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Cold War historiography at the crossroads

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How is the Cold War understood in an expanding and diversifying historiographical field? Conceptual precision and specificity seem to be giving way to a looser understanding of the Cold War as an era that encompassed different although interconnected conflicts and transformations. Some scholars ask for specificity and consistency while current centrifugal trends point to multiple approaches and centres of interest. Diversity is galvanising the field, but historians need to (re)define their object of inquiry and strive for at least a minimum of conceptual clarity. In particular, we should aim at a broad cultural understanding of the Cold War, contextualise it in larger processes of historical change without confusing the two dimensions, and reassess relations between Europe and other Cold War contexts.

An incremental rush of change sandwiched between the electoral triumph of *Solidarność* in June 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 – and significantly pivoted on the 1990 reunification of Germany – left nobody in doubt that the Cold War had ended. Or so we thought at the time, on the basis of a then-conventional understanding of what the Cold War had been, and what it had been about. The systemic and ideological confrontation between capitalism and communism had faded away. The geopolitical partition of Europe was no more. Nuclear deterrence was morphing into a less armed, almost hypothetical version of its

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previous self. Superpower rivalry was rapidly wound up with cascading effects in various areas of the world.

Almost a quarter of a century later, historians are not so much disputing such a reading of the end as expanding, dissecting, and complicating the very notion of a Cold War into a kaleidoscopic multiplication of prospects, contextualisations, methodological approaches, and meanings. We obviously situate the Cold War in longer-term perspectives of international and global transformations.¹ We construct new hierarchies of significance – at times inspired by a rather more problematic presentism – from the long-term legacies that our current perspectives tend to prioritise.² We decentre from a primarily Euro-Atlantic focus to the complex heterogeneity of the global South, and from a close frame on the superpowers' decision-makers to the agency of a variety of actors in Latin America, Asia or Africa.³ And we enlarge the field from the customary subjects of diplomacy, security and ideology onto a bracing assortment of trans-national and domestic, cultural and social, human rights and media, economic and intellectual history approaches.⁴

¹ See, among the many possible examples, Prasenjit Duara, "The Cold War as a historical period: an interpretive essay", *Journal of Global History*, 6, no. 3 (November 2011): 457–480; Silvio Pons, *The Global Revolution. A History of International Communism 1971–1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Michael H. Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 2007).

² For instance, Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012) or Walter L. Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy. National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

³ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Robert J. McMahon, ed., *The Cold War in the Third World* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Matthew J. Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Artemy M. Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko, eds. *The End of the Cold War and the Third World: New Perspectives on Regional Conflict*. (London-New York: Routledge, 2011); Sue Onslow, ed., *Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Liberation*. (London: Routledge, 2009); Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, ed. *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945–1991* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat, eds., *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); G. M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser. *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁴ Akira Iriye, ed., *Global Interdependence: The World after 1945* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014); John Robert McNeill and Corinna R. Unger, eds., *Environmental Histories of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.- New York: German Historical Institute; Cambridge University Press, 2010); Heonik Kwon, *The Other Cold War*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Philip E. Muehlenbeck, ed., *Race, Ethnicity, and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012); Sarah B. Snyder, "Bringing the Transnational In: Writing Human Rights into the International History of the Cold War", *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 24, no. 1 (2013): 100–116; Sandrine Kott, "Par-delà la guerre froide. Les organisations internationales et les circulations Est-Ouest (1947–1973)", *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 109, no. 1 (2011): 142–154; Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shepard*

Thus we seem to maintain, at least implicitly, a shared understanding of the Cold War's outer perimeter, as an East-West conflict of increasingly global reach that burst out in the aftermath of the Second World War to die away around 1989. Within the contours of this rough working definition and chronology, however, the very subject appears to be growing more and more indeterminate and amorphous, as the traditional paradigm of a highly specific bipolar conflict (whether realist-based on security rivalry or pivoted on the projection of ideological and socio-economic models) is superseded by a complex fabric of disparate interactions (local, national, transnational and global) with multiple actors operating in many intersecting fields, and assorted interpretative paradigms often mixed together.

There is no doubt that by doing so we are considerably broadening historical knowledge of Cold War-related transformations in a geographically and figuratively expanding space. We are following new paths, creating new links and mixing ingredients into unprecedented concoctions.

The question is, are we also diluting any notion of the Cold War as a complex and yet unified, identifiable subject of inquiry? Can we still constructively speak to each other, rather than past each other, if 'Cold War' grows to encompass the architecture of Hilton hotels⁵ as well as the Berlin Wall, American kitchen technology⁶ no less than American sovietology⁷, Latin America's domestic conflicts⁸ just as much as the Kremlin's grand strategy?⁹ Put it another way, are we still dealing with one Cold War or many¹⁰, and how do they relate to each other? Are we expanding Cold War history or building a multifaceted history of international, transnational and global change through the second half of the twentieth century, a period that we keep referring to as

Footnote 4 continued

Stone Between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Roland Végső, *The Naked Communist: Cold War Modernism and the Politics of Popular Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013); James Schwoch, *Global TV: New media and the Cold War, 1946–69* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Patrick Major and Rana Mitter, eds., *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London: Frank Cass, 2004); Ronnie D. Lipschutz, *Cold War Fantasies: Film, Fiction, and Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Annette Vowinckel, Marcus M. Payk and Thomas Lindenberger, eds. *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012.

⁵ Annabel Jane Wharton, *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001).

⁶ Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann, eds., *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

⁷ David C. Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁸ Greg Grandin and G. M. Joseph, eds., *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America's Long Cold War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁹ V. M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

¹⁰ A claim made rather bafflingly, when discussing the mixture of confrontation and cooperation during the Cold War era, by Jeremy Suri, "Conflict and Co-operation in the Cold War: New Directions in Contemporary Historical Research," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46, no. 1 (2011): 5–9.

the Cold War era even though we no longer agree on the overarching centrality of the notion itself?

The editors of the *Cambridge History of the Cold War*¹¹ evidently thought that a wide-ranging, inclusive, pluralistic interpretation of Cold War history was not only sustainable but also inescapable. By and large, they were proved right. Taken together, the essays in the three volumes of the *CHCW* are, and presumably will be for some time to come, the main reference point to assess the state of an expanding field. Economics and technology, culture and ideology, science and strategy, diplomacy and intellectual history combine in a multifaceted and duly global reading of an extended Cold War that broadens its reach while still maintaining – at least in my reading – a perceptible identity as antagonistic dichotomy.

