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**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ  
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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS  
BETWEEN CANADA AND THE U.S.S.R.  
DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

by Robert-William Laforest

This is presented to the School of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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## PREFACE

In recent years, there has been a considerable amount of research in Canada on the various aspects of Canada's foreign policy. Most of the works pertaining to Canadian-Soviet relations have focused on the initial contacts between Canada and the Soviet Republic and on the brief episode of the Soviet Trade Mission to Canada (1924-1927).

Canada's participation in the ill-fated Allied scheme to defeat Bolshevik forces in Northern Russia and Siberia at the end of the First World War is well covered by John Swettenham in Allied Intervention in Russia, 1918-1919 (Toronto 1967) and by Roy MacLaren in Canadians in Russia, 1918-1919 (Toronto 1976). A more concise account of Canada's involvement in the Siberian intervention can be found in Gaddis Smith's "Canada and the Siberian Intervention 1918-1919" (American Historical Review, 1959). Colonel G.W. Nicholson offers a brief overview of the military operations in Northern Russia and Siberia in chapter 17 of the Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War, Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919 (Ottawa, 1962).

Ronald Adams examines the Canadian government's decision to adhere to the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement

in 1922 as well as its acceptance of a Soviet Trade Mission in 1924 in "Mackenzie King and the Soviet Trade Mission, 1924-1927" (Masters dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1971). Considerable attention is given to the controversy surrounding the alleged improprieties of the Soviet trade agents in Montreal such as their attempts to disseminate communist literature in Canada. Adams also shows how Ottawa followed Great Britain's lead in terminating the Trade Agreement in 1927. Similarly, James Eayrs offers a brief treatment of Canadian-Soviet relations between 1919 and 1927 in chapter 6 of his Northern Approaches; Canada and the Search for Peace (Toronto 1961). The most comprehensive study done to date is by far Aloysius Balawyder's Canadian-Soviet Relations between the World Wars (Toronto 1972). Balawyder demonstrates that Canadian-Soviet relations were primarily motivated by commercial considerations. He also analyzes the factors that influenced Canadian policies toward the Soviet Union. These included; trade interests, British diplomacy, the policies of the Comintern, pressures from political and ethnic groups in Canada and Canadian nationalism. The only known work dealing with Canadian-Soviet relations during the Second World War is Raymond Davies' Canada and Russia, Friends and Neighbors (Toronto 1944). Davies' account of the wartime relationship is somewhat biased and journalistic. The work is based on secondary sources

and is essentially intended to promote Canadian-Soviet friendship. Finally, it should be noted that there are a number of studies on the communist movement in Canada which are most useful to the understanding of Canadian-Soviet relations. Probably the most important of these are Ivan Avakumovic's The Communist Party of Canada, A History (Toronto 1975) and William Rodney's Soldiers of the International, A History of the Communist Party of Canada, 1919-1929 (Toronto 1968).

The present study is an attempt to examine and explain the establishment of diplomatic relations between Canada and the U.S.S.R. in 1942. At the same time, it is hoped that the study will shed some light on Canadian-Soviet relations during the Second World War. Since this work is primarily based on Canadian sources, most notably the King Papers and documents from the Departments of Trade and Commerce and External Affairs, the relationship between the two countries is largely viewed from a Canadian perspective. The study basically covers the period between August 1939 and December 1943 with the exception of the chapter on Mutual Aid which briefly outlines the special measures adopted by the Canadian government to provide economic assistance to the Soviet Union during the last four years of the war. While the main theme pertains to the official contacts between Ottawa and Moscow, consideration is given to a number of

international events which had a direct impact on Canadian policies towards the Soviet Union. In addition, an effort is made to present Canadian public opinion towards the U.S.S.R. and Canadian-Soviet relations through an analysis of newspaper editorials and parliamentary debates. As in the case of the interwar period, trade considerations played an important role in Canadian-Soviet relations during the Second World War. It will be seen that the initial discussions for an exchange of diplomatic representatives between the two governments were brought about by the need to expedite wartime supply negotiations. The author will also attempt to demonstrate that the diplomatic agreement with the U.S.S.R. in 1942 was a manifestation of Canada's desire to pursue a more active and independent foreign policy.

I wish to record my sincere thanks to the courteous and helpful staff of the National Archives of Canada for enabling me to quickly locate all the relevant files pertaining to Canadian-Soviet relations. I would like to express my appreciation to Senator Paul Yuzyk for supervising my thesis and for his numerous and helpful suggestions. Finally, I would like to thank Miss Nancy Westran for typing my rough notes into a readable first draft.

## INTRODUCTION

In order to appreciate the significance of Ottawa's decision to establish direct diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R., it is important to briefly discuss the general orientation of Canadian foreign policy prior to the Second World War. During the interwar period, Canada became a sovereign nation with full powers to formulate and carry out independent foreign policies. This did not mean however that Canada sought an active role in international affairs. Throughout the European Crisis, Mackenzie King repeatedly argued that Canada had no business in becoming involved in foreign entanglements. The King government was no less apprehensive toward the League of Nations and the policy of collective security. In his address to the Imperial Conference in 1937, King asserted that while his government supported the general objectives of the League of Nations, it could not agree with those who envisaged the League as a coercive instrument, "there is no question that public opinion and parliamentary opinion at present is

emphatically against any interpretation of League policy which would involve automatic sanctions".<sup>1</sup> The only type of international commitment which Ottawa was prepared to endorse were those which implied no specific obligations and held some promise of reducing the possibility of armed conflicts. It is not surprising therefore that the policy of appeasement found a good deal of support in Ottawa. Following the announcement of the Munich settlement, King issued the following message to Chamberlain:

The heart of Canada is rejoicing tonight at the success which has crowned your unremitting efforts for peace. May I convey to you the warm congratulations of the Canadian people, and with them, an expression of their gratitude, which is felt from one end of the Dominion to the other.<sup>2</sup>

King defended his cautious foreign policy by insisting that Canada lacked both the experience and resources to play an effective role in settling disputes. External commitments were also viewed as a threat to national unity. King maintained that Canada's domestic problems could only be resolved providing that the task of preserving national unity was not complicated by

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<sup>1</sup>Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 6, 1936-1939 (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1972), p. 163.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1099.

"the further strain that would be involved by present controversy as to participation in overseas wars or commitments so to participate".<sup>3</sup>

In the final analysis, Canada has not progressed very far in international affairs. For one thing, Ottawa continued to rely heavily on the British foreign service in its dealings with most non-Commonwealth countries. By 1939, Canadian Legations had only been established in the following foreign countries; France, Belgium, the United States, the Netherlands and Japan.<sup>4</sup> This was hardly conducive to fostering an image of autonomy in the international community. Perhaps the most visible indication of Canada's apparent subordination to Great Britain was the way in which Mackenzie King brought Canada into the Second World War. While the Canadian Prime Minister had always been a staunch defender of Canadian autonomy in foreign affairs, he nonetheless made it known as early as 1937 "that in the event of a war of aggression nothing would keep the Canadian people from being at the side of Britain".<sup>5</sup> The statement had not been made in vain for Canada declared war on the German Reich one week after the British declaration.

The Canadian government's aversion towards international conflicts and commitments did not however

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>4</sup>Canada, Department of External Affairs Annual Report 1939 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1940), p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>Canada, House of Commons Debates, vol. VI, August 11, 1944, p. 6275.

prevent it from maintaining and expanding commercial relations with several foreign countries. As one of the World's leading trade nations, Canada was always eager to find new markets for her agricultural and manufactured products. It followed, that Canada had a vested interest in promoting a stable international trade environment. Significantly, Mackenzie King informed the delegates of the 1937 Imperial Conference that Canada's relations with foreign countries continued to be chiefly commercial. He further stated that the best contribution his country could make to the cause of world peace "was to remove, so far as it lay within our power, any economic grievances or sources of friction".<sup>6</sup> The desire to increase foreign trade sometimes overshadowed political or ideological differences. Nowhere was this more evident than in the case of Soviet Russia. There is no need here to retrace the entire history of Canadian-Soviet relations during the interwar period. It may be recalled though that both countries shared a common desire to engage in normal commercial relations despite the fact that they possessed different, if not opposing, political and economic systems.

Like most capitalist countries, Canada held great expectations in the potential of the Soviet market. As early as 1921, Canadian officials began compiling information on Canadian trade opportunities in the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup> A year

<sup>6</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 6, p. 174.

<sup>7</sup> Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce Weekly Bulletin, no. 934 (December 20, 1921).

later, the Canadian government adhered to the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement and subsequently recognized the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as "de jure" rulers of the former Russian Empire. Canada maintained quasi-diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. from 1924 to 1927 and was able to negotiate directly with representatives of the Soviet government who had established a small Trade Mission in Montreal. This situation came to an unpleasant end in 1927 when Ottawa decided to follow Great Britain's lead and terminate the Trade Agreement because of the disclosures of the "Arcos Raid" in London.<sup>8</sup> Ironically, the Canadian government indicated that it wished to continue trading with the U.S.S.R. on an unofficial basis. Soviet authorities were duly informed that relations between the Dominion and the Soviet government would be conducted in accordance with normal practice, "when a Dominion has no separate representation at a capital through Channel of the (British) Ambassador".<sup>9</sup> As it turned out, neither the cancellation of the Trade Agreement nor the departure of the Soviet Trade Mission had any effect on Canadian-Soviet trade.

Unfortunately, the advent of the Great Depression disrupted the trade relationship during the early Thirties. The newly-elected Bennett government promised to rehabilitate Canada's economy by adopting strict protectionist policies. Soviet Trade agencies were soon accused of "dumping" their

<sup>8</sup> A thorough analysis of the events leading to the diplomatic rupture is available in Aloysius Balawyder's Canadian-Soviet Relations Between the World Wars (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 82-104.

<sup>9</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, Vol. 4, 1926-1930 (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), p. 1907.

products on the Canadian market. In order to protect Canadian manufacturers and producers, Bennet, introduced legislation in February 1931 prohibiting the importation of several Soviet products into Canada.<sup>10</sup> There were other reasons espoused for the embargo which had nothing to do with Soviet trade practices such as: the Soviet government's use of forced labour, the exploitation of political prisoners, the low standard of living prevailing in the U.S.S.R. and the very nature of the Soviet régime, "which seeks to impose its will upon the whole world".<sup>11</sup> Two months later, the government of the U.S.S.R. retaliated by enacting legislation forbidding all importing organizations and trade organizations of the Union to make purchases of Canadian origin and prohibiting the employment of Canadian ships.<sup>12</sup>

Later under the new administration, both governments decided to resume normal trade relations following lengthy negotiations. In 1938, Canada's Minister of Trade and Commerce, W. Euler, and the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R., E.D. Tchavialev, exchanged proposals for a major trade agreement between their respective countries. Negotiations continued throughout 1938 on the basis of Canada giving the Soviet Union most-favoured-nation treatment in return for an understanding on Moscow's part to purchase goods

<sup>10</sup> Canada, Statutes, 1931, Part I-II, p. XXV.

<sup>11</sup> Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.) King Papers; Manuscript Group (M.G.) 26 J4, Vol. 220.

<sup>12</sup> P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, Record Group (R.G.) 20, Vol. 89, "Canada's Trade with Russia".

to the value of \$10,000,000 per annum from Canada, but with no results.<sup>13</sup> Trade between Canada and the U.S.S.R. did show signs of improvement during the late Thirties but remained negligible in comparison to Canadian-American trade. However, it appeared that Canada's hopes to enjoy a lucrative trade relationship with the U.S.S.R. would materialize in the not too distant future.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER I

### RELATIONS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE SOVIET-GERMAN ALLIANCE

By 1939 it was obvious that the policy of collective security had failed. European statesmen, realizing that an armed conflict was highly probable, if not inevitable, directed their efforts towards securing defensive alliances. As in 1914, Europe was divided into two camps. France and Great Britain, intent on preventing another Munich, undertook through a combination of alliances and declarations to protect the smaller European nations from acts of aggression. However, their diplomatic system contained a serious flaw which jeopardized its effectiveness. This flaw was the absence of the U.S.S.R.<sup>1</sup> The U.S.S.R., on the other hand, could ill-afford to remain completely isolated from European diplomacy. The Kremlin was aware of Hitler's expansionist aims in Central and Eastern Europe. There also existed a strong opinion in the leading Soviet circles that the Western democracies planned to direct German expansionist efforts eastwards.

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<sup>1</sup>P. Renouvin, Histoire des relations internationales, deuxième partie, 1929-1945, Les crises du 20e siècle, vol. 8 (Paris: Hachette, 1958), p. 172.

During the Spring of 1939, negotiations were initiated between representatives of Great Britain, France and the U.S.S.R. with a view to concluding a defensive alliance aimed at checking Germany. The negotiations were only broken off after the announcement of the August 23 Soviet-German non-aggression pact. Britain and France hoped to exact solid guarantees from the Soviets that would dissuade Hitler from attacking Poland. The discussions were extremely difficult as the representatives from the three countries could not come to an agreement on fundamental issues such as the passage of Soviet troops through the Baltic States, Rumania and Poland. But German aims in Eastern Europe were dependent on Soviet benevolent neutrality. Thus, while negotiations between France, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. continued, the German government approached the Kremlin for a possible trade agreement which was to be followed up by a military pact.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet government welcomed the proposal for it considered that:

... a peaceful solution to the question at issue in the field of relations between Germany and Soviet Union as entirely possible for the principle of the peaceful co-existence of various political systems represents a long established principle of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> R. Sontag and S. Beddi, Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941 (Washington: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office, 1948), p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> J. Degras, ed., Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, vol. III, 1933-1941 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 357.

On August 21, 1939 the governments of the U.S.S.R. and Germany signed a trade agreement which paved the way for a non-aggression pact two days later. The Soviet government insisted that the newly concluded agreement was brought about by the desire of Germany and Soviet Russia to relieve the tension in their political and diplomatic relations and eliminate the danger of war.<sup>4</sup> A few days later, Molotov attributed the failure of the tripartite negotiations to the lack of seriousness displayed by the British and French representatives and to their unwillingness to deal with the fundamental issues. The Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs also denied any bad faith in accepting the German proposal without prior informing the governments of France and Great Britain. Finally, Molotov indicated that the negotiations with France and Great Britain might be resumed at a later date.<sup>5</sup>

The news of the Soviet-German pact came as a complete surprise to most Western democracies, particularly France and Great Britain. Chamberlain admitted to the House of Commons that:

I do not attempt to conceal from the House that the announcement came to the government as a surprise and a surprise of a very unpleasant character ( . . . ) It, to say the least, was very disturbing to learn that while these conversations were proceeding on that basis, the soviet government were secretly negotiating a pact with Germany for purposes which on the face of

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 359.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 359-61.

it, were inconsistent with the objects of their foreign policy as we had understood it.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the news of the non-aggression pact came as a complete shock to the Canadian government. O. D. Skelton, the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, criticized the British government for allowing such a development to take place. According to Skelton, the pact represented:

. . . a crushing condemnation of the handling of British foreign policy. Not only Chamberlain and his government, but even more so, Churchill and Eden and the Liberal leaders who have been egging the government, must share the responsibility for the greatest fiasco in British history.<sup>7</sup>

Skelton asserted that London was now faced with the alternative of throwing Poland and Rumania overboard or entering a war in which "she cannot save them."<sup>8</sup> On August 25, 1939, Skelton issued a memorandum to the Prime Minister in which he made certain personal observations on the impending "Polish War." Skelton was even more critical of London's foreign policy. He contended that the first casualty of the impending war between Poland and Germany had been Canada's claim to independent control over her destinies:

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<sup>6</sup> Great Britain, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, Official Report, 5th series, vol. 351 (London: HMSO), pp. 1855-66.

<sup>7</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 6, p. 1233.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

In spite of a quarter century of proclamation and achievement of equal and independent status, we have thus been relegated to the role of a Crown Colony. We are drifting into a war resulting, so far as the United Kingdom's part is concerned, from policies and diplomatic actions initiated months ago without our knowledge or expectation.<sup>9</sup>

As for the pact itself, the Canadian Minister to France, Georges Vanier, expressed the view that Hitler had committed a serious mistake by concluding the August agreement with the Soviet government for "up till now, Hitler could be said to be fighting for an ideal directed against the Communist doctrine, but now that he has put his hand in the red hand of Stalin, he has lost his soul. There is no hope for him now because no longer has he a cause to die for."<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the High Commissioner for Canada in Great Britain, Vincent Massey, remarked that the choice by the Soviets of "this hour to announce the pact is very disquieting and makes it difficult to accept their good faith."<sup>11</sup>

The non-aggression pact did not go unnoticed in the Canadian press. For most leading newspapers, the pact only served to confirm that the U.S.S.R., like Nazi Germany, could not be trusted. The Globe and Mail attacked the lack of honesty which the Soviet government displayed in the four months of negotiations with Great Britain and France and

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 1248.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 1256.

<sup>11</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 274, Massey to King, August 23, 1939.

concluded that "if there is a war, it is well to have him (Stalin) and his party placed where they belong; the enemies of the democracies."<sup>12</sup> The Ottawa Citizen pointed out that the agreement was rendered possible because both countries possessed similar types of governments "where a new concept of civilization has emerged, absolute power, and few scruples."<sup>13</sup> The Winnipeg Free Press qualified the pact as short-sighted policy for "security cannot be bought by bribes and Russia has now given a bribe to Hitler."<sup>14</sup> The Montreal Daily Star labeled the pact as a betrayal and argued that it was directed against the peace-loving democracies.<sup>15</sup> The ultra-conservative Quebec City daily l'Action Catholique denounced the U.S.S.R.'s obvious lack of good faith. The editorialist observed that the Soviet government was dishonest to the point where "one would question having them (Soviets) as collaborators."<sup>16</sup> The following day the daily interpreted the pact as the fourth partition of Poland. The paper's reaction was no doubt inspired by its distaste for communism "the greatest adversaries of the Christian civilization are now fraternizing while waiting to destroy themselves."<sup>17</sup> Le Devoir claimed that the four leading

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<sup>12</sup>Globe and Mail, Toronto (August 25, 1939).

<sup>13</sup>Ottawa Citizen (August 23, 1939).

<sup>14</sup>Winnipeg Free Press (August 25, 1939).

<sup>15</sup>Montreal Daily Star (September 8, 1939).

<sup>16</sup>L'Action Catholique, Quebec (August 23, 1939).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. (August 25, 1939).

nations of Europe had been duped by the U.S.S.R. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the pact would enable Moscow to bolshevize the universe.<sup>18</sup> Not surprisingly, the Canadian Communist Party's organ The Clarion took exception with most Canadian newspapers by supporting the Soviet-German pact. The paper asserted that Great Britain and France had forced the U.S.S.R. to reach an agreement with Nazi Germany:

Hence the announcement that a pact of non-aggression has been signed between Germany and the U.S.S.R., is understandable only in the light of British Tory conspiracies. The U.S.S.R. is still prepared to conclude a pact with Britain ( . . . ) The main obstacle to the achievement of collective guarantees to stop fascist aggression has been and is the Tory Chamberlain government.<sup>19</sup>

The Soviet-German pact thus paved the way for Germany's invasion of Poland. The impending "Polish War" placed Canada and the other Dominions in a difficult situation as Great Britain seemed prepared to enter into war to honour her commitments to Poland. Despite Canada's independent status, her destinies were still closely tied to those of 'mother' England. The final days of August 1939 were difficult ones for the King administration. Following a futile attempt at mediation in which King urged Hitler and the President of Poland to settle their countries differences by peaceful methods,<sup>20</sup> the Prime Minister announced that Parliament would

<sup>18</sup> Le Devoir, Ottawa (August 26, 1939).

