

Concluding remarks: Tourism Across a Porous Curtain

Angela Romano

This book focuses on tourism behind the Iron Curtain. Cold War Europe comprised not only Europeans and their countries, but also the superstructure in which they lived, namely the bipolar divide, two military alliances facing each other, and the leadership and deep involvement of two extra-European superpowers that had interests and quarrels at the global level. However, as this chapter will highlight, Cold War Europeans were capable of developing transcontinental dynamics that differed from and transcended the superpower bipolar relationship and its ups and downs, challenged the bipolar divide, and gradually yet steadily promoted a new kind of thinking on the Continent, based on webs of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Tourism, it will be shown, became part and parcel of this process of pan-European cooperation, as well as the expression—both East and West—of ideological and political visions of international relations, economic interests, strategies of growth, and regimes' self-confidence (or the lack thereof). Consequently, this chapter will also argue in favour of new avenues of research which, by taking tourism as a heuristic tool, will contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of Cold War evolution and end in Europe.

Europe as the template for the Cold War - and for its overcoming

A few years ago, discussing the ever-expanding scope of Cold War historiography, the historian Federico Romero made a strong case for “re-emphasis(ing) the place of Europe in the global Cold War”.¹ He noticed that the Cold War's paradigms and defining features were conceived for application to the European theatre first: territorial partition; socioeconomic separation; alliance systems with vast military structures; intra-bloc institutionalized economic interdependencies; and vigorous ideological confrontation, shaping cultural representations and mobilizing civil society.² More importantly, he remarked, the Cold War originated in and about Europe, “pivoted on the continent's destiny”, and found its solution in Europe.³

We may add that Europe was central to Cold War symbolism. The Cold War imposed a mental mapping that was characterized by the idea of otherness as a necessarily antagonistic entity. Europe first and foremost was framed as a space shaped by a dualistic concept of *us* and *them*: East or West, backward or progressive, dictatorial or democratic, repressive or free—or vice versa, solidary or exploitative, moral or corrupted, fostering brotherhood or promoting individualism. That the structure, features, and constructed views of the Cold War found perfect expression in the partition of Europe also explains why Churchill's early Iron Curtain image—a European-based image—endured down the decades as the most powerful symbol of the Cold War worldwide.

In addition to confrontation being a defining element of the Cold War, we must acknowledge isolation as one of its key features. This is visible not only in the military,

political, and economic organization of the blocs, but also in the regimes' attempts to obstruct possible contamination by the ideas of the other camp. Here again, the importance of the European reality—with the Berlin Wall as perfect epitome—is crucial also in cultural and symbolic terms. This view is confirmed by the historiography of post-Cold War Central and Eastern Europe, which offers a narrative of these countries' "return to Europe". The fact that the forty-year-long socialist experience is presented as an interlude in an otherwise all-European or pan-European history only strengthens the image of a Cold War Europe in which the Iron Curtain was very much present as a physical, ideological, and even psychological barrier, secluding people from economic, social, and cultural contamination as well as mere contacts with the other side.

The Cold War-era partition left a legacy of separate studies of Eastern and Western Europe; historians working on the two sides of what used to be a divided Europe have proceeded with largely separate agendas and networks. In the last decade, however, an ever-growing number of scholars has focused on East–West relations in Europe during the Cold War, putting Europeans' agency centre stage. This flourishing historiography is deeply changing our understanding of the continent as the realm of confrontation and separation of the two ideological systems. By re-focusing their attention on Europe in the global Cold War, historians are adding layers of complexity to our understanding of East–West relations, and leading to a more sophisticated assessment of the Cold War as a historical process.

Recent studies recognize the 1970s in particular as the period in which the geopolitical and ideological bipolar equilibrium eroded, and small and medium powers enjoyed greater autonomy from the superpowers.⁴ In this context, studies of detente have proved that the latter had a substantially different meaning for the superpowers and their allies. While the former intended detente as a means to consolidate bipolarity and lower the costs and risks of superpower confrontation, "European detente" was meant to promote a gradual overcoming of the Cold War in Europe. This process of rapprochement between Western Europe and the socialist countries was to be achieved through expanding contacts and deepening mutual interdependence between the two halves of the continent.⁵ Indeed, most Western European governments' policies of detente deliberately involved the East in commercial, financial, and cultural cooperation. This European detente is now acknowledged among the crucial factors in determining the end of the Cold War, and explaining the pace of the fall of communism in Europe.⁶

What is becoming clearer is that a complex and lasting pattern of European detente can be counted among the key features of the Continent from the mid-1960s until the end of the Cold War. Since the mid-1960s, most Western European governments promoted, through bilateral channels, a more or less successful policy of detente with the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries.⁷ By the mid-1960s the socialist regimes recognized foreign trade as an important factor in socialist economic development, and planned to expand trade with the developed market economies.⁸ Consequently, the socialist regimes of Europe grew ever more enmeshed in trade, finance, and exchanges with capitalist Western Europe.

