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ihren deutschen Amtsbrüdern einerseits eine klare Parteinahme für die Endgültigkeit der Oder-Neiße-Grenze mit dem Ziel, sich nicht dem Vorwurf der kommunistischen Regierung in Warschau auszusetzen, sie träten nicht entschieden genug für die Interessen des polnischen Volkes ein. Andererseits zogen sie damit in der (west)deutschen Öffentlichkeit den Verdacht auf sich, sie würden mit dem kommunistischen Regime gemeinsame Sache machen. P. zufolge übten sich die deutschen Bischöfe in der Grenzfrage in vorsichtiger Zurückhaltung, um weder der Regierungspolitik vorzugreifen noch die Vertriebenen und ihre öffentlich präsenten Verbände zu provozieren.

Dazu ist allerdings kritisch anzumerken, dass die Generationserfahrung, auf die P. eingangs rekurriert, stärker hätte gewichtet werden können. Die in der Zwischenkriegszeit geweihten katholischen Geistlichen hatten leidvoll erfahren müssen, dass Friedensverträge, Nichtangriffspakte oder politische Erklärungen keine Grenzen sicherten, sondern aus Machtkalkül und/oder Opportunität eingegangen bzw. verworfen werden konnten. Zudem schien sich der Weimarer Grenzrevisionismus gegenüber Polen nach 1945 entlang der Oder-Neiße-Linie zu wiederholen. Daraus erwuchs bei den Bischöfen eine gehörige Skepsis gegenüber politisch-diplomatischen Deklarationen. Nach ihrer Auffassung garantierten keine Verträge, politischen Denkschriften oder Statements die Grenzen, sondern hauptsächlich ihre mentale Anerkennung durch die betroffenen Gesellschaften. Keine politischen Postulate, die polarisierten, sondern die Akzeptanz der Nachkriegsrealitäten durch die deutsche Bevölkerung war für die katholischen Bischöfe der Schlüssel für eine künftige friedliche Nachbarschaft mit Polen. In diesem Sinne auf die deutsche Gesellschaft, vor allem auf die Ostvertriebenen, geduldig einzuwirken, umschrieb die langwierige Kernaufgabe des deutschen Episkopats im deutsch-polnischen Versöhnungsprozess. Vor diesem Hintergrund ließe sich auch die Zurückhaltung des deutschen Episkopats in der Oder-Neiße-Frage in das theologisch-religiöse Konzept der Versöhnung einschreiben.

Das letzte Kapitel beschäftigt sich mit den Querverbindungen zwischen den beiden Versöhnungsprozessen. Dabei rückt P. die europäische Ebene in den Mittelpunkt und veranschaulicht, dass es den deutschen, französischen und polnischen Bischöfen gelang, dem jeweiligen Versöhnungsprozess eine europäische Dimension zu verleihen. Letztere war gesamteuropäisch gedacht, d. h. die Ost-West-Teilung überbrückend. Diese Querverbindungen beziehen sich primär auf die späten 1970er und die 1980er Jahre. Dabei wird deutlich, wie viel an Substanz und gegenseitigem Vertrauen die beiden Prozesse inzwischen gebildet hatten. In der Öffentlichkeit hin und wieder verunglückte Aussagen oder Missverständnisse konnten die Bischöfe so untereinander stets unaufgeregt und „brüderlich“ ansprechen und ausräumen.

P. hat eine ausgesprochen ertragreiche Arbeit vorgelegt, die sich durch umfangreiches Quellenstudium, dichte Beschreibung, analytische Schärfe und Reflexion auszeichnet. Diese gut lesbare Studie setzt Maßstäbe für künftige Forschungen zum Thema.

Essen

Severin Gawlitta

Neringa Klumbyte. *Authoritarian Laughter*. Political Humor and Soviet Dystopia in Lithuania. Cornell University Press. Ithaca 2022. XIV, 306 S., Ill. ISBN 9781501766695. (\$ 32,95.)

Neringa Klumbyte's book is a good study of the history of humor in the Soviet Union from the point of view of a former Soviet colonial state, Lithuania. Previous research on Soviet humor was conducted mostly by Russian American scholars, like Serguei Oushakine, who reflected the prevailing Russia-centered approaches to the history of this subject.¹ As a social historian, I was especially impressed that her anthropological study is

¹ See, e.g.: SERGUEI OUSHAKINE: "Against the Cult of Things": On Soviet Productivism, Storage Economy, and Commodities with No Destination," in: *The Russian Review* 73

based on solid historical sources, not just on an oral history approach involving mainly personal interviews. K. used Communist Party and KGB archives, and especially the personal archive of Juozas Bulota, who was the editor-in-chief of the Lithuanian satire and humor magazine *Šluota* (Broom), which was under his leadership from 1956 through to 1985.

The book covers the story of this journal during this post-Stalin socialist period in Soviet Lithuania, using mostly Bulota's materials. K.'s major goal as a cultural anthropologist is to analyze what she calls "authoritarian laughter, the Soviet government's project of satire and humor." Her main idea is to show the "paradoxical" character of this project: "[W]hile it aimed to serve Communist Party ideological agendas and involve editors, artists, writers, journalists, and readers in creating communist society, it encompassed opposition that undermined the government's initiatives" (p. 2). At the same time, she emphasizes that her focus is to demonstrate how multidirectional this project was: "[I]t was communicative exchange among artists and different audiences that was both ideologically correct and oppositional." As she explains, the ambiguous and contextual essence of the authoritarian laughter allowed her to use "the concept of multidirectionality," which shows "its circulation and reception and underscore[s] the fact that the same jokes were often meaningful in different ways to different audiences—authorities, censors and readers" (p. 3).