<sup>19</sup> The Clarion, Toronto (August 26, 1939).

<sup>20</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 6, pp. 1246-47.

meet on September 7, 1939 to discuss Canada's course of action. Canada's position in international law during the first week of September 1939 was an anomalous one. Canada enjoyed the status of a neutral and was thus able to place orders in the United States for arms and various military equipment. However, the Canadian government proceeded to arrest and intern German nationals under the Defence of Canada Regulations despite protests from the German Consul General.<sup>21</sup> On September 10, 1939, Canada's declaration of war against the German Reich was made official.

The reality of Germany's military strength became evident as German troops easily overpowered all Polish resistance. As a result, the Soviet government began to fear that the German High Command would not stand by the Moscow agreement and withdraw to the line that had been agreed upon.<sup>22</sup> On September 17, 1939, the U.S.S.R. issued a note to the Polish Embassy in Moscow, announcing that the U.S.S.R. regarded the Polish State as having ceased to exist and that all agreements concluded between Moscow and Warsaw had become invalidated. It was also made clear that the U.S.S.R. would not stand idle while her blood brothers inhabiting Poland were left defenseless.<sup>23</sup> The same day, Soviet troops

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 1292-96. )

<sup>22</sup>Sontag and Beddi, Nazi-Soviet Relations, p. 98.

<sup>23</sup>Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945, vol. 1, 1939-1943 (London: Heineman for the General Sikorsky Historical Institute, 1961), p. 46.

crossed the Polish border in order to occupy the territory which had been allotted in the secret clause of the August non-aggression pact. The partition of Poland was finalized on September 28, 1939 as a result of the Soviet-German boundary and friendship treaty.<sup>24</sup> The Kremlin then concentrated its efforts on extending its sphere of influence in the Baltic area. Under the guise of protecting the interests of the three small Baltic states, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, the Soviet government signed assistance treaties with each country in return for access to certain strategic naval and air bases. The complete annexation of all three states would soon follow. The Soviet Union's apparent complicity with Hitlerite Germany provoked strong reactions in the Canadian press. The Globe and Mail spoke of Stalin's treachery and rejected Molotov's explanations. "The Soviet Union," it was said "entered Poland solely to obtain her territorial rights before Hitler's hordes got too far." The Toronto daily concluded that "whether Russia joins Germany or not, Stalin's paramount objective is the destruction of the British Empire."<sup>25</sup> The Toronto Telegram maintained that the invasion was not unexpected and pointed out that "Russia is of the same color as the Nazis and fascists as far as international dealings are concerned."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> Globe and Mail (September 18, 1939).

<sup>26</sup> Toronto Telegram (September 18, 1939).

Canadian indignation was to increase as a result of the Soviet-Finnish Winter War. Under the general scheme of bolstering the defensive posture of the U.S.S.R., the Kremlin approached the government of Finland with a proposal for a border readjustment which included certain territorial concessions. The proposal included the leasing of the port of Hango and the adjoining territory, the granting of certain naval bases and particularly the ceding of the isthmus of Karelia in return for certain districts reportedly double the size of those requested by the U.S.S.R.<sup>27</sup> Despite claims that the territorial realignment was only intended to preserve the U.S.S.R.'s borders and would not constitute an infringement on the Finns' sovereignty (the request it was said, was extremely modest), the proposal was coldly rejected by the Finnish government. The refusal prompted the Soviet government to take military action. After protesting a series of border incidents in which Finnish troops allegedly attacked Soviet border guards, the Kremlin announced that an invasion of Finland had become necessary. Molotov claimed that the Soviet invasion of Finland was brought about by the "hostile policy pursued by the existing Finnish government."<sup>28</sup> Soon after the commencement of the military operations, the Kremlin announced, rather surprisingly, that it recognized the government of the Democratic Republic of Finland which was, not surprisingly, headed by a well-known Finnish

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<sup>27</sup> Degras, ed., Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, pp. 382-84.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 403.

communist named Otto Kuusinen and that a non-aggression pact had been signed with the new government. It soon became apparent that the Kuusinen government had very little effective support from the Finnish proletariat and did not pose any threat to the legitimate government. The actual military campaign only demonstrated that the Finns were valiant fighters and that the Red Army was anything but the efficient machine which it had been built up to be. Fighting under difficult conditions and in the middle of winter, the Soviets suffered heavy losses. The Soviet invasion of Finland resulted in worldwide denunciations of Moscow's foreign policy. Not only was the invasion viewed as an unnecessary and unprovoked act of aggression, it seemed to confirm that Hitler and Stalin had worked out a plan to dominate Europe. These sentiments were shared by the Canadian Prime Minister; "a ghastly bit of ruthless aggression all a part, I believe, of a plot between Hitler and Stalin to dominate Europe."<sup>29</sup>

The Winter War received extensive coverage in the Canadian press. Stalin's foreign policy was repeatedly denounced by most Canadian newspapers. It was thus that the Toronto Telegram ridiculed the Soviet government's allegation that Finland was threatening the U.S.S.R. "Stalin," it was said, "outdoes even Hitler."<sup>30</sup> For the Ottawa Citizen, the

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<sup>29</sup>J. Pickersgill, The Mackenzie King Record, vol. 1, 1939-1944 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 30.

<sup>30</sup>Toronto Telegram (November 30, 1939).

invasion constituted tangible proof that Moscow's primary objective in foreign policy was to spread communism by taking advantage of the Winter War.<sup>31</sup> Canadian newspapers also took great pleasure in reporting every Soviet setback. The extent of the world's indignation can be discerned in the deliberations of the League of Nations. In early December 1939, the Canadian government was informed that the League was to review an appeal from Finland to consider alternatives to put an end to Soviet aggression.<sup>32</sup> The appeal, if approved, would result in the U.S.S.R.'s immediate expulsion from the League. It was felt that the U.S.S.R.'s expulsion could have an effect on the Soviet-German alliance. According to Hume Wrong, the Canadian representative in Geneva:

Belligerents and European neutrals will judge Finnish appeal solely by effect on course of war. Germany might welcome expulsion as encouraging the U.S.S.R. to join forces with her. On the other hand, strong League condemnation might increase great distrust in Germany of Soviet alliance.<sup>33</sup>

On December 11, 1939 King informed Wrong that the Canadian government had decided to support the motion to expel the U.S.S.R. from the League. The decision was, however, conditional on Great Britain's prior approval of the resolution.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Ottawa Citizen (December 1, 1939).

<sup>32</sup>Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 7, 1939-1941 (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), p. 1080.

<sup>33</sup>P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 282, Wrong to King, December 8, 1939.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., King to Wrong, December 11, 1939.

On December 13, 1939, the government of the U.S.S.R. was officially notified that its failure to observe its political agreements with Finland, as well as Article 15 of the Covenant of the League, had resulted in its expulsion from the League of Nations. At the same time, the Secretary-General of the League incited every member to provide Finland with such material and humanitarian assistance "as may be in its power and to refrain from any action which might weaken Finland's power of resistance."<sup>35</sup> Throughout the special session devoted to the Finnish appeal, the Soviet delegate persisted in claiming that his government was not at war with Finland. He referred to the farcical pact of assistance and friendship which his government had signed with the so-called Democratic Republic of Finland.<sup>36</sup> Not surprisingly, the Soviet News Agency Tass claimed that the majority of the league members did not agree with the decision. The Soviet agency argued that the French and Anglo imperialists had forcibly imposed their will on the assembly.<sup>37</sup> There was no doubt, however, that the league's decision had Canada's full support. The Canadian government's attitude was best summarized by Hume Wrong;

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<sup>35</sup> League of Nations Publications 1939, VIII-3, (Geneva Official Report No. A-46, December 13, 1939).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Degras, ed., Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, pp. 412-15.

There cannot be a clearer case in the history of unprovoked aggression and rarely have more treaty obligations been violated simultaneously. (. . . .) For the first time, when its political influence had declined to almost zero, the League cast out one of its members for violating the covenant. It is certain that the verdict was deserved. Whether it will have any effect on the guilty party is another question.<sup>38</sup>

As a result of the December 13, 1939 resolution, several countries undertook to provide assistance to the hard-pressed Finns. The movement to help the Finns by sending arms, ammunition and supplies found a good deal of support in Canada. The Montreal Gazette urged its readers to support the Finnish cause by sending contributions to the Finnish Consulate in Montreal.<sup>39</sup> Citing the League's resolution which invited members to assist Finland, the Canadian government granted the sum of \$100,000. to the Finnish Consul General for the purchase and transport of Canadian foodstuffs. There were, however, limits as to how far Ottawa would go to assist Finland. During the war, a number of Canadians, mostly of Finnish descent, expressed their desire to enlist in the Finnish Armed Forces. While the Canadian government could not prevent individuals from participating in the Winter War, it was not prepared officially to endorse or facilitate their participation. Hence a request from the Consul General for Finland for training facilities for Canadians planning to

<sup>38</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 282, Wrong to King, December 11, 1939.

<sup>39</sup> Montreal Gazette (December 20, 1939).

enlist for service in Finland was turned down by the Canadian government. The reasons for the refusal were outlined by the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs in a memo to the Minister of Defence:

I am inclined to the view that in this matter, the Canadian government should not go any further than the governments of France and of the United Kingdom. It is essential that the initiative should be left insofar as hostile action is concerned to those governments.<sup>40</sup>

Throughout the war, discussions were held between the French and British governments regarding the possible dispatch of an expeditionary force to Finland. It was felt that an Allied presence could possibly alleviate the dangerous situation in Scandinavia which could be created by the collapse of Finland.<sup>41</sup> In March, France and Great Britain urged Finland to appeal openly for military assistance. The plan required Sweden's and Norway's co-operation since the expeditionary force would land on the Scandinavian Peninsula. The Finns were reluctant to accept the plan fearing that Allied intervention would afford Moscow with a pretext to be more demanding in any peace settlement. Moreover, it was felt that the proposed intervention would not substantially affect the eventual outcome of the struggle. The plan was equally unappealing to the Norwegian and Swedish governments who did not want to see their countries become battlefields.

<sup>40</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 297, Skelton to King, February 20, 1940.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Macdonald to King, February 12, 1940.

In mid-March, the Finns yielded to the inevitable, ceased all military resistance and accepted the Kremlin's peace proposal. The terms of the March 12, 1940 treaty, although severe, were not as exacting as they could have been. The Soviet government was concerned not to anger further world opinion and did not wish to create any friction with Berlin. The Finns' heroic struggle was lauded by most Canadian newspapers.<sup>42</sup> Typical was the March 13, 1940 editorial which appeared in the Montreal Daily Star:

The curtain has been rung down in one of the greatest tragedies of modern times, after fighting for one hundred and five days against overwhelming odds, under circumstances unique in the history of warfare, Finland has been impelled to accept a peace treaty upon crushing terms.

The Soviet-Finnish war had thus brought France and Great Britain on the brink of entering into an armed conflict with the U.S.S.R. It also gave rise to strong anti-Soviet feelings in countries like the United States and Canada, not to mention worldwide condemnation and expulsion from the now powerless League of Nations. While the crisis in Anglo-Soviet relations appeared momentarily averted as a result of the March 12 Peace Treaty, it seemed unlikely that the U.S.S.R.'s status as a neutral would be respected by the Western democracies.

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<sup>42</sup> Ottawa Citizen (March 14, 1940); Montreal Gazette (March 13, 1940); Winnipeg Free Press (March 14, 1940); Toronto Telegram (March 13, 1940); Le Devoir (March 13, 1940).

In the early months of the European war, Great Britain, in the absence of serious fighting, relied on economic sanctions to weaken Germany and her allies. British authorities also had to devise mechanisms which would prevent neutral countries from re-exporting British goods to Germany.<sup>43</sup> To be effective, the plan required the full support of the Commonwealth governments. Canada would be asked to ensure that her trade policies remain consistent with those of the British government. There followed a need for increased consultation between Canadian and British officials regarding all major trade agreements with countries suspected or capable of re-exporting goods and supplies to Germany. In examining the feasibility of creating and implementing a viable control system over exports, the King administration had to contend with Canadian public opinion, Canada's own wartime needs, British and Allied requirements as well as the possible adverse effects which any control system would have on the Canadian economy. Trade policies with countries such as the U.S.S.R. would have to be reappraised in light of the developments in the European war. To be sure the U.S.S.R.'s proximity to and alliance with Hitlerite Germany made Canadian-Soviet trade politically unexpedient during the early months of the European war. Ottawa was aware, however, that trade proposals originating from Soviet agencies had to be handled with caution. Outright refusals might increase

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<sup>43</sup>W. Meddlecott, British Foreign Policy Since Versailles 1919-1963 (London: Methuen and Co., 1963), pp. 235-36.

the Kremlin's distrust of the Western democracies and push the U.S.S.R. deeper into the Axis camp. In September 1939, the Canadian government introduced an export licensing system which prohibited the export of certain essential metals and minerals such as nickel, lead, cobalt and asbestos except under permit from the Minister of National Revenue.<sup>44</sup> The application of the licensing system proved particularly difficult in respect of exports to the U.S.S.R. and Japan.

In October 1939, the government of the U.S.S.R. through its official trade agency, Amtorg, approached the International Nickel Company regarding the purchase of some 8,000 tons of nickel. British authorities advised against the sale fearing that the precious metal might be re-directed to Germany. The request prompted government officials to review Canadian domestic and military nickel requirements. It was reported that stocks were entirely adequate to meet the request even after allowing for domestic and military requirements of Great Britain, the Allies and friendly neutrals. It was felt that a refusal would not be justified on the non-availability of supplies. Moreover, it was feared that an outright refusal could provide the Soviet government with a pretext to lay claims to the Petsamo nickel deposits in Finland, a concern which was owned by the same International Nickel Company.<sup>45</sup> British officials realized that while it

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<sup>44</sup> Canada Gazette (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1939), vol. 73, pp. 1177-78.

<sup>45</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8 (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1976), p. 1088.

was preferable to limit supplies to the U.S.S.R. and Japan to as little as possible, it was difficult to halt all shipping to these countries. They, therefore, suggested that the International Nickel Company limit its supplies to 500 tons a month rather than make any large shipments. The company was also asked to obtain assurances from both countries that the nickel supplies would be used solely for domestic consumption.<sup>46</sup> The policy was discarded following the U.S.S.R.'s invasion of Finland. The invasion certainly had an immediate effect on Canadian-Soviet trade.

In December 1939, a Montreal firm called Sincennes and McNaughton Ltd., announced that it was selling two tugs to the Soviet government. The two vessels in question, the "Bonsecour" and the "Bon Voyage," were reported to be unsuitable for any war purpose. The sale caused some concern in the House of Commons, as the Member of Parliament from Broadview, T. Church, requested copies of the pertinent documentation related to the sale.<sup>47</sup> In early December, the influential Toronto Globe and Mail issued an editorial denouncing the sale of the two vessels to the U.S.S.R. The Toronto daily argued that the stipulation prohibiting the use of the vessels for any military purpose "is not more value a stipulation than bombing and pursuit planes shipped to

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 1089.

<sup>47</sup> Canada, House of Commons Debates, 1940, vol I, p. 116, May 22.

Germany must not be used for military purposes."<sup>48</sup> Ten days later the Globe and Mail asked for the recalling of the tugs which were now en route to Vladivostok:

Inasmuch as Britain is sending aid to Finland in the form of fighting planes, it is anomalous, to say the least, that Canada should forward the sinister scheme to make Vladivostok a year around naval base.<sup>49</sup>

The issue was brought to the attention of the Prime Minister by A. D. P. Heeney. King was informed that the vessels were not ice-breakers, but rather harbour tugs. It was pointed out that the deal was finalized one month prior to the outbreak of the war after full advertisement and consultation with the Department of External Affairs. Heeney also observed that at the time of the sale, the British government was engaged in trade negotiations with the U.S.S.R. and that there was no reason of policy against the transaction. Finally, it was noted that the Canadian government held a bond to secure payment in the event that war broke out between Canada and the U.S.S.R.<sup>50</sup> The controversy surrounding the sale of the two harbour tugs is significant in that it reflected the Canadian public's increasing opposition towards Canadian-Soviet trade and in particular the exporting of materials having military applications.

<sup>48</sup> Globe and Mail (December 5, 1939).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. (December 15, 1939).

<sup>50</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J4, vol. 335, Heeney to King, January 22, 1940.

In January 1940, the developments in Europe forced the Canadian government to reconsider its licensing system. It was evident that the provisions of the September Order-in-Council were inadequate. Commodities such as wheat and cereal grains were not covered by the export licensing system.<sup>51</sup> The only restrictions on the export of wheat from Canada to any country were those implicit in the general provisions of the Trading with the Enemy Regulations. However, before introducing any amendments to the export control system, Ottawa undertook to determine London's policy and position regarding trade with the U.S.S.R.<sup>52</sup> The Canadian government was informed that British authorities had halted the granting of licensing covering the export of raw materials to the U.S.S.R. Certain licenses had been granted for machinery and manufactured goods purchased under pre-war credits although the articles so ordered had been commandeered much to the annoyance of the Soviet government. In addition, restrictions had been imposed on goods not requiring export permits despite the fact that the previously non-restricted goods were unlikely to be of any value to the U.S.S.R.<sup>53</sup> Similar consultations were held with other Commonwealth governments.<sup>54</sup> By late January 1940, Ottawa's concern over

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<sup>51</sup>P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J4, vol. 292, King to Massey, January 21, 1940.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., January 19, 1940.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., Massey to King, January 23, 1940.

