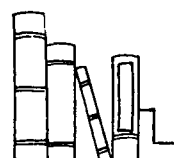




BOOK REVIEWS



Pipes' Peace

Survival Is Not Enough: Soviet Realities and America's Future, by Richard Pipes (New York: Simon and Schuster, \$16.95).

Reviewed by Arch Puddington

One consequence of the post-Afghanistan cooling of U.S.-Soviet ties has been the publication of a steady stream of books and studies analyzing the nature of the Soviet system and setting forth recommendations on how America can more effectively conduct relations with its rival superpower. Richard Pipes's book ranks among the most important of these. A professor of history at Harvard and former director of East European and Soviet Affairs at the National Security Council, Mr. Pipes is a preeminent authority on Soviet history and strategic thinking. He is also a figure of some controversy within the fraternity of Kremlinologists, having attained a kind of pariah status for his unrelenting criticism of détente during the 1970s. Given the prevailing view that the resurrection of détente should stand as the principal goal of American policy, *Survival Is Not Enough* is not likely to enhance the author's popularity with the foreign policy establishment.

Domestic Imperialism

Mr. Pipes has written a powerful criticism of Western attitudes towards the Soviet Union, attitudes based on clichés, illusions, and no small amount of wilful self-deception. At the heart of the problem, he believes, is a failure to recognize the relationship between the USSR's totalitarian internal system and its expansionist foreign policy. He is scornful of the view that Soviet foreign and domestic policies are but tangentially linked, or not linked at all, noting, "Historical evidence suggests that the foreign policy of every country is a function of its domestic conditions and an extension of its internal policies." It is, he adds, particularly important to understand the political system/foreign policy relationship, because the Soviet system is a product of two especially dangerous currents: the Russian political tradition and Marxism-Leninism.

Of the two, Mr. Pipes believes the Russian tradition to be the more important. He explicitly rejects the notion that socialism is inherently repressive, observing that 20th century socialist parties throughout Western

Europe have embraced parliamentary democracy and divested themselves of utopianism and commitment to the class struggle. Pre-revolutionary Russia, on the other hand, was both internally autocratic and imperialist in its relations with its neighbors. Russian imperialism, moreover, did not derive from a paranoid fear of invasion, but rather was basic to the system. The rulers of Old Russia, like the Kremlin leadership today, employed foreign conquest as a means of securing internal legitimacy. As Mr. Pipes notes: "Permanent conquests serve to justify the permanent subservience of Russian society."

Since the seizure of power in 1917, the Soviet leadership has improved upon the pre-revolutionary imperialist tradition by developing new and uniquely efficient methods of regimenting its own people. This enables the Soviets to maintain relative calm within the imperial orbit while working assiduously to destabilize their adversaries, a development unprecedented in the history of imperial powers. Moreover, the Kremlin is abetted by the gullibility of crucial segments of the Western elite. To these elites, the idea that the Kremlin pursues a Grand Strategy towards eventual world domination is an absurdity; they insist, against all evidence, in seeing the Soviet leadership as sharing similar values and political goals. The Soviets, for their part, are only too ready to exploit differences within the democratic world. They work hard to neutralize various constituency groups and foment divisions among the countries which form the Western alliance.

East-West trade provides a revealing example of how the Soviets implement a strategy of divide and conquer. By pressing for deals with declining, sunset industries in West Germany, the Kremlin has created a mass constituency for "normal" economic relations, a constituency which embraces not merely the German business class, but thousands of workers whose jobs now depend on the continuation of trade with the Soviets. In the United States, the Soviets have succeeded in transforming the business elite, the traditional target of anti-capitalist polemics, into "the most vociferous neutralist lobby" in the country.

Gullible West

The closed character of the Soviet system also gives the Kremlin a unique advantage in the war of ideas. The Soviet definition of peace as little more than the absence of overt conflict goes generally unchallenged in international forums. Even more telling is the Soviet ability to stifle internal, popular debate over the leadership's thoughts about fighting a nuclear war at a time when a contentious and divisive brawl over nuclear policy rages

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in the democratic world. The fear and hysteria generated by open discussion of nuclear war is shrewdly exploited by the Soviets, who emphasize and reemphasize the same themes: that nuclear war would lead to the extinction of life on this planet, that the Soviet Union abhors the very thought of nuclear conflict, but, conversely, that actions which pose a threat to Soviet interests also threaten world peace. The rich dividends reaped by this kind of psychological blackmail can be seen in the reactions of world leaders to President Reagan's pointed attacks on the Soviet system, specifically in the notion that moral considerations must be set aside when dealing with the Soviet Union because of the absolute necessity of maintaining good relations with the Kremlin. The result of this kind of accommodation is, of course, quite dangerous because it encourages the Soviets to believe that they can commit any act of aggression short of nuclear war without provoking the direct opposition of the West. In similar fashion, the Soviets have won acceptance both of the Brezhnev doctrine and a double standard in the treatment of guerrilla movements: they call for political accommodation with "liberation" forces which threaten non-Communist countries and oppose indigenous forces which threaten Marxist regimes.

