Labor History

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/clah20

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To cite this article: Rory Archer, Sara Bernard & Yannis G.S. Papadopoulos (2023) Introduction: the Cold War of labour migrants: opportunities, struggles and adaptations across the Iron Curtain and beyond, Labor History, 64:4, 321-329, DOI: 10.1080/0023656X.2023.2227600

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2023.2227600

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Published online: 23 Jun 2023.

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LABOR HISTORY
2023, VOL. 64, NO. 4, 321–329
https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2023.2227600

Introduction: the Cold War of labour migrants: opportunities, struggles and adaptations across the Iron Curtain and beyond

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ABSTRACT
This introduction to the special issue The Cold War of Labor Migrants: Opportunities, struggles and adaptations across the Iron Curtain and beyond seeks to bring forward the conversation between the history of the Cold War and migration studies. It is the result of a workshop convened by the Working Group 'Labor Migration History', of the European Labor History Network. It maps out the academic debate on international labor migration and it critically engages with its western-centric approach. It introduces the seven contributions which, from different geographic and thematic perspectives, reassess the importance of non-Western experiences in shaping the entanglement between international labor migration and the Cold War. Two lines of inquiry feature prominently in this special issue. The first is a reassessment of the relevance of the regulation of international migration as a political terrain on which the Cold War divide was both constructed and deconstructed by different institutional actors, which, at various levels, were empowered by the existence of Cold War rivalry. The second, is the agency of migrants and aims to explore the fluidity, opportunism and creativity in the ways that migrants themselves experienced state control because of the particular Cold War socio-economic and political context.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 15 June 2023
Accepted 15 June 2023

KEYWORDS
Labour migrants; cold War; international migration; postwar Europe; socialism; iron curtain

Labour migration, in its different forms, has been one of the most important socio-economic phenomena accompanying the transformation of the global economy and the nation state during the first age of migration from the mid 19th century until World War One, and the second age, since 1945 (Hatton & Williamson, 2005). An extensive literature examines the different and multifaceted ways in which labor migration shaped, and was shaped by, economic, social, cultural and political change in both sending and receiving societies. Some questions, however, and disciplinary perspectives and geographies, have received less attention than others.

Although the second age of mass migration led to an increase of international migration globally, and to the diversification of its geographies, the experiences and perspectives of western liberal countries have been disproportionately represented in both theoretical and empirical studies (J. Lucassen et al., 2010, pp. 7–35). Starting with World War Two, Western Europe in particular, has dominated the field of migration research across disciplines. World War Two and the immediate postwar period generated displacement on an unprecedented scale across continents. An estimated 175 million individuals (7.6 percent of the world's population) were displaced globally, compared to

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the twelve million (slightly less than one percent of world population) of World War One and its aftermath, and the forty-seven million (0.9 percent of world population) of the Cold War aftermath (1992–1996). In the 1940s, continental Europe alone accounted for about sixty million displaced individuals (Gatrell, 2013, p. 3). A large proportion of displacement in Europe followed an East–West axis. The expulsion and outflow of between twelve and sixteen million ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe has been particularly prominent in the migrant history of Western Europe although much less so in the historiography of Eastern Europe. But immigration also came from non-European territories. Several million Europeans arrived in Western Europe from former colonial territories. In the 1940s colonial immigration affected mostly Italy, Great Britain and Belgium, France in the 1960s and Portugal by the 1970s (Bade & Bade, 2003, pp. 222–223). Greece, although not a colonial power, in the context of the Cold War, favored the 'repatriation' of the more conservative elements of the Greek communities in Egypt and former African colonies and channeled those considered 'communists' to Australia and other overseas countries (Dalachanis, 2022).