<sup>54</sup>P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 89, King to Burchell, January 20, 1940.

wheat exports took on new proportions as it was revealed that large quantities of wheat had been sold by the Canadian Wheat Board to exporters in Vancouver for shipment to Vladivostok.<sup>55</sup> Officials from the Canadian Wheat Board insisted that wheat exports to the Far Eastern provinces of the Soviet Union had been a normal feature of the grain trade for a number of years. It appeared that such purchases were rendered necessary in view of the high costs of transporting wheat across Siberia.<sup>56</sup> In an attempt to resolve the problem, N. A. Robertson of the Department of External Affairs prepared a memorandum for the Prime Minister's attention in which he offered two basic alternatives which could be applied to control and restrict wheat sales to the U.S.S.R. The first alternative called for the introduction of a formal embargo on exports to the U.S.S.R. The second required the application of export permits on all exports to European neutrals including countries contiguous to Germany. Robertson expressed his preference for the second alternative as "thus far no other country has resorted to a formal embargo."<sup>57</sup> In addition, it was feared that the first alternative would accelerate the U.S.S.R.'s rapprochement with Germany and Japan. Robertson's memorandum was forwarded to the Cabinet War Committee for consideration. The committee opted for the second alternative as outlined by Robertson

<sup>55</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J4, vol. 335, Heeney to King, January 20, 1940.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8, pp. 1092-93.

and decided to recommend to the Cabinet, "that immediate steps be taken to prevent the export of this and other wheat to the U.S.S.R. by the method of requiring export permits for shipments to European neutrals contiguous to belligerents."<sup>58</sup> The recommendation was immediately approved by the Cabinet and the following day, an Order-in-Council was enacted prohibiting the export of any goods to any neutral countries contiguous to territories under enemy occupation or control without prior approval from the Minister of National Revenue in the form of an export permit.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the list of commodities covered by the September 20th Order-in-Council was amended to include additional metals and minerals.<sup>60</sup> In announcing the introduction of the new export regulations to the High Commissioner for Canada in Great Britain, King emphasized that his government would not grant any permits for the export of wheat to the U.S.S.R.<sup>61</sup>

The introduction of the January Order-in-Council meant that the volume of Canadian exports to the U.S.S.R. would be reduced substantially. Ottawa's decision was welcomed by the Canadian press. Many Canadian newspapers had been calling for an embargo on Canadian exports to the U.S.S.R. as a retaliatory measure to the latter's unprovoked war against

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 1093-94.

<sup>59</sup> Canada Gazette, vol. 73, p. 2393.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8, p. 1094.

Finland. Moreover, the maintenance of trade relations with the U.S.S.R. was viewed as being totally inconsistent with the policy of providing arms and supplies to Finland.<sup>62</sup> The January 20 editorial of the Globe and Mail is quite indicative of the position adopted by most Canadian newspapers during the Soviet-Finnish war:

The exportation of Canadian wheat to Russia to assist the Soviet Republic to wage war on little Finland is every whit as bad as the sending of Canadian bombing planes to the Red aggressor to facilitate the unprovoked bombing of the defenceless Finns. The Canadian government should impose an embargo against the export of Canadian wheat and everything else to the Soviet Republic.

In addition to restricting exports to enemy countries and their allies, there existed another weapon in the British arsenal of economic warfare. This weapon was the naval blockade. The application of this scheme involved the determination of contraband, the creation of contraband control bases and the interception of ships suspected of carrying contraband cargoes. Contraband control centres were established by the British government in the Mediterranean and British waters. A contraband control centre was subsequently set up on Canada's East coast following long and difficult negotiations between Ottawa and London.<sup>63</sup> The Canadian government

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<sup>62</sup> Winnipeg Free Press (January 25, 1940); Le Devoir (January 24, 1940); L'Action Catholique (January 25, 1940); Montreal Daily Star (January 23, 1940); Toronto Telegram (January 20, 1940).

<sup>63</sup> J. Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Appeasement and Rearmament (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), pp. 173-74.

was far from enthusiastic about the plan. Extensive and forceful application of the naval blockade would be resented by friendly neutrals. In March 1940, the Canadian government was asked to intercept a Soviet vessel suspected of carrying a contraband cargo. Ottawa declined the request fearing that the interception of the Soviet vessel could be used by the U.S.S.R. as a pretext for retaliatory action, in concert with Japan, against Canada's west coast. Another consideration in the refusal was no doubt Canada's limited naval resources. Ottawa declined a second request in February 1941 for essentially the same reasons.<sup>64</sup>

Canada's refusal to intercept the Soviet vessels did not, however, lessen her resolve to exercise strict controls over her exports to the U.S.S.R. As expected, the export licensing system was having the desired effect. In a dispatch dated April 15, 1940, King informed the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs that since the inception of the export permit system, the only permits granted for exports to the U.S.S.R. "have been two or three bundles of old clothes for necessitous relatives of immigrants from Russia."<sup>65</sup> There remained the question of how long Ottawa would maintain its "undeclared embargo" on exports to the U.S.S.R. In July 1940, the Canadian Wheat Board received two enquiries from Amtorg for possible wheat shipments from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

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<sup>64</sup>Pickersgill, The Mackenzie King Record, pp. 151-52; P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 703, February 8, 1941.

<sup>65</sup>P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 89, King to Macdonald, April 15, 1940.

Several factors had changed since the introduction of the export licensing system, namely that; relations between Finland and the U.S.S.R. had been re-established and the American government was selling vast quantities of wheat to Amtorg. At the same time, Canada was faced with a surplus of wheat and very little storage capacity. In addition, the developments in Europe and in the Pacific had necessitated the maintenance of at least nominally friendly relations with the U.S.S.R.<sup>66</sup> But, since British authorities advised against the sale,<sup>67</sup> the transaction never materialized.

The maintenance of the "undeclared embargo" on exports to the U.S.S.R. was becoming increasingly difficult as relations between the Allies and the U.S.S.R. showed signs of improvement. In August 1940, the American government renewed a commercial agreement with the U.S.S.R. which had been in effect since 1937. The treaty involved approximately 40 million dollars of American exports and was a continuation of the pre-war agreement save for the provision that the American government reserved to itself the right to impose restrictions on certain goods. The agreement was effective until August 1941.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, Great Britain was negotiating a barter deal with the U.S.S.R. whereby the latter would provide Great Britain with flax, hemp, lubrication

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<sup>66</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8, pp. 1094-95.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 1096.

<sup>68</sup> P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 703, August 7, 1940.

oil and other materials in return for rubber, tin and jute. The Canadian government was asked if it wished to become a party to the proposed deal.<sup>69</sup> The request was considered by the appropriate officials in the Department of External Affairs. It appeared that there were very few Soviet commodities for which Canada stood in direct need. The Canadian government seemed content to leave the initiative as far as any major policy decision to the British government, according to N. A. Robertson:

If trade and political relations were put on a satisfactory footing as a result from the negotiations now proceeding, Canada would be prepared to permit the sale of certain products for which the export to the U.S.S.R. (permits) were now refused.<sup>70</sup>

This statement was repeated by King in a dispatch addressed to the Dominion Secretary on November 1, 1940.<sup>71</sup> Throughout the summer of 1940, the Canadian government continued to refuse export permits for wheat sales to the U.S.S.R. despite signs of a rapprochement between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain. In September 1940, an application for an export permit for 100,000 tons of wheat to Vladivostok was submitted by a Mr. G. Serkau of Montreal to the Department of National Revenue.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8, pp. 1096-97.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 1097.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 1098.

<sup>72</sup> Serkau was a lawyer formerly from Winnipeg who had visited Moscow and had tried to persuade Ottawa in 1930 to approve a trade agreement which involved the export of Canadian cattle to the U.S.S.R. The deal was rejected by Ottawa, but apparently Serkau maintained his contacts with the Soviet Trade Agency (Amtorg).

Serkau wanted the Canadian government to reconsider its trade policy with the U.S.S.R.<sup>73</sup> In October 1940, a similar request was directed to the Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board by the Vice-President of the Continental Grain Company. The latter emphasized that:

We believe that we have some signs of rapprochement between the British and Russian governments and if the tendency should actually be in this way, a sale of Canadian wheat to the Russians might be politically expedient.<sup>74</sup>

Both requests were rejected by the Canadian government. Ottawa seemed equally uninterested in increasing the volume of imports from the U.S.S.R. An October enquiry from an official of the London Chamber of Commerce regarding Canada's position on Soviet imports was given little follow-up action. The official was notified that because there was no Soviet trade representative in Canada, the inquiry could not be referred to any Soviet trade agency.<sup>75</sup>

It is, therefore, not surprising that figures on Canadian-Soviet trade for the calendar year 1940 were insignificant. Exports were limited to \$541. while imports amounted to \$98,779.<sup>76</sup> There appeared no indication, at least during the early months of 1941, that Ottawa would

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<sup>73</sup>P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 182, Wilgress to McKinnon, September 20, 1940.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., October 4, 1940.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., Wilgress to Whiteman, October 16, 1940.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., "Canada's Trade with Russia."

relinquish its ban on Canadian exports to the U.S.S.R. In February, the regulations on the control of exports were revised to include additional commodities. In March, an application for an export permit submitted by the Lang Tanning Co. of Kitchener Ontario involving the sale of 500,000 pounds of sole leather for eventual shipment to the U.S.S.R. was rejected by the Department of National Revenue.<sup>77</sup> Canada's contribution to Britain's economic blockade against Germany and her allies was certainly beyond reproach. The King administration had sacrificed Canadian trade interests for the success of the plan.

In the absence of any diplomatic representation between Canada and the U.S.S.R., relations between the two countries continued to be chiefly commercial. There is no doubt that the Kremlin's decision to sign a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany had an adverse effect on Canadian-Soviet trade. Soviet aggression in Europe during the early months of the war only made matters worse. When faced with the possibility that the Soviet Union might become a full-fledged member of the Axis camp, Ottawa introduced measures to control exports destined for Soviet territory. Through subsequent legislation and by participating in Britain's economic blockade against Germany and her allies, the Canadian government virtually halted all trade with the Soviet Union. Along with the deterioration in Canadian-Soviet trade

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Wilgress to Lang, February 28, 1941 - March 1, 1941.

relations, the period witnessed a renewal of anti-Soviet feelings in Canada. Such feelings were particularly evident in the Canadian press. At the same time, Canadian authorities adopted measures to curtail the activities of communist sympathizers in Canada. Communist publications like The Clarion were banned in 1939 because of their subversive content. In June 1940, the federal government outlawed both pro-Nazi and pro-communist organizations and proceeded to arrest and intern leaders of the Communist Party of Canada under the Defence of Canada Regulations.<sup>78</sup>

Throughout the period of the Nazi-Soviet alliance, the Canadian government continued to rely heavily on Great Britain for guidance in formulating its foreign policies. When dealing with the Soviet Union, Ottawa chose to leave the initiative, as far as major policy decisions were concerned, to British authorities. Mackenzie King and his government preferred to concentrate on domestic issues and on Canada's war effort.

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<sup>78</sup> I. Avakumovic, The Communist Party of Canada, A History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975) pp. 142-143.

## CHAPTER II

### THE U.S.S.R. AS AN ALLY

Despite the efforts undertaken by the British government, Anglo-Soviet relations showed little signs of improvement during the early months of 1941. The Kremlin was still very suspicious of Britain and was generally unresponsive to British overtures for economic or political agreements. The U.S.S.R. was not prepared to jeopardize her relationship with Germany by concluding any form of agreement with Great Britain. As in 1939, Britain had very little to offer Soviet Russia for a possible breach with Germany. However, rumours began circulating in diplomatic circles that the period of peaceful co-existence between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia was coming to an end. Hitler's ever-increasing territorial ambitions in Central and Eastern Europe were viewed with increasing alarm in Moscow. In February 1941, Hitler ordered the occupation of Bulgaria, thereby extending Germany's sphere of influence closer to the Soviet Union's. In March, Molotov signified his government's displeasure in a memorandum to Germany's ambassador in Moscow, in the following manner: (

It is regrettable that despite the warning given by the Soviet Government in the demarche of 25 November 1940, the government of the German Reich deemed it

possible to take the course of violating the security interests of the U.S.S.R. and has decided to occupy Bulgaria militarily.<sup>1</sup>

Tension between the U.S.S.R. and Germany increased due to their conflicting interests in the Balkans. Having long considered the Balkans within its sphere of influence, the Kremlin acted in defiance of Germany by courting the government of Yugoslavia. Despite this, the government of Yugoslavia decided to follow the example of Bulgaria by declaring its adherence to the Tripartite Pact in March 1941. Further complications arose when the Yugoslav government was overthrown by a group of Serbian officers under the nominal rule of King Peter. The Soviet government responded by adopting a policy of extreme friendliness toward Yugoslavia and, on April 5, 1941, signed a treaty of friendship and non-aggression with Yugoslavia. The U.S.S.R. pledged, among other things, to refrain from attacking Yugoslavia and to respect the latter's independence and sovereignty.<sup>2</sup> The following day, however, German troops invaded Yugoslavia to ensure German supremacy in the area.

Reports of unusually heavy German troop movements in Eastern Europe became more and more frequent in May and June. Warnings emanating from British and American officials of an impending German attack on the Soviet Union were dispelled as malicious attempts aimed at undermining Soviet-German relations.

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<sup>1</sup> Degras, ed., Soviet Documents on International Affairs, p. 483.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 484-85.

The Soviet government was able, however, to score one diplomatic triumph during this period which was to be of immense value during the crucial days of the Soviet-German war. This was the April 13 Pact of Neutrality with Japan. By June 1941, all indications pointed to a massive German invasion of Soviet Russia. On June 14, Izvestia published the now famous communiqué in which the Kremlin denounced the absurd rumours of reported disagreements between Moscow and Berlin. The communiqué reaffirmed the Kremlin's desire to pursue a policy of co-existence with Hitlerite Germany.<sup>3</sup> Several explanations have been advanced as to why Stalin would not publicly recognize the seriousness of the situation. Stalin, realizing the unpreparedness of his military forces, was perhaps trying to gain time to better prepare the defences of the U.S.S.R. Perhaps still, Stalin considered it possible to avoid a conflict with Germany altogether by making concessions to Hitler. In any event, the decision did not rest in Stalin's hands. On June 21, 1941, the Soviet government lodged an official protest against violations by German aircraft on Soviet territory. The same night German troops invaded the Soviet Union; Operation Barbarossa had begun in earnest.

The unpleasant task of announcing the invasion to the people of the U.S.S.R. was given to Molotov. The Commissar for Foreign Affairs qualified the attack as a "perfidy unparalleled in the history of civilized nations." Molotov

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 489.

emphasized that the invasion was perpetrated despite the fact that a treaty of non-aggression existed between the U.S.S.R. and Germany. He insisted that the Soviet government had most, "conscientiously abided by all the provisions of the treaty."<sup>4</sup> Finally, Molotov differentiated the German people from the bloodthirsty clique of Germany's fascist rulers, "who have enslaved the French, Czechs, Poles and Serbs, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Greece, and other nations."<sup>5</sup> It was only twelve days later that Stalin officially addressed the people of the U.S.S.R. After proclaiming the war with Germany a National War in defence of the Fatherland, he defended his government's decision to sign the non-aggression pact with Germany by claiming that the agreement had given the U.S.S.R. a one and one-half year period of peace to prepare her forces to repel Fascist Germany.<sup>6</sup>

As a result of the invasion, Allied governments were forced to reappraise and reassess their political and economic relations with the U.S.S.R. Although anti-Soviet sentiments were very strong in most Western capitals, the fortunes of war dictated that some form of agreement would have to be reached with the U.S.S.R. The British government wasted little time in declaring its policy with respect to the Soviet-German war. Winston Churchill issued a statement on the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 490-91.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 491.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 491-93.

evening of June 22, in which he reaffirmed his government's pledge to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi régime. Churchill stated that "any man or state who fights against Nazidom will have our aid."<sup>7</sup> The British Prime Minister made the following declaration in respect to the U.S.S.R.:

It follows therefore, that we shall give whatever help we can to Russia and to the Russian people. We shall appeal to all our friends and allies in every part of the world to take the same course and pursue it as we shall, faithfully and steadfastly to the end.<sup>8</sup>

Ottawa was not consulted on this important issue. The Dominion Secretary explained that in view of the urgency involved, the British government could not consult in advance with the Dominion governments. Not surprisingly, it was added that, "His Majesty's Government should warmly welcome any public statement which you feel able to make in support of it."<sup>9</sup> The Canadian government's response could not have been more favourable; King sent the following reply:

I wholly agree with the decision taken by the United Kingdom Government with regard to the policy to be followed in relation to the war between Russia and Germany, and fully understand your inability in the circumstances to communicate with other Empire Governments before reaching it.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8, pp. 1099-1100.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

There appeared to exist a genuine similarity in the attitudes adopted by Ottawa and London regarding the Soviet-German war. On June 22, 1941, Mackenzie King issued a statement on the Soviet-German war, the content of which was almost identical to the speech pronounced by his British counterpart. The Canadian Prime Minister referred to the cynicism displayed by the German government and asserted that the attack merely represented "a new phase of the attack on Britain and the Democracies."<sup>11</sup> King reminded the people of Canada that Hitler's invasion was not conceived as an attempt to eliminate the threat of communism from Europe, but merely represented another step in Hitler's march toward world conquest. As for the Soviet Union, King stated that:

Whatever one's opinion may be about the philosophy of the Russian Revolution, however strongly some of Russia's international activities may be condemned, the plain fact today is that, as Russia fights Germany, it is not Russia which is a threat to freedom and peace ( . . . ) Everyone who engages with our enemy, advances our cause.<sup>12</sup>

The American government's immediate reaction to the invasion was rather non-committal. Prior to the invasion, consideration was given to the policy to be pursued by Washington vis-a-vis the U.S.S.R. during the early stages of the conflict. In a memorandum prepared by the Division of European Affairs of the State Department, it was suggested

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<sup>11</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 316, King to MacDonald, June 23, 1941.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

that any initiative regarding a possible American-Soviet rapprochement should rest with the government of the U.S.S.R. Moreover, the State Department felt that any assistance, military or otherwise, offered to the U.S.S.R., should not interfere with the American aid program to Great Britain and other victims of aggression. It was also stated that "the fact that the Soviet Union is fighting Germany does not mean that it is defending, struggling for, or adhering to the principles in international relations which we are supporting."<sup>13</sup> The memorandum concluded by urging the government to refrain from making any commitments or promises concerning its future policy toward the U.S.S.R.<sup>14</sup> This general policy is reflected in a statement issued by Sumner Welles, the Acting Secretary of State, following the news of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. Welles denounced the lack of honour and good faith displayed by the German government and observed that the aims of the leaders of Germany amounted to nothing less than world domination. Welles undertook to repeat his government's attitude towards communism:

To the people of the U.S., this and other principles and doctrines of communistic dictatorship are as intolerable and as alien to their own beliefs, as are the principles and doctrines of Nazi dictatorship. Neither kind of imposed overlordship can have, or will

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<sup>13</sup> United States, Foreign Relations of the United States; Diplomatic Papers, 1941, The Soviet Union (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1958), p. 766.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 767.

have, any support or any sway in the circle of life, or in the system of government, of the American people.<sup>15</sup>

However, Welles recognized the seriousness of the threat posed by Germany's most recent act of aggression:

In the opinion of this government, consequently, any defences against Hitlerism, any rallying forces opposing Hitlerism, from whatever sources these forces may spring, will hasten the eventual downfall of the present German leaders, and will therefore be of benefit to our own defense and security. Hitler's armies are really the chief danger of the Americas.<sup>16</sup>

Significantly, it was reported that the American government was surprised at the undiluted cheerfulness with which Ottawa had greeted the Soviet Union's entry into the war. This opinion was expressed by a high official of the administration in Washington. The official envisioned several difficulties in stabilizing relations with the U.S.S.R. because of the possibility of a Soviet vassal government being established as a result of a German victory. He cited other problem areas notably in respect to the independence of the Baltic states, Soviet aims in Asia, etc. It was his opinion that the Soviets should be provided with arms, but should not be given any political commitments. He believed that until the situation became clearer "the less said about Russia by public men in the Anglo-American countries, the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 778.

better."<sup>17</sup> Finally, he questioned the military advantages to be gained by Soviet Russia's entry into the war and expressed his hope to see the Soviet government overthrown by the military.<sup>18</sup> He repeated these opinions a few days later to Canada's Assistant Under Secretary of State for External Affairs.<sup>19</sup> Keenleyside sought to appease his fears by pointing out that both Churchill and King as well as other Allied leaders, "had prefaced their acceptance of collaboration with Soviet Russia by repeated statements of their dislike of communism."<sup>20</sup>

The announcement of Germany's invasion of the U.S.S.R. and Churchill's pledge to provide assistance to the U.S.S.R. provoked mixed reactions in the Canadian press. According to the Globe and Mail, the conflict between Germany and Soviet Russia only served to demonstrate the basic weakness of the totalitarian state of the U.S.S.R., "This form of government has proved to be a fiasco producing nothing but violence and was ( . . . ) a fraud and an impertinence." However, the Toronto daily made a distinction between the people of Russia and the "power hungry zealots in Moscow." The editors concluded by echoing Churchill's pledge that "whoever stands against the Prince of Evil is our friend and

<sup>17</sup>Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8, p. 1103.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 1103-4.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

deserves our help."<sup>21</sup> The following day the same Globe and Mail issued an editorial strongly supporting the position taken by Churchill and King with respect to the Soviet Union. The editors remarked that "this is not a time for boggling about their ideology. "The U.S.S.R.," it was said, "could play a very useful role in wearing down the enemy." There followed a review of the military implications arising out of the Soviet Union's entry into the war which led to the following statement: "in our view there is great justification for regarding Russia as a potentially useful ally and giving her every possible help and encouragement."<sup>22</sup>

The Toronto Telegram had very little sympathy for the plight of the Soviet Union. According to the Telegram, the war ended Stalin's hope of profiting on peace and safety by the wasteful strife of other nations "all of whom he has considered enemies." It observed that Churchill's pledge to assist the U.S.S.R. was not to be interpreted as a rapprochement with Red principles.<sup>23</sup> The following day, the Telegram argued that the Soviet government could not be trusted:

. . . the fact is the Soviet Government is a gangster government of the same stripe as the Nazi Government, it has as the Toronto Star says no more sense of honour than a rattlesnake, and maybe it is fighting our enemy but it is no more to be trusted than that enemy. A

<sup>21</sup> Globe and Mail (June 23, 1941).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid (June 24, 1941).

