

Conference on Soviet-American Relations, 1945-1950

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In 1986 representatives of the National Committee of Soviet Historians and the International Research and Exchanges Board of the United States agreed to sponsor a series of conferences between Soviet and American historians and political scientists on Soviet-American diplomatic relations since 1945. This was the first agreement ever between Soviet and American scholars to undertake a comprehensive joint examination of the post-World War II relationship between their two countries, based on the maximum possible use of archival and oral as well as published source materials.

The first conference in this series, dealing with the 1945-50 period, took place in Moscow on June 16-18, 1987. Ambassador George F. Kennan headed the American delegation, which included M. Steven Fish (representing Alexander George, of Stanford University), George Herring (University of Kentucky), Michael J. Hogan (Ohio State University), David Holloway (Stanford University), Deborah Welch Larson (Columbia University), Vojtech Mastny (Boston University), Ernest R. May (Harvard University), Thomas G. Paterson (University of Connecticut), as well as the

two conference organizers, John Lewis Gaddis (Ohio University), and William Taubman (Amherst College).

Academician S. L. Tikhvinsky, Chairman of the National Committee of Soviet Historians, headed the Soviet delegation, which included R. G. Bogdanov (Institute of the USA and Canada), A. Yu. Borisov (Moscow State Institute of International Relations), N. I. Egorova (Institute of General History), A. M. Filitov (Institute of General History), N. S. Ivanov (Institute of General History), V. L. Mal'kov (Institute of General History), B. I. Marushkin (Institute of General History), A. I. Schapiro (Institute of World Economy and International Relations), A. I. Utkin (Institute of the USA and Canada), and the Soviet conference organizer, A. O. Chubarian, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of Soviet Historians.

The conference sessions focused on the following topics, with presentation of a Soviet and an American paper on each of them: World War II cooperation and its legacies; postwar planning; economic reconstruction; military and diplomatic strategies; nuclear weapons; crisis management; Europe as an issue in Soviet-American relations; and perceptions and misperceptions.

Although the American delegation was most hospitably received and our discussions proceeded in a thoroughly professional manner, it rapidly became clear that substantial differences still remain in the way Soviet and American scholars treat the events of the early Cold War. Despite striking manifestations of *glasnost* in other areas of contemporary Soviet life, we detected no discernible tendency on the

part of Soviet scholars, at least in writing, to criticize any aspect of their country's diplomacy during the period in question: the Cold War remains, for them, very much a one-sided affair, with principal responsibility for it resting almost entirely with the United States and its allies. Oral discussions, particularly when these could take place on an individual basis, produced more balanced assessments, but these have yet to find their way into print. There appear to be several reasons for this:

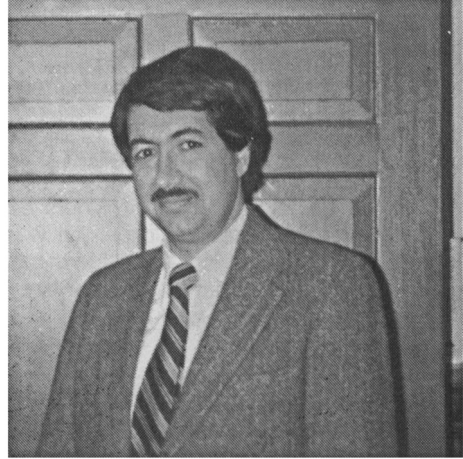
First, although there is now a considerable amount of discussion among Soviet scholars about the need to fill in what General Secretary Gorbachev has called the "blank pages" in Soviet history, this injunction does not appear to have been extended, as of yet, to include postwar foreign policy.

Second, Soviet scholars still lack access to, or (for those few who have such access) the authority to cite or quote from, their own Foreign Ministry and other state archives for the period in question. They are forced, accordingly, to rely heavily on public statements of policy made at the time, official histories of Soviet foreign policy, and of course the very large volume of material that has been made available from archival sources in the United States and Great Britain.

Third, Soviet scholars do not appear to have exploited, in any systematic way, the use of memoirs or oral history interviews with surviving participants in the events in question. (A significant memoir literature exists, for example, in the field of Soviet nuclear weapons development.)

It should be emphasized, though, that our Soviet colleagues were frank in acknowledging to us the difficulties under which they work; they are hopeful as well about the possibility that, within the context of reforms now taking place, conditions for research into post-1945 foreign policy issues may soon improve.

Five more conferences in this series are to take place over the next five years, all under the co-sponsorship of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and the International Research and Exchanges Board. The second one, which will cover the period 1950-55, will be held in the United States in the fall of 1988.



HOWARD J. SILVER

McCarran-Walter Act Amended to Remove Ideological Restrictions

Howard J. Silver

Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)

The Congress has adopted and the White House has approved an amendment to the State Department Authorization bill that states: "no alien may be denied a visa or excluded from admission into the United States, subject to restrictions or conditions on entry into the United States, or subject to deportation because of any past, current, or expected beliefs, statements or associations which, if engaged in by a United States citizen in the United States, would be protected under the Constitution of the United States." This could help prevent visa problems for people wishing to attend the International Political Science Association convention in Washington in 1988 and other scholarly conferences in the United States.

Aliens could still be excluded or deported under the executive branch's authority to protect national security and foreign policy, except in the situations