While still in place in “the ideological, security and symbolic spheres”, the Cold War partition of the Continent was becoming less stringent. East and West remained separate and antagonistic camps, but they were connected by multilateral and bilateral patterns of interaction. By the mid-1970s, Europe was criss-crossed by an expanding web of exchanges that prefigured an area of pan-European cooperation, which was often read with an expectation of gradual convergence and interdependence. This emerging continental space of collaboration was also enshrined in the 1975 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Moreover, the economic, diplomatic, societal, and cultural connections that had come to define detente between Eastern and Western Europe did not wither in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a period that several historians (who mostly focus on the superpowers) still label the “second Cold War”. Very recently, Oliver Bange and Poul Villaume have argued strongly against such notion and pointed to the continuity and relevance of a long detente, which they define as “antagonistic cooperation” with strong elements of a “trans-bloc, trans-societal, and trans-ideological framework” with European actors at its centre.⁹

Recent European Cold War historiography is paying much-deserved attention to the role of neutral countries in what is therefore confirmed as a complex and multifaceted space featuring not only East–West rivalry, but also diverse interactions and pan-European cooperation. In addition, some historians have recently proved that this opening pan-European space also invited the action of actors that were previously insulated or passive, such as the European Community. Since the early 1970s, the enlarged, strengthened, and more politically active European Community had a vested interest in the continuation of detente and the promotion of new European relations beyond the Cold War blocs’ antagonism.¹⁰ More importantly, the European Community proved not only willing but also able to significantly alter intra-European relations, cutting many of the blocs’ ties in the East.¹¹

Recent historiography has therefore demonstrated that, in addition to confrontation, Cold War Europe experienced a growing degree of East–West connectedness and interdependence. The change of focus is also visible in the titles of the literature. Some historians emphasize the intentionality of the promotion of these contacts, conceived as a means to change the European order in the long run, hence the likes of *Overcoming the Cold War*; *Helsinki 1975 and the transformation of Europe*; *Perforating the Iron Curtain*; *Overcoming the Iron Curtain*; and *Untying Cold War Knots*.¹² Others have been more interested in giving prominence to the development of multiple and diverse contacts across the Cold War divide, as in *Raising the Iron Curtain*; *The Nylon Curtain*; *Passing through the Iron Curtain*; *Gaps in the Iron Curtain*; *The Iron Curtain as a Semi-permeable Membrane*; and *Loopholes in the Iron Curtain*.¹³

Overall, this impressive historiographical production offers clear evidence that a diverse and numerous group of predominantly European actors were proactive in encouraging, building, and effecting contacts and exchanges across Cold War borders, and later were committed to preserving this web of relations from the harsh winds of

renewed superpower confrontation. They confirm the argument that Cold War Europe's two antagonistic camps were divided by a porous curtain rather than an iron one.

It is also becoming evident that European detente paved the way for new thinking and deeper cooperation across the Continent. This development is epitomized by the Helsinki CSCE and its ensuing process, which Cold War historiography now recognizes as having had a key role in bringing about the fall of socialism.¹⁴ A burgeoning scholarship on the CSCE in the past decade has demonstrated that it was of major importance in most states' Cold War policy, has contributed to elucidate the different conceptions of *détente* and to reveal the relevant role and increasing activism in Europe of actors other than the superpowers. The analysis of the CSCE negotiations and its Final Act reveals that the pan-European conference was a step towards overcoming the Cold War order's logics and constraints.¹⁵ In particular, it has demonstrated that the Helsinki process was a key instrument in Western European and neutral states' detente policies, as well as in the European socialist governments search for a more autonomous role in a new framework of multilateral cooperation.¹⁶

More recently, a group of historians teamed up to offer the first multifaceted analysis of the increasingly relevant yet contradictory place that pan-European space occupied in the economic and political life of socialist regimes. They have identified common patterns across the socialist bloc, but also the rifts over the desirability or necessity of opening up to international exchange.¹⁷ An even more ambitious research project, led by the same historians, is now exploring the changing mindset of the European socialist elites when cooperating with Western Europe and the EEC, and the existence of a plurality of views in each country. The project reconstructs and assesses the expectations that nurtured the socialist ruling elites' approaches to the international division of labour and European cooperation, their national strategies across the 1970s, their attempts to reconcile transformation with regime stability, and ideological rivalry with a new rhetoric of collaboration—and the predicaments the socialist regimes faced as their strategies began to unravel.¹⁸

The emphasis on improved East–West contacts and cooperation is not to deny the persisting reality of Cold War antagonism. Control and limitations were still in place or put in place by socialist regimes to respond to the proliferation of contacts through an all-too-porous curtain. It is enough to remember the poor record of most socialist regimes in implementing the CSCE provisions pertaining to the improvement of citizens' rights to access Western territory, literature, and the press, as well as their jamming of foreign radio broadcasts. Another key example has been the impressive growth in staff and activities of the security apparatuses since the 1970s, which developed new justifications for mass surveillance precisely because of the policy of detente and increasing contacts between East and West, which the agencies saw as a fundamental threat from hostile influences.¹⁹

Yet people did travel and encounter “the others”. The very fact that people were being allowed to travel behind the Iron Curtain could be considered a twofold achievement, as an improvement in domestic regimes' relations with their citizens *and* as a barometer of

improved East–West relations. This was epitomized, once again, in the Final Act of the Helsinki CSCE, where tourism was linked to actions intended to favour freer movement across borders, and taken as one of the yardsticks of the governments' commitment to detente and pan-European cooperation.

Tourism in the framework of the CSCE

The CSCE Final Act was a politically solemn but non-legally binding agreement, which comprised three main sets of recommendations (the so-called baskets): (I) questions relating to security in Europe (comprising ten principles guiding relations between the participating states, known as the Helsinki Decalogue, as well as the Confidence Building Measures); (II) cooperation in the fields of economics, science and technology, and the environment; and (III) cooperation in humanitarian and other fields.

The inclusion of Basket III was entirely a Western idea and diplomatic victory. It endorses the liberal concept of human rights and centrality of the individual, and hence reversed the Soviet view, according to which detente only related to relations among states. The Final Act gave governments and dissidents an opportunity to legitimately claim the modification of certain rules and practices of socialist regimes towards their own citizens. This was a main change in international law, as it asserted the idea that the way states treat their citizens was now a matter of international jurisdiction. Indeed, the West's emphasis on human contacts was justified in terms of a "people first" approach to detente, which also applied to proposals in the field of economic cooperation.²⁰ It is in relation to this "human contacts" aspect that tourism features in both Baskets II and III.

