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Introduction by Vladislav M. Zubok

**Oscar Sanchez-Sibony. *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev*.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. ISBN: 9781107040250 (hardback, \$99.00).

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Introduction by Vladislav M. Zubok, London School of Economics and Politics

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I have been among many who lamented the decline of studies on the Soviet economy and the absence of a historiography of Soviet finance. During the Cold War (some of us still remember it), the cohort of people in Soviet economic studies was relatively small in quantity, but high in quality – scholars such as Alec Nove, Philip Hanson, Margaret Miller, Paul Gregory, Mark Harrison, Michael Ellman, Vladimir Kontorovich, Igor Birman, Vladimir Treml, James Millar, and Abram Bergson come to mind. Some non-economists, such as Moshe Lewin and Valerie Bunce, offered excellent analyses of the impact of economic realities on Soviet history and foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> Yet with the implosion of Soviet studies and with growing specialization in the social and political sciences, this field shrank badly. David Woodruff and Juliet Johnson,<sup>2</sup> who studied economic and financial transition from Soviet to Russian economy, moved to other topics. This happened at the time of the archival revolution – when we could finally compare Soviet promises to the USSR's performance and recalibrate the 'the balance of power' between the Soviets and the West according to economic data.

Meanwhile, the field of Soviet economic history remains an El Dorado for insights. Sanchez-Sibony's small and provocatively titled book testifies to this. Its author aims very high. A student of the revisionist historian Sheila Fitzpatrick, he pushes for a new paradigm of Soviet international behavior based on his study of new Soviet sources – mostly bureaucratic paperwork about Soviet foreign trade and economic relations. He dismisses all leading Cold War historians as alleged perpetrators of "a discursive construction" that misleadingly held the USSR to be a superpower – while he considers it "an inveterate and enthusiastic participant" (253) of the international economy – ergo globalization. Communist ideology, plots to overthrow the liberal capitalist order – the author apparently found none of this in the archives he studied

A revisionist offensive can succeed on some ground and fail on others – as this discussion demonstrates. Two reviewers find the book to have failed on many counts, and the third reviewer recognizes that there are 'minor problems' but welcomes the author's boldness. Ted Hopf, a leading proponent of constructivism in the field of International Relations, focuses on the role of ideology in Soviet economic behavior, and, in his view, Sanchez-Sibony's conclusions obfuscate this major issue. In his view, Soviet planned economy, lack of flexibility in trade, and the strategy of 'non-capitalist development' in the Third World were ideological constructs rather than pragmatic responses to international economic structures and practices. In his conclusion, Hopf raises a counterfactual issue that flows

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<sup>1</sup> Moshe Lewin, *The Soviet Century* (London: Verso, 2005); Valerie Bunce, "The Empire Strikes Back: the evolution of the Eastern bloc from a Soviet asset to a Soviet liability," *International Organization*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Winter, 1985), pp. 1-46.

<sup>2</sup> David Woodruff, *Money Unmade. Barter and the Fate of Russian Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Juliet Johnson, *A Fistful of Rubles. The Rise and Fall of the Russian Banking System* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

from the book: What if the West had waged only an economic war against the Soviet Union (say, similar to the sanctions that have recently been imposed against Russia )? Would there have been a Cold War in the first place? He does not express his personal view on this question.

Jonathan Haslam, a leading historian of Soviet diplomacy, concludes that the book is too flawed and one-sided to advance our understanding of Soviet motives and behavior. He takes Sanchez-Sibony to task for making sweeping revisionist conclusions drawn from a narrow documentary base: Soviet foreign trade. The archives of the International Department of the Central Committee and the activities of Soviet intelligence provide a completely different ‘face’ of Soviet international behavior – expansionist, messianic, and certainly opposed to the emerging liberal economic order. In Haslam’s conclusion, the book fails to overthrow the Cold War historiographic analysis. There is a huge amount of evidence, ignored by Sanchez-Sibony, that the Soviet Union was not “just a state like any other,” Haslam writes, and Soviet interactions with the world were determined above all by the ideological nature of the Soviet regime. He also writes that Sanchez-Sibony creates ‘straw-dolls’ to destroy – such as Soviet autarky. Regrettably, Haslam’s criticism does not tackle the issue of the changing nature of Soviet economic relations with the world – the central focus of the book.

Michelle Denise Getchell, a Latin Americanist, welcomes the book’s novel interpretation and cites its major conclusions with approval. She is in solidarity with Sanchez-Sibony against “myths that pervaded the historical literature on the Cold War” – about the bipolar nature of the confrontation and the autarky of Soviet economic behavior. She finds absolutely persuasive the argument that “Soviet economic policy was the result not of theoretical hair-splitting, but of the constraints imposed by global economic conditions.” At the same time, she is puzzled that Sanchez-Sibony ignores many of his predecessors who already revised the “myths” and wonders if at times he “is merely setting up a straw man.”

In my opinion, the book falls short of being a ‘good revisionist history.’ Still, it succeeds as a ‘provocation.’ I will explain what I mean. I would not recommend Sanchez-Sibony’s book as the main reading on Soviet international behavior, or even Soviet economic motives. It is simply too unbalanced. And it lacks something I value much about history: its irony and unintended consequences. The book’s hammering away at the ‘new’ non-ideological behavior of the Soviets, its intent to dislodge and debunk “Cold War discourse” (252) distracts too much from one of its much more interesting tasks: understanding the contradictory and evolving nature of the Soviet economic relationship with ‘capitalist world’ and the USSR’s post-colonial periphery.

Meanwhile, the material that the book presents can provide a lot of grist to this exercise. The Soviets wanted to destroy the capitalist system but, as Sanchez-Sibony’s narrative (if not analysis) demonstrates, they had to ‘milk’ that system systematically – for technology, know-how, even credits. From an early ‘temporary’ Bolshevik dependency on this system to industrialize the country this ‘milking’ grew into a strategic dependency during the late Soviet era – something that certainly contributed in the end to the Soviet demise. And the Soviet Union’s growing ‘fraternal assistance’ to the post-colonial Third World - with its

ideological intent to win it for 'socialism' - had the same fatal effect of making the Soviets more engaged in 'capitalist globalization.' Sanchez-Sibony's dating of the early 1960s as the point of no return is premature; other authors would rather point to the years of 'détente' as a more probable watershed, when the Soviet Union could no longer exist without Western credits and import.

