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Time for Equal Opportunities”

Исследовательская работа (эссе)

**«Посол СССР в Великобритании Иван Майский: дипломатия,
торговля, культура»**

***«Ivan Maysky, USSR’s Ambassador in Great Britain: diplomacy, trade and
culture»***

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Our essay is dedicated to Ivan Mikhailovich Maysky (real name and surname – Jan Lyakhovetsky). He was born on January 19, 1884, in the town of Kirillov, Novgorod Province, Russian Empire and died on September 3, 1975, Moscow, the USSR. Ivan Maysky had been serving as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR to the United Kingdom for 11 years. He made a great contribution to the development of diplomatic and trade relations with Great Britain, and also, having a literary talent, in culture, as he described all the complexity of these relationships in his works.

Ivan Mikhailovich Maysky's father was a military doctor, a native of the Kherson province, his mother was a teacher. After graduating from the Omsk men's gymnasium Ivan Maysky studied at the Faculty of History and Philology of St. Petersburg University but was expelled because of his political position. During the revolution of 1905-1907 he was a member of the Saratov Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

In early January 1906, he was arrested and sent to Tobolsk exile. In 1908 he emigrated to Germany, where in 1912 he graduated from the Economics Department of Munich University. After receiving a brilliant education, he moved to England. The experience of living in England helped him later adapt to the country in diplomatic work.

In 1921 he was appointed as Head of the Economic Department, since 1922 he was engaged in diplomacy, where he went through all the stages of being trained to be a real diplomat. He was Plenipotentiary Representative of the USSR to Japan (1927 – 1929) where he saw personal interests intertwined with diplomatic ones; to Finland (1929 – 1932); Plenipotentiary Representative / Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR to Great Britain (1932 – 1943).

When he returned to Moscow from England, he worked as Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, then he was an academician. He was engaged in literary and scientific work almost till his dying day at the age of 91.

They didn't want to publish his books – the diplomat's notes, – then they did it, but with large bills.

Being Plenipotentiary Representative in different countries, and later Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR, Ivan Maysky had made a great contribution to diplomacy.

In 1932 he signed Finland-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty.

During the Second World War, Ivan Maysky, as the USSR Ambassador to the UK, participated in the organization of negotiations on the opening of the Second Front, and then of the organizing the Arctic convoys – the groups of ships from the USA and Great Britain to Russia carrying the lend-lease cargoes. After the death of PQ-17, when the conduct of Arctic convoys was temporarily suspended, he participated in negotiations to get them back.

During his visit to Moscow in 1942, Winston Churchill, in a conversation with the Soviet leader Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, noted that Maysky was a good diplomat. Stalin agreed, but added that “he is too talkative and does not know how to keep his mouth shut”. We don't know what Stalin kept in mind, maybe he knew Maysky wrote the diaries, maybe there were some other reasons. British historians noted that Maysky behaved very freely in London.

Ivan Maysky took part in the Yalta Conference held on 4 - 11 of February 1945, the World War II meeting of the heads of government of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union to discuss the postwar reorganization of Germany and Europe. He made proposals to determine the reparations of Germany to the Soviet Union; the reparations were approved later, at the Potsdam conference held between July 17 and August 2, 1945.

The greatest contribution to developing trade relationships between the USSR and Great Britain, in our opinion, was signing the trade agreement. Trade relations between the countries have been difficult since the days of the Great Russian Revolution not only due to political but also for economic reasons: Great Britain wanted the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to pay the Russian Empire debts.

After the denunciation by the British side of the trade agreement of 1930, negotiations on the conclusion of a new trade agreement began in London. These negotiations were conducted with great difficulties and lasted for 15 months. How this agreement had been signed was described by the Soviet Ivan Maysky in his memoirs "Memoirs of a Soviet diplomat, 1925-1945". Let us turn to Maysky's diaries (in our own translation) [3].