Research on the postwar period in Western Europe has centered on the transition from being a region of emigration to one of immigration. This was a gradual process which started in northwestern core economies and spread later to Mediterranean Europe and the literature has been careful to explore national differences and common trends (Bade & Bade, 2003, pp. 217–275; Kofman, 2000; Kubat et al., 1979; L. Lucassen, 2022). Colonial immigration developed hand in hand with the launching of state-run temporary recruitment of guest workers, mostly from southern Europe and Maghreb countries. As a result of both colonial and guestworker immigration, in Western Europe a diversity of migration policies and patterns of relations between sending and recruiting countries, both at the institutional and societal level, coexisted. In 1975, just before the revocation of bilateral agreements for the temporary recruitment of the unskilled labor force in the principal European recruiting countries, approximately two million foreign workers were employed in West Germany, followed by France (about 1.5 million), the United Kingdom and Switzerland with 750,000 and 500,000 migrant workers, respectively (King, 1993, p. 28).

The mid-1970s emerges as a period of transformation across migration research. Societal integration instead of temporary recruitment and stay became to dominate political and academic debates on migration, a trend which had already started in the United States, Canada, and Australia in the preceding decades (Chin, 2017). Despite the closure of borders to economic immigration from outside the EEC, in northwestern Europe, the presence of 'foreigners' (citizens of countries which were not part of the EEC or affiliated communities) increased predominantly as a result of family reunion and family formation. By the mid-1980s, family dependents and second-generation migrants accounted for between one-third and three-quarters of foreign citizens residing in Western European countries (Heath et al., 2008; Ucarer & Puchala, 1997). Meanwhile, Italy and other countries of the north Mediterranean area had begun to transform from countries of emigration into countries of transit and immigration, largely thanks to a dynamic informal economy and geographic proximity to areas which were affected by continuouspopulation movements as a result of postwar economic, political and natural crises (King, 2001). The key push factor was the impact of the two oil price shocks during the 1970s on the economic development and political stability of developing countries. The increase in the price of oil and the widening of the technological gap with developed countries greatly affected the ability of developing countries to compete on the global market leading to a jump in foreign debts, poverty and unemployment. Indeed, as Timothy J. Hatton and Williamson (2005, p. 3) explain, 'In the first global century [Nineteenth century] emigration raised living standards in poor countries a lot. In the second global century [the second half of the Twentieth century] emigration could raise living standards in poor countries a lot, but typically it does not' (see also Castle, 2015). In the 1980s, xenophobia and racism were on the rise across Western Europe and the North Atlantic. As multiculturalism was increasingly deemed a failed political project in liberal democracies, security gradually replaced integration as the dominant preoccupation in migration policies (Buenker & Ratner, 2005; Chin, 2017; Gabaccia, 2012; Mann, 2016).

The different phases and shifts in the regulations of labor migration in Western Europe in the second half of the 20th century and in particular the transition from integration to national security in migration policies after that have been predominantly studied by social scientists and political scientists. Migration historians, on the other hand, have tended to analyze the postwar period until the mid-1970s in terms of continuities and changes with the restrictionist interwar period which was dominated by the dynamic interaction between the interventionist state (which defined the legal framework for the selection, recruitment and stay of migrant workers), and the migration networks which continued to operate sometimes in cooperation with, other times challenging state control (Page Moch, 2003 –21;, pp. 1; L. Lucassen & Lucassen, 2005). From this (historical) perspective, World War Two was certainly a crucial event but rather than being a turning point it accelerated rather than brought to an end developments which had already started at least in the interwar period (Mazower, 2011; Parsanoglou & Papadopoulos, 2019).

A common gap in the scholarship on labor migration in the postwar period has been that the Cold War features rather marginally. With the exception of studies on postwar displacement, and on the politically motivated emigration from the Eastern Bloc, which started 1945 and ended at the turn of the 1980s (Mazurkiewicz, 2019), the Cold War rarely appears as playing any relevant role in the definition of migration policies and patterns in the postwar period. This is surprising considering the importance which the regulation of international migration has assumed in international relations since the end of World War One; and the centrality of the Cold War division as the axis around which the international order was rebuilt in the aftermath of World War Two. International migration, whether economically or politically driven, has been absent from recent discussions about the future of Cold War historiography (DiDonato 2020; Romero 2014). The Cold War has been absent from recent reassessments of migration history as a global history as well (J. Hollifield et al., 2022). Labor migration has also been under-represented in the research agenda of global labor history despite the fact that it has contributed greatly to attempts to revitalize and conceptualize the importance of labor for the study of the modern and contemporary world (Van der Linden, 2008). As a result, the ways in which labor migration affected Cold War dynamics, and was in turn shaped by them, remain under-researched.

