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# Blurring Boundaries in the Cold War World

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*Linda Risso, Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War: The NATO information service*, London: Routledge, 2014, 320 pp.; £90.00 hbk; ISBN 9780415570329

*Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, NATO and Western Perceptions of the Soviet Bloc: Alliance Analysis and Reporting, 1951-69*, London: Routledge, 2014, 242 pp.; £90.00 hbk; ISBN 9780415743754

*Patryk Babiracki & Kenyon Zimmer (eds.), Cold War Crossings: International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc, 1940s-1960s*, College Station, TX, Texas A & M UP, 2014, 240pp.; £30.50 hbk; ISBN 9781623490300

*Andrew Hammond, British Fiction and the Cold War*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 336pp.; £60.00 hbk; ISBN 9781137274847

*Judith Devlin & Christoph Muller (eds.) War of Words: Culture and the Mass Media in the Making of the Cold War in Europe*, Dublin: UCD Press, 2013; 288pp.; £50 hbk; ISBN 9781906359379

### **Blurring Boundaries in the Cold War World**

The cultural turn in Cold War scholarship which emerged in the 1990s explored the roles of governments and the hegemony of their ideas in waging a cultural Cold War, both domestically and internationally against an opposing ideology. More recent interpretations including those reviewed here have examined the ambiguous nature of each Cold War sphere and the occasionally porous nature of the division between the blocs. Scholars have explored the roles of governments from East and West in shaping public conversations about the Cold War by influencing culture and facilitating interactions between sections of their own population and the other side. The five books reviewed here, alongside several other recent publications, reveal nuances within the blocs and suggest that the period was far less Manichean than previously understood, with frequent encounters leading to attempts to understand the other side. Neither 'East' nor 'West' was a homogenous bloc. Networks, both state-led and in collaboration with the private sector, traversed borders and sometimes mediated the exchange of people and ideas across the iron curtain. Historians have increasingly started to explore these networks and unlock the complexities of Cold War alliances and rivalries within and between blocs.

Early scholarship on Cold War transnational cultures tended to explore cultural exchanges and present them as an extension of the conflict, with the USA often presented as seducing Eastern

Bloc viewers with displays of consumerism.<sup>1</sup> More recent scholarship, including the books reviewed here, has examined the nuances within each sphere and the often contradictory networks which crossed borders with the aim of maintaining ideological hegemony. These networks targeted information, in the form of cultural items, and exhibitions, towards certain members of the populations of nations, which might be within or outside their sphere, with the intention of showcasing a national 'way of life' which included elements of either Western or Communist values. A number of scholars have questioned how far official narratives were accepted by the general population of different nations.<sup>2</sup> The work under review consists of two types. Firstly, Linda Risso and Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, both explore how NATO was involved in collecting, interpreting and disseminating a preferred vision of the Cold War alliances and/or the enemy. The rest explore the Cold War experience either in literature, official and unofficial mythologies or the ability to travel and even to collaborate within blocs and across Cold War divisions. Cultural encounters should be at the forefront of historians' explorations into the Cold War in coming years as we continue to pursue the complexities of loyalties and perceptions of elites and societies on either side of the iron curtain.

### **NATO and official visions of the Cold War**

Recently, historians have investigated the importance of transnational connections and the role of official and semi-official organisations and networks in influencing ideological conversations within the public spheres on either side of the Iron Curtain.<sup>3</sup> Both Risso and Hatzivassiliou explore the role of NATO in attempting to shape western understandings of the importance of waging the Cold War. Risso's book is the first in-depth exploration of the NATO Intelligence Service (NATIS), which promoted the Atlantic community, mainly to elites and intellectuals, but sometimes also directly to European populations within each member state from the Cold War to the present. Much of the focus of NATIS was on 'opinion formers' who were given information about NATO in order to

promote the need for military alliance and re-armament, as well as countering communist claims that the organisation was imperialist. Risso adds to our understanding of the role of Western elites during the Cold War and how they attempted to influence public discourse over NATO. Her work highlights how western information agencies utilised 'public diplomacy' to justify their mission to western audiences. Her key argument is that the cultural diplomacy between NATO and members of its constituent nations helped to promote the idea that unity of the Atlantic alliance was necessary to fight the communist threat. Furthermore, Risso argues that the information role of NATIS suggests that NATO constituted primarily a political organisation that strove to balance domestic considerations and divisions of its diverse member states with its broader security remit.

