How Global Was Eastern Europe during the Cold War?

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Abstract

A substantial body of scholarship recognizes the globality of the Cold War, evidencing the strategic propositioning of states favorable to the superpower ideologies divided in Berlin. However, much of the existing scholarship treats this globality as evidence of superpower strategy: economic partnerships, the provision of weapons, the courting of creatives all understood as self-consciously inseparable from the battle itself. This article argues that the Cold War, if understood as a battle fought territorially, ignores the reality of provincial connections. Eastern Europe, a slippery spatial term, welcomed and visited the spatial certainties that the Cold War was based on. The world went to Eastern Europe throughout the Cold War, and Eastern Europeans went to the world, in numerous and varied forms. These interactions challenge the perception of the Cold War as fought according to hermetically sealed spaces, and their legacy challenges the perception that the world can be divided according to historical-ideological-spatial certainties. Ultimately, the globality of the Cold War reframes how much the context of the Cold War contributed to the connectivity and fluidity of spaces.

Article

The globality of the Cold War itself is inscribed into the cityscape of Lagos. The Eko Hotel, of Nigerian design, constructed by a Bulgarian enterprise in 1977, under American supervision, illustrates the global entanglement of the Cold War (Figure 1). All over West Africa and the Middle East, according to research by Lukasz Stanek, there is brutalist evidence of concrete compromises made between socialist satellites and states ideologically and spatially separate from the frameworks seen from Washington and Moscow. Indeed, the Cold War was fought according to particular spatial frameworks, namely a "tiered world" divided according to ideological alignment and strategic potential.[1] The world was conceptualized into historical-geographical-ideological entities: the "West," the "East," the "Global South," and the "Far East." These framings informed how the Cold War was understood and how it was fought. Eastern Europe was likewise spatially

[1] Timothy Barney, "Diagnosing the Third World: The 'Map Doctor' and the Spatialized Discourses of Disease and Development in the Cold War," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100, no. 1 (2014): 2.

conceptualized and filtered through Cold War geopolitics.[2] But spatial framings were never consistent. Each had political potential, but each masked provincial priorities. Whether propelled by the "instrumental incentives" of financial institutions,[3] guided by the *Realpolitik* of "friendly" and "hostile" spaces,[4] or incensed by the "common struggle" of "anti-imperialist space,"[5] the Cold War transformed the idea of hermetic conceptual spaces.

Figure 1: The Eko Hotel, Lagos.[6]

Eastern Europeans were propelled into transnationalism and globalization.[7] Scholarship increasingly recognizes the geographies of collaboration, and David Matless problematizes the "Eastern bloc" as a "Soviet-dominated whole," illustrating Eastern independence from their Soviet straitjacket.[8] In his study, he considers the physical movement of geographers, and their international correspondence, as illustrative of the breakdown of Cold War spatialities at the academic and vernacular level. Despite nominal reliance on state

[2] Velichka Ivanova, "Literature in the 'Other' Europe Before and After the Transition: The Work of Blaga Dimitrova and Milan Kundera," *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 18, no. 2 (2010): 217-219.
[3] Alexandra Gheciu, "Security Institutions as Agents of Socialization? NATO and the 'New Europe,'" *International Organization* 4 (2005): 976.
[4] Klaus Dodds, "Cold War Geopolitics," *A Companion to Political Geography,* eds. John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell, and Gearóid Ó Tuathail (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 210.
[5] James Mark and Quinn Slobodian, "Eastern Europe in the Global History of Decolonization," *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire,* eds. Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 351.
[6] Image sourced from Gloria Nwafor, "We are still open for business, says Eko Hotels," *The Guardian,* March 24, 2020, https://guardian.ng/business-services/we-are-still-open-for-business-says-eko-hotels/.
[7] Bruce Williams and Kledian Myfarti, "Albania: Crossing Borders with a New Imaginary," *Contemporary Balkan Cinema: Transnational Exchanges and Global Circuits,* eds. Lydia Papdimitrious and Ana Grgic (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 30-31.
[8] David Matless, Jonathon Oldfield, and Adam Swain, "Geographically Touring the Eastern Bloc: British Geography, Travel Cultures and the Cold War," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33, no. 3 (2008): 356.

regulated agencies, the "other side of the Iron Curtain" was translated with sympathy and admiration, especially in less academic spaces like the British *Geographical Magazine.* Essays here, rather than regurgitating official narratives, "globalized" Eastern Europe as both a real place and subversive space for an international audience. Similarly, James Mark revises globalization historicizing its Cold War context: Rather than being the triumph of western capitalism, epitomized by and waiting for the breached Berlin Wall, globalization was driven by "so-called peripheries," including Eastern Europe.[9] 1989 did not suddenly expose Eastern Europe to the world; contacts had been maturing for decades.