<sup>23</sup> Toronto Telegram (June 23, 1941).

gangster does not become a good citizen by virtue of the fact that another gangster attacks him.<sup>24</sup>

The Ottawa Citizen called for all civilized people to reflect intelligence individually and collectively "for in this process of salvaging whatever there is of civilization, nations as far apart as capitalist United States and Socialist Soviet Russia have to work together."<sup>25</sup> The Montreal Daily Star insisted that the Soviet Union would not expect assistance either in men, munitions, or other necessities of war from Great Britain. It also wondered if the Soviet Union could successfully repel the German invaders.<sup>26</sup> The news of the invasion produced mixed reactions in the Winnipeg Free Press. On one hand the paper stated "the accretion of strength to the anti-Hitler camp is welcomed, be it great or small, no matter whence it came.". At the same time, it hoped that both "detestable" régimes destroy each other.<sup>27</sup> Quebec City's L'Action Catholique welcomed the news of the Soviet Union's entry into the conflict. However, it was quick to point out that any support offered to the Soviets would not constitute an endorsement of communist doctrines. Like the Winnipeg Free Press, it expressed its pleasure in witnessing the mutual destruction of the two enemies of humanity and

<sup>24</sup> Ibid (June 24, 1941).

<sup>25</sup> Ottawa Citizen (June 23, 1941).

<sup>26</sup> Montreal Daily Star (June 23, 1941).

<sup>27</sup> Winnipeg Free Press (June 23, 1941).

religion.<sup>28</sup> It was the opinion of the newspaper Le Soleil that the interests of Great Britain and the democracies would be served by Soviet Russia's entrance into the conflict as the great struggle between the dictatorships would undoubtedly take its toll on Germany's armed forces. The paper maintained that if Germany were to be triumphant, it would improve her chances of securing a final victory in Europe, Asia and in Africa.<sup>29</sup> Speaking on the Communist Party of Canada, Le Soleil supported Ottawa's decision to ban the left-wing political group. Finally, the editors noted that the Canadian government, "will certainly consent to assist the Red Army by sending wheat or arms, however, it will never in any way favour or support communist principles or ideologies."<sup>30</sup>

Consideration was given in Ottawa to some of the concerns expressed by the American government regarding the possible consequences of a German victory in the U.S.S.R. In a memorandum dated June 24, 1941, Escot Reid reviewed the implications of a possible German takeover of the Ukrainian Republic. It was his opinion that if successful, Germany would attempt to establish a Vichy-type of government in the rest of the U.S.S.R. and thus gain control over the entire country. Reid also emphasized the importance of providing assistance to the Soviet Union. He held that the

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<sup>28</sup> L'Action Catholique (June 27, 1941).

<sup>29</sup> Le Soleil (June 23, 1941).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid (June 25, 1941).

Allies had much to gain by keeping the U.S.S.R. in the struggle against Germany:

If Russia can be kept in the war we can make Germany's Eastern Front a constant drain on her men and resources. In a year or two, we could launch an offensive against Germany from Russia using Russia's vast armies equipped with the armaments of the United States.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, discussions between the governments of Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. regarding a declaration of mutual assistance and a pledge of mutual consultation were nearing completion. Both countries pledged, without any precision as to quantity and quality, to help each other and agreed to refrain from concluding separate peace treaties. The proposed text, as well as an explanatory note, were forwarded to King by the Dominion Secretary for comment on July 10, 1941.<sup>32</sup> King replied the same day stating that; "Canadian Government agree to United Kingdom Government proceeding with proposed declaration to be signed on behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the U.S.S.R."<sup>33</sup> The pact was signed in Moscow on July 12, 1941. The Toronto Telegram hailed it as a logical sequel to Winston Churchill's declaration. The Toronto daily pointed out, however, that the pact did not make Britain and Soviet Russia

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<sup>31</sup>Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8, pp. 1102-3.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 1105.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 1106.

allies, but merely associates or co-belligerents. The Telegram's opinion of the Soviet leaders did not change, "Stalin and Molotov are not more trustworthy than they were when they consummated their colossal treachery in 1939."<sup>34</sup> Quebec City's L'Action Catholique, while recognizing that the pact was difficult to avoid, asserted that it posed a definite threat of Bolshevik contamination.<sup>35</sup> A few days later, it predicted that a struggle between communism and God was inevitable.<sup>36</sup>

In the first weeks of the Soviet-German war, a complete German victory appeared inevitable. Entire Soviet armies were captured and German troops continued to make great advances into Soviet territory. The situation was, at best, desperate. This was not a time for arguing about ideological or political differences. The U.S.S.R. needed help. The Kremlin had no choice but to set aside its traditional hostility toward the Western democracies and request assistance from the Allied camp.

Less than a month after Hitler's attack on Soviet Russia, a Canadian journalist in Washington was informally told by the Soviet Ambassador to the United States that "steps ought to be taken for some form of direct Soviet

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<sup>34</sup>Toronto Telegram (July 15, 1941).

<sup>35</sup>L'Action Catholique (July 14, 1941).

<sup>36</sup>Ibid (July 16, 1941).

representation in Canada."<sup>37</sup> The Soviet Ambassador, while emphasizing that the suggestion was purely personal, referred to the inconvenience of using the Soviet Embassy in London and the Foreign Office as the official channel of communication from Moscow to Ottawa.<sup>38</sup> There were, however, several issues both of a domestic and international nature which had to be resolved before Canada and the U.S.S.R. could exchange representatives. It was one thing to issue general statements in support of the Soviet war effort. Exchanging diplomatic representatives with a country which had been an undeclared enemy for almost two years was altogether different. No doubt there still existed considerable hostility in Canada toward the Soviet régime and everything it stood for. Canadians could not easily forget the August 1939 non-aggression pact nor could they subscribe to Stalin's vacillatory foreign policy. There also existed some well-founded doubt about the Kremlin's ability to rally the people of the U.S.S.R. to repel the German invader. Finally, it remained to be seen whether an exchange of diplomatic representatives was really necessary. Yet, few Canadians could argue that there did not exist a vital Canadian interest in keeping the U.S.S.R. in the war against Germany.<sup>39</sup> Ottawa would certainly not entertain dispatching an expeditionary force to assist

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<sup>37</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 7, p. 94.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., vol. 8, p. 1106.

the Red Army, but Canadian arms and supplies could have a salutary effect on the Soviet war effort. Canadian trade policies toward the U.S.S.R. had to be completely revised. The practice of utilizing export licences to restrict the exportation of essential commodities to the U.S.S.R. had now become outdated in light of Churchill's pledge of assistance to Soviet Russia. But, several issues had to be resolved before Canada could begin shipping supplies to the Soviet Union. In June 1941, there existed only two viable Maritime routes which could be used to supply Soviet Russia with war material; Vladivostok and the Persian Gulf. The first was threatened by possible developments in relation to Japan while the second was badly congested. There was also a need for complete coordination and consultation between Allied governments as to the volume and nature of supplies which could be spared for the Soviet war effort.

The reversal in Canadian trade policies toward the U.S.S.R. did not occur abruptly. Ottawa avoided making any definite commitments to the Soviet government during the uncertain months of June and July 1941. The King administration preferred to await the results of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations. In any event, there was no direct trade representation between Canada and the U.S.S.R. Negotiations for the provision of supplies had to be handled through the appropriate British government agencies in London. On June 30, 1941, the Canadian Trade Commissioner in New York received an enquiry from a Vancouver exporter requesting the

Canadian government's policy regarding trade offers originating from the Soviet trading corporation in New York (Amtorg). Douglas Cole directed the enquiry to the Director of Commercial Intelligence Service in Ottawa.<sup>40</sup> Payne's reply was as follows;

. . . you should be careful to confine yourself to specific requests received from Canadian exporters and make it clear to the AMTORG Trading Corporation that you are simply acting on behalf of Canadian firms and not soliciting business with Soviet Russia on behalf of the government.<sup>41</sup>

On July 24, 1941, Amtorg requested that the Canadian government issue an export permit which would enable it to purchase 174,625 pounds of Nichrome ribbon and wire from the Brian Harris Company. The permit was required because of the composition of the alloy which was fifty percent nickel, a substance which could not be sold without an export permit.<sup>42</sup> After much consultation between officials of the Department of Trade and Commerce, the Department of Munitions and Supply and the Canadian Trade Commission, Canadian authorities decided against the sale. The explanation given for the refusal is quite indicative of Canada's cautious trade policy during the Summer of 1941;

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<sup>40</sup>P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 182, Cole to Payne, June 30, 1941.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., Payne to Cole, July 3, 1941.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., vol. 84, Rostarchuk to Cole, July 25, 1941.

I do not believe we would be justified in exporting this amount of nickel to the United States for manufacture there. If the material is to be manufactured in the U.S., then the nickel should be supplied from there unless such release has been approved, and in fact requested by the State Departments of the United States and the United Kingdom. In my opinion, the whole question of supplying the heavy quantities of metals which the Russians will be asking for is a matter of policy to be decided by the United States and the United Kingdom.<sup>43</sup>

In early August, the Canadian government was asked to submit all export permits not sponsored by the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation to the British government. In addition, London wanted details on all export permits granted by the Canadian government.<sup>44</sup> Ottawa not only provided all the requested information, it indicated its complete willingness to cooperate with the British government.<sup>45</sup> Thus in the early months of the Soviet-German war, Canadian shipments to the U.S.S.R. were held to a minimum. First consideration after Canada's own domestic needs were met was to ensure that Great Britain's requirements in metals, minerals and food-stuffs were adequately looked after. As far as the Soviet Union was concerned, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce explained that "It is understood that owing to the difficulties of transportation, Russian requirements will be largely confined to war materials and machine tools."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., vol. 28, Bateman to Wilgress, July 28, 1941.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., MacDonald to King, August 1, 1941.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., King to MacDonald, August 6, 1941.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., vol. 89, Wilgress to Cole, August 13, 1941.

Gradually, the Canadian government became more receptive to the idea of providing supplies to its ally. Developments on the Eastern Front together with the improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations, had certainly influenced Canadian policies. It may be recalled that the British government had entered into an agreement with the Soviet government whereby the latter received a ten million pound loan for the provision of supplies.<sup>47</sup> On October 4, Prime Minister King informed British authorities that his government was now seriously considering providing help to the U.S.S.R. King stated that Canada was prepared to dispatch medical supplies to the U.S.S.R. through the medium of the International Red Cross.<sup>48</sup> It was no coincidence that approximately one week later, the British government placed an order for 40,000 bushels of wheat for the Soviet Union through the Ministry of Food.<sup>49</sup> On October 23, the Canadian government was asked to provide the Soviets with an ice-breaker in order that the port of Archangel could be kept open throughout the year. The British government suggested that the "N. B. Mclean" be made available for the winter months, but indicated that any similar vessel, "would be most

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., MacDonald to King, August 19, 1941.

<sup>48</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 317, King to MacDonald, October 4, 1941.

<sup>49</sup> P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 182, MacDonald to King, October 11, 1941.

welcome."<sup>50</sup> It was not without considerable reluctance that Ottawa agreed to detail the "Montcalm" which was at the time on a northern lighthouse supply trip.<sup>51</sup> On accepting the vessel, the Soviets requested a Canadian crew.<sup>52</sup> As for payment, London suggested that Canadian officials make arrangements directly with the Soviet government. Ice-breakers were by no means in abundant supply in Canada. The sale of the "Montcalm" was brought about by exceptional circumstances. Such was not the case for Canadian wheat. It was obvious that Canada would be called upon to supply large quantities of wheat to the U.S.S.R. There remained the question of establishing procedures for dealing with Soviet wheat requirements. By the end of October, British officials had devised two alternatives with respect to payment and routing. In the first alternative, the Ministry of Food would sell wheat to the U.S.S.R., F.O.B. as, and when required, and return the funds obtained from the Soviet government to Canada. The second alternative simply called for direct negotiations between Canada and the U.S.S.R. The British government added that further discussions would be required between Moscow and Ottawa.<sup>53</sup> Although Canadian authorities preferred the

<sup>50</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 317, MacDonald to King, October 23, 1941.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., King to MacDonald, October 25, 1941.

<sup>52</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8, p. 1117.

<sup>53</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 317, MacDonald to King, October 25, 1941.

first alternative, whereby the bulk of the negotiations would take place between the U.S.S.R. and the British Ministry of Food, Ottawa could not expect British officials to handle all the arrangements. It was evident that some form of consular or trade representation was needed between Canada and the U.S.S.R. to expedite negotiations and ensure that Canadian interests were taken into consideration. The Soviets, it turned out, were more than willing to dispatch trade or consular representatives to Canada. On October 15, Massey directed a telegram to King requesting the latter's view regarding a Soviet proposal for the acceptance "of one or two Russian Consular Officers to deal with the problems arising out of the increased shipments from or via Canada to the U.S.S.R."<sup>54</sup> Two weeks later, King, while discussing the problems arising out of Finland's decision to side with Germany, informed Massey that the Canadian government was willing to accept the Soviet proposal;

When you see Maisky you may tell him that government have agreed to receive one or two Russian Consuls in Canada where they should be helpful in expediting arrangements for moving supplies and equipment toward U.S.S.R.<sup>55</sup>

The whole question of consular representation with the U.S.S.R. was an issue to which British authorities attached great importance. In a dispatch dated November 13, 1941,

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<sup>54</sup>Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 7, p. 95.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 356.

Massey noted that Moscow's decision to increase consular representation with other Commonwealth countries such as New Zealand and South Africa represented a major change in the Soviets' position on the matter. At the same time, Massey summarized his discussion with the Soviet Ambassador to the United Kingdom in which he enquired whether Soviet authorities would accept Canadian Consuls on a reciprocal basis;

I emphasized that I knew of no intention on the part of the Canadian government to make any such appointments, but said that I should be interested to know whether, in principle, the soviet government would have any objection to such appointments. Mr. Maisky assured me that there would be no objection. I have passed this information on to the United Kingdom authorities informally in case it may be of assistance to them in their negotiations with the Soviet Union on the subject to know that soviet government would have no objections in principle to the exchange of consuls with Canada.<sup>56</sup>

While discussions between Canadian and Soviet officials regarding an exchange of consular representatives were proceeding, Ottawa was confronted with a sensitive issue which held potentially serious implications for Canadian-Soviet relations. This issue was the position adopted by the Finnish government in relation to the Soviet-German war. Germany's invasion of the U.S.S.R. had presented Finland with a unique opportunity to regain the territory annexed by the U.S.S.R. during the Winter War. Thus, Finnish troops advanced in concert with the Germans in the attack against the Soviet Union. In August, the Canadian government followed Britain's

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 95-96.

lead and requested Finland to cease all consular activities in Canada.<sup>57</sup> Throughout the Fall of 1941, Moscow pressed the British government to declare war on Finland. Great Britain was forced to choose between refusing to comply with her new ally's request and declaring war on a nation which did not pose any threat to the immediate interests of Great Britain or the Dominions. Vincent Massey, Canada's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, felt that although a declaration of war against Finland would not be of any material advantage to the Soviet government, such an action would have a salutary psychological effect. A refusal to comply with their request might, on the other hand, "give rise in their minds to suspicions however unfounded, that we were holding our hands free to influence after the war settlement, in a manner which might be prejudicial to Russian interests."<sup>58</sup> King did not share Massey's views as is evident from the following statement;

I do not see what advantages she (U.S.S.R.) could gain from our declaration of war against Finland, Hungary and Roumania which would outweigh practical difficulties of a domestic and diplomatic order which such action would involve.<sup>59</sup>

King also mentioned the ill-effects such a decision would have on the Canadian Finns and Hungarians which existed in

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>58</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 312, Massey to King, October 30, 1941.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., King to Massey, October 30, 1941.

relatively important numbers in the labour groups in Canada.<sup>60</sup> Despite King's reservations, the Canadian government ultimately followed Great Britain's lead and declared war on Rumania, Hungary and Finland in December 1941.<sup>61</sup> The obvious result of Canada's declaration of war was, according to Massey, "that there will be uniformity in practice between United Kingdom and Canadian regulations."<sup>62</sup>

With the improvement in Canadian-Soviet relations, Canadian exports to the U.S.S.R. rose dramatically. There were, of course, certain problems associated with the shortage of ships and the Soviet government's lack of funds which had an adverse effect on Canadian deliveries. Ottawa also had to contend with the American Lend-Lease Program. There existed a distinct possibility of some kind of competition developing between the Canadian export program and Lend-Lease. Vincent Massey sought to allay the Canadian government's concerns by assuring King that the British Ministry of Food was looking after Canadian interests in this matter, "I consider that their interest is our interest."<sup>63</sup> Despite these problems, Canadian exports to the U.S.S.R. exceeded \$5,000,000. during

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Canada Gazette, vol. 75 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1941), p. 2071.

