomindel inherited the infrastructure of pre-revolutionary diplomacy and found itself involved with countries with traditional foreign services meant that the culture of Soviet diplomacy was unable to change significantly. While Soviet diplomats clung to the ideology of the Bolshevik state they served, they were also compelled to abide by the expectations and rules of their profession.

The alignment of Soviet diplomacy with the diplomatic field was the result of pragmatism. There was a distinct difference between Soviet intentions in diplomacy and what could realistically be achieved. Spreading the revolution to Europe was always the main intent, but sacrifices had to be made. What evolved from this situation was a diplomatic corps committed principally to securing the

Soviet Union's place on the diplomatic stage, rather than sparking revolution outside its borders. While hard-line revolutionaries continued to hold places in the Narkomindel during the 1930s, on the whole a more moderate, less revolutionary minded, individual came to the fore. And thus, the Soviet diplomat found – perhaps much to his chagrin – that he had come to resemble his foreign counterparts and his Tsarist predecessor, for whom involvement in diplomacy was always more important than anything else.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archival Sources

Russia

Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rosiiskoi Federsatsii (AVP RF)

Fond 04 – Chicherin Secretariat (Secret)

Fond 4 – Chicherin Secretariat

Fond 05 – Litvinov Secretariat (Secret)

Fond 5 – Litvinov Secretariat

Fond 08 – Karakhan secretariat (secret)

Fond 8 – Karakhan secretariat

Fond 069 – referentura po Anglii (secret)

Fond 69 – referentura po Anglii

Fond 082 – referuntura po Germanii (secret)

Fond 82 – referentura po germanii

Fond 0100 – referentura po Kitai

Fond 162 – Soviet Embassy in Britain

Fond 165 – Soviet embassy in Germany

Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii

Fond 17, opis 100 – personnel files of the Nomenklatura

Fond 159 – Chicherin, Georgii Vasilevich

Fond 134 – Kollontai, Alexandra Mikhailovna

Fond 137 – Krasin

Fond 359 – Litvinov, Maxim Maximovich, 1914-1951

United Kingdom

National Archives, London

FO 183 – Foreign Office: Consulate and Legation, Russian Empire: Registers of Correspondence 1816-1915

FO 266 – Foreign Office: Consulate, Archangel, Russian Empire (later Union of Soviet Socialist Republics): Registers of Correspondence 1820-1919

FO 448 – Foreign Office: Embassy and Consulate, Moscow, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (formerly Russian Empire): Registers of Correspondence 1857-1941

FO 537 Foreign Office: Consulate, Vladivostok, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (formerly Russian Empire): Registers of Correspondence

FO 954/24A Soviet Union: Geneva tel. No.70 (from S. of S.). Conversation with Litvinov (Locarno negotiations), 1/10/36

Cambridge University Library

Hardinge Papers

Ogden Papers

Leeds Russian Archive

Konstantin Izraztsov Papers

Lewis Roberts Papers

Sir Thomas Preston papers

Bosanquet Family Papers

Francis Lindley Papers

Nottingham University

Buchanan Collection

St. Anthony's College, Oxford

Litvinov Papers

United States

Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University

Bazili Papers

Girs Papers

Maklakov Papers

Sazonov Papers

Papers of Russian Embassy in France, 1917-1924

Papers of Russian Embassy in US, 1914-1933

Bakhmeteff Archive, Columbia University

Bakhmeteff Papers

Botkin Papers

Girs Papers

Kollontai Project: oral history, 1976-1978

Shebeko Papers

Taube Papers

Urusov Papers

Published Collections of Documents

G. M. Adibikov — *Politburo Tsk RKP(b)-VKP(b) i Komintern: 1919-1943 gg. Dokumenty* (Moscow, 2004)

V. Aldoshin et al. *(eds)* — *Sovetskogo-Amerikansie otnoshenia. Godii nepriznania. 1918-1926* (Moscow, 2002)

V. Aldoshin et al. *(eds)* — *Sovetskogo-Amerikansie otnoshenia. Godii nepriznania. 1927-1933* (Moscow, 2002)

Y. Basenko et. al (eds) — *Rossia i SHA : diplomaticheskie otnoshenia. 1900-1917* (Moscow, 1997)

Oleg Budnitskii (ed) — *"Sovershenno lichno i doveritel'no!": B.A. Bakhmetev - V.A. Maklakov. Perepiska. 1919-1951.* 3 vols. (Moscow, 2001-3)

Alexander Dallin and F. I. Firsov — *Dimitrov and Stalin, 1935-1943: Letters from the Soviet Archives* (New Haven, 2000)

