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## The Russian Revolution

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gristle would be found for the Italians' seemingly curious colonial appetite, and a particularly vile mandate might be graciously offered to the Americans to teach them the arduous nature of an imperial burden."

But as 1919 continued on, the euphoria of the imperialists proved short-lived: Ireland was erupting, Egypt was rumbling, and the Amritsar massacre had ignited India. The tide turned, and imperial reformers became more important in the negotiations.

Allen Leeper, whose credentials included speaking Romanian and holding the position of secretary of the Anglo-Romanian Society, had the difficult job of representing Britain on the conference's Romanian Committee in the face of Italy's support of maximal Romanian claims. Italy, on the basis of checkerboard diplomacy, sought Romania as an ally located to Yugoslavia's rear. Leeper's comment in a Foreign Office minute conveys his despair: "If Mr. Bratianu's Govt. insists on quarreling with the Serbs & putting their trust in Italy, no one can save them from ruin." Allen Leeper's correspondence with his brother Rex, who worked on Russian questions for the PID, is cited on a number of occasions and provides candid background comment on the diplomatic developments. In future, the reader might hope to hear more from Goldstein about the role of the Leeper brothers in postwar diplomacy.

Successful though they were, the PID staff and the British negotiators wanted more from the Paris Peace

Conference than they got. They wanted a larger Belgium that included Luxembourg. They wanted a Yugoslavia that included Fiume. They wanted a pro-British Greece. They did not get these or a number of other desired concessions and arrangements. For Britain, winning at Paris meant not losing. As Goldstein puts it, "On paper Britain gained nothing. Its victory was that neither did any other state." Winning the peace meant losing less than anyone else.

This work provides a powerful case for Britain's thoroughness in its preparations and the quality of its PID experts, which made it successful in the diplomatic arena.

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Pipes, Richard. *The Russian Revolution*. New York: Knopf, 1990. 970pp. \$40

*The Russian Revolution* is an immense and masterful account of the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the Bolshevik coup of October 1917, and that party's attempt to consolidate its power. It begins where Professor Pipes's earlier study, *Russia under the Old Regime* (1974), left off—both chronologically and, one must lament, ideologically. The work is vintage Pipes. It displays an impressive mastery over evidence which, unfortunately, is forced to serve a narrow and inadequate interpretation of Russian history.

Pipes is probably the foremost proponent of the "patrimonial" interpretation of Russian history, which avers

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that because the tsar considered Russia to be his private estate, politics became indistinguishable from the economics of the household. Russians were viewed as mere servitors, not citizens. *Russia under the Old Regime* stated that the modernization of the patrimonial institutions in the 1880s brought on "unmistakable germs of totalitarianism." In *The Russian Revolution*, Pipes asserts that the continued existence of a patrimonial government, impinging as it did upon a recently liberated society and economy, was the primary source of discontent. To a large extent, "revolution was the result not of insufferable conditions but of irreconcilable attitudes." One can "beg to disagree" with Pipes and his patrimonial theory, and one can fault him for paying insufficient attention to the "insufferable conditions," yet still find merit in Pipes's assertion that "nothing in early twentieth-century Russia inexorably pushed the country toward revolution except the presence of an unusually large and fanatical body of professional revolutionaries."

Pipes's interpretation states that the revolutionary period extended for almost a century, from the 1860s to Stalin's death in 1953. The "culminating period," however, was 1899-1924, from the university strike to the death of Lenin. During this period, Pipes argues, the "Weltanschauung" and institutions of Soviet totalitarianism were established. Stalinism, consequently, was not an aberration but merely the effective implementation of Leninist ideology—a conclusion which Pipes attempts to

support in his last chapter, "The Red Terror." (Unlike the Jacobin Terror of 1793-1794 in France, for "Soviet Russia, the terror never ceased.") However, this interpretation remains unpersuasive, especially in light of Lenin's late opposition to the rise of Stalin. (For an interesting argument *contra* Pipes on this matter, the reader should examine Robert C. Tucker's recent work, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928-1941*, which interprets Stalinism as a second revolution.)

The well known historical landmarks which fall within Pipes's culminating period (or, more precisely, that part of the period examined in this book—the remainder will be examined in a sequel, *Russia under the New Regime*) are subjected to his considerable powers of extensive and intensive scholarship. The result is an engaging and occasionally provocative book. He informs us that: (1), contrary to popular opinion, interior minister Plehve did not seek war with Japan in order to divert a domestically troubled Russia; (2), the 1905 Revolution, although a clear victory for the liberals, exacerbated Russia's principal problem—the conflict between the government and society; and (3), prime minister Stolypin's agrarian reform was but a marginal success, even before it was disrupted, and his plan to create a class of farmers loyal to the regime was thus destined to fail.

In Pipes's view, World War I was less the cause of the revolutions of 1917 than were two decisions made by Tsar Nicholas during the war: to

prorogue the Duma and take personal command of the war at the front. According to Pipes, "the decisions which Nicholas took in August 1915 made a revolution unavoidable. Russia could have averted a revolutionary upheaval only on one condition: if the unpopular bureaucracy, with its administrative and police apparatus, made common cause with the popular but inexperienced liberal and liberal-conservative intelligentsia."

The spontaneous revolution in February brought not only the end of tsarist rule in Russia but also a weak but accountable Provisional Government that was beholden to an unaccountable and hostile Provisional Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. Trotsky subsequently utilized the soviets as a cover for initiating the Bolshevik coup. Lenin completed the coup by emasculating the soviets and proroguing the Constituent Assembly. As these highlights indicate, Pipes believes that political events were more responsible for bringing revolution than were social problems (e.g., the dislocation of peasants or alienation of workers). This perspective allows the author to establish the continuity between Russian patrimonialism and Soviet totalitarianism—in the person of Lenin.

Richard Pipes's treatment of Lenin is a bit much. Not only is too much made about his "cowardice," given the admitted paucity of evidence, but what is one to make of the following? "To reconstruct his thinking, it is necessary, therefore, to proceed retroactively,

from known deeds to concealed intentions." Are we to discount totally the possibility of tactical adjustments in response to events? Nevertheless, it is from this questionable methodology that Pipes (less than two pages later) has Lenin personifying the critical, deterministic link between Russian patrimonialism and Soviet totalitarianism. Pipes says, "This [militarized] outlook on politics Lenin drew from the inner depths of his personality, in which the lust for domination combined with the patrimonial political culture shaped in the Russia of Alexander III in which he had grown up. But the theoretical justification for these psychological impulses and this cultural legacy he found in Marx's comments on the Paris Commune. Marx's writings...served to justify his destructive instincts and provided a rationale for his desire to erect a new order: an order all-encompassing in its 'totalitarian' aspiration."

Such is the narrow and inadequate interpretation of Russian history which emerges from an otherwise rich and engaging work.

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Williamson, Samuel R., Jr. *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*. New York: St. Martin's, 1991. 272pp. (No price given)

This publisher's series, *The Making of the Twentieth Century*, has included to date works on the origins of the First World War for Britain (Z. Steiner),