<sup>62</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 312, Massey to King, December 11, 1941.

<sup>63</sup> P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 182, Massey to King, January 16, 1942.

the calendar year 1941.<sup>64</sup> This figure is significant in light of the fact that prior to June 1941, trade between Canada and the Soviet Union was virtually non-existent. Canadian exports included aluminum, nickel, leather, motor vehicles, war supplies, wheat and flour.<sup>65</sup>

In mid-December, Maisky presented a draft agreement to Massey whereby Ottawa and Moscow would exchange consular representatives, the number of which was to be decided by subsequent negotiations. The proposed agreement was to come into force immediately after its signature. Massey fully supported the proposed agreement since it served to "pin the Russians down in the matter of reciprocity and it is expedient to take advantage of the proposal."<sup>66</sup> Looking at the proposal from a British point of view, Massey asserted that it would enhance the British government's position in its attempt to appoint additional British Consuls in the U.S.S.R.<sup>67</sup> The political climate could not have been more favourable for Ottawa to reach an agreement with the government of the U.S.S.R. During the last week of 1941, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Anthony Eden, along with Sir Stafford Cripps, met with Stalin, Molotov

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<sup>64</sup> Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, Exports, vol. II (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1942), p. 443.

<sup>65</sup> P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 89, "Statement of Commodities Shipped to Russia, 1937-1943."

<sup>66</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 312, Massey to King, December 15, 1941.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

and Maisky in order to discuss and exchange views on questions relating to the conduct of the war and the post-war organization of peace and security in Europe. It was reported that both parties were convinced that the Moscow conversations, which were held in a friendly atmosphere, constituted a new, important step toward collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain.<sup>68</sup>

Given Canada's traditional disinterest in European affairs, it was unlikely that Canadians would be greatly concerned with Soviet affairs or with Canadian-Soviet relations. Canadians were more preoccupied with issues such as the economy, cooperation with Great Britain and the Canadian war effort. In early 1939, there had been some measure of debate in the House of Commons on the activities of the Canadian Communist Party in which certain references were made to the government and policies of the U.S.S.R. Similar debates followed on issues such as the Defence of Canada Regulations in which certain French Canadian Members of Parliament criticized the government of the U.S.S.R. In February 1939, Wilfrid Lacroix (Liberal, Montmorency) urged his fellow Members to approve an amendment to the Post Office Act, prohibiting the mailing of communistic literature in Canada. Lacroix condemned the religious persecution that existed in Soviet Russia and argued that the Canadian Communist Party was directly affiliated to the Comintern:

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., vol. 317, MacDonald to King, December 23, 1941.

I think I have clearly established, first, that the Third International or Comintern is a revolutionary instrument, an incendiary torch destined to light the fire of civil war in all countries. Secondly, I stated that the Russian Government is itself of the Communist Party.<sup>69</sup>

The Soviet Union's alliance with Hitlerite Germany and actions against Poland, the Baltic States and Finland certainly angered most Members of Parliament. But debates on the European war were rare occurrences in the House of Commons. References to the policies and activities of the Kremlin were even more infrequent. The Soviet-German war and the subsequent declaration and pledge of assistance made by Churchill on behalf of his government brought renewed interest in the Soviet Union. On November 3, 1941, Mackenzie King, while reviewing the international situation, undertook to discuss the implications of the Soviet Union's entry into the war. King began by reiterating his June 22 statement:

Germany, and not Russia, was the threat to freedom and peace, that every force fighting Hitler was fighting, whether consciously or unconsciously, for the preservation of Christian civilization: that every power which engaged our enemy advanced our cause . . . I emphasized that, therefore, it was not a time to debate differences of view or to relax effort, but rather a time for strengthened unity of opinion, and for still greater effort. That view has been everywhere accepted throughout the country.<sup>70</sup>

He then briefly outlined his government's policy in respect to the U.S.S.R. He informed the House that the Canadian

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<sup>69</sup> Canada, House of Commons Debates, vol. II, February 21, 1939, p. 1179.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., vol. IV, November 3, 1941, pp. 4050-51.

government had kept in close touch with the activities of the Beaverbrook-Harriman mission, both before and after it had visited Moscow:

In consequence, the members of the Mission were in a position to count upon tangible support of Canadians in the fulfilment of the undertakings given to the Soviet Government ( . . . ) In a general way, the programme of aid includes war supplies, food, medical supplies and transport equipment.<sup>71</sup>

Following the announcement of the Soviet-German war, there appeared sporadic requests from various organizations and individuals for closer cooperation between Canada and the U.S.S.R. Meetings in support of the Soviet war effort were held throughout the Summer of 1941 in Montreal, Toronto and other large cities. The chief participants of these occasions included; A. A. MacLeod, the editor of the Canadian Tribune, John Kerry, Montreal lawyer, Jean-Charles Harvey, editor of the Le Jour. The audience at these public rallies which attracted approximately 5,000 people on each occasion, "included many races in Europe, including Russians and also many with a known leaning towards Communistic principles as well as representatives of the rank and file of citizens."<sup>72</sup> The resolutions passed during these meetings took the following line:

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Canada, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 8, pp. 1106-7.

- a) establishment of full diplomatic relations between Canada and the U.S.S.R.;
- b) resumption of trade negotiations;
- c) dispatch of a trade delegation to Moscow without delay with full powers to consummate a trade agreement; and
- d) release of all anti-fascists and labour leaders.<sup>73</sup>

As a rule, the Canadian press was quite receptive to the idea of providing assistance to the U.S.S.R. although most Canadian newspapers were quick to dissociate Canadian aid with endorsement of communist principles. As time passed, many Canadian newspapers became actively involved in the various drives and campaigns to raise funds or supplies for the Soviet war effort. In addition, certain dailies began pressing for a resumption of diplomatic relations between Ottawa and Moscow. In its September 3 editorial, the Globe and Mail offered several reasons why Canada should immediately proceed to establish direct diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R.:

Is it not eminently desirable that we should follow the example of Britain and the U.S. and establish the normal diplomatic agencies of communication with a country which is proving itself a faithful and valuable ally?

Apart from the desirability of observing ordinary decencies of conduct such as showing gratitude where it is deserved, there exists one very compelling reason why Canada should, without delay, take steps to give formal recognition to the value of Russia's alliance. One of the most disturbing developments of

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

the Summer has been the ominous recession of American enthusiasm for full belligerent participation of the war. It springs from various causes, but one of them undoubtedly lies in the distrust and dislike of Russia which has taken such deep roots in the minds of the business community in the U.S. and which is now being formed by skillful propaganda on the part of the American opponents of full belligerency. Their hands will undoubtedly be strengthened if Canada continues to hold aloof from recognition of Russia, and the prospects of full American intervention may become dimmer than they are today.<sup>74</sup>

A few days later, the Globe and Mail directed a more biting criticism of Ottawa's policy and attitude toward the U.S.S.R. The editors expressed "baffled wonderment" at the contrasts between the remarkable tenderness shown toward the Vichyites and the frigid aloofness manifested toward the Soviet Union. "But surely the Russian people deserve friendlier and more generous treatment than they have been receiving from us."<sup>75</sup> There was also much praise for the gallant resistance offered by the Russian people. Finally, it was observed that "there seems to be no valid reason why our Government should delay establishment of friendly formal contact with Russia through the exchange of diplomatic representative, and we hope that no subtle pressure is being exerted to check such an eminently wise action."<sup>76</sup> The Globe, as many other English dailies, also lent its support to the campaign undertaken by the Canadian Red Cross Society to provide medical and relief

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<sup>74</sup>Globe and Mail (September 3, 1941).

<sup>75</sup>Ibid. (September 9, 1941).

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

supplies to Soviet Russia.<sup>77</sup> The Winnipeg Free Press spoke favourably of the possibility of Canadian tanks being shipped to Russia "Canadians can only approve of any new impetus which will accelerate the output of tanks and gladly see them rushed to the help of Russia."<sup>78</sup> The same periodical also supported the rally, organized by the Winnipeg Council for Allied Victory, to raise funds for medical supplies for Soviet Russia.<sup>79</sup> Similar editorials in support of the Red Cross Campaign were issued in the Ottawa Citizen<sup>80</sup> and the Montreal Gazette.<sup>81</sup> The Montreal Daily Star commended the people of Quebec for their;

. . . . spectacular demonstration of their concern over the plight of the Russian soldiers and civilians who were in urgent need of medical supplies ( . . . ) The people of this province gave a very prompt and generous response.<sup>82</sup>

The Toronto Telegram, on the other hand, adopted a sterner attitude toward the medical aid program:

It is right and proper that Canadians should contribute medical aid to Russia for the Russian soldiers and people who deserve sympathy and support. It is a flat falsehood to say that Canadians owe Mr. Stalin

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. (November 17, 1941).

<sup>78</sup> Winnipeg Free Press (October 8, 1941).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. (November 15, 1941).

<sup>80</sup> Ottawa Citizen (October 10, 1941).

<sup>81</sup> Montreal Gazette (November 25, 1941).

<sup>82</sup> Montreal Daily Star (February 5, 1942).

and his associates gratitude. We are helping them because their plight helps us not because they are less treacherous and brutal than they were six months ago.<sup>83</sup>

By the end of 1941, there appeared to exist considerable interest among certain groups of Canadians for an improvement in Canadian-Soviet relations. The Canadian government was not unaware of this interest. N. A. Robertson, in a memorandum dated November 25, 1941, informed Prime Minister King that:

We continue to receive scores of resolutions from all sorts of organizations from all over Canada, and particularly from the West, urging the Government to establish direct diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>84</sup>

Although it is difficult to effectively measure the extent to which Canadians favoured a resumption of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R., it is evident that segments of the population, notably within the labour groups and the Eastern European communities in Western Canada, exerted considerable pressure on the Canadian government to this end. Communist sympathizers and members of the Communist Party of Canada were particularly vocal in demanding an immediate exchange of diplomatic representatives between Canada and the U.S.S.R. Generally speaking, it can be said that most Canadians supported the impending resumption since it

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<sup>83</sup>Toronto Telegram (November 28, 1941).

<sup>84</sup>P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J4, vol. 345, Robertson to King, November 25, 1941.

seemed both logical and necessary. Canadians had also been assured by Prime Minister King that the Canadian-Soviet rapprochement would not alter the Canadian government's stand on communism.

### CHAPTER III

#### DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHED

On January 22, 1942, Mackenzie King informed Vincent Massey that the Canadian government was prepared to accept the Soviet proposal for an exchange of consuls between Canada and the U.S.S.R. At the same time, King made it clear that his government had no intention, at least in the immediate future, of appointing consuls to the U.S.S.R. It was his opinion that the most appropriate Canadian representation in Moscow would be diplomatic. King added that "enquiries as to the acceptability of a Canadian Minister to the U.S.S.R. will, it is expected, be initiated shortly through the usual channels."<sup>1</sup> Since the proposed agreement was only intended as a preliminary arrangement, the exact nature and status of the Canadian delegation to the U.S.S.R. could be settled at a later date. The agreement was signed on February 5, 1942 in London. Ivan Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador to the United Kingdom, signed on behalf of the government of the U.S.S.R., while Vincent Massey signed for the Canadian Government. The text of the agreement was as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol 329, King to Massey, January 22, 1942.

The Government of Canada and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have reached an agreement as follows:

- (1) The two Governments have agreed to exchange Consular representatives, the number and residence of which will be decided by subsequent negotiations between them;
- (2) the present agreement comes into force immediately after its signature and is not subject to any ratification;
- (3) the present agreement is drawn up in two copies, each of them in the Russian and English languages. Both texts have equal force.<sup>2</sup>

The establishment of direct diplomatic relations between Canada and the U.S.S.R. not only enhanced the Dominion's international status, it also enabled Ottawa to deal directly with the Soviet government on matters which were of immediate concern to Canada. To be sure, the Canadian government assured London that it would continue to respect the principle of consultive cooperation on matters of common concern. In a dispatch dated March 15, 1942, addressed to the Dominion Secretary, King explained that:

Such arrangements would not denote any departure from the principle of consultive cooperation amongst all His Majesty's representatives as amongst His Majesty's Governments themselves, in matters of common concern. The methods of dealing with matters which may arise concerning more than one of His Majesty's Governments would therefore, be settled by consultation between the representatives of His Majesty's Governments concerned. In proposing the establishment of Canadian Legation, His Majesty's Government considers that it will promote

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<sup>2</sup>Canada Treaty Series, 1942 (Ottawa: King's Printer), no. 9.

the maintenance and development of cordial relations not only between the U.S.S.R. and Canada, but also between the U.S.S.R. and the whole British Commonwealth of Nations.<sup>3</sup>

Most Canadian newspapers welcomed Canada's decision to resume relations with the U.S.S.R. The Globe and Mail viewed the establishment of diplomatic relations between Canada and the U.S.S.R. as an end to the anomaly that Canada should continue to give harborage at Ottawa to a representative of the discredited Vichy government while refusing to have any official contacts with Soviet Russia. The Toronto daily could not understand why a consul was being sent to the U.S.S.R. when the Canadian representative to Brazil was a Minister "a country not as actively engaged in the War Effort."<sup>4</sup> The Montreal Daily Star also greeted the treaty as an end to the anomaly of one country being at diplomatic odds with another while being its ally. The editors emphasized that the establishment of relations with Moscow would not affect Canada's position towards communism, "Mr. Churchill has told us that he cooperates with Russia but withdraws no word of criticism of communism. We can do likewise."<sup>5</sup> The Montreal Gazette observed that Canadians could only welcome the treaty since, "it brought this country into closer association with a Nation which has shown itself capable of

<sup>3</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 333, King to MacDonald, March 15, 1942.

<sup>4</sup> Globe and Mail (February 7, 1942).

<sup>5</sup> Montreal Daily Star (February 6, 1942).

great sacrifice, great heroism and unfounded determination."<sup>6</sup>

In accordance with the February 5th treaty, discussions were initiated between Canadian and Soviet officials regarding the nature and status of their respective delegations. In addition, it was necessary to review the accomodation requirements of the proposed delegations. The discussions, normally held at the Canadian High Commission in London, continued throughout the spring of 1942. On March 29, 1942, Ottawa indicated that it was willing to accept Vladimir Yerofeyev as Consul General of the U.S.S.R. for the whole of Canada.<sup>7</sup> But two days later, it was revealed that Moscow had accepted Ottawa's proposal to exchange diplomatic rather than Consular representatives. As a result, the appointment of Vladimir Yerofeyev was cancelled.<sup>8</sup> Presumably, he would be replaced by a more senior Soviet official. The Soviets were understandably eager to dispel the idea that their representatives in foreign countries were agents of the Comintern. During an April meeting on accomodation requirements, a Soviet official stated that his government was anxious that relations between Moscow and Ottawa start on as happy a footing as possible, particularly:

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<sup>6</sup> Montreal Gazette (February 6, 1942).

<sup>7</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol, 333, King to MacDonald, March 29, 1942.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., vol. 329, King to Massey, March 31, 1942.

. . . as he saw no reason why they should not grow and become firmly established in the future. Canada and Soviet Russia had mutual interests in trade relations for instance he said with a twinkle in his eye, Nevokov also remarked that there was no source of friction between the two countries on the grounds of "territorial ambitions" and no political differences which were likely to cause trouble between the two countries. He added with emphasis that it had been widely believed that Soviet diplomats were agents of the Comintern and were employed in conducting Communist propaganda in countries to which they were accredited. He said nothing was further from the truth and that in point of fact although the head of Soviet Mission was frequently a member of the Communist Party, few members of the subordinate staff were members of the Party.<sup>9</sup>

While Canadian and Soviet officials were finalizing their negotiations for an exchange of diplomatic representatives, the governments of the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain were strengthening their alliance. As usual, London kept Ottawa and other Dominion governments informed of the developments. Considerable progress had been made since Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. signed the July 1941 declaration calling for joint action in the war. This agreement was followed up by a Confidential Protocol regarding Anglo-American supplies to the U.S.S.R. in October 1941. In May 1942, both parties came to an agreement which was formalized in a Treaty dated May 25, 1942. The first eleven articles of the agreement served to re-affirm both governments' pledges to see the war against Hitlerite Germany and her European associates through to a satisfactory end. Other provisions called for collaboration towards the organization and

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., vol. 333, Massey to King, April 10, 1942. 0

maintenance of European security and economic prosperity and adherence to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. The treaty was to remain in force for twenty years and contained no secret clauses.<sup>10</sup> The treaty was reviewed extensively by officials of the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa. There was an obvious realization that the May 25 agreement would help eliminate some of the mistrust between London and Moscow and solidify the Grand Alliance. Norman Robertson, Canada's Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, considered that the final text of the treaty was much more satisfactory than anticipated. However, in reacting to what appeared to be an invitation to adhere to the treaty, Robertson was quick to point out that it would be inadvisable for Canada to become involved in an agreement having such far-reaching political implications. He raised several other objections in a memorandum addressed to King:

I do not think we should consider adhering to the treaty. We were not parties to its negotiation. There is no provision in the Treaty as it stands for adherence by third countries, and there is no suggestion that countries which are not members of the British Commonwealth should adhere to it. Apart from such diplomatic objections to our adherence, I do not think that Canada should, at this stage, assume post-war obligations in other parts of the world which would be different from or so further than those that the U.S.A. is prepared to assume.<sup>11</sup>

Apparently, King shared Robertson's views. As early as May 1, 1942, the Canadian Prime Minister had notified

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., vol. 344.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Robertson to King.

Massey that "Canadian government does not wish to enter into Treaty relations with the U.S.S.R. along lines of proposed Anglo-Russian Treaty."<sup>12</sup> There were other reasons which militated against Canada becoming a party to the agreement. It was feared that such a decision would irk certain minority groups in Canada. Moreover, the King administration felt that by adhering to the treaty, Canada would be violating the principles of the Atlantic Charter as well as those of Collective Security.<sup>13</sup> Ottawa's refusal to become a party to the agreement and conclude similar "political" agreements with Moscow did not prevent Mackenzie King from issuing public statements in support of the treaty. On June 11, 1942, King sent the following message to Churchill:

The Canadian Government is very pleased that the negotiations which have been proceeding between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the U.S.S.R., have reached a successful conclusion. We believe that the New Treaty will greatly contribute to the successful prosecution of the war and to the realization after the war, of the principles of the Atlantic Charter.<sup>14</sup>

King repeated this statement in the House of Commons the same day and tabled a copy of the agreement.<sup>15</sup> The treaty was generally well received by the English Canadian press.<sup>16</sup> No

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., vol. 329, King to Massey, May 1, 1942.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., vol. 344, Glazerbrook to King, June 2, 1942.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., vol. 333, King to MacDonald, June 11, 1942.

