BEYOND THE IRON CURTAIN: EASTERN EUROPE AND THE GLOBAL COLD WAR

Introduction

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In recent years, scholars have demonstrated that the Cold War was not simply a bipolar confrontation between the communist east and the capitalist west across an impermeable Iron Curtain. Rather, it involved a variety of multipolar interactions among the First, Second, and Third Worlds. Historians of eastern Europe have been a part of redefining the nature of Cold War confrontation by consistently questioning the oversimplified notions of east and west. First, the countries of eastern Europe, in contrast to the conventional notion of their status as passive members of the "Soviet bloc," showed at different times an important degree of divergence and autonomy from the Soviet Union. After 1956, in particular, eastern Europeans engaged in multiple transborder contacts with the west, whether through travel, tourism, popular culture, artistic and scholarly exchange, or consumer choices, which created alternative channels of communication across the Iron Curtain. Instead of acting as "Soviet satellites," eastern Europeans emerged as important players by promoting their own ideas of modernity, progress, humanism, culture, and everyday life that modified, challenged, or undermined the alleged all-encompassing "Soviet model." Second, experts and intellectuals, such as economists, scientists, engineers, physicians, journalists, writers, and artists were also actively involved in the Third World, shaping the economic, technological, and cultural landscape of the postcolonial states. Such contacts were multivalent and often ambiguous; while forging common political or economic agendas was part of the aspiration, the interaction often resulted in frictions, disappointments, misunderstandings, and frustrated plans. Nevertheless, these engagements created lasting alliances and alternative notions of modernity between eastern Europe and other parts of the globe.

The objective of this thematic cluster is to present four case studies that showcase the diverse international engagements of selected eastern European actors and to situate those interactions in the context of the global Cold War.[1] Whether it was Polish social scientists promoting ideas of development in

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1. The four case studies presented here illustrate some of the new directions in the study of eastern Europe and the global Cold War, and especially the role of experts and intellectual elites. They do not claim to offer a comprehensive reinterpretation of the east European experience during the Cold War; rather, they are part of new research that looks beyond the nation-state or the communist bloc as frameworks of analysis while also using interdisciplinary approaches.

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postcolonial India, Albanian filmmakers walking a fine line between Yugoslav, Soviet, and Chinese influences, Polish intellectuals advancing a global Catholic agenda in conversation with their peers in the western hemisphere, or Bulgarian experts organizing cultural events in India and Mexico under the provisions of official cultural exchange, the historical agents presented here complicate static and isolationist images of Cold War eastern Europe and of bipolar Cold War competion. Moreover, the authors challenge us to think about the global Cold War beyond the military and political interventions in the Global South by shifting the focus to the production of knowledge and the transfer of ideas as important tools for shaping politics. By analyzing international contacts that spanned continents, and by following official and unofficial transborder circulation of ideas, the cluster emphasizes the dynamic interaction between international, national, and local forces in the shaping of both eastern Europe and the Cold War global environment.

The four contributions presented in this cluster build upon three bodies of literature that have undergone dynamic developments in recent years: the scholarship on east-west interaction, predominantly focused on cultural history; studies of the global Cold War centered on diplomacy and international relations; and theoretical work on global, international, and transnational history. While these bodies of scholarship have by now informed studies of eastern Europe, they often function in isolation. This cluster aspires to bring these separate approaches into a productive conversation.

Rethinking the place of eastern Europe on the Cold War map starts with reassessing its relationship to the west. The nature of east-west interaction has been subject to scrutiny and revision for many years. Approaching eastern Europe as a cultural construct is now the norm, but Europe's own "core-periphery" tropes need to be further interrogated as part of "globalizing" the Cold War.[2] Conventionally, scholars and other commentators have lumped the countries of east central and southeastern Europe together with the Soviet center because they understood it as a part of the Soviet "sphere of influence." While there has been an increasing recognition of the social and cultural distinction of east European states, their political model or international agenda have rarely been seen as separate from the Soviet.[3] This cluster nuances this long-standing view by illuminating international projects pursued by eastern Europeans independently from the Soviet Union, and sometimes, independently from the political agenda of their own state.

