

Chapter 1 : BBC - History - Ernest Bevin

A critical examination of the labour government and trades Union Congress in the immediate postwar period, this book argues that the Cold War was not just a traditional conflict between states but also an attempt to contain the growth of radical working-class movements at home and abroad.

Early life[edit] Bevin was born in the village of Winsford in Somerset , England , to Diana Bevin who, since , had described herself as a widow. His father is unknown. At the age of eleven, he went to work as a labourer, then as a lorry driver in Bristol , where he joined the Bristol Socialist Society. He spoke with a strong West Country accent, so much so that on one occasion listeners at Cabinet had difficulty in deciding whether he was talking about "Hugh and Nye Gaitskell and Bevan " or "you and I". He had developed his oratorical skills from his time as a Baptist lay preacher, which he had given up as a profession to become a full-time labour activist. They had one child, a daughter, Queenie Politically, he was on the right-wing of the Labour Party, strongly opposed to communism and direct actionâ€”allegedly partly due to anti-Semitic paranoia and seeing communism as a "Jewish plot" against Britain. At the general election , Bevin was persuaded by the remaining leaders of the Labour Party to contest Gateshead , on the understanding that if successful he would remain as general secretary of the TGWU. During the late Thirties, for instance, Bevin helped to instigate a successful campaign by the TUC to extend paid holidays to a wider proportion of the workforce. But during this period he became increasingly involved in foreign policy. He was a firm opponent of fascism and of British appeasement of the fascist powers. In later years Bevin gave Attlee whom he privately referred to as "little Clem" staunch support, especially in when Morrison and Cripps led further intrigue against Attlee. During the war Bevin was responsible for diverting nearly 48, military conscripts to work in the coal industry these workers became known as the Bevin Boys while using his position to secure significant improvements in wages and working conditions for working-class people. Bevin remained Minister of Labour until when Labour left the Coalition government. Byrnes and Harry S. After the general election, Attlee had it in mind to appoint Bevin as Chancellor and Hugh Dalton as Foreign Secretary , but ultimately changed his mind and swapped them round. One of the reasons may well have been the poor relations which existed between Bevin and Herbert Morrison , who was scheduled to play a leading role in Labour domestic policy. In praise of Bevin, his Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office Alexander Cadogan wrote, "He knows a great deal, is prepared to read any amount, seems to take in what he does read, and is capable of making up his own mind and sticking up for his and our point of view against anyone. Folly argues that Bevin was not automatically pro-American. Instead he pushed his embassy in Washington to project a view of Britain that neutralized American criticisms. He was frustrated with American attitudes. Bevin was not coldly pragmatic, says Folly, nor was he uncritically pro-American; nor was he a puppet manipulated by the British Foreign Office. Additional fundsâ€”that did not have to be repaidâ€”came from the Marshall Plan in , which also required Britain to modernize its business practices and remove trade barriers. One early attempt was the Dunkirk Treaty with France in NATO was primarily aimed as a defensive measure against Soviet expansion, but it also helped bring its members closer together and enabled them to modernize their forces along parallel lines, and encourage arms purchases from Britain. Yet at this stage Britain still maintained a network of client states in the Middle East Egypt until , Iraq and Jordan until , major bases in such places as Cyprus and Suez until and expected to remain in control of parts of Africa for many more years, Bevin approving the construction of a huge new base in East Africa. After the war Britain helped France and the Netherlands recover their Far Eastern empires, hopeful that this could lead towards the formation of a third superpower bloc. He was a leading advocate for British combat operations in the Korean War. The decision was taken in secret by a small Cabinet committee. Those ministers who would have opposed the bomb on grounds of cost, Hugh Dalton and Sir Stafford Cripps , were excluded from the meeting in January at which the final decision was taken. Bevin failed to secure the stated British objectives in this area of foreign policy, which included a peaceful settlement of the situation and the avoidance of involuntary population transfers. Bevin was undeniably a plain-spoken man, some of whose remarks struck many as insensitive. Critics have accused him