This article draws on Matless's problematization of Eastern Europe as a non-space and applies it to the conceptualization of *all* Cold War spatialities. Conceptual spaces might have their moral dimensions ascribed onto them such that their territorial limits acquire weight, but it was during the Cold War that spatial scholar Henri Lefebvre defined the "worldwide" as a contested category.[10] Together with scholarship emphasizing changing patterns and perceptions of territorialization, I argue that the Cold War saw spatial frameworks undermined by increasing globality.[11] I will explore examples of the "West," the "Global South," and the "Far East" affecting Eastern Europe, and Eastern Europe affecting these conceptual spaces. As global actors, Eastern Europeans challenged the conceptual relevance of a monolithic "Eastern Europe" space. In so doing, they semi-consciously pre-empted the breakdown of borders that advances in cyber, technology, and information has done since the turn of the century.

Of course, for most Eastern Europeans, barbed wire rather than Brechtian nomadism (Bertolt Brecht chose both East and West at different times in his career in the theater) was the reality.[12] As Mikhail German lamented, "One could be fit for military service but not fit for travel abroad."[13] Nevertheless, the Wall separating East from West was frequently breached. Initially about "friendship and unity with the proletariat," according to Josef Stalin, physical and material reciprocity became necessary to pacify restless socialist satellites.[14] Letters from diasporic communities in Western Europe also forged intimacy, providing evidence that the superiority of socialism was a mere smokescreen. The

[9] James Mark, "Introduction," *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World*, eds. James Mark, Artemy M Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), 2-12.
[10] Jonathon Oldfield, David Matless, and Adam Swain, "The making of a sub-discipline: state initiatives and the production of British geographical studies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1945-71," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36, no. 4 (2011): 574-589; Lukasz Stanek, "Socialist Worldmaking: Architecture and Global Urbanization in the Cold War," *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World*, eds. James Mark, Artemy M Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), 168.
[11] D. J. Zeigler, "Post-communist Eastern Europe and the cartography of independence," *Political Geography* 21 (2002): 671-686.
[12] David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 276-296.
[13] Cited in Anne E. Gorsuch, *All this is your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 111.
[14] Cited in Baruch A. Hazan, *Soviet Propaganda: A Case Study of the Middle East Conflict* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1976), 34.

East/West binary was blurred as real and imagined globality challenged the rhetoric that sealed them.

Theodora Dragostinova understands the Cold War as a way for Eastern Europeans to challenge geopolitical spatialities. This is evidenced by global cultural events with significant Eastern European contributions. Supposedly "a Balkan backwater or Soviet satrapy," Bulgaria reimagined itself by celebrating the anniversary of its medieval state in 1981. *1000 Years Bulgaria* was one of 38,854 cultural events on tour between 1977 and 1981. This self-projection as a Slavic civilization central to a European community revised geopolitical spatialities, explicitly inserting the Bulgarian historical narrative into Western exhibition halls. If the 800 artifacts failed to assert Bulgaria's national, rather than "Eastern," relevance, UNESCO insisted that its members, recognizing Bulgaria's contribution "to the development of world historical processes," must "mark this anniversary in a suitable manner."[15] Reaching New York, New Delhi, and Mexico City, Bulgaria's cultural program epitomized the sentiment of the late-Cold War period. The whole world had been disoriented from the ultimate global entanglement, the 1971 oil shock, but there was an accompanying acceleration of political reconciliation, a détente suggesting collaboration rather than competition. A moment of geopolitical disorientation and international change allowed for smaller states, as Dragostinova argues, to insert their agendas into new spaces. By the 1970s there was something of a shared, little-brother sentiment, newly expressible in an increasingly uncertain world order, as articulated in the *National Herald* of New Delhi, reviewing the touring company: "Small nations know a lot about big nations, but the big nations know very little or almost nothing about the small nations."

Similarly aspirational, Poland demanded a revision of conceptual spatial frameworks. Poland went "West" via their exhibition *1000 Years of Art in Poland,* which according to Verity Clarkson, located Poland's "intrinsic relation to mainstream European culture." The dialogue surrounding the exhibition hints at efforts to revise Poland's peripherality in Western discourse. Including Bernardo Bellotto as a patron of Polish art destabilized any idea of an exclusively Western European art canon. Remembering that Copernicus was Polish, Andrew Causey of the *Illustrated London News* captured the confrontation with geopolitical spatialities that the exhibition prompted, recognizing a "home-from-home feeling of Warsaw as another of the great European capitals."[16] The Cold War context, when cultural flaunting acquired a new primacy, qualified the ideological separation of East and West as the East inserted itself into the visual realm of the Western consciousness and the conceptual realm of the Western past. As a result, Eastern Europe as a separate spatiality was challenged.[17]

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[15] Theodora K. Dragostinova, *The Cold War from the Margins: A Small Socialist State on the Global Cultural Scene* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), 2-14, 97-114.
[16] Cited in Verity Clarkson, "A 'Many-Coloured Prism': Exhibiting Polish National Identities in Cold War Britain," *Machineries of Persuasion: European Soft Power and Public Diplomacy during the Cold War,* eds. Óscar J. Martín García and Rósa Magnúsdóttir (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 30.
[17] Clarkson, "A 'Many-Coloured Prism,'"30.