Risso explores NATIS's organisation and how competition between varying services and nations prevented it from becoming a coherent and efficient organisation. The book utilises a vast amount of NATO documentation, much of it previously unexplored, with a key focus on the day-to-day operations of the bureaucracy of the service. The book provides an interesting organisational overview of NATIS, which historians can now situate within the overlapping and sometimes competing networks of 'information' services that disseminated Cold War propaganda on behalf of various Western nations.<sup>4</sup> Risso uncovers the main difficulties facing NATO: being perceived as either a tool of imperialism or merely a military alliance. Those not familiar with NATO will learn about the objectives of the organisation and how it sought to foster an 'Atlantic community' which integrated science, and technology to wage the Cold War in several countries and had the potential for further supranationality – but was often frustrated by limited funding or desires to preserve territorial independence. Risso also explores the irony of a Western information agency like NATIS seeking to counter Soviet propaganda but being careful to avoid being labelled as a propaganda agency itself. Some of the NATO propaganda outputs which she examines are still in publication, for instance the *NATO Letter* (albeit in an online form), which demonstrates how NATIS has evolved and matured to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Risso goes on to argue that NATIS not only had to justify the USA's predominant position within NATO to the populations of the other member states, but it also had to defend the decision to rearm former belligerent states like Germany while countering communist allegations about the alliance's purpose. NATIS therefore frequently had to fight off claims that it was acting as a tool of American and British imperialism; it was hoped that nurturing 'opinion formers' like journalists, teachers and politicians would cement a positive image of NATO throughout Western populations. At other times, NATIS attempted mass dissemination of its information by targeting youth organisations and encouraging students to visit its headquarters and handing out information pamphlets, as well as producing widely distributed newsreels. Unlike the British Information Research Department NATIS was open about its aims, and ultimately quite diverse in expanding its information activities, while disseminating and translating its propaganda itself.

Part two of Risso's book explores the NATIS propaganda material and its interactions with Western populations. Further exploration of some of the publications and films would have enhanced the book overall. The chapters on film and academic exchange programmes merely whet the appetite. For instance, Risso barely explores the potential impact the visits to the NATO HQ had on journalists, politicians, students, trade unionists, and military figures or on those who had received NATO fellowships. Whilst Risso recognises the challenges involved in exploring the effects of such programmes, expanding on some of the subjects would have added a greater depth to her analysis of the role of the agency beyond an outline of its bureaucracy. Reading Risso's book, one is left with an impression of an agency that throughout its existence was hampered by lack of funds, competition between overlapping departments, translation problems, protection of national interests and its tendency to preach to the converted. I hope that in future scholars will expand research into the way that NATIS interacted with governmental and non-governmental organisations, with greater emphasis on the films and literature produced by NATIS, and perhaps critical oral history with participants from the various NATIS activities.

Hatzivassiliou, in his book *NATO and Western Perceptions of the Soviet Bloc*, looks at NATO slightly differently; he explores the alliance's working committees and how the organisation became part of the West's struggle in the 'crisis of legitimization' of the liberal-democratic system (p. 5). In other words, how liberal democracies reasserted their predominance in Europe following the turmoil of the great depression and the interwar turn to dictatorships. Whilst acknowledging the importance of the Marshall plan, Hatzivassiliou explores how re-legitimization required the involvement of multiple agencies – not least NATO – in order to cement the hegemony of common liberal-democratic values. According to Hatzivassiliou, the West did not become homogenised and NATO was not necessarily dominated by the USA. While he highlights the USA's role in providing leadership he simultaneously explores the transnational character of the organisation which was open to diverse viewpoints from various member states.

Hatzivassiliou emphasises the fear felt amongst NATO planners and analysts about the Soviets' political and economic system. He reads the official NATO documents not as statements of fact, but as conveyors of the belief systems or mentalities of these senior NATO planners. The book begins with an emphasis on the mid-twentieth century age of European dictatorships; liberal democracy was not the preferred system of rule for many people and Soviet strength was often perceived as posing a huge challenge to the western nations. Hatzivassiliou breaks new ground into NATO's official mind-set and how its leadership made sense of the competing form of modernism on the other side of the iron curtain. Hatzivassiliou notes that perceptions of Soviet aims had been solidified by December 1952 when a report called 'Trends of Soviet Policy' posited that the Soviets planned to disrupt NATO, Marshall Aid, and European integration, and to divide the western nations. The pervasiveness of this thesis - at the national level - is demonstrated in a 1961 report by Sir Frank Roberts, the British Ambassador to Moscow. Roberts, who had formerly been the British Permanent Representative to NATO, reported that the Soviet charm offensive towards Britain that was occurring during a period of increased trade and cultural exchanges between the two nations was in part motivated by an 'element of wedge driving between us [the British] and the Americans'.<sup>5</sup>

NATO's perceptions both informed and were informed by the participation of these national officials within its organisation. Hatzivassiliou also notes that the anti-Soviet perception began during Stalin's lifetime but continued to steadily influence NATO's members' beliefs about Soviet foreign policy long after his death.