of being anti-Semitic. One remark which caused particular anger was made when President Truman was pressing Britain to immediately admit , Jewish refugees, survivors of the Holocaust who wanted to immigrate to Palestine. Bevin told a Labour Party meeting that American pressure to admit Jews was being applied because "There has been agitation in the United States, and particularly in New York, for , Jews to be put in Palestine. I hope I will not be misunderstood in America if I say that this was proposed by the purest of motives. They did not want too many Jews in New York. Byrnes , the United States Secretary of State. According to historian Howard Sachar , his political foe, Richard Crossman , a fellow Labour Party member of parliament and a pro-Zionist member of the post-war Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry into the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine , characterised his outlook during the dying days of the Mandate as "corresponding roughly with The Protocols of the Elders of Zion ", a Tsarist fabrication written to inflame anti-Semitic prejudice. At the reconvened London Conference in January , the Jewish negotiators were only prepared to accept partition and the Arab negotiators only a unitary state which would automatically have had an Arab majority. Neither would accept limited autonomy under British rule. When no agreement could be reached, Bevin threatened to hand the problem over to the United Nations. The threat failed to move either side, the Jewish representatives because they believed that Bevin was bluffing and the Arabs because they believed that their cause would prevail before the General Assembly. Bevin accordingly announced that he would "ask the UN to take the Palestine question into consideration. The Arab armies were led by Jordan, the most effective state, whose military forces were trained and led by British officers. The remainder was divided between Jordan and Egypt. Hundreds of thousands of, overwhelmingly Arab, civilians had become displaced. The Haganah carried out less direct attacks, until the King David Hotel bombing , after which it restricted itself to illegal immigration activities. His ashes are buried in Westminster Abbey. After the broadcast, Phillips took Attlee to the hospitality room for a drink and in order to make conversation said:

Chapter 2 : British Labour and the Cold War : Peter Weiler :

In the Cold War battle for hearts and minds Britain was the first country to formulate a coordinated global response to communist propaganda. In January, the British government launched a new.

Earlier this week it emerged Mr Corbyn had hosted Mr Sarkocy " who was posted to Britain as a diplomat under a fake identity " in the House of Commons. The Labour leader insisted he had no idea Mr Sarkocy, who was actually working for the Czech secret police and was later expelled from Britain by Margaret Thatcher, was a spy. At his home in rural Slovakia, the year-old added: He was getting money from us. Jeremy Corbyn is a man who wants to lead this country as our Prime Minister yet has repeatedly sided with our enemies. The British public has an absolute right to know what went on. But he revealed that the Labour leader had helped him build contacts. However, Mr Sarkocy " who at the time used the alias Lieutenant Jan Dymic " said they met more often than the three times listed in archived records. He said Mr Corbyn was a regular at events within the Czech embassy in Kensington, London, at the time. The ex-spy claimed the then backbench MP was also in touch with other StB agents working from within the agency. Asked if he met Mr Corbyn on more occasions than documented, he said: He [Corbyn] put us in touch with other people " He knew I was there as a diplomat. It was the same. There was no reason to stress that I was working for the StB because I was working in diplomacy. The binding act can be in written form or verbal. Three years after Mr Sarkocy arrived in London posing as a diplomat in the Czech embassy, he was evicted by Mrs Thatcher for his role in a spy ring with three others. The ex-spy, who was renowned by bosses for his innovative ways of cultivating sources, yesterday bragged about his ability to work inside the British system. Hinting at his proximity to other MPs during his trips to the Commons, he added: There was a really good whisky. It is great to be on the terrace and looking at the River Thames. The Labour leader hosted the pair in the Commons in July despite warnings they were a threat to national security. The Cuban spies were part of the Miami Five, a group arrested in and found guilty in of trying to infiltrate US military installations. Gonzalez was released in , while Hernandez was let out in Their appeal was upheld. At the time, there was significant concern that spies from behind the Iron Curtain were targeting members of the Labour Party for state secrets. Mr Sarkocy, an engineering graduate, moved to London in May Experts have said the documented information points to the Labour leader being cultivated as a possible source rather than serving as an active informant. Last night, a spokesman for Mr Corbyn said: These claims are a ridiculous smear and entirely false. His story has more plot holes in it than a bad James Bond movie. In the mids, the USSR began a new agent recruitment strategy that involved attracting bright young Communists or Communist sympathisers from leading universities. They were told to break all links with other Communists and use their talents and educational success to penetrate the corridors of power. It followed a long campaign by the Security Service to persuade successive governments of the need for the expulsions. Over the previous two decades, the Security Service acknowledged:

Chapter 3 : British Labour Party Archives - New Cold War: Ukraine and Beyond

British Labour and the Cold War by Peter Weiler, , available at Book Depository with free delivery worldwide.

