



—Sovfoto.

Iosif Vissarionovich Djughashvili at seventeen-year intervals in his career—1900, 1917, 1934, and 1951.

supervising the loyalties of the policy-recommending sub-leadership. Mr. Fischer oversimplifies the interrelation of power and control at this level, at which some degree of judgment and initiative is required.

Mr. Fischer believes that on Stalin's death the Soviet regime will face a choice between "a military dictatorship or a police dictatorship" and he demonstrates convincingly why he feels that of the two "the police is high in the ascendant." But what is of particular concern to the West is the effect that the triumph of one or the other may have on the drive of the new Soviet leadership to maximize its power. Would a military dictatorship be cautious about running unnecessary risks because of its fear of the superior technology of the West? Or would it strike out for new conquests in order to justify the maintenance of an enormous military establishment at the expense of a relatively poor economy and a very poor people? Would a police dictatorship be cautious because of a fear that new Titos might arise from the triumph of Communist Parties in areas which were not under Soviet military and police control? Or would it have greater confidence in its ability to manipulate its foreign auxiliaries into power without the direct use of Soviet military forces? Mr. Fischer has not elaborated this crucial question.

Every student of Russia—and who is not a student, even an expert, today?—will find shrewd observations and keen insights in Mr. Fischer's new book, his first on Russia in some ten years. And if his answers to our fears and doubts are never simple or pat, this can be laid to the fact that the painfully intensive scrutiny of Russia's changing pattern has been Mr. Fischer's great passion for some thirty years, rather than relying on a mythical and effortless "expertness" acquired overnight.

Eastern West & Western East

RUSSIA: ABSENT AND PRESENT.

By Wladimir Weidle. Translated by A. Gordon Smith. New York: John Day & Co. 152 pp. \$3.

By ERNEST J. SIMMONS

IN their postwar campaign against the West, Soviet propagandists have begun to revise radically the traditional conception of the history of Russian culture. While not eschewing Western influences entirely, a determined effort is being made—often in defiance of all historical facts—to establish the indigenous nature of Russian culture from the earliest times to the present. If anything, claim the Soviet theorists, it is Russia that has culturally influenced the West. In a sense this effort does serve as a corrective to pre-revolutionary historians who tended to underestimate the significance of the native contribution to the country's culture. On the whole, however, Soviet writers are going to absurd lengths in their strident insistence upon the original nature of nearly every manifestation of Russian culture.

Mr. Weidle's book reverses this whole process. He attempts to demonstrate that Russian culture, since its beginning in the Middle Ages, has been an integral part of European culture. There is nothing essentially new in this thesis, but Mr. Weidle brings to bear on it much fresh evidence and a considerable knowledge of European as well as Russian culture. He cogently dismisses the "Eurasian" theory of Russian culture, which had attracted adherents in the past, and he convincingly counters the common notion of the non-European separateness of Russian culture, because of the early influence of a Byzantium that was "Eastern" and therefore somehow "Asiatic." The

early Byzantine influences, Mr. Weidle maintains, brought to Russia the same Greek art, literature, and thought that nourished the culture of the West.

Mr. Weidle traces Russia's contacts with the West from the time of the medieval Scandinavian warriors, who ruled the country, to the Western influences on the brilliant flowering of Russian art at the end of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth centuries. These contacts, broken by the Tartar invasions, were resumed in a vigorous manner at the time of Peter the Great and continued uninterruptedly thereafter.

In the details of his exposition Mr. Weidle occasionally errs or overlooks data important for his thesis. After the Tartar invasions the resumption of contacts with the West was not delayed to the time of Peter the Great. It began more than a century earlier during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, who developed close political and commercial relations with England. In fact, Mr. Weidle seems to ignore the significance of English influence on Russia. He asserts that in the eighteenth century French and German influence was most powerful. Without denying the dominant position of the French, there began at this time a veritable anglomania in Russia, and it continued until well into the nineteenth century. Then the ambivalence of the Slavophil movement, the pronounced "Western" outlook of some of its adherents, seems to have evaded Mr. Weidle. And to say that Pushkin's "Bronze Horseman" is the "noblest and

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most impassioned hymn that has ever been sung on the magnificence of Petersburg and the glory of Peter" would no doubt have both surprised and amused the poet. More serious is Mr. Weidle's failure to bring to bear on his interpretation the various economic and material factors that so thoroughly conditioned the whole growth of Russian culture.

Mr. Weidle's preoccupation with the influence of Western culture on Russia leads him into the old mistake of exaggerating their identity. Europeans did not come to understand and love the great works of Russian culture, as Mr. Weidle claims, because they found their "own true image" in them. On the contrary, what enthralled Europeans was the discovery of an artistic essence wholly unlike that of the West in the Russian ballet, music, theatre, and fiction. The relation of man to the world and the wonderful dramatization of the universal spiritual and moral problems of humanity in the fiction of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky were unique achievements of Russian art.

