

# The Establishment Responds

Power, Politics, and Protest  
since 1945

*Edited by*

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Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, eds, *A Companion to Post-1945 America* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 211–234. For a discussion of the “structural racism” paradigm, see my essay Manfred Berg, “Struktureller Rassismus oder pathologisches Sozialverhalten? Die Debatte über die Black Underclass in den USA,” in Winfried Fluck and Welf Werner, eds, *Wie viel Ungleichheit verträgt die Demokratie? Armut und Reichtum in den USA* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus Verlag, 2003), 47–70.

28. Richard M. Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 200; Terry H. Anderson, *The Pursuit of Fairness: A History of Affirmative Action* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 159, 267–273.

## 6 “Promising Everything under the Sun”: Helsinki Activism and Human Rights in Eastern Europe

Sarah B. Snyder

The 1975 Helsinki Final Act spurred an explosion of dissident activity in Eastern Europe, eventually leading to the development of a transnational network committed to reform in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The agreement was the culmination of three years of negotiations by representatives of 35 European and North American states at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and contained principles to govern East-West interactions in Europe. In addition to reaching an agreement on the inviolability of frontiers, which was the original impetus for the Soviet desire to hold the conference, the Helsinki Final Act committed the CSCE states to respect human rights and facilitate human contacts across East-West borders.<sup>1</sup> The agreement’s final provision set a follow-up meeting to evaluate Helsinki implementation in two years’ time, which provided the rationale for the formation of nongovernmental groups to monitor adherence to the accord. Importantly, the first review meeting led to a second, and a whole series of meetings followed, fostering links among Helsinki activists and cementing the CSCE and human rights advocacy onto the international diplomatic agenda. Advocates for implementation of the Helsinki Final Act succeeded in unifying and supporting dissidence, advancing a human rights agenda on an international stage, offering incentives for change in Eastern Europe, and facilitating the transition to a new Europe at the end of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup>

The rise of Helsinki monitoring groups in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was an unanticipated consequence of the Helsinki Final Act and initially precipitated a wide range of government repression including harassment, forced exile, and imprisonment. Yet transnational activism supporting compliance with the Helsinki Final Act persisted and gained the support of Western and neutral governments, such that by the time Mikhail Gorbachev became Soviet general secretary in 1985, Soviet progress on human rights had become necessary for Gorbachev to attract Western support for his policy

agenda. Over time the transnational Helsinki network moderated the Eastern European establishment's response to the rise in human rights activism in the wake of the Helsinki Final Act and contributed to the end of the Cold War.

### The Helsinki Network

In order to understand how the Soviet and Eastern European response to human rights activism evolved over time, an examination of the components, agenda, and tactics of this transnational network committed to implementation of the Helsinki Final Act is necessary. The network operated through the intertwined efforts of dissidents, human rights activists, and Western politicians and diplomats to champion human rights and East-West contacts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The monitoring groups that developed across Europe and made up a transnational Helsinki network called upon the Soviet Union and others to uphold their Helsinki commitments and drew international attention to their reports of human rights abuses. Groups such as the Moscow Helsinki Group served as an essential conduit of evidence of Eastern human rights abuses. They exposed Eastern practices, often succeeding in focusing international attention on a particularly troubling case. Helsinki groups generally utilized similar tactics—nonviolence, working within the constitution, and calling on governments to honor obligations to international agreements—and they faced the same punishments, including expulsion from the Soviet Union, long prison terms, or harassment, to name a few. Over the years, a transnational Helsinki network came to include Eastern human rights activists, Jewish refuseniks, ethnic nationalists, diplomats, legislators, international NGOs, journalists, and political leaders. Together, and across national borders, they pressed for adherence to the human rights and human contacts provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. In time, the broader transnational Helsinki network was able to affect implementation of the Helsinki Final Act, secure improved observance of human rights, and fundamentally shift Eastern European politics and society.