Exhibits not only revisited Cold War mental maps. Literature has always been a way to "go" without "going." Rival superpowers deliberately translated "the Other" to reinforce loyalties, in what Sarah Davies called the "periodical equivalent of an arms race."[18] Magazines were state-sponsored as recognized fodder for propagandistic purposes, soft-power strategies to transmit ideas about the "bourgeois prosperity" lacking in the East, according to those behind the US magazine, *Amerika.* Residents in Kyiv, Minsk, and Tallinn were all exposed to the messages mediated through glossy colors, connecting Eastern Europe with the "West." But travel also happened in consuming subversive media, and the movement of stories hinted at the globality of Eastern Europe. Narratives of "escape" fed a Western curiosity that Eastern Europe was imprisoned. Although the actual number of escapees was low, stories like "386 through Ulbricht wall with a False Passport," of Dietrich Jensch's getaway in 1965, and accounts of the "Freedom Train," when Czech dissidents hijacked a train crossing the Curtain in 1951, were distributed widely.[19] That the same image of escapees featured in *Aftonbladet, Expressen,* and *Lektyr* illustrates this globality, in what Laura Saarenmaa calls border-crossing activity. In some ways, these stories re-affirmed superpower spatio-moral tropes, translations that reinforced the East as "voiceless embodiments of victimhood."[20] But it worked both ways, as narratives travelled back depicting the West as a place of exploitation and unemployment, particularly potent in diasporic exchanges. Certainly, the exchanges between Transylvanian Saxon emigres in Germany and their compatriots in Romania foregrounded the disappointment felt after 1989, when more people travelled West. Alienation and discrimination were the frontrunners to the failed integration efforts explored by James Koranyi.[21] By learning of the proximity of the Other (real and imagined), the aesthetic exchange during the Cold War undermined the spatial framings that it ultimately depended on. The West was hardly the paradise its patriots promised; when access was liberalized, the spatial separation from the (equally evasive) "East," which its self-identity depended on, was let down by the *actual* porosity of both the places and the people that had interacted during the Cold War.

Eastern Europeans also went to the "Global South," challenging notions of spatial certainty. Scholarship has detailed the interconnectivity of the discourses of Soviet internationalism and decolonization. In the wake of mid-century independence struggles, projected solidarity from socialist states appealed to those looking for allies in a globalizing world.[22] However, given that international socialism looked very similar to imperial domination of before, Eastern Europeans were a welcome compromise, sharing a history of quasi-

[18] Sarah Davies, "The Soft Power of *Anglia*: British Cold War Cultural Diplomacy in the USSR," *Contemporary British History* 27, no. 3 (2013): 317.
[19] Laura Saarenmaa, "Operation Diplomat and Other Smuggling Stories: East-German Trafficking in the Swedish Popular Press 1963–1973," *Media History* 26, no. 1 (2020): 51-55; Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2016), 218-221.
[20] Saarenmaa, "Operation Diplomat," 53.
[21] James Koranyi and Ruth Wittlinger, "From Diaspora to Diaspora: The Case of Transylvanian Saxons in Romania and Germany," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 17, no. 1 (2011): 96-115.
[22] Sara Pugach, "Eleven Nigerian Students in Cold War East Germany: Visions of Science, Modernity, and Decolonisation," *Journal of Contemporary History* 54, no. 3 (2019): 553-555.

colonization and proving a path out of it.[23] However, Eastern Europeans were not necessarily Moscow's "scavengers," to use Austin Jersild's term, but individuals, providing industrial equipment, sending planning experts, or selling prefabricated components.[24] "East" to "South" exchange complicated their spatially separate imaginings.

