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The European Parliament: Performance and Prospects, by E.J. Kirchner

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March 1985, the policies of Western governments towards the USSR have revolved around various assessments regarding the nature and objectives of the Soviet state.

According to Curtis Keeble, the former British Ambassador to Moscow (1978-82), in his excellent introduction to this important work:

It is only too easy to overlook the fact that those who form policy in any country, no matter how great their political power, are constrained to an extent which they themselves may not realize by the political, social and ideological climate in which their own ideas have developed; by the geopolitical situation of their country; by the military and economic resources they can deploy; and by the individuals and institutions through whom they must operate. Dearly though we have paid for past misjudgements, the price of error in relations with the Soviet Union is of another order of magnitude. (p. 2)

With these considerations in mind, a distinguished group of scholars, governmental officials and a journalist gathered in the autumn of 1983, under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), "to examine not so much the nature of Soviet foreign policy as the nature of the state and society from which it stems" (p. 2). As such, the objective of the Chatham House meetings, and the objective of the studies contained in this book, has been to look beneath the "external manifestations" of Soviet policies to the domestic "roots" from which they originate (p. 1).

The book itself is composed of Keeble's introduction and 13 comprehensive contributions that fall into three broad categories: the first on history, ideology, and society; the second on the Soviet economy; and the third on policymaking institutions. Individual chapters are by Hugh Seton-Watson ("The Historical Roots"); David Lane ("The Societal Dimension"); Alistair McAuley ("Nation and Nationalism in Central Asia"); John Lawrence ("Religion in the USSR"); David Dyker ("Soviet Industry in its International Context"); Alec Nove ("Soviet Agriculture: Problems and Prospects"); Alan Smith ("International Trade and Resources"); Edwina Moreton ("Comrade Colossus: The Impact of Soviet Military Industry on the Soviet Economy"); Stuart Kirby ("Siberia: Heartland and Framework"); Peter Frank ("The CPSU Local Apparatus"); Malcolm Mackintosh ("The Military Role in Soviet Decision-Making"); and Archie Brown ("The Foreign Policy-Making Process"). In the final chapter by Curtis Keeble

("Conclusion: The Implications for Foreign Policy"), a very successful attempt is made to gather together the "threads" of the previous chapters and to "assess the ways in which the nature of the Soviet state may be reflected in its foreign policy . . . to explore the kind of relationship which a Western democracy can reasonably expect to sustain with the Soviet Union" (p. 217).

The Domestic Roots of Soviet Foreign Policy brings together several interesting themes, all of which, in addition to being domestically rooted and of contemporary importance, are presented and analyzed in a scholarly and coordinated fashion. This volume is a welcome addition to the growing body of studies dealing with the motivations and objectives of Soviet foreign policy.

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The European Parliament: Performance and Prospects. By Emil J. Kirchner. (Brookfield, Vt.: Gower Publishing, 1984. Pp. xiv + 170. \$32.95.)

The European Parliament (EP) is either the most ambitious experiment yet in international integration, or it is an expensive opera *buffo* in 434 acts playing in three theaters. The response depends upon one's perceptions, because a good argument can be made for both characterizations.

As an example of international cooperation, consensus-building, and collective democratic decision making, the EP is supposed to provide the basis for the democratic control and oversight of the European Community's institutions and processes. Before 1979, its members were chosen by and from the national parliaments of the EC, but now its members are elected directly by the European population (elections were held in 1979 and 1984). The EP currently has 434 members from all 10 EC members, and its membership will increase with the formal entry of Spain and Portugal into the EC. These 434 representatives do not sit by national groupings. Rather, they sit by the various transnational party groupings, and the specific party grouping is a stronger explanatory variable for their actual voting behavior than is national identity.