In addition, several small socialist groups had formed around this time with the intention of linking the movement to political policies. It was during this period that British socialism began to make headway in local government. In 1889, a "Progressive" party composed of Fabians and British Liberals took control of London County Council at the first elections held there. This was the first council to have substantial socialist influence, and carried out a programme of municipalisation, while constructing some of the first social housing in England and increasing public spending on services such as the Fire Brigade. A few months later, Jowett founded a branch of the Independent Labour Party in that city. As a member of Bradford City Council, Jowett was responsible for the passage of several important reforms that were eventually adopted by other local authorities. In 1896, for instance, Bradford became the first local authority in Britain to provide free school meals, while a successful campaign led to the clearing of a slum area and its replacement with new houses. Jowett was also a supporter of reforming the Poor Law, and attempted to improve the quality of the food given to the children in the Bradford Workhouse after being elected as a Poor Law Guardian. In 1900, West Ham borough became the first ever Labour council. Keir Hardie, the leader of the party believed that to obtain success in parliamentary elections, it would be necessary to join with other left-wing groups. Steels, proposed in his union branch that the Trades Union Congress call a special conference to bring together all left-wing organisations and form them into a single body that would sponsor Parliamentary candidates. The motion was passed at all stages by the TUC, and the proposed conference was held at the Congregational Memorial Hall on Farringdon Street on 26 and 27 February. He had the difficult task of keeping the various strands of opinions in the LRC united. The judgment effectively made strikes illegal since employers could recoup the cost of lost business from the unions. Keir Hardie, who had taken a leading role in getting the party established, was elected as Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party in effect, the Leader, although only by one vote over David Shackleton after several ballots. The Fabian Society provided much of the intellectual stimulus for the party. The Liberals, who were eager to cut deadweight electoral losses to the Conservatives, arrived at a list of 30 constituencies in which they would "stand down", thereby giving the LRC free run against Conservatives in exchange for some sway over LRC campaign planks. Winning 25 out of the 30 seats in question, Labour helped H. It formed an alliance with the Liberal Party that allowed for cross support in elections, and permitted the emergence of a small labour contingent in Parliament. It was a temporary arrangement until the 1920s, when the Labour Party was strong enough to act on its own, and the Liberals were in an irreversible decline. The causes were subtle social changes in the working class that produced the younger generation that wanted to act independently. Michael Childs argues that the younger generation had reason to prefer Labour over Liberal political styles. Social factors included secularized elementary education with a lesser role for Dissenting Protestantism; the "New Unionism" after brought unskilled workers into a movement previously dominated by the skilled workers; [19] and new leisure-time activities, especially the music hall and sports, enthralled youth while repelling the older generation of Liberal voters. Childs notes that the electoral reforms added many young working-class voters, and the passing of older Liberal-oriented age cohorts during the 1880s enabled Labour to supplant the Liberals. The governing Liberals were unwilling to repeal this judicial decision with primary legislation. The height of Liberal compromise was to introduce a wage for Members of Parliament to remove the need to involve the Trade Unions. By 1900, there were about Labour representatives sitting on municipal Councils of various kinds, not including a few County councilors in the mining areas, or a much larger number on Boards of Guardians, Parish Councils, and District Councils. Aside from education, and the feeding and medical inspection and treatment of schoolchildren, the issues which the Labour Party pressed most urgently in local government were the local provision of work for the unemployed, the eight-hour workday, the adoption and enforcement of the Fair Wages Clause in public contracts, and fair wages and conditions for local authority employees. In some areas particularly Birmingham and Glasgow there was active pressure in support of municipal housing and slum clearance schemes, while there was also

