

The Soviet Union and Cold War Neutrality and Nonalignment in Europe. Edited by Mark Kramer, Aryo Makko, and Peter Ruggenthaler. Lanham MD: The Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series, Lexington Books, 2021. 627 pp.

Officials in the United States and several West European countries viewed the neutral states as a first line of defense during much of the Cold War. But what did the neutral states' relationship with the Soviets look like? This question takes center stage in *The Soviet Union and Cold War Neutrality and Nonalignment in Europe*. At first glance, this title might seem a bit convoluted. However, the double use of the conjunction indicates a serious approach to the Soviet relationship with Cold War neutrality and its relationship with nonalignment, without risking a conflation of the two. This is part of this book's key objective: to supplement often West-centric examinations of neutrality with examinations based on a much wider range of sources and viewpoints.

The first part of the book deals with different neutrality policies in Cold War Europe, and its chapters lay bare the discrepancies between *theories* of neutrality (more often than not based in political configurations that no longer existed) and their *practice* in this period. The first chapter by Franz Cede busts several myths about Austria's neutrality, such as the notion that neutrality was imposed upon the country. Cede argues that, while circumstances outside Austria's borders combined to make neutrality viable, that does not mean that neutrality was Austria's to accept through no agency of its own or that there were no ideological considerations at play. Olaf Kronvall, in his chapter on Swedish neutrality, shows that Washington regarded Sweden's way of being neutral as immoral, a conviction that could not be seen as separate from the events of the early 1940s. Thomas Fischer offers a short chapter on Switzerland which, despite its brevity, offers a nuanced grasp of the many different understandings and orientations that coexisted under the label "neutral." This difference in orientation is further mapped by Mark Kramer in the conclusion of the book, in which Kramer confirms Switzerland was an outlier (p.543). The chapter by Rainio-Niemi on Finland is more globally focused. Importantly, this chapter views 1955 as a breakthrough year that brought new definitions of neutrality. This year recurs in many of the volume's chapters as a key moment.

The second part of the book deals with Soviet foreign policy towards the neutral states. The first chapter by Alexey Komarov, which examines Swedish neutrality as viewed from Moscow, serves as a counterpoint to the chapter by

Kronvall. It is interesting to see that the Swedish position was seen as “free-riding” not just by Washington DC but also by Moscow. It is a pity, however, that the characterization of Sweden as “peace-loving” (p.120) is not further developed. This is very much in line with the political language of the World Peace Council, very much a part of Soviet foreign policy but nevertheless barely present in this book. In chapters like this, a more capacious understanding of (Soviet) foreign policy would have reaped dividends. The potential gains of such a broader definition do appear in the chapter by Peter Ruggenthaler on Soviet policy towards Austria. Ruggenthaler incorporates, for instance, the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow into his discussion. I learned a great deal from this chapter, especially its thoughtful treatment of the difficult position in which Austria found itself in 1956 and 1968. This section is completed by Kimmo Rentola’s chapter on Soviet policy towards Finland during the early stages of the Cold War and a brief chapter by Olga Pavlenko on the run-up to 1989 in Soviet-Swiss relations. In this part of the book, 1955 again emerges as a key moment. Rentola’s chapter covers “das tolle Jahr” (p.138), while Ruggenthaler emphasizes the importance of the military withdrawal of the Soviets from Austria (p.149).

The third part of the book deals with the role of the Soviet Union in the foreign policy of European neutrals. The qualifier “European” neutrals here is especially important, given that this part of the book in particular would have been markedly different, as well as more unwieldy, had the viewpoint been more global. The first chapter by Aryo Makko on Swedish foreign policy mirrors the view from the Soviet perspective and demonstrates that the tensions covered in the earlier parts of the book were both-sided. Next, Kari Möttölä shows that Finnish foreign policy was determined (even more so than Swedish foreign policy) by geographical location, in which Finland’s “Nordicity,” as Möttölä calls it, served as a stabilizing factor. Maximilian Graf continues the discussion with a view of Austria’s *Ostpolitik* after 1968. Graf returns to the idea of Austrian policy “myths” first taken up by Cede at the beginning of the book. In a coauthored chapter on Swiss foreign policy, Thomas Bürgisser, Sacha Zala, and Thomas Fischer close this part by offering a detailed periodization of the evolving Swiss-Soviet relationship, which manages to show an evolution in Swiss attitudes even while acknowledging that the resulting policy was very much a “yoyo affair.”