<sup>15</sup> Canada, House of Commons Debates, vol. III, June 11, 1942, p. 3252.

<sup>16</sup> Globe and Mail (June 12, 1942); Toronto Telegram (June 12, 1942); Winnipeg Free Press (June 13, 1942); Montreal

doubt, the positive developments in Anglo-Soviet relations had a reassuring effect on the Canadian government. Convinced that London and Moscow were now in agreement on such important issues as war-time cooperation and post-war reorganization, Ottawa proceeded to finalize arrangements with the Soviets. In June, Ottawa accepted, without any major reservations, a Soviet proposal for an immediate exchange of diplomatic missions. The only amendment which the Canadian government suggested to the Soviet text was the insertion of the word "direct" between the words "establish" and "diplomatic." The addition was considered necessary in view of the fact that Canada had maintained diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. since 1924.<sup>17</sup> The treaty was signed in London on June 12, 1942. As in the case of the February 5th agreement, Massey signed for the government of Canada while Maisky signed on behalf of the government of the U.S.S.R. The treaty stipulated that:

- 1) The two Governments have agreed to establish direct diplomatic relations and to exchange Ministers.
- 2) The present agreement comes into force immediately after its signature and is not subject to ratification.

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Star (June 12, 1942).

<sup>17</sup>P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 324, Massey to King, June 1, 1942.

- 3) The present agreement is made in two copies, each of them in the Russian and English languages. Both texts have equal force.<sup>18</sup>

According to Massey, the Soviet government attached considerable significance to the signature of the agreement. Maisky reportedly viewed the treaty as an important addendum to the Anglo-Soviet Treaty. Other Soviet officials regarded the agreement as the opening of a new era in Canadian-Soviet relations, "an era which may see far-reaching developments."<sup>19</sup>

Most English Canadian newspapers welcomed the treaty as a confirmation of Canada's increasing sovereignty in foreign affairs. It was generally agreed that the resumption of full diplomatic relations was a timely gesture which would be of mutual benefit to both countries. In reviewing past Canadian-Soviet relations, the Toronto Globe and Mail asserted that incidents such as the communist propaganda campaigns "were now water over the dam, and something more crucial is on the agenda." The editor held that the Western democracies had much to gain by cooperating with the U.S.S.R.;

As a new international economic era is promised, the inclusion of Russia will make her a partner, which should remove grievances such as grow out of an isolated and despised position. There is much evidence, moreover, that Russia has progressed far from the original theories of Communism toward recognition of individualism.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Canada Treaty Series, 1942, no. 12.

<sup>19</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 324, Massey to King, June 17, 1942.

<sup>20</sup> Globe and Mail (June 16, 1942).

The Winnipeg Free Press predicted that the treaty would help foster better relations between the two countries particularly since they had enormous immediate interests in common, "a common belligerency in a great cause, and many vital interests to share in peace." The Editorial concluded on an optimistic note:

... the opening of legations in our two capitals should rapidly widen the sphere of friendliness without which the prospect of a re-established peaceful world is all but impossible.<sup>21</sup>

The Montreal Daily Star maintained that "tangible benefits will be derived immediately from this resumption of formal relations, but even greater benefits should accrue to both nations in the post-war period."<sup>22</sup> These views were shared by the editor of the Montreal Gazette.<sup>23</sup> The leading French Canadian newspapers refrained from commenting either favourably or otherwise on the restoration of diplomatic relations between Canada and the U.S.S.R. The subject of Canadian-Soviet relations was brought up in the House of Commons by the Member of Parliament for North Battleford during the June 18 debate on the Mobilization Act. Mrs. D. Neilsen praised the King administration for its far-sighted decision and expressed her satisfaction in witnessing what she considered was a new orientation in Canadian foreign policy:

<sup>21</sup> Winnipeg Free Press (June 15, 1942).

<sup>22</sup> Montreal Daily Star (June 13, 1942).

<sup>23</sup> Montreal Gazette (June 13, 1942).

I welcome these changes in government policy by a government which, a few years ago, was following so strictly its policy of isolation ( . . . ) I believe that it is in accordance with the sentiments of the Canadian people.<sup>24</sup>

Mrs. Neilsen's interest in Canadian-Soviet relations can no doubt be traced to her pro-communist beliefs as well as to her long involvement in the communist movement in Canada. Surprisingly enough, no other Member of Parliament commented on the June 12 treaty.

Under normal circumstances, the opening of a diplomatic mission in a foreign capital can be a fairly routine undertaking. There was, however, nothing routine about dispatching a group of officials over 4,000 miles to a country under partial enemy occupation. To make matters worse, Canada's Department of External Affairs was sorely lacking in experienced foreign officers. The shortage of senior foreign officers was even more acute. Throughout the Summer of 1942, N. A. Robertson attempted, without success, to find a suitable candidate for the position of Minister Plenipotentiary to the U.S.S.R. Robertson's search extended far beyond the ranks of the Civil Service. Consideration was given to Dr. C. F. Martin, Dean of McGill University's Medical Faculty, however, his age (74) ruled out his nomination.<sup>25</sup> The delay in appointing a Minister to the U.S.S.R. was

<sup>24</sup> Canada, House of Commons Debates, vol. IV, June 18, 1942, p. 3459.

<sup>25</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J4, vol. 241, N. A. Robertson to King, July 13, 1942.

becoming embarrassing to the Canadian government. The King administration was criticized by the Globe and Mail for its "incredible dilatoriness about naming a Canadian Minister to Russia". The Editor contended that the slowness had reached a stage "where it can be fairly described as a source not merely of exasperation to intelligent Canadian opinion, but of positive affront to a valued ally".<sup>26</sup> Finally, in October 1942, the Deputy Minister of Trade, L.D. Wilgress was approached by Robertson. Wilgress appeared to be the ideal candidate for the position. Aside from being Canada's first Trade Commissioner to Siberia in 1917, Wilgress possessed an impressive career in the Trade Commissioner Service and a knowledge of the Russian language. Obviously honoured by the offer, Wilgress accepted the nomination. But the decision was not an easy one for the Deputy Minister of Trade. He was giving up an established position for what he described "a leap into the unknown".<sup>27</sup> On November 5, 1942, the Committee of the Privy Council on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, officially appointed Lealyn Dana Wilgress as Canadian Minister to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.<sup>28</sup>

Following his appointment, Wilgress concentrated on gaining as much knowledge as possible on diplomatic

<sup>26</sup> Globe and Mail (October 9, 1942).

<sup>27</sup> D. Wilgress, Memoirs (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967) p. 123.

<sup>28</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J4, vol. 344, Privy Council Minute # 10083, November 5, 1942.

procedures and on familiarizing himself with the work of the Department of External Affairs. There remained the question of selecting appropriate personnel to assist Wilgress. Given the ex-Deputy Minister's lack of experience, it was obvious that the position of First Secretary would have to be filled by a veteran of the Foreign Service. After careful consideration, R. M. MacDonnell was chosen for the demanding position. He was considered a competent hard-working man who was thoroughly familiar with the work of the department, possessing extensive knowledge of legation practices. He had served for eight years with the Canadian Legation in Washington.<sup>29</sup>

The military component of the mission was headed by Brigadier Hercule Lefevre, a senior officer considered "a little too old for an active command."<sup>30</sup> There was also a requirement for an Assistant Military Attaché with a knowledge of Russian. The dearth of suitable candidates forced officials in Ottawa to consider dispatching a Russian-born Canadian (i.e. children of families who left Russia during the revolution). Before appointing Major George Okulitch as Assistant Military Attaché, Robertson consulted with the Soviet Minister to Canada to ensure that Soviet authorities would not object to his appointment.<sup>31</sup> The remainder of the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., vol. 241, Robertson to King, November 12, 1942.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

mission consisted of two Third Secretaries. One was J. A. McCormick, a graduate of the University of Toronto who was on loan from the Canadian army to the British, serving as a liaison officer with Soviet forces in Northern Iran. He had joined the Department of External Affairs after his release from the army.<sup>32</sup> The other Third Secretary was Arnold C. Smith, who was working for the British Embassy in Cairo in the field of public information. He would join the team on its way through Cairo to Kuibyshev.<sup>33</sup> The staff of Canada's first diplomatic mission to the U.S.S.R. was thus as follows:

Minister	- L. D. Wilgress
Military Attaché	- Brigadier H. Lefevre
First Secretary	- R. M. MacDonnell
Military Attaché	- Major G. Okulitch
Third Secretaries	- Arnold C. Smith
	- J. A. McCormick

The destination of the Canadian representatives was not Moscow but Kuibyshev, a city on the Volga River. When German troops came dangerously close to Moscow, Soviet authorities decided to relocate a number of government departments to safer locations such as Gorky, Saratov and Kuibyshev. The latter became the temporary headquarters for the People's Commissariat

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., Robertson to King, November 12, 1942.

<sup>33</sup>R. M. MacDonnell, "Mission to Kuibyshev," in International Perspectives (July/August 1973), p. 54.

for Foreign Affairs and received all diplomatic missions.<sup>34</sup>

The Soviet government wasted little time in selecting and appointing a Minister to Canada. Less than a week after the signature of the June 12 treaty, Ottawa indicated that it was willing to accept Feodor Gousev as the U.S.S.R.'s First Minister to Canada. Prior to his appointment, Feodor Gousev had served as Head of the Second Western Department in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>35</sup> Canadian authorities undertook to obtain additional information on Gousev via the British government. The Soviet Minister arrived in October 1942, accompanied by the First Secretary of the Legation and by the Commercial Attaché. By the end of 1942, the remainder of the Soviet Union's mission to Canada had settled in Ottawa. The Soviet Delegation to Canada was composed of the following officials;

Minister	- Feodor Gousev
Counsellor	- Gregori Tounkin
First Secretary	- Sergei Kudriavtev
Commercial Attaché	- Ivan Krotov
Second Secretary	- Vitoli Pavlov
Third Secretary	- Roman Ousienko
Attachés	- Feodor Vidiasov
	- Ivan Volenkó
	- Nikolai Uspenski

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> P.A.C.) King Papers, M.G. J1, vol. 329, Massey to King, June 1942.

In addition M. S. Vavilov and M. V. Kutsenko set up an office in Halifax to oversee shipments to the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup>

With the arrival of Gousev in October, Soviet authorities began exerting considerable pressure to obtain suitable accommodation for their representatives. The situation came as no surprise to the Canadian government since Maisky had expressed dissatisfaction over Ottawa's inability to meet the Soviets' accommodation requirements before Gousev even arrived in Canada. Vincent Massey considered the situation serious enough to intervene on the Soviets' behalf. He urged the King government to treat the issue as a priority for, as he put it, "there is danger of real ill-feeling developing over this question."<sup>37</sup> Seen from today's perspective, four months would seem an ample amount of time for a government to secure and renovate a building to house a diplomatic mission. But, in the context of a wartime period and in view of the Soviets' particular requirements, the delay is readily understandable. In any event, Massey's intervention had the desired effect for in October 1942, the Department of External Affairs secured a building which had been bought by the navy and outfitted as a barrack for Wrens. The large house on Charlotte Street in Ottawa was promised for November. That the Canadian government was reluctant to give up such a

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<sup>36</sup> Canada, Secretary of State for External Affairs, Annual Report (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1942), p. 22.

<sup>37</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 329, Massey to King, October 7, 1942.

valuable building is patently evident from the following extract of a dispatch from King to Massey dated October 9; "emphasize to Maisky the real sacrifice the Canadian Government, and in particular the Navy, have made in giving up a place needed badly and used by the Navy."<sup>38</sup>

The situation as far as the Canadian Delegation was concerned was much more satisfactory. By the time Canadian representatives arrived in Kuibyshev in March 1943, they were fortunate enough to take immediate occupancy of a building which was to serve as their temporary headquarters in the U.S.S.R.<sup>39</sup> The house assigned to the Canadians was a former small hospital which was large enough to provide office and living accomodation for the Canadian Delegation, which had been increased by the addition of a R.C.A.F. non-commissioned officer. He had joined the Canadian party in Cairo to handle the typing and clerical work.<sup>40</sup> After an initial meeting with the Soviet Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs in Kuibyshev, it remained for Wilgress to make the long train ride to Moscow for the presentation of credentials. The journey to Moscow was rendered necessary in view of the fact that most high ranking Soviet officials had not left the Soviet capital. The official communist organs Izvestia and

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., King to Massey, October 9, 1942.

<sup>39</sup>Details on the routing problems of the long journey to Kuibyshev are provided in MacDonnell, "Mission to Kuibyshev," and Wilgress, Memoirs, pp. 124-30.

<sup>40</sup>Macdonnell, "Mission to Kuibyshev."

and Pravda featured a short article on the ceremony.<sup>41</sup>

Having met the protocol requirements, Wilgress could now proceed with the affairs of his small mission. The task which confronted Wilgress and his small group was indeed monumental. In addition to looking after Canada's interests in the U.S.S.R., particularly in respect to trade and treaty negotiations, Wilgress was expected to supply his government with information on a wide variety of subjects and to report on the latest developments in the U.S.S.R. Prior to his departure, Wilgress received instructions from King on the type of information which Ottawa wanted on the Soviet Union. Among the items contained in King's "shopping list," were: Soviet views on the post-war settlement, international security, relations between the U.S.S.R. and the United Kingdom, the U.S., China, Ukraine, the relationship between Canadian communists and the Comintern, the Soviet political system, information on Canada in the U.S.S.R., etc.<sup>42</sup> In his concluding remarks, King reassured the Canadian Minister that Ottawa did not expect too much on these issues and that the instructions were only intended to serve as a general indication of "what we would like to have if it were possible to get the requisite data."<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Pravda; Izvestia, Moscow (March 14, 1943).

<sup>42</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 336, King to Wilgress, January 6, 1943.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Despite the difficulties in implementing the provisions of the June 12 agreement, there was considerable optimism expressed about the future of Canadian-Soviet relations on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>44</sup> The growing spirit of Allied cooperation and solidarity only added to the optimism. For its part, the Canadian government made every effort to ensure that relations between Ottawa and Moscow would remain cordial. The Department of External Affairs went to great lengths to accommodate members of the Soviet Delegation as far as diplomatic privileges were concerned. Gousev and his staff were also afforded several opportunities to meet with Canadian officials in both government and industry and were even allowed to visit some of the major Canadian war plants. These gestures were certainly appreciated by the Soviet Minister. It was thus that Gousev thanked Robertson for allowing him and his officials to visit plants in Toronto and Montreal, "I was pleased to see how war industry of Canada helps to win the war."<sup>45</sup> There were other manifestations of Canadian goodwill and hospitality. In January 1943, the Canadian government permitted the Soviets to hold an exhibition depicting the Soviet achievement "25 years of the U.S.S.R." at the National Gallery in Ottawa.

<sup>44</sup> A journalistic and pro-Soviet account of Canadian-Soviet relations depicting the optimism of the wartime relationship can be found in R. A. Davies, Canada and Russia, Neighbors and Friends (Toronto: Progress Books, 1944).

<sup>45</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 341, Gousev to Robertson, January 13, 1943.

In April 1943, it was announced that the Canadian government ice-breaker "Montcalm" had been presented as a gift to the government of the U.S.S.R. It may be recalled that Ottawa had originally intended to sell "The Montcalm" to the Soviets at the request of British authorities. Obviously, the decision to donate the vessel was brought upon by Canada's desire to promote friendly relations with her new ally. Judging from the tone of Molotov's letter of acknowledgement, the display of generosity was indeed interpreted in this fashion by the Soviets:

... thanks to the kindness of the Canadian Government to which the Soviet Government is greatly obliged, the vessel "Montcalm" has been since May 1942 at the disposal of the Soviet authorities and has already been of substantial use to the Soviet Mercantile Fleet in the northern waters of the U.S.S.R. With regard to your statement on April 10th of this year, the Soviet Government has directed me to express to the Canadian Government their deep gratitude for this gift which represents a further strengthening of friendly relations between Canada and the U.S.S.R.<sup>46</sup>

The Canadian government also lent its support to a variety of campaigns and schemes to raise funds, medical supplies, clothing and other commodities for the people of the Soviet Union. Generally speaking, these campaigns were tremendously successful. The "Aid for Russia" campaign which began in November 1942, raised more money than any other drive except for the appeal for Britain.<sup>47</sup> In January 1943, Mackenzie

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., vol. 345, Molotov to Wilgress, May 4, 1943.

<sup>47</sup> B. F. Soward, Canada in World Affairs: From Normandy to Paris, 1944 to 1946 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 298.

King attended, along with several other dignitaries, a meeting of the "Aid to Russia" campaign in Montréal. In introducing Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt, King reminded the audience that although the campaign had the warm support of the government, it had no official character. He referred to the campaign as a nation-wide tribute by the people themselves to a gallant ally.<sup>48</sup> The Prime Minister then proceeded to discuss the importance of providing assistance to the Soviet Union:

It has been the duty of the allied governments to see that their own industrial production is supplemented by the factories and the workshops of Britain, the United States and Canada. We are proud that we have been able to make the contribution we have. But, the civilian population no less than the armed forces of Russia, need all the help that can be given. In addition to military supplies, the people of Russia are in greater need of medical supplies, food, clothing and other necessities to help relieve their terrible suffering ( . . . ) In the new world which air-power is making, Russia next to the United States is becoming our nearest neighbour: She is just over northern horizon beyond the pole. The arctic waters, so long an impenetrable barrier between us, are now coming to join us closer together. As we become neighbors we desire more than ever to become the most helpful of friends. A friend in need, is a friend indeed. This is as true of nations, as it is of individuals.<sup>49</sup>

In June 1943, a National Council for Canadian-Soviet friendship was established in Toronto. The goal of the council was not only to raise funds and supplies for the

<sup>48</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J4, vol. 345, January 13, 1943.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Soviet war effort, but also to promote understanding and friendship between the peoples of Canada and the U.S.S.R.<sup>50</sup> Their meetings were often attended by the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and officials from the Soviet mission. The council held a great meeting on June 22 in Maple Leaf Gardens to celebrate the second anniversary of the Soviet Union's entry into the war. Mackenzie King joined such dignitaries as Raymond Massey, the Honourable Joseph Davies, former U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., and Sir Ellsworth Flavelle Bart, Chairman of the council, in paying tribute to the Soviet Union.<sup>51</sup> As in the case of the "Aid to Russia" campaign, there was a remarkable response from the Canadian people to the various initiatives and drives undertaken by the council on behalf of the Soviet Union. To be sure, the Soviet people's heroism was greatly admired by Canadians.<sup>52</sup> Canadian newspapers accorded extensive coverage to the Eastern Front. As a result, Canadians soon became familiar with Stalingrad, Sebastopol, Moscow and most leading Soviet commanders. When a representative from the Soviet News Agency (Tass) in Canada requested, on behalf of his government, a statement from the Prime Minister of Canada on the

<sup>50</sup> Toronto Star (June 10, 1943).

<sup>51</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J4, vol. 345, "Salute to our Russian Ally" (programme of the first meeting of the National Council for Canadian-Soviet Friendship).