The West wanted tourism in Basket II because of the tie-in with freedom of movement.²¹ The European Community member states presented a common draft recommendation to the CSCE on 28 January 1974, which became the basis for the negotiations. Essential EC proposals included the facilitation of tourists' mobility within the country visited as well as larger currency allowances for travel abroad. Both were first proposed by the Italian government, which specifically highlighted their relevance beyond economic and commercial concerns into the social field and human relationships. There were also more economic rationales: another Italian proposal called for an in-depth study of the statute and the activities of travel agencies, while a joint Irish–Italian proposal asked to pay more attention to staggering holidays in order to avoid excessive concentration of tourists in the summer season. Following careful consideration at European Community level, these proposals were brought together as a draft recommendation submitted to the CSCE. Much of the editorial work was completed in the spring of 1974. Only a few paragraphs remained problematic, namely those on facilitating individual and group tourist movement with the possibility of obtaining documents and foreign currency to travel (the socialist regimes' delegations were firmly opposed to the discussion of these issues, which they considered a matter for Basket III); and on the activities of foreign travel agencies, which the socialist countries did not want to be specifically listed. Agreement was finally reached in the

second week of December 1974, with the EC member states settling for a less constraining wording. Instead of “currency”, which was an unacceptable term to socialist regimes, the text spoke of “financial means”, and now included the caveat that individual countries’ economic possibilities should be taken into account. The reference to the granting of documents was eventually phrased as “the necessary formalities for travel”.²²

The other Basket II provisions concerning tourism were more focused on economic aspects. Cooperation in economic fields represented the second major topic of interest for the socialist countries (the first being security), and this helped the work on Basket II proceed quite fast. In addition, an ad hoc coalition of Southern European countries—Portugal, Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Romania, and Bulgaria—was particularly active in the sub-commission dealing with the promotion of tourism, on which their economies were clearly dependent.²³ States intended to increase tourism by “encouraging the exchange of information, including relevant laws and regulations, studies, data and documentation relating to tourism, and by improving statistics with a view to facilitating their comparability”, and by “facilitating the activities of foreign travel agencies and passenger transport companies in the promotion of international tourism”. However, the West could not get a provision that engaged socialist countries to allow private agencies to advertise and operate normally in socialist countries’ territory.²⁴ States also agreed to engage to “pursue their cooperation in the field of tourism bilaterally and multilaterally with a view to attaining” specific objectives such as improving tourist infrastructure, examining possibilities of exchanging tourism specialists and students with a view to improving their qualifications; promoting conferences and symposia on the planning and development of tourism, and encouraging tourism outside the high season. They also pledged to “endeavour, where possible, to ensure that the development of tourism does not injure the environment and the artistic, historic and cultural heritage in their respective countries”.²⁵

The most difficult negotiations on tourism took place in the highly contentious Basket III, where the Soviet and their allies were determined to subject all provisions to the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs.²⁶ For the West, tourism was a peculiar aspect of the human contacts and freer movement issue.²⁷ During the 1960s the percentage of tourism from the West to the East had significantly increased, while the opposite flow had remained at its negligible level. In most socialist countries—the worst case being the Soviet Union—tourists to the Western world went through complex and arbitrary procedures. The authorities essentially promoted collective tourism, which enabled them to exercise effective control over the actions of tourists; pre-established programmes and itineraries allowed the regime to limit private contacts with the foreign population as well as the risks of defection. Foreigners visiting socialist countries faced considerable restrictions on movement as well as on contact, direct or indirect, with local citizens. Socialist regimes also had an interest in limiting the number of citizens exposed to the wealth of Western societies. Moreover, given the lack of hard currency in the socialist bloc, governments considered

themselves justified to impose restrictions to their citizens willing to travel abroad. In addition, tourists were only allowed to carry small sums of money. Conversely, socialist regimes maintained abnormally high exchange rates for foreigners coming to visit the country, in order to exact more hard currency.²⁸

The overriding Western preoccupation was to draw the socialist delegates into a serious discussion of measures that would have practical and discernible effects on the circulation of people (and information) between East and West. The EC member states made it clear that only if satisfied with the Basket III provisions would they accept to move to the CSCE final stage and to hold it at the summit level (which was a priority for the Soviets). On the question of the freedom of movement, the West asked for the removal of impediments upon travel of Eastern European citizens to non-socialist countries, for example the reduction of passport fees, abolition of exit visas requirements in conformity with general practice in the West, liberalization of foreign exchange allowances, simpler and more transparent administrative procedures for visa requests, and the possibility to appeal in case of denial or undue delay. The citizens of the participating states should be permitted and encouraged to travel to and within the other countries in Europe, and they should suffer no adverse effects for applying.

The Eastern delegations argued that these problems in many cases could not be usefully discussed at the Conference and should be solved bilaterally. They also stressed the differences between the Eastern and Western political and social systems, and the need for scrupulous observation of the principles of non-intervention and respect for domestic laws and customs.²⁹ The socialist countries took the line that the whole of Basket III should be governed by a preamble whose wording was designed to provide them room for maintaining existing restrictive practices (and freedom to introduce new ones); the view was clearly that the more detailed the substantive provisions on human contacts and information, the more explicit the restrictive references in the preamble should be.³⁰

Work on the preamble and provisions related to travel formalities remained deadlocked for months.³¹ By the end of April 1975 not a single word had been registered, and attitudes had hardened on all sides on the politically sensitive issues of working conditions for journalists, access to information, freer travel, and the general objectives for human contacts and information.³² In mid-May 1975 a package deal prepared by the British, approved by all EC partners, and supported by other NATO allies and neutral countries met a more forthcoming attitude from the socialist delegates. The contents of the package did not of course match up to all the ambitions of the Western governments, yet it represented a satisfactory outcome.³³ With regard to human contacts, the states made it "their aim to facilitate freer movement and contacts, individually and collectively, whether privately or officially, among persons, institutions and organizations of the participating states, and to contribute to the solution of the humanitarian problems that arise in that connection".³⁴ The formulation was neatly Western, as it explicitly mentioned individual and private contacts and movements.

