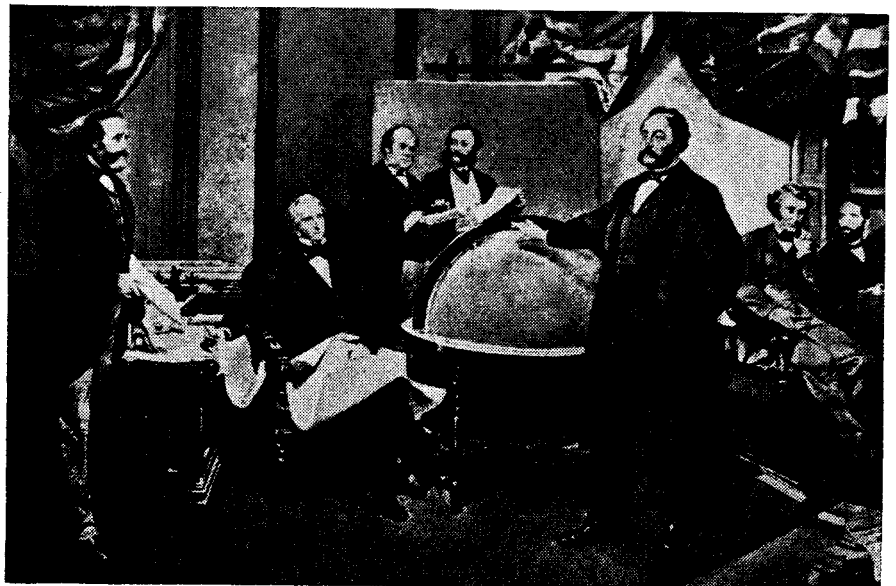


Communist Revolution in order to provide a field for American economic penetration of Russia over the ruins of the Revolution. The capitalist forces, abetted by trusted career men in the Department of State—William Phillips, Robert F. Kelley, and George F. Kennan—overbore the saner advice of outsiders like William Boyce Thompson, Raymond Robbins, Alexander Gumberg, and Senator William E. Borah to reach some sort of a “meaningful” agreement with the Soviet Government. They even prevailed over the abortive Roosevelt-Litvinov agreement of 1933. Failure of American policy to make a pact with Soviet Russia to stem German and Japanese aggression explains, if indeed it does not justify, the “only” Soviet alternatives: the Nazi-Soviet pact of August 1939, and the Winter War against Finland to reinsure Russian defenses against an outflanking Baltic attack by Hitler.

Dr. Williams’s work is heavily documented from apparently unrestricted access to Department of State archives to 1937, and from printed (which means carefully selected) Soviet papers. He steadily finds fault with American foreign policy toward Russia since 1900, except perhaps for Franklin D. Roosevelt’s policy at Teheran and the implications of his “democratic approach to the problems of industry.” He has little if anything to say against Soviet policy toward the United States and the Western world; the sins of the Soviets, if any, seem to be the mistakes of the United States. He makes scarce mention of Russian non-aggression treaties made and broken with other powers since 1934; he has nothing to say of the implacable nature of Soviet revolution and Red imperialism. Surely these subjects are pertinent to any inquiry into Russian-American relations that suggests that the peace might not have been lost after the Second World War if only the United States had accepted Russia’s terms for a sweet reconciliation.

The central core of the study is American policy toward Soviet Russia, from 1917 to 1937, but the author with the aid of secondary studies inserts some preliminary and useful chapters to reach back to 1781 and a sort of epilogue to carry along to 1947, thus enabling him to embrace the title “American-Russian Relations 1781-1947.”

Samuel Flagg Bemis, professor of diplomatic history and inter-American relations at Yale University, is the author of numerous works on American foreign policy, including “A Diplomatic History of the United States.”



—Bettmann Archive.

“Signing the Treaty of the Purchase of Alaska,” by Leutze.

Wars in the Wind

LINCOLN AND THE RUSSIANS. By Albert A. Woldman. Cleveland: The World Publishing Co. 311 pp. \$5.

By DAVID DONALD

“RUSSIA entertains for the United States of America a lively sympathy founded on sentiments of mutual friendship and on common interests,” the official newspaper of the Russian Government announced. “Not only are our interests alike,” the Russian ruler added, “but our enemies are the same.”

“In regard to Russia,” replied the American Secretary of State, “she has our friendship, in every case, in preference to any other European power, simply because she always wishes us well, and leaves us to conduct our affairs as we think best.”

The quotations are not from some futuristic horror story of a sovietized America; they are taken from actual diplomatic interchanges during the American Civil War. At the time the United States and Russia were in conflict on no issues, and they shared a traditional enmity for Great Britain, a similar military problem of domestic insurrection (Southern in the one case, Polish in the other), and a comparable social crisis caused by the liberation of their servile populations. “The two countries,” wrote Prince Gortchakov, “placed at the extremities of the two worlds, both in the ascending period of their development, appear called to a natural community of interests and of sympathies.”

In “Lincoln and the Russians” Al-

bert A. Woldman contends that “this strange alliance” of American democracy and European autocracy “was a potent factor in preventing European intervention in the American Civil War and in stopping an Anglo-French alliance from attacking Russia over the turbulent Polish question.” But this carefully advertised friendship of “two of the most mismated international bedfellows in all recorded history” was not, Mr. Woldman feels, the result of “lively sympathy” or of “mutual friendship.” Instead, it was simply “realistic international politics in full play.” When the United States opposed international intervention in the Polish crisis of 1863, it was not from any love of the Russians but from fear that a precedent be set for meddling in the American domestic conflict. And, in turn, the Russian fleets were sent to New York and San Francisco not because of the Czar’s sympathy for the North but because he feared that in the anticipated European war his fleet would be bottled up in the Baltic. After Appomattox when the United States purchased Alaska, it was no gesture of “altruistic friendship” on either part. The Russians knew they would certainly lose their American empire shortly and the purchasers knew what they were getting.