Other scholars, while praising the *CHCW* for its masterful treatment of many topics and its open-ended, expansive reading of what constitutes, or contributes to, Cold War history, have pointed out the ‘substantial cost’ of the ‘intellectual and methodological pluralism’ that is diluting ‘the meaning of “Cold War” as a concept’ to the point ‘that “Cold War” lurks everywhere and can be applied to almost everything, from high politics to the history of everyday life, from actions of statesmen to the mundane’. When surveying the broader field, Holger Nehring concludes that ‘Cold War studies have lost a clear object of enquiry and a clear conceptualisation of what it is that constitutes their subject’.¹²

In a similar but blunter vein, Lawrence Freedman warns us against substituting a specific meaning of the Cold War with an ecumenical view of it as ‘as an epoch’, so that it becomes ‘possible to discuss almost everything that happened everywhere between 1945 and 1991 as part of one event’. The need left ‘unfulfilled’ by the *CHCW*, he argues, is ‘to untangle the Cold War from all the other strands of twentieth-century history, work out what was distinctive and special about it, and then assess how it interacted with all the other strands’.¹³

Thus, we are dealing with two interconnected problems. The first concerns the distinguishing core of the Cold War. A few years ago, Anders Stephanson suggested a conceptual definition pivoted on the mutual denial of legitimacy by two adversaries locked in a mortal struggle for the liquidation of the other, thus a total-war condition short of actual direct combat¹⁴. Although accurately applicable to the 1945–1963 period – after which Stephanson no longer sees a Cold War but a much more customary great power rivalry – such a strict definition embraced only Washington and Moscow, with their respective alliances as mere appendages. Besides, it would not

¹¹ Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹² Holger Nehring, “What Was the Cold War?” *The English Historical Review* 127, no. 527 (August 2012), 923.

¹³ Lawrence D. Freedman, “Frostbitten, decoding the Cold War 20 years later,” *Foreign Affairs*, 89, no. 2 (March/April 2010), at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66033/lawrence-d-freedman/frostbitten>, accessed 17 May 2014.

¹⁴ Anders Stephanson, “Fourteen Notes on the Very Concept of a Cold War”, in *Rethinking Geopolitics*, ed. Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby (New York: Routledge, 1999): 62–85.

account for the processes of mutual recognition, negotiation and exchange that grew to dominate in the 1970s, and that brought international relation specialists and a few historians to reinterpret the Cold War as a stable order, a 'long peace'.¹⁵

Both Anders Stephanson's concept and the 'long peace' formula likely appeared too radical or too partial and circumscribed to be usable and were set aside by most historians, who settled instead for a pragmatic, functional – and most often implicit – notion of the Cold War as an East-West antagonism rooted in irreconcilable ideologies, structured on geographical partition and strategic deterrence, and fought in a variety of spheres (from alliance diplomacy and political manipulation to development projects, from cultural and intellectual confrontations all the way to bloody 'proxy wars' in allegedly 'peripheral' areas). This operational consensus cuts across most of the *CHCW* essays and is articulated in two of its most valuable contributions. Robert Jervis anchors our understanding of the Cold War to 'the power of identities and the related fact that each side understood the Cold War as a clash of social systems'.¹⁶ David Engerman argues that the Cold War was 'at its root a battle of ideas', of messianic and universalist claims to progress whose parallel and mutually exclusive character meant that 'permanent coexistence was impossible'.¹⁷

This broad but distinct focus on ideas, identities, and the contest for cultural hegemony allows for an inclusive characterisation of the Cold War as an all-round strategic and ideological conflict for defining, steering, and shaping the future, first of Europe and then – at least hypothetically – of the world. It might leave unsatisfied those who prioritise the historical turning point of the nuclear threat, and its ensuing stalemate, as well the long-term militarisation of states and societies.¹⁸ But neither of these factors ought necessarily to be sidelined by an approach pivoted on the clash of ideas and social systems. In each camp, political and cultural élites articulated their fear of war, and the corresponding strategies to prevent and deter it, not only in relation to the adversary's military means and posture but to their own deeply held convictions about the inherently expansive and dangerous nature of the opposite system, symptomatically perceived as 'totalitarian' or 'imperialistic'. Even though nuclear strategies had a technical and intellectual specificity of their own, the key factor that made the Cold War a dynamic, self-reproducing antagonism – even when the shared interest at stabilising mutual deterrence seemingly called for an agreed,

¹⁵ John L. Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹⁶ Robert Jervis, "Identity and the Cold War", *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 2, 33. See also Robert Jervis, "Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?", *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 36–60.

¹⁷ David C. Engerman, "Ideology and the origins of the Cold War, 1917–1962", *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 1, 20 and 24.

¹⁸ Freedman, "Frostbitten", criticises the *CHCW* in particular for neglecting or at least downplaying the military dimension of the conflict.

durable order – was the fear of uncontrolled change in the social, economic, political, and cultural realm.¹⁹

The dominance each side tried to achieve was not so much on material assets, resources or physical spaces (although these were often very important) as on the vectors of historical change, be they the post-war societal demand for economic security and well being or the quest for equality and independence. At its core, the contest was about harnessing and steering the ‘wind[s] of change’²⁰, so as to prevent either the dreaded ‘spread of Communism’ or the ‘imperialistic subjugation’ of socialist and anti-colonial movements. The peculiarity of the Cold War was not only that it threatened mutual extinction and could therefore not be allowed to escalate to direct war, or that it fielded enormous arsenals to accomplish such a goal, but that it could not achieve peace either, since each side ultimately aimed not at accommodation but at gaining advantage and traction in the struggle for the shape of future history.

When seen as a contest for hegemony, as a struggle for mastering change without blowing up the planet (but at considerable risk of doing so nonetheless), the Cold War fully retains ‘its war-like character’ as a key, defining feature of its origins and development as a deep East-West antagonism, rather than being reconfigured as a narrative of competing modernisation projects or a paradigm of military interventions in the South.²¹ This approach also allows us to maintain the critical continuum with the Second World War and the Depression as the intellectual matrixes that informed not only the analytical and strategic underpinnings of policy-making (internationally and domestically, with societal mobilisation and the expansion of national security states), but also the cultural and emotional imagination of post-war societies in Europe, North America, and Japan. One of the challenges of articulating a cultural history of a conflict spanning four decades resides in its changing meaning across time and generations. Initially rationalised, and to a large extent publicly accepted, as the dire means to avoid a Third World War without capitulating to nightmarish scenarios of either communism or capitalism, the Cold War then morphed into the over-armed ‘balance of terror’ that subsequent generations grew to perceive not as the least bad option but as the supreme danger itself, inherently and senselessly risky, violent and suffocating.²²

¹⁹ A convincing instance of this approach can be found in Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), who emphasises the interplay of strategic views and cultural assumptions, as well as the uncertainties and fears at the core of Cold War strategies and decisions.