continued agitation in relation to the Board of guardians for improved treatment both of the unemployed and other classes of paupers, particularly the disabled and the aged. House-building, midway between a public health service and a trading enterprise, became one of the main planks in the Labour municipal platform. However, the invasion of Belgium and the surge of pro-war attitudes among the membership of the party led increasingly to support of the war. Ramsay MacDonald continued to oppose the war, but he quickly resigned as party leader and was replaced by Arthur Henderson, who was strongly committed to defeating Germany. Asquith wanted the co-operation of the trade union movement to greatly expand munitions production. Henderson became President of the Board of Education and served as adviser to Asquith on labour issues. Minor positions were given to G. Roberts and William Bruce. In December, when Asquith was replaced by David Lloyd George, more Labour leaders were included in more important positions. Arthur Henderson resigned from the Cabinet in amid calls for party unity to be replaced by George Barnes. Overall, however, the majority of the movement continued to support the war for the duration of the conflict, and the British Labour Party, unlike most of its equivalents on the Continent, did not split over the war. This resulted in a range of largely spontaneous protests in which were then often co-ordinated by local Labour movements, such as that in Glasgow, where the ILP played a leading role. This forced the government to pass legislation which fixed wartime rents at pre-war levels. This was significant in that it showed labour to be the party that would defend working-class interests in housing, more than its rivals, while also helping Labour to move away from trade union related issues towards areas which had some direct appeal to women, in particular. In addition, as argued by Andrew Thorpe, it also "added credibility to the idea of state action to control market forces which disadvantaged the working class. The Labour Party pushed hard for high taxation of war profits, rationing, and other controls, and in with J. Clynes at the Food Commission and in as Controller, price controls were introduced which stabilised food prices, while rationing, which came into operation at the beginning of, ensuring a real degree of "fair play. The Co-operative Party later reached an electoral agreement with the Labour Party. The Communist Party of Great Britain was refused affiliation between and With the Liberals in disarray Labour won seats in, making it the second largest political group in the House of Commons and the official opposition to the Conservative government. After the election the now-rehabilitated Ramsay MacDonald was voted the first official leader of the Labour Party. Progress continued in local government. This established the first all-Labour local council to be elected in England. They resulted in the appointment of Clarice Shaw, Ald. Hyde and Jessie Stephen. Because the government had to rely on the support of the Liberals, it was unable to get any arguably socialist legislation passed by the House of Commons. The most significant measure was the Wheatley Housing Act which began a building programme of, homes for rent to working-class families. The government collapsed after only nine months when the Liberals voted for a Select Committee inquiry into the Campbell Case, a vote which MacDonald had declared to be a vote of confidence. The ensuing general election saw the publication, four days before polling day, of the hoaxed Zinoviev letter, which implicated Labour in a plot for a Communist revolution in Britain, and the Conservatives were returned to power, although Labour increased its vote from The Zinoviev letter is now generally believed to have been a forgery. Ramsay MacDonald continued with his policy of opposing strike action, including the General Strike, arguing that the best way to achieve social reforms was through the ballot box. They learned a lesson and switched to a policy of deliberate media engagement, notably with the BBC, which proved successful in the long run. However, MacDonald was still reliant on Liberal support to form a minority government. Under the Coal Mines Act, for instance, marketing schemes for output and price regulation were set up, while a commission was appointed to promote schemes of unification. The Pensions Act of granted pensions to over, children, old people, and widows who had previously been excluded from the pensions system. By the end of the unemployment rate had doubled to over two and a half million. All of this whilst tax revenues were falling. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Snowden refused to permit deficit spending. When this was repeatedly turned down, Mosley resigned from the government in February and went on to form the New Party, and later the British Union of Fascists after he converted to Fascism. Under pressure from its Liberal allies as well as the Conservative opposition who feared that the budget was unbalanced, the Labour government appointed a committee headed by Sir George May to review the state of public finances. The May

Report of July urged public-sector wage cuts and large cuts in public spending notably in payments to the unemployed in order to avoid a budget deficit. Several senior ministers such as Arthur Henderson and J. Clynes threatened to resign rather than agree to the cuts. The dispute over spending and wage cuts split the Labour government; as it turned out, fatally. The cabinet repeatedly failed to agree to make cuts to spending or introduce tariffs. The resulting political deadlock caused investors to take fright, and a flight of capital and gold further de-stabilised the economy. In response, MacDonald, on the urging of the king agreed to form a National Government, with the Conservatives and the small group of Liberals. On 24 August MacDonald submitted the resignation of his ministers and led a small number of his senior colleagues, most notably Snowden and Dominions Secretary J. Thomas, in forming the National Government with the other parties. MacDonald was vehemently denounced by the Labour Party as a "traitor" and a "rat" for what they saw as his betrayal. The only former Labour cabinet member who survived the landslide was the pacifist George Lansbury, who accordingly became party leader. The party experienced a further split in when the Independent Labour Party, which for some years had been increasingly at odds with the Labour leadership, opted to disaffiliate from the Labour Party. The ILP embarked on a long drawn out decline. The role of the ILP within the Labour Party was taken up for a time by the Socialist League, which operated inside the Labour Party and was led by Stafford Cripps, which attracted several thousand teachers and intellectuals. At the conference Somerville Hastings of the Socialist Medical Association moved a resolution, which was carried, calling for the establishment of a State Medical Service and in Conference unanimously accepted an official document on a National Health Service largely prepared by SMA members. Party leader Attlee avoided economics. By contrast, the small surviving Liberal party had elaborate analyses and proposals thanks to its experts such as John Maynard Keynes and William Beveridge. When Labour came to power in 1945, it discovered there were no plans on how to conduct nationalisation. No preparation had been made for the shortages in coal that experts had warned was coming. Attlee and his fellow leaders based their postwar policies on wartime experiences. See Abyssinia Crisis [46] Lansbury had to resign. Mild, unassuming and modest Attlee was initially regarded as a weak caretaker leader. However his pragmatism, command of information, and brokering abilities made him highly effective in backstage negotiations and manoeuvres. Attlee became the longest serving party leader, and one of its most successful. Spain discredited the once-dominant pacifist element. Nevertheless, they remained a small weak party in Parliament. Local Labour reforms in the inter-war period[edit] Although Labour remained out of office for most of the inter-war period, it was able to control many local authorities and put its socialist principles into practice on a small scale. The Labour-controlled local authorities, and also those in which Labour was the strongest single party, had in practice to concentrate mainly on making the most of the opportunities offered to them by national legislation especially in the fields of housing, education, public health services, and, after 1945, the services transferred to them from the Boards of Guardians. In all these fields, Labour had a notably good local government record. Cole, A History of the Labour Party from 1918 to 1964 [17] During the inter-war period, Labour in local government sought to use the power of municipal authority to improve the working and living environments of its primarily working-class constituents. The functions of local government provided Labour Party members with experience in office, and provided them with the opportunity to improve the living standards of its constituents through measures such as improvements in housing and health care, the provision of maternity clinics, and free milk and meals for schoolchildren.