In the last two decades, however, thanks to the adoption of global, gender, postcolonial and decolonial approaches and the access to the archival records of the period in question, a debate has started to develop about the relation between the Cold War and international migration. The importance of labor migration for post-war reconstruction and the process of European integration has been revisited by a number of studies which have demonstrated how Cold War rivalries were important not only in East–West relations but also in relations *within* Western European countries and between the latter and other parts of the world, South America in particular. They have shown how the management of postwar displacement was set up as a system to link the economic and political developments of receiving overseas countries to the integration of Western Europe with the United States (Clayton, 2004; Comte, 2018, 2020; Molnar, 2018; Ventura, 2015). Economic convergence within the 'Free World' became a priority for the United States of America. In this context, the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), founded in 1951, was an instrument of US Cold War diplomacy that was supposed, on the one hand, to relieve Europe of refugees, unemployed and underemployed workers, a potential source of social unrest and a hotbed for the diffusion of communist ideas, and, on the other hand, to offer to overseas countries the workforce they needed for their development. For South American governments, the influx of European skilled workers and farmers through ICEM was considered pivotal for rapid industrialization and intensive agriculture (Damilakou & Papadopoulos, 2022). Moreover, refugees from Eastern Europe were supposed to inculcate local populations against communist ideas. These plans for organized migration in order to distribute the workforce according to the needs of the global economy often did not prioritize the needs of immigrants themselves, however. For example, the emigration from US administered Okinawa to South America, although supposedly driven by the need to offer better

perspectives to local inhabitants, was mainly the result of security concerns and neo-colonial policies (Iacobelli, 2016).

The Cold War had an impact on human mobility inside and from the Global South. Scholars are only starting to delve into the agency of labor migrants in challenging or adapting to opportunities created by the existence of the Cold War divide. During the postwar period, whatHannah Arendt described as 'race-thinking' was still dominant in the receiving countries of Europe, America and Oceania and potential immigrants from Asia were looking for breaches in restrictive immigration legislation. The United States gradually abandoned the long-standing Asian exclusion policy after World War Two with the aim of advancing its image as an egalitarian society and favored the immigration of students and skilled workers from India and Pakistan hoping to strengthen transnational links with local middle classes during the Cold War (Quraishi, 2020). Cold War tensions also influenced mobility in East Asia. Immigrants from China tried to use the lack of recognition of the communist government by the U.S.A to their own advantage. Moreover, the Republic of China (Taiwan) used the growing immigration to the U.S.A after the repeal of the Chinese exclusion act in 1943, to promote its foreign policy goals and improve the image of Chinese in American public opinion (Oyen, 2017). At the same time, while western states organized the transfer of Europeans stranded in mainland China through ICEM, they were reluctant to receive Chinese fleeing the communist regime derogatively describing them as 'rice refugees', that is, unwelcome economic migrants (Madokoro, 2016).

Beyond that, attempts to challenge the international regulation of labor migration remain undocumented even in the large literature on labor and Trade Union internationalism. This is surprising given that the United States and its allies advocated for the freedom of movement of the labor force while the Soviet Union and the socialist countries championed that socialism guaranteed employment and respectable living conditions to all workers, rendering spontaneous migration unnecessary and presenting it as an instrument for the capitalist exploitation of the working class. In practice, the freedom of movement in the West was limited in the right to emigrate while receiving states maintained the right to select, on the basis not only of economic criteria, but also on racial and ethnic prejudices, who could settle in their territory and under which terms (J. F. Hollifield, 2004). Yet, workers' mobility and agency, in spite of obvious limitations, was broader than previously assumed within the Socialist Bloc. The only case of regulated labor migration from a socialist state – Non-aligned Yugoslavia under Tito – to Western Europe has featured prominently in recent years as historians have revisited the work of Yugoslav sociologists of the Cold War era and provide multi-perspective accounts of the millions of Yugoslavs who settled in countries like West Germany (Brunnbauer, 2016, pp. 257–309; Ivanović, 2012; Le Normand, 2021; Novinšćak, 2009) and their return to the homeland (Bernard, 2019).

