Anne E. Gorsuch, Diane P. Koenker, eds., *The
Socialist Sixties, Crossing Borders in the Second
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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/8295>

DOI: 10.4000/monderusse.8295

ISSN: 1777-5388

Publisher

Éditions de l'EHESS

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 October 2015

Number of pages: 905-909

ISBN: 978-2-7132-2507-9

ISSN: 1252-6576

Electronic reference

Manfred Zeller, « Anne E. Gorsuch, Diane P. Koenker, eds., *The Socialist Sixties, Crossing Borders in the Second World* », *Cahiers du monde russe* [Online], 56/4 | 2015, Online since 01 October 2015, Connection on 24 September 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/8295> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/monderusse.8295>

This text was automatically generated on 24 September 2020.

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REFERENCES

Anne E. GORSUCH, Diane P. KOENKER, eds., *The Socialist Sixties, Crossing Borders in the Second World*, Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 2013, 338 p.

- 1 How will the global history of the socialist camp during the Cold War be written? What was the Soviet Union between the end of Stalinism and perestroika? How can perspectives on Western popular culture during the Cold War be complemented with the Socialist side of the puzzle? What is the relationship between global trends and local appropriations, between dynamics and stagnation, or between convergence and conflict, both culturally and politically?
- 2 *The Socialist Sixties*, edited by Anne E. Gorsuch und Diane P. Koenker, chooses a central point of reference for Western cultural production in the last five decades: the sounds, dynamics, movements, and developments of the Sixties. They ask what can be found “by approaching the sixties from inside socialism”¹ (1). To anticipate the book’s answer to this question: a lot. This volume is a heavyweight, not for the number of its pages, but because of the substance of many of its articles, exciting topics, thorough investigations based on rich historical resources, and thrilling arguments. It is professionally edited and includes a helpful index at the end.
- 3 At the same time, *The Socialist Sixties* is no easy contribution to the ongoing discussion on conflicting interpretations of Cold War history. It refers to a specific yet vague timeframe that begins somewhere after Stalin’s death and ends somewhere after the end of the Prague Spring in 1968. More importantly, it is structured along three somewhat overlapping categories: Socialist Modern, Contact Zones, and Popular

Culture and Media. Together with the multiform offerings of the individual articles this confuses the general picture. Still, it is exciting what the volume's articles contribute to the abovementioned research debates. Thanks to its unclear structure, it remains a nail biter until the very last article.

- 4 Part one, *Socialist Modern*, is dedicated mainly to 1960s visions of a modern Socialist future. Its articles focus on appliances and Soviet consumer culture (Susan E. Reid), Soviet city planning of the 1960s (Lewis Siegelbaum), and the Soviet Exposition of Science, Technique and Culture in Cuba in 1960 (João Felipe Gonçalves). Susan E. Reid's chapter "This is Tomorrow" deserves close attention, perfectly undermining expectations of single-edged biased fans of 1960s excitements. Reid writes the most intriguing forty pages imaginable on vacuum cleaners and refrigerators, accompanied by a wide variety of images. She convincingly challenges the "shortage paradigm" (p. 45) and investigates how the "need for new types of goods" (p. 31) was evoked by Soviet industrial designers and media. The "Soviet brand" thus created had to appear "durable" and "reliable" (p. 38). Not stopping there, Reid further looks at criticisms and the reception side of this story, where the purchase of refrigerators, washing machines, and vacuum cleaners could symbolize social status, among other things, as well as the division between two generations of Soviet citizens. In their chapters, both Lewis H. Siegelbaum and João Felipe Gonçalves also point to the relevance of visions of Socialist modernity of the 1960s, while the latter also describes the limits of the idea of convergence in the context of revolutionary Cuba. The 1960s "dreams" of Socialist modernity, as Siegelbaum concludes, created the "lived experience of the Soviet seventies" (p. 79).
- 5 The second part of the book, titled *Contact Zones*, combines articles on the Western reception of Soviet literature (Polly Jones), the global history of guitar poetry (Rossen Djagalov), the Soviet tourist song movement (Christian Noack), the world youth festival in Sofia in 1968 (Nick Rutter), and Soviet-Czechoslovak tourism before, during, and after the Prague Spring (Rachel Applebaum). This section in particular is difficult to distinguish from the others. Its articles detect more or less intense zones of contact, focusing both on actual and virtual encounters, quite similar to some of the articles in the third part, *Popular Culture and Media*.
- 6 Polly Jones focuses her chapter "The Thaw goes International" on the reception of Soviet literature of the 1960s by Western literary critics, writing a history of literature and its "translation and transit in the other direction" (p. 123-124). She demonstrates how Western literary debates were shaped by general Cold War assumptions, at a "time of both rapprochement and alienation" between East and West (p. 125).
- 7 Christian Noack's and Rossen Djagalov's complementary chapters inform about singer-songwriters and song movements both inside and outside the Soviet Union. Djagalov's chapter on guitar poetry deserves special attention. It describes the global phenomenon of the singer-songwriter and makes a comparative analysis with crucial protagonists from Europe and the Americas. It looks for influences and links, and finds a guitar poetry which functioned in a "symbiosis" (p. 149) with leftist social movements of the 1960s. Moreover, Djagalov shows, using countless examples, how the reception of particular singer-songwriters was limited—by their specific language, state regulations and other reasons—mostly to their national contexts. This synopsis demonstrates strikingly how histories of globalization work beyond the search for cultural transfers.

