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Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow and Bernd Rother, eds., *Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945-1990*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012. vii + 358 pp. Introduction, bibliography, notes on contributors, and index. \$95.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 978-0-85745-288-7.

Review by Michael H. Creswell, Florida State University.

Edited by Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow, and Bernd Rother, *Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945-1990* explores the individuals, groups, and processes that offered “visions” during the Cold War of how the East-West struggle could be terminated.[1] The editors provide a thoughtful introduction, and the contributions proceed both thematically and chronologically.

George F. Kennan possessed a distinct vision, as John Harper explains. Kennan’s 1947 “X” article provided a strategy, “containment,” which would guide U.S. foreign policy for the remainder of the Cold War. Yet Kennan grew discontented and called on both superpowers to withdraw their military forces from Europe. His advice unheeded, Kennan left the Department of State in 1950, but his writings made an indelible mark on U.S. foreign policy.

Kennan’s ideas reappear in Thomas Gijswijt’s essay on the Bilderberg Group, an exclusive club of Euro-Atlantic VIPs. Speaking on the BBC in late 1957, Kennan restated his views. Although supported by Germany’s Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Britain’s Labour Party, his ideas found little acceptance among the trans-Atlantic foreign policy elite of the Bilderberg Group. Gijswijt contends that the importance of Kennan’s talks lay in his conviction that his own strategy of containment had failed. He believed the status quo was unacceptable because eastern Europe might be lost for good, Germany remained divided, and that NATO’s embrace of a nuclear strategy was dangerous. Kennan’s lectures prompted Dean Acheson to author a critique of them and tour Europe to counteract their popularity.

Despite Acheson’s efforts, the Bilderberg Group and governments in Europe, though convinced of the reality of the Soviet threat, were forced by public opinion to renounce the status quo and to engage with the Soviet Union. However, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev’s ham-handedness over Berlin in 1958 undercut the disengagement proposal. Overall, the Bildenberg meetings persuaded the SPD to soften its views toward NATO and European integration. The meetings also reflected the widespread agreement that keeping American military forces in Europe was crucial and that the defense burden would have to be shared more equitably. In the end, the meetings deflated Kennan’s loftier pretensions.

The second section of the book focuses on Josef Stalin’s death in order to determine if there was a “missed opportunity” to reach a deal. Geoffrey Roberts writes that from the Cold War’s inception, the Soviet Union began its campaign to “end the division of Europe and establish a permanent East-West détente” (p. 47). A primary goal was to prevent the rearmament of Germany.[2] To that end, the Soviets wanted to reopen talks begun at Potsdam on the German question.[3] Concerning the famous Soviet note of March 1952, Roberts writes, “To all intents and purposes the Soviet aim of a peaceful and democratic Germany was a real one” (p. 52).[4] He claims that while Stalin soon lost interest in the idea, his successors sincerely wanted to reduce international tensions. They also pushed for a collective

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security regime that would dissolve the Cold War blocs. Although Western governments rejected the Soviet offer, Moscow took satisfaction in the Western publics' positive reception.

Jaclyn Stanke also explores the West's options following Stalin's death. C. D. Jackson, a psychological strategy specialist who wanted to destabilize the Soviet Union, urged President Eisenhower to immediately offer four-power talks, which would be a propaganda win for the United States regardless whether Moscow accepted or not. Eisenhower instead rejected Bohlen's advice and later authorized moderate covert actions against the USSR in the belief that he could transform it into a "normal" member of the international community. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill also supported transformation, but he eventually wound up supporting *détente*. Stanke concludes that it could have been a missed opportunity when Eisenhower refused to embrace the ideas of Churchill and U.S. diplomat Charles Bohlen, who "advocated a wait-and-see approach" (p. 69).

Vladislav Zubok's look at Soviet intellectuals focuses on chess champion Mikhail Botvinnik, who urged the Communist Party to compromise in order to save humanity; physicist Lev Landeau, a true believer in communism; and nuclear physicist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Andrei Sakharov. Less ideological than Landeau, Sakharov believed the Soviet system could transform itself but saw the new bureaucratic class running the country, which subverted its ideals, as the main obstacle. Adverse to coups and revolutionary uprisings which he feared would plunge society into violence, he advocated that scientists, artists, and intellectuals in both East and West take the lead in bringing about reform and mutual understanding. While Zubok admits that the intellectuals had no direct impact on policymakers or on the end of the Cold War, they played an indirect role by fostering a mindset different from Leninism. Initially dismissive of Sakharov's ideas, Mikhail Gorbachev later embraced them and sought a way to bring the Cold War to an end in a way different from how the intellectuals had envisioned.

