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bly "recodes" America in familiar categories. Yet this recoding does not amount to simple reduction. At the same time, it creates the possibility of a reverse movement: by describing America within a different system of coordinates, one can make visible what remains implicit within the American perspective itself. A paradoxical position thus emerges: an external gaze, even if inevitably limited, can reveal something new not only to the observer and their own community but also to those being observed.

The result is that Kirschenbaum's book becomes not only a study of the Soviet view of America but also a reflection on the nature of historical knowledge itself. International relations appear here as the outcome of interactions between interpretive regimes, while history becomes an attempt to capture the moments of their intersection. It is precisely in these intersections—in acts of translation and in their inevitable incompleteness—that what is later perceived as an "image" of another country is formed.

For these reasons, the book will be of particular interest to scholars of Soviet cultural history, US–Russian relations, and transnational intellectual exchange. It will also be valuable for readers interested in how historical actors construct knowledge about foreign societies and, in doing so, reveal their own assumptions.



Tijana Matijević and Milica Resanović, eds., *Svi se plaše roda: aktuelna osporavanja i upotrebe pojma u Srbiji (Everyone is afraid of gender: Contemporary contestations and uses of the concept in Serbia)*, Belgrade: Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, 2025, 355 pp., open access, ISBN: 978-86-6190-024-2.

Book review by **Zorana Simić**
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The interdisciplinary collection *Svi se plaše roda: aktuelna osporavanja i upotrebe pojma u Srbiji* (Everyone is afraid of gender: Contemporary contestations and uses of the concept in Serbia), edited by Tijana Matijević and Milica Resanović, is, as stated in an informative introduction, a local response to the global anti-gender mobilization. This phenomenon is diligently and receptively explained in a recent book by Judith Butler, one of the most influential intellectuals and activists of our time. Butler's resonant book, *Who's Afraid of Gender?*, published in 2024, largely inspired the two Serbian editors. Both Matijević and Resanović are affiliated with the Gender Research Laboratory (GenLab) at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade, the publisher of the collection (all the represented authors are also researchers at this institution). As they emphasize, the collection is designed as a continuation of the debate initiated by Butler, who addressed the transnational reception of gender in recent decades, in the Serbian context.

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One of the central questions that Butler raises is how gender has become a kind of (psychosocial) phantasm, which serves to unify and mobilize various anxieties, fears, and hatreds toward vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as the LGBTQ+ population, thereby concealing the essential inequalities, destruction, and social problems in the world. Butler's thesis is that anti-gender movements support right-wing, fascist, anti-democratic, and/or authoritarian discourses and tendencies. By defending gender, Butler advocates for a more just and livable life.

In this vein, the editors of *Svi se plaše roda* take an explicitly engaged and openly pro-gender position, claiming in the introduction that this collection represents an academic resistance to anti-gender tendencies in Serbia. In this regard, they crucially refer to 2024, when the Constitutional Court of Serbia issued a decision to initiate proceedings to determine the unconstitutionality of the Gender Equality Law, which was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia in 2021. They also point to the broader context of anti-gender mobilization (in Serbia) and the recent spread of moral panic regarding gender and so-called gender ideology—an umbrella term that implies the idea of gender as a hostile ideological weapon (of foreign powers). In the editors' words, the collection *Svi se plaše roda* offers various interpretations of the discursive struggles in Serbia surrounding the concepts of gender and gender equality by analyzing and deconstructing how gender and "gender ideology" are perceived as a threat to the "core" of society.

The chapters in the book are suggestively in line with this editorial idea. The collection consists of two carefully conceived and divided parts—"Gender and Ideology: Global and Local Trajectories of Anti-Gender Discourse" and "Gender and Gender Equality: Feminist Readings of Social Consensus and Disputes." The first part contains texts by Adriana Zaharijević, Milan Urošević, Filip Balunović, and Tijana Matijević. The second part includes chapters by Marija Mandić and Jelena Ćeriman, Milica Resanović, Krisztina Rácz, Aleksandra Knežević, and Zona Zarić and Ljiljana Pantović.

By mapping the transitions from gender to "gender ideology," Zaharijević demonstrates how "gender ideology," in her own words, is a pseudo-concept that corrodes the notion of gender. Urošević analyzes the connection between anti-gender discourses and conspiracy narratives in Serbia, concluding that it is plausible to talk about a local version of the Butlerian gender phantasm. By focusing on today's alt-right and its anti-scientific basis, Balunović claims that the construction of "gender ideology" serves a new far-right philosophy, pleading for a leftist emancipatory politics. Matijević reflects on the polarization and disputes within the feminist movements in Serbia, believing that gender-critical feminists contradict the basic postulates of feminism. Mandić and Ćeriman, relying, among other things, on critical discourse analysis, offer a chronological review of (still ongoing) debates regarding the gender-sensitive language in Serbia. Resanović, following Pierre Bourdieu, explores the connection between conflicts, gender inequalities, and the thesis about the privileged position of women authors in today's Serbian literary field. Rácz inspects the construction of gender and gender roles in the textbooks for Serbian as a non-native language, focusing, among other things, on language policies (gender-sensitive language). Knežević exposes the idea about the value neutrality of science by studying the still ongoing debate about biology textbooks in Serbia that concern precisely the gender-relevant

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phenomena. Zarić and Pantović philosophically and anthropologically examine the problem of obstetric violence, claiming that this problem represents the very climax of epistemic injustice in women's healthcare.

In the first part of the collection, the authors show how conservative ideologies are hidden behind the resistance to "gender ideology," while the second part presents interesting case studies that confirm this. Accordingly, the book is equally compact and instructive. As emphasized in the introduction, the crossing of many truly diverse disciplines and approaches makes it possible to see gender not as a monolithic concept but as a distinctly dispersed and pervasive phenomenon. Although its editors explicitly refer to previous studies and sporadic analyses of anti-gender discourses in the Serbian context, this collection represents a pioneering attempt to gather researchers of different profiles who, often following Butler's path, try to shed light on what is hidden behind the understanding of gender as a threatening phenomenon, that is, why almost everyone fears gender. The high degree of self-reflexivity, as well as the insistence on the ethical aspects of scientific research and its topics, makes the book particularly important and worthy of attention.

The book might primarily be of interest to researchers in the humanities and social sciences (interested in gender), but it would also be useful to practitioners in other fields, such as biology or medicine. Nevertheless, it could be a significant (polemical) reference for the wider public as well. The feminist community has already recognized its value, since it was recently awarded the "Anđelka Milić" prize. However, it remains to be seen whether and how those actors of the public who oppose both gender and "gender ideology" will react to the appearance of *Svi se plaše roda.*



Mikuláš Pešta, *Student Internationalism and the Global Cold War: The International Union of Students in Socialist Prague*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2026, 312 pp., open access, ISBN: 978-135-042-554-5.

Book review by **Juraj Marušiak**
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The role of students in politics during the Cold War is an intriguing yet still underresearched topic. Mikuláš Pešta's book on the International Union of Students (IUS) combines global and national perspectives. The author examines not only the organization's activities after 1945 but also its relations with the Czechoslovak state. The publication thus complements previously published monographs on "student politics" in Poland,[1] Czechoslovakia,[2] or Yugoslavia,[3] as well as works that address the issue from a broader perspective, such as Mark Kurlansky's book on 1968.[4] Significantly fewer publications have addressed the student movement as a global phenomenon.