Jane Degras (ed) — *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy,* 3 vols. (Oxford, 1953)

Aleksandr Izvol'skii — *Au service de la Russie: Alexandre Iswolsky, correspondance diplomatique* (Paris, 1937)

Maksim Litvinov, Vyacheslav Molotov — *Soviet Foreign Policy: Declarations by J. Stalin, M. Molotov, M. Litvinov* (London, 1934)

and Iosif Stalin

Maksim Litvinov — *Against Aggression. Speeches by M. Litvinov, together with texts of treaties and of the Covenant of the League of Nations* (London, 1939)

Ministerstvo inostrannykh del SSSR — *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki SSSR* 21 vols. (Moscow, 1957-77)

France. Ministere des affaires etrangeres — *Documents diplomatiques Francais 1871-1914* (Paris, 1939)

France. Ministère des affaires étrangères — *Documents diplomatiques Français, 1932-1939. Serie 1: 1932-1935* (Paris, 1964)

France. Ministère des affaires étrangères — *Documents diplomatiques Français, 1932-1939. Serie : 1936-1939* (Paris, 1963)

Constantine Nabokov — *Letters of a Russian Diplomat to an American Friend, 1906-1922* (Lewiston, N.Y, 1990)

Richard Pipes (ed) — *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive* (New Haven ; London, 1996)

S. P. Pozharskaia et al. *Rossiia i Ispaniia : dokumenty i materialy : 1667-1917* (Moscow, 1997)

Russia. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del *Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX veka : dokumenty Rossiiskogo Ministerstvo inostrannykh* (Moscow, 1975-80)

United States Department of State *Foreign Relations of the United States*

Despatches from United States ministers to Russia 1808-1906.

Notes from the Russian Legation in the United States to the Department of State, 1809-1906.

Records of the Department of State relating to political relations between the United States and Russia and the Soviet Union, 1910-29.

Records of the Department of State relating to political relations between the Soviet Union and other states, 1930-1939.

Records of the Department of State relating to political relations between the United States and the Soviet Union,

1930-1939.

Records of the Department of State relating to internal affairs of the Soviet Union, 1930-1939: decimal file 861.

USSR. Narodnyi Kommissariat Inostrannykh Del — *Godovoi otchet NKID k VIII S'ezdu Sovetov (1919-1920)* (Moscow, 1921)

USSR. Narodnyi Kommissariat Inostrannykh Del — *Godovoi otchet NKID k IX S'ezdu Sovetov(1920-1921)* (Moscow, 1921)

B Zhilaev et al. (eds) — *Sovetskogo-Amerikansie otnoshenia. 1934-1939* (Moscow, 2003)

B Zhilaev et al. (eds) — *Sovetskogo-Amerikansie otnoshenia. 1939-1945* (Moscow, 2003)

Personnel Lists and Other Handbooks

Handbook of the Soviet Union, (New York, 1936)

Spisok chinov Ministerstva imperatorskago dvora

Edward Crowley	*The Soviet Diplomatic Corps, 1917-1967* (Metuchen, N.J., 1970)
R Davies	*Soviet Government Officials, 1922-194 : a Handlist* (1989)
A. A. Gromyko, S. A. Golunskii and V. M. Khvostov	*Diplomaticheskii slovar'* (Moscow, 1983-85)
George Lensen	*Russian Diplomatic and Consular Officials in East Asia : a Handbook of the Representatives of Tsarist Russia and the Provisional Government in China, Japan, and Korea from 1858 to 1924 and of Soviet Representatives in Japan from 1925 to 1968* (Tallahassee, Fla., 1968)
Russia. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del	*Vestnik – Ministerstvo inostrannykh del*
Russia. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del	*Ezhegodnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del, 1883-1914* (Saint Petersburg, 1861-1916)
Russia. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del	*Spisok chinov Ministerstva inostrannykh del po starchinstva postuplenie na aluzbu v ministerstve* (St. Petersburg, 1911-1915)

D. N. Shilov, *Gosudarstvennye deiateli Rossiiskoi Imperii : glavy vysshikh i tsentralnykh uchrezhdenii 1802-1917 : biobibliograficheskii spravochnik* (Saint Petersburg, 2002.)