NATO's planners did not always draw correct conclusions about the Soviet Union. Hatzivassiliou explores how a 1960 report on the Eastern Bloc economies revealed awe at the perceived ability of the communists' to muster their resources and command extraordinary growth rates, higher than those of the west despite lagging living standards. Anxiety about the East's performance was not solely limited to the NATO elites. In the aftermath of the 1957 Sputnik episode, the Soviet's lead in the space race spread fears amongst Americans of a possible 'education gap' in favour of the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in Britain in the early 1960s there was a widespread belief in journalistic and other opinion former circles that the West's predominant economic position was challenged by the Soviet system that had commandeered all natural and human resources at the service of its economic production. Michael Shanks's *The Stagnant Society* echoed similar anxieties, suggesting that the West was losing its predominance in industrial production in the face of more rationalised Soviet planning.<sup>7</sup> However, the official version of this viewpoint began to change from the mid-1960s and Hatzivassiliou illustrates how the realisation that the East was not going to out-produce the West allowed for better relations between the two blocs. More reflection on the links between the NATO elite and the rest of western society would expand the reach of Hatzivassiliou's book. Nevertheless it shows us some of the anxieties that did exist for key thinkers in western strategy as well as some of the ways in which the US ensured that its voice was heard and often became predominant in NATO committees.

### **The Cold War experience in culture, travel and exchange**

Whilst organisational histories have explored the mind-sets of those officially responsible for forming and implementing NATO policy, historians have complemented this research by examining how official and unofficial narratives about the Cold War were created, sustained and challenged. In the introduction of *Cold War Crossings*, Vladislav Zubok points out that the book shifts the focus in Cold War studies towards an examination of structures: the system of blocs. However, the transnational approach taken in the collection and the examination of the ability of citizens in the East to move or communicate within their bloc and between East and West, adds important nuances to Manichean approaches to the Cold War. Cultural diplomacy in the East is understudied and this volume is a welcome addition that builds on recent studies which have explored the West's similar endeavours in this field.<sup>8</sup> One chapter in particular adds a new conceptual understanding of the Cold War divisions: Michael David-Fox suggests that instead of an 'iron curtain' we should talk about a 'semipermeable membrane' (p. 18).

David-Fox argues, that even during Stalin's rule, selected people were able to travel to other communist countries while others were even permitted to journey outside the Soviet bloc, albeit at a controlled level, with the opportunity most often limited to communist party members. He considers the metaphor of the 'iron curtain' to be divisive – evoking the iron-age and depicting the Soviet Union as a primitive society – echoing Larry Wolff's exploration of Western perceptions of the Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> David-Fox suggests that this barrier was far from solid and certain members of each bloc's society were able to experience the other side. Moreover, he explores the Soviet 'superiority complex', claiming that Soviet high culture was presented as more sophisticated than the mass culture and the increasing availability of consumer goods that prevailed in the West; but that Stalin's regime concealed its envy of the Western way of life. David-Fox notes that the American diplomat George Kennan and former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, both pivotal in setting the scene for Western policy and framing perceptions of the East, viewed the Cold War as a civilizational struggle with 'Western civilisation' being depicted as superior. Churchill promoted this discourse throughout the West and helped to reinforce that the Soviet Union posed a 'challenge and peril to

Christian civilisation'.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, each sides' belief in its ideological superiority seemingly set them at odds with the other and necessitated a show of strength to defend their version of civilisation from the expansionism that either side believed their opponent was pursuing.