Shortly after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in August 1975, U.S. representative Millicent Fenwick (Republican-New Jersey) returned from a trip to the Soviet Union determined to enhance the United States' role in protecting human rights. Fenwick was so moved by her personal meetings with dissidents and their relatives in the USSR that she proposed a joint legislative and executive committee to monitor compliance with the Helsinki Final Act and to press for greater international implementation. The result of her efforts, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, became a strong advocate for U.S. activism on human rights and an essential part of the transnational Helsinki network.

The early establishment of the Commission offered an outlet for the Eastern monitoring groups, which would emerge shortly thereafter, and their research on violations of the Helsinki Final Act. As one of the first bodies to undertake Helsinki monitoring, the Commission facilitated the development of a network of groups and individuals committed to the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act and heightened the influence of the Helsinki process over time.<sup>4</sup>

Commissioners and their staff highlighted Helsinki violations through hearings, publications, and press releases; for many years, the Commission was the most comprehensive source on Helsinki compliance in the United States.

At the same time Fenwick established the Commission, human rights activists in the Soviet Union, prompted by publication of the Helsinki Final Act in Soviet newspapers, proceeded to form their own group dedicated to compliance with the agreement. The Public Group to Promote Fulfillment of the Helsinki Accords in the USSR, popularly known in the West as the Moscow Helsinki Group, included activists with a range of agendas but a common goal of monitoring Helsinki implementation. The establishment of the Moscow Helsinki Group and the Commission within a month of each other raised the international profile of the Helsinki agreement and led Helsinki compliance to remain in the forefront of East-West relations.

The Helsinki Final Act served as a common foundation for human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the communist bloc. In Moscow Helsinki Group member Ludmilla Alekseeva's view, the Helsinki Final Act produced a "collective phenomenon of Soviet dissent." In her words, the Helsinki process enabled the "unification of the human rights movement with religious and national movements" because all were working toward rights outlined in the Helsinki Final Act. As evidence of this dynamic, the Moscow Helsinki Group was made up of Jewish refuseniks, ethnic nationalists, and human rights activists.<sup>5</sup> The Moscow Helsinki Group further offered an important connection between dissidents in Moscow and concerned people around the world, and the group immediately sought to join a broader network by sending its reports to Western NGOs and all CSCE signatories.<sup>6</sup>

The Moscow Helsinki Group also inspired the formation of many other monitoring groups in the East and the West. The development of grassroots groups first expanded within the Soviet Union to Lithuania, Armenia, Georgia, and Ukraine, with the establishment of groups such as the Christian Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in the USSR, the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, and the Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Agreements in the USSR. Subsequently they extended to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and beyond. Some of the most prominent new groups in Poland were the Polish Workers' Defense Committee, created in the spring of 1976, and the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights, which focused on Helsinki monitoring. Charter 77, a grassroots effort launched in January 1977, drew contradictions between Czechoslovak law, the government's signature of the Helsinki Final Act, and life in Czechoslovakia.

The first Helsinki monitoring groups directed their attention to the upcoming CSCE Follow-up Meeting opening in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in October 1977 where the 35 CSCE states would reconvene to evaluate progress toward implementation of the Helsinki Final Act. Each monitoring group worked to document violations of the Helsinki Final Act and distributed their research to sympathetic CSCE delegates. U.S. ambassador to the Belgrade Follow-up Meeting Arthur J. Goldberg, drawing upon documentation provided by the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as Eastern monitoring groups, was particularly outspoken at the meeting, ensuring a rigorous

review of Helsinki compliance. Through their complementary efforts, Helsinki monitoring groups and CSCE diplomats established a standard whereby those who disregarded their Helsinki obligations would be publicly humiliated in an international forum. Yet the Belgrade Meeting did not produce new commitments and repression continued in Eastern Europe.

