



H-Diplo Roundtable Reviews

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David S. Foglesong. *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”: The Crusade for a “Free Russia” since 1881.* New York: Cambridge University Press, October 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0521855907 (hardback); 978-0521671835 (paperback).

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David Foglesong's *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia" since 1881* joins a distinguished list of studies reaching back to 1950 that explore Russian-American relations before and during the Cold War with significant attention to the nature of public opinion and attitudes towards each other. Thomas A. Bailey's *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations from Early times to Our Day* (1950) brought this subject to generations of diplomatic historians, and William A. Williams joined Bailey two years later with *American-Russian Relations 1781-1947*. Perhaps the most influential studies in this field in the 1960s were Peter G. Filene's *Americans and the Soviet Experiment, 1917-1933* (1967) and Frank A. Warren's *Liberals and Communism: The 'Red Decade' Revisited* (1966). David Engerman also explored American views on Russian industrial development in *Modernization from The Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (2003). Norman Saul has marched through the terrain with three volumes, *Distant Friends: the United States and Russia, 1763-1867* (1991); *War and Revolution: The United States and Russia, 1914-1921* (2001); and *Friends or Foes? The United States and Russia, 1921-1941* (2006). John Lewis Gaddis also swept through entire relationship with *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States: An Interpretive History* (1978, 1990).

What is distinctive about Foglesong's approach to the Russian-American relationship, beyond his carrying the story into the post-2000 period is, as Deborah Larson points out in her review, his exploration of popular American attitudes toward Russia from the origins of the first American crusade to reform Russia in the 1880s to the 1990s post-Soviet effort to bring democracy, capitalism, and Protestantism to Russia. As Larson and other reviewers note, Foglesong distinguishes between popular American attitudes on Russia, which he significantly relates to American views and hopes on their own society, and the perspectives of American policy makers. Foglesong also gives more attention and significance to the influence of American religious views in shaping perspectives on Russia and the Soviet Union.

The reviewers emphasize the strengths of Foglesong's study and Foglesong's response addresses the questions they raise including the following:

1) Larson notes that there is theoretical support for Foglesong's thesis that how "Americans view Russia has been shaped more by how they perceive the United States than political and economic developments in that country." She views Foglesong's work as "part of the literature on national identities and their relationship to foreign policy" and opines that Foglesong's thesis is consistent with this work. (1, 6) To affirm their own values and commitment to freedom, democracy, capitalism, and religion, Americans periodically want to remake Russia over to the American system.

2.) To strengthen his thesis on the motivating force of American self-images in shaping their views on and desire to reform Russia and the Soviet Union, Foglesong could have devoted more attention to the 1930s and the studies of Filene, Warren, and Engerman. The

great depression certainly shook American faith in their political and economic systems more severely than the “crisis of confidence” that Foglesong links to the renewal of a reform crusade on the Soviet Union by 1975. The American reaction to the “Soviet experiment,” particularly liberal enthusiasm for the image of Soviet economic progress, full employment, and the benefits of a planned economy, in contrast with depression realities at home in rising unemployment, increasing homelessness, and political drift until FDR and the New Deal arrived in town, would seem to strengthen Foglesong’s thesis. The one significant time that the American mission to reform Russia was reversed is centered in American attitudes more so than Russian conditions.

3.) As Walter Hixson, Victoria Zhuravleva, and Katherine Sibley note in their reviews, Foglesong definitely enhances studies on American views on Russia by emphasizing the importance of religious motivations. As the first American mission was launched to free Russia in the late nineteenth century, Protestant evangelists initiated missionary work and joined with liberal activists and business interests. Later after 1905, American missionaries stepped up their campaign to liberate Russians from the Orthodox Church and they were active again in the 1920s with relief workers, business leaders, and engineers. During the Cold War Americans looked for a spiritual rebirth in the Soviet Union, and President Reagan, according to Foglesong, drew on his religious upbringing for his campaign to free Russians.

4.) Each crusade to reform Russia seems to end with some degree of disillusionment, and as Foglesong critically notes, the latest after 1990 is no exception. As Americans, led by economists, Christian evangelists, lawyers, and political scientists, rushed to help transform the new Russia, optimistic expectations soon gave way to dismay over the decline in Russian living standards, crony capitalism, and President Vladimir Putin’s assertive leadership in a number of domestic and foreign areas. The reviewers agree with Foglesong’s criticism of the enduring American failure to understand that Russia has to pursue its own course and follow Russian and not American designs. As Zhuravleva suggests, “today, as in the past, the Russian reality is a intricate interweaving of a great number of negative and positive trends, and comprehending Russia by means of bipolar evaluations, rigid transitional paradigms and messianic moralizing provokes a backlash and accusations of hypocrisy and double standards leveled at American leaders as the war in Iraq continues, NATO expands, and the U.S. carries out its policies in the former Soviet republics.”

5.) There is some disagreement among Foglesong and the reviewers on whether or not American policy makers and the political elite have been enthusiastic participants in the American mission to reform the “Evil Empire.” Larson notes from Foglesong’s study a “gap between public attitudes and governmental policy” (6) as leaders tend to pursue power and interests as opposed to reform ideals. In his response, Foglesong responds that “key U.S. policymakers have shared the popular ambition to liberate Russia and they have at crucial moments succumbed to the illusion that American influence could inspire a rapid transformation of Russia.” Assessments of George H.W. Bush and William Clinton tend to support Larson’s observation as neither was prepared to back up cooperative diplomacy on some issues with substantial economic assistance. “The Bush administration was driven to

a great extent by fears—of losing points in propaganda battles, wasting money in economic aid, even facing a reversion to a Stalinist ‘evil empire,’” Foglesong emphasizes, and the author views Clinton as offering more “grandly idealistic” public statements but similar policies and embraced Boris Yeltsin as Bush backed Mikhail Gorbachev rather than a democratic process. (198, 207) Woodrow Wilson and Ronald Reagan, however, back up Foglesong’s argument as they seem to have transcended the pursuit of interest in their quests to promote the spread of democracy and capitalistic values in Russia against, respectively, Lenin’s Bolshevism and the “evil empire” of the 1980s. Yet Sibley cautions about the “follies of contemporary history” and Foglesong’s effort to evaluate U.S. leaders with some degree of consistency.

6.) Foglesong does relate American policy makers to his central theme, but his most sustained analysis focuses on Reagan in Chapter 8. Foglesong depicts Reagan as the American leader most committed to the mission to reform the “Evil Empire” out of his religious beliefs and sense of mission. Along the lines of Melvyn Leffler’s recent evaluation of Reagan, Foglesong suggests that Reagan mixed condemnation of Soviet leaders and their system with hopes to win the same leaders over to reform and cooperation with the West, and “vacillated between his conflicting impulses while seeking to placate both militant anticommunist supporters and critics who called for better relations between the superpowers. Hence, contrary to the claims of partisan Republicans and neo-conservative ideologues, Reagan did not have a coherent, consistent strategy to cause the collapse of Soviet communism.” (175) Reagan’s most significant impact on Gorbachev, according to Foglesong, was not in his rhetoric, defense build-up, Reagan doctrine, or advice to the Soviet leader on religious freedom, but, instead, in “Gorbachev’s gradual realization that Reagan would not use force to compel the Soviet Union to alter its system [which] helped him to overcome the climate of fear and take the risks of launching a destabilizing restructuring of the Soviet system.” (195)

Participants:

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H-Diplo roundtable; *Murder, Culture, and Injustice: Four Sensational Cases in American History* (2000); *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (1997); Charles A. Lindbergh, *Lone Eagle* (Longman, 3rd ed., 2006); *Witness to Disintegration: Provincial Life in the Last Year of the USSR* (1993); George F. Kennan, *Cold War Iconoclast* (1989.) which received the Bernath Prize, Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. Among his recent articles and review essays are "Empire As a Way of Life," forthcoming in *Diplomatic History*; "Leffler Takes a Linguistic Turn," *Diplomatic History*, (June 2005): 419-421; and "The Vindication of 'X'? Reassessing Kennan After the Cold War," *The Historian*, 59 (Summer 1997): 849-58.

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Her current research concerns the use of pattern-recognition in foreign policy decision making and the role of mistrust in international relations. She is involved in research with Alexei Shevchenko on how status concerns and identity affect Russian foreign policy. An example of this line of research appears in "Shortcut to Greatness: New Thinking and the Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy," *International Organization*, Vol. 57 (Winter 2003) (with Alexei Shevchenko), 77-110 which explains Gorbachev's foreign policy revolution.

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scholarly journals on images of Russian-American Relations and was the editor of volume *Russian-American Relations in Past and Present: Images, Myths, and Reality* (2007). In addition, she has published the text-book *Vsemirnaia Istorii XX veka (World History of the 21st Century)* (2002) co-authored with Igor Dolutskii. Now she is working on a book entitled "Understanding Russia in the United States: Images and Myths (1881-1914)."

This excellent book analyzes the modern history of U.S.-Russian relations in the context of a continuous American drive to transform first Russia and then the Soviet Union. Foglesong, who teaches at Rutgers, has previously published several important works on the U.S.-Russian relationship and thus is well suited for this project. I believe *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire"* now stands as the best available work covering the entire history of modern U.S.-Russian relations.

What distinguishes this study is Foglesong's willingness to look beyond the standard—and all too rarely interrogated—"realist" frame. Instead of responding primarily to geopolitics and national interests, the American-Russian relationship reflected the "protean American drives to transform Russia" (ix). Moreover, "When those hopes for a free Russia were obstructed, Americans often characterized opposing forces in Russia as not merely despotic but diabolical." (6)

Terms such as "diabolical," "mission," and "crusade" underscore another major contribution of Foglesong's study, the willingness to examine the considerable role that religious motivations played in shaping American attitudes and policies toward Russia. This study thus complements a rapidly growing body of important work addressing the impact of religion and culture on all facets of U.S. foreign policy.

