

**Richard M. Mills**



**AS  
MOSCOW  
SEES  
US**

**American Politics and Society  
in the Soviet Mindset**

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American Politics and Society  
in the Soviet Mindset

RICHARD M. MILLS

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*To my parents for their nurturing  
To my family for their unflagging support  
To my teachers for their example*

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## PREFACE

The aim of this book is to present a broad range of Americans with a comprehensive and comprehensible picture of how their politics and society are viewed from the perspective of a radically different culture. Knowing how the Soviets interpret the American experience should help identify areas where better communication could facilitate improvements in Soviet-American relations.

The focus is on identifying and analyzing continuities and changes in Soviet interpretations—a combination of continued criticism of American political and social institutions and processes together with a growing appreciation of them that has led to selective Soviet borrowing of ideas and methods. The progress the Soviets have made is balanced against the substantial roadblocks to further advancement.

The introduction explores how the Soviet mindset has affected Soviet perceptions of the United States and how it is being modified. Part I analyzes the traditional Soviet framework of concepts for discussing American politics, and Part II does the same for American society. Part III considers why and on which points traditional Soviet approaches have been modified and also shows how change, creativity, and adaptation have been accomplished. Part IV critically examines the larger and deeper intellectual issues raised by the discussion.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the many people who have helped make this book possible.

My wife, Judith, participated in the work at every stage, and her contributions have been invaluable. Rebecca, my daughter,

also assisted in the enterprise. The intellectual stimulation and encouragement of colleagues in Fordham University's Political Science Department—especially Stephen David, John Entelis, Paul Kantor, and Rev. Richard Regan, S.J.—were vital. Encouragement for my project came at an early stage from Frederick Barghoorn and Dean Harry J. Sievers, S.J., midway from Robert C. Tucker, and in the final stages from Ivo Banac, David Mayhew, and Dean Mary Powers. The following graduate research assistants unearthed helpful materials: Joshua Berkowitz, Kathleen Conolly, Aleksandr Dvorkin, Mark Meirowitz, Charles Nagy, Patricia O'Leary, and Philip C. Wagner.

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*New York*  
*October 1989*

R.M.M.

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## **AS MOSCOW SEES US**

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# INTRODUCTION

When I'm taking books to an American exhibit I don't take books Americans wouldn't like. In our books, we look at American politics the way we look at it, but we have never taken these books to the United States.

*Tankred Golenpolsky, manager of the  
Sixth Moscow International Book Fair, 1987*

Truth be told, Tankred Golenpolsky's remarks are overly critical.<sup>1</sup> Too many Soviet books on American politics do substantiate his forebodings, but some are not as offensive as he thinks. Yet even the better books would be alien to American sensibilities insofar as they reflect the typical Soviet mindset at work trying to fathom the internal political dynamics of the Western superpower.

This book is partly based on the volumes that Mr. Golenpolsky would keep from the American public. Beyond that, it explores a variety of Soviet writings to answer a question that continues to pique our curiosity: how successful have the Soviets been in their efforts to improve their understanding of America's social and political systems?

Especially at summit time, we become immersed in speculation about just how much the Soviets know about us and how well they understand the operation of our systems. It is time to take a discriminating look at the many Soviet publications that can begin to sate our curiosity.

Mainstream Soviets have long viewed the United States with decidedly mixed emotions. Some have been positive, but most were negative, and powerfully so. Even now they clearly admire the United States for its technical innovations and practical know-how in industry, transportation, agriculture, and the service sector. However, they remain highly critical of the overall operation of the American economic, social, and political systems.

These attitudes, especially the critical ones, have been expressed in a flood of publications about American art and literature, film,

industrial management, science, philosophy, the media, the economy, the society, politics, and many other facets of American domestic life, not to mention foreign policy. There is no complete bibliography, but a partial list of Soviet books on these topics published between 1960 and 1976 contains some 700 titles (Raskin 1976). A comprehensive list of Soviet books and articles published between 1945 and 1970 on American history alone contains 3,669 items (Okinshevich 1976).<sup>2</sup>

The primary focus of this book is politics in the United States as interpreted by Soviet analysts over the decades. Aspects of Soviet domestic life that have affected these interpretations are a secondary concern.