<sup>52</sup> Soward, Canada in World Affairs, p. 297.

25th anniversary of the Red Army,<sup>53</sup> King unhesitatingly praised the valour of the Soviet troops and the strategic genius displayed by their commanders:

The vigour and endurance shown in the great defensive actions before Moscow, at Leningrad, at Sebastopol and at Stalingrad, destroyed the myth of Nazi invincibility. The immense and sustained winter offensive along a continent-wide front has encouraged all free peoples and given new hope of liberation to the conquered lands. The United Nations are all indebted to the Red Army for its determination, its military efficiency and its vast contribution to ultimate victory.<sup>54</sup>

It is evident in reviewing Wilgress' correspondence from Kuibyshev and Moscow, that Soviet authorities were no less interested in maintaining friendly relations with Canada. There were numerous displays of courtesy and hospitality toward the members of the Canadian delegation. By the end of 1943, Wilgress had been able to meet with most leading Soviet officials including Molotov and Kanalin. In July 1943, Brigadier Lefevre and Major Okulitch were invited to visit one of the leading tank schools of the Red Army.<sup>55</sup> In October 1943, the Soviet government made special arrangements to enable Mrs. Wilgress and her daughter to join the Canadian Minister in Moscow. Robertson considered the gesture important enough to bring to King's attention, "This is a very gracious and most unexpected courtesy on the part of

<sup>53</sup>p.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 343, Zhivaynov to King, February 12, 1943.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., Acland to Zhivaynov, February 17, 1943.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., vol. 353, Wilgress to King, July 29, 1943.

the Soviet Government, and it is evidence, I think, of quite a friendly feeling toward Canada and toward our Minister in Moscow,"<sup>56</sup>

In August 1943, Wilgress, with headquarters now in Moscow, was notified that Gousev would replace Maisky as Soviet Ambassador to the United Kingdom. As an interim measure, Gregori Tounkin would serve as Chargé d'Affaires.<sup>57</sup> The replacement of Maisky by Gousev was interpreted in some circles as an indication of Stalin's dissatisfaction with Allied policies particularly in respect to the proposed second front in Europe. Officially, the Soviets explained that Gousev's promotion (a relatively junior official in the Soviet Foreign Service), was due to a dearth of personnel.<sup>58</sup> Before departing for his new assignment, Gousev sent the following message to Prime Minister King:

It is my one regret that my stay in Canada was of such short duration, as the time I spent in your country proved of tremendous interest and did assist me greatly to appreciate the relations which exist between the different nations of the British Commonwealth. I reciprocate your hope that the friendship so warmly expressed between our two peoples at the meeting we attended together at Toronto, will develop still more strongly in the years ahead.<sup>59</sup>

In the Fall of 1943, Ottawa proposed the elevation of Canadian and Soviet Legations to the rank of Embassies.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., vol. 344, Robertson to King, October 13, 1943.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., vol. 353, Wilgress to King, August 13, 1943.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., August 23, 1943.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., vol. 341, Gousev to King, November 5, 1943.

In presenting the proposal to Molotov, Wilgress stated that the Canadian government had felt for some time that its international position and contribution to the war effort required that it should be represented by Embassies rather than Legations in international capitals.<sup>60</sup> The Soviet government immediately accepted the proposal and agreed that the Canadian Minister to the U.S.S.R. should become the first Canadian Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. All that was required to change the status of the respective missions was an exchange of aide-memoires and a formal announcement. Soviet authorities indicated that their prompt acceptance was due to the excellent relations which existed between Canada and the U.S.S.R.<sup>61</sup> In February 1944, the elevation of Legations to Embassies in Ottawa and Moscow was made official.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., vol. 353, Wilgress to King, November 15, 1943.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., November 17, 1943.

## CHAPTER IV

### FIRST CONTACTS

The last three years of the war were marked by a series of conferences and meetings between the members of the Grand Alliance. These meetings were brought about by the need to co-ordinate military operations and were considered necessary to the maintenance of Allied unity. As the war progressed, as it became global, more and more consideration was given to post-war issues such as spheres of influence, border settlements, economic reconstruction and peace-time security. At the same time, the "Big Three's" pre-eminence in Allied councils increased. Because of this, they would play a decisive role in preparing the world for peace. Hence the future success of any peace settlement hinged on the Great Powers' ability to resolve their major differences and work out mutually acceptable solutions to a series of complex problems. But decades of mistrust and hostility between the English-speaking powers and the Soviet Union could not be easily forgotten. The Soviets feared that Great Britain and the United States would conclude a separate peace agreement with the Axis powers. They displayed considerable bitterness over the Allies' reluctance to open a second front in Europe since the Red Army was bearing the brunt of

the European war.<sup>1</sup> Assurances from Churchill and Roosevelt that a second front would be opened as soon as the military situation improved, did little to allay Stalin's concerns. Conversely, the British and American governments had good reasons to be suspicious of their Soviet ally, ideological differences notwithstanding. Stalin's past record in European diplomacy was hardly reassuring. However, of all the issues that strained relations between the "Big Three," none was more sensitive than the Polish question.

As the Red Army began taking the offensive on the Eastern front, relations between Moscow and the Polish government in exile deteriorated seriously. The Soviet government made it known that it considered the territory acquired from Poland in 1939 as an integral part of the U.S.S.R. The Soviet press denounced the Polish government-in-exile as a reactionary group seeking only to reassert their mastery over the Ukrainians and Byelorussians.<sup>2</sup> Basically, the dispute centered around the eventual location of Poland's Eastern border. The discovery in April 1943 of several thousand corpses, reputed to be of Polish officers, and the subsequent allegation that they had been executed by the Soviets, dealt the final blow to Polish-Soviet relations. On hearing the news, General Sikorski requested a full investigation by the International Red Cross. On

<sup>1</sup>Renouvain, Histoire des Relations Internationales, vol. 8, pp. 315-16.

<sup>2</sup>A. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, the History of Soviet Foreign Policy; 1917-1967 (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 341.

April 25, 1943, Molotov presented a note to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, informing him that the Kremlin could no longer maintain diplomatic relations with the Polish government-in-exile. The note denounced the apparent complicity between Hitlerite Germany and the government of Poland;

. . . the circumstances that the hostile campaign against the Soviet Union began simultaneously in the German and Polish Press and is being carried out on identical lines leaves no doubt that there is a contact between Hitler, the enemy of the allies, and the Polish government and an agreement on the conduct of this hostile campaign ( . . . ) It is known to the Soviet Union that this hostile campaign against the Soviet Union was undertaken by the Polish government in order, by means of the employment of Hitlerite slanderous forgery, to bring pressure to bear on the Soviet government with a view to wresting territorial concessions from it at the expense of the interests of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet White Russia and Soviet Lithuania ( . . . ) On these grounds, the Soviet government resolved to break off relations with the Polish government.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that the news of the Katyn Forest Massacre first originated in Berlin made it appear that the Germans had planned the whole affair to foment discord between the Allies. Although subsequent investigations established Soviet culpability, the appalling revelation did in fact deliver a harsh blow to Allied unity. It was in this particular setting that Dana Wilgress and his small group opened Canada's first diplomatic mission in the U.S.S.R.

<sup>3</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 353, Wilgress to King (Original text translated by Wilgress), April 27, 1943.

In reviewing the events leading to the diplomatic rupture, the Canadian Minister laid a good portion of the blame on the government of Poland, "Unfortunately, the Poles could not overcome their weakness for public statement on delicate matters of international concern."<sup>4</sup> Wilgress also faulted the British and American governments for "allowing matters to drift towards the present crisis". "These two governments," observed Wilgress, "should have advised the Poles that their best policy was to seek from the Soviets an amicable settlement on the frontier question as soon as possible."<sup>5</sup> It remained for the British and American governments to persuade Moscow to restore relations with the London Poles. As a result, these two governments were placed in the unenviable position of trying to reconcile Polish nationalism and Soviet security concerns. Not surprisingly, the Canadian government decided against intervening in the dispute. On May 5, 1943, Wilgress was notified that he should not undertake to protect Polish interests in the U.S.S.R.:

Your mission is too small and too recently established to discharge this most difficult task, that we do not wish to prejudice our relations with the Soviet government so soon after the exchange of diplomatic missions and that we have as yet no experience of this type of work and no suitable additional personnel.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Wilgress to King, April 26, 1943.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., April 27, 1943.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., King to Wilgress, May 5, 1943

Ottawa's instructions did not prevent Wilgress from informing Soviet authorities that the Canadian government hoped for an early settlement of the Polish-Soviet dispute in order that a United Front could again be presented to the Axis powers.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the early stages of the conflict, the Canadian Minister, unlike many Western observers, sympathized with the Soviet position. For one thing, Wilgress appeared convinced that the U.S.S.R. was moving towards a period of closer cooperation with the capitalist world. He also believed that the Soviet presence in Poland was of a temporary nature:

My opinion is that Stalin undoubtedly was sincere when he replied on May 4th to the Moscow correspondent of the London Times and the New York Times and advised that without question the Soviet government desires a strong and independent Poland after the defeat of Germany.<sup>8</sup>

One of the recurring themes in the numerous dispatches originating from Kuibyshev in 1943, was the need to recognize the Kremlin's "special interests" in Eastern and Central Europe. Wilgress considered the acceptance of this principle by the Anglo-Saxon powers as a prerequisite to any peace settlement. The following comments taken from a May 6 dispatch are quite indicative of the Canadian Minister's initial reaction to the controversy surrounding the Polish-Soviet dispute;

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Wilgress to King, May 11, 1943.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., May 12, 1943.

It is essential for the future welfare of the world that countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States should work closely with the Soviet Union in the post-war period. This however, will be impossible if the Russians have any sense of injustice through not being treated according to their contribution to the defeat of the Axis or through other countries not recognizing their vital interests in Eastern Europe. Seen from this perspective the vested interests of Polish land-owners, Latvian ship-owners or Estonian politicians seem very insignificant in comparison with the major issues at stake, but the danger is that these vested interests can evoke the natural sympathy for the smaller country and the main issues can become blurred in the haze of endless debate to which such controversies give rise.<sup>9</sup>

Apparently, a large portion of Canada's Polish community disagreed with Wilgress. Editorials pressing for an independent Poland and denouncing Soviet activities in Poland appeared in the Winnipeg-based Czas and Gazetta Polska as well as in Toronto's Kronika Tygodniowa. In September 1943, Montreal's Le Devoir published an interview with Father André Krzesinski, a Polish priest refugee teaching philosophy at the University of Montreal. Among other things, Krzesinski accused the Soviet government of exiling two million Poles to Siberia, of murdering Polish priests and civilians without reason and of killing 15,000 Polish officers near Smolensk. He claimed that the Kremlin severed relations with Poland in order to avoid having to explain these atrocities.<sup>10</sup> Obviously, the article did not please the Soviets. Krzesinski's accusations were described

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., May 6, 1943.

<sup>10</sup> Le Devoir (September 29, 1943).

by the Tass correspondent as "malicious anti-Soviet insinuations given under the pretense of confirming facts supposedly known by Krzesinski."<sup>11</sup> The anti-Soviet attitude of the Polish language press in Canada drew scores of protests from Soviet officials including the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, V. I. Molotov.<sup>12</sup>

There was similar agitation within Canada's Ukrainian community regarding Soviet policies towards the Ukrainian Republic. The Ukrainian community was divided in two factions. The first, known as the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, formed in 1940, grouped all the important Ukrainian organizations together except the communist ones to end internal quarrels and to support the war. The strongest influence on this organization was the Ukrainian National Federation which strongly supported the cause of an independent Ukraine. The other faction, known as the Ukrainian Canadian Association, adopted a pro-Soviet line. It also supported the war but denounced the Ukrainian-Canadian Committee as being fascist.<sup>13</sup> On May 13, 1943, Pravda carried an article by A. Bazomolets, President of the Ukrainian Academy entitled: "Soviet Ukraine and the

<sup>11</sup>P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 353, King to Wilgress, October 15, 1943.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Wilgress to King, June 21, 1943.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., King to Wilgress, May 12, 1943. A detailed account of the various Ukrainian organizations in Canada including a pro-communist Ukrainian Canadian Association can be found in Senator Paul Yuzyk's, The Ukrainians in Manitoba: A Social History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953), pp. 80-112, 186-93.

Ukrainian-German Nationalists in Canada." The author criticized the Ukrainian-Canadian Committee for having submitted a memorandum to the Canadian government advocating a separate and independent Ukrainian state. The right of the group of Canadian Ukrainians to speak for the whole Ukrainian nation was hotly disputed.<sup>14</sup> The following day, an article by Pavlo Tychina appeared in both Izvestia and Pravda, this time praising the Canadian Ukrainian Association.<sup>15</sup> These articles, as well as the remarks made by the Soviet Minister in Canada caused a good deal of concern in Ottawa. In Kuibyshev, they produced something close to panic. Sensing a rift in Canadian-Soviet relations, Wilgress cabled his Prime Minister asking him to issue a statement in the House of Commons denouncing activities and controversies that divide the Members of the United Nations.<sup>16</sup> The reply came on May 28, 1943. Wilgress was notified that although such a statement might be issued if the situation warranted it, "Canadian authorities preferred not to interfere with the activities of foreign language organizations, provided that they remain within the law."<sup>17</sup> The Department of External Affairs realized, though, that any endorsement of Ukrainian nationalism would be resented in Moscow. For this

<sup>14</sup>Pravda (May 13, 1943).

<sup>15</sup>Pravda; Izvestia (May 1, 1943).

<sup>16</sup>P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 343, Wilgress to King, May 23, 1943.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Robertson to Wilgress, May 28, 1943.

reason, N. A. Robertson advised Prime Minister King not to accept an invitation from the Ukrainian-Canadian Committee to attend their national convention in Winnipeg:

Under present conditions, I doubt whether any Minister should accept such an invitation ( . . . ) However careful and correct his remarks, his presence at such a meeting would be construed as some kind of a Canadian endorsement of Ukrainian nationalism which has among its objectives the separation of the Ukraine from the U.S.S.R.<sup>18</sup>

Canada's reluctance to take sides in the Polish-Soviet dispute was quite understandable. Canadian authorities realized that they had no business in proposing border settlements in Eastern and Central Europe. Furthermore, Ottawa could ill-afford to jeopardize relations with Moscow at a time when Canadian representatives were setting up Canada's first diplomatic mission in the U.S.S.R. Still, the Canadian government resented Big Power domination and could not accept that Canada's destinies should be entrusted to three or four large powers.<sup>19</sup> Mackenzie King made it known that his government would not stand idle when the United States, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. worked out a general settlement for Europe. King argued that his country's contribution to the Allied war effort entitled it to an adequate voice in United Nations' councils. In July 1943, King outlined his government's position regarding international

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Robertson to King, June 1, 1943.

<sup>19</sup> J. Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: Peacemaking and Deterrence (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 154.

organizations in the House of Commons;

. . . authority in international affairs must not be concentrated exclusively in the largest powers ( . . . ) A number of new international organizations are likely to be set up as a result of the war. In the view of the government, effective representation on these bodies should neither be restricted to the largest states nor necessarily extended to all states. Representation should be determined on a functional basis which will admit to full membership those countries, large and small, which have the greatest contribution to make to the particular object in question.<sup>20</sup>

The complete story of Canada's struggle to gain admittance to the various United Nations' organizations such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, (UNRRA) need not be told here.<sup>21</sup> Suffice it to mention that Great Britain and the United States were not easily convinced of the need for Canadian representation. For the most part, the preliminary discussions on the establishment of U.N. bodies proved extremely trying and disappointing for Canadian officials.

As it turned out, Canada experienced similar difficulties with the Soviet government. Wilgress soon discovered that Canada's international status was unclear to the Soviets. The discussions on the establishment of a United Nations commission for investigating war crimes brought the

<sup>20</sup> Canada, House of Commons Debates, vol. III, July 9, 1943, p. 4558.

<sup>21</sup> J. L. Granatstein, Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government 1939-1945 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), see chapter 8, "A Nation on the World Stage," pp. 294-327.

situation to a head. The Kremlin insisted that the Soviet Republics no less than the British Dominions had a right to individual representation on this and other United Nations' committees. In an attempt to clarify Canada's international status, Wilgress presented an aide-mémoire to Soviet authorities in defence of Canada's claim to sovereignty. The Canadian Minister was the first to admit that the Soviets had good reason to question Canada's autonomy. He gave the following reasons:

I think we have to admit that there are a number of unimportant but to the Soviet mind significant indications that Canada is still in some respects in a position of subordination to the United Kingdom. Among other things which have come to my notice in recent weeks are the following:

- a) we fly at the Legation on Public Holidays a flag which is scarcely distinguishable from the flag flown on United Kingdom merchant vessels ( . . . . )
- b) until we established this Legation, the British Embassy looked after our interests in the Soviet Union ( . . . . )
- c) we permit the United Kingdom government to present our views and in general represent our interests in the deliberations of the Three Great Powers who have assumed responsibility for the conduct of the war ( . . . . )

it must be apparent to the Soviet Government that the United Kingdom has assumed, with the tacit concurrence of Canada, responsibility of speaking for the British Empire as a whole in the deliberations of the Highest Councils of the United Nations.<sup>22</sup>

In their reply to Canada's aide-mémoire, the Soviets reputed Canada's argument that the Soviet Republics did not enjoy the same degree of independence in international affairs as

<sup>22</sup>P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 352, Wilgress to King, November 17, 1943.

the British Dominions:

The denial on the part of the Canadian Government of the right of the Federated Republics to participation in the United Nations Commission for the investigation of War Crimes cannot be justified by any references to differences in the international status of the Federated Republics on the one hand and the Dominions on the other, especially, as it is apparent in part from one Canadian Legation's aide-memoire of September 9, 1943, that the British Dominions themselves comparatively recently acquired their new status which they now link their participation in international conferences and organizations.<sup>23</sup>

Although the question of representation on the War Crimes Committee was eventually resolved, it remained for Wilgress and the Department of External Affairs to convince the Soviet government that Canada acted independently in foreign affairs.

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., Wilgress to King, November 11, 1943 (aide-memoire submitted by Vychinsky, translated by King).

## CHAPTER V

### WARTIME ASSISTANCE UNDER MUTUAL AID

As seen earlier, Canadian-Soviet relations during the interwar period were almost entirely commercial. As allies engaged in a common struggle, interest in trade took on new proportions. The need to speed up trade negotiations brought proposals for an exchange of diplomatic officials and led to the establishment of direct diplomatic relations between Ottawa and Moscow. While the June 12th agreement enhanced trade opportunities, the immediate prospects for a mutually profitable trade relationship were rather remote. Early German victories in Ukraine together with the continued and extensive bombing of large industrial centres had virtually ruined the Soviet economy. It was clear that wartime trade between Canada and the U.S.S.R. would develop into a one-sided proposition. Canada would be called upon to supply large quantities of metals, foodstuffs and armaments to her new ally. Unfortunately, Soviet reserves in gold and American dollars were inadequate to cover anticipated purchases under the cash and carry policy. Their predicament was, in fact, very similar to Great Britain's. Special financial arrangements had to be devised to overcome this basic problem and to avoid disruptions in Canadian deliveries.

