

THE VICTORS' DILEMMA: ALLIED INTERVENTION IN THE RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR. By *John Silverlight*. New York: Weybright and Talley, 1970. xxiii, 392 pp. \$10.00.

Mr. Silverlight is an assistant editor of the London *Observer*. He has written a first-rate journalistic account of Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War. The adjectives are important. Although Silverlight is scholarly in his citation of sources, his is not a scholar's book. Rather, it is an account for the general reader, put forward in a style—often employing long excerpts from memoirs and other firsthand accounts—that conveys visual, almost sensual, impressions of the tumultuous events it chronicles.

Such vividness is the book's strength. Its principal weakness is that it is not analytical. We come away from it knowing relatively little about the politics of policy-making within the Allied governments, or indeed about the politics of their societies as a whole which gave rise to anti-Bolshevik policies but which then could not sustain military intervention against the Bolsheviks. We are not told much about *why* governments and individuals acted as they did, although we are given myriad details about *what* they did. In short, Silverlight's narrative cuts a wide swath, but it does not cut deep.

Neither does it plow new ground. There is no information here that we have not had before. Although Silverlight has made limited use of British government archives (in a manner suggesting that he took his leads from published monographical works rather than making a systematic search), his book is largely based on published English-language sources. His substantial bibliography contains two titles in French, all the rest in English. Yet if the specialist will gain little, the general reader will find in Silverlight's book the best general survey of Allied intervention. The only comparable work is William Henry Chamberlin's *The Russian Revolution, 1917–1921* (1935), which, of course, treats a considerably wider range of topics. But much has been published, particularly about the behavior of the Allied governments, in the nearly four intervening decades, and Silverlight draws upon a substantial portion of these more recent publications in bringing us his highly readable survey.

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VLADIMIR IL'ICH LENIN: BIOGRAFICHESKAIA KHRONIKA, 1870–1924. Vol. 1: 1870–1905. Institut marksizma-leninizma pri TsK KPSS. Moscow: Politizdat, 1970. xii, 627 pp. 1.16 rubles.

This biographical chronology of Lenin's life, works, and deeds is the first of presumably four or more volumes, and will form an integral part of Lenin's *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, fifth edition. It is the lineal descendant of the brief chronological appendixes to the second, third, and fourth editions of Lenin's *Sochineniia*. Thus it is enormously more detailed than all the previous chronologies and contains much useful information that they did not give. On the other hand, it is somewhat capricious—deliberately so, one must note—in giving or withholding summaries of Lenin's writings and utterances chronicled, and far less informative about what Lenin's collaborators said, thought, or did. To get a more complete picture of the skeletal outlines of Lenin's life and works one must combine the notes and chron-

ology of the second (and third) edition—far richer concerning vanished things and unpersons—with the fullness and variety of detail of this new chronology.

A few illustrations may help the reader to understand the value as well as the shortcomings and inadequacies of this imposing work. Thus it contains much detail that even few specialists on Lenin will be eager to learn. It begins with the birth of Lenin on April 10/22, 1870, only casually mentions Lenin's parents and grandparents, and sheds no light on the much-debated question of their national origins. But if the reader wants to know on what dates and for how long and in the company of what members of his family the child Lenin spent his summers at the maternal grandfather's estate at Kokushkino, not a year, not a day, nor a guest, nor an excursion away from the estate is omitted.

More interesting is what is stated and what left unstated concerning the intermittent stays of the youthful Lenin at the estate (the chronology modestly calls it *khutor*, farm) at Alakaevka. What was the young Lenin, during his twentieth, twenty-first, and twenty-second years doing on a remote, rundown farm near the miserable village of Alakaevka, a village of only eighty-four families, nine of them without a single horse or cow, four without ownership even of the miserable huts they inhabited, a village without a library or even an elementary school? We learn that Lenin's mother bought the farm at the beginning of 1889, and that he and various members of his immediate family lived there each summer, from May to early September, in 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, and until August 12/24 of 1893, when his mother sold the farm and he left for good. What was he doing in that miserable village for five summers of his young manhood? From the chronology we learn only that various officials watched him, or rather asked for reports on their new landlord, that he read some books, and that he defended one local peasant in a local court. From my own researches I can add that his mother paid 7,500 rubles for the estate (no small sum in the gold rubles of the 1890s). After seeing her son barred from the university and prevented from studying law, and after pleading in vain in the name of her husband's record of service ("It is a veritable torment," she wrote in one of her petitions, "to regard my son and see how the best years of his life slip unfruitfully away"), she had looked for an alternative career. Remembering her own childhood in a German farm community on the Volga, she had sought to set him up as a landlord over eighty-three *desiatinas* (roughly 225 acres) of land and I do not know how many poor peasants. That is why he came to that godforsaken spot for four spring plantings, and stayed for the bringing in of three, or perhaps four, harvests. The impressive regiment of archivists and chroniclers who compiled this work used many proper sources, including of course the memoirs of Krupskaya, but they could find no use for the simple quotation from Lenin to her: "My mother wanted me to engage in farming. I tried it but I saw that it would not work: my relations with the *muzhiks* got to be abnormal."