Negotiations on a new trade agreement were interrupted in March and resumed on July 3. There were no plenary meetings of the parties – there was no need for them. But the commissions and sub-commissions began to work hard.

During this period, Sir Horace Wilson, who had previously played a very important role in the negotiations, became the main figure on the English side. Renciman¹ completely withdrew himself from the case, Colville was very busy with his department at that time, all the threads of negotiations were concentrated in Wilson's hands, and it was with him whom the Soviet side had to fight with every day on all issues concerning the future trade agreement. During July and the first half of August, the negotiations progressed at a fairly rapid pace.

By the end of July, there was an agreement between the parties on the payments balance. A scheme was adopted to gradually equalize this balance over five years, representing something in between the first and second positions of the directives.

To put pressure on the Soviet side, the British decided to show restraint. At the end of August, Wilson defiantly left "on vacation". To maintain contact with the Russians, officials of the third and fourth rank were left, who, when asked about the deadline for the signing the agreement, usually shrugged their shoulders and, looking at the ceiling, muttered something about the need for a long rest for the Minister of Trade. It was a clear game on nerves.

After long disputes, by the end of August, a formula that satisfied both sides was found and approved.

¹ Renciman, Colville – foreign policy officials

By the end of August, there was also unanimity on the status of the trade mission: diplomatic privileges were reserved for the trade representative and his two deputies. During the negotiations, the issue of using British tonnage for Soviet transportation was also settled, the British attached special importance to that.

The Soviet side was forced to put aside a permanent trade agreement and was ready to sign a temporary one. Thus, by the beginning of September, the elaboration of this agreement was basically completed. It remained only to make the last light polishing of the text, and the agreement could be signed in early September.

Sir Horace John Wilson was a senior British government official who played a key role as Head of the Domestic Civil Service in the government of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain during the pacification period just before the Second World War.

There was a lot of talks about a new contract and once there was a night left before signing. Ivan Maysky sat down at the table and wrote a declaration:

«The declaration of Ambassador of the USSR. In view of the declaration of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (i.e. the British Foreign Minister – I. M.), announced at the time of signing the provisional trade agreement between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom, the Soviet Government wishes to remind the Government of the United Kingdom that when the British memorandum on debts and claims was handed over to the Soviet delegation at the second meeting on trade negotiations on February 9, 1933, the latter stated that the contents of the memorandum related to the trade agreement. The Soviet Government fully supports this point of view.

At the same time, the Soviet Government wishes to declare that it supports and confirms its own claims and the claims of its citizens against the British Government arising because of the participation of the United Kingdom in the intervention and blockade of 1918-1920. February 16, 1934».

But everything was in vain and the signing was postponed again. It all happened in February 1934 in London. After a while, Anglo-Soviet relationships would not be so warm, but that's another story.

An experienced diplomat, well acquainted with the "kitchen" of British politics, with many state and public figures of Western countries, reproduced the facts and events of the day in hot pursuit, usually on the same day. Thus, he mentioned a conversation with Secretary for Overseas Trade R. Hudson on March 8, 1939, from which it was clear that the British government, sending this minister to Moscow, had been aware of contacts between the business circles of England and Germany (Hudson mentioned the upcoming negotiations between groups of industrialists of both countries). Referring to his conversation with Chief Diplomatic Adviser of the British Ministry for Foreign Affairs, R. Vansitart on March 14, 1939, Maysky conveyed his words about the speeches of Stalin and Manuilsky at the XVIII Congress of the CPSU: they "caused doubts in British political circles about the desire of the Soviet government to cooperate with Western powers."

Ivan Maysky is the author of memoirs "Before the Storm" (Moscow, 1945), "Memoirs of the Soviet Ambassador" (Moscow, 1964), "Days of Trials" (Novy Mir. 1964. No. 12), which highlight many of the most important political stories of the Stalin era. His works throw the veils of diplomacy. His diaries look like political detectives showing the fights of the minds and wills, and who knows, maybe famous Russian writers such as Julian Semenov with his "Seventeen Moments of Spring" drew some ideas from Maysky's works, among other sources. He is a writer of a number of historian books for children.

