

Carole Fink, Bernd Schaefer. *Ostpolitik, 1969–1974: European and Global Responses.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 289 S. \$85.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-521-89970-3.



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Archival studies are slowly bringing the picture of the last twenty years of the Cold War into sharper focus. Important monographs remain scarce, but the customary practice of arranging a conference followed up by a volume of collected essays is now in full swing for the coverage of this historical period. This process has been facilitated by the opening of archives and the publication of archival sources, a practice in which the United States and Germany have taken a leading role.

This volume follows an earlier publication edited by Bernd Schaefer on the transatlantic dimensions of the first phase of *Ostpolitik*.^[1] Sequels to this volume are already available^[2] that bring the story up to the emergence of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the international crisis of 1979-84, which some authors now call the second Cold War but which I prefer to see as the third Cold War in an ongoing East-West conflict.^[3] One of the central questions facing those who would interpret this period is the problem of whether *Ostpolitik* was a historical development without further con-

sequences or indeed a prerequisite for the founding of the CSCE and the eventual fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Another key question about *Ostpolitik* might be: To what extent did the FRG conform to general trends in world politics or instead, did the social democratic government of this period diverge onto another, potentially dangerous, German *Sonderweg*?

Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer give a paradoxical, but adequate answer to this problem by suggesting that there can be no clear answer: "Ostpolitik paralleled but also diverged from the course of U.S.-Soviet détente" (p. 5). The special value of this volume lies in its concentration not only on European international relations but also on the extra-European dimensions of German *Ostpolitik*, an underresearched dimension of the question that several articles treat. For example, Bernd Schaefer underlines that the People's Republic of China initially expressed a vehement opposition to this kind of détente and offered to rescue the GDR from what it saw as Soviet "appeasement," but ended up improving its relations with

the FRG, even though West German chancellor Willy Brandt never played the "Chinese card" against Moscow. As the contribution by Meung-Huan Noh suggests, parallels between the two divided countries, Korea and Germany, were fewer than one might have expected: despite a temporary détente in Korea, the southern government was never in a position to imitate Brandt, let alone acknowledge the North as a state. India, discussed by Amit Das Gupta, was in a difficult situation with the Bangladesh War following independence from Pakistan, had to lean on the Soviet Union, and was thus unable to follow the path of détente. The Indira Gandhi government leaned emotionally to Brandt, but had to show some consideration for the GDR as well. Israel, too, revealed a certain positive sentiment toward Brandt, as discussed by Carole Fink, but German willingness to deal with the Soviet Union caused some irritation there, especially in the context of Soviet support for the Arab states during the Yom Kippur War. An anticommunist orientation made it difficult for the white regime in South Africa, analyzed here by Tilman Dederling, to continue good economic relations with the East, and in the middle of the 1970s, the FRG chose a clearer course against apartheid. Writing about the fringes of Europe, Milan Kosanović elaborates the rapprochement between Brandt and Josip Tito of Yugoslavia as a product of strong domestic constraints and the growing importance of Yugoslav immigration to the FRG.

At the heart of the volume, however, stands the European reception of this tendency. Most of the contributions not only deal with international views of West German *Ostpolitik*, but also tackle the whole field of these states' bilateral relations with the FRG. This approach causes some inevitable overlap among the articles and also produces relatively few divergent opinions. Andrey Edemskiy evaluates the role of Leonid Brezhnev in the Soviet Union's reception of *Ostpolitik*. From his perspective, the Soviet leader "was unprepared to function as a major political leader of a

superpower" (p. 37) and had to steer a difficult domestic course. Other authors, such as Vlad Zubok, have assessed this factor differently.[4]. But the image of the FRG as the enemy disappeared or was at least mitigated in the USSR during this period. Relations between Poland and the FRG--the topic of an essay by Krzysztof Ruchniewicz--finally improved to a degree under Brandt, a trend that marks him as the forerunner of real rapprochement in the 1990s. Ruchniewicz, however, does not discuss the fact that central aspects of the German-Polish treaty of 1970 had been discussed previous in German-Soviet exchanges, a problem that caused some resentment in Warsaw. Czechoslovakia, which Oldřich Tůma explores, proved to be the most difficult relationship for Brandt's FRG, not least because of problems tied to the 1938 Munich agreement. Thus, a bilateral treaty was signed only in 1974.

While the British perspective is missing from the volume, Marie-Pierre Rey deals with France and Holger Klitzing with the United States. Klitzing sees a basic criticism of *Ostpolitik* reflected in Henry Kissinger's desire to deal with the Soviet Union himself and reach a limited rapprochement on the basis of great-power détente, even as Richard Nixon harbored ongoing resentment against the social democrats and their (in his eyes) pro-communist line. This chapter offers especially strong, well-documented arguments. Rey suggests that President Georges Pompidou favored improved relations between Bonn and Moscow even as he argued in Moscow that both countries should be "vigilant" against the German states and their ambitions. Perhaps the most innovative piece of the collection bears only indirectly on the "new eastern policy": in it, William Glenn Gray discusses West German nuclear policy from 1967 to 1975. This policy engaged a complicated web of interests, but the 1968 signature of the Non-Proliferation Treaty at least paved the way for *Ostpolitik*.

On balance, the editors and contributors have produced a fine collection, one that breaks new ground on some questions and sheds light on others with innovative theses that will require further discussion. In their conclusion, Fink and Schaefer pose ten related questions which may open an even wider field for future research. With regard to the two initial questions, the volume offers no definitive answer, but plenty of thought-provoking assertions. This is no small achievement.

Notes

[1]. David C. Geyer and Bernd Schaefer, eds., *American Détente and German Ostpolitik, 1969-1972* (Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, Supplement 1 [2004]), full text: http://www.ghi-dc.org/files/publications/bu_supp/supp1/supp_01_comp.pdf.

[2]. Olaf Bange and Gottfried Niedhart, eds., *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2008); Leopoldo Nuti, ed., *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki to Gorbachev 1975-1985* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[3]. For the definition of an ongoing East-West conflict from 1945 with three especially tense phases, called "cold wars"--1948-51, 1958-62, and 1979-84, see Jost Dülffer, *Europa im Ost-West-Konflikt, 1945-1991* (Munich: Oldenbourg 2004); see also the conference report on the "second cold war," recently held in Berlin: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/reports/PDF/GHI-NATO-Double-Track-Report.pdf>.

[4]. Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

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