For Mr. Pipes, nothing could be further from the truth than the charge, much stressed in Soviet propaganda, that anti-Sovietism exists only because of pressures exerted by private interests in the capitalist world. The list of those who can be depended on to endorse, at least implicitly, Soviet criticism of American foreign policy includes businessmen who have been denied trade opportunities for security reasons, opposition politicians who take malicious glee in our foreign policy setbacks, and those who believe that defense spending deprives the poor of social programs. According to Mr. Pipes, it is "difficult to think of a group in the West which has a vested interest in bad relations with the Soviet Union." Ideological conviction, not self-interest, is the driving force behind our ability to deter Soviet expansion and stem the spread of Communism.

Bolshevik Blues

This conclusion would ordinarily lead one to suspect that Mr. Pipes views the future with deep pessimism. This is not the case. Despite the many advantages it enjoys in its struggle with the democratic world, the Soviet Union is itself beset by a daunting array of political and economic problems with which its rigidly centralized system is ill equipped to cope. Mr. Pipes avoids the mistake of predicting the USSR economy's imminent collapse; he believes that the country can muddle through without significant change. The Kremlin, however, cannot forever maintain itself as an imperial power burdened as it is with an economy which provides a standard of living for the Soviet people roughly comparable with many Third World countries. Reform is essential, but unlikely, since the process of economic change would inevitably pose a threat to the *nomenklatura*, the party elites who rule the country. Thus various experiments designed to provide incentives for workers and managers and inject a measure of economic decentralization have been repeatedly

sabotaged by a bureaucracy protective of its power and privileges.

A further drain on the economy is the increasingly high cost of maintaining an empire. Instead of being enriched at the expense of its colonies, the Soviet Union is emburdened by a transfer of resources to the subject nations. The USSR's weak economy has also inhibited the Kremlin in its effort to gain influence in the Third World; indeed, Mr. Pipes asserts that the Soviets have had to concede defeat in their attempt to establish a global empire.

Survival Strategy

Mr. Pipes' prescriptions for American policy flow directly from his analysis of Soviet society and his reading of the strengths and weaknesses of the democracies. In the Third World, the United States should borrow a note from Soviet practice and employ proxy forces to check Soviet expansionist efforts. He counsels against the direct use of American troops in the belief that a protracted war would only reignite the latent isolationism of the American people.

He recommends that we exploit our economic preeminence wherever possible. This means, above all else, refusing to sell the Soviets the technologies which enhance their military capability. A policy of economic denial, he says, makes economic as well as strategic sense, since improvements in Soviet military capability made possible by our technology will ultimately compel us to spend more on defense. Technology transfer has an additional, insidious, effect: it enables the Soviets to postpone the implementation of economic reform, a development which will necessitate a transfer of resources from the military to the civilian sector. Finally, Mr. Pipes favors the use of economic sanctions as a means of punishing Soviet aggression. Here he dismisses the argument that the measures imposed by President Carter did not bring about Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, observing that our demonstrated willingness to impose sanctions may well have been a crucial factor in the Soviet decision not to invade Poland.

Mr. Pipes also cautions against the perception of arms control as a principal instrument of peace. Arms accords, he observes, do not pave the way for broader political settlements. Rather the political agreements must come before arms control. Peace, in the fullest sense, will be achieved only when the Soviets exhibit a willingness to conform to internationally accepted norms of behavior; until that time, arms agreements will produce only modest consequences.

Survival Is Not Enough is one of the most clearly written books on U.S.-Soviet affairs in some time. Mr. Pipes reveals himself as a man with a profound attachment to the democratic West, to its political and economic institutions, and to its democratic values. He is, nonetheless, a demanding critic of those in the West, principally among our European allies, who believe that the achievements of democratic civilization can be maintained without sacrifice. The democratic world will prevail, he believes, if we neither cower before the bear, nor feed it.