USSR. Narodnyi komissariat po inostrannym Delam *Ezhegodnik Narodnogo komissariata po inostrannym delam: Annuaire diplomatique du Comissariat du peuple pour les affaires etrangere,* (Moscow, 1925-1936)

Published Memoirs and Diaries

Dmitrii Abrikossov *Revelations of a Russian Diplomat: the Memoirs of Dmitrii I. Abrikossow* (Seattle, 1964)

S. I. Aralov *Vospominaniia sovetskogo diplomata, 1922-1923* (Moscow, 1960)

Alexandr Barmin *Memoirs of a Soviet Diplomat: Twenty Years in the Service of the U.S.S.R* (London, 1938)

Alexandr Barmin *One Who Survived: the Life Story of a Russian Under the Soviets* (New York, 1945)

Nicolas de Basily *Nicolas de Basily, Diplomat of Imperial Russia, 1903-1917: Memoirs* (Stanford, California, 1973)

Grigory Besedovsky *Revelations of a Soviet Diplomat* (London, 1931)

Maurice Bompard	*Mon ambassade en Russie, 1903-1908* (Paris, 1937)
George Buchanan	*My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memoirs* (London, 1923)
H. C. Dand	*Russian Hazard : the Adventures of a British Secret Service Agent in Russia* (London, 1937)
Louise Bryant	*Mirrors of Moscow* (New York, 1923)
Reader Bullard	*Inside Stalin's Russia: the Diaries of Reader Bullard, 1930-1934* (Charlbury, Oxfordshire, 2000)
Joseph Davies	*Mission to Moscow : a Record of Confidential Dispatches to the Department of State, Correspondence, Current Diary and Journal Entries Including Notes and Comment up to October 1941* (London, 1942)
Harold Eeman	*Inside Stalin's Russia: Memories of a diplomat 1936-1941* (London, 1977)
Louis Fischer	*Men and Politics: an Autobiography* (London, 1941)
Evgenii Gnedin	*Katastrofa i vtoroe rozhdenie: memuarnye zapiski* (Amsterdam, 1977)
Gustav Hilger and Alfred Meyer	*The Incompatible Allies: a Memoir-History of German-Soviet Relations, 1918-1941* (New York, 1953)

Alexander Isvolsky	*The Memoirs of Alexander Iswolsky: Formerly Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to France* (London, 1920)
Andrei Kalmykow	*Memoirs of a Russian Diplomat: Outposts of the Empire, 1893-1917* (New Haven; London, 1971)
Alexandra Kollontai	*The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman* (London, 1972)
A. M. Kollontai	*Iz moei zhizni i raboty: vospominania i dnevniki,* (Moscow, 1974)
A. M. Kollontai	*Diplomaticheskie dnevniki: 1922-1940* (Moscow, 2001)
A. M. Kollontai	*Letopis' moei zhizni* (Moscow, 2004)
V. N. Lamzdorf	*Dnevnik V.N. Lamzdorfa, 1886-1890* (Moscow, 1926)
V. N. Lamzdorf	*Dnevnik V.N. Lamzdorfa 1891-92* (Moscow, 1926)
Maxim Litvinov (attrib.)	*Notes for a Journal* (London, 1955)
Bruce Lockhart	*Memoirs of a British Agent: Being an Account of the Author's Early Life in Many Lands and of his Official Mission to Moscow in 1918* (London, 1932)

Bruce Lockhart *The Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart* (London, 1973)

Ivan Maisky *Maisky: Ten Years Ambassador* (London, 1944)

Ivan Maisky *Before the Storm: Recollections* (London, 1944)

Ivan Maisky *Kto pomogal Gitleru: iz vospominanii sovetskogo posla* (Moscow, 1962)

Ivan Maisky *Vospominaniia sovetskogo posla* (Moscow, 1964)

Ivan Maisky "Stranitsy iz Dnevnika", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, vol.10, no. 6 (1966), pp. 118-128

Ivan Maisky "Stranitsy iz Dnevnika", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1967), pp. 102-113

Ivan Maisky "Cherchill' i ego Okruzhenie: Fragmenty iz Vospominaii (Part 1)", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1975, no. 1, pp.95-104

Ivan Maisky "Cherchill' i ego Okruzhenie: Fragmenty iz Vospominaii (part 2)", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1975, no. 2, pp.133-147

G. N. Mikhailovskii *Zapiski: Iz istorii rossiiskogo vneshnepoliticheskogo vedomstva, 1914-1920: v dvukh knigakh* (Moscow, 1993)

Konstantin Nabokoff *The Ordeal of a Diplomat* (London, 1921)

A. V. Nekliudov — *Diplomatic Reminiscences Before and During the World War: 1911-1917* (London, 1920)

N. V. Novikov — *Vospominaniia diplomata : zapiski, 1938-1947* (Moscow, 1989)

Maurice Paleologue — *An Ambassador's Memoirs 1914-1917,* 3 vols. (London, 1923-5)