Tourism features in two specific items under the “human contacts” rubric: “Travel for Personal or Professional Reasons”, and “Improvement of Conditions for Tourism”. Overall, the provisions tackled administrative hindrances and were meant to reduce the chances of a person being penalized for trying to travel abroad.³⁵ The Western European countries only obtained two provisions of general intent. First, participating states agreed to endeavour to lower, where necessary, the fees for visa and official travel documents; as it is plain to see, the states had wide discretion in determining individual cases. Second, states declared their intention to ease regulations concerning movements of foreign citizens within their territory, with due regard to security requirements; yet the West could not gain free movement of foreigners in one state’s territory apart from in identified security areas. Probably, the major gain in this field was the specific clause on contacts and meetings among religious faiths, institutions, and organizations, which was vigorously put forward by the Vatican delegation and supported by the Italians.

Despite undeniable limits and weaknesses, Basket III offered an overall framework for intergovernmental cooperation and a series of guidelines to participating states for unilateral implementation of reforms or arrangements to comply with their international political undertakings. Moreover, the Final Act set in motion a process, or at least the first step of a process, by calling for the convening of a follow-up meeting in Belgrade in two years time, in order to check the implementation of Final Act provisions and to promote further cooperation. Other meetings followed in subsequent years, turning the CSCE into the Helsinki process.³⁶ Of course the Final Act did not bring about a massive liberalization of travel. Yet in the ensuing years various bilateral agreements were concluded, most often on a reciprocal basis, to facilitate travel and to establish cooperation in the field of tourism. Moreover, various socialist countries took a series of unilateral measures to ease the conditions of entry and temporary exit for family visits and tourism. For instance, in 1977 both Hungary and Bulgaria abolished the obligation on Western tourists to change a certain daily amount of foreign exchange, and in 1978 Bulgaria adopted the application of preferential exchange rates or tourist tariffs. In 1977 Bulgarian authorities also approved the granting of entry and transit visas on arrival at the borders. In Poland, a decision in 1982 reduced visa deadlines, extended the validity of passports to 3 years, and required written reasons to be given when visa applications were refused.³⁷ To some extent, the Western Europeans’ CSCE promotion of human contacts across the blocs did affect the way socialist regimes treated foreigners and their own citizens.

Avenues of research

The CSCE case illustrates the strong connection that governments in both East and West (as well as the neutral ones) established between tourism and travelling on the one hand and Cold War politics on the other. It also hints at specific economic interests that could cut across the East–West divide and foster ad hoc transversal alliances. Moreover, the CSCE, though establishing a multilateral framework, asserted the crucial importance of action taken at the bilateral level as well as in domestic policy. Lastly, the Final Act

emphasized the importance of allowing the people to meet and know “the others” across the whole continent. It is possible to identify three levels of entanglement between tourism and the Cold War—international, domestic, and personal—or, in other words, relations among states; relations between the state and its own citizens as well as foreign tourists; and the experience of the tourists behind the Iron Curtain.

Not only does tourism offer a unique perspective that further elucidates the multifaceted phenomenon of East–West relations, it also opens another window into socialist regimes’ foreign, economic, and domestic policies. The chapters in this volume address a variety of important issues that open up new avenues for research, linking the histories of tourism and of the Cold War in meaningful ways. They also further encourage collaborative, cross-feeding efforts at research and conceptualization by historians working on various spheres of European and international history, communism, economic, social, and cultural history.

Individual or group contacts through travelling and tourism amount to a transnational activity that is often difficult to trace and even more difficult to interpret. A micro-history perspective per se adds to our knowledge, but has a broader significance if connected with larger events and processes, such as Cold War relations, regional cooperation, and domestic revolutions. This approach necessarily requires a certain degree of quantification and qualification of the tourism and travel experience. How large was the observed phenomenon in specific country or countries under scrutiny? Were tourists and travellers a relevant part of the population at the given time and/or in comparison with other periods? Even more important is to detect and appraise the profile and background of tourists and travellers. Was the activity of travelling spread across the strata of the population—countrymen versus city-dwellers, apparatchiks versus workers? Were Western tourists and travellers mostly leftists—if not fellow travellers, at least left wing? How many Western tourists were connected to the East via family or other bonds from the pre-communist period?

Profiling tourists and travellers would certainly help us to better assess their openness to new perceptions of the country and society they visited. Tourism and travelling are often identified with the desire to discover the “other”, and have often been adopted as a tool for improving relations between countries. Yet travellers have their own pre-constructed views of the other, and thus might not be open to “discovering” and changing their existing interpretative paradigms. A real and direct experience can even strengthen pre-set stereotypical images of the country and people visited. In an era and space dominated by Cold War antagonism and pervasive indoctrination of the masses on the superiority of one’s own system and the backwardness or even evil nature of the other system, how much was the travelling and tourist experience influential in changing their views of the host country? And did perceptions of the other influence the tourists’ allegiance to their own system? For example, Western workers who in the 1970s felt the effects of the economic crisis might have been more sensitive to low-price services offered in socialist countries.