In June 1942, Soviet authorities requested a credit of ten million dollars from the Canadian government to cover past and future wheat purchases. The request was reviewed by officials from various federal departments in Ottawa in consultation with their British counterparts. During these discussions, it was decided that there would be no further commitment to extend the credit once the sum was exhausted. In describing the proposed loan to Massey, Mackenzie King made it clear that his government had no intention of competing with the Lend-Lease Program or with the impending Anglo-American protocol;

The Canadian government has in mind that Russia will obtain the great bulk of its needs in wheat and flour from the United States under the impending protocol. The purpose of the credit would be to clean up the situation arising from past shipments and to provide for any supplies of wheat and flour that Russia may wish to take from Canada in broken stowage or otherwise supplementary to Lend-Lease deliveries.<sup>1</sup>

In August 1942, the concerned federal departments and agencies, notably Trade and Commerce, Finance and the Bank of Canada, finalized the arrangements for the ten million dollar loan. On September 8, 1942, a formal agreement was signed in London between representatives of the Canadian and Soviet governments. As a result of the agreement, the Canadian government undertook to provide the U.S.S.R. with a credit of ten million dollars for the purchase of Canadian

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<sup>1</sup>P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 182, King to Massey, June 19, 1942.

wheat and flour on a delivery basis F.O.B. North American Seaboard. Transportation costs were excluded and the agreement was made retroactive to cover the value of all wheat shipped through the Agency of the Ministry of Food of the United Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> The agreement, although significant, was merely conceived as a short-term measure to settle outstanding and future wheat sales. Other arrangements had to be made to meet Soviet requirements in armaments, metals and manufactured goods.

In May 1943, the government of Canada introduced the War Appropriation Act, also referred to as the Mutual Aid Act. By this act, the sum of one billion dollars was made available to "any of the United Nations to enable them to obtain supplies for the war effort."<sup>3</sup> There was also a provision in the act calling for the creation of a board to administer the funds. The Mutual Aid Board was comprised of the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Munitions and Supply. The Honourable C. D. Howe was appointed Chairman. Canada was by no means the first Allied country to adopt special measures to assist victims of aggression. Canada's neighbour and closest ally, the United States, enacted legislation early in the war to

<sup>2</sup> Canada Treaty Series, no. 13 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1942).

<sup>3</sup> Canada, Statutes of Canada (Ottawa: King's Printer) "An Act for Granting To His Majesty Aid for the Purpose of Making Available Canadian Supplies to the U.N," assented May 20, 1943.

render large-scale assistance to Allied countries.<sup>4</sup> The main beneficiaries of these programs were Britain and the Soviet Union. It may be recalled that during the course of, 1942, the American government had undertaken to supply the U.S.S.R. with approximately one billion dollars worth of goods, both military and civilian, as a result of Lend-Lease agreements. At the same time, the British government made every effort to honour Churchill's June 22nd pledge of assistance to the U.S.S.R. It seemed therefore only logical that Canada should envisage becoming a party to the forthcoming protocol. In April 1943, King informed Wilgress that his government had decided to become a direct party to the Third Protocol subject to negotiation and consultation with the governments of the United Kingdom, the United States and the U.S.S.R.<sup>5</sup> Several months of difficult negotiations followed. Officials from Canada, Great Britain and the United States had to assess Soviet requirements against their own wartime needs. Not surprisingly, Soviet demands often exceeded Canadian supplies and production capabilities. This was particularly true in the case of Valentine tanks, aluminum, Mosquitoe bombers, trucks, mine sweepers, locomotives and copper ingots.<sup>6</sup> Soviet officials also wanted the

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<sup>4</sup>T. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1969), pp. 721-22.

<sup>5</sup>P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 353, King to Wilgress, April 19, 1943.

<sup>6</sup>P.A.C., Department of Trade and Commerce, R.G. 20, vol. 924, Minutes of a meeting on Canadian deliveries, June 23, 1943.

protocol to include not only supplies which the Canadian authorities felt they could definitely commit themselves to deliver, but also those about which there was some doubt. The list of Canadian goods to be shipped under the protocol included items such as gun powder, machine tools, medical supplies, aluminum ingots, flat cars, rails, etc.<sup>7</sup> Further negotiations were required to determine exact quantities and delivery dates.

Canada's decision to participate in the Third Protocol was received warmly by the government of the U.S.S.R. In conveying his government's appreciation, the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Canada implied that the decision would have positive repercussions on future Canada-Soviet trade:

I have the honour to inform you that the government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics highly appreciate the decision of the government of Canada to render aid to the Soviet Union in its struggle against the common enemy of the United Nations - Hitlerite Germany, by making direct deliveries to the Soviet Union of munitions and other supplies. The government of the U.S.S.R. hope that the shipments from Canada will lay foundations for the development of trade relations between our two countries after the War.<sup>8</sup>

The Protocol was finally signed in London on October 19, 1943, between the American, British, Canadian and Soviet governments. The former agreements of this kind had been signed, the first in Moscow on October 1941, the second in

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Tounkin to King, August 24, 1943.

Washington in October 1942. The Third Protocol represented a continuation of the existing arrangements. This was, however, the first time that Canada had taken part as a signatory, though supplies from Canada had previously formed part of the commitments of the United Kingdom and in some cases, that of the United States. Because of the delays in signing the agreement, it was necessary to make the protocol retroactive to June 30, the date upon which the second agreement terminated.<sup>9</sup> On February 11, 1944, an agreement was signed in Ottawa between the government of Canada and the government of the U.S.S.R. whereby Canada agreed to supply war materials to the U.S.S.R. under the War Appropriation Act. Article I of the agreement stipulated that Canada would deliver supplies to the U.S.S.R. "as the government of Canada shall authorize from time to time to be provided."<sup>10</sup> It was understood that the nature, quantity and dates of delivery of the supplies made available by the government of Canada would be determined by negotiations between the two governments and set forth in protocols or other agreements.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, Article IX stipulated that:

<sup>9</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 26 J1, vol. 353, Massey to King, October 16, 1943.

<sup>10</sup> Canada Treaty Series, no. 4 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1944).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

The governments of Canada and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics re-affirm their desire to promote mutually advantageous economic relations between their countries and throughout the world. They declare that their guiding purposes include the adoption of measures designed to promote employment, the production and consumption of goods and the expansion of commerce through appropriate international agreements on commercial policy with the object of contributing, to the attainment of all the economic objectives set forth in the declaration of August 14, 1941, known as the Atlantic Charter.<sup>12</sup>

Through this agreement and subsequent negotiations (The War Appropriation Act of 1943 was extended to cover the fiscal year 1944-1945), Canadian shipments of military equipment, metals, foodstuffs as well as Canadian services, such as ship repairs, amounted to \$23,281,000. in 1943-44, \$97,604,000. in 1944-45 and \$46,370,000. in 1945-46.<sup>13</sup> The total allocated to the U.S.S.R. under the mutual aid program between September 1943 and September 1945 was \$167,255,000.<sup>14</sup> Prime Minister King tabled these figures in the House of Commons in 1946 in response to an allegation made by Canadian Communist Party leader Tim Buck that Canada had held out on a hard-pressed ally through the most crucial days of the war.<sup>15</sup> Mutual aid thus represented the culmination of a long series of measures by which the Canadian government assisted

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Canada, Mutual Aid Board, Final Report (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1946).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Canada, House of Commons Debates, vol. I, March 27, 1946, p. 300.

the United Kingdom and other nations in financing their enormous requirements in Canada. These measures were taken in order to implement a basic policy made by the government early in the war, "a policy of not allowing financial considerations to obstruct the flow of Canadian munitions, raw materials and foodstuffs to Britain."<sup>16</sup> The policy was described in the House of Commons by J. L. Isley, the Minister of Finance, during the debate on the War Appropriations Bill in March 1941 in the following words:

It has been and will continue to be the policy of the government to see that United Kingdom purchases in Canada are not hampered by reason of any lack of Canadian dollars. We have seen and will continue to see that the problem of the deficit is solved.<sup>17</sup>

Although approximately eighty-five percent of the aid extended went to the United Kingdom, a substantial portion of the remainder was directed to the U.S.S.R.<sup>18</sup> Other than through mutual aid agreements, considerable amounts of Canadian supplies were forwarded to the U.S.S.R. as a result of normal trade negotiations. According to the records of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, trade between Canada and the U.S.S.R. during the last four years of the war, was very much one-sided. The import-export figures in dollars were

<sup>16</sup>Canada, Mutual Aid Board, Final Report.

<sup>17</sup>Canada, House of Commons Debates, vol. II, March 21, 1941, p. 1713.

<sup>18</sup>F. A. Knox, "Canada's Balance of International Payments 1940-1945," in Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (1947), p. 357.

as follows:

1942--\$108.00 - \$36,602,778.

1943--\$2,533.00 - \$57,660,335.

1944--\$177,766.00 - \$103,264,280.

1945--\$86,138.00 - \$58,819,525.<sup>19</sup>

Canada's decision to provide aid to the U.S.S.R. resulted from the interaction of diplomacy and considerations of military necessity.<sup>20</sup> Like his British and American counterparts, Mackenzie King recognized the importance of keeping the U.S.S.R. in the war against Nazi Germany. A German victory in the U.S.S.R. would have been a virtual disaster for the Allied camp. The strategy to provide arms and supplies to the Soviet Union was thus mainly brought upon by the military crisis. As the war progressed, the level of economic assistance was increased to meet the requirements of the Soviet counter-offensive. In addition, the various aid programs became an integral part of Allied diplomacy. In this context, it is important to recall Canada's commitment to collective security as well as her growing involvement in Allied diplomacy. By participating in joint ventures such as the Third Protocol, Ottawa was acting in accordance with both of these broad principles. The

<sup>19</sup> Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, Trade of Canada, Year Ending December 1945 (Ottawa: King's Printer).

<sup>20</sup> R. Dawson, The Decision to Aid Russia (Wesport: Greenwood Press, 1974), pp. 290-91.

establishment of diplomatic relations between Canada and the U.S.S.R. in 1942 only strengthened the case for Canadian aid to the Soviet Union. The promise of economic aid would most certainly help to promote friendly relations between Ottawa and Moscow. At the same time, the Canadian government hoped that its wartime generosity would lead to better trade opportunities after the war. This point was clearly made in a dispatch originating from the Canadian Minister in Moscow in 1943:

I do not think that there is anything which we can do at the moment to prepare further the ground for future trade between Canada and the U.S.S.R. A very splendid step forward has been taken by Canada's becoming a party to the Third Protocol. This led to the visit to Canada of Mr. V. A. Sergeev, Vice-Commissar of Foreign Trade, who has returned most impressed with our industrial capacity ( . . . ) The prospects for our future trade with the Soviet Union depends very largely on how generous the United States are in providing reconstruction supplies. Obviously it will be difficult for us to compete with the United States in generosity, but the demand on this country during the first few years after the war will be so great that there is ample room for Canadian supplies in addition to those which will be sent from the United States.<sup>21</sup>

Significantly, there was little opposition in Canada towards Ottawa's decision to provide aid to its new ally. In fact, many leading Canadian newspapers had come out in support of Canadian aid soon after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union. In any event, King could defend his government's decision by pointing to the policies adopted by Canada's

<sup>21</sup> P.A.C., King Papers, M.G. 25 J1, vol. 353, Wilgress to King, November 6, 1943.

closest allies; the United States and Great Britain. In proceeding with the various aid agreements with the Soviet government, King had correctly assumed that the hatred towards Nazi Germany in Canada easily outweighed any animosity for the Soviet régime.

## CONCLUSION

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Canada and the U.S.S.R. in 1942 marked the beginning of a new era in Canadian foreign policy, one where Canada sought greater involvement in international affairs. To be sure, the departure from the traditional policy of avoiding commitments did not occur abruptly nor was it totally planned by Canadian policy-makers. As we have seen, the Canadian-Soviet rapprochement was largely the product of circumstances which were beyond the control of the Canadian government. After almost two years of being at diplomatic odds, Canada and the U.S.S.R. suddenly became wartime allies by virtue of their common belligerency with Germany. Ottawa's attitude towards the Soviet régime did not change because the U.S.S.R. was at war with Germany but Mackenzie King welcomed the U.S.S.R.'s entry into the war and publicly supported Churchill's pledge of assistance to the Soviet government.

While the Canadian government was willing to follow Great Britain's lead and support the Soviet war effort, it was not prepared to allow its relationship with the Kremlin to be the sole concern of British diplomats. For one thing, the practice of utilizing the British Foreign Service as the official Channel of communication with the Soviet government was both cumbersome and time-consuming. It also became

apparent that the complex supply negotiations with the Soviets could best be handled by Canadian officials. There was also the question of Canada's growing international status:

By 1942, MacKenzie King and his advisors considered that Canada's contribution to the Allied War effort warranted greater recognition for Canada as an autonomous Allied power. In establishing diplomatic relations with U.S.S.R., King saw an opportunity to advance the cause of Canadian autonomy and, at the same time, lessen his country's dependency on the British Foreign Service. It was this desire for greater autonomy and recognition that prompted Canadian authorities to propose an exchange of diplomatic rather than consular representatives with the Soviet Union in 1942 and later request the elevation of the Canadian Legation in Moscow to the rank of Embassy. The diplomatic agreement with the U.S.S.R. can also be viewed as a manifestation of Canada's determination to cooperate with all nations to hasten the defeat of Nazi Germany. MacKenzie King recognized the importance of maintaining and improving communications with a country that could make a valuable contribution to the Allied cause. King soon indicated that he was willing to do more than issue encouraging statements to assist his hard-pressed ally. Special economic measures were introduced to enable the Soviets to acquire Canadian arms, supplies and foodstuffs during the most crucial period of the war. These gestures demonstrated that Canada no longer

wished to play a passive role in allied diplomacy. As the war progressed, Canada gradually assumed greater responsibilities in Allied councils. The old policy of non-involvement and avoiding commitments had been discarded although, so long as MacKenzie King remained at the head of the government, not forgotten<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. cannot however be solely attributed to diplomatic and military considerations. It is possible to discern another vital consideration which influenced Canadian policy at the time; the desire to increase exports to the Soviet Union. The June 12 agreement would enable Canadian authorities to obtain first-hand information on the Soviet market to prepare the ground for post-war trade. Significantly, Canada's first Minister to the U.S.S.R. was a trade expert rather than an experienced diplomat. It can be argued of course that Wilgrès' appointment was due to the acute shortage of Senior Canadian foreign officers. Yet, the decision to select the Deputy Minister of Trade was consistent with the main, if not only, orientation of Canada's pre-war "Soviet policy". Similarly, it is clear that economic considerations were chiefly responsible for Moscow's sudden interest in Canada. Throughout the interwar period, the Soviets had desired a normalization of Canadian-Soviet relations as

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<sup>1</sup> J.L. Granatstein, Canada's War, p. 421.

part of their policy to increase trade with the Capitalist world. But Canadian-Soviet relations were never a priority of Soviet foreign policy. The German invasion changed matters. Canada's vast resources and expanding arms industry made her a most promising diplomatic partner. The Soviets urgently needed Canadian arms and supplies and could ill-afford any delays caused by a lack of communication between the two capitals.

Established in a period of Allied cooperation, Canadian-Soviet relations remained cordial throughout the war. Optimistic statements and declarations originating from both capitals predicted a new era in Canadian-Soviet relations, one based on mutual respect, understanding and friendship. It was even suggested that Canada might become the Arctic Link of friendship between the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> Canadians greatly admired the heroics of the Soviet People and responded generously to the campaigns to raise funds and supplies for their mighty ally. The Soviet government certainly appreciated Canada's wartime aid and treated the Canadian Ambassador almost as an equal with the British and American representatives in Moscow. Wilgress wrote after the war "I had felt myself at the very top in Soviet esteem ranking just after the British and American Ambassadors".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> B. Soward, Canada in World Affairs, From Normandy to Paris 1944-1946 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> Eayrs, In Defence of Canada, p. 41.

At first glance, it would appear that the Soviet Union was the only party truly to benefit from the resumption of diplomatic relations. Through the diplomatic agreement, the Soviets were able to procure large quantities of supplies under favourable credit arrangements. Canadian aid did not decide the outcome of the war on the Eastern Front, but it did help to strengthen Soviet resistance to the German invader. Yet, despite the fact that the wartime relationship was somewhat one-sided, the resumption did serve Canadian interests. The U.S.S.R. proved to be a valuable ally during the most crucial period of the war. Canadian diplomats also acquired experience in dealing with the Soviets. Wilgress and his staff were able to obtain first-hand information on the Soviet system and better understand the methods of Soviet foreign policy. The knowledge and experience gained through these contacts would prove invaluable in future years. This alone was sufficient justification for having resumed diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R.

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## ABSTRACT

Canadian-Soviet relations were almost entirely limited to trade matters during the interwar period. Canadian trade policies toward the U.S.S.R. followed closely those of Great Britain since most formal communication between Ottawa and Moscow had to be channelled through the British Foreign Service. Canada enjoyed a relatively lucrative trade relationship with the U.S.S.R. throughout most of the interwar period and Canadian manufacturers held great expectations in the potential of the Soviet market. The Kremlin's decision to sign a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in 1939 and its acts of aggression in Poland and Finland during the first months of the war created a great deal of resentment in Canada. In response to the Soviets' apparent complicity with Germany, Ottawa introduced measures to control exports to the U.S.S.R. in 1940. Restrictions on exports to the U.S.S.R. remained in force until June 1941 when Hitler launched his surprise attack on the Soviet Union. After almost two years of being undeclared enemies, Canada and the U.S.S.R. suddenly became wartime allies by virtue of their common belligerency with Germany. In February 1942, Canadian and Soviet officials agreed to an exchange of diplomatic representatives in order to improve communications between their respective governments and expedite wartime trade negotiations. Shortly thereafter,

Ottawa proposed a resumption of direct diplomatic relations between Canada and the U.S.S.R. In the Fall of 1942, Soviet diplomats arrived in Ottawa and immediately began negotiating for Canadian arms and supplies on behalf of their government.

Canada's first Diplomatic Mission to the U.S.S.R., headed by former Deputy Minister of Trade L. D. Wilgress, settled in Kuibyshev, a small town on the Volga River, in March 1943. Established in a period of allied cooperation, Canadian-Soviet relations remained cordial throughout the war. Optimistic statements and declarations originating from both capitals predicted a new era in Canadian-Soviet relations, one based on mutual respect, understanding and friendship. The resumption of diplomatic relations generally served the interests of both countries during the war and helped to eliminate some of the mistrust between the two governments. Through the diplomatic agreement, the Soviets were able to procure arms and supplies under favourable credit arrangements while Canadian diplomats acquired valuable diplomatic experience and first hand information on the Soviet System. The resumption of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. and other wartime allies such as China marked the beginning of a new era in Canadian foreign policy, one where Canada sought greater involvement in international affairs.