David-Fox expands his argument by suggesting that Stalin had an obsession with Western mass consumption, but that his 'superiority complex' meant that the USSR prioritised high culture during the early years of the Cold War. Soviet propaganda depicted Stalin as the giver of culture to the Eastern Bloc countries. Attempts to spread Soviet culture across the Eastern bloc necessitated, a 'creolisation' of cultural experiences, a term first applied to the Cold War by Berghahn in his study of transatlantic cultures.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, many Soviet advisers and scholars learned as much from their eastern counterparts as vice-versa. Soviet 'cultural' imperialism was further restricted by the lack of ability and vision of the functionaries responsible for implementing these exchange programmes. From 1956 the Soviet process of destalinization, allowed for more travel opportunities to central Europe. David-Fox explores how many of these Soviet visitors were shocked to discover that contrary to their beliefs, socialist countries were actually better developed than the Soviet Union. Sometimes these cultural exchanges extended to the West with the aid of increased tourism as well as official visits and exchanges such as the American National Exhibition of 1959, and the less investigated British and French exhibitions of 1961, which brought Soviet citizens into contact with various Western cultures.

Patryk Babiracki investigates how Polish peasants who visited the USSR between 1949 and 1952, as part of a scheme to promote collective farming, perceived communism and the USSR. As with Western visitors, during the interwar years, the Polish farmers were frequently exposed to the 'showcase' collective farms. But the Soviet state could not disguise some of the poorer conditions on other farms, which were sometimes erroneously included in the schedules or encountered whilst travelling between locations. Babiracki notes that many of the peasant farmers who undertook the tours were already sceptical about communism. However, he does not situate their experiences as a

similar form of confirmation bias that many of the interwar Western ‘fellow travellers’ had experienced, but sees it as an ability to see the ‘unofficial reality’. Nevertheless, when coming across some of the poorer Soviet farms and countryside, many of the Polish peasants did have their expectations confirmed. Babiracki therefore views these visits as giving many of the farmers the ability to question the official narratives about collective farming.

Nick Rutter explores how the Soviet Union was given an opportunity to present the idea of the iron curtain as a Western creation during the 1951 World Festival of Youth and Students, held in Berlin. Measures taken by western countries to prevent delegates from crossing western borders to attend the communist organised festival meant that Soviet news media was able to question which side really embodied ‘freedom’. The chapter raises questions around Cold War vernaculars. Most notably, Rutter focuses on the term ‘iron curtain’ which he suggests was used by both West and East to criticise the other side for hampering freedom. Rutter’s argument engages with linguistic explorations of how the Cold War was framed, understood and reproduced and this diverse methodological approach makes it one of the better chapters in the collection. Rutter’s focus on the British delegation in particular exposes the attitude of what he describes as an ‘ideologically diverse’ section of youth to the Cold War (p. 91). Many of these youths expressed supportive opinions of the Eastern Bloc because they felt aggrieved with the western nations’ attempts to prevent them from travelling to East Berlin.

Other essays in the collection explore Albanian and Soviet cultural exchanges and the attempts by newly independent African nations to distance themselves from Soviet ‘soft power’, whilst benefitting from any material benefits that the exchanges might bring. Several of the essays utilise Joseph Nye’s conceptual tool of ‘Soft Power’, following in the footsteps of other cultural Cold War historians. Marsha Siefert, in particular, examines those ‘willing interpreters and receivers’, the Soviet and American co-producers, who made sense of the other side’s culture, and their audiences, who enabled co-operation and soft power to operate between the blocs. Siefert explores an

important East-West exchange – the co-production of the film *Meeting at a Far Meridian* (1962) between the USA and USSR. Siefert's chapter is significant because it suggests that the barriers to cultural co-operation existed more because of the bureaucracies put in place by each side rather than being a by-product of a complete opposition and incompatibility between the two ideological systems. Ultimately, the divisions were able to be negated and limited cultural co-production progressed.

*Cold War Crossings* is an important volume which does much to shed light on the nuances of both the Soviet bloc and east-west relations. The chapters have depth in their analysis and explore their single issues well. Exchanges and encounters showcased that the Soviets' power did not only manifest itself with force but similarly to the West, with persuasion and promise. A more diverse theoretical perspective might improve future explorations of cultural exchanges. Concentrating on Nye's 'soft power' concept encouraged many authors to focus predominantly on the diplomatic outcomes of these exchanges rather than their effects on opinions about the East in the West and vice-versa. Therefore, the significance of the range of cultural interactions that move beyond formal state interactions tend to be lessened. Future scholars might better measure the impact of these cultural exchanges on the participants and their subsequent ability to influence popular public opinion by adapting methodologies from ethnography, sociology, cultural and literary studies while also looking at the role of the state in facilitating the exchange programmes.

