

## The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972-1990

edited by Nicolas Badalassi and Sarah B. Snyder, New York, Berghahn Books, 2019, xiv + 365 pp., \$97.50/£69.00 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-78920-026-3

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remind scholars and others that the more the misinterpretations of the lessons historians leave, the more likely one can draw conclusions that will lead the decision-makers of today towards failure.

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**The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972-1990**, edited by Nicolas Badalassi and Sarah B. Snyder, New York, Berghahn Books, 2019, xiv + 365 pp., \$97.50/£69.00 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-78920-026-3

*The CSCE and the End of the Cold War* is a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature on the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe [CSCE] and its significance in Cold War and human rights history. This edited volume brings together 15 scholars who provide several insightful approaches on the topic. Having the human dimension manifested in various ways as their starting point, the chapters of this volume investigate the role of the 'Helsinki process' and the emergence of human rights as a guiding principle in relations amongst states and its contribution to the end of the East-West division. This volume shows the CSCE's pivotal role not only as a diplomatic process but rather as 'a reflection of a time, linked to empowerment of individuals on both sides of the Iron Curtain' (10). By examining the evolution of the CSCE from its early days to the collapse of the Cold War system, the authors engage with several features that provide an informed overview of this transnational phenomenon.

The book has three broad themes. The first focuses on diplomats and especially their agency in establishing the human dimension in the process. Andrei Zagorski surveys the interplay of human rights non-governmental organisations with the framework of the CSCE and the former's efforts to integrate themselves in this mechanism. Brown and Romano engage with the mindset and experiences of diplomats on the ground. By applying a prosopographical methodology, they highlight the significance of the emergence of an *esprit de corps* that facilitated negotiations and eventually gave diplomats more influence and leeway on the process than their commanding foreign offices would admit. Similarly, Badalassi and Kieninger highlight the way certain individual French and American diplomats like Max Kampelman succeeded in convincing Western decision-makers on the merits of the human rights element.

The second section shifts the focus on the transnational aspect of human rights promotion and the role of dissidence. Most chapters herein build on Daniel Thomas's *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism*. Elisabetta Vezzosi explores the Committee of Concerned Scientists and its impact on adding human rights to the agenda of the American and international scientific community. Christian Peterson provides a bottom-up analysis of the effects of Helsinki in the 1980s by examining certain civil society groups from both sides of the Iron Curtain such as the Moscow Trust Group and Brooklyn Antinuclear Group. Carl Bon Tempo contributes a study on the influence of the Helsinki Final Act on American domestic politics,

arguing that its impact especially on groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People was limited compared to developments in Europe, East and West. In this vein, Jacek Czaputowicz highlights the role of the CSCE in bringing Western European peace movements and Eastern European dissidents closer, thus creating ‘from below’ the foundations for the events that led to the dissolution of the communist regimes. In the ‘heretical’ chapter in this section, Douglas Selvage critically assesses ‘the Helsinki Effect’ argument by analysing the stance the Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic [GDR] *vis-à-vis* the CSCE. Even though not denying the Helsinki accords’ importance in the largely peaceful demise of communism in Eastern Europe, he argues that the ‘Helsinki Effect’ was not the decisive factor that led to the end of the Cold War compared to other long term factors such as the economic crisis and the East’s dependence on Western funds and trade (220).

The last section consists of European-based case studies. Maximilian Graf’s and Matthias Peter’s chapters deal with the efforts of Austria and Germany, respectively, to maintain the European spirit of *détente* despite the vicissitudes of superpower relations. Oliver Bange brings to the fore the somehow neglected arms control aspect of the CSCE and how this played a role in accentuating the rifts between the Soviet Union and GDR towards the end of the 1980s. An original element of this section is the inclusion of a study by Hamit Kaba about Albania, the only European state that boycotted the process. In his piece, Kaba explains that Albania’s self-imposed isolation was a conscious decision of the regime’s leadership to protect its own grip to power and minimise the risks of exposure with the rest of the world.

As implied by its title, the underlying question that this collection tries to answer is to what extent the CSCE was a significant factor for the end of the Cold War. Attempts to provide monocausal explanations for the termination of such a complex system as the Cold War that lasted for more than four decades are usually inconclusive. Nonetheless, the variety of approaches offered in this book enrich the perspective on the topic of human rights and the Cold War, but they do not, and they could not, provide a definitive answer on the big question of whether CSCE was the decisive factor. What this volume excels in doing, however, is to expand and stimulate successfully scholarly discussion aspired to by the editors. By doing so, this book contributes in placing the CSCE firmly in the ever-changing and ever-debated pecking order of the causes of the end of the Cold War.

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**Zbigniew Brzezinski: America’s Grand Strategist**, by Justin Vaïsse, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2018, 505 pp., \$35.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780674975637

I only have childhood memories of the Carter Administration, so former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski first caught my attention relatively late in 2002. Appearing on *The Newshour with Jim Lehrer* on American public television, he debated