- 8 Nick Rutter's chapter on the World Youth Festival in Sofia in 1968 and Rachel Applebaum's chapter on Soviet-Czechoslovak tourism around the Prague Spring also heavily correspond. While Applebaum investigates mainly the impact of the Prague Spring and the subsequent invasion by Warsaw Pact states on encounters between official Soviet tourists and Czechoslovakian citizens, Nick Rutter also analyzes communications within the Socialist camp around 1968. His chapter on the encounter between various socialist concepts, movements, and actors around the 1968 World Youth Festival in Sofia is a must-read for anybody interested in the history of the left in a transnational perspective. Investigating the various moves and communication strategies of "orthodox," "radical," and "diplomatic" internationalists, he concludes that while there may have been a "common vocabulary" of internationalism in 1968, there was, however, "neither a common language, nor a common purpose" (p. 196).
- 9 Like other recent publications² (2), part three of the volume, *Popular Culture and Media*, emphasizes the importance of media for the dynamics of the 1960s. Its articles focus on cinema (Lilya Kaganovsky), television (Sabina Mihelj), spectator sports (Robert Edelman), an overview of the ambivalent nature of youth culture in post-revolutionary Cuba (Anne Luke), and the Soviet TV series "Seventeen moments of spring" (Stephen Lovell).
- 10 Sabina Mihelj and Robert Edelman focus on television. Mihelj's chapter "The Politics of Privatization" gives a helpful overview of television under Socialism, marking commonalities and differences in various Socialist countries. She points to the importance of television in the "privatization of politics" and the rise in "political participation" (p. 252) it induced. In comparing two Yugoslav TV series of 1968 and 1970-1971, she discusses and distinguishes the Yugoslav 1960s and 1970s, where in the latter the various Yugoslav nationalities started drifting apart. Edelman also looks for turning points in his chapter "Playing Catch-Up". After deriving Soviet soccer passions from early post-War experiences, Edelman turns to the final of the European Champions Cup between Glasgow Rangers and Dinamo Moscow in 1972. In describing the fan violence around this game, and the subsequent reaction of Soviet soccer fans who were able to watch this game live at home, he demonstrates the important local consequences that transnational connections can have in the media age.
- 11 Lilya Kaganovsky's chapter on Soviet cinema of the 1960s describes the transformation of an already established medium in the post-Stalinist world. Intriguingly, she focuses on post-memory, memory practices of the second generation, who were not directly involved in the traumatic events of the Second World War, but nevertheless were confronted with the trauma of those who were. Subtly, this chapter looks for non-linear plots, distant communication, isolated characters, and the indirect markers of trauma, such as the picture of a missing father or other images of absent male role models.
- 12 Although not arranged together in the volume, her chapter should be discussed along Stephen Lovell's article on the TV miniseries *Seventeen Moments of Spring*. Lovell is interested in whether a clear analytical distinction can be made between the 1960s and the 1970s that goes beyond the binary opposition between "the most mythologized decade in post-war European history" (p. 304) on the one hand, and "the murky thereafter" (p. 303) on the other. Consistently, he asks what exactly the 1970s were, and thereby turns to the immensely popular TV series from 1973 about Soviet spy Maxim Isaev, alias Otto von Stierlitz, who is operating in Nazi Germany in the spring of 1945.

Lovell analyzes the reception as well as the production side of the TV show. Other than Kaganovsky's chapter, here the war no longer seems to be represented through absences and second-generation trauma. By contrast, this fictional story, according to Lovell, not only satisfied the Soviet spectators' interests in the West "while remaining firmly Soviet" (p. 314), but also served as a "parable of the intelligent under the Soviet system" through its potentially ambiguous messages (p. 316). In his venturesome conclusion, the chapter draws a direct link between Stierlitz and Vladimir Putin, arguing that an epoch began by the early 1970s that still lasts until today.

- 13 The *Socialist Sixties* presents utopia and appliances of Socialist modernity, cultural transfers within the Eastern bloc and Cuba, it ponders reciprocal perceptions between East and West, discusses encounters between citizens of various socialist countries on the one hand, and between various actors of the international left on the other. Moreover, it points to television culture between inner developments and transnational interconnections. Finally, it analyzes world war memory in cinema and TV between post-memory trauma and re-appropriation. Even though its structural haziness makes it not always easy to quickly identify the strong interrelation of some of the articles, *The Socialist Sixties* should be considered one of the most important publications on the global history of Socialism in the context of the Cold War.

NOTES

1. Cf. for a similar approach the conference: "Sozialistische Sechziger. Transnationale Perspektiven auf die Sowjetunion und Jugoslawien in ihrem 'goldenen' Zeitalter", University of Hamburg, 07/02 – 09/02/2013.
 2. See for instance, Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union built the media empire that lost the cultural Cold War*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011; Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and his TV: the culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010.
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