*British Fiction and the Cold War* by Andrew Hammond demonstrates that the Cold War was part of everyday British life and that British literature, whilst less alarmist than that of the USA, saw the Cold War as a defining feature of the post-war era. Hammond categorises British literature's engagement with the Cold War along six themes: Soviet expansionism, nuclear anxieties, the intelligence war, the weakening of British 'socialism', decolonisation, and America's rise to globalism. The most important chapters explore how British fiction engaged with the Cold War by exploring how the communist threat, spy fiction and nuclearity were represented in British fiction. Hammond

examines a vast number of British writers going well beyond those traditionally labelled as Cold War authors. His breadth of exploration of Cold War themes in literature is of great value and Hammond's monograph will be seen as vital for students seeking to study British literature and the Cold War. However, Hammond stretches the pervasiveness of the Cold War theme in British culture too far.

Several of the chapters over-exaggerate the impact of the Cold War and barely attempt to discern Cold War events from other developments of the twentieth century and in particular, the post-war period.<sup>12</sup> Whilst these chapters are extremely well researched and expertly written, they talk about themes that emerged in the British experience of the post-war world, with post-colonialism being the most obvious of these. Not 'taking off the cold war lens', confirms the fears raised by David Caute that scholars are in danger of labelling all culture produced during this period as Cold War culture.<sup>13</sup> Decolonisation of the British Empire began before the Cold War and, whilst the prevention of communist take-overs shaped the process of decolonisation, the wealth of postcolonial literature that emerged in Britain should not be automatically equated with Cold War literature. Hammond tends to show that these 'post-imperial' discourses emerged more from Britain's imperial experience and the desire for those who either remained within the commonwealth or migrated to Britain to find their own voice. I would hope to see Hammond expand more on this theme, but as a separate issue to the Cold War. Furthermore, the rise of the USA as a global power began before the Cold War, most notably in its recovery from the interwar depression and its avoidance of widespread domestic destruction during the Second World War. America would have become the most predominant western power as Britain receded from this position with or without the Cold War. Whilst Hammond acknowledges the long-term impact of the memory of World War Two on post-war literature he tends to underplay it in favour of the influence of the Cold War on these narratives. Andrew Rubin's recent examination of decolonisation and America's rise to globalism in *Archives of Authority* tends to blend the British concerns with loss of international prominence and the transfer of world cultural hegemony to the USA slightly more effectively.<sup>14</sup>

Whilst Rubin perhaps over-emphasises 'high' rather than popular culture, he connects literary analysis to the actual governmental programmes and the formal attempts to influence the shape of literary discourses.

The legacy of the Second World War and the promises of the welfare state ran through several of Hammond's other themes and whilst he acknowledges their influence, he perhaps understates their value. For instance, Hammond links Alan Sillitoe's fiction to Cold War nuclear anxieties by suggesting that in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, the landscapes the protagonist runs through 'resembles that of a nuclear winter' (p. 66) with a subconscious effect on the boy. However, the short story's narrator talks about everything being 'dead' but 'dead before coming alive, not dead after being alive'.<sup>15</sup> The scenes could thus be also identified as metaphors for an unrealised post-war promise which has failed to allow this youth to thrive and produced his subsequent feelings of emptiness. The existentialist angst that Hammond identifies in Sillitoe's work and some of the disaster novels that he links to nuclearity underplays the extent to which these themes emerged from the collective trauma of the Second World War. The experience of mass aerial bombing was necessary for post-war British authors and their readerships to imagine the destruction that might be caused by a nuclear war.

Moreover, apocalypticism is a much older theme in Western literary traditions and the Cold War disaster novels effectively became a vehicle for older narratives about the end of the world to be rewritten for the second half of the twentieth century. For instance, Hammond notes that J G Ballard's *The Drowned World* was not about a nuclear war, despite being a disaster novel. However, for Hammond all disaster scenarios had the ability to evoke thoughts of atomic Armageddon regardless of whether the fictional catastrophe was nuclear.<sup>16</sup> Ballard writes about a post-apocalyptic world which came about because of an extra-planetary disaster. In Ballard's novel the de-evolution of humankind is caused by solar flares rather than nuclear war. However, these solar flares might be read as a metaphor for a widespread destruction whose cause is out of the hands of

