

THE SOVIET EMPIRE: EXPANSION AND DÉTENTE. Edited by *William E. Griffith*. Critical Choices for Americans, vol. 9. Lexington, Mass. and Toronto: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath, 1976. xxii, 421 pp. Tables. Map.

This book is one in a series of some fourteen volumes which brings together studies prepared for the Commission on Critical Choices for Americans. It is composed of twelve separate chapters by distinguished authorities in the field of Soviet politics, such as Thomas W. Wolfe on Soviet military policy, Robert Legvold on Soviet policy toward Western Europe, Thomas W. Robinson on the Soviet Union and Asia, Oles M. Smolansky on the Middle East, and J. M. Montias and Robin Alison Remington on Eastern Europe.

Two features of this volume distinguish it from most edited works on Soviet foreign policy and make it particularly useful for both specialists and the general reader. Reflecting the growing interest on the part of Western experts in the interconnections between Soviet foreign and domestic politics, several of the chapters—for example, Peter Reddaway on dissent, Seweryn Bialer on the Soviet elite and domestic trends, and Joseph S. Berliner and Franklyn D. Holzman on the Soviet economy—are addressed specifically to analysis of internal developments which may or may not affect present and future Soviet conduct abroad. In addition, the contributors have been afforded ample space to explore their subjects in depth, with the result that several studies are over fifty pages in length and make real contributions toward a balanced and comprehensive perspective on complex and controversial issues.

If, in the mid-1960s, the central question for students of Soviet foreign policy was what lay “beyond the Cold War,” in the mid-1970s, this was replaced by a preoccupation with what will emerge “beyond détente.” The unrealistic euphoria of 1972–73 has vanished, and there is a general recognition that the conflictual elements in East-West relations are strong and persistent, while the cooperative dimensions are fragile, tentative, subject to quick reversal, and not easily nurtured by even the most enlightened of Western policies. The studies in this volume (which have been updated to include events through early 1976) reflect this mood of sober, hard-headed, post-détente realism. They provide an effective antidote to exaggerated expectations of détente, as well as valuable reassurance against overdrawn fears of what the Soviet Union intends and/or is able to accomplish in its foreign policy.

Although the authors deal with different regions of the world and with different dimensions of Soviet policy, for the most part, a general consensus exists regarding the nature of Soviet society, its likely evolution (or more accurately nonevolution) in the near future, and the forces that motivate Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet Union is seen not as an ideologically motivated revolutionary power, but as a newly arrived imperial power which places great reliance on military strength and which will attempt to expand its influence on a global scale. For all their caution, their determination to safeguard existing interests, and their fear of uncontrolled crises and escalation, the leaders of the Soviet Union will continue their persistent drive to undercut Western positions on a worldwide basis. Although Marxist-Leninist ideology has little direct relevance to the day-to-day policy choices of the Soviet foreign ministry and has become increasingly ritualized and sterile, it does serve to reinforce the deeply ingrained Soviet tendency to view the world in conflictual terms. No matter how much Western scholars and policymakers muse about the shrinkage of planet Earth and the need for cooperative and interdependent solutions to transnational problems, the Soviet leadership finds it difficult to transcend a zero-sum game perspective in which Western losses—shifts in the “correlation of forces” promoted first and foremost in the 1970s by the buildup of Soviet military power—are Soviet gains.

Despite these warnings, the studies in the volume also carry the more hopeful message that a recognition of the continuing sources of tension in East-West relations need not lead to bleak pessimism and distraught fears concerning the decline of the West. *Détente* in one form or another is likely to continue—albeit with reduced expectations on all sides—since it does meet important Soviet needs: facilitating the importation of advanced Western technology, avoiding an unrestrained strategic arms race, providing a framework for crisis management and the avoidance of nuclear war, and preventing closer relations between the United States and China. It also must be borne in mind that, in spite of the extensive commitment of Soviet resources and debilitating American weaknesses in the post-Vietnam and Watergate periods, the Soviet Union has not been able to convert military strength into durable political influence (such as in the Sudan, Egypt, Somalia, and India).

The contributions make clear that, in the years to come, the outward projection of Soviet power will be hampered by internal political vulnerabilities—growing nationalism among minorities and the likelihood of succession problems when the Brezhnev generation in the Politburo and Central Committee (and not just a single leader as in the past) need to be replaced. Similarly, debilitating and constraining economic problems—such as the technological lag, declining growth rates, erratic agricultural production, and a squeeze on energy resources—will persist and possibly worsen. On top of all this, the attractive power for foreign elites of both Marxist-Leninist ideology and the Soviet economic model has declined precipitously. In short, Soviet weaknesses and difficulties are at least as great as those of the West, and a prudent, balanced, and, above all, unified Western policy which avoids overreaction, panic, and preoccupation with the purely military aspects of the East-West equation has every chance for success in the 1980s. As a number of the authors point out, Western disunity and internal weakness, rather than Soviet strength, are likely to be the dominant problems conditioning the critical choices for Americans in the years ahead.

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EUROCOMMUNISM AND THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. SPECIAL REPORT, JANUARY 1977. By *James E. Dougherty* and *Diane K. Pfaltzgraff*. Cambridge, Mass.: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc. xiv, 66 pp. \$3.00, paper.

Eurocommunism may be viewed from three analytically separate perspectives: First, it poses a domestic challenge in such countries as Italy, Spain, or France, where Communist parties offer a more or less radical alternative to prevailing political and economic patterns, structures, and priorities. Second, Eurocommunism is a challenge to the East, because it offers, or claims to offer, the prospect of a more humane—indeed pluralistic—form of socialism, which is different from both the theory and practice of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Third, Eurocommunism is a challenge to the West, notably to NATO and the Atlantic alliance, because of the ambiguity and uncertainty of West European Communist support for an alliance whose main function is to contain Soviet power.

Although the book under review deals primarily with the Eurocommunist threat to the Atlantic alliance, it takes a very skeptical view of all three aspects of Eurocommunism. Recent reappraisals of Communist theory and practice are seen as tactical maneuvers based on calculations of electoral necessity. Among others, the authors regard the undemocratic, Leninist principles of internal party organization and the reluctance to break with Moscow to be evidence for their skeptical conclusion.

One can share, as this reviewer does, the authors' concern about the Eurocommunist challenge to the Western alliance, and one can remain skeptical about the rather sudden "transformation" of the French Communist Party without belittling,