2. The body of literature on "inventing" eastern Europe, starting with the pioneering book by Larry Wolff, is substantial. For recent works that interrogate the core-periphery tropes within Europe see, for example, Pamela Ballinger, "Recursive Easts, Shifting Peripheries: Wither Europe's 'Easts' and 'Peripheries'?" in "Special Section: Recursive Easts, Shifting Peripheries," a special issue of *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 31, no. 1 (February 2017): 3–10; Derek H. Aldcroft, *Europe's Third World: The European Periphery in the Interwar Years* (Aldershot, Eng., 2006); and Brian Porter-Szucs, *Poland in the Modern World: Beyond Martyrdom* (New York, 2014). For classic accounts see Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization of the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1994); and Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York, 1997).

3. For more extensive discussion of the historical literature on east European communism see Malgorzata Fidelis and Irina Gigova, "Communism and Its Legacy," in Irina Livezeanu and Arpad von Klimo, eds., *The Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700* (New York, 2017), 365–414.

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Recent research has questioned the ingrained idea of the profound difference between eastern and western Europe through the Cold War period. Looking at social and cultural history, in particular, suggests commonalities and cross-fertilization between east and west. Scholars now argue for convergence rather than contrast. Developments such as the welfare state, consumer culture, modernist design, and technological innovation, to name just a few, came to define the postwar European experience regardless of the political system. To this effect, Tony Judt has argued for a distinctly "European way of life" in the post-1945 era that transcended the Cold War divide, while David Caute has pointed to the Soviet-American rivalry over "high" culture and the arts as rooted in the shared values of the Enlightenment.[4]

Along these lines, many authors see postwar "modernity" as a more appropriate framework in which to analyze east European societies. Here "modernity" is conceptualized as a global phenomenon, not limited to the west or Europe, but rather something "created by the participation and, most importantly, the aspirations of people far and wide."[5] The departure from singular modernity exposes considerable domestic experimentation within the eastern "bloc" countries that often disposed of Soviet models, and rather preferred to selectively borrow from the west or rely on earlier national traditions to build their own version of socialist modernity.[6] Such distinct versions of modernity, as the four essays in this cluster show, could then be showcased and tested in non-European spaces.

Moreover, in the post-Stalinist period communist leaders no longer pursued international isolation. As David Crowley and Susan Reid have argued, reinventing the communist project after Stalinism required a more open attitude towards the outside world.[7] Many east European leaders now believed that reformed communism offered a new, better kind of modern life, which would withstand the confrontation with the west.[8] As Małgorzata Mazurek and Elidor Mëhilli demonstrate in this cluster, as early as the 1950s east European political leaders and intellectuals from Warsaw to Tirana embarked on forging connections to other parts of the world to create a new "national" culture more attuned to "modern" inspirations from the outside.

The post-Stalinist environment promoted international exchanges among east European states, and between east and west. Workers' delegations went

4. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York, 2006); and David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War* (New York, 2003).

5. AHR Roundable: Historians and the Question of "Modernity," "Introduction," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (June 2011): 634.

6. For recent work see, for example, Katalin Miklóssy and Melanie Ilic, eds. *Competition in Socialist Society* (New York, 2014); Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger, eds., *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (New York, 2012); and Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor, 2008).

7. David Crowley and Susan Reid, "Introduction," in Crowley and Reid, eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston, 2010), 3–51, 12.

8. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, "Introduction," in Gorsuch and Koenker, eds., *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca, 2006), 1–14, 13.