Sanchez-Sibony writes: "All political actions and reactions during the Cold War have to be viewed within a general politics of Soviet accommodation of, and adaptation to, the world economy" (174). This sentence offers a great provocation, one that could potentially lead to a fruitful debate – yet the word "all" should scare away any historian. The book is imbued with unnecessary maximalism that diverts the reader from the paradoxical, contradictory realities that anyone living in the Soviet Union (or even briefly visiting it) could easily have seen. This tactic of constructing the book led me to many question marks on the book's margins – some inviting a discussion, some distracting from it. Despite its shortcomings of evidence, historiography, and arguments, the book is well worth reading. I agree with Getchell that Sanchez-Sibony did a service to scholarship. He reminded us how much we need a good economic history of the Soviet bloc. It should be a synthesis of both sides of the Soviet international behavior – the one of accommodation and adaptation, and the other of ideological messianism, aggression, and imperialism. As long as only the latter is written without the former, our understanding of the Soviet factor in world affairs, and of the peaceful Soviet demise, will remain (quoting our reviewers) "only half the story" and "a curate's egg."

### Participants:

**Vladislav M. Zubok**, Ph.D. is Professor of International History at the London School of Economics. He is a specialist in the Cold War and Soviet-Russian history, director of the Russian programme at the LSE IDEAS. His publications include *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* with C. Pleshakov (Harvard University Press, 1996), *A Failed Empire: the Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007), and *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Belknap Press, 2009). He is currently finishing the book "Patriotism of Pity" on life and works of the twentieth-century Russian intellectual Dmitry Likhachev and beginning a new project "1991: Russia destroys the Soviet Union."

**Michelle Denise Getchell** is a Dickey Center and Dean of the Faculty Postdoctoral Fellow in International Security and U.S. Foreign Policy at Dartmouth College, where she is working on her first book manuscript, "Extracting the Eagle's Talons: The Soviet Union in Cold War Latin America." Her article examining the evolution of narcoterrorism from the Cold War to the War on Drugs has been published as a chapter in *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War*, and her article reinterpreting the 1954 coup in Guatemala is forthcoming in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*.

**Jonathan Haslam** is the author of *Russia's Cold War. From the October Revolution to the Fall of the Wall* (New Haven 2011). His next book *Near and Distant Neighbours 1917-1989. A New History of Soviet Intelligence* (New York) will appear in 2015. He is Professor of the

History of International Relations at Cambridge University and a Fellow of the British Academy.

**Ted Hopf** is the Provost's Chair Professor of Political Science at National University of Singapore. His most recent book, *Reconstructing the Cold War: The Early Years, 1945-1958* (Oxford 2012), won the 2013 American Political Science Association Robert Jervis-Paul Schroeder Award for Best Book in International Relations and History and the 2013 Marshall D. Shulman Award, presented by the Association of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies for the best book published that year on the international politics of the former Soviet Union and Central Europe. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Cornell University Press, 2002) won the 2003 Shulman Award. Hopf received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1989.

Review by Michelle Denise Getchell, John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding

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In *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev*, Oscar Sanchez-Sibony takes aim at two myths that have pervaded the historical literature on the Cold War. The first, that the postwar international system was defined by stark bipolarity, has in fact been under assault for some time now (more on which later). The second myth, that the Soviet Union's political economy was characterized by autarky, provides plenty of grist for Sanchez-Sibony's mill. He marshals a wealth of evidence to show that throughout the Cold War, the Soviet economy was firmly embedded in the structures of the global economy. "The reality of the country's economic relations," he writes, "was characterized largely by accommodation and cooperation with the West" (8). A corollary of this argument is that Soviet commercial policy during the period under examination was characterized largely by continuity, and that too much has been made of the shift in Soviet relations with the decolonizing world as a function of the transition in leadership from Joseph Stalin to Nikita Khrushchev. Regarding Soviet relations with the global South, Sanchez-Sibony persuasively argues that the prevailing view of the two Cold War superpowers competing for influence in a region that reacted to events rather than shaping them is mistaken. In fact, "the Soviets more often than not waited for others to initiate relations" (11). Based on previously untapped archival sources from the Russian State Archive of the Economy (RGAE), the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), and the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), *Red Globalization* offers a revisionist interpretation of the economic Cold War – one that promises not only to revitalize the debate over the nature of the Cold War competition, but also to open up new avenues of inquiry for researchers.

In Part One, "Isolation," Sanchez-Sibony debunks the narrative of the period between the death of Vladimir Lenin and the implementation of the First Five-Year Plan as one of constant political struggle based on ideological prescriptions. Such a narrative, in his view, is "odd and misleading," as it "entails an apparent freedom of policy options at a time when options were becoming rather constrained" (37). This period should be viewed not as rife with ideological squabbles, but as a time when economic debates were shaped by changing global circumstances; the period needs to be contextualized in terms of the international economic crises that "constrained the Soviet Union along the same broadly unavoidable patterns that structured political and social changes around the world" (56). Stalin was not a forceful proponent of autarky, but instead remained committed to an integrationist approach, and was in fact fully steeped in the gold standard orthodoxy. This section does much to lay the foundation for Sanchez-Sibony's argument that Soviet leaders were less obsessed with ideology than has typically been portrayed, and that Soviet economic policy was the result not of theoretical hair-splitting, but of the constraints imposed by global economic conditions. Seeking to move past the somewhat stale debate over whether ideology or national security determined the course of Soviet policy, Sanchez-Sibony draws attention to the shared assumptions that undergirded the postwar economic system. Fear of untrammelled market forces and anxiety about the durability of the postwar economic



recovery were a common denominator, shared on both sides of the rapidly descending 'Iron Curtain' – an epithet popularized by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, but with which Sanchez-Sibony may very well take issue. For even as the rhetorical battle lines were drawn, "the Soviets sought to buy into the very system of financial and commercial exchange that could guarantee the quick recovery of fortress Soviet Union" (59).

In Part Two, "Aspiration," Sanchez-Sibony explores the shift in Soviet trade patterns away from an almost exclusive reliance on trade with the communist bloc and towards greater trade with the West and with the decolonizing world. Acknowledging that the enduring political aim of Soviet commercial policy was the "politics of the...powerless and the marginalized in search of recognition," he argues that Soviet trade, rather than being in thrall to politics, was actually "far more attuned to commercial considerations" (98). Embedding Soviet trade policy in the context of the Bretton Woods economic system and the acute dollar shortages of the late 1950s reveals that "Western leaders often proved less liberal in their approach to trade than the Soviets" (123). Sanchez-Sibony dismisses the notion that Soviet aid to countries of the underdeveloped world was part of a master plan of subversion, or even that it was meant to decisively influence their development. The Soviets never hoped to replace the West as the preeminent trade partner and provider of economic aid, nor did the leaders of the underdeveloped world seek such a replacement. Instead, Soviet trade and aid policy should be understood as part and parcel of the Soviet entrance into the global economy and as an attempt to "help dependent economies achieve greater autonomy" (140). Moreover, it was more frequently the governments of the global South that instigated trade and aid ties with the Soviet Union. Indeed, the historical narrative that describes state-centered economic rhetoric and policies as a mere outgrowth of Soviet influence draws Sanchez-Sibony's ire; "such an assessment infantilizes Third World societies and their leaders" (157).