most of the world's population. In that case, world leaders usurp the role of God in traditional apocalypse narratives, but this is not how Hammond interprets the novel: he sees any disaster as being a metaphor for nuclearity. The interpretation is dependent on the imagination of the reader and the nuclear metaphor, like the communist invasion metaphor present in many Hollywood productions, is not always decoded as the authors or modern cultural historians desire. The impact of the Second World War also dominates Ballard's writing: he was influenced by his childhood experience of the Japanese invasion of Shanghai. Whilst the arms race was a key and perhaps defining feature of Cold War culture, nuclear anxieties were also tied to the trauma of the Second World War and to the development and deployment of nuclear weapons before the Cold War began. Rather than seeing all of the novels produced during this period as Cold War fiction we might note the multi-layered influence of memory and broader swathe of international and domestic events that were often quite separate from the Cold War itself.

Hammond attempts to apply Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture*, which explores American Cold War fiction, to British literature.<sup>17</sup> He argues that British literature – fiction and non-fiction – emerged to 'contain' communist ideology. Hammond also explores how the conflict affected British literature. We should be wary of overstating both cases: British anti-communism was more muted than in America and the Cold War was less 'total' in Britain. Hammond, however, does illustrate some of the nuances of British literature and how during détente many authors tended to satirise communism or show the superiority of Western values. Much of the change in literary narratives, from predominantly more fearful scenarios to more of a tendency to poke fun at the communist threat, that Hammond explores follow Hatzivassiliou's exploration of the changing perceptions of the NATO elite, leading us to the conclusion that the literary and political elite often shared similar viewpoints. Read alongside Jonathan Hogg's *British Nuclear Cultures*, Hammond builds on a field of British Cold War culture which has been neglected since the early 1990s accounts by Hewson and Inglis.<sup>18</sup> Yet in many ways the continued influence of the imagined division between Western and Eastern Europe, which had existed for several centuries before the Cold War, should be further

acknowledged. Larry Wolff's exploration of how Western Europe 'imagined' Eastern Europe as its opposite remains crucial in understanding how ideas of 'bipolarity' emerged during the late twentieth century. The Cold War division, which Hammond argues, featured periods of curiosity and even exoticism of Eastern Europe, was dependent on this older cultural division. The treatment of Eastern Europe in British Cold War literature was often a case of pouring old wine into new bottles.

Judith Devlin and Christoph Müller's *War of Words* explores how both East and West harnessed mass media to promote their ideological systems. The book is interesting to historians seeking a broad geographic exploration of how systems of propaganda were implemented. Russel Lemmons' opening essay explores East German commemorations of Ernst Thälmann, the leader of the German Communist party (KPD) who died in Buchenwald concentration camp in 1944. Lemmons situates these memorials within the concept of political religions. Whilst Lemmons has researched the commemorations in depth and is right to point to the KPD's struggles against the Nazis during the Second World War as an East German foundation myth which co-existed alongside a cult around Thälmann, labelling antifascism as a political religion over-theorises these connections. Lemmons follows other adherents of the concept of political religion and labels aspects of the ascetics of politics as martyrdom, sainthood and religious rites. However, Lemmons applies the theory where he sees a 'fit' within the East German regime and then suggests that this makes the GDR a political religion, rather than seeking evidence which shows the nuances in the effectiveness of totalitarian ideology. Lemmons explores elite rhetoric around Thälmann during times of commemoration and he rightly explores how the former leader was used by the East German ruling party and KPD's successor party, the SED, to promote its political ideas. But all political parties – in dictatorships or democracies – act similarly with their chosen 'great' leaders. Furthermore, Lemmons does not extend his examination to whether the 'worshipping' of Thälmann extended into domestic life. A religion requires everyday acts of worship, not just public commemoration and celebration, which this essay does not show. The over-application of the concept of political religions risks viewing all memorialisation – especially for victims of Nazi persecution – or celebration of national foundation

figures as acts of political or civil religions. Theories of political religion were tied to Western Cold War narratives with Richard Crossman's collection of essays by ex-communists, *The God that Failed*, popularising the term in that era.<sup>19</sup> Modern scholars should be ready to appreciate the uses of the theory of political religions in Western political propaganda.