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to neighboring countries to meet with other workers. Youth festivals, periodically organized in socialist capitals, gathered young people from all over the world. Cultural events, such as international jazz performances, theater festivals, or art exhibitions, attracted international participants.[9] The Bulgarian cultural activities and exhibitions in India and Mexico in the 1970s and early 1980s that Theodora Dragostinova analyzes in this cluster therefore took place in an environment that already invited the cross-border exchange of ideas and international celebration of culture.

Alongside official tours and visions of transnational modernity, socialist citizens themselves invented ways for cross-border contact. By the early 1960s, for example, consumer travel that involved selling products from home and shopping for goods elsewhere had become an important feature of the Cold War world.[10] Between the late 1950s and the early 1970s, shopping trips by Yugoslavs to the Italian city of Trieste developed into "mass shopping frenzy," and by the late 1980s, a complex network of informal international trading developed in the region, traversing Poland, Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, and Turkey.[11] Transnational tourism could also have political consequences as people from different cultures discovered their mutual history, conflicting memories, and taboos that stimulated thinking beyond the nation state.[12] As Piotr H. Kosicki shows in his contribution, Catholic clergy and lay activists in Poland similarly built on their own international networks dating back to the pre-communist era. Taking advantage of increased opportunities for travel and exchange, they developed transnational contacts in the west and the Third World with little interference from the state.

The second body of literature that informs this cluster involves recent works on the global Cold War, which have redefined the field of international history by exploring the close connection between decolonization and the Cold War. Since the early 1990s, new studies of ideology, technology, and the end of European empires have transformed our understanding of the postwar

9. Examples of recent research on these topics include Zdeněk Nebřensky, "From International Activity to Foreign Tourism: East-West Interaction, Czechoslovak Youth Travel, and Political Imagination after Stalin," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 29, no. 1 (March 2015): 147–67; Nick Rutter, "Look Left, Drive Right: Internationalism at the 1968 World Youth Festival," in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World* (Bloomington, 2013), 193–212; György Péteri, "Sites of Convergence: The USSR and Communist Eastern Europe at International Fairs Abroad and at Home," special issue of *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 1 (January 2012): 3–12; and Rachel Applebaum, "The Friendship Project: Socialist Internationalism in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s, *Slavic Review* 74, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 484–507."

10. See Breda Luthar, "Remembering Socialism: On Desire, Consumption, and Surveillance," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 6, no. 2 (July 2006): 229–58; Patrick Patterson, *Bought and Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Ithaca, 2011); Jonathan Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (Washington, DC; New York, 2007); and Jerzy Kochanowski, *Through the Back Door: The Black Market in Poland, 1944–1989* (Frankfurt, 2017).

11. Luthar, "Remembering Socialism," 230; Kochanowski, *Through the Back Door.*

12. See Mark Keck-Szajbel, "A Cultural Shift in the 1970s: 'Texas' Jeans, Taboos, and Transnational Tourism," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 29, no. 1 (March 2015): 212–25.

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global order. Robert McMahon has reminded us that "the Cold War constituted a truly global contest, in which the Third World . . . assumed a large and substantive role."[13] David C. Engermann, at the same time, has emphasized the fundamentally multipolar nature of the Cold War, in which a variety of interactions among the First, Second, and Third Worlds developed.[14] And Odd Arne Westad has powerfully argued that both the Soviet Union and the United States wanted to prove the universal, worldwide appeal of their specific ideological models. Accordingly, the United States acted as an "empire of liberty," based on the principles of "free market, anti-Communism, fear of state power, and faith in technology." By contrast, the Soviet Union acted as an "empire of justice," focusing on alternative notions of modernity through state-driven industrialization and mass social mobilization.[15] The political orientation of the postcolonial states emerged as an important marker in the ideological struggle between communism and liberal democracy, and both the United States and the Soviet Union sought to prop up friendly regimes and establish presence in the newly-independent postcolonial states through economic, technological, or military aid.[16]