In the aftermath of the limited successes of the Belgrade Meeting, the still nascent Helsinki network looked toward the subsequent review meeting to be held in Madrid, Spain, beginning in November 1980. In anticipation of Madrid, Goldberg suggested the Helsinki monitoring efforts would benefit from a U.S.-based group made up of private citizens. This group, established in 1978, became Helsinki Watch, the most influential Western-based NGO focused on Helsinki compliance.<sup>7</sup> Helsinki Watch's formation proved critical because as Eastern repression of Helsinki activists escalated, Western NGOs were increasingly needed to lead the monitoring effort.

Faced with a profusion of different groups trying to advance their objectives through the Helsinki process, Helsinki Watch recognized forging connections between like-minded groups across CSCE states could facilitate more effective human rights advocacy. As such, Helsinki Watch initiated the formation of an international nongovernmental organization, the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights or the IHF as it was called, which proved to be a significant development in the Helsinki process. For the myriad of interest groups spread across CSCE countries, the IHF's founding created a means to connect with one another more easily while establishing a central organization to better guide the overarching network. The establishment in November 1982 of the IHF marked a transition to a Helsinki "coalition," which could pursue a common approach, enabling Helsinki advocates to pursue joint strategies and tactics, thereby heightening their effectiveness.<sup>8</sup> With the IHF, there was clear evidence of the development of a "global community" focused on achieving adherence to the Helsinki Final Act.<sup>9</sup> Regrettably, at the same time that Western activists were succeeding in organization and coordination efforts, the Moscow Helsinki Group felt compelled to stop work: "The Moscow Helsinki group has been put into condition where further work is impossible ... Under these conditions the group ... has to cease its work." In the aftermath of the Group's September 1982 decision to disband, monitoring of Soviet Helsinki compliance was based primarily in the West.<sup>10</sup>

Those groups and individuals that made up the Helsinki coalition worked over the subsequent years at CSCE review meetings and outside the formal CSCE negotiations to influence Western and Eastern governments to comply with the terms of the Helsinki Final Act. The unrelenting efforts of the Helsinki coalition finally achieved some progress after Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary in 1985 and embarked upon a reform campaign.

### The Network's Influence

The Helsinki network sought to influence Eastern European and Soviet human rights practices directly and indirectly. Initially, human rights activists on both sides of the Iron Curtain sent direct appeals to communist leaders. As those

petitions had little discernible effect, they turned instead to "leverage politics," or drawing upon an influential figure, such as CSCE ambassadors or Western political leaders, who could advance their agenda more effectively.<sup>11</sup> Evidence of the eventual influence of Helsinki activism on Soviet or Eastern European leaders can be seen in Soviet behavior during the Vienna CSCE Review Meeting held from 1986 to 1989, and specifically the Soviet government's surprising proposal there to host a human rights conference in Moscow, which was the centerpiece of a calculated strategy to project an improved Soviet image to the West.

One important element of this new Soviet attitude toward the CSCE was the effort expended by the Soviet delegation to interact with journalists in the early stages of the Vienna Meeting, where they held six press conferences in one week alone. In contrast with previous meetings, Soviet delegates were willing to accept lists of refuseniks and political prisoners as well as to meet with a range of NGOs and concerned individuals. In the words of one observer, the Soviets tried to draw a contrast between their new openness and "the bad old days."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, according to its own foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet Union's policy of increased contact with the press was due to the influence of *glasnost*.<sup>13</sup>

The Soviets also created governmental bodies that supposedly addressed domestic human rights in an attempt to indicate a more receptive attitude toward such concerns. First, in July 1986, they established a bureau on humanitarian affairs in the foreign ministry, whose leader, Yuri Kashlev, also headed the Soviet delegation in Vienna.<sup>14</sup> U.S. ambassador to the CSCE Vienna Meeting Warren Zimmermann and other U.S. policymakers determined there was little substance behind the new Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Administration, but it nonetheless signaled progress. In their view,

The primary function of the office, rather, seems to be propaganda, i.e., to defend Soviet human rights practices and to criticize Western countries for alleged abuses of human rights. The fact that the Soviets felt obliged to create such an office, however, does indicate increased Soviet sensitivity to Western human rights criticism.<sup>15</sup>