The analysis of modern U.S.-Russian relations begins appropriately with the American response to the assassination of Alexander II, with the autocrat widely perceived in the United States as a Christian martyr. Politicians, clergymen, and journalists such as George Kennan sought to bring salvation to Russia, just as others had advocated for China, the Philippines, and other nations and areas of the globe.

Disillusioned by Russian "nihilism" and the failure of the 1905 upheaval, Americans "rapturously welcomed" the liberal revolution of 1917, which they believed would "invigorate Russia's fighting spirit and throw open doors to American political, economic, and religious influence." (50) History of course transformed those dreams into nightmares later that same year, with the ultimate outcome being the "demonization of Bolshevik

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Russia” that would prevail for the next seven-plus decades. (56) In American cultural perceptions, Russia had been transformed from the anarchists and nihilists of the tsarist era into an even more sinister amalgam of communists, German agents, and, even worse to some, “Hebrews.”

Foglesong’s narrative turns next to the interwar period in which American Protestants and reformers continued to mount an extraordinary effort to save Russia until Joseph Stalin slammed the door on the foreign crusaders. As one Pentecostal leader observed, Russia “still remains open and millions of white people are waiting for the message of life.” (60) Excellent in his analysis of U.S. religious motivations, Foglesong might have done more, as the above comment suggests, to play out the profound impact of American racial formations on foreign policy.

The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 led to the emergence of the Grand Alliance and a corresponding “rebirth of hopes for a free Russia.” (106) The onset of the Cold War — or, better yet, the *revival* of the Cold War that had prevailed since 1917 — underscored that the American cause was one of good versus evil. Following in the path of several studies over the past decade, Foglesong grasps that despite the misleading trope of “containment” the United States sought to destroy Soviet communism in a “crusade for freedom” that unfolded primarily through propaganda and cultural infiltration of the Soviet empire.

Not surprisingly, given the focus of Foglesong’s previous scholarship on the earlier period of U.S.-Russian relations, his chapters on the more recent history are less rich than the earlier ones. The study would have benefited from more cultural analysis of familiar events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis as well as the *détente* era. However, Foglesong takes up the slack in his analysis of Jimmy Carter’s highly visible human rights campaign, which heightened expectations for a “free Russia,” and of the Reagan era, which brought a “revitalization of orthodox faith” in transforming Russia. (173)

Foglesong thankfully dispenses with one of the most popularly held canards of cold war mythology — that Reagan successfully implemented a “plan” to undermine the Soviet evil empire. “Contrary to the claims of partisan Republicans and neo-conservative ideologues, Reagan did not have a coherent, consistent strategy to cause the collapse of Soviet communism.” (175) On the other hand, while Reagan at least “welcomed Mikhail Gorbachev’s dramatic changes, the incoming Bush administration appeared oblivious to them.” (199)

The American Mission and the “Evil Empire” closes with fresh analysis of the post-Soviet era in which huge numbers of missionaries and reformers once again flocked overseas to assure the salvation of the now-liberated Russia. Alas, by the end of the 1990s a blundering American diplomacy, combined with the corruption, crony capitalism, and reversion to authoritarianism inside Russia, delivered a “backlash against Western cultural penetration of the former Soviet Union.” (213)

The foolhardy U.S. decision (my term, not Foglesong's) to expand NATO by admitting as many former Warsaw Pact nations and former Soviet republics as possible could only create renewed enmity between Russia and the United States, but such "realities" were apparently too profound for the Clinton administration or the State Department to grasp. As Foglesong puts it, more moderately, "Together with disappointment at the limited financial assistance from the West, disillusionment with capitalism, and bitterness about declining standards of living, indignation at NATO expansion spurred a major shift in the Russian political environment." (214)

Thus by the turn of twenty first century the dream of transforming Russia into a liberal democracy had failed, prompting Foglesong to entitle his last chapter "Mission Unaccomplished." Ironically, and perhaps somewhat in contradiction with the evidence he has presented, Foglesong hints that the United States might have transformed Russia or made progress toward that aim through wiser policies. I suspect, however, that the problem all along was in not allowing Russia to be Russia, which is of course a deep seated and culturally grounded problem that runs (as the second George Kennan might have put it) like a "red skein" across the entire history of American diplomacy.

By the end of this study, critics will be challenged to dispute Foglesong's argument for continuity rather than discontinuity over the sweep of U.S.-Russian relations. What emerges is a continuous foreign policy grounded in the protean American drive to "free Russia." In addition to the strong analysis throughout, this book is brilliantly illustrated and handsomely packaged by Cambridge University Press. The seventeen illustrations of editorial cartoons, magazine covers, and propaganda posters complement Foglesong's argument and some are quite striking in the power of their religious imagery.

Finally, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire"* draws on exhaustive research. The notes and bibliography – more than 100 pages of primary and secondary citations—constitute a valuable resource in their own right. This is first-rate history, well researched, persuasively argued, and original, and should serve for some time as the standard single-volume work on the full sweep of modern U.S.-Russian relations.

How we see others is often directly related to how we see ourselves. An intellectual is likely to judge others' intelligence, while a successful entrepreneur evaluates others according to their earning ability.¹ According to David S. Foglesong, since the late nineteenth century, how Americans view Russia has been shaped more by how they perceive the United States than by political and economic developments in that country. Despite the title, which seems to suggest a study of U.S. efforts at changing the Russian regime, Foglesong's stimulating book is part of the literature on national identities and their relationship to foreign policy.² He is more concerned with American popular perceptions of Russia and their divergence from reality than U.S. governmental policy.

At various historical transitions, the U.S. people have believed that Russians were becoming more similar to themselves, and that Russia was launched on the path toward democracy, freedom, and federalism. To expedite what they see as an inevitable process, Americans have had a sense of mission to remake Russia over in the image of U.S. business, democracy, and society. Rarely is Russia treated as a society with a distinctive history, culture, and political trajectory. When popular expectations of Russian reform are disappointed, Russia is viewed as a negative image of the United States, having those traits that are the polar opposite of the aspects of U.S. culture and society in which the American people take pride. Even when crusades to improve Russia have yielded disappointing results, the very effort has made Americans feel better about themselves by demonstrating U.S. idealism and its unique mission. When

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¹ Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London, 1988), 23.

² Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca, 2002); Ido Oren, *Our Enemies and US: America's Rivalries and the Making of Political Science* (Ithaca, 2002).

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Americans are anxious and depressed about the future of their country, invidious comparisons to Russia help to provide a more positive frame of mind.

As a historically backward nation, Russia has tried to catch up with the West. Historically, this effort has entailed maintaining a stronger state apparatus than is compatible with American liberal beliefs. In choosing state-led development, Russia resembles other economically backward countries that have been forced by international pressures to catch up quickly. Failure to consider Russia's unique heritage, lack of civil society, and sense of cultural alienation³ has repeatedly led to misunderstanding, misperception, and missed opportunities for cooperation.

Foglesong draws on a variety of primary sources, including private letters, editorials, cartoons, and movies to portray popular American images of Russia from the late nineteenth century through the present, with an epilogue on the U.S. reaction to Russian President Vladimir Putin. As I will discuss below, the American tendency to use Russia as a foil for their identity is explained by social identity theory in social psychology. Interestingly, U.S. leaders have had fewer illusions about Russia's prospects for reform, their policies largely motivated by power and interest rather than ideals. The contrast between the attitudes of the American people and the political elite is intriguing, but is not explicitly analyzed by Foglesong. It is consistent, however, with tenets of realism.

The recurrence of these patterns throughout U.S. history is striking. Initially Imperial Russia was viewed as a distant, friendly power. But in the late nineteenth century, at the same time that Protestant evangelists began to do missionary work in Russia, liberal activists in the United States began campaigning for a "free Russia." Why did American attitudes toward Russia change? Commercial, humanitarian, political and religious motives combined to form a new American mission to free Russia from its bureaucratic backwardness and autocratic regime. As the tsarist government launched a program of industrialization, American business leaders began to perceive economic opportunities in Russia as an enormous market for U.S. exports. In order for Russians to be able to buy American products, they needed U.S. help in overcoming an inefficient agriculture, inept government, oppressive police, and medieval religion. In addition, negative views of Russia helped overcome the sense of unease and anxieties that many Americans felt about developments in the United States—declining religious faith, the rise of materialism, mistreatment of Native Americans, and disenfranchisement and lynching of African Americans. In comparison with Russia's troubles, American imperfections seemed relatively minor. Russia "gradually came to serve as a 'dark double' or 'imaginary twin' for the United States." (11)

Much of the popular interest in Russian reform derived from the writings of journalist George Kennan, a distant relative of his namesake George F. Kennan. In the 1880s, Kennan traveled to Russia to report on the tsarist exile system in Siberia. Although he had

³ Alfred J. Reiber, "How Persistent Are Persistent Factors?" in Robert Legvold, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century and the Shadow of the Past* (New York, 2007), 205-78.

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originally defended the Siberian system as no worse than prisons in the United States, Kennan underwent a conversion, having been favorably impressed by the intelligence, suffering, and sacrifices of the political exiles that he met in Siberia. At the same time, Kennan underwent a spiritual rebirth in which he rediscovered his religious roots, after having experienced periods of doubt and skepticism due to the conflict between religion and science and the examples of inhumanity that he witnessed firsthand. When he returned to the United States, from 1887 through the mid-1990s, he wrote dozens of articles in popular journals and an influential book, *Siberia and the Exile System*, proclaiming the evils of the tsarist regime and the nobility of Russian revolutionaries. In public lectures, Kennan argued that Russians longed to emulate America. In order to dramatize this point, he described how three hundred political prisoners in a St. Petersburg prison had secretly sewed small American flags, and bravely waved them through the bars of their cells to celebrate the Fourth of July. This anecdote was repeatedly cited and printed by fellow supporters of the movement for a free Russia. Kennan also described democratic self-governing societies in Russia's western frontier, Manchuria. This analogy, by evoking parallels to the American West, heightened American expectations that Russian were eager for democracy and could evolve into a United States of Russia. Contradicting the idea that Russia was ready for democracy was the popular image of Russian peasants as backward, illiterate, and barbaric. Kennan turned this belief to his advantage by drawing similarities between the Russian serfs and American slaves to make the case for liberation. Russian revolutionaries and anarchists were compared to U.S. abolitionists, who had traveled to the American South to teach in African-American schools. This analogy appealed to liberal activists; many of the members of the Society of American Friends of Russian Freedom were in fact descendants of abolitionists.