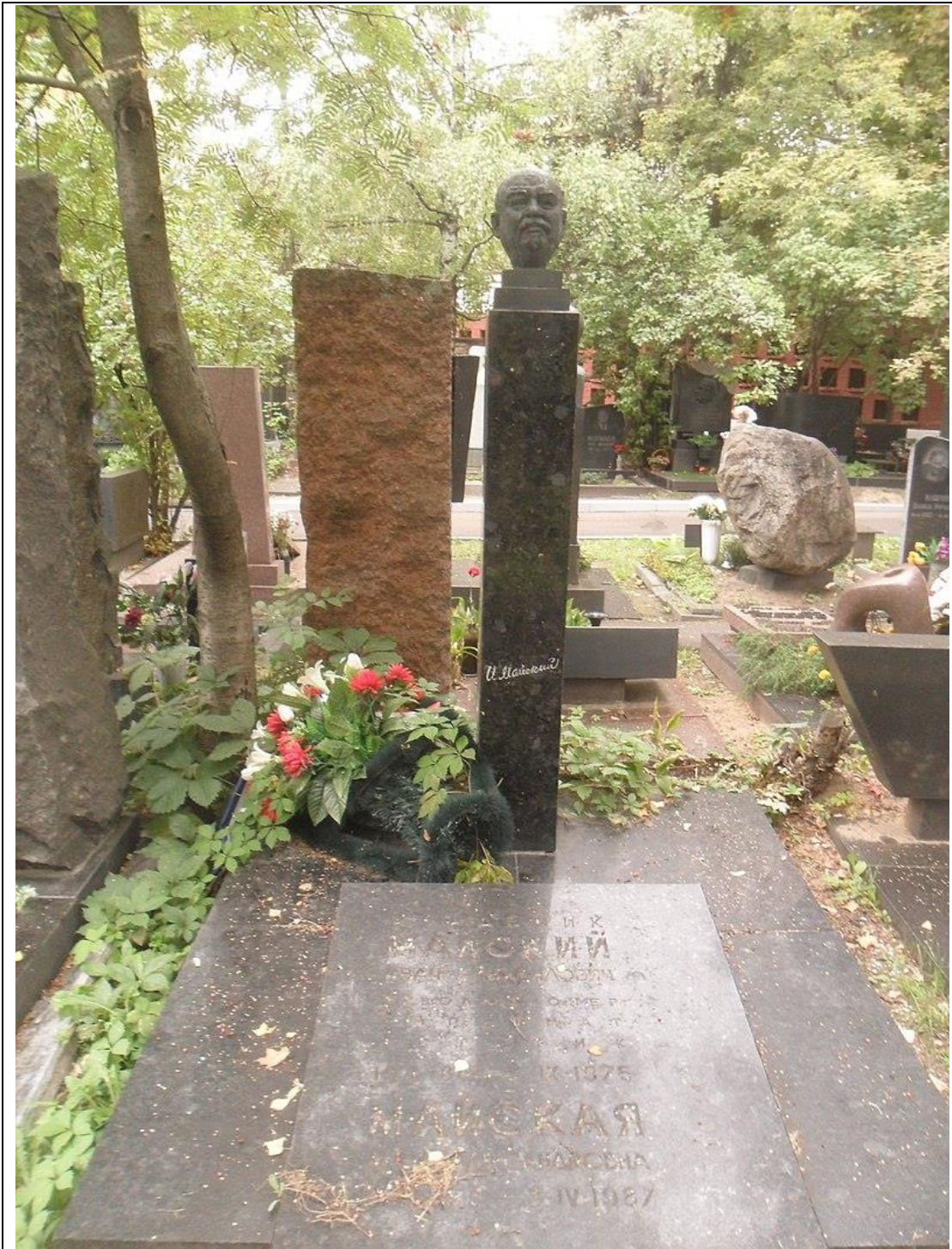
In our essay, we talked about who Ivan Maysky was and about his contribution to diplomacy, trade and culture.