In the West, politics is defined in many ways. Philosophically, it is the study of how to achieve the common good or ensure that the public interest is served. Functionally, it deals with how conflict among parts of the community can be managed successfully, how the state is organized and operates, or how a community makes binding policy decisions about the allocation of its resources. But the Soviets define politics in the United States as the activities that keep the nation firmly in the hands of the ruling class.

Soviets have traditionally seen American politics as a struggle among the social classes that is generated by the way people relate to each other in their economic activities. The Soviets develop their analyses of American politics directly from their views of American society. It is for good reason that they call their own framework for interpreting politics not only Marxism–Leninism but also “the class approach” or “class analysis.”

In the mid-1980s the class approach lost its prominence when the Soviet leaders abandoned it as the basis of Soviet foreign policy, adopting what they called “new thinking” about foreign affairs. Rather than seeing world politics as a struggle between capitalism and communism, the stress would now be on overcoming threats common to all humans (whether capitalists or communists) such as nuclear war and ecological disaster. It seemed that a new mainstream was being created as the leaders diminished the ideological component in foreign policy. In Soviet domestic politics a new mainstream was being created through the practice of openness (*glasnost*) and democratization.

No such substantial changes have yet taken place in the way the

Soviets view American domestic politics and society. The dramatic changes wrought in the way the Soviets now perceive and practice politics at home and abroad bring into sharper relief the comparatively minimal changes made so far during the Gorbachev era in Soviet interpretations of American domestic politics and American society.

Mainstream Soviet attitudes are the time-hallowed ways in which Soviet politicians, academic experts, and even a good portion of the Soviet populace have thought about and discussed American politics and society in their public statements and writings. The Soviet study of American politics is still based on the assumption that economics at least shapes, or more likely determines, the contours of a society and the politics that take place within it. For that reason Soviet writings on purely economic issues are not directly applicable here, whereas those that probe the relationship of economics to society and politics are highly relevant.

A major objective in exploring Soviet views of U.S. politics is to establish how much of this general Soviet interpretive framework and the worldview behind it has been modified or, equally important, has not been modified when the United States is the object of analysis. In cases where their study of American politics and society has little or no impact on the Soviets' outlook—when it seemingly should—we are confronted with problems of intercultural perception. This serious issue in Soviet–American relations has been approached in various ways in both scholarly and general writing in the West.<sup>3</sup> Seweryn Bialer stated the problem neatly: “We should remember that it is as difficult, if not more so, for the Soviets to understand our beliefs, values, goals, and social-political organization as it is for us to understand theirs” (1985, 272).

The true depth and extent of these intercultural problems became fully evident only in the 1970s when American intellectuals tried to communicate with recent Soviet émigrés. As Edward Keenan, a close and incisive observer of these interactions, comments, “Their understanding of American legal and social institutions, and their tolerance for the complexity of pluralism, seem to their American counterparts distressingly limited” (1979, 277). Since the dissident émigrés were generally presumed to be the very Soviets who should be most in tune with American values

and beliefs, many Americans found that realization especially disturbing.

Intercultural misperceptions create problems in political analysis that are not confined to Americans and Soviets. Even well-informed leaders of America's Western allies, who more closely share a political culture than the Soviets, have difficulty understanding significant aspects of American politics. Suzanne Garment notes that after almost forty years of uniquely close involvement with the American political system, Israeli politicians still do not understand how some fundamental elements of the legal and judicial system operate (1987).

The risks in studying intercultural perceptions were signaled by Helmut Sonnenfeldt and William G. Hyland, whose experience in dealing with the Soviets would be difficult to match: "Any attempt by foreigners to comprehend and represent the conceptions of other nations and their leaders is always beset by pitfalls; these dangers are almost certainly more pronounced when dealing with the USSR" (1986, 220). This warning prefaced their informative study of Soviet perceptions of national security.

If we are to help erode East-West perceptual and political barriers in the hope of improving relations, we must know the extent, depth, strength, and persistence of the barriers to be overcome. Because they are more complex than ever suggested in previous Western studies, there is good reason to pursue this book's primary topic—establishing and evaluating continuities and changes in the substance of what the Soviets have published about American politics and society.