Trade and economic relations between East and South saw spaces created and action conducted outside Cold War geopolitics. Initially, Eastern Europeans maintained the Soviet system of soft loans rather than exchanges in hard currency, but pressure from Western competitors compelled participation in international regulatory institutions, Comecon membership gradually superseded by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).[25] For instance, the GDR established a trade agreement with Ethiopia in 1977, swapping coffee for weapons, with details like accumulating debt and interest rates to be sorted later on. After Mengistu Haile Mariam's coup in Ethiopia, and the US departure, the GDR stepped in, eager to mediate the bind of fixed-price guarantees that was hurting Germany's economy after the Brazilian coffee crop failure in 1975. However, ideology ceded to economics. When Ethiopia started trading on the free market, the coffee "reserved" for Germany was its poorest quality. The GDR withdrew and diverted its trucks and infrastructure to Vietnam, suggesting a global pragmatism with which to mediate the splintering of communist and capitalist space. Anne Dietrich concludes that side-lining ideology for profitability was a trajectory for most commercial encounters between "East" and "South."[26] Anna Calori goes further, tracing a "globalist approach" in which to understand the economic disintegration of a Cold War world.[27] Indeed, bilateral relationships were reciprocal, summarized by a Mozambiquan official in 1980: "we do not want underdevelopment and we do not want perpetual economic domination…But there is a way to pull all that behind us…let's do some exchanging."[28] Such "aid shopping" also encouraged First and Second Worlds to meet, as the Third World rejected geopolitics in preference for maximizing the skills individual companies, rather than ideological spatialities, offered.[29]

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[23] David C. Engerman, "The Romance of Economic Development and New Histories of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1 (2004): 23-54.
[24] Austin Jersild, "The Soviet State as Imperial Scavenger: 'Catch Up and Surpass' in the Transnational Socialist Bloc, 1950-1960," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 1 (2011): 109-132.
[25] Anna Calori, Anne-Kristin Hartmetz, Bence Kocsev, and Jan Zofka, eds., *Between East and South: Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 9-13.
[26] Anne Dietrich, "Bartering Within and Outside the CMEA: The GDR's Import of Cuban Fruits and Ethiopian Coffee," *Between East and South: Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War*, eds. Anna Calori, Anne-Kristin Hartmetz, Bence Kocsev, and Jan Zofka (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 197-208.
[27] Anna Calori., "Introduction," *Between East and South: Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War*, eds. Anna Calori, Anne-Kristin Hartmetz, Bence Kocsev, and Jan Zofka (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 19.
[28] Cited in Bodan Jacob and Iolanda Vasile, "Agents of Decolonization? Romanian Activities in Mozambique's Oil and Healthcare Sectors, 1976–1984," *Between East and South: Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War*, eds. Anna Calori, Anne-Kristin Hartmetz, Bence Kocsev, and Jan Zofka (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 145.
[29] David C. Engerman, "The Second World's Third World," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 1 (2011): 196.

In his book, *Architecture in Global Socialism,* Lukasz Stanek explores the architectural dialogue between "East" and "West" in the Middle East. The collaboration between the Polish firm *Archicentre* and the Swedish developer *Skanska* was pragmatic as trade rationalized systems into export-oriented markets. Returning to the example of the Eko Hotel, Stanek stresses the collaboration that was driven not by hard geopolitical strategy, or at least not only that, but the pragmatism of specialization and profitable economic returns. Architects did not necessarily carry ideologies but were motivated by modernity and monumentality. While Josip Broz Tito and Nicolae Ceauşescu both saw architectural export as strategic, and solidarity with the postcolonial world an advantageous dig at Western imperialism, the Global South was a new and more neutral space, hosting and enabling multiple worldmaking projects, but self-consciously exploiting their neutrality for the maximum returns. As one Kuwaiti diplomat insisted in 1983, Cold War spatialities were irrelevant: "Kuwait is a completely open market; no political consideration is given."[30] Stanek suggests that architectural efforts were experiments in socialist worldmaking.[31] But this article challenges his maintenance of geopolitical frameworks. It was not the Socialist world that was architecturally reproduced, but the adaptation of architectural practices according to *global* connections. The cityscapes of the Middle East, as well as the cityscapes of Eastern European cities where Cold War spatial partnerships have subsequently enabled the use of computer-aided design, are a testament to the globality of Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

Ultimately, in architectural and economic partnerships, Eastern and Southern engagements undermined Cold War spatializations. Eastern Europeans were active in countries neither explicitly socialist nor adherents to the socialism of Soviet specifics. Czechoslovakia maintained Angolan connections even after the latter renounced Marxism-Leninism, and the GDR navigated the socialist cosmopolitanism of Zanzibar to access its cloves. Global actions were a cause and consequence of an increasingly global world.[32]

The relationship Eastern Europe had with the "Far East" was initially informed by Cold War spatializations, but these frameworks were likewise gradually eroded. The Soviet Union found receptive partnership with its Asian comrades, sending Eastern Europeans to formalize Sino-Soviet relationships. However, compromises between Chinese priorities and socialist states' ambitions meant Eastern Europeans in the Far East qualified the spatializations they represented, possibly because of the relative novelty of Sino-Soviet space for Eastern European agents, according to Liu Xiaoyuan.[33] For instance, the 1956