The Soviet Union also formed the Public Commission for International Cooperation in Humanitarian Problems and Human Rights in late 1987. Headed by Fedor Burlatsky, a Gorbachev adviser, the Public Commission was charged with monitoring Soviet and other CSCE states' Helsinki compliance as well as reforming Soviet legislation.<sup>16</sup> According to an official statement, the Public Commission was designed "to achieve conformity of Soviet legislation with the obligations assumed by the Soviet Union in the Helsinki Final Act and in UN human rights documents."<sup>17</sup> In Burlatsky's view, the Public Commission served as a "legal opposition," focusing on political and civil rights and recognizing the rights of informal political groups.<sup>18</sup> The Public Commission's creation may have been prompted by concerns about potential criticism of the Soviet human rights record in Washington during Gorbachev's visit there, as the announcement of its establishment came only a few days before Gorbachev traveled to the United States. At least initially, the Public

Commission seemed designed more for propaganda purposes than to advocate or implement change.

The most striking and potentially important Soviet initiative in these years remained its proposal to host a CSCE meeting in Moscow. At the outset of the Vienna Meeting in November 1986, Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze had announced a Soviet proposal to host a conference on human contacts, information, culture, and education in Moscow as one of the experts' meetings to follow Vienna.<sup>19</sup> The Soviet initiative suggested a significantly changed attitude toward the CSCE and a growing recognition that demonstrating a positive record on human rights was beneficial to Soviet interests. Writings by Soviet leaders such as Shevardnadze and Gorbachev indicate an evolving commitment to human rights ideals. According to Anatoly Adamishin, "Some people believed that moving forward in the field of human rights was not a concession to the West but an indispensable prerequisite for the country's development, which needed long-overdue democratic reforms."<sup>20</sup> The proposal became the defining issue of the Vienna negotiations; for many observers, progress on the proposed Moscow conference served as a barometer of Eastern advancement on human rights, as the acceptance of the Moscow conference proposal and thus agreement on a concluding document necessitated Soviet progress on human rights.

Some delegates were adamant that they would not consider the proposal given the USSR's abysmal rate of Helsinki compliance, whereas others thought that its merits should be explored. A Canadian delegate likened it to "Hitler suggesting in 1938 that Berlin should host a conference on the welfare of the Jews," and an editorial in the Austrian *Die Presse* suggested the fulfillment of such a proposal would be like "a debate in the fox den about raising chickens."<sup>21</sup> As the Soviets were slow to expand fully on their proposal, Western delegations, in consultation with NGOs such as the IHF, began amassing a list of conditions that might be necessary for its acceptance.<sup>22</sup>

The litany of conditions considered by Western governments would have seemed entirely implausible a few years earlier, but by 1987 there was meaningful movement by the Soviets. In that year, the Soviet Union made important strides, including releasing 140 political prisoners in February, ceasing to jam the U.S. government's radio broadcasting service Voice of America in May, and allowing German and Jewish emigration to rise significantly.<sup>23</sup> In a further sign of increasing Soviet willingness to resolve human rights cases, the Soviet government responded for the first time to the Commission's entreaties by resolving 137 cases of the 442 it had raised several months earlier.<sup>24</sup> In September 1987, U.S. secretary of state George Shultz began to see genuine change in the Soviet position when Shevardnadze told him, "Give me your lists and we will be glad to look at them."<sup>25</sup> Not only was Shevardnadze an improvement over former Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko in his willingness to listen to Shultz's concerns and occasionally act on one of the cases that Shultz had mentioned, but by 1987, U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock argues, "Shevardnadze actually began to try to change the system."<sup>26</sup>

Soviet leaders pursued a range of steps to win support for their proposed conference, including inviting some of their most ardent opponents to Moscow: the International Helsinki Federation and the Commission on Security and