In Part Three, "Integration," Sanchez-Sibony explores the changing economic circumstances of the 1960s, during which dollar shortages became dollar gluts, which in turn provided the Soviets unparalleled opportunities "to use financial competition as a lever to get better terms and quicker results from the rich nations" (188). Indeed, that the Soviets benefited so greatly from their economic relations with the rich Western countries makes a mockery of assertions that the Kremlin was bent on destroying the liberal economic world order. By the 1970s, Sanchez-Sibony argues, the Soviets had become so ensconced in the international system that the material benefits to be accrued from engagement easily superseded any remaining commitment to ideology. As for Soviet economic relations with developing countries, they were more often than not initiated at the request not of the Soviet Union, but of leaders of the global South. These relations were not typically the result of a shared ideology, nor did Soviet foreign aid have a deep or abiding influence on the sociopolitical and economic structures of its recipients. Furthermore, Soviet alliances with countries of the developing world were "forged not in the magnetism of Soviet power, but in the exclusionary politics of Western hegemony" (235). Whereas in the 1950s, the aim had been to secure a foothold in the Third World and to pry those countries away from their dependence on the West, by 1961, "unadulterated national gain, rather than the economic independence of its partners or the accrual of political goodwill, was an ascendant objective for Soviet foreign trade" (242).

Sanchez-Sibony has done a major service to scholars with this monograph. By examining the relevant archival documentation and providing the crucial global economic context of Soviet decision-making, he has done much to challenge the myths that have governed the Cold War historical literature. However, as alluded to above, the myth that the postwar international system was defined by strict bipolarity has been under fire for some time now. Regional specialists, particularly those who focus on Latin America, have sought to de-center the United States from the dominant historical narrative, emphasizing the agency and interventionism of regional actors.<sup>1</sup> One wonders then if Sanchez-Sibony is merely setting up a straw man, though it is perhaps also the case that the important contributions of regional specialists have yet to be meaningfully incorporated into the dominant historical narrative. Another concern is the puzzling absence of reference to scholarship that could only have served to bolster Sanchez-Sibony's interpretation. Nicola Miller, for instance, has made many similar arguments about Soviet trade policy and economic relations with Latin America, de-emphasizing the role of ideology and contextualizing Soviet policy in terms of basic economic realities.<sup>2</sup> Oddly, Sanchez-Sibony's brief section on Cuban-Soviet economic relations draws heavily from the scholarship on U.S.-Latin American relations while neglecting that of Soviet-Cuban relations. In fact, there are several studies and memoirs of the Soviet-Cuban relationship that Sanchez-Sibony could have consulted.<sup>3</sup> While these works do not all focus on economic relations, a broader source base may have helped to illuminate the ideological and strategic aspects of Soviet trade and aid policy.

This leads to a question concerning the relationship between Sanchez-Sibony's sources and the interpretation he advances. Officials in the KGB and the International Department of the Soviet Communist Party were deeply involved in the making of Soviet policy toward the Third World and were generally much more influenced by ideology than were their counterparts in the Economics and Foreign Ministries. Given the insurmountable obstacles to accessing documents from the KGB and the International Department, it is

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In From the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter With the Cold War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); and Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Mark Atwood Lawrence, and Julio E. Moreno, eds., *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Nicola Miller, *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1959-1987* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Yuri Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance, 1959-1991* (Florida: University of Miami North-South Center Press, 1996); Dmitry Yazov, *Karibskij Krizis: Sorok Let Spustya* (Moscow: Megapir Publishing House, 2006); Svetlana Savranskaya, ed., *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012); Nikolai Leonov, *Likholet'e: Sekretnye Missii* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnoshenii, 1994); and Jacques Lévesque, *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution: Soviet Ideological and Strategic Perspectives, 1959-1977* (New York: Praeger, 1978).



understandable that Sanchez-Sibony's interpretation focuses on the pragmatic nature of Soviet policy. Nevertheless, one wonders how (or whether) his arguments would have been affected by reference to these sources. The Mitrokhin archive, housed at Cambridge, has just opened to researchers, but Sanchez-Sibony certainly could have engaged with the work of Christopher Andrew, the only scholar to have had access to this collection of KGB documents.<sup>4</sup> In short, more perhaps could have been done to explore the ideological, political, and strategic dimensions of Soviet economic policy, or at least to acknowledge in a brief note in the introduction the connection between his interpretation and the primary sources upon which it is based. This, however, is a relatively minor concern and should certainly not obscure the fact that this is a persuasive, impressive, and important work that will reshape the debate over the fundamental nature and meaning of the Cold War.

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<sup>4</sup> Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), and *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB in the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

This book is a curate's egg. One aim overall of *Red Globalization* is to portray Soviet foreign trade against the broader background of Moscow's international relations from the revolution to collapse. In this respect it is commendably ambitious since it re-opens an interesting debate about the purpose and role of foreign trade in Soviet thinking and practice. But it is very uneven in quality.

The strength of the book undoubtedly lies where archives have yielded some hard data, in chapters 3-5. These chapters come into clear focus on the post-Stalin era. The section on India is the most informative and breaks some accustomed assumptions about the bases for mutual interest by highlighting Soviet links with the private sector. If only it were further researched. The confession in Moscow that they simply did not know enough about the country is fascinating, though unexplored: the sequel – extensive penetration by secret intelligence – is unaccountably missing.

This section is much stronger on the emergent Third World (including recalcitrant Japan), where the best relations were with similarly protectionist entities, than on the First World (the NATO Powers). The extensive trade in arms, of course, increasingly loomed large: by the eighties Moscow had become one of the largest exporters of weaponry in the world. Here Sanchez-Sibony's would also have benefited from further reading. It is a sad comment on all those years of suffering in the Soviet Union that by the time Ronald Reagan became President of the United States, Moscow's main exports other than arms were oil and gas; and, of course, trouble was not far distant when oil then dropped to a mere \$14 a barrel. The appearance of the Strategic Defense Initiative was timed precisely at a point of chronic weakness. Foreign trade was thus a barometer of the state of the Soviet economy and how small the distance it had travelled relative to its adversaries since the first five year plan.

Trade, as the author notes, had certainly grown enormously from the time of Nikita Khrushchev: most notably, from the date of Nikolai Patolichev's appointment as Minister of Foreign Trade in August 1958 – then at eight million foreign trade roubles – to the time of his retirement under Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 – at 141.6 million.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union was, according to the author, much committed to foreign trade; yet its neighbours in Western Europe get little mention apart from West Germany and only a couple of pages are reserved for Comecon trade relations. Sanchez-Sibony makes no mention of the fact that the European Economic Community emerged in 1957 and worried the Russians because it made divide and rule in commerce much trickier? And what of the German internal market that transcended political division after 1955? There is little sign of it here. Moreover, the United States is all but absent – even the story of the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which made most favoured nation status for the USSR conditional on freedom of emigration for Jews, is missing – though the Russians were critically dependent upon the

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<sup>1</sup> N. Patolichev, "Kak prorvali blokadu Kuby. Iz vospominanii ministra vneshnei torgovli SSSR", *Zavtra*, 23 September 2003.