[30] Cited in Lukasz Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 240.
[31] Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism*, 25-20, 240-280, 305.
[32] Eric Burton, "Diverging Visions in Revolutionary Spaces: East German Advisers and Revolution from above in Zanzibar, 1964–1970," *Between East and South: Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War*, eds. Anna Calori, Anne-Kristin Hartmetz, Bence Kocsev, and Jan Zofka (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 91-96; and Pavel Szobii, "Czechoslovak Economic Interests in Angola in the 1970s and 1980s," *Between East and South: Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War*, eds. Anna Calori, Anne-Kristin Hartmetz, Bence Kocsev, and Jan Zofka (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 161-171.
[33] Jan Zofka, Péter Vámos, and Sören Urbansky, "Beyond the Kremlin's reach? Eastern Europe and China in the Cold War era," *Cold War History* 18, no. 3 (2018): 252.

Hungarian Performing Arts Ensemble's tour in Shenyang projected its own spatial priorities by including their unofficial *national* anthem, "Rákóczi March," rather than Party-oriented works.[34] Romantic nationalism was a calculated avoidance of Stalinist propaganda art, but it was also a strategic insistence of a folkish intimacy between Hungary and China that avoided, even discarded, the USSR. Playing into the political effervescence of the late 1950s, the Ensemble forged a global connection between two socialist, but also two self-conscious, states. It was the Cold War context that accelerated this potential partnership. Likewise, the twinning project between the Chinese and Czech villages Vinařice and Cangzhao "officially" ended in 1961, but local relations survived the Sino-Soviet split, a testament to the globality of Eastern Europe and the redundancy of spatial separations of Cold War geopolitics. Too much emphasis on geopolitical maneuvering, in academia especially, ignores the personal connections that testify to an alternative narrative of Cold War connectivity.[35] However, it was Yugoslavian globality that best demonstrated the futility of geopolitical spatializations. Tito conducted a "Friendship Tour" in 1958 in anticipation of his premiership of the Non-Aligned Movement which Jawaharlal Nehru hoped "would acquire a wider, universal implementation." Travelling with an "ambition to play a global role," Tito broke down Cold War conceptual geographies.[36] As A. Singham put it, Tito "revealed to the Afro-Asian world the existence of a non-colonial Europe which would be sympathetic to their aspirations. By bringing Europe into the grouping, Yugoslavia helped to create an international movement."[37] The "Great Friendship" ultimately failed but the legacy of its globality, and that of the Czech agriculturalists, surpassed the territoriality of the Cold War.

Eastern Europe did not only go to the Far East on Tito's flag-ship destroyer, the *Galeb,* to challenge the conceptual distance between spaces. Nor was it only a destination for Sino-Soviet solidarity, as print-media imagined (Figure 2). The "Far East" was a repository for alternative global aspirations to be rearticulated through media. Increasingly, films provided a "mechanism to travel," which, despite providing tourism "in which virtual travel confirmed the superiorities of home," also enabled international relations.[38] Just as the West were showing *Fincho,* a color-film exploring the colonial "gift" of industrialization, to indoctrinate Nigerians with British corporatism,[39] Albania used films to forge solidarities and project its national relevance across socialist, if not Soviet, space.[40] Albania's leader, Enver Hoxha, permanently paranoid about his international relevance, forged a version of a

[34] József Böröcz, "Performing socialist Hungary in China: 'modern, Magyar, European,'" *Cold War History* 18, no. 3 (2018): 263.
[35] Daniela Kolenovska, "Sino-Czechoslovak cooperation on agricultural cooperatives: the twinning project," *Cold War History* 18, no. 3 (2018): 294.
[36] Svetozar Rajak, "From Regional Role to Global Undertakings: Yugoslavia in the Early Cold War," *The Balkans in the Cold War*, eds. Svetozar Rajak, Konstantina E. Botsiou, Eirini Karamouzi, and Evanthis Hatzivassiliou (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 66.
[37] A. W. Singham and Shirley Hune, *Non-Alignment in an Age of Alignments* (Joplin, MO: The College Press, 1986), 52.
[38] Gorsuch, *All this is your World,* 168, 185.
[39] Noah Tsika, "Soft Power Cinema: Corporate Sponsorship, Visual Pedagogy, and the Cultural Cold War in West Africa," *The Velvet Light Trap* 73 (2014): 53-54.
[40] Lynn T. White, "Dictators Against Dependence: Albania and Korea," *Asian Politics and Policy* 10, no. 3 (2018): 493-495.