The secondary focus is on the political and intellectual forces in the Soviet Union that produce these continuities and changes in the Soviet analytical framework and therefore in Soviet perspectives on American politics and society. Six factors are basic: the shifts that occur in the overall political climate in the Soviet Union; the continuities and changes in how the Soviets understand their own official ideology; the dynamics of Soviet intellectual and academic life; Soviet responses to their discovery of American political science; cultural exchange with the United States; and aspects of American reality that either challenge or confirm Soviet images of American politics and society.

Each factor warrants investigation in an individual volume. I

address them mainly in Chapter 5 but also as subthemes at relevant points, and there are many, throughout the book. The last factor is so controversial in both the United States and the Soviet Union that very little of a nonpolemical nature has been written about it in either country. Among Sovietologists, Alexander Dallin's measured statement remains a rare exception, even though written a decade ago: there are distortions in the Soviet image of the United States, but some of them do have a basis in negative aspects of American life (1980).

My aim is to deepen Americans' understanding of how mainstream Soviets think about, discuss, and explain American politics and society to themselves in their publications. In this era of rapidly increasing contacts between Americans and Soviets at every level, with spacebridges and "CongressBridges," it is important that not only policymakers and Sovietologists be aware of the various ways in which the Soviets can and do view American politics and society.

Yet it is not enough for Americans simply to know that there is variety, within limits, in Soviet views. They ought to know the significance of the views they confront in their reading or conversations. The materials presented in the first four chapters approximate the ways that most top Soviet leaders are likely to view American politics and society given their social origins, the training they receive as potential party leaders, and their political experience as regional party leaders before assuming top positions in Moscow. This background encourages them to think and perceive in terms of the Soviet conventional wisdom.<sup>4</sup> Recent books by Politburo member Aleksandr Yakovlev (1985) and former member Andrei Gromyko (1985), which have been translated into English, are good examples.<sup>5</sup> As Soviet historian Roy Medvedev remarked during Mikhail Gorbachev's first summit visit to the United States: "The Soviet leader is tied to a doctrine, to a certain ideology. He can't jump outside its limits. In the West people don't understand these limits. They're not brought up on them."<sup>6</sup>

These mainstream attitudes, what I call the Soviet mindset, are illustrated in Chapters 1 through 4. In contrast, the materials in Chapter 6 most nearly reflect the better informed views of many, though not all, Soviet academic specialists and experts on American politics—these comprise a subset of the mindset. Americans are by now familiar with participation by Soviet academics and

diplomats in American television discussions of current domestic and international events. This book goes behind these performances to examine the typical intellectual commitments that Soviets make when they discuss American politics in published form at home among themselves—the acid test of openness in the Soviet Union.

Mainstream thinking is characterized by a high degree of fit with current official Soviet perspectives. Mainstream attitudes are of two basic kinds—elite and mass. The elite's hallmarks are dedication to the fundamentals of the Marxist–Leninist world outlook and acceptance of the Communist party's particular interpretation of those fundamentals at any given time.<sup>7</sup> The mass attitude is shaped by the educational system's programs up to the secondary school level, by the media, and by the frame of mind and expectations that the rigors of everyday living in the Soviet Union create. *The elite mindset receives greatest attention in this book, but since elite and mass attitudes overlap considerably they can together be called the Soviet mindset.*

Subsets are created when, for instance, a person refuses to change a particular, short-term mainstream stance or changes it only partially. During the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras Soviet citizens could either retain positive feelings toward Stalin or look at him with a measure of disfavor and find that party officialdom was tolerant of each attitude. A person could be moderately liberal or conservative about many issues and experience the same tolerance. Characteristically, in these subsets a degree of fit with current official modes of thinking and perception remains. In the past this brought about limited variety within a larger unity.

Gorbachev and his closest associates are a unique subset. Some of their views are radically at odds with tradition, and under Gorbachev the elite and mass attitudes have been modified significantly in some respects so that a much greater variety of opinion is possible—but still within a now broader unity. That these modifications still do not encompass American politics and society is authoritatively illustrated in a new book to which two of Gorbachev's closest advisers, Aleksandr Yakovlev and Georgii Shakhnazarov, contributed (Yakovlev, ed. 1988).