²⁰ The metaphor used by British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in his 1960 speech in Cape Town, referring to African demands for independence, was only the most resonant of many similes with natural forces of change (tides, floods, flows, etc.) used to convey the compelling character of pressures for societal transformation. It reverberated widely in the language of the media and in Western popular culture, from music and cinema to science fiction.

²¹ Here I fully agree with the warning by Nehring, “What Was the Cold War”, (the quote is from p. 923) that current global readings of the Cold War are at risk of making the notion meaningless if they lose sight of its core antagonistic nature.

²² On efforts to write cultural histories of the Cold War and historicise its multiple, shifting meanings and perceptions, see Patrick Major and Rana Mitter, “Culture”, in *Palgrave Advances in Cold War History*,

Even more important in the current historiographical landscape, this approach can bridge the increasing gap between a Euro-Atlantic-centred understanding of the Cold War limited to the actions of the more powerful states, and a global one pivoted on a North to South dynamic that often ends up paradoxically downplaying the specificity, relevance and agency of struggles and transformations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. If the former remains stuck in a diplomatic history of great powers' games, the latter often forgets Matthew Connelly's plea to 'take off the Cold War lens' and study each actor and tension in its own terms.²³ Because it was the constantly renewed Cold War antagonistic dynamism that propelled the expansion on a global scale of imperial formations (very diverse, asymmetrical, and yet to a certain extent mirroring each other) striving for domination and hegemony over transformations that they neither initiated nor controlled, however much they tried to manipulate them.

Thus, I find myself entirely on the side of Odd Arne Westad's plea for a 'pluralist approach' to the 'histories of the Cold War'. He uses the metaphor of the elephant – a big, complex beast that should not be reduced to one of its constituent parts by focusing too closely and exclusively on the latter – to further the ongoing internationalisation and diversification of international history by its encounter with social, cultural, and intellectual history.²⁴ His argument is directed against the 'relentlessly US-centered'²⁵ reductionism of most American historiography of the Cold War, and specifically at Anders Stephanson's call for a 'rigorous centering' of historical understanding of the Cold War as 'the manner in which the United States was able in peacetime to enter into the world of international politics on a global scale in the name of conducting a war short of actual war that had allegedly been declared by "international Communism"'.²⁶ One might add here that it is not only in Cold War studies that American historiography continues to show the formidable 'gravitational

Footnote 22 continued

ed. Saki R. Dokrill and Geraint Hughes (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 240–262; Joel Isaac and Duncan Bell, "Introduction", in *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War*, ed. Isaac and Bell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 3–16; Dan Stone, "Cold War Ideas", *Contemporary European History* 22, no. 4 (2013): 675–686.

²³ Matthew Connelly, "Taking off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North–South Conflict during the Algerian War of Independence", *American Historical Review*, 105, no. 3 (2000): 739–69. Among other studies that make the same precious methodological point see Daniel Speich, "The Kenyan Style of 'African Socialism': Developmental Knowledge Claims and the Explanatory Limits of the Cold War", *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 3 (June 2009): 449–65; Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.–Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza, eds. *De-centering Cold War History. Local and Global Change* (London–New York: Routledge, 2013).

²⁴ Odd Arne Westad, "Exploring the Histories of the Cold War. A Pluralist Approach", *Uncertain Empire*, 51–59.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁶ Anders Stephanson, "Cold War Degree Zero", *Uncertain Empire*, 42 and 34. See also Anders Stephanson, "The Cold War considered as a U.S. project", in *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War*, eds. Silvio Pons and Federico Romero (London: Frank Cass, 2005): 52–67.

pull' of a 'methodological nationalism'. It drives even recent, post-exceptionalist efforts to situate American history in the world and deal with its imperial dimension, most often by tracking the expansion of the United States in the outer world in ways that do not transcend the nation as 'the reason of the journey' but simply enlarge (and enrich, to be sure) its remit.²⁷

Westad's elephant ushers in the second problem I want to discuss. If the task at hand is the exploration of the various strands and dimensions of international and global history that intersected with the Cold War – so as to historicise it, contextualise it, and account for its permutations over time and space – we should simultaneously maintain, or reconstruct, usable hierarchies of historical relevance. Just as we do not want to misconstrue the tail, or tusk, for the entire beast, so we ought not to overlook those vital organs without which the elephant simply could not subsist.

The problem, of course, is relevance for what, and to whom. At least ever since Arne Westad published his *Global Cold War* in 2005, scholarship on the Cold War has been engaged in a contorted discussion – not always explicit, not often clear – about its physical and figurative boundaries, shifting emphases on core and periphery, its legacy and significance for 'the making of our times'.²⁸ In particular, it catalysed a long-brewing uncertainty about the relative place and influence of the Cold War vis-à-vis far-reaching processes of international change in the late twentieth century and beyond. The recent *Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* picks up the challenge and purposely strives to explore the connections between the Cold War and 'the broader context and contours of global political, economic, social, and cultural developments' while maintaining them analytically separate. Obviously aware of the danger of collapsing the two dimensions in an indistinct global haze, or an equally nebulous, sprawling reading of the Cold War, its editors aim at assessing their mutual influences and evaluating 'both the extent and the limits of the cold war's reach into world history'.²⁹

The various strands are probably best disaggregated and distinguished. What matters most in contemporary terms, for the shape and trends of the world we live in, is not necessarily what mattered in the Cold War. In a long-term perspective, the demise of colonialism and the formation of independent states in Africa and Asia, the 'creation of an alternative moral universe'³⁰ premised on human equality rather than racial hierarchy, the global expansion of capitalism, the resurgence of China and Asia are all processes of far greater historical significance than the Cold War. The latter no doubt had an influence in drawing the contours and setting the pace of some of those

²⁷ Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World", *American Historical Review*, 116, no. 5 (2011): 1364.

²⁸ Westad, *The Global Cold War*.