Equally curious are the summaries of Lenin's articles and conversations given in some instances, and the omission of such summaries in others. Thus we learn that Lenin scolded Valentinov for his interest in the philosophy of Ernst Mach (actually it was Valentinov who rebuked Lenin for condemning Mach without reading him), and we get a summary every time Lenin reproves a "deviator." But if we want to know what Lenin said about "The Fall of Port Arthur," in his article with that title of January 14, 1904, there is no hint of Lenin's jubilation ("Indeed, the European bourgeoisie has cause for alarm; the proletariat has cause for rejoicing").

More curious are the twistings and turnings, the unsaid and the too much said, in the entries on Lenin's bloc with Bogdanov to rebuild the shattered Bolshevik faction in 1904—a bloc “neutral in philosophy.” One cannot tell from this volume that Lenin and Bogdanov were coleaders of the little group of twenty-two that started the recovery of the Bolshevik faction, or that out of the nineteen actually present one was Lenin's younger sister, one his wife, one Bogdanov's wife, one Lunacharsky's, and one Bonch-Bruevich's.

Much effort is spent on obscuring the “neutrality in philosophy” of the Lenin-Bogdanov bloc. The chronicle tells us that in May or June 1904 Lenin wrote Bogdanov a letter criticizing his *Empirio-Monism* (“The letter has not been found”); that in June 1904 Lenin wrote eleven pages of theses against Ernst Mach (“The theses have not been found”). But from other sources we learn that Lenin had not yet read Mach; that he had asked Plekhanov to write a critique of *Empirio-Monism*, but Plekhanov had been “too busy”; that he had then asked “Orthodox” (Liubov Akselrod), and she had written only to betray her ignorance of the subject; and that Lenin's own first relatively serious critique was written in 1906 in a three-notebook-long letter to Bogdanov, which Bogdanov characterized as “so thin in philosophical knowledge and so rich in insults” that if Lenin wanted to continue personal relations with him the letter “hereby returned, must be treated as unwritten, undispached, and unread.” And so it remained until Bogdanov defeated Lenin in his own faction on Duma tactics in 1907, a defeat responded to by Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.

Well, one must not be too captious when one considers the circumstances under which a veritable army of serious researchers, archivists, and literary detectives worked on this chronology of the life of the founding father. If they have included much trivial nonsense, for example, “Lenin and Krupskaja spent the night of February 18, 1900, in a hotel in Ufa (the address has not been determined),” and if they have distorted and concealed where they had to—yet they were serious scholars, and the massively detailed chronology will be a useful tool to students of Lenin and Bolshevism, the best that we could have expected.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SEXUALLY EMANCIPATED COMMUNIST WOMAN. By *Alexandra Kollontai*. Edited, with an afterword, by *Iring Fetscher*. Translated by *Salvator Attanasio*. Foreword by *Germaine Greer*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1971. xvii, 137 pp. \$5.95.

Even without the book's foreword by Germaine Greer, the motivation for translating and publishing Alexandra Kollontai's autobiography, written in 1926, would be obvious. Unfortunately, despite its flamboyant title, the work is bland and disappointing and fails to resurrect the image of its beautiful and dedicated author or to convey the drama of her life.

The guarded tone of Kollontai's writing is understandable. In 1922 she had been shipped off conveniently to the Russian Legation in Oslo, where, while serving with distinction as Soviet ambassador, she had to watch from afar as her comrades in the Workers' Opposition, including her lover Alexander Shliapnikov, one by one fell victim to Stalinist purges. The numerous deletions made by