Americans for high (especially military) technology. Increasingly this reached the Soviet Union only via the KGB; but no mention at all is made of that fact. And ordinary economists had little control over the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the State Committee for Foreign Economic Ties: just ordinary economists. One need only look at the career path of the current head of Foreign Intelligence (SVR), Mikhail Fradkov.

Sanchez-Sibony goes out of his way to mention the re-foundation of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) under new auspices: Mikoyan's relative and protégé, economist Anushavan Arzumanyan; yet he fails to mention that two thirds of its research was classified top secret and that the next head of the Institute, Nikolai Inozemtsev, was himself a KGB officer. Whereas even CIA operations find their way into the book and are subject to the author's disapproval, this key organ of Soviet power is entirely absent, including directorate T (scientific and technological intelligence), which was made public with the revelations from France about agent "Farewell," and fully outlined by Christopher Andrew,<sup>2</sup> and has been substantially documented within the Mitrokhin archive itself, now at the archives centre, Churchill College, Cambridge University.

In other respects Sanchez-Sibony has gone much further than necessary in giving us an overview than was perhaps wise. Throughout, the author appears to argue that the Soviet Union was a state just like any other. The history is therefore sanitised of what he believes to be 'Cold War' distortion. Indeed, Sanchez-Sibony claims the Cold War is a mirage "rather than the all-encompassing reality of the second half of the twentieth century" (253) on the basis of no proof whatsoever; so all historians of Soviet foreign policy who disagree with him are ignored or taken to task in the footnotes; yet no attempt at all is made to provide an alternative perspective on the foreign policy background based on documentation. No mention at all is made of the Soviet Union's crucial goal of spreading Communism across the globe, if necessary at the point of a bayonet. This is apparently just "a discursive construction" (also 253), whatever that means. The Soviet Union thus emerges unaccountably as an innocent victim of everyone else. The author's purpose is made explicit on page 253 of the conclusion: "We must recover the Soviet Union not just as the important constituent of the global that it was, but also as an inveterate and enthusiastic participant." But why exactly *must* we do so? What exactly is the purpose of such an exercise?

To accomplish his task, Sanchez-Sibony seizes upon the apparently widespread notion that the Soviet economy was autarchic. The first point to make is that no serious scholar has taken seriously the straw doll of Soviet "autarchy" for a very long time. Indeed, I recall a conference at Birmingham University's Centre for Russian and East European Studies (Britain) in the 1970s when Michael Dohan, whose research Sanchez-Sibony relies upon for the prewar period, brought this straw doll along with him for extensive demolition to the bewilderment of the historians of Soviet industrialisation then present, as he meticulously but pointlessly picked it apart in front of our eyes. As usual instead of an uproar, the

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<sup>2</sup> C. Andrew, *The Mitrokhin Archive* (London 1999), pp. 245-246, 280-281, 283, 287, 456, 539-540, 548-553, 566-568, 597-598, 608, 610, 618-620, 626-628, 725.

Birmingham response to the obvious delivered at length in a paper proudly presented as novel was a sublime and dignified silence. And the key paper on trade statistics written by Vladimir Treml (cited 4-5), upon which Sanchez-Sibony pivots his argument with reference to foreign trade under Khrushchev, is more than thirty years old.

The idea that the Soviet Union was ever important to international commerce will no doubt come as a complete surprise to anyone alive at the time – a truly original thought that could not be more wrong; and the concomitant idea that the Soviet Union was ever enthusiastic about world trade is untenable. Had these been the case, Anastas Mikoyan, the Soviet Union's most consistent advocate of the consumer industries, and his protégé Alexei Kosygin (a former Nepman - those who worked the capitalist market in the 1920s), would have died happy men. To establish any such thing as true would, however, have required rewriting the entire economic history of the Soviet Union and, more awkwardly, all the foreign trade statistics (and, by the way, we do not have all the necessary tables in this book to appreciate the trends in foreign trade over eight decades). The inversion of our understanding sits uneasily on the mind. To substantiate, it would necessitate an unending search to find statements of policy to this effect from all Soviet leaders from Vladimir Lenin to Mikhail Gorbachev. We are presented with none, since they seem not to exist.

The point is that Soviet Russia was from the outset above all protectionist as a deliberate act of economic policy and that policy was set by the Bolsheviks above all for ideological reasons. In 1918 they cancelled all foreign debts –a deliberately hostile act motivated entirely by ideology that Sanchez-Sibony oddly labels “quite practical” (32) - and they nationalised all foreign capital investment without compensation and then capped it all by making of foreign trade in its entirety a state monopoly. These were surely not the actions of a government calculated to enhance participation in a capitalist world economy. How could one raise loans on world financial markets to underwrite foreign trade if the country had a notorious reputation for absolute non-payment? Clearly foreign trade as such was not high priority but an occasional tactical convenience in the larger scheme of things. The Russians, for instance, blackmailed the United States into granting diplomatic recognition by drastically cutting U.S. imports, and even President Franklin Roosevelt failed to get Joseph Stalin to change his mind on debts in order to secure U.S. diplomatic recognition in 1933. The plain fact is that the Bolsheviks thought the resultant blowback a high price worth paying as a matter of root political principle. Thus a wholehearted commitment to foreign trade was simply not compatible with Communist doctrine. Freeing foreign trade was anathema. It is the politics that were fundamental.

That this was damaging is the very reason why the more intelligent on the right within the Bolshevik Party, Nikolai Bukharin and Grigorii Sokol'nikov, fought persistently with Lenin and his successors to abolish the state monopoly of foreign trade. Indeed, in December 1922 Lenin attacked Bukharin on the grounds that dropping the monopoly and introducing tariffs on imports would render Russian industry “completely defenceless....Any other kind of protectionism in the current conditions of Russia would be completely fictitious, paper protectionism, which would give nothing to the proletariat.” Stalin in turn insisted the monopoly was “the shield and fence of our young socialist industry” and that “while there is Soviet power the monopoly of foreign trade will live and prosper come what may.” It

was, he said, “one of the permanent bases of the Soviet Government’s ‘platform’.”<sup>3</sup>

The monopoly was in fact a core principle underwriting Soviet power. In the words of Stalin, giving in on this crucial issue “would mean the refusal to industrialise the country...flooding the USSR with goods from capitalist countries, the curtailment of our industry as a result of its relative weakness, increasing the number unemployed, worsening the material position of the working class, the weakening of its economic and political circumstances. This would mean, in the end, strengthening the Nepman and the new bourgeoisie in general.” It would amount to “suicide.”<sup>4</sup>

