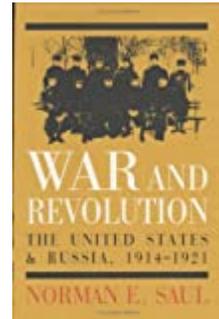




**Norman E. Saul.** *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia, 1914-1921.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001. xx + 483 pp. \$45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7006-1090-7.



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### From Friends to Allies to Enemies

This book, the third in a series of well received works, was preceded by *Distant Friends: The United States and Russia, 1763-1867* (1996) and *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867-1914* (1996). Its author teaches at the University of Kansas and, prior to this series, has published a number of books and articles on tsarist foreign policy.

The over-arching theme of this book and its two predecessors involves what the author calls “mirror-imaging” or, alternatively, “Americanization.” That is, Saul argues that many Americans and some Russians believed their two countries to have a special relationship that of teacher and student. The United States was thought to provide an especially relevant model for the political, economic and social evolution of Russia. This viewpoint anticipates, at least in rough outline, the later development of modernization theory.

Professor Saul has chosen a crowded field in which to make a contribution. The relationship between the American Republic and late Imperial Russia, along with its Provisional Government and Soviet successors, has been frequently investigated. In the last three decades

there have been important studies by William Allison, Fred Carstensen, Donald Davis, Beatrice Farnsworth, Victor Fic, Peter Filene, David Foglesong, Lloyd Gardner, Joan Hoff Wilson, George Kennan, Christopher Lasch, James Libbey, Robert Maddox, Arno Mayer, David Mayers, David McFadden, Eugene Trani, Betty Unterberger, Christine White, Robert C. Williams, William Appleman Williams and others.

However, the author has, indeed, made a contribution by producing an analysis which is not only more detailed than earlier works, but, more importantly, by crafting a study which is multi-dimensional. Saul’s approach encompasses not only government-to-government relations, but also the roles played by legislative bodies, the press, scholars, NGOs, private philanthropists and political activists. Moreover, the author is interested in foreign trade, intellectual intercourse, technological exchange and even the cross pollination of artistic schools. He pays particular attention to Russian images and academic studies of the United States, and to American views of and scholarship on Russia. For example, he draws a fascinating portrait of the battle to control the American

image of Imperial Russia, which pitted American Rus-sophiles and the Imperial government against Russian radical emigres and the American Jewish community.

The book abounds with provocative and sometimes controversial judgements. Quite sensibly, the author characterizes American aid to the Provisional Government as “too little and too late” (p. 169). He is critical of President Woodrow Wilson and of American policy toward Russia generally as unfocused and indecisive. Saul depicts the American mission in revolutionary Russia as out of Ambassador David Francis’ control, badly divided and working at cross purposes. The lack of a sound, clearly articulated and carefully implemented American policy in Russia had serious consequences. “Failure to solve the Russian problem damaged severely any hopes to realize the American Wilsonian goal of a democratic world protected by a powerful League of Nations. The legacy of this failure would shape much of the international history of the twentieth century” (p. 307). In assessing the causes of America’s armed intervention in the Russian Revolution, the author sees a mix of motives safeguarding Allied arms caches in Russia, rescuing the Czech Legion, conceding to pressure from Britain and France, countering the threat of Japanese expansionism in Siberia and supporting anti-Bolshevik forces in the Russian civil war. Although Saul includes anti-communism as one element in Washington’s policy, he does not make ideological conflict its centerpiece as, for example, Arno Mayer has. Ultimately, U.S. policy toward Russia failed in its own terms because it could not create a new Russia as a clone of America. Washington never

found a Russian leader who would and could lead his country down the American path. It was never a realistic expectation in the first place and, unfortunately, not the only time the U.S. government and its people have been captured by that delusion.

Inevitably, in such a long and complex work, some of the author’s judgements seem less persuasive. He contends, for instance, that “the United States virtually forced a democratically oriented Russia to stay in the war” (p. xi). This assertion misses the point that the nationalistic liberals who dominated the first Provisional Government cabinet scarcely needed American pressure to make them seek to maintain Russia’s position in the Entente and its promised share in the post-war spoils. Similarly, it is inaccurate to call Pavel Miliukov and Aleksandr Guchkov “key makers of the February Revolution” (p. 128). In reality, they and some of their colleagues in the cabinet had been part of the Duma’s “provisional committee” which was formed to forestall the revolution.

This work is based on extensive research in thirty-one U.S. archives and three important Moscow archives (AVPR, TsKKPSS and GARF). Unfortunately, Saul was not permitted to examine the Russian Foreign Ministry archive for 1918-1921. He has also consulted virtually all of the printed documentary collections, memoirs and secondary studies relevant to his topic. The author’s writing is clear and direct. This book should be accessible to any educated person, though it is likely to appeal mainly to scholars and graduate students. This is a well conceived and useful work, a valuable addition to the literature of Russian-American relations.

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