Cooperation in Europe.<sup>27</sup> In Helsinki Watch executive director Jeri Laber's view, the Soviets chose to invite the IHF, a longtime critic of Soviet authorities, due to its influence at Vienna and the Soviets' overwhelming desire to host a human rights conference.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, according to Soviet delegation head Yuri Kashlev, "We are engaged in a dialogue on human rights in the Soviet Union not only with those who like us but those who criticize us as well."<sup>29</sup>

Swedish IHF delegate Frantisek Janouch's firsthand account of his time in Moscow illustrates the lengths to which the Soviets went to curry favor for the conference. Janouch wrote, "Almost anything was permitted during that one week: Jewish demonstrations as well as demonstrations of Hare Krishna devotees, and many more things, unknown or at least unusual in Moscow."<sup>30</sup> According to Janouch, Shevardnadze's deputy Anatoly Adamishin tried to persuade the IHF to support the conference proposal, going so far as "promising everything under the sun."<sup>31</sup> Although the IHF representatives encountered a wide spectrum of views on the proposed conference among those they met in Moscow, Janouch personally saw value in allowing a conference to induce the Soviets to develop a favorable human rights record:

I am convinced that the organization of a conference on humanitarian issues in Moscow could have a positive influence on future developments in the USSR. The earliest date the conference could meet in Moscow is 1990, probably one or two years later. During the period of preparation the Soviet authorities will logically make sure that fundamental human rights are respected. This means that the present relatively liberal attitude of the Soviet authorities will go on for several more years—and will clearly progress even further during the actual conference.<sup>32</sup>

In Janouch's view and also in that of others, agreeing to the conference would ensure an initial period of respect for human rights and by the time the conference closed, it would be too late for the Soviets to reverse course and return to repressive human rights practices.

After returning from Moscow, the IHF shared its impressions with the Vienna CSCE delegations and began a public campaign in support of a Moscow conference. Leading the campaign, Helsinki Watch executive director Jeri Laber wrote an opinion piece for the *International Herald Tribune* outlining the argument for the meeting:

A Moscow human rights conference would ... give the Soviet people a forum for discussing their government's past, present and future human rights practices. It would allow an infusion of Western ideas and values, including the concept that respect for human rights cannot merely be legislated from above but requires the active participation and vigilance of private citizens.<sup>33</sup>

There is some irony that its trip to Moscow led the IHF to work toward the same goal as the Soviet Union, though clearly for different reasons. Likewise, there is incongruity in the Soviets' courting of the IHF, which had long fought

against Soviet repression. The reach of IHF's influence with CSCE delegations, however, was such that Soviet authorities were forced to take steps to win over this transnational coalition of Helsinki monitors.

Because the acceptance of the Moscow conference proposal and thus agreement on a concluding document necessitated Soviet progress on human rights, the improvements in the USSR and Eastern Europe in this period demonstrate the influence of the Helsinki process on Soviet policymaking. They were central to the successful end to the Vienna Meeting and all of the political, social, and economic changes that followed. By the end of 1988, there were considerable improvements in the Soviet human rights situation: 600 political prisoners had been released, emigration had swelled to 80,000, and radio jamming had ended.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

The Vienna Meeting and its agreement on the conference in Moscow represented an end to the traditional East-West divide that characterized the CSCE and Europe. As Jeri Laber notes in her memoirs, "Reforms we had demanded as conditions for the Moscow human rights conference—the release of political prisoners, free emigration, and an end to jamming of foreign radio stations—had actually come to pass."<sup>35</sup> That the Soviet Union would propose hosting a conference on human rights, meet numerous conditions to gain its acceptance, and agree to the far-reaching Vienna Concluding Document illustrates the influence of longtime Helsinki advocacy on Soviet political leaders. The agenda of the Helsinki network—that Eastern changes in human rights be central to the question of East-West relations—shaped Gorbachev's course of reform. Years of activism had ensured human rights a permanent place on the Cold War diplomatic agenda, which led Gorbachev to address human rights issues in order to achieve his international diplomatic goals. As Gorbachev recognized changing the Soviet role in the CSCE was important to normalizing relations with the West, he slowly undertook measures to do so. The Soviet decision to propose a human rights conference in Moscow and efforts by Soviet leaders to win the support of the IHF is evidence of the strength of Helsinki activism in influencing Soviet behavior; importantly, this influence has broader implications for how we should think about the end of the Cold War.