The Bukharinite alternative was thus rejected out of hand. The policy chosen in its place was bootstraps industrialisation. It necessarily required that the Soviet Union industrialise through what left oppositionist economist Evgenii Preobrazhensky advocated: primitive socialist accumulation – sucking income from the people (mostly the peasantry) as consumers and producers – to pay for the importation of capital goods, especially machine tools: hence the drastic introduction of the forced collectivisation of agriculture introduced in October 1929. And the purpose of this was to rid the Soviet Union of any dependence on the outside world – except through industrial espionage for high technology - for the development and maintenance of its defence industries. Stalin explained in a letter to Molotov on 24 August 1930: “In a word, we must dramatically force the export of grain.” “Otherwise, we risk doing without new metallurgical and machine tool factories.”<sup>5</sup> Famine was, of course, a direct and foreseeable consequence. The price of principle was thus paid multifold in the millions of peasant deaths: men, women and children.

The state monopoly of foreign trade, set in concrete during the crisis years, was thereafter impossible to question throughout the remainder of the Soviet Union’s existence until, at least Gorbachev, when everything came into question; it is none the less hard to see how one can sensibly draw the conclusion that the Communist leadership had an overriding commitment to the expansion of foreign trade. The discerning reader will not find here a realistic appraisal of Soviet foreign trade since the revolution; and the omissions and distortions are worrying, but there is within a core which advances our understanding.

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<sup>3</sup> This is discussed in extenso with quotations from documents in the Party archive by V. Sakharov, *Politicheskoe zaveshchanie Lenina: real'nost' istorii i mify politiki* (Moscow, 2003) chapter 3, section 3.

<sup>4</sup> I. Stalin, *Voprosy leninizma*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, Moscow, 1933, pp. 272-273.

<sup>5</sup> V. Kondrashin, E. Tyurin, “Govorit' o golode schitalos' chut' li ne kontrrevolyutsii”. *Dokumenty rossiiskikh arkhivov o golode 1932-1933 gg. v SSSR'*, *Otechestvennye akhivy*, No 2, 2009.

**Review by Ted Hopf, Provost Chair Professor, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore**

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Large countries in general are more autarkic, meaning that they have total trade figures as a percentage of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that is lower than smaller countries. This is usually because they have large domestic markets that allow for efficiencies in the production of goods due to economies of scale. In addition, land area is generally positively correlated with natural resource endowments. The bigger the country, the less need to import iron ore, oil, etc. Large countries like the USSR do not need to trade as much, and do not.

Oscar Sanchez-Sibony refutes the claim that the Soviet Union was an unusually autarkic country, although he does not rely on the classical economic explanation I just offered. Instead, he makes the structural claim that any country with Soviet economic characteristics would have behaved similarly to the USSR in the world capitalist economy, and so Soviet ideology does not account for Soviet foreign economic policy. The author offers an important corrective to the conventional wisdom, even among scholars of the Soviet Union, that the USSR was unusually autarkic. But his claims that ideology does not explain the kind of autarky the Soviet Union achieved are not so convincing.

Even countries as autarkic, or more autarkic, than the USSR, by the author's own reckoning, Japan and the U.S., respectively, produce manufactured goods and high technology products for export to competitive markets. It is hard to explain why a single Bristol Britannia airplane in the early 1960s was as valuable as sixteen Soviet Ilyushin Il-18s, in terms of hours flown without servicing and repairs, without a Soviet ideology aimed against capitalist principles of market competitiveness. (21) (See also the discussion of equally uncompetitive Soviet products on 112-4, 116-7, 176-7, 179, 196, 222)

The author is absolutely correct to stress that many markets were closed to Soviet exports for political reasons. The Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (CoCOM) list, for example, banned the export to, and import from, the USSR of a wide array of 'strategic' products. But that said, there were no restrictions on an even vaster array of consumer and industrial goods that the USSR produced at home for its own consumers and industries that were utterly unsaleable abroad, except to the most desperately poor or dependent of countries. What explains the Soviet Union's inability to produce competitive products if not an anti-capitalist ideology prevailing at home, and reproduced abroad?

Sanchez-Sibony argues ideology did not matter in Soviet economic relations with the decolonizing world. If so, then why did Soviet leaders create the concepts of the "non-capitalist path of development" (NKPD) in the 1960s, followed by "countries of socialist orientation" (CSOs) in the 1970s? These formulas were based upon the Soviet experience in developing the economies of its own Central Asian peripheries. With Moscow and Russia as surrogate vanguards for a non-existent working class, these republics, under the leadership of the local communist party, could skip capitalism and move directly to socialism. The list of political and economic prescriptions for countries on the NKPD, and CSOs was



exhaustive: vanguard parties, state control of media, central planning, development of heavy industry when possible, reduction of foreign trade with imperialist countries, reduction of dependence on Western foreign capital and aid, a re-orientation to trade, as much as was possible, to the Soviet Union and its socialist allies in the world. The author misses all this, perhaps because all of his archival material concentrates on what was going on in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Finance, other economic organs, and the files on and of Anastas Mikoyan, the long-time Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade and general economic ambassador for the Soviet Union for decades. I could not find a single mention of the Central Committee International Department, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) institution responsible for managing relations with most of the developing world, and the primary source of Soviet ideology in the decolonizing world. If one only reads the most economic and de-ideologized of Soviet sources, one is likely to come away thinking that economic rationality, rather than ideology, explains Soviet choices. But it remains only half the story.<sup>1</sup>

Only a few times does the author suggest that ideology mattered a lot. In the conclusion, (248), he writes of “the desperate Soviet fantasy of building an industrial infrastructure in poor countries that would support what the Soviets connoted as ‘cadres’” (248). But the author tries to gainsay what he has just granted, writing that Soviets privately were not so optimistic. No, they were not optimistic, but they continued to encourage their decolonized allies to engage in import-substitution industrialization, contradicting the equally ideological neoliberal conceptualization of free trade efficiency.

The author frequently uses ideas, if not ideology itself, to account for a host of Soviet policies. For example, he argues the USSR refused to participate in Bretton Woods or the Marshall Plan in part because “integration into this global architecture would have...include[ed] the end of the state’s monopoly over foreign trade....” (66) Isn’t state monopolization of foreign trade part of an anti-capitalist ideology? Or “the Soviet Union could not aspire to convertibility (of the ruble) and keep its economic system; its centralized economy was such that it made a nonsense of active participation in the Bretton Woods system” (72, 174). Wasn’t this commitment ideological? What about the Soviet preference for three or five-year trade agreements with countries that “stipulated the general amount of trade” (96)? Why this particular modality, instead of conventional capitalist contracts with individual firms, if not an ideological commitment to central long-term planning?