All of the above suggests a significant degree of instrumentality of tourism and travelling across the Iron Curtain. Future research could well focus on identifying actors for whom tourism and travelling was an instrument to reach goals other than personal leisure of the travellers (the variety of actors can be impressive: not only governments, but also NGOs, activists, associations); on appraising their goals, and assessing the results. This volume shows that we may record cases going in very opposite directions, namely tourism as a means to transcend Cold War conflicting views or travels meant to strengthen the regime's self-constructed image of superiority and show-case the regime's achievements. Likewise, when assessing the results of using tourism as a means to achieve a specific goal, research may uncover cases in which carefully devised tourist and travelling experiences proved useful, others in which they were irrelevant, and other cases in which they turned out to be counterproductive and left the tourists with a poor impression.

Another crucial field of historical enquiry relates to the agencies responsible for tourism policy and its implementation, and the exploration of their interplay. Although there was space for contacts at unofficial level, the state apparatus remained the main actor responsible for encouraging or limiting these connections via regulations of various kinds, allocation of financial support, planning and building of infrastructure, recruitment in the tourist sector, and of course direct control. First, research linking tourism and travel to socialist regimes studies contributes insights on socialist decision-making and the specific role of specialized organs of the government. While there is a rich literature on the Soviet Union on what Alec Nove defined as "centralized pluralism", research on bureaucracy and interest groups in other socialist countries is still scant and rarely goes beyond the 1960s. A diachronic inquiry into the actors involved in the state apparatus dealing with tourism and travelling and into the rules regulating the sector would evidence the impact of generational change or ideological turns, shed additional light on the regime's approach to both domestic reforms and foreign relations, and relate it to historiographical debates on the periodization of the Cold War and detente.

Second, the study of state regulations and practices pertaining to travel and tourism can foster an understanding of the complexities of the socialist world, as it brings additional evidence of a diverse range of approaches to relations with the capitalist West (as well as to relations with fellow socialist countries). To take just one example, the Polish government after Gierek came to power adopted a relatively liberal passport policy, thanks to which the number of visits abroad skyrocketed from approximately 1 million in 1971 to 10 million in 1972. The policy remained in place without major interruption until the imposition of martial law in December 1981.³⁸ Poland's liberal passport policy stands in sharp contrast to the Romanian or Soviet rules and vetting practices for citizens travelling abroad. At the same time, it is worth analysing and assessing the different regimes' regulations and practices for incoming Western tourists, as it was often feared they would spread the "germs" of capitalist views, morals, and mentality, at the very least to and through the tourism workers with whom they had actual and

prolonged contact. The degree of distrust, control, and limitations imposed on Western tourists speaks volumes about the self-confidence of the various socialist ruling elites. Research on tourism and travel that takes into consideration the relationship between travellers and those in charge of setting the rules helps assess how the socialist regimes' saw their country's place and prospects in an emerging space of trans-European connections that challenged their political control and ideological legitimization.

Third, this research also sheds new light on the fabric of socialist societies, on the progressive loss of citizens' allegiance, and on the inherent weaknesses and eventual fall of the socialist system. As Péteri suggests, the socialist regimes' relationship with the West lay at the core of their identity and self-understanding, given the fundamental claim that socialism was constructing a superior, alternative modernity.³⁹ There was no other part of the world with which sentiments of inferiority and superiority, admiration and enmity, emulation and rejection became so intertwined. Ultimately, the West was not only a rival, but also an inextricable part of the fabric of socialist society.⁴⁰ The West, in the evocative title of Paulina Bren's 2008 article, was the "Mirror, mirror, on the wall", a means of judgement on oneself.⁴¹ In this respect, tourism and travelling certainly features among the various types of East-West interactions and the many layers of the socialist regimes' engagement with the West.

Historians working on tourism and travel who take a transnational perspective thus enrich both the national historiographies of socialist regimes and international history studies. Transnational historians can reconstruct and reveal the diverse geographies of economic, social, political, and intellectual interactions that made Europe a continent of overlapping spaces of cooperation rather than a place hosting clearly circumscribed and isolated systems of state socialism on the one hand and capitalism on the other. Péteri talks about the "nylon curtain", which

was not only transparent but it also yielded to strong osmotic tendencies that were globalizing knowledge across the systemic divide about culture, goods, and services. These tendencies were not only fuelling consumer desires and expectations of living standards, but they also promoted in both directions the spreading of visions of ... civil, political, and social citizenship.⁴²

The historian Arnd Bauerkämper affirms that "Altogether, the history of Europe is to be conceived as the history of continuous social and cultural exchange, interaction, and networking."⁴³ In this respect, the history of tourism and travel enhances our understanding of the history of Cold War Europe as a place where connectedness came to characterize the continental order, and tourists crossed what was in fact a porous curtain.

References

- Bagnato, Bruna. *Prove di Ostpolitik: Politica ed economia nella strategia italiana verso l'Unione Sovietica: 1958-1963*. Florence: L. S. Olschki, 2003
- Bange, Oliver, and Gottfried Niedhart, eds. *Helsinki 75 and the Transformation of Europe*. New York: Berghahn, 2008