Cultural Revolution that legitimized claims to a semi-colonial origin myth. Emphasizing the National Liberation War, the state-sponsored film *Ngadhnjim mbi vdekjen* (Essay on Death) forged an anti-fascist intimacy between Albania and China. This film dealt with female war heroes, caught by Nazi Germans and tortured for their communist beliefs, a translatable struggle spatially and temporally. *The Great Warrior of Albania Skanderberg* was likewise popular for its demonstration of the technological capacity of socialism.[41] The subject of *The Great Warrior* was the fifteenth-century national hero George Skanderberg, whose legendary legacy of fending off Ottoman attack for two decades was transcribed into the propagandistic artillery of Albanian socialism. These films were simultaneously part of a nationalizing and globalizing process in Albanian international relations. The resistance blueprint, the foundation for most Soviet cinema, was a readily communicable allegory for Albanian relevance, especially after the Sino-Soviet split when the socialist world order was being reoriented. Global Albanian politics, and global Albanian films, eroded the conceptual utility of discrete "Eastern Europe" and "Far East" spaces.

Figure 2: Cover of 1959 edition of Sino-Soviet Friendship Journal.[42]

The spatial entity of Eastern Europe was not only undermined by Eastern Europeans going global but also by the globe coming to them. "Western," "Southern," and "Far Eastern" representatives came carrying and rejecting their conceptual identities. If the West represented self-appointed superiority and consumerism, it came as economists and Birds

[41] Elidor Mehilli, "Globalized Socialism, Nationalized Time: Soviet Films, Albanian Subjects, and Chinese Audiences across the Sino-Soviet Split," *Slavic Review* 77, no. 3 (2018): 623-634.
[42] Taken from Jersild, "The Soviet State as Imperial Scavenger," 119.

Eye sweetcorn. The South, supposedly a people and place ripe for manipulation, came as agitated students disillusioned by the Cold War binary. The Far East came not as noncritical socialist trainees, but with concerns informed by domestic pressures. In every instance, spatializations were overcome in a globalized, dialogic space.

Western capitalism and Eastern communism competed at the domestic level, epitomized by the notorious Kitchen Debate, which reduced geopolitics to a debate about consumption and convenience. Despite every effort made to restrict Soviet subjects' exposure to America's "endeavor to make [them] dissatisfied," Eastern Europe was "visited" by pointed exhibits, according to a US ambassador.[43] At Poznan's International Trade Fair in 1956, the "Made in USA" effort offered an abundance of appliances and vending machines full of Coca-Cola, tapping into the growing dissatisfaction with the scarcity of goods and services in the "sclerotic Soviet East," according to Don Slater.[44] At exhibitions organized with military efficiency and regularity, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Nikita Khrushchev were aware of the changing terms of the battle, the East lapped up the West, on display as attractive time-free actresses (Figure 3). The riotous excitement when the food was given to a spectator at the end of the exhibition contrasted with the Polish bread riots of recent memory. Supermarket shows were matched by the economic "arrival" of the West, in the growth of the European Economic Community (EEC). As the profitability of Comecon membership floundered, and the West dropped its reluctance to operate outside Cold World spatializations, realistic compromises spread continentally. While the USSR held firm against the European family, Eastern European satellites were spatially separate and systematically self-conscious about the value of alternative economic models. By 1978, Czechoslovakia and Hungary had made deals with the EEC on steel, and even Bulgaria, long the Soviet darling, concluded its own the following year. EEC overcame aversions to import quotas, and Eastern European states ceded the necessity of multilateral negotiations, blurring Cold War spatialities. As Angela Romano argues, by the 1970s, "The Cold War order was evidently out-of-date for many governments in Europe."[45] So were its spatial frameworks.

[43] Ambassador cited in Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), vii.
[44] Don Slater, cited in Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*, xiv.
[45] Angela Romano, "Untying Cold War knots: The EEC and Eastern Europe in the long 1970s," *Cold War History* 14, no. 2 (2014): 168.

Figure 3: The "Kitchen of the Future" set, as modelled by students from the University of Zagreb.[46]

The West also came intangibly via smuggled literature, which complicated its separation from the East. Prague became a transit zone for translating Western literature into Eastern languages. Translations, according to Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski, were a "window to the West."[47] But in bringing the West closer, the abstract separation of Eastern and Western spaces was undermined. Sometimes, this was explicitly enlisted into the geopolitical agenda. In the late 1970s, students from Moscow State University initiated an exchange with the University of Michigan, enabling the publication of Mikhail Bulgakov in Western spaces and the translation of American articles in journals including *Problems of Communism* and *Problems of Eastern Europe.* But literature was also apolitical, or a-geopolitical, fiction, a forum for universal values rather than capitalist or socialist ones. For instance, appreciating the disillusioned "jumpers" in Peter Schneider's *Der Mauerspringer* (*The Wall Jumper*) in both East and West Berlin, according to Matthew Miller, undermines the idea of divided spaces via a practice of "aesthetic cognitive mapping." The West and East read each other, and in so doing broke down the "curtainless concrete" separating them.[48] Ultimately, the more the West visited the East, including on paper, the less the conceptual divide between them made sense. Intellectual, pragmatic, and material entanglement, cause and consequence of globalizing forces, attests to the futility of Cold War spatialities.