Kennan's propagandizing paid off. His writings had a major impact on American attitudes toward Russia. Early in the 1890s, newspaper editors observed that Russia was in the "public gaze" and "for most people in the United States the gospel according to Kennan has become the truth about Russia." (26)

While the crusade for Russian freedom never attracted more than a small number of supporters and lost steam by the mid 1890s, there was a recurrence of the U.S. messianic impulse after 1905 when Tsar Nicholas II signed an edict promising religious toleration, opening up the gates to American evangelists who wanted to liberate Russians from the supposedly medieval Orthodox Church. Missionaries from the Seventh-Day Adventists, Methodists, and Baptists flocked to Russia, where their efforts threatened the Orthodox clergy and prompted a governmental backlash.

Americans greeted the 1917 revolution and the overthrow of the tsarist regime with jubilation, expecting that Russia would be open to American political, economic and social influence. *Life* magazine printed a drawing in which a woman representing the Statue of Liberty rode a Bear while Russian people worshipped America's liberty. But the Russian revolution became fractured between the liberal provisional government and a soviet led by socialist intellectuals. After the Bolsheviks took control, President Woodrow Wilson sent a small expeditionary force to Russia in hopes that the Russian people would rise up and throw off Bolshevism. President Wilson declared that the Bolshevik revolution was the

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“negation of everything that is American” (57), again demonstrating the tendency to evaluate Russia relative to the United States. Many Americans believed that the Bolshevik regime was not authentically Russian, allowing them to continue to believe that Russia would eventually evolve into a democracy like the United States. Despite official hostility, during the 1920s, American missionaries, business leaders, relief workers, and engineers continued their efforts to educate Russians about U.S. culture and practices until the Bolsheviks became more hostile to religion and foreign influence at the end of the decade.

Not surprisingly, the Grand Alliance between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain against Hitler’s Germany reawakened American hopes that after the war Russia would be converted to traditional religion and democracy. These illusions were encouraged by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Henry Luce-owned magazines such as *Life* in order to reduce public opposition to lend-lease aid to the Soviet Union. American business leaders anticipated not only that they would expand U.S. exports to the Soviet Union after the war, but also help to liberalize the country, despite the government’s control of trade and the traditional Soviet emphasis on heavy industry rather than consumer goods.

In the early part of the Cold War, books and magazine articles by such authors as James Burnham, Eugene Lyons, historian William Henry Chamberlin, and John Foster Dulles predicted the imminent collapse of communism and the rebirth of a spiritual Russia. American hopes for “liberation” of the Soviet Union were derived from particularistic readings of history, spiritual beliefs, and racial attitudes. Supposedly the Russian people had a long record of revolting against tyranny, as demonstrated by those who fought on the side of the Nazis during World War II and the numerous Soviet soldiers and diplomats who defected to the West. The Russian Orthodox faith, which lay too deep within the Russian psyche to be eradicated by government policies, was a potential source of resistance to the Soviet regime. Russians were Slavs and Europeans and therefore capable of democratic practices. Finally, many believed that exposure of the Russian people during World War II to the material wealth of America and Western Europe would increase popular discontent that could eventually destabilize the regime.

In contrast to the flood of popular writings about liberation, after the death of Stalin in 1953, the United States did little to try to exploit potential domestic instability in the Soviet Union. President Dwight David Eisenhower preferred to work for the long-term evolution of the Soviet Union toward greater democracy by means of expanding contacts and negotiations. A favored tactic was to penetrate the Soviet Union through educational exchanges and cultural exhibitions. Of the cultural exhibitions, the most famous was the first in 1959, where Vice President Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev debated over whether the futuristic model of an American kitchen demonstrated the superiority of capitalism. The United States Information Agency organized nine other exhibitions over the following decade, displaying everything from plastics to graphic arts to recreational vehicles in order to win over the “hearts and minds” of the Russian people.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union once again became the target of Manichean criticism: conservatives denounced détente as a one-way street while liberals campaigned for human rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Foglesong argues that the

renewed American zeal for liberating the Soviet Union cannot be entirely explained by the renewed Soviet repression of dissidents and tightening restrictions on Jewish emigration, which followed rather than provoked U.S. pressure for human rights, nor by Soviet adventurism in the Third World, which reached a climax in 1979 with the invasion of Afghanistan. Instead, Foglesong attributes the renewed moralistic attacks on the Soviet Union to a crisis of self-confidence within the United States that was brought about by the war in Vietnam, energy shortages, exposure of CIA abuses, challenges to traditional authority by feminists and the youth culture, and exposure of presidential abuses of power. Although President Jimmy Carter did not believe that communist repression could be easily eradicated, he thought that promoting human rights in foreign countries could bring domestic political benefits and renew the American spirit. Similarly, President Ronald Reagan's supporters believed that a crusade against totalitarianism and for freedom would help to overcome the "malaise" of the Carter era.

Reagan dreamed of reforming the Soviet system, offering the Soviets the opportunity to join the civilized nations and to be integrated economically with the West. Foglesong attributes Reagan's sense of mission to his religious upbringing, which included teaching Sunday School and attending a college founded by the Disciplines of Christ. Reagan believed that God had a plan for him and the world and that America was destined to carry the torch of freedom in the world. When Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev instituted more radical reforms, including freeing political dissidents, allowing critical discussion of the Soviet past, and encouraging liberalization in Eastern Europe, Americans were particularly impressed by the movement toward greater religious freedom in the U.S.S.R.

In the final decade of the 20th century, America's mission to extend democracy, capitalism, and religion to Russia seemed to be on the verge of fulfillment. As in previous eras, Americans were attracted to the cause of Russian reform. Christian evangelists supported publishing houses, economists advised the government on the transition to capitalism, lawyers encouraged the adoption of a jury system, and political scientists educated Russian politicians on electoral strategies. Excessive expectations for a Russia that would mirror the United States were followed by equally unrealistic pessimism that Russia was returning to dictatorship and aggression toward its neighbors. While American efforts were well-intentioned, they were often ill-suited to Russian realities, as the abrupt transition to capitalism had a disastrous impact on Russian living standards and the "democratic" reformers on whom Americans pinned their hopes were corrupt and venal. Ironically, American economic assistance to Russia was relatively stingy when Russia was most open to American ideas, largely because of the George H. W. Bush administration's risk aversion and the William Clinton administration's absorption with domestic politics. Disappointed hopes in Russian democracy have led to harsh public criticism of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who predictably has responded with some acerbity and irritation at the United States for sticking its nose into Russian affairs.

At the end, Foglesong draws comparisons between previous demonization of Russia and contemporary criticism by public figures such as Vice President Dick Cheney that Russia is abandoning democracy and using its oil resources to dominate other states. It is striking how Americans feel entitled to criticize Russia for failing to live up to liberal democratic

ideals, regardless of whether such ideals are suited for Russia at its current stage of political, social, and economic development. Public disparagement of a regime's democratic record rarely leads to reform, but can instead provoke a nationalist backlash, as seen recently in Russian elite references to their being a "sovereign democracy." Since public criticism only increases Russian obduracy, Foglesong questions why intelligent Americans persist in verbal attacks. Could it be that critics wish to draw comparisons with Russia on traits that highlight America's moral superiority?

Foglesong does not provide a theoretical explanation for why Americans have so often compared themselves to Russia, but it is consistent with social identity theory. According to social identity theory, people derive part of their sense of self from their membership in various social groups. Group members enhance their sense of worth by denigrating out-group members on dimensions that they regard as important to their own identity.⁴ So from this perspective, it is not surprising that Americans have found fault with Russia on those traits that are characteristic of the United States—democracy, capitalism, and religion.

Foglesong's thesis about an American mission to remake the Soviet Union applies to popular attitudes rather than official government policy. He points out that official policy toward the Soviet domestic political system was quite restrained. During the Cold War, support for covert action was limited by the fear of war and nuclear retaliation. As a result of détente, President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger accepted that communism would endure in the Soviet Union and that the Soviet Union was the political equal of the United States. The gap between public attitudes and governmental policy is consistent with realism, which argues that leaders are guided by material factors and *Realpolitik* rather than ideals. This raises the question of what impact popular writings and attitudes have on governmental actions. Did the American mission to reform Russia constrain U.S. policy? To what extent were U.S. leaders inhibited in their ability to engage with Soviet leaders by popular anticommunist beliefs?

Foglesong's book provides a panoramic view of American popular attitudes toward Russia, one that is illustrated with many arresting cartoons and magazine covers. It should provoke a wider debate about the rationality of evaluating Russia with reference to an idealized view of the United States, as well as the deeper sources of this tendency.

⁴ Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior," in William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, ed., *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1986), 7-24; Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identification*.

David S. Foglesong has written an ambitious, meticulously researched monograph on American-Russian cultural relations, a book that embraces the multitudinous attempts Americans have made to shape Russia through religious, political, journalistic, popular and other influences since the 1880s. The book is crowded with compelling examples from both Russian and American sources, and shows an undeniable sense of missionary entitlement throughout the past 125 years.

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Foglesong makes two major arguments through this work. He suggests, first of all, that beginning with the efforts of the senior George Kennan in the 1880s, Americans have exerted a concerted effort to recreate Russia in their image, as part of a larger missionary project that the United States and its citizens carried out around the world beginning in the late 19th century, from Japan to Nicaragua. Here, he succeeds in placing the anti-Communist framework through which this relationship has been seen for much of its recent history, and especially in the Cold War, within the larger swath of an American program in which Russia was just one of many "targets." In this, he contextualizes the American role in Russia as part of a much bigger missionary thrust.