Sources

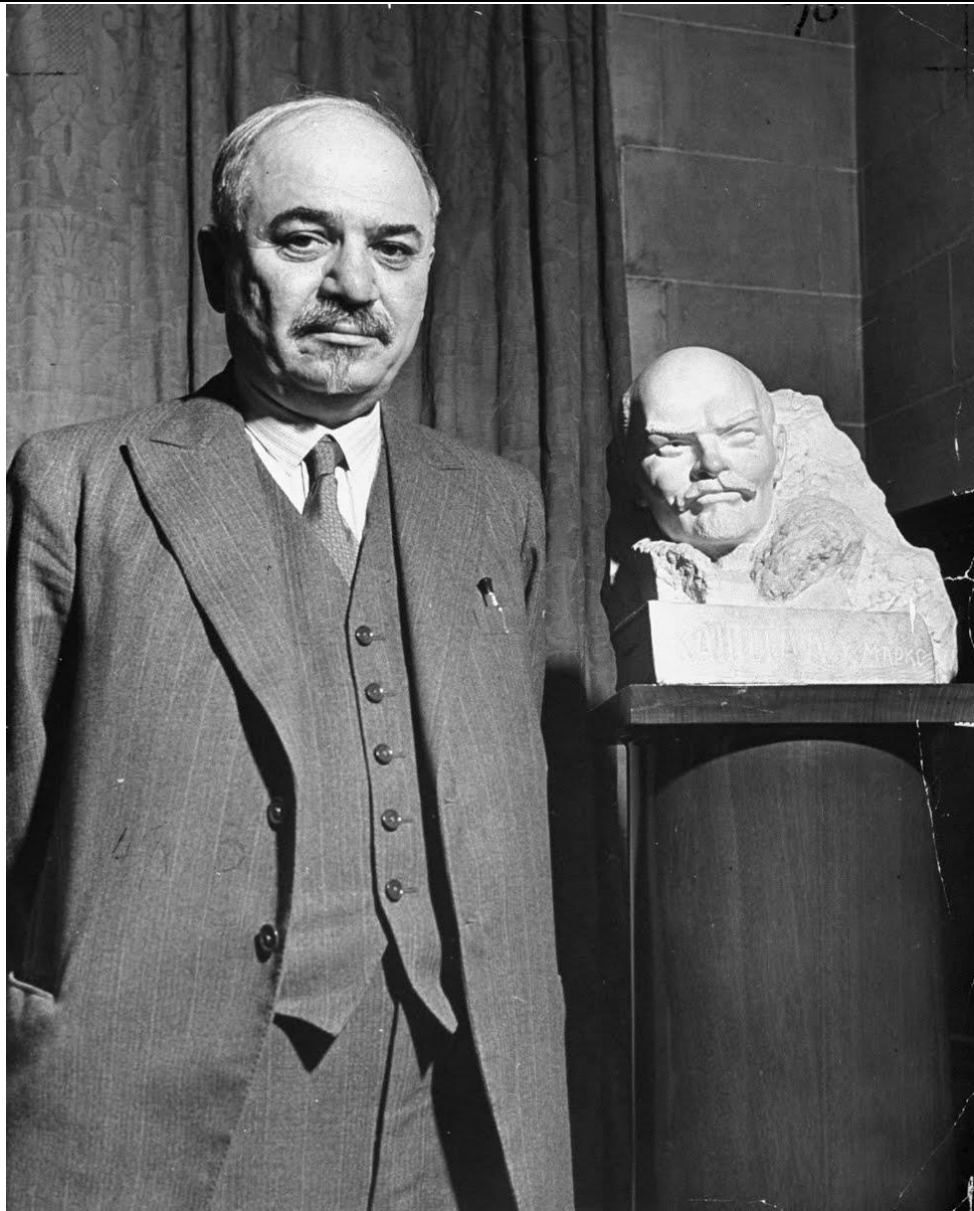
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2. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Horace Wilson. URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horace_Wilson_\(civil_servant\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horace_Wilson_(civil_servant)) (date of access 12.11.2022)
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Illustrations