This exception is attributable to Gorbachev's continued adherence to the class approach when thinking about the difference

between capitalist and socialist societies. Specifically, Gorbachev has an exalted vision of what socialism ought to be as opposed to what it actually had been in the Soviet Union prior to his incumbency. He maintains that the Soviet people declared themselves in favor of that vision in the 1989 elections, which were unique in providing for a choice of candidates: "Yes, the Soviet people have unequivocally spoken in favor of socialism, but in its renewed and humane form, and in favor of a socialism that really serves the interests of the people and ennobles man" (*Pravda*, April 27, 1989).

It was this vision that Anatolii Dobrynin, another of Gorbachev's closest advisers, had in mind when he said: "There is an alternative to capitalism—and that alternative is socialism" (*Pravda*, April 13, 1988). Gorbachev has spoken very negatively about capitalism and its social and political systems in ways typical of the Soviet mindset, as he did in his major speech following his return home from the Reykjavik summit (*Pravda*, October 15, 1986). Consequently, when he unexpectedly began adopting Western political terminology and applying it to Soviet political life he also *adapted* those terms by prefacing them with the word "socialist" as in "socialist pluralism," a term he has used often, or in the less often used "our own socialist system of checks and balances" (*Pravda*, November 29, 1988). Clearly, these concepts will be applied in a refined, purified, or corrected version consonant with Gorbachev's vision of socialism, and not as practiced in the capitalist countries in ways that are discussed in Chapter 2.

Soviet specialists on the United States have thus far not radically changed the way they write about our country in contrast to other Soviet writers who have applied new thinking to world politics or *glasnost* to Soviet domestic politics. In particular, only a few articles that break radically new ground have appeared in the Soviet monthly magazine devoted exclusively to the study of the United States and Canada. They will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Soviet specialists on the United States are a subset of the elite mindset. Within this subset, as in all of them, there are subdivisions that can be identified on the basis of traits specific to each. The administrators and staff of the Institute of United States and Canadian Studies are a subdivision simply because of their abnormally easy access to the American print media. Some of them also travel

to the United States frequently, a privilege that distinguishes them from most other members of the subset.

Soviet participants in academic exchanges sponsored by the International Research and Exchanges Board comprise another subdivision. Under these auspices many Americanists have spent varying periods up to a year at American universities. Top leaders like Aleksandr Yakovlev and Yevgeny Primakov, nonvoting Politburo member and president of the upper chamber of the Soviet legislature, were participants years ago.

Alexandra Costa (1986), now a resident of the United States, had lived and worked in Washington while a Soviet citizen and knew Soviet embassy personnel well. Soviets who have the opportunity to live in the United States are a subdivision of the larger subset of specialists on America who know the United States only or primarily from the print media. The embassy staff told her how difficult it would be for her, as it was for them, to communicate with other Soviets (the mindset) about their own experiences in America and what they, the subdivision, had learned from those experiences—the folks back home just couldn't understand.<sup>8</sup> The embassy personnel remained loyal Soviet citizens, but their unusual experience had added some noticeably different perspectives that they could not communicate to even their closest friends and relatives.

A similar subdivision is composed of Soviet journalists stationed in New York or Washington who afterward wrote books on American politics (Beglov 1971) or society (Gerasimov 1984).

Curiously, recent Western studies of Soviet perspectives on American politics and society exhibit a Western mindset, giving far more attention to Soviet perceptions of American foreign policy than to Soviet views on the domestic political system that produces the foreign policy.

Foreign policy has been considered in detail by Stephen Gibert (1976), Morton Schwartz (1978), John Lenczowski (1982), Franklin Griffiths (1984), and Robert Huber (1988). It is also the topic of a forthcoming book by Robert Legvold, *The Soviet Union and the Other Superpower*.

In these previous studies Soviet views on American domestic politics are but a small, sketchy component of the larger analysis that focuses on American foreign policy. Three of the authors try

to show how the Soviets perceive the links between American domestic politics and foreign policy: the title of Lenczowski's chapter on domestic politics is "Domestic Determinants of U.S. Foreign Policy," Griffiths's article is entitled "The Sources of American Conduct: Soviet Perspectives and Their Policy Implications," and Huber has a chapter called "Soviet Perspectives on the Process of Congressional Involvement in U.S. Foreign Policy." Gibert and Schwartz in their respective chapters on American domestic politics do not attempt to forge such links. Of all these authors, Schwartz alone discusses Soviet views on American society, but in fewer than a dozen pages which treat only social movements and give no attention to Soviet discussions of American social structure.