Bernard Pares — *My Russian Years* (London, 1931)

E. M. Primakov et al. — *Chemu svideteli my byli...: Perepiska byvshikh Tsarskikh diplomatov, 1934-1940: Sbornik dokumentov v dvukh knigakh* (Moscow, 1998)

Christian Rakovsky — *Angliya i Rossiya* (Moscow, 1924)

Aleksei Roshchin — "V dovoyennom Narkomindyele" *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, 1992, No. 2 pp

Baron Rosen — *Forty Years of Diplomacy* (London, 1922)

Alexander Savinsky — *Recollections of a Russian Diplomat* (London, 1927)

Sergei Sazonov — *Vospominaniya* (Paris, 1927)

Sergei Sazonov — *Les Années Fatales: Souvenirs de S. Sazonov, Ancien Ministre des Affaires étrangères de Russie (1910-1916)* (Paris, 1927)

Sergei Sazonov *Fateful years 1909-1916: The Reminiscences of Serge Sazonov, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs: 1914* (London, 1928)

Yuri Solov'ev *Vospominaniya diplomata 1893-1922* (Moscow, 1939)

Genevieve Tabouis *Vingt ans de "suspense" diplomatique* (Paris, 1958)

Michel de Taube *La politique russe d'avant-guerre et la fin de l'empire des Tsars (1904-1917) memoires du baron M. de Taube* (Paris, 1928)

H. Walters *Secret and Confidential: The Memoirs of a Military Attaché* (London, 1921)

Louise Weiss *Mémoires d'une Européenne* (Paris, 1970)

Secondary Works

William Allison *American Diplomats in Russia: Case Studies in Orphan Diplomacy, 1916-1919* (Westport, Conn., 1997)

David Armstrong *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford, 1993)

Gill Bennett *'A most extraordinary and mysterious business': The Zinoviev*

Geoff Berridge *Diplomacy : theory and practice* (Basingstoke, 2002)

S. I. Blinov *Vneshniaia politika sovetskoi Rossii: pervyi god proletarskoi diktatury* (Moskva, 1973)

Letter of 1924, Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029395681

George Bolsover "Izvol'sky and Reform of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs," *Slavonic and East European Review,* vol.63, no. 1 (1985), pp.21-40

Oleg Budnitskii "B.A.Bakhmetev: Ambassador of non-existent government", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia,* 2000, no. 1, pp. 134-66

Scott Burchill (et al.) *Theories of international relations* (Basingstoke, 2001)

E. H. Carr *The twenty years' crisis, 1919-1939 : an introduction to the study of international relations : by E.H. Carr* (London, 1981)

E. H. Carr *German-Soviet relations between the two world wars, 1919-1939* (London, 1952)

E. H. Carr *International relations between the two world wars : 1919-1939* (Basingstoke, 1985)

John Carswell *The Exile: a Life of Ivy Litvinov* (London, 1983)

G. I. Cherniavskii, V. A. Golovko and M. G. Stanchev — *Mezhdu Moskvoi i Zapadom : diplomaticheskaia deiatel'nost' Kh.G. Rakovskogo* (Khar'kov, 1994)

Evgeny Chossudovsky — *Chicherin and the Evolution of Soviet Foreign Policy and Diplomacy,* (Geneva, 1973)

Iurii Cherniakov — *Diplomaty, chinovniki i drugie : sovetskie ministry inostrannykh del, (1917-1991)* (New York, 1996)

Aleksandr Chubar'ian — *Sovetskaia vneshniaia politika v retrospektive, 1917-1991* (Moscow, 1993)

Barbara Clements — *Bolshevik Feminist: the Life of Aleksandra Kollontai* (London, 1979)

Francis Conte — *Un revolutionnaire-diplomate: Christian Rakovski : l'Union sovietique et l'Europe* (1922-1941) (Paris, 1978)

Francis Conte — *Christian Rakovski, 1873-1941 : a Political Biography* (Boulder, 1989)

Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert — *The Diplomats: 1919-1939* (Princeton, 1953)

Alexander Dallin, A.D. M. Abrash, G. D. Malone — *Russian diplomacy and Eastern Europe, 1914-1917* (New, York, 1963)

Elena Danielson "The Elusive Litvinov Memoirs" *Slavic Review,* vol.48 no. 3 (1989), pp.477-483

Richard Debo "Litvinov and Kamenev - Ambassadors Extraordinary: The Problem of Soviet Representation Abroad", *Slavic Review*, vol.34, no. 3 (1975),pp.463-482