The effect of transnational Helsinki activism can be further seen in the events that shaped the end of communism across Central and Eastern Europe. In the aftermath of the Vienna Meeting, Helsinki monitors, long persecuted by Eastern regimes and championed by supporters in the West, participated in grassroots movements in pursuit of human rights and freedoms that fueled change across Europe.<sup>36</sup> There was, of course, considerable variation across Eastern Europe in the degree to which human rights demands were central to activism against the existing governments.<sup>37</sup> Such differences, however, do not undermine the direct and indirect influence of human rights activism at the time. The broader Helsinki network's influence throughout this period shaped the scope and pace of change, contributing to the transformation of Europe.

The transnational character of the Helsinki network heightened its effectiveness and enabled it to serve as an agent of change in Eastern Europe. When Vaclav Havel was in the United States for his first visit as president of Czechoslovakia, he spoke at Helsinki Watch's offices in New York, testifying to the strengths and significance of the transnational connections that made up the Helsinki network. In his remarks, Havel emphasized the influence Western allies such as Helsinki Watch had on the end of the Cold War: "I feel that I'm here as a friend among friends. I know very well what you did for us, and perhaps without you, our revolution would not be."<sup>38</sup>

## Notes

1. My use of the term "transnational network" is based on the definition of transnational advocacy networks formulated by political scientists Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker, and Kathryn Sikkink: "sets of actors linked across country boundaries, bound together by shared values, dense exchanges of information and services, and common discourses." Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker, and Kathryn Sikkink, "From Santiago to Seattle: Transnational Advocacy Groups Restructuring World Politics," in Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds, *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 7. For more on transnational advocacy networks, see Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).
2. This chapter concentrates on the contribution of the Helsinki network to changing human rights practices in Eastern Europe. Other activists protested for disarmament, trade union rights, environmental protections, and nationalist prerogatives.
3. My use of the term human rights is guided by the definition outlined in the 30 articles of the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights upon which the Helsinki Final Act was based. The human contacts provisions of the Helsinki Final Act addressed issues such as family reunifications, binational marriages, and travel restrictions.
4. The CSCE meetings subsequent to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act were known collectively as "the Helsinki process."
5. The term *refusenik* referred to those, usually Jewish, who had been denied permission to emigrate. Ludmilla Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 345–346. I have chosen to use the anglicized version of her name, under which she published in the United States, only in the citations. Discussion of Alekseeva's role will use the proper transliteration.
6. Joshua Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents: Their Struggle for Human Rights* 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 221.
7. Jeri Laber, *The Courage of Strangers: Coming of Age with the Human Rights Movement* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002), 97–99.
8. Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink, "From Santiago to Seattle," 7.
9. Akira Iriye describes a "global community" as "the establishment of networks of communication through intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations, that was clearly evident, as seen in the accelerating pace of interchanges and cooperative activities on the part of those organizations, their increased funding, and the way real-time communication was becoming possible." Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 192.