The Western analyses that touch on Soviet views of American domestic politics in these ways have not captured the larger and deeper senses that the Soviets have of the structure and exercise of power in the United States, and neither has the one book that deals exclusively with Soviet views on American domestic politics. In it, British author Neil Malcom treats Soviet analyses of the dominant role played by the top of the American power structure, and on that basis alone he then discusses Soviet perceptions of political conflict in America (1984).<sup>9</sup>

Soviet writings also reveal the much more complex understanding of the relationship of the social structure to politics, covered here primarily in Chapters 3 and 4. As far as the Soviets are concerned, it is not only the people at the top who are important politically. As Gorbachev commented: "In any country the people have the decisive voice, and that includes the American people" (*Pravda*, October 14, 1986). This book therefore in contrast to earlier Western works conveys a very different sense of how the Soviets understand American political dynamics. It considers a much wider sample of Soviet scholarly writing, the differing Western appraisals of those writings, and the effects of Gorbachev's openness policy on the study of American politics and society.

To foster a fuller awareness of the road the Soviets have traveled in their understanding of the American sociopolitical setting, there is more history here than in any of the previous studies.

This effort entails reevaluating the role of the Institute of United States and Canadian Studies (IUSAC). Some previous Western analysts have used the publications of IUSAC as prime data sources

to demonstrate that the Soviets borrowed ideas and insights from American political science and that their understanding of American politics consequently improved (Schwartz 1978; Malcom 1984).

That coin has another side. Consulting a broader range of Soviet information sources makes it apparent that the continuities in Soviet views on American politics and society are no less important than the changes, and, further, that IUSAC has not been the most important vehicle for changing the Soviets' analytical framework and concepts. The point is not to underrate, much less denigrate, the institute, but to define its role in influencing the mindset within a more meaningful, balanced, and comprehensive context. A part of the fifth chapter is devoted to this endeavor.

In the Gorbachev years a new factor entered the picture when two specialists on the United States joined the Soviet top leadership. Anatolii Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador in Washington for a quarter of a century, and Aleksandr N. Yakovlev (Iakovlev), author of several books on the United States and Soviet ambassador to Canada for almost a decade, were appointed secretaries of the party's Central Committee in March 1986. In a meteoric rise, Yakovlev then became a candidate member of the Politburo itself in January 1987 and quickly a full member in June 1987. He thus joined Andrei Gromyko, who had until then been the Politburo's diplomatic expert on the United States, just as Iurii Andropov had been the Politburo's intelligence specialist on America. Each represents a different subdivision of the mindset capable of influencing it at or near the very top.<sup>10</sup>

Soviet scholarly writings on American politics and society are a very special example of the mindset in operation. Soviet scholars draw their information from a wide array of American sources: public documents, the publications of political scientists, liberal and radical critiques, the findings of investigative reporters—to give a very partial list. They then interpret these data in works normally printed in editions of 2,000 to 10,000 copies if they are books or 50,000 if they are articles in journals. These contain the most balanced information, and the least ideologically colored data, about American politics that can be found in print in the Soviet Union. As we shall see, the studies are not intended to be dispassionate, nor are their authors striving for objectivity. Never-

theless, they are at the opposite end of the spectrum from the negative and outright propagandistic books, printed in editions of 50,000 to 100,000 copies.

Though confidential governmental or party studies are not published, something about them can be surmised from conversations and negotiations with the Soviets who are privy to these materials. Even particular Soviet actions reveal previously unsuspected expertise; for example, the shrewd purchases of American grain in 1972 showed that Soviet foreign trade experts were intimately familiar with the operation of the American grain market despite an ideological distaste for it.