Richard Debo "The 14 November 1918 teleprinter Conversation of Hugo Haase with Georgii Chicherin and Karl Radek: Document and Commentary ", *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, vol.14, no. 4 (1980), pp.513-534

Helen Dittmer "The Russian Foreign Ministry under Nicholas II : 1894-1914", PhD Thesis, University of Chicago, 1977

A. G. Dubinin "125-letie so dnia rozhdeniia G. V. Chicherina", *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriia*,1998, no. 3, pp.242-245

Sabine Dullin "Les diplomates soviétiques à la SDN", *Relations Internationales*, no. 75 (1993)

Sabine Dullin "La politique extérieure de l'URSS : une histoire en friche", *Matériaux pour l'histoire*, no. 36 (1994)

Sabine Dullin "Le rôle de Litvinov dans les années 1930", *Communisme*, no. 42-44 (1995)

Sabine Dullin — "Le Narkomindel dans la politique extérieure de l'URSS", *Cahiers de l'Institut d'Histoire du Temps Present*, no. 35 (1996)

Sabine Dullin — "Les ambassades soviétiques en Europe dans les années 1930", *Communisme*, no. 49-50 (1997), pp.17-28

Sabine Dullin — "Les diplomates soviétiques des années 1930 et leur évaluation de la puissance de l'URSS", *Relations Internationales*, no. 91 (1997), pp.339-355

Sabine Dullin — *Des Hommes D'Influence : Les Ambassadeurs de Staline en Europe, 1930-1939* (Paris, 2001)

Sabine Dullin — "Sovetskie diplomati v epoku slainskikh represii. Novie lyudi?", *Neprikosnovenyi zapas*, vol. 4, no. 24 (2002), pp. 42-48

Sabine Dullin — "Une diplomatie plebeienne ? Profils et competences des diplomates sovietiques, 1936-1945", *Cahiers du Monde Russe*, vol. 44, no. 2-3 (2003). pp.

David Dunn — "Maksim Litvinov: Commissar of Contradiction", *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.23, no. 2 (1988), pp.221-243

Bruce A. Elleman — "Soviet Diplomacy and the First United Front in China", *Modern China*, vol. 21, no. 4 (1995), pp. 450-480.

P. N. Efremov	*Vneshniaia politika Rossii: (1907-1914 gg.)* (Moscow, 1961)
Carole Fink	*The Genoa Conference: European diplomacy, 1921-1922* (London, 1984)
Louis Fischer	*The Soviets in World Affairs : a history of the relations between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world, 1917-1929* (Princeton, 1951)
Michael T. Florinsky	"World Revolution and Soviet Foreign Policy" *Political Science Quarterly,* vol. 47, no. 2(1932), pp. 204-233
William Franklin	*Protection of foreign interests : a study in diplomatic and consular practice* (New York, 1969)
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	*Women in Diplomacy: The FCO, 1782-1999*
L. Z. Gadilov and F. Kh Gumerov	*Revoliutsioner-diplomat: istoriko-biograficheskii ocherk* (Ufa,1977)
G. P. Gooch	*Before the war : studies in diplomacy* (London, 1936)
Joshua Goldstein	*International Relations* (New York, 2003)
Gabriel Gorodetsky	*Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1991: a Retrospective* (London, 1994)

Constantin de Grunwald	*Trois siecles de diplomatie russe*, (Paris, 1945)
Keith Hamilton Richard Langhorne	*The practice of diplomacy : its evolution, theory and and administration* (London, 1995)
Jonathan Haslam	*Soviet Foreign Policy, 1930-1933: the Impact of the Depression* (London, 1983)
Jonathan Haslam	*The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933-39* (London, 1984)
Jonathan Haslam	*Soviet Foreign Policy in the 1930s* (Birmingham, 1984)
Jonathan Haslam	*The Soviet Union and the threat from the East, 1933-41: Moscow, Tokyo, and the prelude to the Pacific War* (Pittsburgh, Pa, 1992)
Michael Hughes	"Diplomacy or Drudgery? British Consuls in Russia during the Early Twentieth Century," D*iplomacy & Statecraft,* vol.6, no. 1 (1995), pp.176-195
Michael Hughes	*Diplomacy Before the Russian Revolution: Britain, Russia and the Old Diplomacy, 1894-1917* (New York, 1999)
A. V. Ignat'ev, O. V. Orlik and I. S. Rybachenok	*Portrety rossiiskikh diplomatov: sbornik nauchnykh trudov,* (Moscow, 1991)