10. Paul Goldberg, *The Final Act: The Dramatic, Revealing Story of the Moscow Helsinki Watch Group* (New York: Morrow, 1988), 278, 284; and Laber, *The Courage of Strangers*, 182–183.
11. Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, 16.
12. William Korey, "Helsinki, Human Rights, and the Gorbachev Style," *Ethics and International Affairs* 1 (1987): 113–133; Roland Eggleston, "The New Soviet 'Openness' in Vienna: Many Words, Little Substance," Radio Liberty Background Report, November 10, 1986, Helsinki, Vienna, 1986–1989, Box 1118, Old Code Subject Files, Soviet Red Archives, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, Open Society Archives; Memorandum, Nagler and Minnema to National Committees, November 20, 1986, Memos, 1986, Box 20, Correspondence and Memoranda, Records of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Open Society Archives; William Korey, *The Promises We Keep: Human Rights, the Helsinki Process and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Institute for East West Studies, 1993), 227, 271; and Orest Deychakiwsky, "Helsinki Review Process: Making Progress Slowly, but Surely," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 18, 1987, 7.
13. Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, trans. Catherine Fitzpatrick (New York: Free Press, 1991), 44.
14. Transcript, Press Conference with Ambassador Zimmermann, December 3, 1986, CSCE Vienna—November 1986, Box 6 Unprocessed, Joint Baltic American National Committee Records, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Korey, *The Promises We Keep*, 220.
15. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Hearing, September 11, 1986, 99th Congress/2nd Session.
16. Julia Wishnevsky, "Burlatsky on Goals of Soviet Human-Rights Commission," Radio Liberty Research, February 17, 1988, Human Rights, 1988–1988, Box 692, Old Code Subject Files, Soviet Red Archives, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, Open Society Archives; Alexander Rahr, "USSR-Fedor Burlatsky to Head New Human Rights Commission," December 1, 1987, Politics: Human Rights: General, 1987–1988, Box 20, New Code Subject Files, *ibid.*; and Korey, *The Promises We Keep*, 220.
17. Viktor Yasmann, "An Official Human Rights Organization in the USSR: 'New Thinking' or Propaganda?" Radio Liberty Research, January 12, 1988, Human Rights, 1988–1988, Box 692, Old Code Subject Files, Soviet Red Archives, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, Open Society Archives.
18. Stephen F. Cohen and Katrina Vanden Heuvel, *Voices of Glasnost: Interviews with Gorbachev's Reformers* (New York: Norton and Company, 1989), 174.
19. It was only the second proposal of the entire Vienna Meeting, submitted on December 10, 1986. CSCE/WT.2, December 10, 1986, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe Archives, Prague, Czech Republic; Eduard Shevardnadze (USSR), November 5, 1986, CSCE/WT/VR.3, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe Archives; and Bohdan Nahaylo, "Shevardnadze Proposes International Conference on Humanitarian Issues in Moscow," November 5, 1986, Human Rights, 1986–1987, Box 692, Old Code Subject Files, Soviet Red Archives, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, Open Society Archives.
20. Anatoly Adamishin, "Vienna," in Anatoly Adamishin and Richard Schifter, *Human Rights, Perestroika, and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009), 153.
21. Janie Leatherman, *From Cold War to Democratic Peace: Third Parties, Peaceful Change, and the OSCE* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 184; and Laber, *The Courage of Strangers*, 260.
22. Roland Eggleston, "West Considers Soviet Proposal for Humanitarian Meeting in Moscow," Radio Liberty Research, December 4, 1986, Helsinki: Vienna, 1986–1989,

