

WLASSOW: VERRÄTER ODER PATRIOT? By *Sven Steenberg*. Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1968. 256 pp. DM 18.

VLASOV. By *Sven Steenberg*. Translated from the German by *Abe Farbstein*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970. ix, 241 pp. \$7.50.

Many essays and books have been published—those by Jürgen Thorwald and Alexander Dallin, to mention only two—dealing with the events in the Second World War still connected with the name of Vlasov. This is the first biography of the general. We are indebted to Steenberg for having collected information over a number of years that would raise Vlasov's image and correct the distortions to which it has been subjected since the war. As this effort necessitated placing the main emphasis on his personality, his surroundings have been pushed further into the background than would have been the case in a more balanced account. The author describes, however, how Stalin's favorite and one of the saviors of Moscow became a staunch opponent of the Soviet regime, and what trials of strength Vlasov was exposed to in the tussle between the various forces that streamed around him and within him. His tragedy was a psychological and political drama from which conclusions can be drawn that would relate to future developments.

Vlasov's story will lose none of its importance so long as there is a necessity to determine the role played by the internal opposition in the Soviet Union. Since the subject of Vlasov is often raised in Russia, it apparently belongs to a past which has not yet been finally mastered. Hitler failed to recognize anti-Stalinism, and in 1945 the Western powers overlooked this political potential.

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SOVIET-POLISH RELATIONS, 1917–1921. By *Piotr S. Wandycz*. Russian Research Center Studies, 59. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969. ix, 403 pp. \$10.00.

Professor Wandycz has at last put the controversial subject of the Polish-Soviet War of 1920, its antecedents and effects, into the proper perspective. It was neither a war of "Polish imperialism" nor an issue of Russian self-determination but a struggle between Warsaw and Moscow over territory of crucial importance to both—that is, the borderlands of Lithuania, Belorussia, and the Ukraine. To Piłsudski, as to Lenin, the borderlands were the key to the future power status of the country he led. If Russia failed to control these territories, her influence and intervention in Poland and the Baltic States would be blocked and, with it, the highroad to Germany. If Piłsudski succeeded in gaining his objective of linking the borderlands with Poland by way of alliance with an independent Ukraine and federation with Lithuania and Belorussia, he would lay the foundations for the most powerful state in Eastern Europe. As it turned out, Russia suffered only a temporary setback, since Poland lacked the strength and the will to follow where Piłsudski wished her to tread.

Basing his work on much hitherto unpublished archival material, Polish, Russian, and to some extent British, as well as extensive published sources, Professor Wandycz has produced the most significant study of his subject to date. He demonstrates, with chapter and verse, that the Soviet version of self-determination was a farce—in reality an attempt at the federation and then unification with Soviet Russia of all her borderlands, including Poland. The Communist parties in the

borderlands—whose leaders had to be persuaded by Lenin to play the “game” of federation—were in reality the provincial branches of the CPSU, and their governments were maintained by the Red Army. However, while Lenin succeeded in imposing his policy on the Communist leaders of Belorussia, Lithuania, and the Ukraine, Piłsudski failed to get strong backing for his aims from the Polish parliament and public opinion, which were dominated by the National Democratic Party. This party, led by his lifelong opponent, Roman Dmowski, opposed the creation of an independent Ukraine allied with Poland and Polish federation with Belorussia and Lithuania. The party held that the former course would alienate Russia and that the latter would weaken Poland, and promoted instead the policy of annexing those former territories of Eastern Poland where the Poles formed a significant minority and would to some extent be able to assimilate the non-Polish population. This policy, reinforced by the exhaustion of Poland by six years of war (1914–20), represented the majority view of Polish opinion and tied Piłsudski’s hands, particularly after his victory of August 1920 over the Red Army.

Furthermore, Piłsudski was hampered by the policy of the Western Allies, France and Britain. The governments of these powers at first supported the Whites in the Russian Civil War and held to the provisions of article 87 of the Versailles Treaty, which left the settlement of the Polish eastern border to the Great Powers in consultation with Russia. When the Whites lost all chance of victory, by the end of 1919, the Western Allies proposed that Poland follow a policy of “no peace, no war”—that is, stay indefinitely in a posture of armed defense. Only the French military gave support to Piłsudski’s plans. Even after the Treaty of Riga was concluded in March 1921, Britain accepted it with but an ill grace. The treaty was not given international recognition until 1923. Finally, besides having to contend with Polish public opinion and the Western Allies, Piłsudski faced the obstacles of Lithuanian hostility to Poland and the impatience of Belorussian leaders to achieve full independence. He did reach a workable agreement with the Ukrainian leader, Simon Petliura, but its seeds failed to take root in the short time that the Polish and Ukrainian troops were installed in the war-ravaged and unstable Ukraine.

Professor Wandycz concludes his study with the verdict that, given the diametrically opposed aims of Poland and Soviet Russia, it is difficult to see how events could have taken any other course than they did in 1917–21. With the coming of peace, Poland, and possibly Germany as well, was saved from becoming a Soviet republic. Soviet Russia turned inward, proceeding through NEP to “build socialism in one country”—hardly the aim Lenin had in mind when he seized power in November 1917. However, the conditions for a long-lasting peace were absent, and for this the Western Powers have their share of the blame. “The Entente had antagonized the Bolsheviks, discouraged the Poles, and failed to preside over a settlement in the East. Its share of responsibility for events which later arose from the 1917–21 period was heavy indeed. In this larger failure, unfortunately, the Poles could take little comfort” (p. 290). In this period and later, the Western Powers had no clear-cut policy in Eastern Europe.

It is devoutly to be hoped that this book will be widely read not only by historians of Eastern Europe but by historians of Western Europe as well. The latter will find in it a major work in the English language on a subject which has too often in the past been seen only as a reflection in a crooked mirror.

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