Second, the author points out that despite the universality of the American impulse to transform Russia, the relationship also had its singular aspects. Americans, including diplomats, evangelists, efficiency experts, and Cold War mongers, have felt uniquely compelled to remake Russia. Other scholars, such as Norman E. Saul, Michael Cassella-Blackburn, Gregory Mitrovich, and David C. Engerman, have revealed these transformative impulses in their work as well.¹ But Foglesong is the first to put the phenomenon in a fully long-term perspective.

Foglesong also takes a different tack from Engerman, with whom his work will likely be closely compared. Engerman's recent study explores most closely the years before World

¹ Norman E. Saul, *Friends or Foes: The United States and Russia, 1921-1941* (Lawrence, KS, 2006); Michael Cassella Blackburn, *The Donkey, the Carrot, and the Club: William Bullitt and Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1948* (Westport, CT, 2004); Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Chapel Hill, 2003); David C. Engerman, *Modernization from The Other Shore: American intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, 2003).

War II, and emphasizes the way in which Americans romanticized industrial development for Russia, regardless of its human costs. Foglesong's work focuses more on the American missionary impulse, the desire to transform Russia culturally and politically, and is less interested in economic developments.² While Engerman sees among American engineers and other social scientists a brand of Victorian progressive thinking that saw Russians as fit for the universal modernization project, Foglesong identifies a particularly Russian-flavored approach among his missionizers. In his view, even though Russia served as just one of many desired ornaments on a broad missionary tree in this era, it also had its own special qualities that made it an especially strong prospect to emulate the United States. Foglesong emphasizes the notion of Russia as an American *doppelgänger* with its frontier, its revolutionary heritage, and its vastness, among other qualities. Thus rather than simply Westernizing, Foglesong suggests, Americans in their "fascination" with Russia believed that country had a duty to *be* like them: its "true destiny was to be a democracy like the United States" (6, 59).

As such an "imaginary twin," Russia served as a useful foil for American self-definition. Besides looking at the Russian and Soviet peoples as amenable to reforms through the assistance that Radio Liberty, American Protestantism, or democratic elections might give them, Foglesong suggests, both U.S. officials and the American people saw Russia as "a screen on which Americans projected their hopes and fears" (62). (The book, by the way, has wonderful cartoons and other illustrations to illuminate such thinking.) It was the United States' "dark double": the totalitarian, controlling, oppressive other against which Americans could contrast their virtues (6). Thus, maintaining non-recognition of the Communist state in the 1920s was "gratifying" for Washington's "righteous honor" (77). What Foglesong doesn't mention was that this stance was increasingly meaningless as greater and greater trade burgeoned in that decade, facilitated by U.S.-approved credits and loans; one of the book's weaknesses is the limited attention it devotes to economic developments between the two nations.

Foglesong's work is compelling, however, in its emphasis on religious efforts to transform Russia. He pays close attention to crusading members of the Protestant tribe, including Baptists, Methodists, Adventists, and Pentecostals who went to Russia over the course of the 20th century. Bashing Orthodoxy themselves, they saw the early Bolsheviks' own attack on Russia's church as their opportunity. On this topic, Foglesong's discussion of World War II is especially compelling, as he notes the way in which Russian "redemption" seemed increasingly likely as Stalin at last legitimized Orthodoxy to build a stronger patriotism, and further welcomed American films and other Western cultural productions. Yet as Foglesong points out, this was short lived; Orthodox leaders were "timid" and did not push for significant openness beyond their allotted portion (p 92). The temples of atheism would return. Foglesong notes as well the way in which Soviet leaders saw the importance of American industrial imports in this era, including not only the plentiful piles of Lend Lease but also the earlier pattern of trade which Soviets hoped to expand in the war; they

² David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the other shore. American intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, 2003)

“admired advanced American technology” (98). This is a rather tepid assertion, though, considering the risks Soviet agents took with their own citizens, and sympathetic Americans like the Rosenbergs and Harry Gold, to obtain such technology during the war. But Foglesong doesn’t mention the espionage story, or any of the secret side of the Soviet search for technology in World War II, which is surprising for an author who made much of intelligence work in the First World War in his earlier book.³

The early Cold War may seem to be the time when Americans were most compelled to “liberate” Russia, and Foglesong affirms this. More interestingly, though, he shows the variety of views in this effort. George Kennan the Younger, for instance, thought Americans needed to cultivate more “spiritual distinction” and snap their “shackles of disunity, confusion, and doubt” before they could hope to influence change in Russia (124). James Burnham, on the other hand, thought such a reflective approach dangerously defeatist. Even as Washington beamed in subversive, anticommunist radio programs (often jammed), many Americans in the 1950s questioned whether the Soviets wanted America style capitalism, or even whether they were at heart protestors against their fate; instead, as Engerman has shown as well, there were longstanding notions of Russian passivity which seemed to preclude their challenging the *status quo*.⁴ Rather than count on the Russian people to bring about change, then, after disastrous U.S.-sponsored incursions to rollback communism in places like Albania it seemed that only the forces of the Soviet military, suitably enlightened, could do any such thing. With Stalin’s death and the end of the Korean War, a prosaic Eisenhower ushered in a more gradual approach, even with the brinksmenlike Dulles at his side. With the Voice of America and Radio Liberty continuing, often ineffectually, “liberation” shifted to “liberalization” (139). Thus, Eisenhower stood by as Hungary exploded and as irresponsible radio journalists sent unfilled promises, although in more distant parts of the world, he was only too eager to support unwise liberation projects that later called forth millions of American troops.

One of the difficulties that Foglesong must wrestle with is the very issue of passivity. How *much* did Russians want to be “liberated” from their oppressive regime? During the Brezhnev Era—known in Gorbachev’s time as the “era of stagnation”—Foglesong argues that Soviet citizens in fact only rarely wanted “spiritual liberation from Communism.” Instead, they appreciated the “stability, security, and national pride” their strengthened nation gave them (158). But at the same time, as Vaclav Havel has shown, Czechoslovaks and others were inspired by the Helsinki Accords to call their government to account in the Charter 77 proclamation of January 1977, a declaration instigated by the Prague regime’s arrests of the band Plastic People of the Universe.⁵ So — which is it? Did Communist peoples want to be liberated, or not? Clearly, something was happening on both sides in

³ David S. Foglesong, *America’s Secret War Against Bolshevism: U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-1920* (Chapel Hill, 1995).

⁴ David C. Engerman, “Modernization from the Other Shore: American Observers and the Costs of Soviet Economic development,” *American Historical Review* 105 (April 2000), 408-09.

⁵ See Havel et al, *The Power of the Powerless* ed. John Keane (New York, 1985).

this “stagnant” era, as underlined by Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s being summarily bounced from, and then begged back, to the White House between the Ford and Carter Administrations. Foglesong suggests the Russians weren’t getting restless, but the brave words of their neighbors under equally oppressed circumstances suggest the seeds were there for change.

The impact of American missionary activity in undermining the Soviet sphere remains highly controversial. Scholars like John Lewis Gaddis have given Ronald Reagan full credit for “spooking the Soviets” into change in the 1980s.⁶ From a somewhat different perspective, Foglesong also offers a positive portrait of Ronald Reagan, building on the message of Michael Schaller that Reagan was “creative” in his approach to the Gorbachev ascendancy.⁷ But unlike Gaddis, he does not see “hanging tough” as the root of Reagan’s effectiveness. Rather, it was the President’s gentlemanly restraint from force that gave the General Secretary the room to “take the risk of launching a destabilizing restructuring of the Soviet system” (195). Of course, there was no shortage of fire and brimstone, as Foglesong shows with his compelling portrayal of Reagan’s religious upbringing in the Disciples of Christ and his sense of missionary responsibility. Chernenko’s Russia, too, served Reagan’s goal of revitalizing the United States as it emerged from the crisis of confidence exemplified by Vietnam, Watergate, and Carter’s “malaise” speech of 1979. But as he notes, unlike the true hardliners, Reagan wanted cultural and scientific exchanges with Russia, and enhanced chances for peace.

While not triumphalist, Foglesong’s portrait of Reagan is certainly revisionist. He is suggesting that the American mission *was* appropriately applied in the 1980s, even though the title of his book, with the “Evil Empire” in quotation marks, would seem to suggest the problematic nature of such a crusade. What distinguished the “genial” Ronald Reagan from a hardliner like the “crewcut” Pat Buchanan, when both men loved Barry Goldwater and Buchanan, of course, served in Reagan’s administration during its early years (176, 136)? Perhaps the timing is key — Reagan by 1985 saw the opportunity in Gorbachev that hostile observers like Buchanan were less likely to. Even earlier, as Foglesong shows, the President was only a reluctant cold warrior. Perhaps more interesting, though, is what distinguishes Reagan’s success from the “failed crusade” of his successors.⁸

It is always risky to write about the very recent past, and the last decade and a half of Russian-American relations are a minefield to be sure. We need only to look at Strobe Talbott’s optimistic appraisal, indeed, forecast, of an “acceleration in... positive trends” in

⁶ See John Lewis Gaddis, “Hanging Tough Paid Off,” *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January/February 1989, reprinted in Robert Griffith and Paula Baker, *Major Problems in American History* Vol 2, second ed. (Boston, 2001), 516.

⁷ Michael Schaller, *Reckoning with Reagan: America and its President in the 1980s* (New York, 1992), 178.