Some believe Charles de Gaulle had a clear policy and strategy, while others believe that he strove to place France at the center of a Europe divided between two blocs. De Gaulle's habitual ambiguity has nourished this debate. Garret Martin comes down the side of the former, identifying three strands to de Gaulle's political philosophy: history; balance; and the centrality of the state. These strands led de Gaulle to discount the role of ideology and thus work with the USSR despite his loathing of communism. At first welcoming the Atlantic Pact, de Gaulle became increasingly dissatisfied with a divided Europe, seeing it as historically unnatural. He spoke of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, convinced that communism could not resist people's desire for freedom. Martin argues that de Gaulle's February 1965 press conference outlining his vision was a turning point for French foreign policy. Although de Gaulle was vague about how his vision for a new concert of Europe would come to fruition, Martin credits him with providing inspiration for others.

A controversial and powerful figure in German politics, Franz Josef Strauss comes under examination by Ronald Granieri. In the CDU/CSU split between "Atlanticists," who wanted to maintain close ties with the United States, and "Gaulists," who sought closer ties with France, Strauss fell into the latter camp, insisting that "mathematics" showed that Europe needed to unite in order to be considered an equal by the Soviet Union (p. 209).<sup>[5]</sup> Granieri concludes that Strauss, who wanted to transcend the nation-state and create a European union, was a man ahead of his time.

In his essay on UK policy toward *détente*, Martin Brown argues that contrary to many observers who believe that including human rights within the Helsinki Accords marked the beginning of the demise of the USSR, this was not the case for the UK.<sup>[6]</sup> He describes UK foreign policy from 1969 to 1975 as "diffident" (p. 121), engaging in the Helsinki process so as not to be out of step with its more enthusiastic partners in NATO and the European Community (EC). Britain also wanted to avoid a debate over human rights because it might very well be targeted over Northern Ireland. Moreover, the British government believed that there was no international "norm" for human rights (p. 122).

Angela Romano discusses the EC Nine and their vision for ending the Cold War. The EC created the European Political Community (EPC) to harmonize their foreign policies. Its initial meeting occurred during the drive for détente and Ostpolitik, but détente meant different things to different governments. For the superpowers, it meant solidifying their dominant role in international politics. For Europe, it meant healing the Continent's division. However, the Nine differed in their view of the CSCE. Germany had the biggest stake in the hoped-for benefits it would provide. However, Bonn worried that its colleagues might use the forum to score political points. Reassuring Moscow was thus a key concern. France wanted a leadership role in CSCE talks to ease East-West tension and help it take leadership of western Europe. France feared, though, that Moscow and Washington preferred the status quo over substantive change. Belgium and Denmark strongly supported the conference, convinced it could lead to change, provided the West avoided provoking the Soviet Union. They therefore promoted a gradual approach.

Italy was equally skeptical of the superpowers. While Italy pursued strongly held positions on the right of human contact (the ability of both East and West European citizens to freely associate with one another), it softened its line in recognition of facts on the ground. Holland took the hardest line, seeing the conference as potentially dangerous. It effectively ruled out compromise and clung tightly to NATO in the belief that it could count on American "skepticism about the CSCE" (p. 140). The Dutch finally agreed with their European partners only after they had been effectively isolated. However, the Nine ensured that their approach to the CSCE would reflect the wishes of the majority in the EPC (European Political Cooperation, a mechanism for coordinating the foreign policies of the EC member states). They also ruled out polemics and hard lines in the belief that it would undermine the larger goal of détente and improving the lives of Europeans. She concludes, however, that this European cooperation failed to endure the oil shocks of the 1970s.

Gottfried Niedhart describes Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik as West Germany's version of détente. Intended to normalize relations between West and East Germany, Ostpolitik had larger ramifications. West Germany was then a more confident and independent actor on the world stage, which changed its relations with its European allies and the United States, which was less than pleased by Bonn's newfound assertiveness. For Brandt, the status quo had to be acknowledged in order to later change it. The Soviet Union had to be reassured of its status and security before it would take steps toward liberalization.