The "modernization" of the postcolonial world therefore became a global and international project. Not surprisingly, economic development that would allow the new states to overcome "backwardness" and dependency vis-à-vis the industrialized nations emerged as the key priority. In this context, many postcolonial states exploited the rivalries between west and east and were able to show "remarkable proclivity for selecting and blending diverse elements while combining them with their own historically and culturally defined priorities."[17] Furthermore, from the 1960s on, China aggressively pursued its own agenda in the Third World and promoted a distinct model of anticolonial revolution, which was articulated in opposition to both the United States and the Soviet Union.[18] By the 1960s, many postcolonial states adopted a Third World identity in direct opposition to the two-bloc mentality of the day. Ideas of sovereignty, anti-imperialist solidarity, equality, and reliance on local traditions provided the basis for this stance.[19] For all these reasons, what has variably been called the Third World, the developing world, or the Global South has taken a center stage in the study of international history during the Cold War.[20]

13. Robert J. McMahon, ed., *The Cold War in the Third World* (New York, 2013), 4.

14. David C. Engerman, "The Second World's Third World," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 183–211.

15. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York, 2005), 4, 8–9, 39–40, 92–97.

16. McMahon, *The Cold War in the Third World*; Westad, *The Global Cold War*.

17. Michael E. Latham, "The Cold War in the Third World, 1963–1975," in Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Vol. 2: Crisis and Détente* (New York, 2016), 268.

18. Latham, "The Cold War in the Third World," 266–67, 274–75.

19. Prasenjit Duara, "Introduction: The Decolonization of Asia and Africa in the Twentieth Century," in Prasenjit Duara, ed. *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then* (New York, 2004), 1–20.

20. For a recent overview of the vast literature see Joseph Morgan Hodge, "Writing the History of Development (Part 2: Longer, Deeper, Wider)," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism and Development*, 7, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 125–74.

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The role of the Soviet Union in the Third World has attracted significant scholarly attention in recent years. Historians such as David C. Engerman and Ragna Boden have complicated our understanding of the role of Soviet aid outside of Europe. Whereas in theory the Soviets sought to assist countries whose governments could demonstrate socialist credentials, the actual practice was more ambiguous as local elites tended to experiment with foreign advice, rather than adopt it wholesale.[21] In India, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sought Soviet economic aid while attacking the Indian Communist Party and outmaneuvering domestic rivals; in Egypt, local engineers working alongside Soviet specialists engaged in back-stage trading at dam building projects; and in Nigeria, local elites vigorously negotiated for Soviet economic and military aid on their own terms.[22] Overall, as many scholars have demonstrated, in the Third World, pragmatism ruled over ideology.

To further nuance this relationship, scholars have demonstrated that instead of acting as Soviet proxies, east Europen states—many of them more economically advanced than the Soviet Union—actively shaped their own international agendas. When eastern Europeans developed their programs in the Third World, those involvements sometime predated Soviet presence, such as Czechoslovak military assistance to Africa.[23] Similarly, the GDR carefully balanced the provisions of technical assistance and political support for local power brokers in Syria and Iraq vis-à-vis the FRG, while Bulgarian computer scientists actively developed new technologies and exported their products throughout the world.[24] Yet, despite these exciting developments in recent literature, the majority of scholars still assume the existence of a "Second World" consisting of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, the latter allegedly acting as a Soviet proxy.

One important contribution of this cluster is to provide empirical evidence why the term "the Second World" needs to be further refined to allow for the autonomy of the east European players outside of Soviet influence. The eagerness of many Third World leaders to pursue a "third way" between capitalism and socialism opened new ways and spaces for eastern Europeans to insert themselves on the global map. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, east European intellectuals, professionals, and travelers could act as independent

21. Engerman, "The Second World's Third World," 189; Ragna Boden, "Cold War Economics: Soviet Aid to Indonesia," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 110–28.

