

SSSR V BOR'BE ZA MIR NAKANUNE VTOROI MIROVOI VOINY (SENTIABR' 1938 G.-AVGUST 1939 G.): DOKUMENTY I MATERIALY. Edited by *A. A. Gromyko* et al. Moscow: Politizdat, 1971. 736 pp. 1.44 rubles.

The purpose of this collection of documents is to substantiate the familiar contention of Soviet historians that the Soviet Union alone stood for genuine collective security in the period before the Second World War, while the Western Powers were chiefly concerned to stimulate German interest in eastward expansion and to connive at her aggression, provided it was at the Soviet Union's expense. The documents themselves come partly from the Soviet archives and partly from Western sources—British, German, American, Italian, Polish. Most of the latter have been published elsewhere in the original. Of the documents from the Soviet archives, most are telegrams from Soviet missions and military attachés abroad. Some appear to be interceptions of documents originating with foreign governments.

The Soviet documents bear out the editors' contention that events and plans of foreign governments were followed closely. They also serve to illustrate the political activities of Soviet diplomats, notably Maisky in London—giving, for instance, accounts of his conversations with Beaverbrook and Lloyd George. The Soviet authorities also followed closely the final stages of the "appeasement" policy, whether carried out on the British government's behalf or by self-appointed intermediaries.

Since it presumably will be some time before the regular series of Soviet documents reaches these years, this material is useful to help assess the background against which the Soviet government decided to come to terms with Nazi Germany. On the other hand, the documents add nothing whatever to our knowledge of Soviet-German relations themselves. The editors refer, of course, to the Soviet-German nonaggression pact but print neither its text nor any documents dealing with the conversations that led up to its conclusion. It is not merely that the Soviet archives are not called upon to furnish any new material; but this is the only subject for which Western documentary collections are not used. The documents from the German archives that have been available in print for a quarter-century are totally ignored, and Ciano's diary, which is used on certain points, is not referred to for its reflections of Germany's Soviet policy.

For the Western reader this is not important; but it is important for an understanding of the Soviet attitude toward foreign policy even today. If the Soviet Union remains the one major power that cannot face the realities of its own past, that is an important fact which we would do well to recognize; since it must be assumed that it is partial collections of this kind that are now used in the training of Soviet youth for their international role.

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IANTARNYI KRAI: TRAGEDIIA GORODA LIBAVY I GIBEL' ROSSII-SKOI IMPERII. By *Ivan Ebershtein*. New York, 1970. 327 pp. Paper.

This book offers an intriguing combination of memoirs and folklore. Without entering into problems of interpretation and politics, I would recommend it strongly to those attempting to steep themselves in the history and culture of the Baltic

area. After a brief description of his survival under first the Soviet and subsequently the German occupation of Latvia in the Second World War, the author launches into the history, both real and legendary, of the Eastern Baltic and more specifically the city of Liepaja (Libava in Russian).

Fact and fiction melt together virtually indistinguishably. Ebershtein has offered footnotes, but the value of the book is not in its scholarly trappings. Indeed, as witnessed by the author's providing (p. 151) a poorly printed Latin text of Tacitus followed by a Russian translation of an old German rendering of the same, the scholarly qualities of the book may best be passed over in silence. Nevertheless, the book offers a delightful introduction to Baltic lore. The reader will surely enjoy such accounts as the efforts of the Lithuanians to claim Roman ancestry, or the mythology of amber.

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CRITIQUE OF HEAVEN. By *Arend Th. van Leeuwen*. The first series of the Gifford Lectures entitled "Critique of Heaven and Earth." New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972. 206 pp. \$10.00.

If the evolution of the religious ideas of the young Friedrich Engels is well known, through his letters to his friends the brothers F. and W. Graber and to his sister Mary, that of the young Marx is scarcely so familiar. It is customary to write that the problem of God did not concern him, or that if it did, he "had no difficulty in ridding himself of religion in his personal life" (J.-Y. Calvez, *La pensée de Karl Marx*, Paris, 1956).

Thus it is a contribution important to the elucidation of this question that van Leeuwen makes in this first series of Gifford Lectures. His study of the available documents written by Marx from 1835 to 1841—from the essays for his final examination at the Trier school to his doctoral thesis (1841) entitled "The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature," and including poems and a letter to his father (1837)—leads van Leeuwen to write, "I would even be inclined to suggest that Marx's early development conceals a deep-rooted dilemma very close to the heart of the Christian dilemma in a post-Christian civilization" (p. 17). In examining the German vocabulary of the essay "Reflections of a Youth Before Choosing a Profession" in the light of those concepts of the Enlightenment in which the young Marx had been immersed both in his family circle and in school, and in comparing this text with the essay devoted to a commentary on a chapter of St. John's Gospel, van Leeuwen reveals how deeply Lutheran Christianity—especially its practical theology—had penetrated Marx's thought. Thus through Marx's attendance at the Left Hegelian Doctors' Club in Berlin, the thesis of 1841, and the article "Introduction to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law" in 1843, the critique of religion undertaken by Marx forced "the Christian faith to an unprecedented confrontation with its own situation" (p. 17). It was indeed before his encounter with Feuerbach that he moved toward such a radical critique. And "to be radical is to take things by the root" (Marx, "Introduction . . .").

The careful study of the thesis of 1841 leads van Leeuwen to another proposition that is no less important. In the mirror of Epicurus Marx discovered his own exile, from a Christian era in which God was dead, to another region, the future.