Labor migration which occurred within the Eastern Bloc (Burkush, 2018; Stola, 2016, 2017), and between the Eastern Bloc and developing countries in Asia and Africa is a more recently developing field, often as a departure from a broader interest in 'alternative forms of globalization' or 'socialist globalization' (Calori et al., 2019; Mark & Betts, 2022; Mark et al., 2019, 2020; Schwenkel, 2014). For example, a 2018 special section in this journal edited by Alena Alamgir, explored what 'made labor mobility and migration socialist' (Alamgir, 2018, p. 1). Connections between the 'Second' and 'Third' worlds, empirically examined through case studies of Soviet and Eastern European engagement and exchange with partners the Global South also include studies of labor exchange and collaboration (Bortlová-Vondráková & Szente-Varga, 2021; Spaskovska, 2018). In this context, scholars examine how in the 1950s socialist countries welcomed refugees and orphans from countries ravaged by imperialism and colonialism as an expression of 'international solidarity', but during the following decades received an important number of students and 'contract-workers' from Vietnam, Mozambique, Cuba and Algeria, among many other countries, through bilateral contract labor accords (Apor, 2020; Burton et al., 2021; Rabenschlag, 2014; Troebst, 2004; Weiss & Dennis, 2005). These studies focus both on the aims of the sending and the receiving governments, but also on the personal motivations of migrants plans to leave their country. Thus, we are coming to know more

about the agency of labor migrants in challenging or adapting to opportunities created by the existence of the Cold War divide but this knowledge is still partial and uneven.

This special issue stems from the desire to bring forward the conversation between the Cold War and migration studies. It is the result of a workshop organized at the University of Glasgow (28–30 June 2021) by the Working Group 'Labour Migration History', which is part of the European Labour History Network. The contributions are a selection of papers which were presented at the workshop and of papers which have developed thanks to discussions which the workshop subsequently generated (for the conference report see Bernard, 2022). Titled 'Labour Migration in the Cold War and beyond: New Questions, Methods and Sources', the workshop sought to map out the existence of research and sources which could shed light on non-western experiences and perspectives, as well as solidarities and struggles, that encountered, negotiated and/or challenged the established liberal order in the regulation of labor migration in both the western and non-western world during and after the Cold War. The Cold War was chosen as a case study in recognition that, because of Cold War competition, alternatives to the western-centric regulation of migration existed in the attempts by some actors in the Second and Third World to resist First World hegemony. In particular, two lines of inquiry feature prominently in this special issue. The first is a reassessment of the relevance of the regulation of international migration as a political terrain on which the Cold War divide was both constructed and deconstructed by different institutional actors, which, at various levels, were empowered by the existence of the Cold War rivalry. The second, is the *agency* of migrants and aims to explore the fluidity, opportunism and creativity in the ways that migrants themselves experienced state control because of the particular Cold War socio-economic and political context.

The first contribution, by Sara Bernard, offers a review and synthesis of the scholarship that from different angles, addresses the links between Cold War competition and the regulation of international migration as shaped by the competition between socialism and capitalism over meanings of, and paths to, development. It contextualizes the formation and evolution of the international system regulating migration from the aftermath of World War Two until the end of the Cold War. Focusing primarily on Cold War Europe, it shows how the establishment of a legal distinction between economic migrant and political refugee at the turn of the 1940s, was instrumental to the further development of labor migration as an area of confrontation between Western and Eastern Europe until the late 1960s and of cooperation and gradual convergence over development strategies during détente.

The second contribution, by Yannis Papadopoulos and Giota Tourgeli, takes the case of the recruitment of female Greek domestic workers to commonwealth countries. This was brokered by the ICEM, the creation of which was underscored by Cold War logic which sought to promote regulated emigration from countries of the European South as a 'safety valve' to reduce unemployment which the US and its allies feared could make the working classes of countries like Greece more receptive to communism. ICEM tried to imbue women from the peripheries of Western Europe with 'superior' western technical skills, cultural values and modern behavioral patterns that reproduced the dominant gender, ethnic, race and class prejudices of destination countries like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Analyzing how migrant media outlets in France discussed the position of (post)-migrant individuals in France, Christian Jacobs argues that the coalescence of the Global Cold War order, French domestic politics, and social change in (post-) migrant communities fostered a transition from anti-imperialist to multicultural understandings of migration. Such media outlets (and the debates they provoked) offered a space to negotiate the position of migrants in France against the backdrop of global developments such as the Cold War, decolonization, the disillusion with postcolonial governments, and the rising human rights movement understandings of migration.