A. V. Ignat'ev, *Rossiiskaia diplomatiia v portretakh,* (Moscow, 1992)

A. V. Ignat'ev "Sergei Dmitrievich Sazonov", *Voprosi istorii*, no. 9, (1996), pp. 24-46

A. V. Ignat'ev *Vneshniaia politika Rossii 1907-1914: tendentsii, liudi, sobytiia* (Moscow, 2000)

Anna Itkina *Revoliutsioner, tribun, diplomat: Stranitsy zhizni Aleksandry Mikhailovny Kollontai,* (Moscow, 1970)

Leonid Itselev *Aleksandra Kollontai-- diplomat i kurtizanka: grezy pchely trudovoi: roman,* (Moscow, 1997)

N. A. Joffe "A. A. Joffe: Revolutsioner i diplomat", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1990, no. 3, pp. 94-109

Anastasiia Kartunova "Kitaiskii Vopros v Perepiske G. V. Chicherina i L. M. Karakhana 1924-1926 gg.", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia,* 1998, no. 6, pp.3-18

H. Keens-Soper, G. Otte Thomas and Geoff Berridge *Diplomatic theory from Machiavelli toKissinger* (Basingstoke, 2001)

Oleg Ken "Karl Radek i Biuro mezhdunarodnoi informatsii CK VKP(b), 1932-1934 gg," *Cahiers du Monde russe,* vol. 44, no. 1 (2003)

Caroline Kennedy-Pipe — *Russia and the World, 1917-1991* (London, 1998)

G. L. Kessel'brenner — *Khronika odnoi diplomaticheskoi kar'ery: diplomat-vostokoved S.L. Lashkarev i ego vremia* (Moscow, 1987)

Irina Khovratovich — *Georgii Vasil'evich Chicherin* (Moscow, 1980)

S. S. Khromov — *Leonid Krasin: Neizvestnye stranitsy biografii 1920-1926 gg.* (Moscow, 2001)

I. K Kobliakov — "Voprosy V. I. Lenina o Mezhdunarodno, polozhenii Sovetskoii Rosii i otvety G. V. Chicherina", *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, vol.7, no. 2 (1961), pp.65-68

M.M. Kononova — "Deiatel'nost' diplomatov Tsarskogo i Vremennogo pravitel'stv v 1917-1938 godakh," *Voprosy istorii*, 2002, no. , pp. 105-18

P. S. Kol'tsov — *Diplomat Fedor Raskol'nikov* (Moscow, 1990)

G. Kremlev — "Sovetskie Diplomaty Razlichnitkh Epokn," *Vestnik Instituta po izucheniu istorii i kul'tury SSSR*, vol.3, no. 10, (1954), pp.56-69

W. W. Kulski — "Soviet Diplomatic Techniques," *Russian Review*, vol. 19, no. 3, (1960), pp. 217-226

Donald N Lammers "Britain, Russia, and the Revival of "Entente Diplomacy"; 1934," *Journal of British Studies,* vol.6, no. 2 (1967), pp.99-123

J. A. Large "The Origins of Soviet Collective Security Policy, 1930-32," *Soviet Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2 (1978), pp. 212-236

Sergei Lagodskii *Vasilii Sokolovskii: Polkovodets, strateg, diplomat* (Moscow, 1995)

Horst Linke *Das Zarische Russland und der Erster Weltkrieg: Diplomatie und Kriegsziele, 1914-1917* (Munich, 1982)

David M. McDonald *United Government and Foreign Policy in Russia 1900-1914* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992)

David MacKenzie *Imperial dreams, harsh realities : Tsarist Russian foreign policy, 1815-1917* (Fort Worth, TX ; London, 1994)

David MacKenzie *From Messianism to Collapse. Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1991* (Harcourt Brace College Publishers).

Eugene Magerovsky "The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, 1917-1946," PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 1975

Ivan Maisky "Georgii Vasilievich Chicherin," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia,* 1972, no. 6,. pp.122-129

Eduard Mark	"October or Thermidor? Interpretations of Stalinism and the Perception of Soviet Foreign Policy in the United States, 1927-1947," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 94, vo. 4 (1989), pp. 937-962
Vojtech Mastny	"The Cassandra in the Foreign Commissariat," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 2 (1976), pp. 366-376
Baron Alexander Meyendorff	"My cousin, Foreign Commissar Chicherin", *Russian Review,* vol.30, no. 2 (1971), pp. 173-178
William Morse	*Leonid Borisovich Krasin: Soviet diplomat, 1918-1926* (Ann Arbor, 1980)
L. N. Nezhinskii	*Sovetskaia vneshniaia politika, 1917-1945 gg: poiski novykh podkhodov* (Moscow, 1992)
Timothy O'Connor	"Culture and Diplomacy in the 1918 Soviet Shakty Affair: A. V. Lunarcharskii on the NEP in Culture and G. V. Chicherin on German-Soviet Realtions," *European Studies Journal,* vol. 7, no. 2 (1990), pp. 33-49
Timothy O'Connor	*Diplomacy and Revolution: G.V. Chicherin and Soviet Foreign Affairs, 1918-1930* (Ames, 1988)
Isabel Oyarzabal Palencia	*Alexandra Kollontay, Ambassadress from Russia* (New De York,1947)

