The Soviet Union and the United States
Rivals of the Twentieth Century
Coexistence and Competition

The Soviet Union and the United States were involved in a complicated interplay of ideological, political, social and cultural factors, which wandered between open rivalry and cautious cooperation. Their relationship was fluctuating. Antagonism was accompanied with developing convergence. The main issue of this anthology is to discuss the attractiveness of polarity. Differing from Europe as well as from other parts of the world: both powers were provided with their history to expand their frontiers in the 19th century. Territorial expansion and the discovery of new ideas and ideologies laid the foundation for their geopolitical hegemony in the 20th century. International authoritative scholars from the United States, Switzerland and Germany give fresh insights in a new understanding of 20th-century geopolitics.

Eva-Maria Stolberg, Associate Professor of Modern History has developed a academic profile on Eurasia, East Asia and the Pacific. She has been doing research on Siberia, China, Japan and the United States and is currently working on the field of intercultural mediation, diversity and gender training for multinational companies and NGOs. With Peter Lang, she published "The Siberian Saga. A History of Russia's Wild East".

www.peterlang.de
## Contents

**Preface**

1 Prelude to Rivalry: The Frontier Foundations of Two Global Empires
   Christopher L. Miller

2 New Worlds? Russian Mental Discoveries of the Northwest Pacific Region
   Martina Winkler

3 Making a Home for the Other: Kazakhs, Sioux and Self-Determination in Soviet and American Contexts, 1920-1930s
   Steven Sabol

4 Images of the Exotic: American-Russian Attitudes toward Orientals
   Eva M. Stolberg

5 Ordinary Russians and Average Americans: Cold War International Correspondents describe “regular people” on the other side of the Iron Curtain
   Dina Fainberg

   Gleb Tsipursky

   Jeffrey S. Hardy

8 Bridging the Gap: Unseen Enemies and Emerging Infections in the Soviet Union and the United States Before the Advent of the Cold War
   Lisa K. Walker

9 Mastermind of Terror: The Soviet Union as the Leader of the International Terror Network
   Adrian Hänni

**Conclusion**
Preface

“Rivals of the Twentieth Century” is devoted to a comparative view on the systems of the two geopolitical powers of the last century: USSR and USA. It is not intended to deliver another diplomatic study, instead it wants to give a view from ‘inside’. What made the Soviet society different to that of the U.S.? Were there any similarities that explained their status as geopolitical powers? What “mental drive” stood behind the general concept of “geopolitical power”? In how far did society give the social background of this great game of the Twentieth century? What about cultural motives of geopolitical rivalry? There will be two parts to be discussed: 1) traditions of the nineteenth century (i.e. the rise of continental power of both countries, autocracy in Russia vs. democracy in the United States), 2) the formation of the geopolitical powers USA and USSR in the Twentieth Century.

What follows is an unconventional approach to an understanding of Soviet-U.S. relationship in the context of Cold War in its social and cultural dimensions. The general theme of this book is the way in which the United States and the Soviet Union and their societies have adapted or failed to adapt to their geopolitical and global role. Soviet-U.S. relationship in the context of the development of their societies was never static during the Cold War, instead social and cultural changes made the two geopolitical rivals of the Twentieth Century less monolithic. Both sides watched each other with attentiveness, curiosity, suspicion, and envy. Mutual encounters cannot be regarded in a pure rational context of politics, emotions, bias were involved.

This volume wants to open a stimulating discussion thread of new interpretations of U.S.-Soviet relationship. International scholars have participated in this project which is actually a work in progress. The scope of this volume covers aspects like ethnic policy toward natives, cultural stereotypes in foreign policy toward East Asians, mass media, cultural codes of juveniles, convergence in penal systems, medicine, the handling with international terrorism. Two introductory articles elaborate the historical foundation of Soviet-U.S. geopolitical rivalry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As the volume will show, it is difficult to separate foreign policy and domestic politics. The second half of the Twentieth century caused rapid changes in both realms. Soviet and U.S. politics came under the pressure of both domestic and foreign influences. Moreover, both geopolitical powers influenced each other. Insofar, the Soviet-U.S. relationship in the Twentieth Century was embedded in a network of complex interactions. The essays of this volume will shed light on this complexity. Bilateral relations imply patterns of sending, replying, invoking messages, images, behavioral values between the participants, i.e. the geopolitical rivals, of a policy-making process. This process is
not one-sided, it touches the role of cooperation and friction that aggregates fluctuations.

This book assesses the mutual behavioral patterns and images in Soviet-U.S. relationship from a bottom-up analysis, contrary to conventional diplomatic studies the focus is not on high policy-making. The general thread of the volume is that mutual behavioral patterns and images are deeply rooted in both societies and common people. The contributors to this volume are searching for innovation with an analytic focus on imaginative and real aspects in Soviet-U.S. relationship. It is our hope that this volume will contribute to a future greater engagement and reassessment of Soviet-U.S. relationship in the Twentieth Century.