A critical examination of the labour government and Trades Union Congress in the immediate postwar period, this book argues that the Cold War was not just a traditional conflict between states but.

Print The postwar period was paradoxical for the U. It had grown through a series of dramatic struggles and organizing drives into a mass movement embracing millions of workers. But it also suffered major setbacks at the hands of the government and the employers by the end of the s. After the war, the U. The Truman Doctrine proclaimed the U. The founding statement of the newly formed Americans for Democratic Action reflected the arrogant confidence of U. The witch-hunts of the s are known to most for what they did to popular entertainers and leading government figures. Most people are aware of the Hollywood blacklist that destroyed the lives and careers of hundreds of actors and screenwriters. In other words, the ax fell first on the working-class movement. THE strike wave, while the largest in U. The stormy years of rank-and-file mass action, mass pickets, factory sit-downs and initiative from below was replaced by a greater degree of control from the more conservative union leadership at the top. This was revealed in the way the strikes were conducted: Leaders bent over backward to forestall strikes and, once they broke out, strove to bring the strikes to an end as quickly as possible. Not only did union leaders fail to resist Taft-Hartley, but the notorious anti-communist affidavit that unions were required to sign in order to get NLRB recognition became the cue for union leaders to instigate a massive purge of communists and other leftists from the unions. Union heads used the extreme climate of intolerance to consolidate their power and to eliminate the influence of the Communist Party CP and other "troublemakers. Initially, resistance from rank-and-file workers was too strong to create a union red scare. Sensing the mood, Murray called off the campaign. The declaration stated, "we resent and reject efforts of the Communist Party or other political parties and their adherents to interfere in the affairs of the CIO. Within weeks, various local CIO unions and statewide bodies adopted clauses barring CP members and members of any "communist" organization from holding union office. While CIO leaders railed against "outside influence" in the unions, they brought in the rabidly anti-communist Association of Catholic Trade Unionists to aid in the witch-hunts. Increasingly, open discussion was quashed, as Murray moved to centralize bureaucratic control and wipe out all dissent in the various locals. Minority reports were disallowed at conventions in , and the national executive granted itself the power to take organizational measures against recalcitrant state and local CIO councils. In cities such as Detroit and New York, CP-led trade union councils were simply short-circuited either by direct appointment of new, loyal heads, or by the creation of new councils that superseded the old ones. The purges created a climate that made it impossible for trade union militants to operate for fear of expulsion and outright physical violence. When Migas rose to speak, Murray whipped up other delegates into a frenzy. When Migas tried to slip out of the hall, he was followed outside and savagely beaten. On the following day, Murray easily passed a constitutional amendment barring communists and "other subversives" from holding union office. Eighteen Trotskyists had already been tried and imprisoned in for opposition to the war under the Smith Act, which made it a federal crime to advocate the violent overthrow of the U. By the end of , there had been indictments under the Smith Act leading to convictions. The combined sentences totaled years. Dozens of CP leaders spent months of jail, either awaiting trial or serving out 3- to year sentences. Many defendants--and many of their lawyers--served months in jail for "contempt" charges hurled against them by judges caught up in the anti-communist mania. Using the Walter-McCarran Act of , which authorized the government to deport aliens who advocated violent overthrow or who were members of organizations that did so, the government instituted deportation proceedings against hundreds of militants born outside the U. Many states passed their own anti-subversion laws under which hundreds of communists were jailed and harassed. Connecticut law, for example, made it a crime to print "scurrilous or abusive matter, concerning the form of government in the United States," and Tennessee made death the maximum penalty for "unlawful advocacy" of the overthrow of the U. Fellow workers were asked to spy on each other in order to turn in anyone who might be considered "subversive. The climate was so frenzied that merely the accusation of communism or a subpoena by a congressional committee was enough to

