

“THE USUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS
OF A SHOTGUN WEDDING”.
BRITISH LABOUR AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
PARTIES IN EASTERN EUROPE, 1945-1948

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The postwar relations between Great Britain and the countries of Eastern Europe have often been viewed as futile. Focusing upon the attitudes the Labour Party and Labour Government took towards the beleaguered Eastern European Social Democratic parties, this article seeks to do justice to the complexity of their dealings. All along, the principal objective was to resist the full communisation of the countries behind the Iron Curtain. But there were considerable differences between Labour Party and Foreign Office in the questions of whether and how to support the Eastern European Social Democrats. As mounting tensions in the international arena put pressure on the very independence of the Eastern European Social Democratic parties, scope for Labour Britain's intervention diminished. Still, even those months that saw escalating left-right polarisation across the continent offered opportunities for supporting the Eastern European Social Democrats in their struggle to survive the Cold War.