²⁹ Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde, "Introduction", in *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, eds. Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1 and 2. A similar attempt at exploring interconnections without confounding the two categories of historical processes is visible also in Francis J. Gavin and Mark Atwood Lawrence, eds., *Beyond the Cold War: Lyndon Johnson and the New Global Challenges of the 1960s* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

³⁰ Cary Fraser, "Decolonization and the cold war", *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, 471.

processes – above all in shaping the international state system and the grid of challenges and opportunities within which they grew – but it did not determine them. What it directly bequeathed to the post-Cold War world were some of the institutional arrangements and practices that have defined peace in Europe, the disappearance of Communism as a world actor, and the full-fledged globalisation of American power. It might very well be that in 20 or 30 years the second half of the twentieth century will be investigated and understood in completely different historical terms that marginalise the Cold War as an expansive, bloody but relatively inconsequential conflict, with the term itself reduced to a quaint moniker for the contemporaries' understanding of their own time³¹.

Another perspective concerns the impact and consequences of the Cold War on what used to be considered the 'Third World', and therefore its direct and indirect influence in channelling those transformations that have grown to define the contemporary world. The fast-growing literature on the topic seems for the moment to advance three – not entirely uncontroversial – points. The first is undisputed and obvious in its tragic dimension. The 'long peace' in the Euro-Atlantic North went hand in hand with highly destructive wars in the global South, which accounted for almost all of the estimated 20 million war casualties in the period of 1945–90. In several cases, those intense and prolonged conflicts inflicted suffering of staggering proportions and had profound demographic, economic, social, and ecological consequences.

The second point descends directly from the previous one. The sheer destructiveness of the encounter between Cold War rivalry and Third World tensions has led to a disproportionate concentration of historical scholarship on armed conflicts. We have far more international history studies on Vietnam than on India and Brazil combined, on the superpowers' interventions in specific countries than on the broad dynamics that arguably had more profound effects on the Third World during and beyond the Cold War era: population growth and migrations, economic and environmental transformations, interaction with financial institutions, international organisations and transnational actors.

Combined with the vastly unequal availability of archival, linguistic and other scholarly resources, this approach has given us a vast knowledge of the motivations, mechanisms, and dynamics with which the US, the USSR and their allies in many instances 'took demonic possession of a local transition' to 'infiltrate and brutalize a decolonization process'.³² Inevitably, knowledge of the other side of the coin – the actors of local and national conflicts, their agency, culture, and politics – is more

³¹ Akira Iriye analyses "the place of the cold war in contemporary history" (30) in his "Historicizing the cold war", *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, 15–31. Current challenges and possibilities for international history are also discussed by David Reynolds, "From the Transatlantic to the Transnational: Reflections on the Changing Shape of International History," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 24, no. 1 (2013): 134–148.

³² Jason C. Parker, "Decolonization, the Cold War, and the post-Columbian era", *The Cold War in the Third World*, 125, 131. See also the Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

dispersed and fragmented, and the various cases can hardly be expected to be unified in a single interpretative framework embracing such widely different contexts as Guatemala and Indonesia, Angola and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the recent growth of historical scholarship on Third World issues – whether its focus is on politics, race, identity, religion, or economics – is so fast that we are reaching a critical mass of studies on the intersections with Cold War antagonism.³³

The picture that emerges out of it is pivoted on two broad conclusions. One is that American or Soviet interventionism in Third World conflicts aimed at strengthening each side in geopolitical terms but above all at ‘channelling [...] the flow of change’³⁴, since they ‘came to see in the dominant trends throughout the developing regions a litmus test of their core ideas about the nature and direction of historical change’.³⁵ Material interests, whether conceived in strategic or economic terms, certainly mattered but the key driver of interventionism originated from ‘an ideological contest rooted in divergent visions of modernity and social change, in which the direction of decolonization, development, and state building served as a key terrain of conflict’.³⁶ The other one is that Cold War antagonism did not create Third World conflicts, but in many – indeed most – instances it exacerbated them by pouring in weapons, money, and advisors, connecting local actors to actual networks and powerful imageries of larger historical trends, raising the stakes. In short, ‘the Cold War played a galvanizing role’ in Third World conflicts rather than a causative one.³⁷ What is far more important and inspiring, many of these studies are foregrounding local and national protagonists, be they social and political movements, ‘postcolonial elites [who] exploited geopolitical tensions’³⁸ to secure their power and promote their own brand of national development, or ‘political entrepreneurs’ who appropriated and adapted Cold War discourses, creating a self-serving, ‘new language of legitimacy’.³⁹ We are at long last moving away from a unilateral, North-to-South view of destructive change wrought by Cold War imperatives upon a passive, merely victimised (or heroic) Third World, and entering instead a more complex realm of process, of dynamic interactions among a

³³ For up to date overviews see Mahon, *The Cold War in the Third World*; Kalinovsky and Radchenko, *The End of the Cold War and the Third World*; Muehlenbeck, *Race, Ethnicity, and the Cold War*; and the essays in Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* by Mark Philip Bradley, “Decolonization, the Global South and the Cold War, 1919–1962”, vol. 1, 464–485; Michael Latham, “The Cold War in the Third World, 1963–1975”, vol. 2, 258–279; Chen Jian, “China and the Cold War after Mao”, vol. 3, 181–200; John A. Coatsworth, “The Cold War in Central America, 1975–1991”, vol. 3, 201–221; Chris Saunders and Sue Onslow, “The Cold War and southern Africa, 1976–1990”, vol 3, 222–243.

³⁴ Duara. “The Cold War as a historical period”, cit., 479.

³⁵ Robert J. McMahon, “Introduction”, *The Cold War in the Third World*, 3.

³⁶ Bradley R. Simpson “Southeast Asia and the Cold War”, *The Cold War in the Third World*, 49.

³⁷ McMahon, “Introduction”, 7.

³⁸ Jeffrey James Byrne “Africa’s Cold War”, *The Cold War in the Third World*, 117.

³⁹ Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza, *Introduction*, in *De-centering Cold War History*, eds. J.E. Pieper Mooney and F. Lanza, 4.

variety of large and small, unequal but active agents of historical transformation, often with unforeseen outcomes.⁴⁰

The third point emerging from the literature on the global Cold War is the momentous, disruptive, transformative (but also very uneven) encounter of much of the Third World with the competing Cold War ideologies of modernisation projected upon it by East and West with massive (but vastly unequal) financial, military, technical, and cultural resources. Firmly placed at the centre of Westad's *Global Cold War* narrative and interpretation, this encounter dominates our understanding of the central years of the Cold War. It was preceded by a period of relative open-endedness, during which the competing pressures of decolonisation and imperial resistance (and restructuring) battled on uncertain ground, with several outcomes still possible.⁴¹ And it would be followed, in the last 15 years of the bipolar era, by the fragmentation of any unified concept of the Third World under the converging pressures of expanding international markets and the political economy of debt managed by international (i.e. Western) financial institutions.