- and Poul Villaume, eds. *The Long Détente: Changing Concepts of Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1950s–1980s*. Budapest: Central University Press, 2017.
- Bauerkämper, Arnd. “Europe as Social Practice: Towards an Interactive Approach to Modern European History”. *East Central Europe* 36 (2009): 20–36
- Bennett, G., and K. Hamilton, eds. *Documents on British Policy Overseas: The Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe 1972–1975*, 3:ii. London: Whitehall History, 1997.
- Berend, Ivan T. “What is Central and Eastern Europe?” *European Journal of Social Theory* 8, no. 4 (2005): 401–16.
- Bilandzic, Vladimir, Dittar Dahlmann and Milan Kosanovic, eds. *From Helsinki to Belgrade: The First CSCE Follow-up Meeting and the Crisis of Détente*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012.
- Bozo, Frédéric, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow and Leopoldo Nuti, eds. *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal*. London: Routledge, 2008.
- ——— and Bernd Rother, eds. *Overcoming the Iron Curtain: Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945–1990*. New York: Berghahn, 2012.
- Bren, Paulina. “Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall ... Is the West the Fairest of Them All? Czechoslovak Normalization and Its (Dis)Contents”. *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 4 (2008): 831–54.
- David-Fox, Michael. “The Iron Curtain as a Semi-permeable Membrane”. In *Cold War Crossings. International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc*, edited by P. Babiracki and K. Zimmer, 14–39. Arlington: University of Texas, 2014.
- Enderle-Burcel, Gertrude, ed. *Gaps in the Iron Curtain: Economic Relations Between Neutral and Socialist Countries in Cold War Europe*. Cracow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2009
- English Robert D. *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Ferraris, Luigi Vittorio. *Testimonianze di un negoziato: Helsinki, Ginevra, Helsinki 1972–75*. Padua: Cedam, 1977.
- Foot, Rosemary. “The Cold War and human rights”. In *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, iii. 445–65. Cambridge: CUP, 2010.
- Ghebali, Victor-Yves. *La Diplomatie de la Détente: La CSCE, d’Helsinki à Vienne (1973–1989)*. Brussels: Bruylant, 1989.
- Gieseke, Jens. *Mielke-Konzern: Die Geschichte der Stasi*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 2001
- Hanhimäki, Jussi M. “Détente in Europe, 1969–1975”. In *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, ii. 198–218. Cambridge: CUP, 2010.
- Hofmann, Arne. *The Emergence of Détente in Europe: Brandt, Kennedy and the Formation of Ostpolitik*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Jarzabek, Wanda. “Hope and Reality: Poland and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1964–1989”. *CWIHP Working Paper Series*, no. 56 (2008).
- Knipping, Franz, and Matthias Schönwald, eds. *Aufbruch zum Europa der Zweiten Generation. Die europäiische Einigung, 1969–1984*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2004
- Leffler, Melvyn P. *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2007.

- Loth, Wilfried. *Overcoming the Cold War: A History of Détente, 1950–1991*. London: Palgrave, 2002.
- and George-Henri Soutou, eds. *The Making of Détente: Eastern and Western Europe in the Cold War, 1965–75*. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Ludlow, N. Piers (ed.) *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik–Westpolitik, 1965–1973*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- “European integration and the Cold War”. In *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, ii. 179–97. Cambridge: CUP, 2010.
- Maresca, John. *To Helsinki: The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe 1973–1975*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1985
- Meneguzzi Rostagni, Carla, ed. *The Helsinki Process: A Historical Reappraisal*. Padua: Cedam, 2005
- Péteri, Gyorgy, “Nylon Curtain: Transnational And Transsystemic Tendencies In The Cultural Life Of State-Socialist Russia And East-Central Europe”. *Slavonica* 10, no. 2 (2004): 113–23.
- “The Occident Within—or the Drive for Exceptionalism and Modernity”. *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 4 (2008): 929–37.
- Pons, Silvio, and Federico Romero, eds. *Reinterpreting the end of the Cold War: Issues, interpretations, periodizations*. London: Frank Cass, 2011
- Rey, Marie-Pierre. *La tentation du rapprochement: France et URSS à l’heure de la détente (1964–1974)*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1991.
- Richmond, Yale. *Cultural Exchanges and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain*. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2003.
- Roberts, Adam. “An ‘incredibly swift transition’: Reflections on the end of the Cold War”. In *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, iii. 513–534. Cambridge: CUP, 2010.
- Romano, Angela. *From Détente in Europe to European Détente: How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE*. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2009.
- “More Cohesive, Still Divergent: Western Europe, the US and the Madrid CSCE Follow-Up Meeting”. In *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s*, edited by Kiran K. Patel and Ken Weisbrode, 39–58. Cambridge: CUP, 2013.
- and Federico Romero, eds. “European Socialist Regimes Facing Globalisation and European Cooperation: Dilemmas and Responses”. Special issue, *European Review of History* 21, no. 2 (2014).
- “G-7s, European Councils and East-West Economic Relations, 1975–1982”. In *International Summitry and Global Governance: The Rise of the G-7 and the European Council, 1974–1991*, edited by Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol and Federico Romero, 198–222. London: Routledge, 2014.
- “The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: A Reappraisal”. In *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War*, edited by Artemy M. Kalinovsky and Craig Daigle, 223–34. London: Routledge, 2014.
- “Untying Cold War knots: The EEC and Eastern Europe in the long 1970s”. *Cold War History* 14, no. 2 (2014): 153–73.
- Romero, Federico. *Storia della guerra fredda: L’ultimo conflitto per l’Europa*. Turin: Einaudi, 2009.
- ‘Cold War historiography at the crossroads.’ *Cold War History* 14, no. 4 (2014): 685–703.
- Sarotte, Mary E. *Dealing with the Devil: East Germany, détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969–1973*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

- Stola, Dariusz. *Kraj bez wyjścia: Migracje z Polski 1949–1989*. Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2010.
- Thomas, Daniel. "Human Rights Ideas, the Demise of Communism, and the End of the Cold War". *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 110–41.
- Vaïsse, Maurice. *La Grandeur: Politique étrangère du Général de Gaulle, 1958–1969*. Paris: Fayard, 1998.
- Varsori, Antonio (ed.). *Alle origini del presente: L'Europa occidentale nella crisi degli anni Settanta*. Milan: Franco Angeli, 2007.
- Varsori, Antonio. *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali dal 1943 al 1992*. Rome: Laterza, 1998.
- Villaume, Poul, and Odd Arne Westad, eds. *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965–1985*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2010.
- Wallace, William V, and Roger A. Clarke. *Comecon, Trade, and the West*. London: Frances Pinter, 1986.
- Wenger Andreas, Vojtech Mastny, and Christian Nuenlist, eds. *Origins of the European Security System: The Helsinki Process Revisited, 1965–75*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Westad, Odd Arne (ed.) *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, and Theories*. London: Frank Cass, 2000.
- *The Cold War: A World History*. New York: Basic, 2017.
- Young, John W. "Western Europe and the end of the Cold War, 1979–1989". In *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, iii. 288–310. Cambridge: CUP, 2010.