The Global South also came to Eastern Europe during the Cold War, ostensibly to "learn" socialist modernity. Rather than imitating socialist space, this entanglement changed what socialist space meant, again exposing the globality of Eastern Europe. Comecon's Permanent Commission for the Coordination of Technical Assistance called for contacts

[46] Taken from Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front,* 163.
[47] Cited in Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2003), 200.
[48] Matthew D. Miller, "Divided Berlin and Cold War Aesthetics: Mediating the Wall in Literature and Film," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 55, no. 3 (2019): 268.

with students from "colonial and developing countries."[49] Relations were conducted through the Soviet Friendly Association with the Peoples of Africa, and students came to universities across Eastern Europe. The University of 17th November in Prague hosted only foreign students between 1961 and 1974, and Bratislava specialized in scholarships for Angolan students. Romania, Poland, and East Germany all hosted a not insignificant number of African students in the 1960s, offering technical training and socialist solidarity. The South came East, inspired by Yuri Gagarin's space flight and enamored by the "second most successful economy in the world."[50] However, the racism that Ghanaian students experienced in Kyiv not only curtailed East-South connections but also challenged supposedly color-blind Marxism.[51] Similarly, hosting Nigerian students demanded a confrontation with socialism, Christianity, and race in East Germany, a confrontation that was occasionally violent and often discriminatory, as detailed in the semi-autobiographical account written by the student A. Ohiaeri, *Behind the Iron Curtain.*[52] Soviet-South relations were significantly hampered by incidents of xenophobia, but the experiences of the South in the East continues to encourage Eastern European historians to confront global discourses, blurring the binary of geopolitical blocs.[53] Despite, and because of, the experience of the "South" coming "East," its legacy informs modern scholarship in ways that demonstrate the globality of Eastern Europe in the Cold War.

The dissolution of geopolitical spatializations was also undermined in the intangible arrival of the South. Filmic contacts with Chile nurtured a commonality across geopolitical framings. During the 1970s, the East German film company, Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA), nurtured increasing intimacy first with Bulgarian creatives, but then too with Chileans, sharing a sense of displacement in socialist filmmaking itself informed by the broader socio-political climate. In Aniko Imre's analysis, Eastern Europe and Latin America were common, self-conscious "imaginary location[s] somewhere between civilization and barbarism."[54] Recognizing the potentiality of Third World solidarity, visas were granted to more than 1,500 Chileans to train in various vocational programs in Germany, conditional on their contribution to a broader socialist meta-narrative. Co-productions saw psychological and territorial likeness inscribed in the radio play *Trace of the Disappeared*, the rugged landscape and association with liminality enough to "bridge the distance," according to the East German press, in a film about the real-life murder of Lonquen, "disappeared" for actively resisting fascism. Again, this creative and ideological intimacy testifies the fluidity of Cold War spatialities: *The Passage,* like *Trace*, depended on Bulgarian, German, and Chilean collaboration, with national specialization

[49] Constantin Katsakioris, "Nkrumah's Elite: Ghanaian students in the Soviet Union in the Cold War," *Paedagogica Historica* 57, no. 3 (2021): 260-263.
[50] Robert C. Allen, "The Rise and Decline of the Soviet Economy," *The Canadian Journal of Economies* 34, no. 4 (2001): 861; Szobii, "Czechoslovak Economies," *Between East and South: Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold Wa*r, eds. Anna Calori, Anne-Kristin Hartmetz, Bence Kocsev, and Jan Zofka (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 169-170, 189.
[51] Katsiakoris, "Nkrumah's Elite," 268.
[52] Pugach, "Eleven Nigerian Students," 561-568.
[53] Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, "Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 1 (2009): 9-15.
[54] Cited in Claudia Sandberg, "An East German Chile in Bulgaria: notions of longing and displacement," *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 12, no. 1 (2021): 24.

underwrote the universal interest in socialist male heroes. The exilic journey towards Argentina is transcribed into Eastern European spaces, and Claudia Sandberg argues that such solidarity could "entertain the idea of proletarian internationalism."[55] But the narratives of individual perseverance amid political turmoil during the Cold War "touched everyone," the German director said. Indeed, it touched enough for English, French, and Bulgarian contributors to overcome binary spatialities, thereby rejecting the specificity of an Eastern Europe space at all.[56]