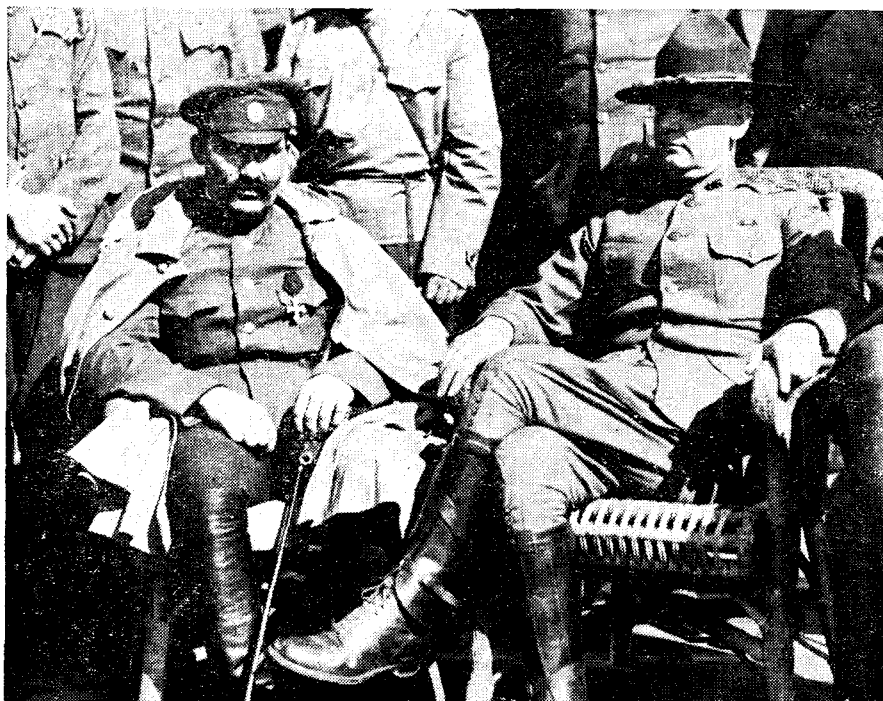
When Mr. Weidle reaches the Soviet period in his book, he propounds a rather original aspect of his general theory on the identity of Russian and European cultures. He maintains that the Soviet revolution was the work of men who believed themselves to be Marxists but were in fact the direct heirs of the revolutionary nihilism of the 1860's, a movement entirely anti-culture in theory and practice. And he draws the obvious conclusion from this, that the Soviet system in turn is ultimately destined to produce an anti-culture—a systematic denial of every non-utilitarian value in art.

One may doubt whether such Marxists as Plekhanov and Lenin were really the heirs of Russian nineteenth-century nihilism, but certainly post-war Soviet "cultural" developments seem to be bearing out Mr. Weidle's thesis. The only hope, he declares, is that Russia will once more find her soul, however changed, recognize herself once more in her past, and return to the great European tradition out of which her culture grew.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 960)

W. FRANK:
BIRTH OF A WORLD—BOLIVAR
(In Terms of his Peoples)

He and his world are ours. Now that I have explored . . . his life, it seems to me that Bolivar, if we experience him, may signify (today) as much to the United States as to America Hispania. . . . This conviction was my basic ground for writing this book.



From "The Siberian Fiasco."

Generals Semenov and Graves in Siberia—"to furnish the Bolsheviks with a jagged club."

A Prophetic Journey

THE SIBERIAN FIASCO. By Clarence A. Manning. New York: Library Publishers. 210 pp. \$3.75.

By HAROLD C. HINTON

PROFESSOR Clarence A. Manning of Columbia University is a noted Slavic scholar whose special field of interest is the history and literature of Ukraine. In his latest book he has tackled a confused and controversial episode which occurred at the other end of Eurasia—the Siberian Intervention of 1918-22. His motive in doing so apparently was to rescue this unpleasant affair from the even more unpleasant propaganda of the Bolsheviks, who still assert that we tried (to borrow Churchill's words) "to strangle bolshevism at its birth."

Unfortunately, Professor Manning's book is a disappointment. It is not well enough written to be of much interest to the general reader, and as a scholarly work it is far inferior to John Albert White's study, "The Siberian Intervention," published by the Princeton University Press in 1950. Much of the introductory material, apparently designed to orient a reader wholly unfamiliar with the subject, is irrelevant, reflects a rather superficial knowledge of Far Eastern history, and contains minor factual errors. For example, Professor Manning assigns the Treaty of Portsmouth, which ended the Russo-Japanese War and

was signed on September 5, 1905, to 1906.

The main portion of the book is an undistinguished factual account of the Intervention itself. Professor Manning's discussion of the motives for the Intervention, and of the cross-purposes at which the intervening powers operated, is not very clear. Briefly, the motives were these: the British and French wanted to bring about the downfall of the Bolsheviks, who had made peace with Germany, and to put Russia back in the war against the Central Powers by bringing to power a White regime; they picked Admiral Kolchak, a brave but incompetent Russian naval officer, as their man. The Japanese, who disliked Kolchak because they no more wanted a unified Russia than they wanted a unified China, were determined to gain control over the Russian Far East, including the Trans-Siberian Railroad, for their own ends. The Americans were there mainly to restrain the Japanese. The fate of some 50,000 Czechs, formerly prisoners of the Russians, and the remote possibility that German prisoners and Allied material in Siberia might find their way into the hands of the Central

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