Ambassador's grave in Moscow



Ivan Maiskiy

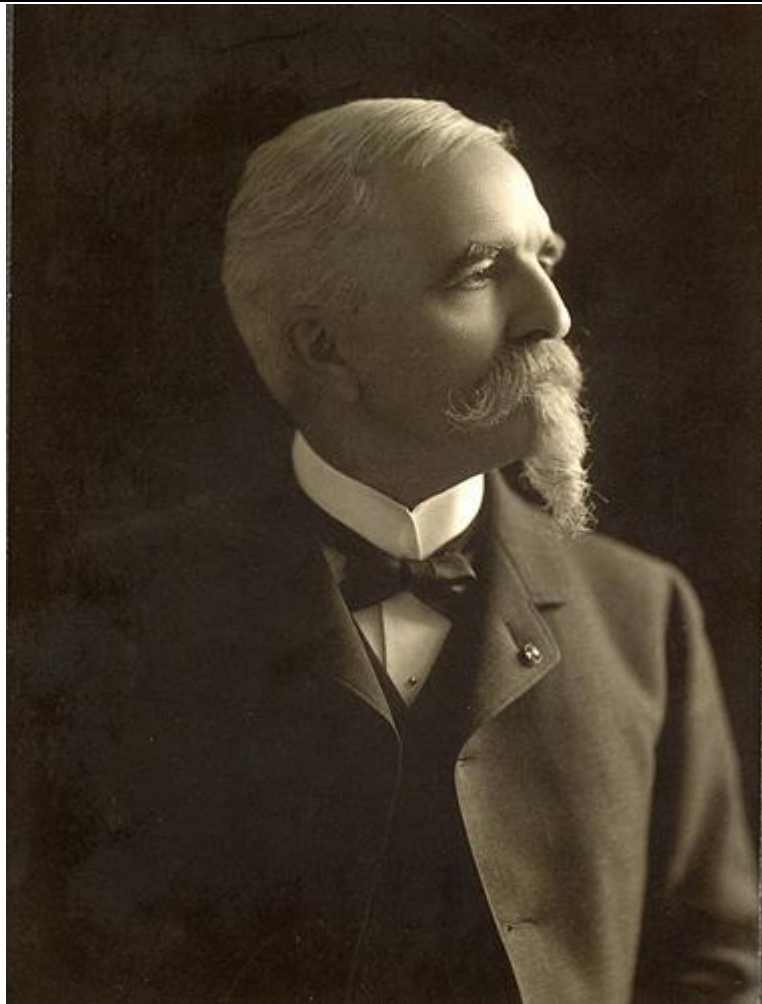
«Декларация посла СССР

Ввиду декларации государственного секретаря по иностранным делам (т. е. британского министра иностранных дел. — И. М.), оглашенной в момент подписания временного торгового соглашения между Союзом Советских Социалистических Республик и Соединенным Королевством, Советское правительство желает напомнить правительству Соединенного Королевства, что, когда британский меморандум по вопросу о долгах и претензиях был вручен советской делегации на втором заседании по торговым переговорам 9 февраля 1933 г., последняя заявила, что содержание меморандума не имеет отношения к торговому соглашению. Советское правительство целиком поддерживает эту точку зрения.

В то же время Советское правительство желает заявить, что оно поддерживает и подтверждает свои собственные претензии и претензии своих граждан к британскому правительству, вытекающие из участия Соединенного Королевства в интервенции и блокаде 1918-1920 годов.

16 февраля 1934 г.»

Declaration of USSR Ambassador



Sir Horas Wilson