

**Rajak Svetozar / Konstantina E. Botsiou / Eirini Karamouzi / Evanthis Hatzivassiliou (eds.): The Balkans in the Cold War (= Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World), London: Palgrave Macmillan 2017, 372 p.**

Reviewed by  
Nedžad Kuc, Vienna

As a region historically known for standing between East and West, the Balkans were home to the separation line dividing Europe into two ideological blocs. The superpowers of the time, the Soviet Union and the United States, although generally more concerned with other regions in Europe and the world, played without any question a significant role in the political developments of the Balkans. However, the states of Southeast Europe did not turn into passive spectators of US and Soviet dominance: They posed a challenge to the international ideological and political system.

In this book, the editors raise the question what exactly shaped this European region during the period of geopolitical antagonism between the two blocs. Was it the “systemic element of the Cold War” or the “inherent regional realities and pressures?” (p. xix). They argue that both external and internal factors played a role. The book’s aim is to “underline their interdependence”, “to comprehend the interrelation between the local, the regional and the

global” and to address “the relationship between the global Cold War and its regional manifestations” in the Balkans (p. xx).

The fifteen chapters are subdivided into five (largely chronological) thematic parts, from the creation of the Cold War order, the military alliances, the relations with the superpowers to the Balkan dilemmas and the relations with the European Economic Community (EEC). In the last part, entitled ‘Identity, Culture, Ideology’ the editors try to bring in a broader range of perspectives instead of only focusing on political and military issues. Nonetheless, the book mainly stays within the framework of diplomatic and political history and the three insightful chapters could have found a place in the previous parts.

All six countries in the Balkans (Yugoslavia, Romania, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey) had to deal with numerous external and internal political changes following the decades after the end of Second World War. Although Yugoslavia gets the most attention in the book, the different chapters still present interesting perspectives and findings for each country. Albania and Romania are dealt with in more detail in Laurien Crump’s article, where she analyzes the countries’ challenges to Soviet dominance in the socialist bloc during the Sino-Soviet split, which resulted in a multilateralization of the Warsaw Pact. Ayşegül Sever looks at Turkey as a multiregional state and its search for security and participations in the NATO, the Balkan and the Baghdad Pacts. Turkey’s westernization and modernization debates are analyzed by and Mehmet Döşemeci. Jordan Baev studies Bulgaria’s perspective on the Warsaw Pact, nuclear proliferation and NATO military exercises. Spyridon Sfetas

discusses the impacts of the Macedonian question on the relations in the Bulgaria-Greece-Yugoslavia triangle. Effie G. H. Pedaliu concentrates on the Johnson-Nixon era détente and its repercussions for each state in the region and Konstantina E. Botsiou deals with the economic and political changes of the socialist Balkan countries in the last two decades of the Cold War. John O. Iatrides discusses how the Greek civil war, among other things, led to American involvement in the region and Eirini Karamouzi analyzes the role of the EEC as a stabilizing force for the young Greek democracy in the mid-1970s.

Mark Kramer points to the increasing rearmament of the Soviet Union and its satellites bordering Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin split and implies that only Stalin's death may have prevented an attack on Yugoslavia in order to bring it back under Soviet dominance. For Svetozar Rajak, the Yugoslav-Soviet split and the Yugoslav rapprochement to the West as well as its alliance with NATO members Turkey and Greece were paradigm shifts of the early Cold War. Rajak's contribution also offers interesting insights into Tito's balancing act between the two ideological blocs, his quest for new allies and stability and how his country became one of the leaders of the Nonalignment Movement (NAM) and "the only Balkan country with the ambition to play a global role" (p. 82). Evanthis Hatzivassiliou argues that NATO analysts regarded Yugoslavia with suspicion and neglected its potential leadership of the NAM until the mid-1960s while Ivo Banac shows the tense Yugoslav-Soviet relations after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Tito's cautious dealing with Brezhnev and his handling of

internal political struggles. Benedetto Zacaria looks at the EEC and its economic activity and cooperation agreements with Yugoslavia and Miroslav Perišić examines the Yugoslav need for cultural transformation and exchange with the West after its expulsion from the Soviet bloc.

The different chapters of the book often focus on one country but also include the other regional states. Internal changes and national actions and developments had transnational impacts. In addition, the Soviet Union, the United States, NATO and the EEC were and had to get involved as the Balkan states maneuvered their ways through the global Cold War system.

In the conclusion of the book, Norwegian Historian Odd Arne Westad observes that the Balkans demonstrated Cold War contradictions: Ideologically close countries like Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union split apart, whereas historical adversaries like Greece and Turkey became NATO-allies. Yugoslavia then avoided challenging the Soviets by limiting the impact its own way of socialism could have had on Soviet satellite states. NATO-membership and the fear of losing their allies in the West definitely helped in preventing an escalation between Greece and Turkey during the Cyprus crisis. Westad concludes that the "Balkan discord was less of a danger mainly because self-containment fitted the ordering and domination that were primary superpower aims during the Cold War" (p. 362).

The book's strength lies in the amount of consulted sources and the multi-archival research for each chapter. The regional archives from the Balkans which became accessible in the last decades are of particular importance and allowed new findings. By

providing a platform for new interpretation and reinterpretation, the editors took the first step towards reaching their goal: to “encourage further research and scholarship” and to “inspire scholarly discussions and debates” (p. xxi). The different chapters of the book offer new insights, open doors for discussions and constitute important contributions to the history of the Balkans and the Cold War.

**Tobias Rupprecht: Soviet Internationalism after Stalin. Interaction and Exchange between the USSR and Latin America during the Cold War, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2015, 334 p.**

Reviewed by  
Constantin Katsakioris, Leipzig

The history of the relations between the Soviet Union and Latin America has so far been an understudied topic. Political scientists of the Cold War era, who occasionally studied these relationships, concentrated on the Soviet-Cuban ties and put their spotlight on military and political cooperation, on the activities of Latin American communist parties or on the writings of Soviet experts of Latin America. The political, ideological and military dimensions clearly overshadowed the cultural one. As a result, the extremely rich history of Soviet-Latin American cultural encounters, literary and cinematic connections,

scientific and student exchanges, and mutual perceptions constituted a black box. Tobias Rupprecht dug into these relationships and filled these enormous gaps. His book restores Latin America's prominent place in Soviet cultural life and gives the Soviet-Latin American relations the place they deserve in contemporary international history.

Rupprecht arguably starts his story with Nikita Khrushchev's Thaw and the Soviet come-back into the international cultural arena after the end of a period of isolationism. He is however fully aware of the historical background, Comintern's role, the very early Latin American interest in the Soviet experiment, as well as of the impact and legacy of the Spanish Civil War. Stalin's death, the emergence of the Third World and the Cuban Revolution set the stage for Moscow's new cultural policy towards Latin America. This new international cultural policy and the ensuing Soviet-Latin American romance is what Rupprecht, following Akira Iriye, calls “Soviet internationalism.” The use of the Iriye definition of internationalism, in the sense of a movement to promote cultural and scientific cooperation, along with the Soviet one, required explanation not less because Iriye used this term for worldwide processes and agendas often led by nongovernmental actors. More importantly, the Soviets themselves, notoriously, used the term internationalism differently, either as class-based namely proletarian solidarity in the Marxian tradition or as nation-based international solidarity, that is, support to the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial nations following Lenin's cardinal amendment of internationalism. Even if Rupprecht explains at the intro-