In between, from the late 1950s to the early 1970s, Cold War anxieties projected upon the decolonising South an American ideology of modernisation that reconfigured the imperial civilising mission as a non-colonial discourse pivoted on building independent (but as closely aligned as possible) national developmental states.⁴² The Soviets, on the other hand, purported to offer the newly independent elites – first by example and then increasingly by means of technical and military aid – the path to build industrialising states capable of achieving full independence from Western imperialism and advance

⁴⁰ See also, among the many possible examples, Tanya Harmer, "Fractious Allies: Chile, the United States, and the Cold War, 1973–76", in *Diplomatic History*, 37, no. 1 (2013): 109–143; Max Paul Friedman, "Retiring the Puppets, Bringing Latin America Back In: Recent Scholarship on United States–Latin American Relations," *Diplomatic History*, 27, no. 5 (2003): 621–636; Geert Van Goethem and Robert A. Waters Jr., eds., *American Labor's Global Ambassadors: The International History of the AFL-CIO during the Cold War*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁴¹ Frederick Cooper, "Alternatives to Nationalism in West Africa, 1945–1960", in *Elites and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Jost Dulffer and Marc Frey (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 110–137.

⁴² See Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David C. Engerman, Nils Hilman, Mark Haefele, and Michael E. Latham, eds., *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Amanda Kay McVety, *Enlightened Aid: U.S. Development as Foreign Aid Policy in Ethiopia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Robert B. Rakove *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Amy L. S. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945–1965* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2006).

towards socialism. Far less endowed and efficient than their Western rivals, they spawned authoritarian one-party states far more than economic growth.⁴³

Competing Cold War fears, visions and strategies thus converged on policies and plans (always developed with, and frequently re-engineered by, sections of the local elites) to uproot the peasantry – sometime literally, often with violence – transcend its cultural and religious universe in the positivistic rationalism of the social sciences, and replace the rural world with the modernity of industrial economics, urbanisation, administrative uniformity.⁴⁴ Thus, the Cold War urge to control and steer change in the global South ‘provided the frame of reference in which a novel relationship between imperialism and nationalism sought to accommodate developments such as decolonisation and the global rights revolution; in turn, this accommodation generated developmentalism, multiculturalism, militarism, and new ideologies and modes of identity formation’.⁴⁵

Much still remains to be done – to be sure – to achieve a nuanced, multifaceted, differentiated picture of the many ways in which these projections of Cold War logic and anxieties actually impacted upon Third World countries or regions, of their dynamics on the ground, of their long-term outcomes. Several recent studies indicate that the reconfiguration of local traditions, the legacies of colonial development, the mix of resistance and compromise spawned in each region, the national elites’ adaptation – and often mixing – of different modernisation recipes and cultures, as well as their own power struggles, mattered far more than imported theories and practices, and therefore that ‘the explanatory power of the Cold War seems limited’ if we want to understand how ‘a multitude of regional modernities unfolded’.⁴⁶

And yet, the long-term consequences and relevance of the global Cold War – even aside from its sheer destructiveness – are clear enough at the macro level, and are

⁴³ David C. Engerman, “The Second World’s Third World”, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 12, no. 1 (Winter 2011), pp. 183–211; Steven G. Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Massimiliano Trentin, “Modernization as State-Building: The Two Germanies in Syria, 1962–1972,” *Diplomatic History*, 33, no. 3 (2009): 487–505; Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956–1964* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Ragna Boden, “Cold War Economics: Soviet Aid to Indonesia,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 10, no. 3 (2008): 110–28; Alessandro Iandolo, “The rise and fall of the ‘Soviet Model of Development’ in West Africa, 1957–64,” *Cold War History* 12, no. 4 (November 2012): 683–704; Jeremy Friedman, “Soviet Policy in the Developing World and the Chinese Challenge in the 1960s,” *Cold War History* 10, no. 2 (2010): 247–272.

⁴⁴ Nick Cullather, “The War on the Peasant: The United States and the Third World”, *The Cold War in the Third World*, 192–207, and Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 396–402.

⁴⁵ Duara, “The Cold War as a historical period”, 457–458. See also Bertrand Badie, *The Imported State. The Westernization of the Political Order* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁴⁶ Speich, “The Kenyan Style of ‘African Socialism’”, 465, 466. See also Jessica Stites Mor, ed., *Human Rights and Transnational Solidarity in Cold War Latin America* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), and in *American Labor’s Global Ambassadors*, eds. Van Goethem and Waters, the essays by Larissa Rosa Corrêa, “‘Democracy and Freedom’ in Brazilian Trade Unionism during the Civil-Military Dictatorship”: 177–200, Angela Vergara, “Chilean Workers and the U.S. Labor Movement”: 201–215, Dustin Walcher, “Reforming Latin American Labor”: 123–136.

plainly at the roots of several of today's international tensions and incongruities. In this respect, the value and acquisitions of the global turn in international history, and specifically of the focus on the global Cold War, are beyond dispute.

Much less convincing is the inference – rarely articulated in explicit terms but often implied in the literature on the global Cold War – that since the Third World had become the most violent arena of bipolar rivalry after the original European battleground had stabilised, it follows that the global dimension had then become the decisive one for the Cold War itself. I would argue instead that the projection of bipolar antagonism in the Third World, for all its violence and disruption, had much less impact and relevance for the Cold War outcome than its promoters in Washington and Moscow had initially assumed. This ineffectiveness emphasises the unredeemable tragedy of the global extension of the Cold War, perhaps best exemplified by the enormously futile American war on Vietnam.

I suggest that we revisit and re-emphasise the place of Europe in the global Cold War. There is not much controversy, of course, about the essentially European origins of the conflict. In the first place because it originated there from incompatible views on the way to overcome the continent's long crisis and, in particular, to demarcate Germany's place and role in it. This was the very heart of the elephant, and would remain so even under a relatively stabilised partition. As a product – not necessarily inevitable but hardly refutable – of the continent's history, the Cold War was the clash between two new world powers just as much as the last conflict for Europe, as I have argued elsewhere.⁴⁷

Second, the shape the Cold War assumed in its native European theatre defined much of its long-lasting structure and grammar: territorial partition with deep socio-economic separation, expansive alliance systems with vast military structures, fierce ideological confrontation and societal mobilisation, tight intra-bloc connections and institutionalised interdependencies.