V Petrov	"Maxim Litvinov," *International Affairs (USSR)*,1976, no. 8, pp.119-121
Todd Pfannestiel	"The Soviet Bureau: A Bolshevik Strategy to Secure U.S. Diplomatic Recognition through Economic Trade," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 27, no. 2 (2003), pp. 171-192
Hugh Phillips	"From a Bolshevik to a British Subject: The Early Years of Maksim M. Litvinov," *Slavic Review*, vol.48, no. 3 (1989), pp.388-398
Hugh Phillips	*Between the Revolution and the West: a Political Biography of Maxim M. Litvinov* (Boulder,1992)
Silvio Pons (et al.)	*Russia in the age of wars, 1914-1945* (Milan, 2000)
Silvio Pons	"The Papers on Foreign and International Policy in the Russian Archives: The Stalin Years," C*ahiers du Monde Russe*, vol. 40, no. 1-2 (1999), pp. 235-250
Valerii Ponomarev and Hugh Ragsdale	*Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, 1993)
N. V. Popov (ed.)	*Arkhivy raskryvaiut tainy... : mezhdunarodnye voprosy : sobytiia i liudi* (Moscow, 1991)
Arthur Pope	*Maxim Litvinoff* (New York, 1943)
Cathy Porter	*Alexandra Kollontai: a Biography* (London, 1980)

V. P. Potemkin (ed.) *Istoriia diplomatii* (Moscow, 1945)

Paul D. Raymond "Witness and Chronicler of Nazi-Soviet Relations: The Testimony of Evgeny Gnedin (Parvus) ," *Russian Review*, vol. 44, no. 4 (1985), pp. 379-395.

A Resis "The Fall of Litvinov, Harbinger of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact,", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Jan. 2000, pp. 33-57

Geoffrey Roberts "The Fall of Litvinov: A Revisionist View", *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.27, no. 4 (1992), pp.639-657

Louis Samelson *Soviet and Chinese negotiating behaviour : the Western view* (1976)

Hugh de Santis *The Diplomacy of Silence: The American Foreign Service, the Soviet Union and the Cold War 1933-1947* (Chicago, 1980)

Robert Schulzinger *The Making of the Diplomatic Mind. The Training, Outlook and Style of United States Foreign Service Officers 1908-1931* (Middletown, CT, 1975)

V. Semenov *Praktika diplomaticheskogo protokola i etiketa* (Moscow, 2002)

Alfred Senn	*Diplomacy and Revolution. The Soviet mission to Switzerland, 1918* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1974)
Zinoviev Sheinis	"Pis'ma M. M. Litvinova iz Merano: 1934 g.", *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriia*, 1992, no. 3 , pp. 136-146
Zinoviev Sheinis	"Alexandra Kollontai - sovetskii diplomat" *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia,* 1985, no. 4, pp. 83-95
Zinoviev Sheinis	"Narodnyi posol sovetskoi Rossii M. M. Litvinov. London 1918 g", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*,1987, no. 1, pp.115-129
Zinoviev Sheinis	"Pervye shagi diplomaticheskoi deiatel'nost M. M. Litvinova", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*.1988, no. 1, pp.152-169
Zinoviev Sheinis	*Maksim Maksimovich Litvinov : Revoliutsioner, diplomat, chelovek* (Moscow, 1989)
Zinoviev Sheinis	"Polpred B. E. Shtein (Shtrikhi k biografii)", *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia.*1991. no. 1.pp.101-118
Zinoviev Sheinis	*Put' k vershine: stranitsy zhizni A.M. Kollontai* (Moscow, 1984)
L. P. Shumrikova	*Alekxandra Kollontai: Zhenshchina i politik* (Dnepropetrovsk, 1992)

