

MICHÁLEK, Slavomír. *RIVALI A PARTNERI STUDENEJ ÉRY. (RIVALS AND PARTNERS OF THE COLD ERA)*. Bratislava: VEDA, vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 2017, 560 pages. ISBN 9788022416023.

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The author has placed in the book 41 short texts supplemented by contemporary photographs about figures from the “cold era” from both sides of the bi-polar division of the world in the second half of the 20th century. The articles about Soviet representatives include the highest functionaries of the Communist Party and state starting with J. Stalin at the beginning of the Cold War and finishing with M. Gorbachev at its end. There are also articles about foreign ministers and diplomats. The American side of the Cold War is represented by the American presidents from H. Truman, who held the post in 1945, to R. Reagan, as well as secretaries of state and advisors, who shaped the American policy of containment of communism. The book also contains articles about the leading representatives of the Non-Aligned movement, the people who solved the German question and some of those responsible for European integration. Naturally, it does not omit Winston Churchill, Mao Tse Tung and the personalities, who can be described as partners or allies of the super power leaders. This part would deserve a separate book, which would consider to what degree the partners on both sides of the bi-polar division were reliable supports for super power policies.

The author defines the Cold War era as the period from the end of the Second World War to the end of the 1980s. He designates this period with the unfamiliar expression, the “cold era”, which can be tolerated in a popular scientific publication as an attempt at originality. Actually, the term “cold era” evokes the term “Cold War” for the reader. The author explains the intention of the book in the introduction.

The wide range of texts about personalities from the Cold War and the multitude of contemporary photographs, which fill more than half the book, represent an original work about the Cold War with no parallel in Slovak historiography.

The writing of the individual texts on the basis of published literature shows a wide range of analysis of the personalities with biographical and career data, rather than being limited to political activity. The author also puts into the texts interesting and important facts about career growth and ideological orientation. Naturally, sections with 3-4 pages of text cannot be exhaustive. The arrangement of personalities in alphabetical order makes the book clearly arranged, but the hierarchy of personalities as rivals or partners in the bi-polar division is lost.

According to the author, the Cold War is a “*term designating conflict relations between two blocs that arose around two super-powers*” (p. 21) and which “*had its concrete expressions and protagonists*”. (p. 26) Its actors played with cards of varying size depending on their country.” The Cold War had its peak in the 1950s and 1960s, when the rivalry between the USA and USSR reached a dangerous level in the Korean War, first and second Berlin crises and Cuban crisis. Perhaps the greater space for these dramatic events from the Soviet point of view would show even more the differences between the two sides and the risk of military conflict. Increased hostile propaganda on both sides

and concrete preparations for armed conflict also drew the allies of both military blocs – NATO and the Warsaw Pact – into crisis situations.

The first great actor of the Cold War on the Soviet side was Josif V. Stalin, who considered himself to be the leading follower of Vladimir I. Lenin. Stalin simplified Leninism. He regarded it as Marxism for the age of imperialism, and considered it to be ideological guidance for communist parties engaged in revolution and building socialism. He regarded class war on the national and international levels, and the view that wars are connected with the existence of capitalism as constants of the ideological vision. At the end of Stalin's life, expressions of state anti-Semitism, the view that social democrat parties were the enemies of communist parties and other ideas were also included. The alliance of the Big Three – the USA, USSR and Great Britain ceased to exist after the Second World War. Co-operation during the war was often associated with the question of agreement on the division of spheres of influence between the great powers. Even today, the media often mention the existence of such an agreement with a particular intension. However, according to American sources such an agreement did not exist at the end of the war either in written or oral form. This view can be found in a telegram from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to all the diplomatic representatives of the USA abroad from 12 October 1968.

Stalin's foreign policy consisted of great power ambitions to gain territory for the USSR in both Europe and Asia. A belt of people's democracies west of the USSR was intended for defence against a surprise attack such as that at the beginning of the Second World War. At a session of Communist Information Bureau (Informbyro) Stalin divided the world into two camps: the forces of progress and democracy led by the Soviet Union and the forces of imperialism led by the United States (p. 474). Stalinism condemned individual paths of development as hostile. Stalin unsuccessfully intervened in solution of the German question in 1948 and provoked the Berlin crisis. His proposal for the reunification of Germany in 1952 was also unsuccessful. Stalin agreed to the launching of the Korean War in 1950 with the aim of militarily defeating South Korea and uniting the two states under communist rule. The participation of the USA and China in the Korean War brought the danger of a world military conflict with use of nuclear weapons. Stalin's successors continued to apply the Stalinist ideology. The Cold War politics formulated by Stalin put their stamp on the people's democratic states especially in the initial period of building up the new system up to the death of Stalin in 1953.