In the six chapters of her book, K. covers the different subjects of the authoritarian laughter in *Šluota*, namely the "banality of Soviet Power," "political intimacy," "censorial indistinction," "political aesthetics," "satirical justice," and "Soviet dystopia." She describes how Communist ideologists supported *Šluota*'s fight against "unresponsive, inept bureaucrats or the shoddiness of industrial production," and how ordinary readers "could generalize Broom's criticisms to the socialist system itself." As "authorities read depictions of criminals, robbers, homeless people, or sexualized images of women in the West" as a criticism of "rotten capitalism," at the same time, those same images "aroused some readers' fascination with the West and desire to visit it" (p. 3). K. finishes her book with a post scriptum "Revolution and Post-authoritarian Laughter" and a conclusion "Lost Laughter and Authoritarian Stigma," which demonstrates how the satirical traditions of the *Šluota* magazine not only undermined and discredited ideological and cultural practices of late socialism in Soviet Lithuania, but also prepared the political anti-Soviet revolution there.

Unfortunately, this wonderful study of the Lithuanian satirical magazine still (with a few exceptions) reflects the methodological and historiographical situation before 2014, the first Russian war against Ukraine, which eventually became (after 2022) the Russian war against the West. K. was inspired by Russian-American scholars, such as Oushakine, who always ignored the national problems of non-Russian nationalities of the Soviet Union. Like many Western scholars of late socialism, she still uncritically follows Alexei Yurchak's anthropological concepts, which are based on his Russian-centered (in his case, Leningrad-centered) research (see pp. 17, 43, 48, 80, 86, 155, 189, 216, 223). K. overlooks the fact that Yurchak completely ignores problems of regional, national, and religious identities that were shaped by the consumption of Western cultural products in various parts of the Soviet Union.² Yurchak also disregards the importance of the idea of the West for political dissent in the USSR, including Lithuania and Ukraine. (His entire book about late socialism in the Soviet Union never mentions the inspiration of the idea of the West for all Soviet dissidents). His interpretation exaggerates the role of discursive practices while ignoring how visual elements, especially comics, Soviet satirical magazines, such as

(2014), 2, pp. 198–236. See his Princeton University's website as well: <https://anthropology.princeton.edu/people/faculty/serguei-oushakine> (2024-08-22).

² ALEXEI YURCHAK: *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, Princeton, NJ 2005.

Šluota, and Western films, influenced both ideological discourse and local identity among Soviet consumers.

Overall, K. correctly describes the role of the Soviet political police (KGB) in monitoring the Lithuanian satirical magazine and its readers. At the same time, the archival collections of the KGB in Kyiv (SBU Archives), not consulted by K., still contain the documentary files (in fond 16) about the special ideological and political operations against the national humor magazines, like *Perets* (Pepper) in Soviet Ukraine and *Šluota* in Soviet Lithuania between 1956 and 1981. Paradoxically, these facts could strengthen K.'s major arguments and widen the readership for her book.

Despite these minor critical remarks, this book is a major contribution not only to the studies of the Lithuanian cultural history and anthropology of late socialism but also to the field of Cold War culture. It demonstrates and reminds us of how the political practices and traditions of this authoritarian laughter are still alive and are needed to undermine post-Soviet authoritarian regimes such as Putin's Russia.

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Sergei I. Zhuk

Socialist Internationalism and the Gritty Politics of the Particular. Second-Third World Spaces in the Cold War. Hrsg. von Kristin Roth-Ey. (Histories of Internationalism). New York – London. Bloomsbury Academic 2023. XI, 279 S., Ill. ISBN 978-1-3503-0278-5. (\$ 103,50.)

The Cold War, once perceived as a geopolitical struggle confined to the rivalry between the USA and the USSR, is now seen as a global conflict with broader implications. *Socialist Internationalism and the Gritty Politics of the Particular*, edited by Kristin Roth-Ey, is a notable example of this evolving perspective. This compelling contribution not only reshapes our comprehension of the Cold War but also deftly intertwines the narratives of globalization and decolonization.

At the heart of this book is an intriguing exploration of social spaces co-constructed by the countries in so-called "Second" and "Third" World countries. By exploring such cases, the contributors highlight the strategic, ideological, and everyday considerations that shaped interactions between emerging countries and socialist forces. Many of those instances transcended the usual diplomatic channels and were not limited to cabinet rooms of officials but also included places that are much less commonly understood as socialist spaces, such as bars, prisons, schools, or even the airwaves and letters. Experts from the Czech military, economists from Poland, women from the Soviet Union, doctors from Romania, and writers from Hungary, among others, perceived themselves as influential figures in guiding the postcolonial world and, at times, their own countries to explore possibilities beyond the boundaries of the Socialist Bloc. However, the editor notes that despite the many works on the permeable nature of the Iron Curtain, the lives of those who bridged the gap were anything but ordinary (p. 7.) The book brings these extraordinary individuals to the forefront, humanizes politics, and reveals the complexity of personal experiences.

Throughout the chapters, the specter of imperialism hovers discreetly but persistently in the background, contributing to an undercurrent that nuances the protagonists' experiences and leaves a mark on the interactions described in the work. It is particularly evident in the stories of the book's heroes, such as the chapter "The Travelogue," in which white Eastern Europeans face hostility in former colonies because of their appearance (p. 254.) Małgorzata Mazurek's contribution further emphasizes this theme, illustrating how London-based Polish professors became participants in the Africanization of the university. Thus, former metropolises exerted a subtle influence and shaped the experiences and identities of individuals who, at first glance, seemed liberated from the colonial past. Such cases skillfully highlight the complex interplay of personal factors, particularly emphasizing the critical role of race, colonial experiences, and gender in shaping access dynamics and apparent