The EP is also an opera *buffo*. Seven languages are used, but none are listened to; it has no permanent place to call home—there is the constant shuffle between Strasbourg, Luxembourg, and Brussels. This road show is the result of the EC Council of Ministers' refusal to designate a permanent resting place, and the EP itself does not

have the authority to decide where to hold its sessions. The concept of equal pay for equal work is absent: The members' salaries are pegged to those of a member of the respective national parliaments, and thus there is a wide spread (approximately \$19,000 for an Irish member of the EP to approximately \$48,000 for a French member). The EP resembles more an endless debating club than a legislature with real effective political power. Much of the members' time is spent on nonbinding symbolic resolutions far removed from the EC process (e.g., resolutions bemoaning the condition of the Indo-Chinese boat people and expressions of sympathy for some French and German cows that drowned after extensive flooding).

Both these characterizations are correct, because the EP's presence lies in the future. The elected EP has a political legitimacy that the former appointed Parliament never had, and the potential exists for it to have greater influence in the future. Given these built in limitations to the EP's effectiveness, it is still important to know who its members are, how they behave in parliament, what objectives they have, and how they perceive their role in the overall EC process. Emil J. Kirchner of the University of Essex has provided this information.

Through extensive personal interviewing and written questionnaires, Kirchner provides a fine empirical study of the EP's members. The MEPs are profiled in demographic terms (including social and occupational characteristics); past political experience (both at the national and the European level); how the MEPs spend their time in and out of Parliament; the various issue areas that receive more (or less) attention; an assessment of the EP's impact on the integration process; and a discussion of the MEPs' effectiveness in relation to the future of the EP. The MEPs are well-educated, most have prior political experience, they are competent, and they, at least to this reviewer, address the right issues (most of the time). But the European Parliament has a long way to go before it can exert effective political power.

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The Foreign Policies of Arab States. By Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Desouki. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984. Pp. xii + 354. \$35.00, cloth; \$15.95, paper.)

This book analyzes the foreign policies of six key Arab countries and the PLO, an organization

that has been aspiring to create a Palestinian state for more than 20 years. One is immediately impressed with the organization of this book, its lucidity, depth, and unquestionable value to those who are interested in the Third World in general, and the Arab states in particular. True to its intention, it fills an obvious gap in foreign policy literature. Because the authors adhere to their well-prepared outline, the result is a cohesive, superbly written study.

The authors effectively show that foreign policies neither exist nor function in a vacuum because they always interact with domestic, regional, and global environments. Pivotal to trade and invasion as it has been throughout most of history, the Arab world resembles the cave of winds that echoes not only local, but also international changes and power politics.

Without being bogged down in the "descriptive or prescriptive genre," the authors purposefully present a meaningful and systematic analysis that provides a rationale of the workings of Arab foreign policies. Although the selected political systems share a number of characteristics and norms, each has its own unique capabilities and limitations. Still the Arab world constitutes a collective political culture that is transnational and that injects variables and imposes constraints on foreign policy decisions. Departing from traditional literature that emphasized the psychological, great powers, or model-builder approach, the book charts a new course that skillfully balances the three basic elements of foreign policy: the domestic, regional, and global environments. Decision makers often face the dilemmas of aid versus independence, resources versus objectives, and security versus development. In such tradeoffs, one should not overpersonalize the Third World's foreign policy processes.

The Arab world has its distinctive characteristics based on prevailing opportunities, capabilities, values, and perceptions of roles. Because of its relative cultural cohesiveness, it experiences much interaction, scrutiny, disruption of unity, and vulnerability. In this context, Islam, which has been politically dormant, is emerging as a potent force that may shake the Arab regimes to their roots. Ironically, by the 1980s as a new order—less revolutionary, more stable, and economically oriented—was unfolding, new pressures were being exerted by the forces of Islamic revolution and fundamentalism. In the meantime, each political system of the Arab world has been charting a foreign policy synchronized with its individual environment.

Since independence, Algeria has been trying to balance the conflicting elements of ideology versus pragmatism, revolution versus a business economy, and Algerian, Arab, and Muslim versus