As Sanchez-Sibony writes, “competition is the key difference between the relative unsuccess of the centralized development of countries like the Soviet Union and the resounding success of the centralized development of countries like Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.” (175) Isn’t competition a central element of free market capitalism and hence rejected by Soviet socialist ideology?

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<sup>1</sup> Sanchez-Sibony acknowledges that the Soviet leadership was convinced “the Soviet Union could serve as a model of socio-economic development” in the developing world, but does not connect this to its ideological premises. (120)

With regard to the developing world, the author writes that “these were easy paths to trade expansion,” but they were not exploited, reflecting “the very typical passive attitude on the part of Soviet bureaucrats and indicative of the general lack of enterprise that characterized Soviet economic penetration of the developing world” (110). Isn’t an anti-capitalist ideology consistent with such passivity and lack of enterprise?

Sanchez-Sibony is right to point out that the Soviet Union was as much, if not more of, a beneficiary of events in the decolonizing world, as it was a cause of them. Most Soviet ‘allies’ in that part of the globe chose the Soviet Union; the Soviet Union or its allies had little hand in creating them. The author also concludes importantly that “Cold War discourse was a political windfall, like no other, even if it gave the country a stature its economy could not sustain” (252). Here the author, following John Mueller and others, points out that the U.S. and the West made the Soviet Union into the other superpower, despite its material inferiority.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, had the U.S. and the West played the Cold War game economically, rather than militarily, there would not have been much of a Cold War in the first place. But the author makes the crucial point that “no one was more interested in spellbinding their respective audiences than the main protagonists.” (253) The USSR and the U.S. needed each other.

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<sup>2</sup>Alan Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat* (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Policy Studies, 1979); John Mueller, “Threats Overblown,” <http://www.cato-unbound.org/2006/09/26/john-mueller/threats-overblown>; Timothy Naftali, “Misunderstanding the Threat,” <http://www.cato-unbound.org/2006/09/20/timothy-naftali/misunderstanding-threat> (both accessed November 2014);

Author's Response by Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, University of Macau

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I would like to thank Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse for organizing this discussion. In writing a book like *Red Globalization*, I very much expected the kind of commentary in evidence above, and the H-Diplo roundtable is a truly unique space to carry on the kind of debate I hoped to spark. My gratitude is earnest.

We have in some of the commentary on *Red Globalization* a somewhat tired, predictable repetition of positions that once upon a time successfully buried lines of inquiry that have proved, in light of our current crises, essential to an understanding of where we are and what we went through. The need to defend historiographical positions that have brought professional success is palpable in some of the reviews. The introduction by Vladislav Zubok, the author of a good book on Soviet foreign policy delimited by a focus on personalities,<sup>1</sup> paints the book as a bad form of revisionism that harks back to the kind of economic determinism that undermines issues and modes of narrative that Zubok values: ideology, irony, and unintended consequences. We have been here before. The consequence of the critique of revisionism has been the exorcism of capitalism as a venue for research in a field that ostensibly investigates the struggle between that socioeconomic system and its other, as well as a lack of training on matters of economy for a whole generation of historians. The developments of the international economy, which form the book's core, are unmentioned. Surely no one intended the gold standard to crumble into a Great Depression (a miscalculation the Bolsheviks shared in when they built their political economy around the gold standard in the 1920s), or for Bretton Woods to generate two unbalanced periods of dollar shortage and glut before ending to function altogether in 1971. Understanding the development of the Eurodollar market and Soviet involvement in it is appreciating the irony of a Soviet policy of participation in the liberal economy that had unintended anti-systemic consequences. These structures are the stuff through which the Soviet Union—and many countries besides—navigated history. Its telling is not some attempt at “provocation,” in Zubok's language. Zubok's commentary focuses on an idea, that of Cold War discourse as a disciplinary technology, that is mentioned twice in the book and which does not at all organize it—an idea I very much hope more Cold War historians will explore.<sup>2</sup> Also mentioned twice: the Cold War as the main organizing political principle in Europe and as nuclear standoff, traditional considerations I also did not propose to challenge or expand much on in the book. An accurate account of the book, something Michelle Denise Getchell achieves easily, necessitates an engagement with its content.

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<sup>1</sup> Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> The idea is Mary Kaldor's, deployed in her excellent *The Imaginary War. Understanding the East-West Conflict* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990). The citations and mentions, coming as they do in the introduction and conclusion, are meant for historians to further explore the approach, not because this has anything to do with the approach of the book, which is rather the opposite of a study in discourse.

Not everything was unintended and haphazard in Soviet policy. In what must constitute, collectively, the single largest project they ever undertook, the Soviets built over several decades a pipeline network and a set of established practices for exporting energy to Western Europe that currently allows for the reproduction of European social life as we know it, as well as that of Russia's. This deep interdependence is not the result of unintended consequences or the outcome of what Zubok mistakenly labels as a "milking" practice—the bumbling Soviets spending the country's treasure and labor somehow inadvertently when what they aimed for was to "destroy the capitalist system." In my research I have not come across anything resembling the formulation of an idea of "milking" the capitalist West as a "tactical device," particularly in the postwar period. Participating in global trade, a formulation that is everywhere in evidence in internal communications, arose from the idea that the Soviet Union should avail itself of the efficiencies that accrue from participation in the international division of labor. This Ricardian idea is understood by all the reviewers to be "pragmatic," and by Zubok as "new"—that is, invented by the book—and "nonideological." I would confess to be puzzled, but this is a longstanding state of affairs in how we have discussed ideology in the Cold War, a discussion Getchell rightly calls stale. The fact is historians will not find an official Soviet statement on the benefits of autarky, but if they look they will find countless on the benefits of international trade—indeed the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA, also known as the Comecon) is founded on that Ricardian principle. Yet reviewers do not read this as ideological. Why not?

Although it is true that I did not set out to draw a comprehensive analysis of the ideas that animated Soviet foreign policy, the book is full of them, as Ted Hopf notes. Hopf's review does fruitfully put the book and his work in conversation, likely because he was trained in a field that takes economy and theory seriously. Hopf characterizes Soviet ideology as anti-capitalist at its core. What that means seems to arise from Western conceptions of what Marxist ideology should look like, conceptions that leave little space for the more collaborative and integrationist proclivities I document—and the logic behind those proclivities. But then, Hopf's review is more guarded, or perhaps agnostic, on whether or not the Soviets were anti-systemic, the issue to which Zubok and Haslam object and that animates the conclusions I draw from my empirical base.