22. David C. Engerman, "Learning from the East: Soviet Experts and India in the Era of Competitive Coexistence," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 33, no. 2 (2013): 227–35; David C. Engerman, *The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India* (Cambridge, Mass., 2018); Elizabeth Bishop, "Talking Shop: Egyptian Engineers and Soviet Specialists at the Aswan High Damn" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1997); Maxim Matusevich, *No Easy Row for the Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Russian-Nigerian Relations, 1960–1991* (Trenton, NJ, 2003).

23. Philip Muehlenbeck, *Czechoslovakia in Africa, 1945–1968* (New York, 2016).

24. Massimilano Trentin, "'Tough Negotiations': The Two Germanies in Syria and Iraq, 1963–1974," *Cold War History* 8, no. 3 (August 2008): 353–80. For Bulgaria, see Victor Petrov, "Welcome to Cyberia: The Bulgarian Information Age and the Creation of a Socialist Business Class 1970–1990," paper presented at the workshop "A Change of Plans: New Perspectives on Bulgaria's Command Economy," Sofia, Bulgaria, July 28, 2016.

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global actors whose "Europeaness" was not in question, and who could display their cultural achievements and professional expertise free of Soviet tutelage. Most strikingly, as shown by Elidor Mëhilli, while Soviet support for Albania's cultural agenda was critical in the 1950s, following the Sino-Soviet split of the early 1960s, Albania was engaged in an explicitly anti-Soviet cultural offensive with the help of Chinese resources. Thus, Albanian film became an aspect of the global struggle for the essense of socialism. The divergence from the Soviet model was evident elsewhere, too. As demonstrated by Małgorzata Mazurek, Polish economists looked to their own economic model and the centrality of the peasant smallholder when advising postcolonial Indian leaders. Remarkably, they championed elements of socialism and expertise specifically rooted in the Polish domestic arena. Likewise, as described by Theodora Dragostinova, seeking to emphasize their cultural and historical affinities with India and Mexico, Bulgarian officials projected the global image of their country as a representative of "European civilization," rather than that of socialist ideology or the Soviet "bloc."

A final historiographical debate in which this cluster engages concerns the theoretical implications of global, transnational, and international history.[25] Just as the field of global history has redefined its distinct function vis-a-vis world history, over the last decade transnational history has been carving out a space within international and global history through the study of the cross-border circulation of ideas, people, and commodities.[26] In one definition, transnational history involves the exploration of "past lives and events shaped by processes and relationships that transcended the borders of the nation-state."[27] Yet, approaches to transnationalism differ across geographically-defined fields (European, United States, and world history) and methodological orientations (cultural vs. international history). In addition, as recently demonstrated by Petra Goedde, transnationalism has also developed differently among European-based and US-based scholars. Historians are yet to agree on a clear definition of transnational history as they reconcile the existing gap in how international historians, on the one hand, and cultural historians, on the other, interpret this term.[28]

25. Historians are yet to develop a coherent theoretical framework for transnational history. Questions raised a decade ago in the *American Historical Review* are still relevant today in shaping the methodology of transnational history. See C. A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol and Patricia Seed, "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *American Historical Review*, 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1441–64. See also Prasenjit Duara, "Transnationalism and the Challenge of National Histories," in Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley, 2002).

26. Matthew Hilton and Rana Mitter, "Introduction," Special Issue, Transnationalism and Global History, *Past and Present* 218, no. Supplement 8 (January 2013): 7–28.

27. Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake, "Introduction," in Curthoys and Lake, eds., *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective* (Canberra, 2005), 5, quoted in Maud Anne Bracke and James Mark, "Between Decolonization and the Cold War: Transnational Activism and its Limits in Europe, 1950s–90s," in *Journal of Contemporary History* 50, no. 3 (July 2015): 404.

28. Petra Goedde, "Power, Culture, and the Rise of Transnational History in the United States," *The International History Review* 40, no. 3 (February 2017): 592–608.