Bernd Rotehr discusses Brandt's strategy for peace. In response to the rise of superpower tensions beginning in the mid-1970s, Brandt worried about the fate of détente. He believed that Moscow's and Washington's continued maintenance of a deterrent regime would lead to an arms race and doom détente. Moreover, he feared these excess arms could cause instability in times of crisis or could even be launched through computer error. These dangers meant, according to Brandt, that the world had to redouble its efforts to work for peace. In Brandt's view, ending the Cold War meant the end of Soviet control of eastern Europe, not communism itself. Brandt also worried that the new CDU/CSU government in Bonn might not continue his Ostpolitik. In response, he launched his "parallel foreign policy," which would entail the SPD to host discussions on international security with its East European counterparts in order to continue East-West communication and draft documents which laid out specific steps to achieve détente in Central Europe (p. 242). Ironically, Brandt's calls for European collective security found a more receptive audience among leaders in the East rather than the West. Though Rother describes Brandt's strategy as *Realpolitik*, he is left wondering whether he was a left-wing Metternich, Bismarck, or Kissinger.

Italian Communist Party (PCI) leader from 1972 to 1984, Enrico Berlinguer believed that the international system would lose its rigidity due to, according to Laura Fasnaro, the "evolution of international détente" (p. 163). He argued for an end to the bloc alignment without causing a schism in the PCI. Many scholars say that he pursued a flawed strategy, but his views remained consistent. The

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Western communist parties maintained a commitment to pluralism, respect for political rights, and a willingness to criticize the Soviet Union. While mistaken about how the Cold War would end, his influence extended to younger communists, including Gorbachev.

Christian Domnitz focuses on Czech politician Jiří Hájek and the CSCE Appeal of Charter 77, an informal civic initiative from 1976 to 1992. Hájek was foreign affairs minister in Alexander Dubček's reformist government when the Warsaw Pact intervened militarily in 1968. Condemning the invasion in a speech at the United Nations, he was removed from his position and ejected from the Communist Party. Hájek went on to co-found Charter 77. Hájek believed that the division of Europe posed the greatest threat to peace. He thus developed a strategy to end this division by enlisting the efforts of citizens on both sides of the divide. However, by the late 1980s, human rights activists in both East and West were questioning the effectiveness of the CSCE process to include citizens and NGOs and to bring about a unification of Europe. However, the arrival of Gorbachev to power heralded change. By 1989, Hájek's friend, Vaclav Havel, had become the country's president, and Hájek was now free to debate his views in public. However, Hájek's dream of a pan-Europe that would include the Soviet Union faded when Soviet tanks tried to suppress movements in the Baltic states in 1991. For those who guided Czechoslovakia's foreign policy, the preferable course was to embrace NATO membership. Thus, Hájek's lasting significance came not in the form of ideas, but in terms of the building blocks from below.

Far from being a visionary who wanted to end the Cold War, Henry Kissinger sought to maintain stability, not undermine it. This is the judgment of Jussi Hanhimäki, who writes that Kissinger was caught unawares by the collapse of the USSR because his foreign policy realism had no place for a great power that would voluntarily give up its empire and then collapse. Ironically, according to Hanhimäki, Kissinger did things that hastened the end of the Cold War—forging U.S.-Soviet agreements on arms limitations, for example—even though that was not his intent.

George-Henri Soutou is forced to hypothesize about the vision of former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1974-1981), who left a meager paper trail, and even then kept most of his opinions to himself. Not even his primary advisors had a full grasp of their boss's thinking. Soutou takes on the task nonetheless. He says Giscard supported the CSCE even more so than Germany, which France saw as slowing down the process. Giscard sought to calm Moscow by not pressuring it. Willing to criticize the Soviets, he preferred doing so in private, which he thought carried more weight than public declarations. While he endured criticism for failing to meet with Soviet dissidents, he also instructed the French Embassy in Moscow to treat with them no less warmly than any other country would.

Soutou argues that Giscard pursued a "two-level strategy": incremental change in the short and medium term, with transformation occurring only in the long term by exploiting the internal contradictions of communism and the benefits conferred by increased East-West contacts (pp. 210-212). By 1979, Giscard recognized that the Soviet Union was facing severe challenges. He believed that pressing Moscow while it was vulnerable would lead it to dig in its heels and perhaps lash out. He therefore rejected President Jimmy Carter's confrontational approach on behalf of human rights.<sup>[7]</sup> Soutou concludes that Giscard ultimately saw the benefits of the Cold War: a divided Germany and the continued engagement of U.S. forces in Europe.

Gregory Domber covers Poland's opposition movement and how its ideas relate to the end of the Cold War. He focuses on Leszek Kolakowski, Jacek Kuroń, and Adam Michnik, three respected Polish dissidents. Not seeking to overturn the Cold War order, their primary concern was Soviet domination of Poland. Awareness of Moscow's readiness to use force to prevent any local communist party from losing control led them to avoid trying to undermine the Communist Party, to respect Poland's adherence to the Warsaw Pact, and to accept that Poland's Communist Party would control the police, foreign policy, and the army. Eventually, Poland's economic and political crises caused the opposition to reverse its

views. Rejecting revolution and reform, Michnik developed the concept of “evolutionism”—a gradual but continuous drive for the expansion of human rights (p. 231). Facing collapse, Poland’s Communist Party acceded to demands of the trade union Solidarność, which led to elections. Kolakowski’s, Kuroń’s, and Michnik’s ideas unintentionally had subverted the system.