prompt an employer to dismiss the accused employee. Militants in and outside the CP were central to building the trade union movement up to what it had become. The red scare drove militants out of the unions and strengthened the hand of the trade union leaders against their own members. The quashing of union democracy forced workers into the straightjacket of Cold War ideology, severely weakening the labor movement. It has yet to recover to this day. Where the CP had gained control of some key unions, its leaders behaved no differently from other union bureaucrats toward the rank and file and toward opposition. During the war, for example, CP-led unions had dealt mercilessly with rank-and-file workers who want to resist the no-strike pledge. The national leadership of the Maritime Union collaborated with the Coast Guard and the National Maritime Commission in victimizing militants. In the post-war battles between the CP union leaders and their right-wing counterparts, many militants felt caught between, unable to distinguish between the policies and practices of either side. Moreover, many CP activists and leaders were hardly open or willing to defend themselves politically. Moreover, all CP delegates were instructed at the convention to vote for the resolution, that is, against themselves. Rather than conducting a principled defense of their right to be part of the labor movement, and a principled criticism of the deleterious effects of red-baiting on the labor movement, CP leaders acquiesced to the attacks, hoping to curry favor. In reality, they merely offered themselves up to the chopping block. The CIO leadership, preoccupied with smashing communism and boosting their power over the ranks, made no efforts to take advantage of the potential strength of the labor movement. Instead of taking the offensive in organizing the South and pushing the shorter work week, the CIO leaders lined up to a large degree with the right-wing offensive, purging the movement of the militants that had been crucial to its success. They did not relate their failing to their own policies--their dependence on the Democratic Party, their inability to organize against Taft-Hartley and their participation in the Cold War witch-hunts. The result of these policies was disastrous. This article originally appeared in the October issue of Socialist Worker.

Harold Wilson, the British Labour Party, and the War in Vietnam Rhiannon Vickers *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 10, Number 2, Spring , pp.

See Article History Alternative Titles: He presided over the establishment of the welfare state in Great Britain and the granting of independence to India , the most important step in the conversion of the British Empire into the Commonwealth of Nations. He was perhaps the leading Labour politician of the 20th century. He transformed his party into the natural opponent of the Conservative Party and thus polarized British politics. He was educated at Haileybury College, a boarding school in Hertfordshire with a strong imperial tradition, and the University of Oxford. He was called to the bar in but abandoned law in In he began regular visits to the impoverished East End of London, where he did volunteer work at a settlement house that was supported by Haileybury College. Two years later he took up residence at the houseâ€”a move that decisively influenced his whole political future. The harsh poverty he saw in East London undermined his faith in the existing order. Although he did not undergo a sudden political conversion, his views moved steadily to the left, and he became and remained throughout his life a committed ethical socialist. In everything except politics, Attlee was profoundly conservative. He liked and respected almost every traditional institution with which he was associated. He was also strongly family oriented, andâ€”unusual among bourgeois socialists of his epochâ€”he felt no revulsion against his class and background. Moreover, there was almost as little vanity in him as there was iconoclasm. Apart from his well-developed social conscience , he was in every respect a conventional and rather self-effacing English upper-middle-class gentleman. Political beginnings Entering East End politics after the war, Attlee became mayor of the borough of Stepney in and was elected to Parliament from the constituency of Limehouse in This parliamentary provenance was crucial to his emergence in as Labour Party leader and as the first Labour prime minister to command a governing majority. In the House of Commons his progress was steady but not meteoric. He served as undersecretary of state for war in the first Labour government , led by Ramsay MacDonald. In he was appointed to the Indian Statutory Commission. Joining the Labour government in , he was successively chancellor of the duchy of Lancasterâ€”a sinecure that left him free to give wide-ranging assistance to the prime minister and other senior ministersâ€”and postmaster general. Only the 52 most rock-solid working-class constituencies returned Labour members, Limehouse among them. After the general election of , Attlee became deputy party leader under George Lansbury. After Lansbury was forced to resign in because of his strong pacifism, Attlee succeeded to the leadership. A by-election and the subsequent general election returned several figures to the House of Commonsâ€”including Arthur Greenwood and Herbert Morrison â€”who probably would have been preferred to Attlee had they been members of the previous Parliament. They did not, however, succeed in replacing him as leader. Attlee gave his full support to the British declaration of war against Germany in , but he was unwilling to join a coalition government under Conservative Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. Attlee then entered the war cabinet as lord privy seal; by he had become deputy prime minister and secretary of state for Dominion affairs. In he became lord president of the councilâ€”though he retained the deputy prime ministershipâ€”and he served in this capacity until the end of the war. Only he and Churchill served continuously in the war cabinet throughout the life of the coalition government. In May Attlee led his party out of the coalition and achieved a stunning parliamentary majority in the subsequent general election, capturing seats in the House of Commons. He became prime minister in July and held the office until October â€”longer than any other prime minister since Herbert Asquith â€” Although several of his principal colleaguesâ€”notably Morrison, Ernest Bevin , Stafford Cripps , Aneurin Bevan , and Hugh Gaitskell â€”were more dominant public personalities than Attlee, until nearly the end of his government he held this somewhat turbulent team together with great success. His firm control over discussions in cabinet meetings reflected his experience in the wartime coalition government. It was said that when Churchill presided over such meetings, they were exhilarating but inconclusive, whereas when Attlee presided which was often, since Churchill was frequently absent , crisp, clear decisions were quickly made. One of the highlights of his administration was its