⁸ See Stephen F. Cohen, *Failed Crusade: American and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia* (New York, 2000).

the Russian-American relationship, circa 2002, to see the follies of contemporary history.⁹ How can one avoid such slippery judgments in a fast-changing political climate? Foglesong's recent coverage is plagued by the same sort of difficulties, but he gamely soldiers on. These are important issues to wrestle with, so his temerity is to be commended, even if he occasionally slips into the quicksand himself. Like Stephen F. Cohen's, his portrayal of the 1990s is a negative one: an era, he says, that was riddled with "unrealistic hopes, exaggerated fears" (198). He writes, for instance, that "liberal universalists" were wrong to think most Russians wanted to stop the right-wing coup that nearly overthrew Yeltsin (197). Yet despite the evidence of wide support for Soviet hardliners, he also suggests this was an era when Russia was "most open to American advice and influence," and that the United States could have been more effectively "promoting American values" at this time—if only done properly. Like Cohen, he sees a terrible mistake made in the 1990s and its too zealous effort to force Russia into "some replica of America."¹⁰ The timing must have seemed right; Boris Yeltsin, after all, was thrilled with what he saw in a Texas supermarket and longed to bring such goodies to Russia. This thinking, Cohen argues, led Americans to support Yeltsin even as he became increasingly unpopular with his reforms that seemed to only benefit a few; the resulting anti-Americanist sentiments set the stage for Putin's "regressive" rule.¹¹ Foglesong would agree. While arguing for the amenability of Russia to American influence, he suggests that the wrong kind of pressure was applied. An unsubtle push for market reforms forced unpleasant economic measures on the post-Soviet Russians, even as a dizzy post-Cold War euphoria led the West to build up NATO at Russia's expense—both efforts inspiring a hardline reaction against Westernizing change in the former Soviet Union, driven not only by conservative Communists but by the Orthodox Church, alarmed by the planeloads of proselytizing Protestants. With Russians dying earlier and earlier and their bank accounts shriveling as oligarchs partied, both Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton stood by Yeltsin, and thus blew the chances of a more lasting American influence. As he attacks both of these former occupants of the Oval Office for pressing a particularly oppressive kind of Westernization, Foglesong is also sharply critical of President George W. Bush for giving up on any transformation: "I don't expect Russia to look like the United States," said the president in 2006 (qtd. on p. 224), a view Foglesong finds "excessive" in its negativity (218). Yet when another George (the late Kennan) said "let Russians 'be Russians'" in the 1950s, Foglesong found this "sage" advice, and indeed, it was (124). One might wish Bush II had harbored more of such ideas in Iraq!

When the present Bush Administration is not abdicating a responsibility to help Russia, Foglesong asserts, its leadership is making criticisms of the Putin regime that are "galling" in their "blatant hypocrisy" and thus driving the Russian president to be "outspokenly defiant" (227). But if it's wrong to do nothing, and it's hypocritical to attack, this seems to leave only warm and involved relations as an option, but there are difficulties here as well. How to work with a regime that exports particles of Polonium 210 on British planes to

⁹ Talbott, 421.

¹⁰ Cohen, xii.

¹¹ Cohen, 186.

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silence critics and inflicts cosmetic terrorism on Ukrainian opponents? Strikingly, Foglesong finds Western coverage of the death of journalist Aleksandr Litvinenko and the treatment of Ukrainian opposition politician Viktor Yushchenko unnecessarily “vituperative” and representative of a “demonization of Putin” (226). His readers may disagree.

In the last three years, trade between the United States and Russia has surpassed U.S. exports to Costa Rica, one indicator that things may not be all bad. Nevertheless, as Council of Foreign Relations fellow Stephen Sestanovich’s recent testimony to the U.S. Congress suggests, US-Russian relations in most other matters have gotten markedly worse since 2005.¹² From the other side, Mikhail Margelov, the head of the Russian Federation Council’s International Affairs Committee, sounded very much like the herald of a new Cold War in comments just six weeks ago, despite his pooh-poohing of just such a development. To him and to his government, he declared, if “the West continues ‘advancing democracy’ towards the Russian borders...the language of interests unfortunately indicates that this all looks very much like an ‘encirclement.’”¹³ Margelov’s dark mutterings make Foglesong’s book all the more compelling right now. Despite its sometimes questionable coverage of the most recent aspects of the relationship, this tightly written, richly researched work makes a strong case for what evangelist Sherwood Eddy noted in 75 years ago: “For good or evil, Russia matters profoundly” (qtd on p. 81.)

¹² Stephen Sestanovich, “Russian-American Relations: Problems and Prospects,” May 17, 2007, Prepared Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee: http://www.cfr.org/publication/13354/russianamerican_relations.html .

¹³ See http://www.interfax.ru/e/B/politics/28.html?id_issue=11940869 .

The study of the Russian-American mutual perceptions has always attracted researchers on both sides of the Atlantic. For a historian, this is a promising subject and challenging as well. The challenge is particularly obvious when dealing with generalizations over large periods of time. There is always the danger of giving in to the existing stereotypes and academic trends, there is the problem of integrating one's own stance with a large body of influential scholarship drawing on substantial sources. Finally, it is crucial that one's evaluations remain impartial regardless of the changing "climate" of the Russian-American relations which might sometimes prompt researchers both in Russia and in the US to self-censorship.

David Foglesong's book offers an example of successfully overcoming the dangers inherent in carrying out such research. This book dwells on the American attempts, beginning in the 1880s and up till now, to export their own symbols of political and religious beliefs, technological innovations and economic theories, mass culture products, and, once, a military invasion as part of their peculiar crusade to rebirth the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the post-Soviet Russia. Foglesong focuses on "the new messianic idea" which is linked with the way Russia's modernization prospects are viewed in the US. This idea is integrated into America's global mission to reform the world. It has become the projection of Americans' ideological fervor, economic ambitions, political idealism, religious inspiration, and philanthropic altruism. This book, therefore, does not focus exclusively on the way Americans used to think about Russia and on the way they think about it today. This book also describes Americans' self-representations, and demonstrates how a demonized Russia serves to revitalize the American nationalism, and how the Russian "Other" was used, in part, to construct the American "Self."

To achieve his goals, Foglesong uses a broad range of verbal and graphic sources from the American press. He also draws on many new sources from archival collections which help him to illustrate the moods of people involved in various private and public missions to revive and renovate Russia. And, last but not least, Foglesong also offers his own interpretations of previously studied sources. Naturally, the book has a large cast of characters, from presidents, state secretaries, ambassadors, experts on "the Russian

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question” to journalists, media personalities, missionaries, businessmen, workers, engineers, public figures, Russian émigrés who helped shape the idea of Americans’ special responsibility for carrying out reforms in Russia and who viewed the relations between the two countries within such binary oppositions as “Light and Darkness,” “Civilization and Barbarity,” “Modernity and the Middle ages,” “Democracy and Authoritarianism,” “Freedom and Slavery,” “the West and Asia/the Orient.”

The book has a logical and well thought-through structure which draws particular attention to the specific cycles of “hopes and disappointments” Americans have been experiencing for more than a century as they considered the prospects of Russia’s democratization. Americans embarked on a peculiar crusade to renovate Russia because they were influenced by the ideas of universal liberalism and by the false illusions that Russians desired to embrace the American model and hoped for help from the US. The result was the Americans’ frustration with the issues of yet another stage of Russia’s modernization and their plunge from the euphoria of universalism into the Russophobia and pessimism. As Foglesong justly remarks, the demonization of Russia and the upsurge of the crusading moods coincided with the social and cultural crises in the American society and helped uphold the Americans’ faith in the unique advantages of the United States. For instance, this occurred at the turn of the 20th century when industrialization challenged the American dream, when the mass immigration threatened the national identity, when the decline in interest in the issues of faith and the demoralizing materialism prompted grave concerns on the part of religious and public figures who viewed it as the destruction of the very foundation of the American way of life. At the same time, the discrimination against Native Americans, African Americans, the Chinese immigrants discredited the American right to spread democratic values throughout the world (11-12). Another example was the late 1970s when the conservatives demonized the Soviet Union against the backdrop of the identity crisis brought on by the Vietnam syndrome, as the economy stagnated, as respect for the Presidency declined, as the youth culture and the feminist movement proposed their own challenges, and liberal activists did their utmost fighting for human rights in the Soviet Union and the countries of the Eastern Europe (150-156, 167, 170-171).

Foglesong is the first historian to attempt to gauge the importance of religion in constructing the image of Russia in the US. He constantly addresses the features of Americans’ religious beliefs thereby demonstrating the contribution made to the messianic moods in the American society by the Christian upbringing and faith of the missionaries, of the activists fighting for human rights, of the influential diplomats, of the political leaders who strengthened the belief that it was necessary to provide real help in solving Russia’s problems. The Manichean concept which divided the world into the kingdoms of Darkness and Light was particularly influential in shaping the idea of Russia as the Empire of Darkness, the demonic “Other” contrasted with the American “Self.” It also helped shape the idea of Russians viewing America as the source of light. American political cartoons serve as a fine confirmation of David Foglesong’s ideas. During the entire 20th century, American cartoonists invariably employed the images of Darkness and Light as their principal communicative strategy to encode the public opinion.

Foglesong's emphasis on the religious factor allows for a more subtle explanation of the changes in Americans' perception of events across the Atlantic. He elaborates on, and refines the description of the initiatives of George Kennan and other "crusaders" at the turn of the 20th century (15-16, 23-25). Foglesong draws special attention to the American missionaries and their role in spreading false illusions during the Russian revolution of 1917, in shaping the image of the Bolsheviks as the hostile "Aliens" for Russia and Russians, and in confirming the need for an American military intervention to save democracy in Russia (35-38, 52, 55). Following Bertrand Patenaude, Foglesong emphasizes the religious missionary zeal of the American Relief Administration during the hunger in the Volga region (65). The author traces the link between the persecution of the Protestant church in 1929 after failure of the messianic project to convert Russian believers and priests to Protestantism on the one hand, and the demonized image of the Soviet Russia on the other (71). Of particular interest is Foglesong's remark that at the time of the Grand Alliance 1941-1945, "popular magazines and many religious periodicals expressed great enthusiasm about spiritual revival in Russia that was expected to have profound significance for the postwar world, and to create opportunity for Americans to assist a broader regeneration of Russia" (83). In contrast with the traditional disregard for the role religion played in shaping the Americans' perception of the Soviet Union during World War II, Foglesong considers the special significance of various Evangelical missions for spreading unrealistic expectations concerning reforming Stalin's regime. When these expectations were dashed the Cold War hostilities increased. Giving credit to George Frost Kennan's realistic outlook, Foglesong, nevertheless, stresses that Kennan "was squarely within the mainstream of American Christian hopes for a religious reformation of Russia" since "religion was central and persistent element in Kennan's thinking about the possibility of liberating Russia from Stalinism" (92, 115). Finally, Foglesong thinks that Russia's spiritual revival was the key element in Ronald Reagan's view of the Soviet Union manifested in his famous statement about the Evil Empire and in his belief in America's special mission (190, 193).