Devlin's Chapter on Stalin's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations is one of the better contributions and skilfully explores how the top down nature of the festivities contrasted with some of the mass initiatives. She examines the diversity of some of the popular responses through letters and comments made in guest-books at various exhibitions which celebrated Stalin's birthday. Devlin shows how many Soviet people projected their national pride onto Stalin because he was associated with perceptions of increasing national strength. Whilst the text has a few distracting errors (for example 'Stalin the man had been largely been replaced by Stalin the symbol' [sic]), it blends political and cultural history and further reinforces how the totalitarian interpretation of the Eastern bloc has been too simplistic (p. 30). The book's overall quality is hampered by the inclusion of seventeen shorter chapters, some of which are barely longer than a conference paper (one has only seven pages before notes). A book consisting of longer chapters would have given many of the early career researchers, whose research features in the volume, the space to better develop their arguments and more fully examine their sources.

The cultural Cold War remains a significant aspect of Cold War studies with the research focus expanding to include the importance of political structures and networks which sought to secure ideological hegemony by shaping public conversations as well as the cultural outputs of each side. However, as scholarship into the conflict becomes more transnational-oriented, a need persists to understand how Cold War cultural exchanges and movements of people influenced the various populations beyond the sphere of international relations, which a greater conceptual openness will help scholars to achieve. Interdisciplinary studies which explore the discourses inherent in cold war exchanges as well as the effect of official agencies' narratives beyond opinion formers will enhance

the future research field. We are also at a crucial time to undertake critical oral histories using participants in exchange schemes. Twenty years from now many of these participants will have died. Future monographs might also expand on the cultural history of the cold war and may explore emotions beyond fear such as elation or hope. Of the five books reviewed here the three monographs will be most useful to scholars in adding further nuances to the interactions between Cold War cultures, the state and the items which were consumed either by specialists, who sought to Cold War culture, or about the cultural artefacts themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and The Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park, Pennsylvania: University Press, 2003); Robert Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty: Exhibiting American Culture Abroad during the 1950s* (Washington DC: Smithsonian, 1997); Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain Propaganda Culture and the Cold War* (New York: St Martins, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> See also Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith & Joes Segal eds. *Divided Dreamworlds: The Cultural Cold War in East and West*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012); Patrick Major & Rana Mitter, *Across the Blocs: Exploring Comparative Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Giles Scott-Smith, *Western Anti-Communism and the Interdoc Network: Cold War Internationale* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012); Andrew N. Rubin, *Archives of Authority: Empire, Culture and the Cold War*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Partyk Babiracki, *Soviet Soft Power in Poland: Culture and the Making of Stalin's New Empire, 1943-1957*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas J Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American propaganda and public diplomacy, 1945-1989*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Giles Scott-Smith, *Networks of Empire: The US State Department's Foreign Leader Propaganda in the Netherlands, France and Britain 1950-70* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008); Giles Scott-Smith, *Interdoc*.

<sup>5</sup> TNA/PREM/11/3269, 21 May 1961, 'Moscow Telegram 962 to Foreign Office'.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Dickson, *Sputnik: the Shock of the Century*, (New York: Berkley, 2001), 224-231.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Shanks, *The Stagnant Society: A Warning*, (London: Penguin, 1961).

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2006); Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy 1945-1989*, (Cambridge: CUP, 2009); Romijn et al., *Divided Dreamworlds*.

<sup>9</sup> Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilisation on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1994), 370.

<sup>10</sup> Winston Churchill, 'The Sinews of Power', Westminster College, Fulton Mo. 5 March 1946.

<sup>11</sup> Volker R. Berghahn, 'The debate on 'Americanization' among economic and cultural historians', *Cold War History*, 10: 1, (2010), 110.

<sup>12</sup> Akira Iriye, 'Historicizing the Cold War' in Richard H. Immerman and Pretra Goode (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 15-31.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew Connelly, 'Taking Off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict during the Algerian War for independence', *The American Historical Review*, 105: 3 (2006), 739-769; David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 615.

<sup>14</sup> Rubin, *Archives of Authority*.

<sup>15</sup> Alan Sillitoe, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, (London: W. H. Allen, 1959).

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<sup>16</sup> J. G. Ballard, *The Drowned World*, (London: Phoenix, 1963); Hammond, 62.

<sup>17</sup> Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narrative, postmodernism and the Atomic Age* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Hogg, *British Nuclear Culture: Official and Unofficial Narratives in the Long Twentieth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Fred Inglis, *The Cruel Peace: Everyday Life in the Cold War* (London: Basic Books, 1991); Robert Hewson, *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War* (London: Meuthen, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> Richard Crossman (ed.), *The God that Failed*, (New York: Harper, 1959).