

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Cold War Energy: A Transnational History of Soviet Oil and Gas by Jeronim Perović

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Nevertheless, the environmental shift transformed into an ecological turn. The Borsod Chemical Combine played a big role in making a positive image of the relations between heavy industry and environment and demonstrating its importance to the central authorities in Hungary. The ecological turn was rooted in the 1970s, when “a growing number of projects and media reports focusing on outreach and environmental information to the wider public appeared” (213). Contrary to the first chapters, this part fails to give us a broader context of what was taking place in the Western world and socialist camp and instead presents an analysis of a few Hungarian cases.

The book's floating focus makes it difficult to read sometimes, as the state, state politics, nature, society, environmental problems, the ideology of communism and capitalism, and real practices sometimes change into each other with no explicit connection drawn between them. Better proofreading of the monograph and correcting misprints in particular in the introduction would help to ease reading. Nevertheless, the book presents a solid set of fresh historical cases that should provoke further research of the environmental face of socialist states. It shows the contradictory nature of environmental development of socialism which means, quite predictably, that it was both about pollution and protection gradually choosing in favor of ecology.

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**Jeronim Perović ed., *Cold War Energy: A Transnational History of Soviet Oil and Gas*, Springer, 2017, 425 pages, € 109.99**

A long array of Cold War studies circle around questions related to the Soviet oil and gas. A few make such a profound contribution to the field than *Cold War Energy: A Transnational History of Soviet Oil and Gas*, edited by Jeronim Perović. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union transformed from an isolated latecomer into a one of the leading exporters of fossil fuels. The hydrocarbons that the Soviet Union extracted from its territories fuelled directly the energy-hungry industrialisation. Through enabling technology trade with western countries, the oil and gas facilitated also indirectly the socialist modernization. From the point of view of ideological and political alliances, the Soviet energy functioned as a key instrument to create and maintain interdependencies between countries.

Through the oil and gas the actors discuss, elaborate, and challenge a range of broader questions related to the asymmetric power relationship and the complex

intermingling of politics and economy. Indeed, energy translated into political power. However, as all the fifteen authors in the fourteen rigorously studied articles convincingly demonstrate, energy was a notoriously insecure and complicated instrument of power in multinational relations. Despite the vast hydrocarbon deposits, the Soviet Union appeared as a rather troubled, even reluctant energy power.

The authors do not content themselves with only filling the white spots on the historiography but the chapters explicitly position themselves in relation to established narratives, often taking on the challenging task to put the common ideas under scrutiny based on primary sources. A great example is Natalia Egorova's article that examines the role of Iranian oil crisis in the beginning of the Cold War. With the help of declassified documents of the former Soviet Union, Egorova evaluates the Soviet interests in the post-war Iran in the international context. She argues that while the crisis did not spark the Cold War, it yielded geopolitical changes in the Middle East that had a profound impact on the east-west dynamic throughout the Cold War. Another example is David Painter's re-evaluation of the "Reagan Victory School" argument. Painter shows how the US aims to restrict Soviet access to western oil and gas technology merely failed and argues against the US agency behind the collapse of oil price in the mid-1980s. In so doing, Painter discredits the US anti-Soviet strategy causing the Soviet energy crisis which accelerated the disintegration of the Socialist bloc.

The editor's opening chapter constitutes a throughout introduction to the topic and creates a common framework for the individual chapters. The articles are divided into three parts. The first part examines the emergence of the Soviet Union as a global oil and gas power. During the transition period, both the attitude of the Soviet leadership towards oil, and the Western attitude towards the Soviet oil, were subject to controversies. Felix Rehschuh in his article on Stalin's oil policy argues that it was the motorization of warfare and German invasion that finally convinced the Soviet Union of the strategic value of oil. Niklas Jensen-Eriksen's study on the UK politics illustrate how nation states were never monoliths but the same "Red oil" appeared as dramatically different question form the point of view of the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade.

The second part of the volume focusses on the East-West détente. The articles add nuances to the established views on the Cold War as East-West hostilities and the Soviet Union as an authoritarian centrally planned economy. Vacheslav Nekrasov's article demonstrate how Khrushchev's energy policy, far from being able to dictate, had to pay attention to several interest groups. Several case studies in this section shows differences between the bilateral east-west relations- Elisabetta Bini's article examines how the Soviet-Italian affairs in energy trade was interpreted from the US point of view. Alain Beltran and Jean-Pierre Williot analyse the Soviet-

France cooperation and interaction in gas trade and transport from the mid 1950s until the mid-1970s. Similarly, Dunja Krempin's study on the Soviet Union's relationship with West Germany elaborates the long developmental process showing the gradual development of energy infrastructure.

The third part examines the disintegration of the Socialist bloc from the point on view of energy trade. The subsidized Soviet oil was critical for the socialist economic integration. Suvi Kansikas's and Lorenz Lüthi's articles both examines Soviet energy as a topic of negotiation, object of power struggles, and a spark of conflicts within the CMEA. As Kansikas shows, the Cold War framework restricted Soviet Union's possibility to effectively deploy its allies' energy dependency as a political instrument to control the socialist bloc. However, Lüthi argues, the Soviet energy supply constituted the main supporting pillar of the Eastern-European economic integration. The incapability of the Soviet Union to provide its allies with cheap energy had devastating impact on the bloc unity at the end of the Cold War.

Despite the "transnational history" the volume refrains from defining its historiographic traditions. However, the materiality and social construction of technological infrastructure is prevailing in several chapters addressing oil and gas pipe-lines. As Roberto Cantonini argues, the pipe lanes were sites of both strategic and diplomatic struggles. Falk Flade's study on Druzhba (Friendship) Pipeline discusses its role in creating a common energy space in the Eastern Europe. Margarita Balmaceda's article provides a fine ending for the volume with the discussion on the legacy of the Socialist energy dependencies. While the pipelines strongly shape and alter path decencies in the energy infrastructure, Balmaceda argues that the "steel logic" constituted only a part of the broader question of energy dependency. It is up to the countries and nations what they chose to do with the legacy of the Cold War.

As the editor notes, "the History of the Cold War remains incomplete without taking into considerations the role of Soviet energy". This volume makes an impressive contribution to the Cold War historiography adding to the understanding of the multi-polar, multi-layered nature of conflict and cooperation during the era.

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