¹ Federico Romero, 'Cold War historiography at the crossroads', *Cold War History* 14, no. 4 (2014): 687.

² Ibid.; see also Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2007).

³ In *Storia della guerra fredda. L'ultimo conflitto per l'Europa* (Turin: Einaudi, 2009), Federico Romero convincingly argues that the Cold War was the clash between two new world powers just as much as the last conflict for Europe.

⁴ Odd Arne Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations and Theories* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); Franz Knipping and Matthias Schönwald (eds.), *Aufbruch zum Europa der Zweiten Generation: Die europäische Einigung, 1969–1984* (Trier: WVT, 2004); Antonio Varsori (ed.), *Alle origini del presente. L'Europa occidentale nella crisi degli anni Settanta* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2007).

⁵ Wilfried Loth and George-Henri Soutou (eds.), *The Making of Détente: Eastern and Western Europe in the Cold War, 1965–75* (London: Routledge, 2008); Oliver Bange and Gottfried Niedhart (eds.) *Helsinki 75 and the transformation of Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2008); Angela Romano, *From Détente in Europe to European Détente: How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2009); Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny, and Christian Nuenlist (eds.), *Origins of the European Security System: The Helsinki Process Revisited, 1965–75* (London: Routledge, 2009); Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad (eds.) *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965–1985* (Museum Tusulanum, 2010); Silvio Pons and Federico Romero (eds.). *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War: Issues, Interpretations, Periodizations* (London: Frank Cass, 2011).

⁶ Robert English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Wilfried Loth, *Overcoming the Cold War: A History of Détente, 1950–1991* (London: Palgrave, 2002); Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow, and Leopoldo Nuti (eds.) *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008); Romero, *Storia*; Villaume and Westad, *Perforating*; Jussi M. Hanhimäki, "Détente in Europe, 1969–1975", in *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), ii. 198–218; N. Piers Ludlow, "European Integration and the Cold War", in *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ii. 179–97; John Young, "Western Europe and the end of the Cold War, 1979–1989", in *Cambridge History*

of the Cold War, iii. 288–310; Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic, 2017).

⁷ There is rich and ever expanding literature. See, for example, Maurice Vaisse, *La Grandeur: Politique étrangère du Général de Gaulle, 1958–1969* (Paris: Fayard, 1998); Marie-Pierre Rey, *La tentation du rapprochement: France et URSS à l'heure de la détente (1964–1974)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1991); Antonio Varsori, *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali dal 1943 al 1992* (Rome: Laterza, 1998), 171–98; Loth, *Overcoming*, 89–95; Bruna Bagnato, *Prove di Ostpolitik: politica ed economia nella strategia italiana verso l'Unione Sovietica: 1958–1963* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 2003); Arne Hofmann, *The Emergence of Détente in Europe: Brandt, Kennedy and the Formation of Ostpolitik* (London: Routledge, 2007); N. Piers Ludlow (ed.), *European integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik–Westpolitik, 1965–1973* (London: Routledge, 2007); Wilfried Loth and George-Henri Soutou (eds.), *The Making of Détente: Eastern and Western Europe in the Cold War, 1965–75* (London: Routledge, 2008).

⁸ William V. Wallace and Roger A. Clarke, *Comecon, Trade and the West* (London: Frances Pinter 1986), 102–3; Ivan T. Berend, “What is Central and Eastern Europe?” *European Journal of Social Theory* 8, no. 4 (2005): 413.

⁹ Bange, Oliver, and Poul Villaume (eds.) *The Long Détente: Changing Concepts of Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1950s–1980s* (Budapest: Central University Press, 2017), 1–15.

¹⁰ Angela Romano, “More Cohesive, Still Divergent: Western Europe, the US and the Madrid CSCE Follow-Up Meeting”, in *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s*, ed. Kiran K. Patel and Ken Weisbrode (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), 39–58; Angela Romano, “G-7s, European Councils and East–West Economic Relations, 1975–1982”, in *International Summitry and Global Governance: The Rise of the G-7 and the European Council, 1974–1991*, ed. Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol and Federico Romero (London: Routledge, 2014), 198–222.

¹¹ Angela Romano, “Untying Cold War knots: The EEC and Eastern Europe in the long 1970s”, *Cold War History* 14, no. 2 (2014), 153–73.

¹² Loth, *Overcoming*; Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 75*; Villaume and Westad, *Perforating*; Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, Bernd Rother and N. Piers Ludlow (eds.) *Overcoming the Iron Curtain: Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945–1990* (New York: Berghahn, 2012); Romano, “Untying”.

¹³ Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchanges and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2003); Gyorgy Péteri, “Nylon Curtain: Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in The Cultural Life of State–Socialist Russia And East–Central Europe”, *Slavonica* 10, no. 2 (2004), 113–23; ‘Passing through the Iron Curtain’, special issue, *Kritika* 9, no. 4 (2008); Gertrude Enderle-Burcel (ed.), *Gaps in the Iron Curtain: Economic Relations Between Neutral and Socialist Countries in Cold War Europe* (Crakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2009); Michael David-Fox, “The Iron Curtain as a Semi-permeable Membrane,” in *Cold War Crossings. International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc*, ed. P. Babiracki and K. Zimmer (Arlington, University of Texas, 2014), 14–39; “Loopholes in the Iron Curtain” was the title of a conference organized by Philipp Ther and Włodzimierz Borodziej at the Institut für Osteuropäische Geschichte der Universität Wien in 2013.