This tale of Realpolitik is not new

David Donald, assistant professor of history at Columbia University, is the editor of the recently published book “Divided We Fought,” a pictorial history of the Civil War.

to students of the Civil War period, though it has never before been presented in the detail that Mr. Woldman offers. His discussion of the Alaska purchase is based heavily on a 1912 article by W. A. Dunning; the "myth of the Russian fleet" was demolished by F. A. Golder in 1920; and the whole story of Russo-American relations during the Civil War was presented concisely by Benjamin P. Thomas in 1930. Mr. Woldman brings few fresh insights to an old subject, and as diplomatic history "Lincoln and the Russians" is conventional and often superficial. Even the title is open to objection, for it is not clear that Lincoln had much to do with the Russians. The "frequent, detailed, and voluminous" reports of the Russian minister at Washington "seldom mentioned President Lincoln," apparently for the good reason that the busy executive left such routine and peaceable foreign relations to be handled by his competent Secretary of State. Even when the Russian fleet appeared in the Potomac, the President missed seeing the Czar's sailors, "fiendishly ugly" and exhibiting "vast absorbent powers," for he was ill with varioloid.

If "Lincoln and the Russians" were only a retelling of Russo-American wartime diplomacy, it should be dismissed as another of those repetitive books which people who write about Lincoln tend to produce. Fortunately, however, it is not merely that. Mr. Woldman has included extensive extracts from hitherto unpublished dispatches of Edouard de Stoeckl, Russian minister at Washington, to his foreign office in St. Petersburg. It is not clear that Stoeckl's communications had much to do with shaping Russian policy, but they do provide a running commentary on the Civil War as seen by an intelligent, prejudiced, sometimes inaccurate, but always interesting foreigner. For the President, "a man of irreproachable honesty but of mediocre ability," Stoeckl had little use. "The great trouble with Lincoln," he wrote acidly, "was that the task was too great for him." The Russian minister thought equally poorly of Northern generals and politicians.

Still, not all of Stoeckl's observations were pessimistic and not all of them were erroneous. The Americans, he informed his superiors in April 1865, "have passed through one of the greatest revolutions of a century replete with political convulsions, and they have come out of it with their resources unexhausted, their energy renewed through surmounting a thousand differences." The war had revealed the latent strength of a democracy; for, "if the Government was incompetent, the people proved themselves great."

The Mortgage of Reform

LABOR IN THE SOVIET UNION.

By Solomon M. Schwartz. New York: Frederick A. Praeger. 364 pp. \$6.

By S. M. LEVITAS

A VAST literature on the Soviet Union has developed since the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, but one will search in vain for a book that describes truthfully and in detail the everyday life of the Russian worker and peasant in whose name the Communists rule. Solomon M. Schwartz's analysis of "Labor in the Soviet Union" should help finally to fill this gap.

The author makes clear in a foreword that it is not his intention to discuss questions related to the social and political content of Soviet life, and in all 364 pages of his book there is not one polemical argument. Rather, Mr. Schwartz has set himself the task of portraying and analyzing the complicated evolution of Soviet labor policy, and to this end he produces a mass of data culled from official sources. He describes that policy not only as it emerges from legislation and executive decree and as it is expressed in Communist propaganda but also as it shows up in the daily existence of the Russian worker. In short, "Labor in the Soviet Union" focuses upon the end-product of Soviet labor policy as well as upon its alleged intentions.

It might be observed that the author has not aimed at an exhaustive account of all the problems of Russian labor, but has concentrated upon certain crucial problems. Thus he dwells upon such fundamental changes as the withering away of the free labor

market and the introduction in its stead of the control and direction of labor by the state—a control which was never systematic, surprisingly enough, but always piecemeal and empirical. Parallel with this development, the nature of worker-employer relationships underwent basic changes since no such thing as an employer could exist, in theory at least. In fact the state replaced the employer but in a more menacing form, and the new relationship of worker to state is studied by Mr. Schwartz in all of its vital phases—from the formal employment contract entered into to the use of official coercion to guarantee its fulfillment and the interests of the state.

This planned process was accompanied by far-reaching changes in wage policy and ultimately by a severe depression of wage levels. The author buttresses his evidence here with a thorough description of the course taken by nominal and real wages, particularly from the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan until 1951. And to broaden the base of his analysis of the development of the Russian worker's living standards, Mr. Schwartz also takes into account the various social benefits he is accorded and supplies a detailed history of Soviet labor legislation.

In order to facilitate an understanding of the special problems of the Russian worker, the author has prefaced his work with a sociological analysis of the changed character of the Russian working class; whereas only a few decades ago it could be described as "semi-peasant," it has since shed most of its ties with the soil and is today very similar to the "backward" industrial proletariat of the West.

"Labor in the Soviet Union" is not an easy book to read, but is a "must" for any serious student of Soviet affairs. A careful, chapter-by-chapter study will reward the reader with a clear and vivid picture. From the dry facts and figures emerges a worker that is enslaved but still struggling to be free. Chained to five-year plans that have sapped his energy and reduced him to the status of a dehumanized being who is deprived of political and economic freedom, the Russian worker is nevertheless not a docile beast of burden—witness the periodic stories of dissatisfaction and other forms of industrial conflict that

(Continued on page 41)



—Scott Long in The Minneapolis Tribune.
"Hero of the Soviet Union."

S. M. Levitas is executive editor of The New Leader.