Nikita S. Khrushchev succeeded to the top position after Stalin's death. He entered history with his criticism of Stalin's mistakes at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956. The criticism was directed towards personal rather than systemic faults (p. 230). De-Stalinization brought crisis for the regimes in Poland and Hungary. At the end of his career Khrushchev provoked the Berlin and Cuban crises, which threatened to grow into nuclear war. According to the author, Khrushchev's legacy was "*full of failures and disappointments, he could not reconstruct or revive Soviet agriculture, and his foreign policy was full of failures and disappointments, chaotic, reckless and over-ambitious*" (p. 244-245). These were reasons for his removal from office in October 1964.

Leonid I. Brezhnev replaced Khrushchev in the position of General Secretary of the Communist Party. Like Khrushchev, Brezhnev had begun to make rapid progress in his

career from 1937 during the period of Stalin's great purges. Two Soviet military invasions are associated with Brezhnev's name: Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1979. Both invasions were described as "international assistance", but ended in failure and Brezhnev's successors described them as political mistakes. Brezhnev strove for agreement with the USA on limitation of nuclear weapons: SALT I and the proposed SALT II. He signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. The Final Act confirmed the post-Second World War frontiers in Europe, but opened up a new field of Cold War confrontation in the field of human rights. Brezhnev's statement: "You are responsible" said at the end of a visit to Czechoslovakia in December 1967, looked like ridicule after the invasion of August 1968.

Another successor to the top position also began his rapid rise after Stalin's purges of the 1930s. Jurij V. Andropov was known more as the head of the Soviet KGB secret police, a position he held for 15 years. As Soviet ambassador in Budapest he requested military intervention against a popular uprising, and he supported J. Kádár as head of a government of workers and peasants. As head of the KGB, Andropov was a significant supporter of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and he directed the secret operations to suppress the reform movement. He was one of the initiators of the invasion of Afghanistan. The shooting down of a South Korean civil aeroplane containing 264 people over Sakhalin brought great international shame on the Soviet Union. However, Andropov was already seriously ill and he did not contribute to clearing up the tragedy. As head of the KGB and general secretary of the Communist Party, Andropov was best informed about the political situation within the Soviet Union, but he introduced no significant measures to deal with decline and corruption.

The group of elderly high functionaries in the Soviet Politbureau decided that Andropov would be followed by K. Chernenko. He held the position for a year, but had little influence on internal and foreign policy because of illness.

The last Soviet leader associated with the Leninist policy was Mikhail S. Gorbachev. In contrast to previous leaders, he attempted to reform in both internal and foreign policy, which led to the expressions: glasnost (openness), perestroika (reconstruction) and acceleration. Gorbachev started great changes in Soviet diplomacy in relations with the West. In relation to the countries of the Soviet Bloc he abandoned the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty. Glasnost was supposed to mean better information, but the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power station indicated failure to fulfil it. The Soviet public learnt about the dangerous accident only weeks after it happened. The end of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany are associated with the name of Gorbachev. However, his greatest success was the improvement of relations with the USA, which meant the end of the Cold War. The author critically evaluates Gorbachev's policies and considers the attempt at perestroika – reconstruction to have been "*condemned to failure from the beginning*" (p. 193). In the author's view, his policies lacked "*real self-understanding*". The fault was retention of an "*unwavering faith in the correctness of the principles of Marxism-Leninism*" (p. 193).

The diplomatic activities of two foreign ministers are closely connected with the application of Stalinism in Soviet foreign policy: Viacheslav M. Molotov and Andrej A. Gromyko. Molotov was the signatory of the Molotov-Ribentrop Pact of 1939 on the

basis of which Poland disappeared and the Baltic states were occupied. A. Gromyko's frequent use of the veto at the UN gained him the nickname: "Mr. Niet". Votes in the UN prevented the discussion of Czechoslovak complaints in 1948 and 1968.

Mikhail A. Suslov was the Soviet ideologue of the "struggle against imperialism" during the Cold War. He was one of the most fanatical admirers of Stalin. He was the eminence grise of Soviet foreign policy, an expert on ideological questions and the international communist movement. He was prominent in the campaign against Zionism. Suslov's influence on the communist movement continued for several decades. It is a pity the author did not put an entry on him in the book because he was one of the architects of Soviet policy during the Cold War.