social reforms, including the creation of the National Health Service. Together, these programs shifted the agenda of British politics in a moderate-left direction for a generation. Three successive Conservative governments accepted a broad consensus in favour of a mixed economy, extensive government-funded social services, and the pursuit of full employment; these priorities were not significantly changed until the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979. Although occasionally expressing doubt about the extent of British military commitments overseas, Attlee firmly supported the view of his foreign secretary, Bevin, that facing the Soviet threat required building up the military strength of the West and maintaining the commitment of the United States to the defense of western Europe. In 1950 he readily accepted the need for Allied entry in the Korean War and for a new rearmament program. Additionally, Attlee oversaw the beginning of the dismantling of the British Empire, granting independence to India in 1947. The feud was more personal than ideological, for the policy differences between the leaders of the two factions—Gaitskell and Bevan—were surprisingly narrow, much more so than those between Tony Benn and Denis Healey in the 1970s. But their temperaments were very different, and Bevan felt that he had been unfairly passed over for the positions of chancellor and foreign secretary in 1955. He was made a member of the Order of Merit in 1955 and a Knight of the Garter in 1956. Attlee was one of only four British prime ministers—Arthur James Balfour, Churchill, and Thatcher were the others—to receive both of these high honours. His memoirs, *As It Happened*, are distinguished more for their laconic discretion than their revelatory interest. Attlee, Clement

Clement Attlee,

Chapter 6 : Project MUSE - Harold Wilson, the British Labour Party, and the War in Vietnam

British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn warned on Friday against rushing into a new Cold War with Russia before full evidence of Moscow's culpability in a military-grade nerve toxin attack on a former.

Against the Cold War. The focus has tended to be on the high politics and political dramas that led to the Korean and Vietnam wars, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Second Cold War and the collapse of Soviet Socialism. However, since the end of the Cold War, historians have turned their attention away from the big story and looked more closely at the smaller, but certainly no less important, details of the period. As such, it is a book that will not necessarily be the first port of call for those seeking details about Soviet, American or British policies during the Cold War. In terms of specific Labour history, it was a period that saw the party in power at the start of the Cold War and Korean War, and also when the Vietnam War reached its peak. However, it is not a general history of Labour and the Cold War, but rather an intricate study of a particular group though Lilleker makes it clear it was not a movement in the party, as it explores pro-Soviet feeling and the traditions of pro-Sovietism in the Labour party. This is a fascinating subject that deserves more attention than it has traditionally received. Why did members of this social democratic party – albeit one with socialism as its professed faith – offer such support to an authoritarian dictatorship that exploited workers and incarcerated intellectuals in the name of socialism? The aim of this book is to show that those Labour MPs who adopted a less hostile approach to the USSR during the Cold War sought to create a peaceful political and cultural coexistence with the Soviet Union and also, in some cases, other countries of the Eastern bloc. It was hoped that this would aid the prospects of peace between East and West. Lilleker aims to demonstrate that these MPs were not dangerous crypto-Communists, but instead principled, though largely ineffectual, parliamentary socialists endorsing an apparently revolutionary government. The book also highlights how the USSR made use of these pro-Soviet Labourites, as it wanted to change the negative way in which most people saw the Soviet Union. Interestingly, the book also includes people who sought links with the USSR through business connections, like Ian Mikardo. One of the more common traits that Lilleker picks out from the pro-Soviet bloc was that supporters were deeply preoccupied with peace in the post-World War Two world. But in some cases, it becomes clear that peace may even have been the main concern, as movements like CND attracted great interest from the pro-Soviet MPs. And if this peace could bring socialism with it, then so much the better. One of the main strengths of this book is that Lilleker counters the general acceptance from many quarters that anyone on the Left during the Cold War was pro-Soviet, and that anyone who was pro-Soviet was a spy. Lilleker deals specifically with this second allegation early on, and proves throughout the book that this was largely incorrect though that is not to say that there were any no active spies in the party. Crucially, such activists did not even need to be a part of what has traditionally been described as the Communist Left. The very fact that the USSR was involved in one way or another in causes such as the anti-Apartheid action in South Africa or the Troops Out campaign in Northern Ireland, meant that many members accepted that the USSR was itself a friend of peace and progressive politics. This then, was what the USSR got out of the relationship. The KGB was able to keep a number of agents both active and permanent. This meant that those who were not selling themselves to the Kremlin were doing it because they, rightly or wrongly, believed in what they were doing. In essence then, part of the book tells the story of conviction politicians, of people who believed that their actions would make the world a better and safer place to be, and this in itself is refreshing in a time of political spin, lies and public cynicism towards politicians. While Lilleker is absolutely correct to point this out, he fails to note that this demonstrates one of the key changes that had affected the Soviet Union since the early days of the Communist International: During the Leninist period, foreign socialists were recruited to the Comintern for the purpose of spreading the revolution in the West. The fact that they largely failed in this the eventual re-packaging of the Soviet experiment was down to Mikhail Gorbachev shows that these MPs were indeed largely ineffective in one of their main tasks. It was argued that it was really the White House and not the Kremlin that was the expansionist, imperialist threat to world peace. It was believed that ending American influence over British policy would aid the causes of world peace and socialism, as, without