Ondřej Klípa's contribution explores working class values in the context of socialist labor migration and economic cooperation in late socialism. Focusing on the case of Polish builders in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 1980s, Klípa provides micro-level insight into the ways in which

the employment of foreign labor came to form part of the economic planning of socialist enterprises. He highlights how thanks to de facto market conditions, the Polish construction sector was able to achieve better results and in less time than their Czechoslovak counterparts. But while these achievements made Polish construction workers valuable assets to socialist development, they challenged the egalitarian values as promoted by Czechs compromising the social interaction between Polish workers and broader Czech society.

Approaching Bulgarian-Vietnamese labor-exchange programs as they were conceptualized by different actors within the socialist state, Raia Apostolova conceives of these encounters as a form of moral economy that attempted to reconcile the notions of socialist internationalism and 'mutually beneficial' migration between postcolonial and socialist states. Focusing on the decade between 1975 and 1985, Apostolova examines how socialist internationalist theory and the social practice of migration interacted and eventually clashed. As different competing logics developed around the political and economic viability of the labor-exchange programs, internationalism transformed into an open-ended domain of socialist internationalist theory.

Rory Archer's contribution on Albanian citizens of Yugoslavia and their labor migration within the Yugoslav state demonstrates the ambivalent nature between the categories of political and economic migration as well as the overlapping nature of internal and international migration in practice. Many Albanians from Kosovo and Macedonia moved to other parts of Yugoslavia in search of work, influenced by both economic necessity (the development gap between the Yugoslav 'South' and 'North') and coercive conditions in their homeland, first in the post-War Years but also after the 1981 Yugoslav crackdown against expressions of national(ist) Albanian political demands.

The final contribution, by Deana Jovanović and Dragan Stojmenović, also focuses on Yugoslavia, and its relations with the Global South. They take the case of Yugoslav highly skilled temporary labor migrants in the field of copper mining in Iran during the 1980s to explore the importance of improvisations in everyday practices of managerial bureaucracy. They argue that the export of such 'know-how' made Yugoslav entrepreneurial capitalist ventures possible and was constitutive of the silent acceptance of the reproduction of capitalist relations. Rather than representing forms of resistance or an alternative to the Western/Northern hegemonies, Yugoslav labor mobility and managerial practices in the global south, Jovanović and Stojmenović suggest, facilitated capitalist ventures at semi peripheries and were harbinger of economic liberalization.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Rory Archer is a social historian at the Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz. His research is focused on labor history, gender history, socialism, housing, everyday life and popular culture in Yugoslavia. He currently leads the research project 'To the Northwest! Intra Yugoslav Albanian migration (1953–1989)' supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). In addition, he works on a project at the University of Vienna investigating the operation of Yugoslav companies in postcolonial Zambia. Rory is one of the coordinators of the Working Group "Labour Migration History" of the European Labour History Network.

Sara Bernard is lecturer in societal transformation in the subject area Central and East Europe at the University of Glasgow. She is a social historian of international migration in the twentieth century, particularly interested in the Cold War period and in the Balkan region. Her first monograph, titled Deutsch Marks in the Head, Shovel in the Hands and Yugoslavia in the Heart. The Gastarbeiter Return to Yugoslavia (1965-1991), was published by Harrassowitz in 2019. Sara is one of the coordinators of the Working Group "Labour Migration History" of the European Labour History Network.

Yannis G.S. Papadopoulos is teaching at the Hellenic Open University and is a research fellow at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies (FORTH) and his research focuses on immigration, transnationalism and ethnicity. His current project deals with transgenerational migration between Europe and South America. He coedited the volume Migration

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