The American President Harry Truman played an important role in the Cold War. He did not have much experience of foreign policy before he became president, but he surrounded himself with experienced advisers and diplomats such as: A. Harriman, D. Acheson, J. Byrnes, G. Marshall and G. Kennan, a team of personalities who put into American policy the main outlines of containment of communism and Soviet expansion. The doctrine of helping free nations to stop Soviet expansion bears his name. While Truman was president significant events occurred, leading to the bi-polar division of Europe and the world. The Korean War threatened to grow into a global military conflict. This factor increased with the militarization of the Cold War. Military strength became a significant factor in pursuing the power political aims of both super powers. In domestic politics, Truman was faced with the campaign by Senator McCarthy in connection with the investigation of so-called un-American activities. The end of Truman's presidency also ended the influence of Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who had participated in creating the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan and NATO.

George F. Kennan belonged to the absolute top elite of American diplomacy after the Second World War and is considered the spiritual father of containment, the strategy of blocking Soviet attempts to dominate the world beyond the frontiers of Central and South-Eastern Europe (p. 287). He formulated his views in the "Long Telegram" with 5,300 words. Kennan's analysis in the telegram contributed to approval of the Truman Doctrine. The article *Sources of Soviet behaviour* contained his view on the containment of communism and this strategy was the central conception for the whole period of the Cold War. Kennan had his greatest influence in 1947–1948. He was an expert on Soviet politics. Document NSC-68 expressed a military approach to containment, to the militarization of the Cold War. Kennan was against the military orientation and global reach of this document. He regarded the Cold War more as a political than as a military conflict.

George C. Marshall became famous for his plan for the economic renewal of Europe, a programme that bears his name. As Secretary of State to President Truman, he had great influence on developments during the first years of the Cold War. He participated in all the major conferences of the Big Three at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam. He presented his plan for the renewal of Europe in June 1947 in a lecture at Harvard University. The main aims of the plan were to revive Europe's destroyed economy and prevent the spread of communism in Europe. It was intended to create a strong Western Bloc, including West Germany. Czechoslovakia initially applied to join the plan, but refused the offer under

pressure from Stalin. The author's text also explains the further activity of G. Marshall in connection with the Berlin Crisis and help for the Chinese Nationalists in the civil war.

The American President Dwight D. Eisenhower created a policy model that his successor followed until the end of the Cold War. His "policy of a new view" pursued three aims: to avoid direct military conflict, continue the policy of containment of communism and approve budgets that did not lead to financial crisis (p. 149). During Eisenhower's presidency from 1953 to 1961, the USA rapidly increased its nuclear arsenal, so ideas arose of creating a balance with the Soviet Union. The shooting down of an American spy plane over the territory of the USSR prevented the holding of a summit meeting between Khrushchev and the American President in Paris.

John F. Kennedy became American President at the age of 43. He was still young when he was assassinated after two years in office. His policy received the name of "new frontiers". It meant a complex of economic, commercial, social and military measures and policies. The philosophy of this policy was based on the following idea: "*Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country*" (p. 304). During the presidency of J.F.K. the world found itself on the edge of war, first during the Berlin and then the Cuban crisis. Before the Berlin crisis, Kennedy met Khrushchev in Vienna. The discussions covered a wide range of issues, but of the most important was the German question. Khrushchev explained why he was interested in concluding a peace treaty without West Germany. Kennedy replied that the question of a peace treaty concerned not only the USA, but also the whole of Western Europe, because the American presence in West Berlin was based on international agreements and not on the agreement of the East Germans. Perhaps this question deserves more space in the text, even at the expense of the account of the lives of the Kennedy family.

In connection with the Cuban Crisis, it is necessary to say that the crisis concerned Cuba, but its main actors were the USA and USSR. Khrushchev did not inform the Cuban leader Castro about the talks with Kennedy and left him on the sidelines. For this reason Castro felt aggrieved and humiliated (p. 95). The solution of the crisis by secret diplomacy disturbed Cuba's trust in the USSR and in Czechoslovakia, which unreservedly supported the Soviet decision. Cuba showed its distrust in the following years in cooler relations with the USSR and Czechoslovakia, while becoming oriented more towards China and the Third World countries with military support for Angola, Ethiopia and Yemen.