Marie-Pierre Rey examines the impact of Gorbachev’s new thinking on the French left. Gorbachev initially sought to repair Marxism-Leninism, pursue a more pacific foreign policy, and curb military spending in favor social spending, but his goals became more ambitious over time. From 1985 to 1987, and from 1988 to 1991, France’s Socialist Party (PS) and the French Communist Party (PCF) switched positions on their views of Gorbachev and his reforms. The PCF looked upon the reforms favorably in the earlier period but soured on them during the latter period, while the views of the PS moved in the opposite direction. This reversal stemmed from the parties’ views of their own destiny and identity. Ultimately, the dream of a Common European Home or a European Confederation remained just that.

French President François Mitterrand, according to Frédéric Bozo, followed the Gaullist foreign policy legacy of trying to end the Cold War division of Europe and overcome Yalta.[8] After becoming president, Mitterrand reoriented French foreign policy, to one based on the assumption that the Soviet empire would be finished by 2000 and that Germany would be reunified within a generation. One way to end the system of blocs was to pursue an integrated and autonomous Europe. While Mitterrand’s initial vision was not borne out by events, by the end of the Cold War he had aligned it with events on the ground.

Ronald Reagan’s foreign policy is analyzed by Beth Fischer and Marilena Gala. Fischer takes aim at the notion of US “triumphalism” (pp. 294, 305), which argues the Reagan administration deliberately engineered an arms race it knew Moscow could not win. Through the words of Reagan officials, however, she shows that they planned no such strategy. Instead, the administration abandoned its hard stance in January 1984 in favor of diplomacy. She concludes that Reagan’s “real triumph” was ending the Cold War, not causing the Soviet Union’s collapse (p. 306). Gala concentrates on Reagan’s firm rejection of nuclear deterrence and his desire for a nuclear-free world. She argues that his simple, but steadfast belief in the merit of the Strategic Defense Initiative nonetheless changed the rigid rhetorical rules that had governed nuclear deterrence and led the superpowers to adopt “more flexible language” with which they could discuss arms control.

The book’s value lies in its multinational and archive-based perspective on individuals and groups who offered ideas on how to end the Cold War. Readers thus receive a panoramic view of the conflict. The book also points the way for future research on the “visions” of other countries, individuals, and institutions not covered here. Some caveats are in order, however. The quality of the contributions vary widely, as some pose interesting historical questions and apply rigorous analysis, but others do not. Many of the essays are primarily narratives, some of which fail to present an argument. Readers might also question some authors’ conclusions, who seem to assign greater importance to their subjects’ visions than actually merited. To be fair, though, some contributors concede that while their subjects did articulate a vision for ending the Cold War, their ideas were either not politically viable or not systematically thought through. These caveats aside, the book is a useful primer in learning about the individuals and groups who saw the conflict as not merely something to be managed, but actually to be brought to a close. Their stories add to the debate over whether the Cold War could have ended before 1989.

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## NOTES

[1] The book differs from a similar collection, which is concentrated on the end of the Cold War, and edited by some of the same scholars who edited the current collection. See Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, N. Piers Ludlow, and Leopoldo Nuti, eds., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[2] NATO agreed in late 1950 to create a European army that would include German ground forces.

[3] A July-August 1945 conference held between Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States to determine, among other issues, how to deal with defeated Germany.

[4] Stalin's proposal for the reunification and neutralization of Germany, as well as the guarantee of specific human rights for the Germans. Britain, France, and the United States rejected the note as a propaganda ploy.

[5] CDU/CSU refers to the union of Germany's two main conservative parties, the Christian Democratic Union of Germany and the Christian Social Union of Bavaria.

[6] The Helsinki Accords is the name given to the final act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) held in Helsinki, Finland, during July and August 1, 1975.

[7] One scholar asserts that Jimmy Carter's stridency toward Moscow destroyed détente and inflamed the Cold War. See Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch: Jimmy Carter, the Olympic Boycott, and the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[8] Held February 4–11, 1945, the Yalta Conference brought together the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States to discuss the organization of postwar Europe. Despite extensive documentation from the conference, it has soon passed into myth. It is where, according to some critics, the decision was made to hand eastern Europe over to the Soviet Union.

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