External Intervention: the American Book Distribution Programme, Migration Brokers and Entry Corridors to Eastern Europe 1956-1989

This article presents, in a synthetic way, the program of book distribution which was a collaborative effort of the US government, the East European diaspora and lovers of books forbidden behind the Iron Curtain. In 1956-1989, about ten million publications were purchased and published from the operation budget for citizens of the Soviet Europe. This paper situates itself in the mainstream of cross-border history. Previous studies of post-war Europe strongly stress the importance of the continent’s division into two parts isolated from one another. The author does not entirely deny this thesis, yet he points to the systematic transmission of Western ideas and values through the Iron Curtain and analyses the consequences of the cultural expansion of the Western world.

Keywords: United States, diaspora, opposition in communist Poland