The construction of the Soviet economy was certainly different from that of the United States, although calling it simply anti-capitalist is much too reductionist. Principles of competition were very much alive in the Soviet Union, but configured differently than those in the U.S.; markets were everywhere, and intermittently encouraged; reforms based on profit guidance for enterprises were tried, but failed probably for institutional reasons rather than strictly ideological ones (archive-based research on the Khrushchev and Kosygin reforms has only just begun); and ultimately the Soviet industrial system, which shared with liberal capitalism the vital goal of reproducing capital, came to justify itself in an ideology of economic growth that was actually new in the international landscape of postwar economic

thinking, as recent cultural and intellectual histories have shown.<sup>3</sup> Anti-capitalism simply does not cover this complexity, and cannot account for the interesting parallel developments in thought and practice between East and West. And just in case what is meant is an anti-systemic politics in the global liberal realm, I will let Anastas Mikoyan lay that to rest (in a conversation with Minister of International Trade and Industry and future Japanese Prime Minister Sato Eisaku):

“The fact that in your country there is a capitalist system, and we have a socialist system cannot serve as an obstacle to the establishment of friendly relations. In the West most absurd fictions circulate about the policy of the Soviet Union. They say, for example, that we only aspire to trade with the socialist countries, or that with the use of trade we want to establish a communist system in the capitalist countries. All this is unfounded nonsense.”<sup>4</sup>

Soviet internal communications overwhelmingly prove Mikoyan right, as my book documents extensively. How to fit these actually existing practices within Hopf’s premise? Should we simply call this behavior pragmatic, de-ideologized? I would not. But then, I was not writing a book about the complexities of Soviet ideology; my aim on that question was to problematize causalities derived from simplistic understandings of what Marxist ideology purportedly prescribed.

By making all questions amenable to an ideological explanation, Hopf’s review suggests areas of conflict between his and my approach in places where I do not see any. Is anti-capitalist the most useful adjective for thinking about bureaucratic logic everywhere? Or is that an attribute only of Soviet bureaucracy? Does international competitiveness really follow a simple capitalist equation? I do not find it terribly important to explain the reasons for the shoddiness of Soviet airplanes,—and I find simplistic the notion that had the Soviet Union been capitalist, it would have competed more successfully, erasing decades of technological backwardness in one simple choice—but the fact that they were shoddy is relevant for explaining why the Soviet Union’s relationship with Ghana did not go very far. Ghana usually appears in Cold War narratives as an ideological fellow traveler, even a Soviet ally. I find greater explanatory value in thinking of the Soviet Union as secondary in the political interests of countries like Ghana, which was concerned with the relationship with the former metropole, with capital, and with its cocoa crop. Rather than thinking of the relationship as one forged in ideology and Cold-War politics, I think it more productive to look at the politics of decolonization and the rigors of the world economy on the economically vulnerable. Are any of Hopf’s questions relevant to this argument with the Cold War literature? I would question Hopf’s arguments about what the book misses and does not, as well as the implications of his exhaustive list of Soviet prescriptions. The Soviets

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Timothy Mitchell, “Fixing the Economy,” *Cultural Studies* 12:1 (2010): 82-101, or Scott O’Byrne, *The Growth Idea. Purpose and Prosperity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), f. 84, op. 3, d. 36, l. 44.

might have prescribed vanguard parties, but as I note in the book, they were just as happy to deal with leaders their own reports called bourgeois—encompassing most leaders of the Global South. The same goes for whether a country controlled its media or not—in terms of economic relations probably their greatest success was relations with India. I note in the book, following Tony Judt and Soviet reports, that the Soviets did not have a monopoly over the idea of central planning.<sup>5</sup> I discuss in the book that the development of heavy industry was a focus of aid practices in both the East and the West, signaling a convergence that undermines traditional Cold War binaries about the political economy of capitalism and communism. And as for a reduction (sic) of trade with the West, a lessening of economic dependence on the West (a more accurate formulation), and a (modest) reorientation of trade to the East, all (or rather the latter two) are mentioned in the book as key political goals of Soviet foreign economic policies, although I ascribe to them—following Mikoyan’s quote above—a less sinister meaning than Hopf’s review implies. I miss none of those issues, discuss them in some detail, and match them to actual practices rather than to declarations of the party’s International Department. Hopf might well disagree with how I interpret these policies, but it is incorrect to claim their absence. Given how much time the book spends on these issues and on accounting for Soviet motivations, it is disappointing that these arguments were not appreciated. The discursive evidence of the Soviet Union’s integrationist practices—with a stress on practice—is widespread and ubiquitous, as the book endeavors to show. Why position it as contrary to all possible Marxist thought (because anti-capitalism) and then deny its evident importance (given what the Soviets actually practiced)? What I try to show is that Soviet actions answered to constraints and opportunities that were not simply created by the will of people with power and the discourses this generates. International action in the twentieth century had also to contend with the overwhelming logic of a liberal world economy that was itself in a constant state of flux—as well as many other international processes, such as anti-colonial discourses that the Soviets more often adopted rather than led, which themselves had much to do with the economic legacies within which postcolonial societies and leaderships were created. William Sewell describes these material legacies with the metaphor of the “built environment.”<sup>6</sup> These also exert a powerful impact on discursive constructions. The continuities, departures and complexities of Soviet worldviews are not done justice by essentially endogenous concepts like anti-capitalism, the revolutionary-imperial paradigm and other such notions that manage to be both reductionist and hopelessly protean at once, and ultimately answer mostly to the needs of the historian’s arguments.

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<sup>5</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), 66-68; Tony Judt with Timothy Snyder, *Thinking the Twentieth Century* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012), 333-354. This is even more eloquently taken up in Daniel Speich Chassé’s, “Towards a global history of the Marshall Plan. European post-war reconstruction and the rise of development economic expertise,” in Christian Grabas and Alexander Nützenadel, eds. *Industrial Policy in Europe after 1945. Wealth, Power and Economic Development in the Cold War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> William H. Sewell Jr., *Logics of History. Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), chapter 10.



