

**The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World. Ed. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013. vii, 338 pp. Index. Illustrations. Paperback.**

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In Gorsuch and Koenker's co-edited volume, *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World*, the authors challenge the Western-dominated view of that decade "by approaching the sixties from inside socialism and looking out." (2013:17) In doing so, they see the dissemination of goods and ideas within the societies of 1960s Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and Cuba as part of a "global moment in an expanding socialist world" (2013:16). Their periodization of a socialist sixties questions earlier historiography on the Eastern Bloc that progresses from Khrushchev's Thaw to Prague Spring in 1968 to Stagnation under Brezhnev.

The work "seeks to use the Second World, socialist societies of the 1960s...as the springboard from which to explore global interconnections and...patterns of cultural cross-pollination" (2013:2). These "flows" of people, goods, and ideas illustrate the extent of cultural interaction among socialist countries as well as within them. One sees, for example, how Cubans developed a taste for Soviet watches after being exposed to them at a 1960 Exhibit in Havana. Although historians have the lion's share of its chapters, *The Socialist Sixties* readily incorporates a wide reach of neighboring disciplines including comparative literature, area studies, communications, visual culture and film studies.

The first section, "Socialist Modern," engages with the emergence of modern socialist societies in the Soviet Union and Cuba. The first two chapters address state efforts to modernize the lives of post-war Soviet citizens through increased appliance consumption (Susan E. Reid, 2013), and the architectural ambition in the urban planning of factory town of Tol'iatti (Lewis E. Siegelbaum, 2013). Whether its market research or strategic allocation of public space, state experts in both chapters integrate foreign models into a socialist ideological context in order to shape the new Soviet consumer and urban resident. State actors also take center stage in the third chapter, which contends that the 1960 Soviet Exhibition in Havana validated socialist achievements in not only technology, but also consumer products, and played a role in escalating the development of socialist rhetoric in Cuba (João Felipe Gonçalves, 2013).

In "Contact Zones," the authors utilize cultural interpenetration, global developments, and transnationalism as a way to capture global flows *within* the socialist world rather than depict it as merely a recipient of Western influence. They cover: the translation and marketing of Soviet literature and its reception in Britain and the US in the early 1960s (Polly Jones, 2013); the limits of transnationalism in the global rise of "guitar poetry" in both the socialist East and capitalist West (Rossen Djagalov, 2013); the development of the Tourist Song Movement in the Soviet Union (Christian Noack, 2013); the competing understandings of internationalism

revealed at the 1968 World Youth Festival in Bulgaria (Nick Rutter, 2013), and the often disjointed cross-cultural interactions between Soviet tourists in Czechoslovakia before, during, and after the Prague Spring of 1968 (Rachel Applebaum, 2013).

Jones stands as the sole author to address the penetration of socialist culture into the West; although she also looks at the Soviet censors who were unable to control literature once it left the country. Djagalov offers an excellent example of parallel development across the West and the Socialist East, where guitar poetry failed to transcend national boundaries due to cultural specificity, risk-averse Western music companies, and state censorship under socialism. Noack's work on the rise of Soviet tourist songs illustrates the paradoxical development of cultural expression through institutionalization as music enthusiasts sought sponsors, such as the Komsomol, to support their outdoor festivals and song clubs. Rutter challenges the perception of the sixties as a period of generational conflict by focusing on how a shared socialist vocabulary masked internal disagreements among participants of the 1968 World Youth Festival in Bulgaria. With exceptional clarity, Appelbaum delineates state attempts to manage cross-cultural exposure by regulating tourism between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia even as those interactions grew increasingly hostile and politically-charged in the wake of the Soviet military invasion of Prague in spring 1968.

The third section, "Popular Media and Culture", uses film, television, and sports media as a lens to assess cultural developments in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Cuba. Clearly in dialogue with recent scholarship on consumption and everyday life in socialist societies, this last section looks at topics such as Thaw-era film (Lilya Kaganovsky, 2013), Yugoslav television (Sabina Mihelj, 2013), Soviet soccer hooliganism (Robert Edelman, 2013), Cuban youth consumption of foreign music (Anne Luke, 2013), and rise of the Soviet television miniseries (Stephen Lovell, 2013). Kaganovsky draws on Marianne Hirsch's notion of "postmemory" in order to analyze how Thaw-era films depicted the younger generation attempting to cope with the traumatic cultural legacy of the Second World War, particularly in terms of absent masculinity. Mihelj looks at popular television programs to chart the rise and fall of humor as a form of public engagement in Yugoslavia, which had only relatively greater freedom of expression than other socialist countries. Illustrating the potential that history of sports as a subfield has to offer, Edelman uses the Soviet exposure to Western soccer hooliganism via live-broadcast matches in the 1960s to explore the cultural impact of greater European interaction via media. Luke claims that the vibrancy with which 1960s Cuban youth culture blended Western music, such as the Beatles, with Latin elements in a socialist context created "new hybrid cultural expressions" (2013:287). In a thought-provoking dissection of the hugely popular television miniseries *Seventeen Moments of Spring*, a Soviet espionage thriller, Lovell argues that the consolidation of a mass culture following in the mid-1970s marks the end of Soviet sixties experimental culture.

As part of the cultural turn, *The Socialist Sixties* delves into the complexities of lived socialist experience, exposing both the cultural developments these societies shared with their capitalist counterparts and the unique local challenges that emerged to shape everyday life under

socialism. This book differentiates transnational from parallel developments of the 1960s, arguing that cultural context matters just as much as censorship in the dissemination and reception of new ideas. For example, guitar poetry may have developed on both sides of the Iron Curtain, but the songs themselves were limited to specific political and linguistic contexts. The volume's incorporation of Cuba encourages future research, which could address the experience of emerging socialist countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

*The Socialist Sixties* is highly recommended for students and scholars interested in the vibrancy of post-WWII socialist societies, a broader understanding of 1960s cultural change, and a transnational, cross-disciplinary historical approach in action.