Robert F. Kennedy played a key role as adviser to his brother the President during the Cuban Crisis. He also influenced the solution of the crisis by means of a secret channel to the Soviet attaché Bolshakov. R. Kennedy's diplomatic and foreign policy activities also contributed to settling other conflicts. His contacts with important politicians in the world gave the world a more positive image than America did with the war in Vietnam. In 1968 R. Kennedy declared his candidature for President, but on the eve of becoming candidate, he was killed in Los Angeles.

Lyndon B. Johnson succeeded to the position of President after the assassination of JFK in November 1963. The number of American soldiers in Vietnam increased during his presidency. Use of chemical and toxic substances in the war led to the destruction of extensive tropical vegetation. The great irony of the Vietnam War was its minimal effect

on the Cold War. The author states, but does not analyse more closely the fact that the USA and USSR strove to end the war, but North Vietnam and the Vietkong were against. Their idea of ending the war was associated with the unification of North and South Vietnam.

The US President Richard Nixon pursued relaxation of East – West relations by means of a series of summits. He was president from 1969 to 1974. He was the first president to visit the Soviet Union and China. The Berlin and SALT I agreements were concluded under his supervision. The agreements brought stability to American – Soviet relations. Another innovation by Nixon was the strategy of opening up to China. In the 1970s China became another great power with its own nuclear weapons and ambitions in South-East Asia. Nixon's policy in Vietnam received the name "Vietnamization". It meant the withdrawal of American troops and transfer of the burden of the war onto South Vietnam. Accusations against Nixon of secret eavesdropping led to his resignation from the presidency.

Henry Kissinger was an important diplomat of the 1970s. He served as national security adviser in the Nixon administration. Kissinger was involved in improving relations with the USSR, establishing contacts with China and talking about ending the Vietnam War. His visit to China with President Nixon had historic importance. The 1973 agreement on ending the Vietnam War was a result of Kissinger's diplomacy. He also engaged in settling the Middle East conflict between Egypt and Israel.

The author names the US President Ronald Reagan as the politician who "brought down the Evil Empire". He was a hard-line anti-communist, who had previously supported the Republican presidents Eisenhower and Nixon. As President he engaged in invading Grenada and Nicaragua. Relations with the USSR worsened during his presidency. At an assembly in the state of Ohio in 1983 he described the Soviet Union as the "Evil Empire". (p. 446) He condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and increased the defence budget with the "Star Wars programme". Reduction of tension with the USSR came after M. Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party. Talks at summits in Geneva, Reykjavik, Washington and Moscow led to reductions in the numbers of nuclear weapons. R. Reagan did not destroy communism, but he significantly contributed to its fall. The Cold War ended at the end of the 1980s with his name.

One of the most important figures in the Cold War was Winston L. Churchill. He held important positions in British politics for more than 60 years. During the Second World War he successfully cooperated with Roosevelt and Stalin. He participated in two conferences of the Big Three at Tehran and Yalta. One of the important events was undoubtedly his speech at Fulton, Missouri on 6 March 1946, in which he spoke of the "Iron Curtain", which extended from Stettin on the Baltic to Trieste on the Adriatic. According to Churchill the cities of Central and Eastern Europe were behind this line in the Soviet sphere of influence. The author regards the Fulton speech as the "*beginning of the Cold War*" (p. 254) and Churchill as a "*passionate supporter of anti-Soviet policies*" (p. 254). Churchill expressed fear of Soviet expansion and the influence of communist parties led by followers of the Communist Internationale. The Iron Curtain was a symbol of the Cold War until the fall of the communist regimes.

Margaret Hilda Thatcher was the British political leader at the end of the Cold War. Her style of leadership gained her the nickname the “Iron Lady”. In internal politics, she directed her attention to economic questions and settling the conflict in Northern Ireland. She criticized the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. She was a close ally of R. Reagan, with whom she shared a strong distrust of communism and the Soviet Union. She was successful in the Falklands War with Argentina. Talks with China helped Hong Kong to gain autonomy in the framework of China. She welcomed M. Gorbachev’s policies including his foreign policy of ending the Cold War. She took a negative view of the re-unification of Germany, fearing that a united Germany would incline more towards Moscow. After leaving office she continued expressing critical views on topical questions, especially on the civil war in Yugoslavia and the Treaty of Maastricht.