One often wonders what book Haslam was reading when he wrote his review. He suggests that the book might need further reading into 1980s Soviet military exports or the 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment, periods that the title alone indicates the book does not cover (Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev figure prominently in the title, although there are some sallies in the text into the first few Leonid Brezhnev years in sections where archives were available and/or it made sense to a section's argument). Likewise, economic relations with Western Europe, which I argue were far more important for the Soviets than those with the global south, get 4 out of 6 chapters, although Haslam's review unaccountably claims otherwise. And the book makes quite clear, and stakes a fair amount of its argument on, the fact that the Soviet Union was "far from an economic force in the world," as per the book jacket, something Haslam somehow reads as an argument for the importance of the Soviet Union to international commerce. Although Haslam's review does not in fact deal with the book's main arguments, it provides a useful service in offering a basic version of the conceptual line that has too often served as a starting point in Soviet and Cold War historiography: autarky. In his old boys' story about the field's treatment of Michael Dohan's excellent scholarship, he writes that no one thought autarky described the Soviet Union. Then Haslam spends the next six paragraphs of his review quite thoroughly contradicting himself and recounting for us the shibboleths of Soviet autarky. The Soviet Union was "protectionist as a deliberate act of economic policy," Haslam writes, with "ideological reasons" at the root of this policy choice. His review recounts for us what we know from every textbook on Soviet history about the tsarist debt, ignoring the fact, presented in the book, that unlike most other countries in the world during the Great Depression, the Soviets never defaulted on their own debt, even if it meant starving their own population and paying Adolf Hitler the debt accrued to Germany in gold ingots in the mid-30s. Both Haslam's review and the textbooks have the Soviet ethos on debt exactly backwards.<sup>7</sup> Despite the book's production of overwhelming evidence that the Soviets took their foreign economic obligations extremely seriously from the 1920s through to the end, Haslam's review simply restates a position that, although dispiritingly widespread in academia, is very clearly wrong: "Commitment to foreign trade was simply not compatible with Communist doctrine." This, I hope, clears up the indictment about "straw dolls" that both Haslam and Zubok include in their reviews. We already know the autarkic narrative, and if the book is wrong in arguing against it, debate over the matter should require engaging with the argument. Haslam's review consistently fails to do so.

There are omissions in Haslam's review that distort historical interpretation. For example, it was not just Sokol'nikov fighting in the early 1920s against Lenin for an opening in the monopoly of foreign trade. Stalin and essentially all other Bolshevik leaders except Trotsky supported Sokol'nikov—and ultimately lost to Lenin's aggressive vehemence. Also, the quotation by Stalin in Haslam's review about forcing the export of grain is in the book, but

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<sup>7</sup> A major task the book sets itself is to do away with facile assumptions about economic history, as in, for example, the assumption that an international capital market might have been available to help the Soviets had they only paid the tsarist debt, a difficult proposition to hold given the complete breakdown of the gold standard in World War I.

the book offers an expanded version of the quote that goes a long way in explaining what I am actually arguing. Here it is:

“Mikoian reports that grain procurements are growing, and each day we are shipping 1 to 1.5 million poods of grain. I think that’s not enough. The quota for daily shipments (now) should be raised to 3–4 million poods at a minimum. Otherwise we risk being left without our new iron and steel and machine-building factories (Avtozavod, Cheliabzavod, etc.). Some clever people will come along and propose holding off on the shipments until the price of grain on the world markets rises “to its ceiling.” There are quite a few of these clever people in Trade. They ought to be horsewhipped, because they’re dragging us into a trap. In order to hold off, we must have hard currency reserves. But we don’t have them. In order to hold off, we would have to have a secure position on the international grain exchange. And we haven’t had any position at all for a long time there – we’ll only obtain it now if we can exploit conditions that have arisen at the present moment and are particularly favorable to us. In short, we must push grain exports furiously.”<sup>8</sup>

What the book endeavors to bring to light is precisely the larger financial and commercial structures and developments that Stalin alludes to here, and which Soviet leaders and officials tasked with expanding foreign trade had to understand and contend with, a historically crucial element that cannot be truncated away as one might quote. Stalin here is describing an international market that is seizing up, grinding to a halt at the very moment he needs it the most (we call this the Great Depression). This prompted a reordering of investment priorities and financial relations in tandem with preexisting and evolving ideas at the Kremlin. An investigation of the discourses at play in different countries can do much to explain the solutions different leaders chose to deal with this debacle, but first we should appreciate the basic fact that they were answering to a particular conjuncture, and then we have to understand the nature of that debacle if we hope to understand the answers they, and Stalin, provided. We have to understand the built (crumbling?) environment within which they acted.

This is why I am very grateful to Getchell for informing H-Diplo readers what the book is actually about. As it is nigh-impossible to have any real notion of what *Red Globalization* argues and does not argue from the other reviews, I would direct H-Diplo readers to her effective synopsis. She chides me for not citing more aggressively regional studies that undermine the bipolar paradigm, while ruminating about how these may not have been incorporated into the “dominant historical narrative,” and she is right on both counts. In fact my account of Soviet interactions with the Global South owes much to the sensibilities I learned from regional studies and the literature and theories of postcolonial studies. Getchell also coincides with the other reviewers in questioning the sources, since they give a more “pragmatic” view of Soviet action than documents from the KGB or the International

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<sup>8</sup> I take this from In Lars T. Lih, Oleg V. Naumov, Oleg V. Khlevniuk, eds., *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 205.

Department of the Central Committee might. Ideology here is once again understood as a functioning sort of Marxist ideology, while trade representatives are said to be less influenced by ideology—a notion I disagree with, as I have argued. Whatever impulses emanated from those presumably “hard ideology” institutions, they ended in a political economy that I hope approximates the one I describe. If someone does find something new in the future, I can only welcome the correction, and hope that I have provided a useful lens for thinking about what that correction might be.

Zubok’s introduction reaches a generous conclusion that appears to be at odds with the critical premise of his commentary. Unless we consider interpretive prisms other than those that permeate Cold War textbooks at the moment, we will not get the story right. In *Red Globalization* I propose to reintroduce capital and the prevailing economic structures within which the Soviets had to operate as such a prism. I do not propose this as a discreet aspect of the Cold War story, as the realm of economy is currently understood, but as a core element in the development of the twentieth century which Cold War narratives will need to engage with extensively, as was the case once upon a time. Whether or not we write directly about economy, we are unavoidably assuming economic verities (now generally of a neoliberal bent) that we should rather be questioning. For example, I do not find it useful to think of economic rationality and ideology (presumably a form of economic irrationality) as opposite categories of state behavior; this contrast says more of the historian’s assumptions about what’s rational and not than of Soviet behavior. In the Soviet context, the book argues in the main, we should strike autarky from our assumptions. I have not read in the reviews an informed argument that would suggest otherwise, but I have read in them a confirmation of my contention that autarky has been historiographically necessary in order to make of the Soviet Union an utterly alien place that cannot be understood by theories developed for the industrial societies of the West. Autarky is the lever scholars have used to separate the Soviet Union from normative notions of historical development. The idea of *Red Globalization* is not to normalize the Soviet Union by rendering it non-ideological, but rather to focus attention on what those normative notions are and problematize them—while hopefully giving a good account of the book’s subtitle. Ultimately I depart from Zubok’s assessment in that I do not think the field will be well served by finding a synthesis in narratives of confrontation and accommodation. I believe that fusing a history of capital, decolonization, and the other grand historical processes that occurred during the years of the Cold War will require new ways of thinking about economy, world politics, culture, and authority. We have a long way to go, and when we get there, we will likely find the field has moved on again, hopefully while building on what came before. But this is not the time to stand for narratives and methodologies whose time has passed.