Third, and perhaps more crucial, the policies and procedures devised for structuring, connecting, consolidating and securing each bloc constructed views of the Cold War conflict itself that revolved around a profound, fundamental interconnection between the international and domestic spheres, in their cultural representations no less than in actual policies. Thence the centrality of perceptions of multiple and multilayered interdependencies, of notions of 'domino' effects, and of readings of the Cold War as a struggle for 'hearts and minds', a contest for hegemonic influence on the very fabric of societies and their patterns of 'development'.

In this respect, the early success of containment appears as the first key factor that moulded the future course of the Cold War. The restoration of a viable and increasingly consensual capitalism in Western Europe, with the cultural defeat of Marxist-based options for social change and the marginalisation of Soviet influence outside its own sphere, built a long-lasting post-war landscape that circumscribed the

⁴⁷ Federico Romero, *Storia della guerra fredda. L'ultimo conflitto per l'Europa* (Torino: Einaudi, 2009). The Italian adjective *ultimo* covers the semantic ground of both *last* and *latest*, but not – curiously enough – of the English *ultimate*.

Cold War battlefield. Without instability and fragmentation of the West, Communism began to lose its strategic, intellectual and emotional claim on the future, and saw its grip on the present sharply circumscribed. Once denied the possibility of capitalising on capitalism's vulnerabilities and penetrating Western fragilities, the Soviets found themselves cornered in the management of an increasingly static and unwieldy empire while hoping for a Third World anti-imperial upheaval capable of overturning a very unfavourable 'correlation of forces'.⁴⁸

The latter prospect no doubt ascended to a primary concern in Washington and permeated both Eastern and Western interrogatives on Cold War scenarios from the mid-1950s until approximately the mid-1970s. But did this refocusing on the global, on the imagined (and as consequence often devastated) battlefields of a larger Cold War scattered around Latin America, Asia and Africa actually change the balance of bipolar antagonism? The burgeoning literature on the Sino-Soviet split and China's place in the Cold War is clearly telling us that the Socialist camp lost whatever chance it might have had to project hegemony on the Third World as its unity fragmented, and that the realignment of China and its subsequent option for a capitalist path dealt the heaviest blow to the strategic and ideological prospects of any anti-Western option.⁴⁹ No single Third World conflict had, or could have had, a decisive role in altering the overall balance of power or the perception of bipolar antagonism's future course (perhaps with the partial exception of the influence the war in Afghanistan might have had on Gorbachev's final re-thinking of the Soviet role and strategy).

⁴⁸ After the long season of Cold War historiography focused on the post-war reconstruction of Europe, recent contributions locate and reconceive Europe's history in the broader international context, and investigate long-term patterns of democratic stabilisation and cultural change. See in particular Holger Nehring and Helge Pharo, "Introduction: A Peaceful Europe? Negotiating Peace in the Twentieth Century", *Contemporary European History* 17, no. 3 (2008): 277–99; Patricia Clavin, "Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts", *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2010): 624–640; Martin Conway, "The Rise and Fall of Western Europe's Democratic Age, 1945–1973", in *Contemporary European History*, 13, no. 1 (2004), pp 67–88; Holger Nehring, *Politics of Security: British and West German Protest Movements and the Early Cold War, 1945–1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch and David Feldman, eds., *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945–1949* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Elisabetta Bini, *La potente benzina italiana. Guerra fredda e consumi di massa tra Italia, Stati Uniti e Terzo Mondo (1945–1973)*, (Roma: Carocci, 2013); Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, "Shallow Waves and Deeper Currents: The US Experience in Greece, 1947–1961. Policies, Historicity, and the Cultural Dimension," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 1 (2014): 83–110; Kaeten Mistry, *The United States, Italy and the Origins of the Cold War: Waging Political Warfare, 1945–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁴⁹ Chen Jian "China, the Third World, and the Cold War", *The Cold War in the Third World*, 85–100; Chen Jian, "China and the Cold War after Mao", *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 3, 181–200; Jeremy Friedman, "Soviet policy in the developing world and the Chinese challenge in the 1960s", *Cold War History*, 10, no. 2 (2010), 247–272; Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962–1967* (Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2009); Zhihua Shen and Danhui Li, *After Learning to One Side: China and Its Allies in the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

Nor did the Cold War's global expansion eliminate the centrality that Europe maintained in the strategic visions of the two antagonists. However seemingly stable in its partition, Europe remained the centre of gravity throughout, symbolically and strategically. It was the only area whose delicately constructed and massively fortified balance each side deemed so fundamental as to contemplate a virtually automatic escalation to total nuclear war in order to preserve it. Nowhere else was a hypothetical withdrawal or loss automatically equated to an overall strategic defeat in the Cold War, a prospect neither side would contemplate since it imagined it – until Gorbachev – as historical apocalypse.

And then of course Europe came back to centre-stage with the unmaking of superpowers' détente and the incipient crisis of the Soviet empire, first in Poland and then elsewhere. There is a fairly broad consensus on the compelling influence that the globalisation of Western capitalism from the 1970s, together with the eclipse of Third World revolutionary prospects, played in isolating the Soviet empire, exasperating its economic predicaments and legitimising the notion of its incipient obsolescence, which Ronald Reagan skilfully played upon.⁵⁰ Within such broad context, however, the key dynamics that propelled the crisis of the Socialist system, all the way to its collapse in 1989, appear to increasingly re-centre the Cold War's fortunes in its original European cradle.

The emerging politics of human rights fostered by the Helsinki agreements focused international attention – and a specifically Western cultural offensive – on conditions under Socialist regimes, and this helped the rise of civic resistance, of non-violent, connected opposition groups in most countries of the Soviet bloc.⁵¹ The economic, diplomatic, societal, and cultural connections that defined détente between Eastern

⁵⁰ Most of the essays in the third volume of *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, eds. M. Leffler and O. A. Westad, concur to highlight this broad point. An attempt at investigating the dysfunctional connections between the Socialist economies and global financial and economic trends can be found in "European Socialist Regimes facing Globalisation and European Cooperation", eds. Angela Romano and Federico Romero, a special issue of the *European Review of History*, 21, no. 2, 2014. See also Pons, *The Global Revolution*; Philip Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy: An Economic History of the USSR from 1945* (New York: Longman, 2003); Ivan Berend, *From the Soviet Bloc to the European Union: The Economic and Social Transformation of Central and Eastern Europe Since 1973* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); David Lockwood, *The Destruction of the Soviet Union: A Study in Globalization* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); André Steiner, *The Plans That Failed: An Economic History of the GDR*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Suvi Kansikas, *Socialist Countries Face the European Community. Soviet-Bloc Controversies over East-West Trade* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2014).