The fourth part offers a new set of countries by examining departures from the Eastern Bloc and turns toward neutrality on the part of Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Albania. Andrei Edemskii centers his chapter on Yugoslavia on the complicated process of rapprochement in the years immediately after Stalin’s

death, culminating in the Belgrade Declaration of 1955 (and thus returning once more to that year as a pivotal global moment). Csaba Békés stays in the mid-1950s by covering the 1956 revolution and specifically the declaration of neutrality in November of that year. Finally, Robert Austin chronicles the evolution of Albania's isolationist turn in the years between its break with the Soviet Union after Stalin and its break with China in the late 1970s. Nadia Boyadjieva picks up where Edemskii leaves off by examining Yugoslavia's non-alignment policy in the decades after 1955. This chapter offers a great tie-in with global politics and shows not just the difference between neutrality and non alignment but also the different physical and mental geographies of the two. Tvrtko Jakovina closes this part with a final chapter on the last Cold War era Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Belgrade in 1989 and the breakup of Yugoslavia itself. This chapter offers a thoughtful continuation of the neutrality-nonalignment debate and how it was waged within the NAM generally and within Yugoslavia specifically.

Turning the tables, the fifth part of the book deals with other Western states' perception of neutral-Soviet relations. Jussi Hahnimäki continues themes raised earlier in the book with a thorough view of the United States' perception of Scandinavian neutrality. Günter Bischof tackles the perception of Austrian neutrality with a focus on the years after the withdrawal of occupation forces in 1955. Anne Deighton departs from the American perspective by turning to the United Kingdom and its closer physical proximity to the European neutrals. This chapter shows where the United States and the United Kingdom diverged and casts the latter's policy as far more cautious. Nicolas Badalassi turns the lens on France and highlights the pragmatic awareness in Paris that total neutrality did not exist, that the neutrals were all dealing with historical and locational contingencies, and that, therefore, France would likewise adapt accordingly. Andreas Hilger shows how West German attitudes towards the neutrals were part of a complex high-stakes balancing act. In a second coauthored chapter, Milorad Lazic and Magnus Petersson take on "the flanks" by examining NATO's relationship with the countries on the margin.

The concluding chapter by Mark Kramer brings together the main themes raised in the book. Crucially, it returns to the question of neutralism versus nonalignment. Kramer places it in a wider global context and acknowledges that nonalignment in Europe and nonalignment elsewhere were very different concepts. This chapter provides crucial context for the rest of the book, so much so that the reader is left wishing it had been offered earlier. This does

point to a larger issue: global context cannot come from the conclusion alone. While the book is focused on the European neutrals, the countries covered did not operate in a purely European theater, nor were their foreign relations with the aligned world limited to interstate diplomacy. I am mindful of the fact that this book covers a lot of ground by uncovering the political and historical contingencies hidden behind the term “European neutral.” But the chapters in which the global does appear do help deepen the reader’s appreciation of the larger political landscape in which neutrality was navigated. Notable instances are Kronvall’s inclusion of the Vietnam War and Makko’s inclusion of the Congo Crisis. Crucially, Rainu-Niemi asserts that the 1955 Bandung Conference marked the “globalization of neutralist sentiments,” which went hand in hand with the globalization of the Cold War. Though this statement does elide concepts of neutralism already circulating in the decolonizing world, this chapter is an important one in the volume, as it acknowledges that the Soviet Union viewed nonalignment positively (even if selectively so) as a break away from imperialism. The United States, in the meantime, was slow to grasp the global uses of neutrality and their significance in the intersection of decolonization and Cold War.

In all, however, the book absolutely delivers on its promise to provide a polycentric perspective on neutrality in Cold War Europe. It is going to be the first book to which to point students and scholars who are seeking a comprehensive history of the concept. In that context, I would be remiss not to mention the stellar bibliography of further reading, which lists not just the most important works on the subject, but also takes seriously the different historiographies of neutrality across Europe, and offers a rare collection of key works regardless of the language in which they were published. This book is a very welcome intervention indeed.

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