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Cultural transnationalism—defined as the circulation of cultural ideas and practices across borders—prominently figures in this cluster. The spread of mass media in the postwar world enabled many to experience the outside world through the more dynamic exchange of images and information.[29] In this context, the socialist state could not entirely control transnational contacts. The regime's ambivalence towards cultural transfer is demonstrated in Elidor Mëhilli's discussion of the Albanian film industry. Even as Albanian leaders took decisive steps to politically separate Albania from the Soviet Union, in the 1960s Soviet cultural influences continued to shape how Albanians consumed and experienced domestic and international film production.

Recent research has also demonstrated the key role of transnational connections in the formation of a variety of political and social movements. For example, scholars have examined youth non-conformity and the student protests of the 1960s in eastern Europe as a product of a global protest culture of the era.[30] Decolonization and anti-capitalist revolutions in the Third World, in particular, stimulated the transnational imagination. Anti-colonial struggles and heroic figures such as Che Guevara inspired leftists across Europe to challenge "the power of established communist, social democratic and socialist parties, and trade union politics."[31] Although left-wing movements have received significantly more attention from scholars than their right-wing counterparts, similar transnational links developed on the other side of the political spectrum, including religious movements.[32] As Piotr H. Kosicki shows in his contribution to this cluster, Polish Catholic activists worked across borders to redefine global Catholicism. Envisioning a new model of international social justice centered on Catholic theology, they sought affinities between Catholicism and socialism on the one hand, while suppressing secular social values such as reproductive rights on the other.

29. Examples of recent scholarship on the role of mass media include Anne Gorsuch, "From Iron Curtain to Silver Screen: Imagining the West in the Khrushchev Era," in György Péteri, ed., *Imagining the West in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh, 2010), 153–71; Malgorzata Fidelis, "Are You a Modern Girl? Consumer Culture and Young Women in 1960s Poland," in Shana Penn and Jill Massino, eds., *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern Europe* (New York, 2009), 171–84; and Karin Taylor, *Let's Twist Again: Youth and Leisure in Socialist Bulgaria* (Vienna, 2006).

30. For recent work see, for example, Richard Ivan Jobs, *Backpack Ambassadors: How Youth Travel Integrated Europe* (Chicago, 2017); Madigan Fichter, "Yugoslav Protest: Student Rebellion in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Sarajevo in 1968," *Slavic Review* 75, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 99–121; James Mark, Péter Apor, Radina Vučetić and Piotr Osęka, "'We are with you, Vietnam': Transnational Solidarities in Socialist Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia," *Journal of Contemporary History* 50, no. 3 (July 2015): 439–64; Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring, eds., *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford, 2013); Timothy Brown and Lorena Anton, eds., *Between the Avant-garde and the Everyday: Subversive Politics in Europe from 1957 to the Present* (New York, 2011); and Padraic Kenney and Gerd Rainer-Horn, eds., *Transnational Moments of Change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989* (Lanham, MD., 2004).

31. Bracke and Mark, "Between Decolonization and the Cold War," 405.

32. On transnational conservative movements, see, for example, the panel "50 Years after 1968: Research on the Global 1960s, part 1, 1968 as a Local/Global Event," American Historical Association, Washington, DC, January 6, 2018. URL: https://www.c-span.org/video/?439228-2/fifty-years-1968 (last accessed May 29, 2018); and Jeremy Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

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What is the best way to think about transnational contacts in their global context? What is the most effective methodology to engage these questions? In particular, what are the differences between global and transnational history in the study of eastern Europe?[33] According to a recent interpretation, "global history suggests parallels and synchronous trajectories in the same historical context, but lacks the interaction, interpenetration, and mutual borrowing at the center of transnational history."[34] Thus, both approaches have their utility for the study of eastern Europe, depending on the exact scope of analysis. In her study of American and Soviet plutonium projects after World War II, Kate Brown has made a convincing case for adopting alternative terms, such as "history in tandem" or "parallel history," to emphasize the complex layers of global interconnections during the Cold War.[35] In this cluster, Piotr H. Kosicki analyzes the "entangled" histories of Catholic intellectuals while Theodora Dragostinova explores the "parallel" histories of cultural exchange between Bulgaria, India, and Mexico. Małgorzata Mazurek and Elidor Mëhilli similarly embrace transnational methodologies to emphasize the movement of people, ideas, and images across borders. Ultimately, all four authors offer interpretations that integrate the insights of international and cultural history while maintaining both a transnational and a global perspective.