Hard Times

Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950–1980, by Charles Murray (New York: Basic Books, Inc., \$23.95)

Reviewed by Adam Meyerson

Charles Murray's extraordinary book, *Losing Ground*, is essential reading for anyone who cares about improving the life of poor people. He shows that America lost the war on poverty, and that progress stopped at the very moment massive federal social spending began. He therefore makes a compelling case that the premises of our social policy are tragically misconceived.

The statistics Mr. Murray amasses are irrefutable. During the 1950s, and particularly in the early and mid-1960s, millions of Americans were winning their personal wars on poverty. The number of people living under the poverty line fell from 39.5 million in 1959 to 24.1 million in 1969, or from 22.4 percent to 12.1 percent of the population. Up-by-the-bootstraps mobility was especially dramatic among black Americans. In 1959, 58.2 percent of blacks and other nonwhites were classified as poor. Ten years later, that figure had plummeted to 30.9 percent.

One might have expected this progress to accelerate in the 1970s, for by the end of the 1960s, the Federal government was putting Lyndon Johnson's Great Society into effect. Spending on AFDC, food stamps, and Medicaid mushroomed; expenditures on public aid tripled, rising from \$15 billion in 1968 to \$47 billion in 1976 (both in 1980 dollars). Special efforts were also being made to bring blacks into the economic mainstream. The civil rights laws of the mid-60s that barred discrimination in employment were quickly followed by affirmative action rules that required discrimination on behalf of blacks.

But these interventions did not achieve what they were supposed to. On the contrary, as Mr. Murray documents, the spectacular progress against poverty abruptly ended at the close of the 1960s. In 1980, the percentage of Americans living in poverty was higher (13 percent) than it had been in 1969. Most disturbing of all, progress among poor blacks, who still had so far to go, was suddenly arrested. Middle-class blacks continued to improve their lot, and by 1980 the percentage of blacks in white-collar jobs had risen to 38 percent, up from 16 percent in 1960. But, 29.9 percent of blacks still lived in poverty in 1980, only one percentage point below a decade before. Measured by its own standards, Washington's war on poverty was thus an abysmal failure.

Contrast this experience with the other great domestic policy initiative of the late 1960s and early 1970s: environmental protection. Our tangle of environmental laws can be criticized on grounds of regulatory overkill and unnecessary cost. But at least America's air and water are substantially cleaner than they were 15 years ago. At least something is being done about public health

hazards such as toxic waste dumps. One cannot make a similar claim about Federal anti-poverty programs. The Federal government did not reduce poverty, and its intervention coincided with an end to the progress that was already taking place.

Seeds of Failure

Although massive social spending did not begin until the late 1960s, Mr. Murray argues that the seeds of its failure were planted earlier in the decade. Between 1960 and 1970, he contends, the environment for poor people changed in three fundamental ways that destroyed opportunities for upward mobility.

Conservatives can take little comfort from Mr. Murray's indictment of social policy.

First, it was much more attractive to be poor and dependent in 1970 than in 1960. Not only had the level of welfare benefits risen. Not only were there new programs such as food stamps and Medicaid, from which one could benefit only by remaining poor. Not only did new rules permit shack-up boyfriends to live off AFDC benefits intended for single mothers and their children. But even work incentives for welfare recipients had the unintended effect of making welfare more attractive. For instance, allowing AFDC mothers to keep most of their earnings from part-time jobs was supposed to encourage women on welfare to work; instead, suggests Mr. Murray, it encouraged women who planned to work to go on welfare.

With all these advantages to welfare, Mr. Murray argues, fewer poor people took and kept low-paying jobs they didn't like. The decision was completely rational over the short term, for one could live as well on welfare as by working at an entry-level job, perhaps better. Over the long run, it was a disastrous trap from which there was little escape. A reliable, hard-working employee in an unpleasant, low-paying job has a good chance to advance to a less-unpleasant, better-paying position. Not so the fellow who quits every time he gets mad at the boss, and lives off his girlfriend's AFDC check until she kicks him out of the house.

The second change in the 1960s was the breakdown of law and order, both in the streets and in the classroom. In 1970, Mr. Murray shows, a frequent robber faced one-third the risk of apprehension that he faced only 10 years earlier. The likelihood of being imprisoned if arrested fell by more than half. Crime simply exploded—between 1963 and 1980 the robbery rate rose 294 percent—and its principal victims were poor people, especially poor blacks. How could slum dwellers rise from poverty if their hard-earned wages—and often their lives—were in constant danger of being stolen away?

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