- Box 1118, Old Code Subject Files, Soviet Red Archives, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, Open Society Archives; and Letter, Howe to Avebury, May 7, 1987, Correspondence: National Committees: United Kingdom, 1986–1992, Box 19, Correspondence and Memoranda, Records of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Open Society Archives.
23. Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 106.
24. Commission cochair Steny Hoyer called the Soviet response "a positive move forward because it is the first time the Soviets have ever responded directly to a list presented by the official U.S. commission monitoring the Helsinki Accords. Hopefully this is an indication that the Soviets are willing to take specific steps to fulfill their Helsinki humanitarian commitments." According to the Commission, the 137 cases that the Soviets resolved involved over 300 individuals seeking emigration from the Soviet Union for a long time. "Soviets Announce Resolution of Commission Cases," *CSCE Digest*, April 1987, CSCE Digest, Box 6, Joint Baltic American National Committee Records.
25. George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: Diplomacy, Power, and the Victory of the American Ideal* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 986.
26. Jack Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), 265. By October 1987, the Soviets had granted exit visas to 6,000 people, more than six times than allowed in 1986; however, 7,500 cases remained. After meeting with Shevardnadze in Moscow, Shultz believed the Soviet system of reviewing applications was finally effective. AP, "Soviets Sending Positive Signals on Human Rights, Shultz Says," October 22, 1987, Politics: Human Rights: General, 1987–1987, Box 19, New Code Subject Files, Soviet Red Archives, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, Open Society Archives.
27. The Soviet Union also invited the Commission to send a delegation to the Soviet Union from November 14 to November 18 in order to garner support for its Moscow conference proposal. Although not discussed in this chapter, Soviet officials tried to convey a similar impression of progress and openness during the Commission's visit. For further discussion of the IHF mission to Moscow and the Helsinki network more broadly, see Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
28. Letter, Schwarzenberg to Gorbachev, November 27, 1987, Delegation to Moscow: General, 1987, Box 3, Project Files, Records of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Open Society Archives; and Laber, *The Courage of Strangers*, 283.
29. Judy Dempsey, "Moscow Go-ahead for Rights Group," in Annual Report 1988, Box 1, Publications, Records of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Open Society Archives.
30. Diary, Frantisek Janouch, January 24–31, 1988, Box 3, Project Files, Records of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Open Society Archives.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*; and International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *On Speaking Terms: An Unprecedented Human Rights Mission to the Soviet Union* (Vienna: International Helsinki Federation, 1988), 46–47.
33. Annual Report, 1988, Box 1, Publications, Records of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Open Society Archives.
34. Laber, *The Courage of Strangers*, 304; and Milan Hauner, "A Softening of the Soviet Stance on Human Rights?" Radio Liberty Research, December 7, 1988, Human Rights, 1988–1989, Box 693, Old Code Subject Files, Soviet Red Archives, Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, Open Society Archives.
35. Laber, *The Courage of Strangers*, 304.

36. For a divergent interpretation, readers should consult Stephen Kotkin, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, with a contribution by Jan T. Gross (New York: Modern Library, 2009), in which Kotkin argues against the existence of a meaningful opposition or civil society in Eastern Europe.
37. For further discussion of this point, see Constantine Pleshakov, *There is No Freedom without Bread: 1989 and the Civil War That Brought Down Communism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 5.
38. Laber, *The Courage of Strangers*, 349; and William I. Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent, 1945 to the Present* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 347.

## 7 Politics of Reproduction in a Divided Europe: Abortion, Protest Movements, and State Intervention after World War II

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After World War II, European states developed new policies toward human reproduction. The deep transformations that occurred in the debates over abortion and over concepts such as “motherhood” and “reproduction” on both sides of the Berlin wall exemplify the relation of the “politics of reproduction” to the political systems of postwar Europe.<sup>1</sup> This essay presents four case studies of national reproductive policies in Western Europe (Federal Republic of Germany and France) and Eastern Europe (German Democratic Republic and Romania), comparing different states’ involvements in abortion legislation in order to analyze the debates, protests, and silences that divided people and policies along national and bloc lines in Europe after 1945.

### Europe and the Politics of Reproduction after 1945

The “Iron Curtain,” which separated war-torn Europe into Western capitalist and Eastern socialist bloc nations for four decades, not only dramatically affected the foreign policies of these states, but also greatly influenced their domestic and private spheres. The reproductive politics and policies which that in this period exemplify significant transformations in the overall relationship between public policy and the private sphere in Western and Eastern European countries.<sup>2</sup>

In Western Europe, experiences under the Nazis and other authoritarian regimes during the interwar period, including their far-reaching control over everyday life, led to deep mistrust and suspicion of any form of government intervention in the private sphere following World War II. Following Robert G. Moeller, “Policies that ostensibly protected the family were in fact policies that defined the social and political status of women.”<sup>3</sup> It is therefore no wonder that reproductive politics, particularly abortion issues, remained on Western states’ agendas. In order to mask this state regulation of “private