⁵¹ Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Oliver Bange and Gottfried Niedhart, eds, *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 2008). The most thorough and convincing historicisation of human rights in the Cold War is Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010). For their place in US politics and culture, see Barbara J. Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014). For an up-to-date overview of a rapidly expanding literature see Sarah B. Snyder, "Bringing the Transnational In: Writing Human Rights into the International History of the Cold War", *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 24, no. 1 (2013): 100–116.

and Western Europe did not wither during the ‘second Cold War’. They continued to envelop a few key Eastern regimes, particularly Poland and Hungary, in a web of trade relations and financial dependencies that emphasised the need for profound reform. They magnified the comparative failure of Socialist regimes in providing basic welfare and consumption, thus further eroding their brittle and thin legitimacy, as well as ideological self-assurance. They built a fabric of transnational contacts and exchanges, not only at the high diplomatic level, that paved the way to views of deeper cooperation across a less and less impenetrable ‘Iron Curtain’. And they raised the stakes for the Kremlin, lest it be tempted to use massive violence once again to discipline its empire, since they highlighted the unsustainable economic and political cost of such a choice, as evidenced in the case of Poland in 1981. In these and many other ways, intra-European détente (and the Ostpolitik that was at its core) narrowed the options available to the Socialist élites while consolidating an international framework of cooperation that eventually allowed for, or at least facilitated, the peaceful conclusion of their final crisis.⁵²

Even the West’s re-engineering of its tools of international governance, in the wake of the 1973–75 crisis, evidenced a remarkable recognition of Europe’s critical position and role. ‘The international architecture of the final stages of the Cold War for security issues and the management of the world economy was surprisingly Eurocentric. This may have been an era of “global Cold War”, but the institutional mechanisms that the West devised to respond to the global challenge were overwhelmingly centred on the continent where the East-West conflict had begun.’⁵³

Finally, the very end of the Cold War is simply unimaginable – both in its actual dynamic and under whatever constellation of counterfactual hypotheses – without a solution to the problem of peace and stability in Europe. Gorbachev’s ‘new thinking’ on the predicaments of the Soviet system embraced and amalgamated global,

⁵² Sari Autio-Sarasma, “A New Historiography of the Cold War”, *European History Quarterly*, 41, no. 4 (2011): 657–664; Poul Villaume and Odd Arne Westad, eds. *Perforating the Iron Curtain: European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War, 1965–1985*. (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2010); Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, Bernd Rother, and N. Piers Ludlow, eds. *Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945–1990* (New York - Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012); Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow and Leopoldi Nuti, eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008); Leopoldo Nuti, ed., *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: from Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975–1985*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009); Sari Autio-Sarasma and Katalin Miklóssy, eds. *Reassessing Cold War Europe* (London: Routledge, 2011); Wilfried Loth and Georges-Henri Soutou, eds. *The Making of Détente: Eastern and Western Europe in the Cold War, 1965–75* (London: Routledge, 2008); Angela Romano, *From Détente in Europe to European Détente: How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE* (Bruxelles: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2009). On US attitudes and policies towards European détente, see Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C: Potomac Books, 2013).

⁵³ Piers Ludlow, “The Real Years of Europe? US-West European Relations During the Ford Administration”, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 161; See also Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol and Federico Romero, eds., *International Summitry and Global Governance: The Rise of the G-7 and the European Council* (London: Routledge, 2014).

international, European and domestic dimensions. We can discuss the extent to which Europe, both as problem and a solution, was at the centre of his intellectual landscape.⁵⁴ And yet the waning of Cold War confrontation and the end of the bipolar system was pivoted on the Berlin Wall and the partition of Europe it symbolised, on the dismantling of Soviet control on the nations of Central-Eastern Europe, on their transition out of communist regimes. In the ‘multi-faceted explanation of the end of the Cold War’⁵⁵ suggested by historical evidence, the salience of Europe’s historical legacies and the Europeans’ own agency occupy a large, inescapable space.

Provincialising Europe is an epistemological necessity for global and international history, but hardly a scholarly strategy applicable to a conflict spawned in and about Europe, pivoted on the continent’s destiny, and eventually solved where it had its deepest and more relevant roots. It is from this latter perspective, in particular, that we should look forward to a collaborative, cross-feeding effort at research and conceptualisation by historians working on various spheres of Cold War history: global, international, Atlantic, and European.

A broad approach to Cold War history that foregrounds the cultural contest for hegemony, and therefore focuses on evolving identities, expectations and shifting interpretations of change, can engender useful synergies aimed at a comprehensive analysis of the final decades, when the place of bipolar confrontation in international life became less preponderant and its sharper edges grew duller and less constant.

One set of connections that calls for extensive historical investigation concerns the post-Keynesian political economy increasingly espoused by the West in the wake of the 1973–75 crisis, and its subsequent ascent to *fin de siècle* neo-liberal pre-eminence. Rooted in endogenous transformations in industry, finance, and technology, it related also to deeply altered perceptions of what the communist challenge entailed, in Europe and in the Third World. The military prowess and geopolitical projection of Soviet power remained a primary issue to be dealt with by means of a varying mix of détente, deterrence, and localized confrontations, but Western elites no longer felt constrained or influenced, in their basic policy choices, by a communist ideological, societal and

⁵⁴ Archie Brown, *Seven Years That Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Robert English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); A. S. Grachev, *Gorbachev’s Gamble: Soviet Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008); Stephen Kotkin, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist establishment* (New York: Modern Library, 2009). Also see Jeffrey A. Engels, “Bush, Germany, and the Power of Time: How History Makes History”, *Diplomatic History*, 37, No. 4 (2013), 639–663, on the notion of Europe as a potential crisis point that informed the Bush Administration’s transition policies.