What then, according to Foglesong, improved Russia's image? It could be hopes for entering Russia's gigantic market which put both political arguments and ideological ambitions on the back burner. It could be liberal Protestants' belief that communists were the bearers of the Social Gospel. However, American Russophiles should be largely credited with adjusting Russia's image. They viewed Russia as the different country, they exhibited a special attitude to the Russian spirituality and national character, and envisioned a very slow and gradual modernization process. The standoff between Russiophiles and "crusaders" is David Foglesong's most intriguing line of inquiry. The Russiophiles spoke of Russia's own way of development, they did not dream of creating the United States of Russia, and they considered the ruler and the people as a unified whole. The "crusaders" considered it a matter of principle to separate these two images and to add a certain Romantic allure to the latter one which helped overcome doubts in the Russian national character¹ and strengthened the conviction that the crusade for a free Russia was

¹ The notion of a national character had the crucial role in Americans' perception of Russia. See David C. Engerman, *Modernization From the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, 2003).

a necessity. David Foglesong shows that those who, unlike the Russophiles, depicted Russians as awaiting help in their liberalization from across the ocean, felt it necessary to include the development of the Russian nation into the universal modernization process and to discover the sources of democracy in Russia's historical past (be it *mir* or the Novgorod *veche*). They also sought to emphasize the non-Russianness of the Romanov dynasty (Woodrow Wilson's opinion), to separate the image of a cosmopolitan Russian people capable of self-government from the image of the xenophobic Kremlin obstructing the country's Westernization (the Cold War trends) (112). Although this seems to me to be a slight simplification reducing the wide range of evaluations to two basic approaches ("crusaders" vs. Russophiles, or liberals/universalists/ optimists vs. conservatives/Russophobes/pessimists), it is nonetheless valid and extremely useful as an analysis tool. This antithesis allows us to grasp the essence of long-standing American myths of Russia, which stood in the way of soberly evaluating both the events within Russia and the prospects of its modernization. One can but agree with Foglesong that this phenomenon is best explained by the Americans' desire to ground their vision in wishful thinking. At the same time, since the end of the 19th century, the liberals, the radicals, the conservatives, the Russophiles and the Russophobes discussed the American development model using Russia as the "Other." They were also heavily influenced by the American social and cultural context. There was a surprising continuity in the perception of Tsarist Russia, Soviet Russia, and post-Soviet Russia.² When explaining the Americans' attitude to the revolutionary Russia of 1917, to the Soviet Russia between the wars, at the time of the Grand Alliance and of the Cold War, and to today's Russia, David Foglesong correctly draws upon both the realities of today and on the long-standing trends in representing Russia and Russians in the US.

His central tenet is that since the end of the 19th century, Russia has assumed the role of America's "dark twin" distracting Americans from their own problems. This claim is not only convincing but also important for understanding the image of Putin's Russia. It seems to me, however, that the glass house metaphor has been a staple of American discourse about Russia as a whole and of the "crusading" discourse in particular. I could refer, for instance, to the members of the Society of the American Friends of Russian Freedom doubting their right to criticize the evils in Russia when Russians could form their own societies to defend the rights of African Americans, Native Americans and Chinese immigrants.³ I could refer to Lillian Wald's remarks on the members of the settlement-house movement being mindful of the mission to harmonize both American and Russian societies.⁴ This is an important nuance worth additional attention. At the same time, there can be no arguing against Foglesong's thesis that drawing comparisons between Russia and

² For more corroboration, see, for instance, a selection of cartoons in David S. Foglesong and Victoria I. Zhuravleva, «Konstruirovaniie obraza Rossii v amerikanskih politicheskikh karikaturah XX veka» in *Rossia I SShA na Stranitsah Russkoi i Amerikanskoi Periodiki* (Moskva, 2008).

³ Stepniak-Kravchinskii S.M., *V Londonskoi Emigratsii* (Moskva, 1968): 314, 360-361.

⁴ See, for instance, Lillian Wald, *The House on Henry Street* (New York, 1915): 238-248.

the United States allowed Americans to persevere in their belief that whatever “growing pains” the American society might be suffering from, the treatment was predictable, non-violent, and it merely returned the society into the state of balance it had temporarily lost.

Several key ideas are traced throughout *The American Mission* although not all of them receive equally thorough treatment in various time periods. For instance, the role of Russian émigrés as the carriers of the negative image of the country they had left is represented in more detail after the revolution of 1917. However, the mass immigration at the turn of the 20th century which involved mostly ethnic and religious minorities contributed significantly to the demonization of the image of the Russian Empire and to upholding the messianic moods in the American society. Foglesong draws a parallel between the Russian revolutionaries and the Soviet dissidents and emphasizes that both viewed Western criticism as a catalyst for reform. Yet Russian pre-revolutionary radicals and liberals, like Soviet Cold War dissidents, put a lot of fuel into the fire of American universal liberalism. Foglesong pays special attention to the influence that stereotypes and peculiar cycles of “hopes and disappointments” had on the academic research in the US in the 1990s. However, this was characteristic of other periods, too. For an example, one might turn to American historian Thomas A. Bailey’s classical work.⁵ Interesting analogies are gleaned from comparing Bolshevism and religion (61). This idea appeared even before the 1917 revolution, influenced to some degree by A. Leroy-Beaulieu, a French intellectual whose authority in “the Russian question” was recognized in both Europe and the US. He explained the spread of the revolutionary ideas in Russia by the fact that a large portion of the population had lost its religious faith. Consequently, belief in the revolutionary utopia was substituted for Christian faith, and nihilism became the Russian people’s New Gospel. Foglesong emphasizes the role of marriages between Jewish women with radical beliefs and Anglo-Saxon Protestant men; this idea is promising, but it would be equally interesting to trace the influence of marriages between Russians and Americans who took an active part in shaping the discourse on Russia in the US, be they Gordon Wasson mentioned by Foglesong (121), or Edmund Noble married to Lydia Lvovna Pimenova.

I am sure that scholars studying the images of Russian-American relations could make various remarks and observation concerning some periods discussed in the book since this highly professional, insightful, and sometimes provocative text prompts serious reflection and stimulates re-considering the process of constructing Russia’s image in the US in historical perspective. This is the book’s principal merit. I would like to draw attention to just one thing. Upon reading the book, one gets the impression that the Russian/Soviet/post-Soviet reality had a rather tangential effect on the American perception of Russia. A myth, however, cannot survive without feeding off reality. It is a

⁵ For instance, the inside cover features an illustration from George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System*; political prisoners in the tsarist prisons are compared to the Communists’ prisoners (note on p. 129); 138-139 say: “In the armed forces from 1894 to 1902 there were more than a half-dozen notorious cases of corruption or selling secrets to foreign powers. (Some of these affairs foreshadow the Soviet purge trials of the 1930’s)” in Thomas A. Bailey, *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations From Early Times to Our Day* (Ithaca, 1950).

different matter, of course, that reality is far more diverse and variegated than its negative or positive components hyperbolized and used for stereotyping an image.⁶

In the beginning of the 21st century, the Russian “Other” plays a far less significant role in shaping American identity, and the idea of a “crusade” doesn’t resonate as widely in the American society. Nevertheless, Foglesong states that leading American politicians, journalists, intellectuals “seem to have felt that it was vital to affirm America’s mission in the world through rhetorical commitment to a free Russia” (222). Moreover, the image of Russia as a disciple is still significant, and as the disciple’s education progresses, the similarity with the US should increase. However, the idea of a discipleship implies inequality and thus clashes with the idea of Russia as a world power. Pessimists in the US and in the West in general subject Vladimir Putin’s government to increasingly severe criticisms claiming that Russia as a disciple failed in one specific key domain, that of democracy, individual rights and freedoms. These criticisms are not groundless, and they nourish the American myths of Russia and help revitalize them. Yet today, as in the past, the Russian reality is an intricate interweaving of a great number of negative and positive trends, and comprehending Russia by means of bipolar evaluations, rigid transitional paradigms and messianic moralizing provokes a backlash and accusations of hypocrisy and double standards leveled at American leaders as the war in Iraq continues, NATO expands, and the US carries out its policies in the former Soviet republics.

Time magazine named Vladimir Putin person of the year stating that “with an iron will--and at significant cost to the principles that free nations prize--Putin has brought Russia back as a world power.” This event (in the past, Stalin was named person of the year twice) and comments in the American press confirm David Foglesong’s principal conclusions—be it Richard Stengel talking about the Soviet Union as the “dark twin” of the US; be it Simon Montefiore describing Putin as a person whose leadership manifests the heritage of the Russian tsars and the Soviet Secretaries General and, most importantly, the heritage of Joseph Stalin spiced with nationalistic populism; be it Nathan Thornburgh declaring that Putin’s foreign policy perceived in the West as a threat, and his domestic policy viewed as suppressing democracy in Russia enjoy full support of the Russian people. Influential American politicians with a realistic outlook, for instance, Henry Kissinger still speak up claiming that “America must not confuse foreign policy towards Russia with seeking to prescribe historical processes. It is important to get our priorities right. Restructuring the domestic situation of Russia cannot be achieved by American designs — particularly in the short term. Russia is a vast country adjoining China, the Islamic world and Europe. Cooperative relations with it are important for peace and global solutions...And we need some understanding for the adjustments required by a country in a period of transition...