Finally, the Far East came to Eastern Europe, and their exchanges in tangible and intangible ways fractured the spatial frameworks ascribed by Cold War geopolitics. The Bandung Conference of 1955 was an Afro-Asian dialogue confronting the legacies of colonialism and, in contemporary Germany, was understood as "a decision of world importance."[57] Unlike the intimacy with Vietnam in the GDR in which the conceptual hierarchy of big and little socialist brothers was behind the socialist assistance campaign of training workers as industrialists or the "socialist brotherhood" behind the German-Chinese Friendship Month (Figure 4), the coterminous Bandung process revised spatial imaginings. Afro-Asian students arrived with a discourse of postcolonialism that needed accommodating, acknowledged by a public relations campaign: "These students will be the political and intellectual leaders of tomorrow" and their choices "might also determine the future of Europe."[58] However, acknowledgement did not precede action, which the GDR failed to take quickly enough for the 500 African students who migrated West. That the GDR failed to shed its binary perspective on world politics was inappropriate neutrality for politicized students of Pan-Africanism, whose frustration Quinn Slobodian expands as being "a serious critique of superpower rivalry."[59] The GDR failed to accommodate the "affective proximity" of the East and Far East, too distracted by its interplay with its Western competitor. When forty East Germans protested the Tiananmen Square Massacre in Pankow, incensed by (newly permitted) West German television channels, they were issued extortionate fines. This gross misjudgment suggests that China and East Germany were entangled not because of socialist solidarity, but by "a shared struggle against [states] that claimed to govern in their names."[60] By 1980, the world was interconnected, spatialities shrunk by global connectivity and universal discourse.

[55] Sandberg, "An East German Chile in Bulgaria," 32.
[56] Sandberg, "An East German Chile in Bulgaria," 27-29.
[57] West German journalist Herbert von Borch, cited in Quinn Slobodian, "Bandung in Divided Germany: Managing Non-Aligned Politics in East and West, 1955–63," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 4 (2013): 64.
[58] Cited in Slobodian, "Bandung in Divided Germany," 647.
[59] Slobodian, "Bandung in Divided Germany," 657.
[60] Quinn Slobodian, "China is Not Far! Alternative Internationalism and the Tiananmen Square Massacre in East Germany's 1989," *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World*, eds. James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), 319-322.

Figure 4: "Long live the Sino-Soviet Friendship" Painting Featured on the Poster of the German-Chinese Friendship Month, July 1951.[61]

Spatial frameworks were significantly altered during the twentieth century; technology, trade, and transport connected peoples and places across previously insurmountable geographies in exponentially shortening time. The Cold War was predicated on seeing the world according to specific spatialities. However, this article has tried to show that the Cold War world was a Cold War concept, and its spatial frameworks make little sense when one interrogates the cultural, economic, and material exchanges of the period. Representatives of every spatiality interacted in and with Eastern Europe, but in many instances, by virtue of this interaction, the ideological weight of their spatial homeland was eroded. Perhaps nothing better demonstrates that global exchanges eroded the conceptualization of Eastern Europe than the diasporic experience in and after the Cold War. The Chilean exiles that arrived in Bulgaria and East Germany after the 1973 coup changed socialist cinema to a more universally accessible commentary on the disillusionment of socio-political certainty at the end of the Cold War. But it was after 1989 when the diasporic experience confirmed the spatial legacy of the Cold War. Paul Magocsi traces the dialogue diasporas had with their homelands after 1989 and suggests that diasporas were unable to influence the geo-political make-up of post-communist Eastern Europe.[62] This is because diasporic groups carry a nostalgia for an outdated idea of their former homelands, according to Mark

[61] Ivanov, "Long Live the Sino-Soviet Freindship," March 1951, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_Treaty_of_Friendship,_Alliance_and_Mutual_Assistance#/media/File:195103_%E4%B8%AD%E8%8B%8F%E4%B8%A4%E5%9B%BD%E4%BA%BA%E6%B0%91%E5%8F%8B%E8%B0%8A%E4%B8%87%E5%B2%81_%E4%BC%8A%E4%B8%87%E8%AF%BA%E5%A4%AB%E4%BD%9C.png, accessed August 30, 2022. For the poster for the "Friendship Month," see Quinn Slobodian, ed., *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 220.

[62] Paul Robert Magocsi, "In Step or Out of Step with the Times? Central Europe's Diasporas and Their Homelands in 1918 and 1989," *Austrian History Yearbook* 36 (2005): 178-184.

Biondich.[63] Their failure to have dreams realized hints at the globalized consequences of Cold War interconnectivity. They failed to understand the patterns of political organization in a post-1989 context when decades of exchange had shifted spatial priorities. Nation-states, long the ambition of Slovak, Croat, and Slovenian diasporas, was an anachronistic ideal, the European Union, the ultimate erosion of spatial specificity, was the dominant ideal. Petitioning for independent statehood meant, in some ways, Eastern European diasporas were the last Eastern Europeans, but they represented an Eastern Europe that no longer existed.

[63] Mark Biondich, "Some Reflections on the South Slav Diaspora," *Austrian History Yearbook* 36 (2005): 190-192.