⁵⁵ Adam Roberts, “An ‘Incredibly Swift Transition’: Reflections on the End of the Cold War”, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 3, 533. In the same volume see also the essays by John Young, “Western Europe and the end of the Cold War, 1979–1989”, 289–310; Jacques Lévesque, “The East European revolutions of 1989”, 311–332; Helga Haftendorn, “The unification of Germany, 1985–1991”, 333–355. See also Mark Kramer, “The Demise of the Soviet Bloc”, *The Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 4 (2011): 788–854; Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas S. Blanton and V. M. Zubok, eds., *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Eastern Europe, 1989* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010).

cultural challenge. The nexus between containment, prosperity, and democratic stability that had been so central in Western Europe's post-war era as to affect almost every sphere (from industrial relations to cultural policies, from monetary and trade arrangements to education and welfare provisions) had ceased to matter.⁵⁶ And the paradigm of modernisation that in the aftermath of decolonisation had pretended to guide and channel Third World change with heavy doses of top-down social engineering gave way to a more direct reliance on market forces and financial de-regulation. Previous political and cultural concerns for piloting transitions towards cohesive societies capable of withstand radical challenges were replaced by IMF prescriptions pivoted on liberalisation, privatization, entrepreneurial 'freedom'.⁵⁷ Widely hailed as a retreat of the state from economic management and social policies, this new mode of governance of the international economy was largely detached from the management of a Cold War antagonism now reconfigured as a purely geopolitical issue. More importantly, it reframed the cultural polarity between East and West as a contest between innovation and tradition, with Socialism no longer the symbol of a radiant or dismal future but the embodiment of an unworkable statist past.⁵⁸ As neo-liberalism donned the mantle of innovation and progress, the Socialist regimes were cast as remnants of a struggle for historical relevance they could no longer reclaim, while the Social-democratic left – in Europe and elsewhere – was hard-put to refashion itself. What was left of the Cold War was taking place in a deeply altered cultural landscape.

A second, promising area for connected inquiries concerns the interaction between the rise of human rights and the transformation of political cultures. The 1970s ascendancy of human rights did not rest only on Helsinki's East-West politics and Carter's reconfiguration of U.S. foreign policy principles. If a measure of its success was its expansion into 'a lingua franca for diverse voices' – eventually as diverse as to comprise the Vatican and progressive NGOs, neo-conservatives and mainstream

⁵⁶ Dan Stone, *Goodbye to All That? A History of Europe since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Geoff Eley, "Historicizing the Global, Politicizing Capital: Giving the Present a Name", *History Workshop Journal*, 63, no. 1 (2007): 168–9; Andreas Wirsching, ed. "The 1970s and 1980s as a Turning Point in European History? A Forum with Göran Therborn, Geoff Eley, Hartmut Kaelble, Philippe Chassaingne", *Journal of Modern European History* 9, no. 1 (April 2011): 8–26; Philippe Chassaingne, *Les Années 1970: fin d'un monde et origine de notre modernité* (Paris: A. Colin, 2008).

⁵⁷ Giovanni Arrighi, "The World Economy and the Cold War, 1970–1990", *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 3, 23–44; Niall Ferguson, ed., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010); Daniel Sargent, "The Cold War and the International Political Economy in the 1970s", *Cold War History* 13, no. 3 (2013): 393–425; Harold James, *International Monetary Cooperation Since Bretton Woods* (Washington: International Monetary Fund, 1996); Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Giuliano Garavini, *After Empires: European Integration, Decolonization, and the Challenge from the Global South, 1957–1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Federico Romero, "Refashioning the West to Dispel Its Fears: The Early G7 Summits", in *International Summitry and Global Governance: The Rise of the G-7 and the European Council*, eds. Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol and Federico Romero (London: Routledge, 2014), 117–37.

⁵⁸ See, for instance, Marshall Goldman, *USSR in Crisis: The Failure of An Economic System* (New York: Norton, 1983).

liberals – a key factor for its elevation to a new moral compass were, in Samuel Moyn’s phrase, ‘the moves of the secular left, including American liberals and the European left, to incorporate the language.’⁵⁹ These, in turn, rested on several factors that challenged and undermined the left’s reliance on the state as the main agent of progressive change, and not only in the shape of a grudging adaptation to the precepts of neo-liberal economics. The new movements that emerged in the aftermath of 1968 – environmentalism, feminism, anti-nuclear activism – posited a radically altered hierarchy of authority between the individual and the state, questioning Cold War priorities no less than the left’s traditional template for social and political change.⁶⁰ The peaceful demise of right-wing authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe and the subsequent transition to democracy not only paved the way to an expanded integration of Western Europe. It also eclipsed the emotional, cultural, and political traction of anti-fascism.⁶¹ Coming on the heels of the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring, it buried the popular front psychology that had constituted the last claim to a shared horizon between the Socialist regimes and the Western left. The communist ones were now the only dictatorships left in Europe, the sole relics of Europe’s age of ideological and civil war. Here again, the parameters of cultural hegemony and the boundaries of historical imagination were being redefined by multiple, connected agents and symbols of change, with repercussions on East-West relations, North-South interactions, and even Euro-American exchanges⁶², that we are just beginning to investigate. Historians of Europe have a good deal of work cut out for them in Cold War history.

⁵⁹ Moyn, *Last Utopia*, p. 144 and p. 167.

⁶⁰ Philipp Gassert, “Internal challenges to the cold war. Opposition movements East and West”, *Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, 433–450; Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The spirit of '68: rebellion in western Europe and North America 1956–1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Lawrence S. Wittner, *Toward Nuclear Abolition. A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1971–Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁶¹ Mario Del Pero, Victor Gavin, Fernando Guirao and Antonio Varsori, *Democrazie. L’Europa meridionale e la fine delle dittature* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2010); António Costa Pinto and Nuno Severiano Teixeira, *Southern Europe and the Making of the European Union, 1945–1980s* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2002); Antonio Muñoz Sánchez, *El amigo alemán: el SPD y el PSOE de la dictadura a la democracia* (Barcelona: RBA Libros, 2012); Eirini Karamouzi, *Greece, the EEC and the Cold War, 1974–1979. The Second Enlargement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Barbara Keys, “Anti-torture politics. Amnesty international, the Greek Junta, and the origins of the human rights ‘boom’ in the United States”, in Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde, and William I. Hitchcock, eds. *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 201–221.

⁶² On the complex, uneven transformations of trans-Atlantic relations see Mary Nolan, *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890–2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chap. 9, and Kiran Klaus Patel and Kenneth Weisbrode, eds., *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).