This study is based on Soviet scholarly publications because they function much like an information-processing or an information-patterning system of the type that Karl Deutsch (1966, 80) described as “a *self-modifying communications network* or ‘learning net’”:

As long as it has autonomy, the net wills what it is. It wills the behavior patterns (the “personality”) that it has acquired in the past and that it is changing and remaking with each decision in the present. Thanks to what it has learned in the past, it is not wholly subject to the present. Thanks to what it still can learn, it is not wholly subject to the past. Its internal rearrangements in response to new challenges are made by the interplay between its present and its past. In this interplay we might see one kind of “inner freedom.” (108)

In a sense, this book is a study of what influences Soviet publishing policy, of the control system that encourages or discourages the publication of information of various sorts (and not just negative) on the United States. Its aim is to determine the degree and extent to which the Soviet system is able to exercise the inner freedom to change that Deutsch had in mind. Central authorities have long controlled and directed writers and publishers in the Soviet Union, but there was also the more subtle operation of a system similar to a hidden hand of self-control that produced results. There was also the irresistible drive to advance, to publish the previously forbidden. This tendency was strengthened markedly under *glasnost*, but it has had limited impact on the themes treated here.

How the Soviets communicate with each other in their published works about the United States and who in the Soviet Union has

how much access to those materials are very significant matters addressed throughout, but especially in Chapter 6. Diffusion of this information is a critical issue because it has characteristically been disseminated on a need to know basis—*who* needs to know and *what* do they need to know? Undoubtedly, future changes for the better will occur: not only will *glasnost* and new thinking ultimately have a favorable impact on how information on the United States is treated, but the contested elections that are at last being held in the Soviet Union have already created a large new “market” for more information on American politics. In 1989 Fedor Burlatskii, a major innovator in Soviet analyses of American politics, won seats in both of the new Soviet national legislatures. Other specialists in American politics also ran, and others served as advisers to various candidates. As important, Burlatskii is a personal friend of the Gorbachevs (Walker 1987). Georgii Shakhnazarov, another innovator in Soviet studies of American politics, became a personal adviser to Gorbachev in 1988. They are respectively the vice president and president of the Soviet Political Science Association.

A very important new channel for learning about American politics was opened in 1989 when Soviet legislators, whose decisionmaking role was now considerably enhanced, began visiting the United States to study American political practices firsthand. This book should help the Americans involved in these interactions to identify, better understand, and overcome the difficulties involved in assimilating such learning.

Nevertheless, the pervasive compartmentalization of information that had long characterized Soviet life remains highly significant. For example, it was only in 1984 that the first one-volume analysis of American politics that provided a coherent overview of the establishment, development, and current operation of the political system’s institutions and processes was published. However, it was not written by a Soviet author but was, predictably (as I’ll explain in Chapters 5 and 6), a translation of an American text, Thomas R. Dye and L. Harmon Zeigler’s *The Irony of Democracy: An Uncommon Introduction to American Politics* (1970–1986).<sup>11</sup> Also predictable was its small printing of 4,210 copies, a sure sign that it was intended for limited distribution.<sup>12</sup> Granted that textbooks are not everybody’s idea of “must” reading, even

a much larger press run would have sold out instantly given the widespread insatiable Soviet curiosity about the United States. This is an especially revealing example of how “the net wills what it is” as it exercises its “inner freedom.” Inner freedom has been exercised in many different ways.

All these considerations influence the structure of my analysis and the methods used to pursue it.

Parts I and II are an extended answer to two questions: How have the Soviets characteristically explained American politics and society when they interpreted them in the most orthodox Marxist–Leninist fashion? What restrained criticisms have Soviet writers themselves made about the adequacy of their mode of interpretation while working within the parameters of the mode itself? Three approaches to the United States have been typical at various times. Chapter 1 treats the first, which portrayed America as virtually under the totalitarian domination of big business. In this version of orthodoxy, in vogue during the 1950s and early 1960s, some Soviets believed that they had discovered *the* hidden mechanism by which the American political system was controlled. This approach is seldom used now, yet in modified form it has left an indelible imprint on the Soviet mindset.

Chapter 2 considers the second approach, which is still very much used and fundamental to understanding the mindset. It centers on the manipulation of the political institutions, processes, and symbols of liberal democracy essential to retaining control over the political system. The focus is on the processes of control rather than on a specific mechanism. The American political system is portrayed as permitting considerable give and take rather than as an outright dictatorship.

The third approach is based on the Marxian concept of the class struggle. This controlling perception of what American politics is about is so important and so complicated that in order to present a comprehensible analysis of that dynamic in Chapter 4 I found it necessary to clarify in Chapter 3 how the Soviets perceive America’s social structure, something about which too little has been written in the West.