Eva M. Stolberg

Christopher L. Miller

Prelude to Rivalry: The Frontier Foundations of Two Global Empires

In 1834, Alexis de Tocqueville chose to end Book One of his soon-to-be classic “Democracy in America” with a peculiar observation and prediction. The observation, one that would have sounded presumptuous to the world even a century later, was as follows: “There are at the present time two great nations in the world, which started from different points, but seem to tend towards the same end. I allude to the Russians and the Americans.” And the prediction, which would have sounded fresh and ominous at the end of World War II, was that “Their starting-point is different and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.”

What could have led to such an early, and apparently prophetic, observation on the part of a visionary European political thinker? What was going on in these two nations during the nineteenth century that would serve as prelude to a global rivalry that would shape the century that followed? What Tocqueville observed and what shaped his prediction was that during the nineteenth century, Russia and the United States were each, in somewhat different ways, establishing and internalizing what U.S. historian Walter Nugent calls “Habits of Empire”; habits that would carry over into the following century making these nations the rival super-powers they would become.

Of course the United States and Russia were not alone in forging empires during the nineteenth century. Empire-building may well have been the single universal enterprise that embroiled the entire Western World during the period from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries.

---

1 Initial work on this project began as the result of an appointment through the Fulbright Scholars Program as the Nikolay V. Sivichev Distinguished Professor of American Studies at Moscow State University in 2007. I owe much to my hosts, Professors Irina Khruleva, Yuri Rogoulev, and Constantine Belouchev for their hospitality and to my seminar students with whom I discussed many of the ideas presented here. Several colleagues at the University of Texas – Pan American – Professors Penelope Adair, David Carlson, Amy Hay, Kristine Wirts, and Tamer Balci – have also been generous in sharing their time and thoughts.


4 This certainly is the opinion put forth by Emmanuel Wallerstein in his classic three volume summary of world systems. See Wallerstein, Emmanuel. 1974. The Modern World-System, vol. I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-
penitentiaries in Capitalist America was fostered, American public opinion of Soviet prisons was still influenced by past reports of Gulag life under Stalin not considering the new judicial changes in the Khruzhchev era. Moreover, in U.S. official rhetoric rehabilitation was the sign of the liberal democracy in the United States in contrast to oppression of human personality in Soviet prison camps. Although in practice there was a tendency of convergence of both prison systems in the postwar period, the discourse on penitentiaries became part of Cold War ideological rivalry.

Lisa K. Walker elaborates the U.S.-Soviet relationship on the field of biomedicine and public health. In both countries interest in epidemiology and its significance for public health dated back to World War II. The 1940s were the great time of discovery. Diseases caused by viruses like the encephalitis were considered as a dangerous threat to population under the aspects of economic progress and national defense. Walker shows that physicians in both countries keenly observed microbiological research on the other side. Moreover, epidemiology, i.e., virology, was in the 1930s and 1940s a highly new explorative field and in the Soviet Union it often failed to be useful for practitioners of public health due to insufficient communication. The situation in the United States was much better as cooperation between researchers and practitioners showed more professional efficiency. There was another stark difference between both countries: virology in the Stalinist Soviet Union had a strong military-orientated character, whereas in the United States the American public was better informed about epidemics and the role of biomedicine. Stalinist culture of secrecy in the 1930s and 1940s hampered an effective professional network in conducting public healthcare. Open information and transparency in the United States helped to reduce peoples' fears and rumors that were more virulent in a closed and secretive society like the Stalinist Soviet Union.

Finally, Adrian Hänni reflects on the role of the Soviet Union in International Terrorism of the 1970s and 1980s from the U.S. perspective. The common belief in the United States and their allies that the Soviet Union used global terrorism as a tool of strategic warfare was fostered by the U.S. administration, the New Conservative, and the CIA. As Hänni shows, these institutions starkly influenced and manipulated public opinion. The channels for creating such a late Cold war mood were the mass media. The U.S. television documentary “The Russian connection” was only one prominent example for this psychological warfare. Hänni unfolds in detail in how far the ideological warfare against the Soviet Union under the umbrella of anti-terrorism came on the agenda of the Reagan administration that maintained a dense institutional network with much pressure on intelligence analysts to produce hints on the Soviet involvement into global terrorism. During the Reagan era the American public was flooded by a numerous books (including most popular fictions), studies and other information propagating this anti-Soviet view. As Hänni convincingly argues, the terror network image was an important ferment of American popular culture in the 1980s. Moreover, he shows that this anti-Soviet bias helped to redefine U.S. superpower identity under the Reagan administration and they stood for the entanglement of geopolitics and the public/cultural sphere in the late Cold War. It was, at least, Ronald Reagan who coined the ideological term of “empire of evil”. The terror network image helped to demonize the geopolitical rival.