The three bodies of literature surveyed here—studies of east-west relations, the global Cold War, and transnational history—all help conceptualize the role of eastern Europe on the global scene. The result is to refine the larger picture of the Cold War, which still assumes a somewhat monolithic (even though increasingly-nuanced) Soviet agenda in the developing world pursued through a division of labor among the "Soviet satellites." Adopting a transnational methodology, the four articles featured here integrate eastern Europe into the interdisciplinary studies of the global Cold War. The authors are well versed in the international history of the Global South and the cultural history of east-west interactions, bodies of literature that have often functioned separately, "reserving" the global Cold War for diplomatic historians and east-west interactions for cultural historians. Furthermore, all four contributors build upon transnational methodologies, adopting a decisively cultural history approach focused on discursive practices, power relations, and alternative ideas of representation and power. In the end, the authors demonstrate how our understanding of eastern Europe changes when decentering Soviet hegemony in favor of diverse international engagements, national priorities, non-state perspectives, and local pressures.

33. For a short but insightful discussion of the distinction between global and transnational approaches, see Gorsuch and Koenker, "Introduction: The Socialist 1960s in Global Perspective," in *The Socialist Sixties*, 1–21, esp. 8–10. See also Michael David-Fox, "Conclusion: Transnational History and the East-West Divide," in Péteri, *Imagining the West*, 258–68; Hyung-Gu Lynn, "Globalization and the Cold War" and Penny von Eschen, "Locating the Transnational in the Cold War," in Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde, eds., *Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* (New York, 2013), 451–68; 584–601.

34. Theodora Dragostinova, "The East in the West: Bulgarian Culture in the United States of America during the Global 1970s," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 53, no. 1 (January 2018): 212–39.

35. Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford, 2013).

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The opening article of the cluster by Małgorzata Mazurek examines the professional activity of several prominent Polish economists (Oskar Lange, Michał Kalecki, and Ignacy Sachs) in postcolonial India in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The author underlines the critical role that the production of knowledge played in forging new relationships between eastern Europe and the developing world based on the common quest for modernization. The parallel processes of de-Stalinization and decolonization drove this interaction, in which a group of Polish economists departed from Marxist orthodoxy and joined international leftist thinkers seeking models for overcoming poverty on a global scale. As Polish and Indian economists developed ideas of "equivalency" between the Second and the Third World, they also changed the broader intellectual landscape of the Cold War by creating alternative "development thought" no longer centered on the western experience. Such theories, as Mazurek argues, were rooted in the historical experience of peasant societies, something that eastern Europe and the postcolonial world shared. Looking to the smallholder as an agent of change, Polish and Indian intellectuals resisted the strict distinction between capitalism and socialism as they sought new ways to modernize their societies.