⁶ The latter was particularly emphasized in: David Foglesong and Gordon Hahn in “Ten Myths about Russia: Understanding and Dealing with Russia’s Complexity and Ambiguity” in *Problems of Post-Communism*, 49:6 (November/December 2002): 3-15.

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The idea that America has the power to change Russia's domestic structure by threats is an invitation to permanent crisis.”⁷

In the 21st century, the American debate on the prospects of modernizing Russia and on the Americans’ role in this process is still going strong even though it began more than a century ago. This is why David Foglesong’s book aimed at elucidating the mechanisms of misrepresentations which threaten both Russian-American relations and the world security as a whole is of equal importance for the academic community and for the policy makers in both Russia and the United States.

⁷ *Time*, 5, 17, 18, 20 December 2007

Why have many Americans believed since the late nineteenth century that they should try to liberate and remake Russia? How has engagement in crusades to free and reform Russia affected how Americans have felt about the United States? Why has Russia, more persistently than any other foreign country, been a foil for the definition and reaffirmation of American national identity? Those were some of the central questions I sought to investigate in research between 1995 and 2006 that culminated in the publication last fall of *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire."*

The book is not a comprehensive history of all facets of American-Russian relations.¹ Instead, it focuses primarily on how Russia since 1881 has been "seen as both an object of the American mission and the opposite of American virtues."² Even with that specific focus, there were many episodes from the last 125 years that I could not recount or could not discuss at length in the space of a little more than 125,000 words.

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I am grateful to the H-Diplo editors for organizing this roundtable discussion of my book and I am gratified that the reviewers have found so much to praise in their insightful commentaries. I am also glad to have an opportunity to clarify my thinking about a number of questions raised by the reviewers.

Walter Hixson's generous and enthusiastic review leaves me with only a few points to address. In commenting on my chapter on the interwar period, "Doors opened and closed: opportunities and obstructions in early Soviet Russia, 1921-1940," Hixson observes that I might have done more "to play out the profound impact of American racial formations on foreign policy." This is certainly true. I did note in passing that some American Relief Administration workers in the early 1920s disparaged listless Russians as hopelessly

¹ The best single-volume history is John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union and the United States* (New York, 2nd ed., 1990), unfortunately out of print in recent years.

² *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire"*, 6.

“Oriental” and that the embittered first U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, William Christian Bullitt, railed about Stalin’s “Asiatic despotism” in the late 1930s. But I did not dwell on this theme, which David Engerman stressed in his excellent recent book, *Modernization from the Other Shore*.³ Instead, I sought to highlight in this chapter and throughout the book how many Americans who sought to redeem or regenerate Russia either set aside or directly disputed negative stereotypes about the Russian national character. Thus, one Pentecostal leader’s 1927 reference to Russians as “white people,” which Hixson cites, was part of a long tradition in which American religious missionaries and political crusaders explicitly defined Russians as European, Caucasian, or “Aryan.”⁴ In 1914, for example, George Kennan, the great crusader against tsarist despotism, insisted that “the Russians are among the most gifted of the Aryan peoples.”⁵ In subsequent decades, his namesake, George F. Kennan, the key figure in launching U.S. “psychological warfare” against Stalinist despotism, stressed that Russians were not Mongols but Europeans who had migrated to the north and east.⁶

Discussing my treatment of the 1960s and 1970s, Hixson suggests that my study “would have benefited from more cultural analysis of familiar events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis as well as the *détente* era.” Although it may be possible for other historians to develop fresh analysis of the cultural impact of the Cuban Missile Crisis, I am not sure how that would have fit in my study. In my chapter on the *détente* era I discussed how U.S. diplomats, propagandists, and cultural exchange officials tried in a low-key way to promote the gradual liberalization of the Soviet system, and I briefly analyzed the waning of anticommunist demonization of the Soviet Union. However, I felt that those developments merited less detailed discussion than the more fervent drive for “liberation” before the *détente* era and the revival of the crusade for a free Russia at the end of the *détente* era.

Reviewing my final chapter on the 1990s, Hixson writes, “perhaps somewhat in contradiction with the evidence he has presented, Foglesong hints that the United States might have transformed Russia or made progress toward that aim through wiser policies.” Let me clarify my views. I do not believe that Americans could have transformed Russia almost overnight into a liberal democracy with a flourishing market economy and widespread conversions to Protestant faiths. However, I do believe that Americans could have been somewhat more successful if the United States had been able to deliver more financial aid in the crucial first year after the Soviet Union collapsed; if U.S. economic advisers had not urged the hasty privatization of state enterprises that enriched handfuls of

³ David C. Engerman, *Modernization From the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).

⁴ For precedents to the 1927 statement, see David S. Foglesong, “Redeeming Russia? American Missionaries and Tsarist Russia, 1886-1917,” *Religion, State and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December 1997), 353-368, esp. 355-6 and 363-4 (note 19).

⁵ *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”*, 48.

⁶ *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”*, 120-1.

unscrupulous, well-connected individuals; if Clinton administration officials had cautioned Russian President Boris Yeltsin in 1993 against provoking a violent showdown with the Russian parliament instead of assuring him that the United States would back him to the hilt in his confrontation; if more Protestant missionaries had studied Russian language and culture before flying to Russia; and if the United States had not pushed the rapid eastward expansion of NATO, which inflamed Russian nationalist resentment of the West and undermined the position of liberals in Russia.

Finally, alluding to a famous comment by George F. Kennan in 1951, Hixson suggests that “the problem all along was in not allowing Russia to be Russia.” It is worth highlighting two other statements by Kennan that illuminate why it has been so difficult for many Americans to let Russians “be Russians.” In the summer of 1945, after journeying to Siberia to investigate popular attitudes across the Soviet Union, Kennan declared that since Russians were a “responsive people, capable of absorbing and enriching all forms of human experience,” they were an especially suitable outlet for “the yearning to feel themselves helpful to others” that was a signal trait of the American character. Kennan therefore felt intensely frustrated that the Russian people “places itself in the hands of a ruthless authoritarian regime” and “beyond the power of others to help.”⁷ In 1988, when many Americans still clung to an emotional antipathy to the rapidly changing Soviet Union of Mikhail Gorbachev, Kennan explained that “A large segment of the American population has the need to cultivate the idea of American innocence and virtue – which requires an opposite pole of evil.”⁸

Deborah Welch Larson’s thorough review is so precise and apt that I have little to say in response. The only major point about which I may disagree with Larson concerns the relationship between American popular attitudes and the policy positions of political elites in the United States. Larson rightly notes that there has often been a “gap between public attitudes and governmental policy.” However, one of the points I sought to emphasize was that key U.S. policymakers have shared the popular ambition to liberate Russia and they have at crucial moments succumbed to the illusion that American influence could inspire a rapid transformation of Russia. A few of the most dramatic cases will serve to illustrate this point. In April 1917 Woodrow Wilson rapturously hailed the way the Romanov autocracy had been overthrown by the Russian people, who were “always in fact democratic at heart.” In the summer of 1918, when Wilson sent military expeditions to northern Russia and eastern Siberia, he unrealistically hoped that the small U.S. forces would help “the Russian people in their endeavour to regain control of their own affairs” from the Bolshevik usurpers. From 1944 through the early 1950s, when George F. Kennan was at the peak of his influence on U.S. policy, he cherished the unrealistic ideas that the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church could “prove to be politically a match for the people in the Kremlin” and that the religiosity of the Russian people could be mobilized

⁷ “Trip to Novosibirsk and Stalinsk, June 1945,” Box 181, Averell Harriman Papers, Library of Congress, discussed in *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”*, 104-5.

⁸ Kennan quoted in *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”*, 193.

against the despotic regime by outside influence. In Ronald Reagan's second term, when he overrode hard-liners in his administration and pursued a strategy of diplomatic engagement with Mikhail Gorbachev, he was strongly influenced by the belief that the Communist leader could be converted to American political, economic, and religious principles. Through its discussion of these and subtler cases when U.S. leaders have been guided by their religious beliefs and political ideals, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire"* is, I believe, not "consistent with realism" (as Larson writes) but a challenge to assumptions that the tough-minded thinking of policymakers can be sharply and consistently differentiated from the moralism and idealism of the U.S. public.

Although Katherine A. S. Sibley praises *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire"* as "meticulously researched" and "crowded with compelling examples," she also criticizes what she regards as shortcomings and she finds the treatment of the most recent decades of American-Russian relations to be "sometimes questionable." I will address her criticisms and try to clear up some confusion about points I believe she has misunderstood.