Chapters 1 through 4 are typically Soviet in their language, focus, argumentation, and spirit because they are an evocation of the Soviet mindset and they present what Raymond Garthoff has called

the “general understanding” the Soviets have of the United States (1985, 1119). I have attempted to recreate for American readers the typical style of Soviet analysis with all its characteristic terminology and themes, insights and oversights, self-congratulation and self-criticism, immobility and development, orthodoxies and diversity. Too much would have been lost had I written a conventional Western exposition and criticism of the Soviet intellectual disposition, stressing my disagreements with it and the conclusions it produces. Readers would have been unable to experience that crucial sense of, or “feel” for, the way in which the Soviets typically discuss the topics of this book among themselves.

If I deliberately use Soviet vocabulary to give American readers an experience in the Soviet mindset at work interpreting American politics, I periodically revert to Western terminology to break the monotony and to recall the intellectual context within which I live and do my analysis. Among the Western studies of Soviet perspectives on American politics and society the approach of this volume is unique.

Parts I and II are a political sociology of the United States that emerges from Soviet perspectives. Once readers have experienced the mindset at work trying in its own terms to understand American politics and society, Part III prompts them to consider the fluid mix of continuity and change in Soviet perspectives. Chapter 5 functions as a transitional device linking the four chapters on the mindset with Chapter 6, which discusses how the mindset has adapted to American reality as it assesses political institutions and processes. It begins with an explanation of why the Soviets have interpreted American politics and society in terms of the mindset and why they continue to explain them in those ways, but to a lesser degree as time has gone by. The last part of the chapter initiates a discussion of how and why the Soviets began to change some of their perceptions. Several case studies illustrate how some Soviets began to incorporate perspectives from American political science into their analyses. On that basis Chapter 6 presents a more detailed and concrete picture of where changes have and, equally important, have not been made in the Soviets’ views. In its approach to the study of American politics, this chapter, together with Chapter 7, is the least characteristically Soviet and the most recognizably American.

Chapter 7 is an exercise in what the Soviets would call “bourgeois objectivism” because it contains my critical evaluation of the various Soviet approaches and explanations. I compare the class approach with the two major alternative theories, pluralism and elitism, that attempt to map the distribution of political power in the United States. No Western author has yet examined the Soviet version of the class approach in light of the debate among American political scientists and sociologists over power distribution. It is time to do so because of the growing Soviet interest in, and familiarity with, American political science. If the Soviets are to accelerate development of their perspectives on American politics, sooner or later they must confront the intellectual issues addressed in Chapter 7.

The book’s structure is closely connected with my methods of presentation. Had I followed a more usual practice I would have placed Chapter 5 at the book’s beginning. Indeed, some readers may wish to read it first. But since the mindset is the most important cultural factor at work, consideration of it had to have primacy of place. In keeping with the learning net concept, and also my focus on publication policy, I am more concerned than previous Western authors with the “information load” or informational function of particular books and articles. While I do identify the liberal or orthodox thrust in the writings of individual Soviet authors, I tend to differentiate writings more than writers. That has a strong impact on the arrangement of the materials in the sixth chapter and others as well.

The question of how to present the materials is complicated by the fact that this study bridges two academic disciplines—American studies and Soviet studies. In addition, because of the way politics is studied in the Soviet Union (combining politics, economics, and sociology) I must use broader social science approaches rather than focusing narrowly on political science alone. In terms of political science my approach is unusual in that I treat American politics from a comparative perspective.

I use the author–date notation system within the text. In Chapter 6 I modify it to include page numbers in Soviet sources to show how scattered the Soviet information on American political institutions and processes is and how much attention Soviet authors have given to particular topics. The scattering results when the

Soviet Marxist–Leninist mindset fits information about American politics into the analytical framework illustrated in Chapters 1 through 4. It also appears to result from a desire to avoid clearly describing aspects of American politics that do not fit the interpretive framework or that contradict it.

That would not be a significant problem for Soviet readers if general, overarching studies of the American political system were widely available to provide a context that would make the dispersed data more understandable. Soviet specialists on American politics do not have this problem since they are immersed in the relevant Soviet and American writing. But mainstream Soviets not in that subset lack this advantage, as does the general Soviet reading public.

The absence of integrating studies forces me to synthesize the Soviet materials in order to analyze them systematically and comprehensively.

## PART I

# **American Politics and the Soviet Mindset**

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