American capitalism dictating world affairs, social democratic politics and socialist economics would create a fairer, more peaceful future. Lilleker does well to show what the broad traditions of pro-Sovietism in the party were, and also how they developed throughout the Cold War period. However, the book could have offered more on why they existed. There is the obvious ideological linkage through socialism, which is discussed here. But this discussion is disjointed, taking place in both the early and late sections of the book. Chapters 1 and 2 deal with the history of pro-Sovietism in the party, but do not look at ideology in any real depth. The book accepts too readily that Labourites like the Webbs agreed with the Soviet experiment, while Walter Citrine did not. The overall study may have been better served had this discussion been included in the earlier chapters, thereby making the points raised in chapter 7 act as a basis for our understanding of pro-Sovietism before we look at what happened. Instead it half rolls into the conclusion, but does not act as the conclusion, thus making the structure and explanation a little confusing. The book also considers the pursuit of peaceful coexistence through the business connections of people like Ian Mikardo. He believed that this would help the prospects of peace in Europe and full employment in Britain. Lilleker does not refer to this, but it would have been interesting to see what he made of it, as this was a different strand of the pro-Soviet tradition, albeit a more pragmatic one. MacDonald did not have the ideological sentiments of the later pro-Soviet MPs, but he did see the USSR as a crucially important country that had to be included in international politics. Another reason given for the pro-Soviet tradition is that these MPs acted as they did because of the political context. The USA was seen as too powerful and controlling, and a counterweight was needed to bring balance to international politics. This is a good assessment, but more is needed on the context. While this book is about one aspect of the Cold War rather than the Cold War as a whole, there are areas where more background information is needed to explain why certain things were important in Labour circles. For example, the invasion of Hungary and the Prague Spring caused significant problems for many on the Left, not least members of the Communist party of Great Britain. But these events are not covered in depth. How did these same socialists feel as the USSR collapsed in and not in as is often stated here? In his interviews which offer some very interesting insights, Lilleker learns that some of his subjects still believed that they were right, in spite of evidence that would be expected to make them reconsider. It would have been fascinating to learn why they still thought this. Something must be said about the poor grammar, spelling and numerous mistakes in the book. The study would have benefited from some stricter editing. Examples of factual inaccuracies include attributing actions to the KGB before it existed, using Budapest instead of Bucharest and repeatedly referring to the continuing actions of the Cominform Communist Information Bureau long after it had been disbanded by Khrushchev. *Against the Cold War* does successfully fulfil its overall objective – to show that those Labour MPs who served Moscow in one way or another were not as dangerous to the state as has traditionally been thought, and were, on the whole, harmless. It makes an important contribution to studies of this subject, as it breaks with the conventional view that these MPs were dangerous traitors who wanted to end British democracy and British ways of life. And perhaps the fact that we are still here, British ways and all, while the Soviet Union disappeared in, also proves that they were not quite as effective or dangerous as the Cold War spy writers told us they were.

Chapter 7 : Tom Watson: UK on frontier of 'new cold war' that Russia is winning | Politics | The Guardian

In terms of specific Labour history, it was a period that saw the party in power at the start of the Cold War and Korean War, and also when the Vietnam War reached its peak.

Chapter 8 : Ernest Bevin | British labour leader and statesman | theinnatdunvilla.com

THE MASS strike wave of dwarfed all previous strike movements. U.S. labor seemed powerful and confident at the end of the Second World War.

Chapter 9 : British Labour leader warns of rushing into new Cold War without full evidence

Ernest Bevin: Ernest Bevin, British trade unionist and statesman, one of the most powerful British union leaders in the first half of the 20th century. He also proved to be a forceful minister of labour and national service during World War II and foreign secretary in the immediate postwar period.