According to Sibley, "one of the book's weaknesses is the limited attention it devotes to economic developments between the two nations." When I first began research on this topic, I planned to devote roughly equal attention to the economic, political, and religious dimensions of American drives to transform or reform Russia. However, as my research proceeded I found the actions and thinking of American business leaders yielded less illumination of the themes of mission and demonization than I had expected.⁹ The fact that the book focuses more on propagandists and missionaries than on manufacturers and merchants is thus not a result of my being "less interested in economic developments," as Sibley puts it, but a result of my finding business interests less valuable and important for answering the questions I pursued. However, the book does discuss the economic relationship in a number of ways that Sibley does not mention in her review. For example, I argue that during the last decades of the tsarist era, Russia's rapid economic development led Americans to pay more attention to that vast empire, to envision Russia as an enormous potential market, to dream about the "regeneration" of Russian agriculture by American machines, and to proclaim that Russia was destined to follow the United States' path of modernization. As I show, the ambition to expand trade with Russia came into conflict with American moral indignation at Russian mistreatment of Jews, and in 1911, public and congressional pressure compelled the Taft administration to abrogate the U.S. commercial treaty with Russia. That step momentarily satisfied American desires to affirm the enlightened tolerance of the United States in contrast to the benighted bigotry of the Russians, but it did not compel tsarist officials to improve their treatment of Jews and there is some evidence that it aggravated religious persecution. This episode is one of several

⁹ One of the economic developments I originally planned to discuss was PepsiCo's penetration of the Soviet Union, from Chairman Donald Kendall's dreams in the 1950s through the agreements with the Soviet government in the early 1970s. Unfortunately, I did not receive permission to work in the Pepsi corporate archive and the documents I was permitted to see in the Russian Foreign Ministry Archive (AVPRF Fond 129, op. 58, papka 246) were too fragmentary to permit a satisfactory discussion. Perhaps other scholars will be able to discuss this subject in the future.

instances when economic developments intersected with the drives to reform Russia and reaffirm American virtues that are discussed in *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire."*

After the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, the United States sought to encourage their removal and to affirm American principles by refusing to recognize the Soviet government for sixteen years. According to Sibley, that righteous stance "was increasingly meaningless as greater and greater trade burgeoned" in the 1920s. That view appears to disregard how the non-recognition policy remained quite meaningful both to Soviet leaders, who cut back purchases in the United States as a way to increase pressure for recognition, and to American anticommunists, who persistently opposed diplomatic recognition as a compromise of American moral principles and a tacit acceptance of an evil regime.

Sibley complains that I do not mention how Soviet agents secretly sought to obtain American technology, particularly during the Second World War – a subject of her book, *Red Spies in America*.¹⁰ This is an important topic, but I do not see how it is significant for the history of American thinking about emancipating and redeeming Russia.

One of the arguments in *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire"* that is most troubling to Sibley is the assertion that during the Brezhnev era (1964-1982) few Russians yearned for spiritual liberation from communism as desperately as exiled writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn claimed they did. In support of this assertion I cited several recent works, including a study by V. A. Kozlov that found a dramatic decline in the number of mass uprisings and disorders in the Brezhnev years.¹¹ I also cited a July 1975 report by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. The report noted that the Soviet regime's economic, agricultural, and nationality problems were "all relatively under control," that "dissenters have become more disorganized and less effective," and that Soviet propaganda emphasis on consumerism and nationalistic patriotism had "been effective, especially among the ethnic Russian" [sic].¹² Sibley challenges my assertion that few Russians were eager for liberation by noting that around the same time "Czechoslovaks and others were inspired by the Helsinki Accords to call their government to account in the Charter 77 proclamation of January 1977." I don't think it is appropriate to make inferences about the complex attitudes of Soviet citizens from a courageous statement by Czechoslovakian dissidents. Sibley demands a simple answer: "which is it? Did communist peoples want to be liberated or not?" I don't believe it is useful to try to reduce the ambivalent feelings of most Soviet citizens – often mingling cynicism about Communist ideology and frustration at shortages

¹⁰ Katherine A. S. Sibley, *Red Spies in America: Stolen Secrets and the Dawn of the Cold War* (Lawrence, KS, 2004).

¹¹ V. A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years* (Armonk, NY, 2002), 305.

¹² Telegram from the American Embassy in Moscow to the Secretary of State, 23 July 1975, Box 20, National Security Adviser Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Gerald R. Ford Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

of consumer goods with pride in Soviet military power and relief at the relative economic security of the 1970s – to a yes or no answer.

Commenting on my treatment of the Reagan era, Sibley writes that I am “suggesting that the American mission *was* appropriately applied in the 1980s.” I think it is important to differentiate more carefully between the harshly confrontational policies of the early 1980s, which I argue were counterproductive, and the policies of the last years of Reagan’s presidency, which placed much greater emphasis on dialogue and negotiation. Even then I argue against overstating the impact of Reagan’s private statements on Gorbachev’s moves, for example toward an end to religious persecution. I conclude that “it was not so much Reagan’s missionary drive as his acceptance of the need for the American and Soviet systems to coexist, that facilitated the steps Gorbachev took which led to the unraveling of the Soviet empire.”

In the last pages of her review, Sibley takes snippets of quotations out of the contexts of many different pages of several different chapters and the brief epilogue of *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* then either contrasts or lumps them. The result is to create an impression of contradictions and a great deal of confusion, some of which I will try to sort out. I *do* believe that George F. Kennan offered “sage” advice when he recommended in 1951 that “when Soviet power has run its course,” Americans should not apply “litmus papers daily to their political complexions to find out whether they answer to our concept of ‘democratic’” but should instead “let them be Russians.”¹³ I am *not* “sharply critical of President George W. Bush” for saying “I don’t expect Russia to look like the United States.” I *did* find “excessive” the harshly negative judgments of Russia by some prominent Americans at the end of the 1990s, such as the declaration of one Republican congressional leader that Russia had become “a looted and bankrupt zone of nuclearized anarchy.”¹⁴ I did *not* find “Western coverage of the death of journalist Aleksandr Litvinenko... unnecessarily ‘vituperative’ and representative of a ‘demonization of Putin.’” In fact, I did not even mention the former KGB and FSB agent Litvinenko, who died in November 2006, a month after I sent the epilogue to the publisher. (Sibley appears to have confused Litvinenko with the journalist Anna Politkovskaya.) I *did* say that comparisons of Putin to Pinochet, Franco, Mussolini, and Stalin reflect a tradition of American demonization of Russian leaders that extends back at least as far as the condemnation of Tsar Nicholas II in the early twentieth century.

Victoria Zhuravleva’s eloquent review not only summarizes but also elucidates and elaborates many of the major arguments in *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire.”* I am grateful to her for her thoughtful and discerning comments.

¹³ George F. Kennan, “America and the Russian Future,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (April 1951), 356, discussed in *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* 124.

¹⁴ *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* 217.

Drawing on her expertise on American-Russian relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Zhuravleva points to some nuances that warrant further attention and she highlights some topics, such as the influence of Russian spouses of prominent American commentators, that could be pursued by other historians. Zhuravleva rightly notes that ethnic and religious minorities who emigrated from Russia in the early twentieth century contributed significantly to the demonization of the Russian empire, and this undoubtedly deserves more thorough treatment by other scholars. However, I think it is important to keep in mind that immigrants from Russia did not by themselves exert strong, sustained influence on American public opinion and U.S. government policy throughout the last half century of tsarist rule. Immigrants from Russia achieved their greatest influence at specific moments when their causes were championed by Anglo-Americans who found their own meaning in the crusades. I chose to focus especially on those Anglo-Americans, such as the settlement house socialists who were attracted to radical Jewish women and New Jersey Governor Woodrow Wilson, who declared in 1911 that putting concern for the rights of Jews above American commerce with Russia would show that “America is not a mere body of traders.”¹⁵

Zhuravleva is quite right that more attention could be devoted to the influence of negative stereotypes and ideological notions on American academic research about Russia. Thomas Bailey’s book about American popular attitudes toward Russia, which Zhuravleva cites, is an especially striking example of how a fine historian writing in the early Cold War embodied and perpetuated notions about a confrontation between American “civilization” and Russian “barbarism” that had gained prominence fifty years earlier.¹⁶ The anthropologists Margaret Mead and Clyde Kluckhohn are among the other academics whose influence on public and governmental views of Russia I was not able to discuss within the limits of my book. David Engerman focused on intellectuals’ ideas about Russia in his thoroughly researched study.¹⁷ I concentrated more on how wider public attitudes have been influenced by crusaders for a “free Russia” and their opponents in the highly charged debate that has continued for more than 125 years.

In a subtle criticism, Zhuravleva writes that *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”* conveys “the impression that the Russian/Soviet/post-Soviet reality had a rather tangential effect on the American perception of Russia.” She does not indicate what passages in the book give that impression. What I sought to show throughout the book is that *real* developments in Russia have been distorted by American lenses. Sometimes this has involved magnification. For example, the real and horrible massacre of Jews at Kishinev in 1903 became in the eyes of many Americans a mark of the essential “savagery” of the Russian people and the “barbarism” of the tsarist government, a blot so huge and hideous that it eclipsed the race riots and lynchings in the United States. At other times the distortion has involved minimization. For example, the real persecution of the Russian

¹⁵ *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”*, 44.

¹⁶ Thomas A. Bailey, *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations From Early Times to Our Day* (Ithaca, NY, 1950).

¹⁷ Engerman, *Modernization From the Other Shore*.

Orthodox Church in the 1920s was often downplayed and condoned by American Protestants, who described it as a necessary clearing of a reactionary obstruction to social progress and the spread of “real spiritual religion.” In more recent times, the real hardships ordinary Russians suffered in the 1990s were minimized by American commentators who hailed how Russia was becoming a market democracy, while the real political intimidation and manipulation in the Putin era has been magnified into a reversion to Stalinist tyranny. In each of these cases, the Russian “reality” was not “tangential” to American perceptions but distorted in American eyes, especially because of American messianic aspirations and tendencies to use Russia as a scapegoat or whipping boy.

A few points in Zhuravleva’s excellent review may warrant some minor clarification or refinement. The Bolshevik persecution of the Protestant churches in the late 1920s did not come “after failure of the messianic project to convert Russian believers and priests to Protestantism”; rather, the success of the rapidly growing Protestant “sects” alarmed key communists and led to the intensified persecution of Protestant leaders. During the Second World War it was not “various Evangelical missions” but writers for popular and religious magazines who were primarily responsible for spreading unrealistic expectations concerning the reformation of Stalinist Russia. I do not hold that by itself “Russia’s spiritual revival was the key element in Ronald Reagan’s view of the Soviet Union”; rather, I argue that the combination of Reagan’s hopes for a broad religious revival in Russia and his belief in the irresistible attraction of American consumer abundance inclined him to believe that Russia could be converted and seduced, in contrast to more pessimistic advisers who maintained that the Soviet Union was an irredeemable enemy and would always be an “evil empire.”

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