V. I. Sipols — *Vneshniaia politika Sovetskogo Soiuza : 1933-1935 gg* (Moscow, 1980)

V. I. Sipols — *Vneshniaia politika Sovetskogo Soiuza: 1936-1939* (Moscow, 1987)

Vladimir Sokolov — *Na boevykh postakh diplomaticheskogo fronta : Zhizn' i deiatel'nost' L.M. Karakhana* (Moscow, 1983)

Vladimir Sokolov — "Na postu zamestitilia Narkoma Inostrannykh Del (o zhizni deiatel'nost B. S. Stomoniakova) ," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia,* 1988, no. 5, pp.111-126

Vladimir Sokolov — "N. N. Krestinskii - Revoliutsioner, Diplomat(1883-1938) ," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia,*1989 no. 5, pp.120-142

Vladimir Sokolov — "Ya. A. Berzin - Revolutsioner, diplomat, gosudarstvenii deyatel," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia,* 1990, no. 2, pp. 140-159

Vladimir Sokolov — "Neizvestnyi G. V. Chicherin: iz Rassekrechennyk Arkihivov MID RF", *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriia,*1994 no. 2, pp.3-18

Vladimir Sokolov & Yelena Belevich — "Narkomindel Georgi Chicherin", *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn,* 1991, No. 3

Vladimir Sokolov — "Narkomindel Maxim Litvinov", *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn,* 1991, no. 4

Zara Steiner — *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World* (London, 1982)

Friedrich Stieve and Ernest Dickes — *Isvolsky and the World War* (London, 1926)

Timothy Taracouzio — *War and peace in Soviet diplomacy* (New York, 1940)

Timothy Taracouzio — *The Soviet Union and international law : a study based on the legislation, treaties and foreign relations of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics* (New York, 1972)

L. I. Trofimova — "Pervye Shagi Sovetskoi Diplomatii (part 1)", *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriia*, 1971, no. 6 (1971), pp.37-52

L. I. Trofimova — "Pervye Shagi Sovetskoi Diplomatii (part 2)", *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriia*, vol.1972, no. 1 (1972), pp.63-79

L. I. Trofimova — "Stranitsa Diplomaticheskoi Deiatel'nosti G. V. Chicherina", *Voprosy Istorii*, 1973 no. 2 , pp.114-123

M Trush — "A Diplomat of the Leninist School," *International Affairs (USSR)*,1972 no. 12 , pp.66-72

Teddy Uldricks — "The Impact of the Great Purges on the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs", *Slavic Review,* vol.36, no. 2 (1977). pp.187-203

Teddy Uldricks	"The Soviet Diplomatic Corps in the Cičerin Era", *Jahrbücher für Geschicte Osteuropas*, vol.23, no. 2 (1978), pp.213-224
Teddy Uldricks	*Diplomacy and Ideology: the Origins of Soviet Foreign Relations, 1917-1930* (London, 1979)
Arkadii Vaksberg	*Val'kiriia revoliutsii* (Smolensk, 1997)
A. L. Voronin	"Iz Diplomaticheskoi Perepiski G. V. Chicherina", *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriia*, 1991, no. 3, pp.238-241
Henning von Wistinghausen	"Der Estlander Rolf Baron Ungern-Sternberg als Russicher Diplomat 1905-1917," *Zeitschrift fur Ostforschung*, vol.36, no. 4 (1987), pp.481-522
John Wood and Jean Serres	*Diplomatichskii tseremonial i protocol* (Moscow, 2003)
Stanislav Zarnitskii and Anatolii Sergeev	*Chicherin* (Moscow, 1975)
Stanislav Zarnitskii and L. Trofimova	*Sovetskoi strany diplomat* (Moscow, 1968)
Stanislav Zarnitski	"Narkomindel Nachilnalsia Tak. . . .", *Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn*, vol.14 no. 6 (1967), pp.86-94
Stanislav. Zarnitskii and L. I. Trofimova	*Tak nachinalsia Narkomindel* (Moscow, 1984)

Nikolai Zhukovskii *Diplomaty novogo mira* (Moscow, 1986)

Theoretical Works

Roland Barthes *Mythologies,* (London, 1972)

Pierre Bourdieu *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste,* (London, 1984)

Craig Calhoun *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History, and the Challenge of Difference* (Oxford, 1995)

Michel Foucault *The order of things: an archaeology of the human sciences* (New York, 1973)

Michel Foucault and Paul Rabinow *The Foucault reader* (New York, 1984)

Elaine Ginsberg *Passing and the fictions of identity* (London, 1996)

Konstantin Stanislavsky *Building a character* (London, 1968)

J. D. Loic Wacquant and Pierre Bourdieu *An invitation to reflexive sociology* (Cambridge, 1992)