The German question was one of the key problems in relations between the USA and USSR throughout the Cold War. There was even some degree of synchronism between worsening of relations between the two super-powers and “solution” of the German question. In this context it is possible to ask whether the development gave birth to the Cold War or the Cold War caused the existence of the German question. Disagreements and conflicts related to it twice threatened to grow into world conflict: in 1948-49 and 1961.

From his election in 1949, the West German federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer strove to anchor the German Federal Republic firmly in the West. His policy was part of the American policy of containment of communism. *“He understood the Cold War as a power struggle between the communist camp led by the Soviet Union and the free world led by the USA”* (p. 29). The Korean War stimulated Adenauer to support Schuman’s plan for a European Coal and Steel Community. He also offered to participate in the defence of Western Europe. Adenauer opposed the creation of a united Germany as proposed by Stalin’s note in 1952. He strove to make the Federal Republic into an essential partner of the West. He visited the Soviet Union in 1955 and established diplomatic relations with it. The return of German prisoners from the Second World War was a success agreed during this visit. Adenauer was a firm supporter of refusal to recognize the German Democratic Republic. The French–German agreement on reconciliation and friendship of 23 January 1963 was a historic success.

The federal Chancellor Willy Brandt was one of the three most important federal chancellors. He was the leader of the West German “Ost Politik”. His successes include signing of the Soviet–German treaty of 7 August 1970. The treaty guaranteed the frontiers of Europe with an emphasis on Poland and East Germany. Brandt’s visit to Poland and penitence for the barbarism of Nazism at the Warsaw Ghetto memorial gained a positive response from the world. A year later, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Brandt’s Ost Politik also included the signing of a German–Czechoslovak treaty and a declaration annulling the Munich agreement of 1938, which the author of the book fails to mention. W. Brandt resigned from the post of federal chancellor after a spy affair, but he remained leader of the Social Democrat Party and chairman of the Socialist Internationale.

The last of the three important West German Chancellors was Helmut Kohl, who held the position from 1982 to 1998. Together with F. Mitterand, he is considered the architect of the Treaty of Maastricht. The mass departure of citizens of the DDR to West

Germany created a critical situation. The solution was the re-unification of the two parts of Germany with the agreement of the super-powers. The “two plus four” talks of spring 1990 between West Germany, East Germany and the four great powers (USA, USSR, Great Britain, France) with observers from Poland, led to the signing of the Treaty on the State Sovereignty of United Germany in September 1990. A month later, in October 1990, H. Kohl became the first Chancellor of a united Germany. This ended the Cold War. The Soviet Union, Warsaw Pact and communist regimes of the Soviet Bloc countries disintegrated.

President Charles de Gaulle of France was one of the important world politicians during the Cold War. He promoted France as an independent great power and country with its own nuclear weapons. He did not identify with the bipolar division of the world and established good relations with the states of Central Europe. He wanted a Europe under French influence from the Atlantic to the Urals.

The Chinese leader Mao Tse Tung actively intervened in the military conflicts in Korea, Indo-China and Vietnam. Under his leadership, China became a great power with its own atomic bomb. He wanted South-East Asia to be the Chinese sphere of influence with the USA and USSR excluded.

The Non-Aligned Movement gained influence in the world in the 1960s. The author places the following politicians in this group: D. Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Nkrumah and Josip B. Tito. These leaders criticized the bipolar division of the world and pursued their own sovereignty and neutrality. The European politicians in this group included President Josip B. Tito. In international politics he supported the principles of neutrality and non-participation in blocs. Tito’s life story was long and varied: from participation in the struggle against fascism and rejection of subordination to Stalin, to engagement as a leader of the non-aligned states.

The author has included politicians from the “socialist states” of Central and South-Eastern Europe among the partners in the Cold War. The varied group includes: N. Ceausescu, A. Dubček, W. Gomulka, K. Gottwald, G. Husák, J. Kádár, A. Novotný and W. Ulbricht. These personalities were witnesses of the Cold War in the role of allies of the Soviet Union. They helped to promote Soviet interests in their own states and the world. However, the position of these leaders was significantly differentiated, ranging from unreserved support to efforts to free themselves from Soviet influence and partnership by means of internal reforms. More comprehensive analysis of these leaders requires independent study and comparison.

The book by S. Michálek reviewed here covers a wide range of world politicians of the Cold War period. It includes a multitude of facts and findings as well as a great number of photographs from a fifty year period. In this way, the book is interesting and attractive. It fills a gap in the Slovak historiography of the Cold War.

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