

THE UNKNOWN WAR WITH RUSSIA: WILSON'S SIBERIAN INTERVENTION. By *Robert J. Maddox*. San Rafael, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1977. xii, 156 pp. Illus. \$9.95.

This is a singularly pointless book. Because there is no preface, the reader can only guess what Professor Maddox intended. He provides virtually no new information or documentation on a subject already frequently treated. Consequently, a research contribution was apparently not his purpose. If he aimed to offer a new interpretation of Wilson's decision to intervene, an article would have sufficed.

Moreover, his interpretation is ambiguous, if not muddled. The dust cover claims that the book shows "how willing President Wilson was to violate his own expressed convictions about 'self-determination,' 'open diplomacy' and the constitutional process, in pursuit of his private intentions to prevent Japanese or even Allied seizure of Russian territory and to topple the Bolshevik regime." But the author's conclusion is contradictory on even this "revisionist" point. Maddox states (on page 136) that Wilson "detested communism and hoped for a successful counter-revolution, but this does not prove he tried to promote one." Yet the author claims (on the same page) that Wilson supported intervention for anti-Bolshevik reasons, despite the president's statements and behavior to the contrary. In asserting Wilson's duplicitous promotion of intervention, Maddox echoes rather than adds to earlier criticisms of Wilson's Russian policy by Lasch, Mayer, Williams, and Levin.

The case Maddox presents is weak. He makes intuitive judgments about Wilson's intentions, draws inferences from highly selective facts about what the president really meant, and offers a simplistic view of the complex matter of United States policy toward Russia. The book is well written but it would be best if it had not been written at all.

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THE MENSHEVIKS: FROM THE REVOLUTION OF 1917 TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR. Edited by *Leopold H. Haimson*. Translated by *Gertrude Vakar*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974. xxiv, 476 pp. \$22.50.

In these essays, the Mensheviks Leo Lande, George Denicke, Simon Wolin, David Dallin, and Boris Sapir have recorded a narrow but important part of Menshevik history. As participants in the events they describe, they provide a remarkable picture of Menshevik dogmatism, political ineffectiveness, elitism, and intellectual integrity. As documented here, the Menshevik dilemma was impressively consistent. Thoroughgoing economic determinists, certain that the Russian Revolution was bourgeois, Mensheviks were confronted by a bourgeoisie which repeatedly blocked "bourgeois" economic reform and a "petty bourgeoisie" which demanded the abolition of private property. Such political realities did not shake the determinist faith of the Mensheviks, although Sapir recalled that a provincial Menshevik (evidently feeling the strain) wrote to the Central Committee in 1917 asking its members to "give us permission to become less intelligent." Mensheviks hoped that politically conscious workers, aware that socialist revolution was premature, would somehow "develop into an independent force with its own socialist aims." And if this formulation seems complicated, Sapir adds the astonishing comment that "bourgeois revolution" is "the only doctrine which made political sense even if it is far removed from reality" (p. 367).

Nevertheless, as David Dallin has noted, Bolsheviks promising socialism assumed power with "unbelievable lack of resistance," and Mensheviks were left to attribute this peculiar development to the behavior of a politically naïve, primitive, and

"Asiatic" peasant populace. The political behavior of the urban proletariat, either alone or in relation to the Mensheviks, receives surprisingly little emphasis in this regard. Instead, we are presented with a Menshevik politics comprised of policy debates and strategic efforts carried out by a number of Menshevik *intelligentsy*. And here too the Menshevik writers are reticent where they might have been particularly insightful. In Dallin's account, we are told of Mensheviks who remained aloof from right-wing military conspiracies and Allied interventionist schemes, but we learn nothing about the civil war activity of Mensheviks who had fervently supported the Allies in 1917. Why, one wonders, was it necessary for the Menshevik Congress to pass a resolution in December 1917 which branded independent political statements against the decisions of competent party organizations "absolutely impermissible outside the Party"? A later resolution prohibiting members from writing on politics in non-Menshevik newspapers is less mysterious, but still needs further explanation in light of Sapir's claim that Mensheviks helped to keep alive a tradition of democratic socialism. Nevertheless, any reader of this volume will know what Sapir means. Mensheviks considered opponents to be honest unless proven otherwise; recognition of fundamental differences was not followed by a Trotsky-like relegation of the enemy to the "dung heap of history."

Mensheviks remained ideologically consistent despite the arrest, imprisonment, and execution of their comrades. They did not make claims for the inalienable rights of any individual or group and opposed Bolshevik treatment of the peasants as a "class enemy," at the same time maintaining that, in principle, peasants were hostile to the goals of proletarian socialism. They appear to have differed most fundamentally from Bolsheviks in the same way that Moshe Lewin has suggested that Bolsheviks often differed from Stalin: they did not sanction the use of unlimited brutality to eliminate the threat which the peasant majority of the population might pose to a revolutionary minority in power. Despite their evident suspicion and fear of the peasant as the embodiment of "Asiatic" backwardness, it seems unlikely that any Menshevik government would have sent even the most recalcitrant of peasants to Vorkuta. Whether this is a satisfactory definition of democratic socialism is, of course, another question.

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LENIN'S LEGACY: THE STORY OF THE CPSU. By *Robert G. Wesson*.

Histories of Ruling Communist Parties series. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978. xviii, 318 pp. Appendixes. \$7.50, paper.

Any historian of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union faces substantial problems of definition. Before the October Revolution, the party was a clearly limited organization, despite the problem of deciding whether the entire Russian Social Democratic movement or merely the Bolshevik component is the appropriate frame of reference. But after coming to power, the party assumed such wide-ranging responsibility that it is no simple matter to determine the boundary between party history and the general history of the Soviet Union, not to mention the Comintern and Communist countries closely associated with the USSR. Robert G. Wesson has dealt with these problems by using the supreme leadership of the party as the main theme of his book, which is basically divided into four sections, devoted respectively to Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev (along with a chapter on the pre-Lenin heritage). The only exception to this statement is a chapter combining Lenin's last years and Stalin's ascent (the 1920s), a device that works quite well and serves to emphasize Wesson's adherence to the school of interpretation that sees primarily continuity between the two party leaders.