Similar engagements with the outside world were also evident in other east European countries that are conventionally understood as more constrained in their choices. The case of Albania, which has been regrettably neglected in the existing scholarship, further complicates eastern Europe's global presence.[36] As explored by Elidor Mëhilli, Albania navigated multiple Cold War geographies across decades: starting as a Yugoslav ally after World War II, it switched its allegiances to the Soviet Union in 1948, only to side with China after the Sino-Soviet conflict of the early 1960s. Here, Mëhilli tells the story of these important ideological battles for the soul of socialism through the prism of fluctuating cultural convengences across continents and geopolitical lines. Specifically, by analyzing film collaborations between Albania, the Soviet Union, and China from 1948 to the early 1960s, he underlines the complementary domestic and international forces that shaped the Albanian socialist project. In the 1950s, Soviet advisors and directors were instrumental for the creation of the Albanian national film industry that uneasily reconciled Soviet and Albanian agendas. But following the Soviet-Chinese split, film collaborations between China and Albania also followed an uneven trajectory. While Albanian films were popular in China because they were seen as capturing the true spirit of Marxism-Leninism while providing a window, ironically, into the west, Chinese films never gained wide currency in Albania. In the end, Albania offers another glimpse into the complexity of geopolitical and ideological divides within the socialist camp.

Further enriching and complicating our understanding of Poland's global presence, Piotr H. Kosicki explores the role of Catholic intellectuals in the transformation of Catholic teaching and practice during the "Global Sixties." The author tells a compelling story of the globalization of the Catholic Church as it shifted from its European orientation to the Global South. In the process,

36. For a more extensive discussion of postwar Albania and Cold War politics see Elidor Mëhilli, *From Stalin to Mao: Albania and the Socialist World* (Ithaca, 2017).

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the postcolonial world came to be seen as a "site of hope" for the new Catholic vision of global social justice. During "the Catholic 1968," as Church leaders sought to "update" Catholicism to claim a stake in the rapidly changing world, Polish Catholic intellectuals played a pivotal role in representing the Catholic Church from behind the Iron Curtain on the global stage, and in crafting the new message to the faithful. Focusing on Polish responses to two documents by Pope Paul VI (*Populorom Progressio* and *Humanae Vitae*), Kosicki illuminates how Polish intellectuals negotiated, often with contradictory outcomes, the competing agendas of the First, Second, and Third Worlds. The global Catholic intellectual engagement, in turn, enabled the consolidation of a "Catholic intelligentsia," recognized by the state, and their prominent voice in communist Poland.

The long-standing assumption in Cold War studies regarding Bulgaria as the "Soviet master satellite" is challenged by Theodora Dragostinova. When analyzed from a global perspective, important degrees of divergence emerge between Bulgarian and Soviet agendas. As Dragostinova shows in her contribution to this cluster, Bulgarian cultural contacts in India and Mexico often had the explicit objective of emphasizing Bulgarian independence, while irritating Soviet officials who tried to distance themselves from the ambitious agenda of their alleged "proxy." She focuses on a range of Bulgarian cultural activities in India and Mexico in the 1970s, which included the creation of friendship societies, cultural centers, Bulgarian language programs, and art exhibitions, to show how Bulgarian elites used international cultural activity as a mechanism to establish their global presence. Thus, her article points to the potential of the Global South in boosting an independent self-image of small states within the Soviet sphere of influence. As Dragostinova makes clear, the intense cultural diplomacy often had economic goals such as securing new markets or natural resources. In the process, however, Bulgarians created narratives of modern nationhood for global consumption, forged relations between "ruling families" in Bulgaria, India, and Mexico, and gained new legitimacy as a role model for developing states seeking to maneuver between the superpowers.

Ultimately, the four contributors to this cluster demonstrate how scholarship on eastern Europe might refine our perspective on the global Cold War in general. So far, the three-world model has been at the heart of global Cold War studies. The east European perspective complicates this picture as it exposes frictions, fractures, and fluidity within the seemingly monolithic "worlds." In light of new research on east-south relations, "the Second World" cannot simply be assumed as being in "the Soviet sphere of influence." The global positioning of eastern Europe did not always neatly fit the "three worlds" model. The four contributions featured here demonstrate that some eastern Europeans were able to comfortably cross the lines between the First, Second, and Third Worlds, both in their domestic and international pursuits. As the cluster cumulatively suggests, exploring a variety of east European "crossings" beyond the Iron Curtain and into the Global South are critical to understanding the complexities of the Cold War order.

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