¹⁴ See Daniel Thomas, “Human Rights Ideas, the Demise of Communism, and the End of the Cold War”, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005), 110–41; Wenger, Mastny and Nuenlist, *Origins*; Adam Roberts, “An ‘incredibly swift transition’: Reflections on the end of the Cold War”, in *Cambridge History*, iii. 513–34; Rosemary Foot, “The Cold War and human rights”, in *Cambridge History*, iii. 445–65.

¹⁵ Angela Romano, “The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: A Reappraisal”, in *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War*, ed. Artemy M. Kalinovsky and Craig Daigle (London: Routledge, 2014), 223–234.

¹⁶ Mary E. Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil: East Germany, détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969–1973* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Carla Meneguzzi Rostagni, *The Helsinki Process: A Historical Reappraisal* (Padua: Cedam, 2005); Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 75*; Wanda Jarzabek, “Hope and Reality: Poland and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1964–1989”, *CWIHP Working Paper Series*, no. 56 (May 2008); Wenger, Mastny, and Nuenlist, *Origins*; Vladimir Bilandzic, Dittar Dahlmann, and Milan Kosanovic (eds.), *From Helsinki to Belgrade: The First CSCE Follow-up Meeting and the Crisis of Détente* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).

¹⁷ Angela Romano and Federico Romero (eds.), “European Socialist Regimes Facing Globalisation and European Cooperation: Dilemmas and Responses”, special issue, *European Review of History* 21, no. 2 (2014).

-
- ¹⁸ The 5-year-long project *Looking West: The European Socialist regimes facing pan-European cooperation and the European Community (or PanEur1970s)* started in 2015 at the European University Institute and received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant Agreement n. 669194), <https://paneur1970s.eui.eu/>.
- ¹⁹ See, for example, Jens Gieseke, *Mielke-Konzern: Die Geschichte der Stasi* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 2001).
- ²⁰ Romano, *From Détente*.
- ²¹ "CSCE—Economic and Technical Cooperation", NATO Economic Preparation for CSCE: Fiche N.19, Fostering of East-West Travel, 22 December 1972, FCO 28/1705, The National Archives (TNA), London, UK.
- ²² Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, *Testimonianze di un negoziato: Helsinki, Ginevra, Helsinki 1972–75* (Padua: Cedam, 1977), 438–40. The participating States affirmed their intention to "deal in a positive spirit with questions connected with the allocation of financial means for tourist travel abroad, having regard to their economic possibilities, as well as with those connected with the formalities required for such travel".
- ²³ John Maresca, *To Helsinki: The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe 1973–1975* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), 178.
- ²⁴ Victor-Yves Ghebali, *La Diplomatie de la Détente: La CSCE, d'Helsinki à Vienne (1973–1989)* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1989), 246.
- ²⁵ *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe Final Act*, Helsinki 1975, <https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act>,
- ²⁶ Mr Bullard (Helsinki) to Mr Wiggin, CSCE: Soviet Attitude, Helsinki, 5 July 1973, Doc. No. 40, in G. Bennett and Keith Hamilton (eds.) *Documents on British Policy Overseas: The Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe 1972–1975* (London: Whitehall History, 1997) (hereafter *DBPO*), 3:ii.
- ²⁷ Ghebali, *Diplomatie de la Détente*, 274.
- ²⁸ Ghebali, *Diplomatie de la Détente*, 288–9.
- ²⁹ Mr Elliott (Geneva) to Sir A. Douglas-Home, Geneva, 15 December 1973, Doc. No. 57, *DBPO*, p. 218.
- ³⁰ Minute from Mr Tickell on CSCE: Basket III, FCO, 15 March 1974, Doc. No. 68, *DBPO*.
- ³¹ Rapport du Sous-Comité CSCE et du Groupe Ad Hoc au Comité Politique, 17 Janvier 1975, FD 136, Historical Archives of the European Union (hereafter HAEU), Florence, Italy; Sir D. Hildyard (UKMis Geneva) to Mr Callaghan, Geneva, 28 February 1975, Doc. No. 114, *DBPO*.
- ³² Minute from Br Burns to Mr Tickell, FCO, 29 April 1975, Doc. No. 120, *DBPO*.
- ³³ Minute from Mr Tickell on CSCE: Basket III, FCO, 16 May 1975, Doc. No. 122, *DBPO*.
- ³⁴ *Final Act*, Cooperation in Humanitarian and Other Fields, Human Contacts, Preamble, par. 5.
- ³⁵ Mr Callaghan to HM Representatives Overseas, FCO, 28 July 1975, "Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE)", Doc. No. 137, *DBPO*, p. 458.
- ³⁶ At the 1994 meeting in Budapest the participating countries agreed to turn the CSCE into the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
- ³⁷ Ghebali, *Diplomatie de la Détente*, 304.
- ³⁸ Dariusz Stola, *Kraj bez wyjścia: Migracje z Polski 1949-1989* (Warszawa, 2010). I would like to thank Aleksandra Kormonicka for bringing the Polish passport policy and book to my attention.
- ³⁹ György Péteri, "The Occident Within—or the Drive for Exceptionalism and Modernity", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 4 (2008), 929–37.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 936.
- ⁴¹ Paulina Bren, "Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall ... Is the West the Fairest of Them All? Czechoslovak Normalization and Its (Dis)Contents", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 4 (2008), 831–54.
- ⁴² Péteri, "Nylon Curtain", 115.
- ⁴³ Arnd Bauerkämper, "Europe as Social Practice: Towards an Interactive Approach to Modern European History", *East Central Europe* 36 (2009), 30.