

Chapter 3

Introduction to Texts



While I was not a Marxist, nor an admirer of the Soviet Union, nor generally an iconoclast, my understanding of Soviet foreign policy, as well as my analyses of events in Czechoslovakia, and even, later, my understanding of the peace efforts in the Israeli-Arab conflict tended to be controversial. Indeed in some cases, I challenged accepted views and generally-agreed conceptions. I certainly did not do this on purpose; I simply called things as I saw them on the basis of my research. In the case of the Soviets, for example, I was surprised by their cautiousness, as distinct from the generally held more “cold warrior view” of the “evil empire” (Ronald Reagan). Depending on the period, concern over a possible war with the Americans tended to outweigh limited gains overseas, for example. Moreover, I saw, and therefore had to acknowledge, changes happening within the Czechoslovak and Slovak Communist parties – changes not necessarily of an anti-Soviet nature but nonetheless of great potential politically. Most surprising, however, and disappointing, were the positions I discovered in archival materials on Israeli decisions and past possibilities for peace. Since these affected me more directly, they were of even greater importance to me. Hence certain conclusions that I presented in lectures and in my article “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Lessons for a Breakthrough,” *Middle East Policy*, XXII/3, 2015, 100–109, after the more detailed accounts in my book on Israeli Peacemaking since 1967 (Routledge, 2014). The following articles represent the essence, or gist, of my analyses and challenges to some of the accepted perceptions. Fortunately for me, the experts whom I respected most allowed that I might be right, although there was also stiff opposition, some of which may be heard even today regarding Soviet behavior. My reflections on gender are just that – reflections or observations – rather than assiduous research-based findings. I hope that, nonetheless, they will be of interest and maybe some use in understanding the role of women, especially regarding conflict and peace.