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# The German Janus: From *Westpolitik* to *Ostpolitik*

PETER H. MERKL

A quarter century of German foreign policies has passed during which three statesmen figured prominently in the reintegration of the successor states of the defeated German *Reich* among the nations of Europe. The late Konrad Adenauer presided over the rehabilitation of Western Germany and its incorporation, on a level of near equality, into the Western alliance (NATO) and into the European organizations from the Schuman Plan (ECSC) to the Common Market (EEC). This extraordinary feat of foreign policy was possible at the time only by a policy of resolutely ignoring all relationships, from hopes of German reunification to making peace, with the states of Eastern Europe. In East Germany meanwhile, the late Walter Ulbricht similarly cemented the East German Republic (DDR) into the Warsaw Pact and, in the 1960s, gave it a new identity as a nation-state in its own right with no expectation of eventual reunification and few contacts with the West. These solid fronts of the cold war era suddenly came to be questioned, when Willy Brandt launched his controversial *Ostpolitik* in his years (1969–1974) as the West German chancellor.

The controversies over the *Ostpolitik* still have not ceased swirling about related issues and various breakdowns and disappointments in the new relationships between Bonn and various Eastern capitals. In particular the established forces of the cold war era, the West German Christian

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Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the East German Communist party, the SED, as well as cold warriors elsewhere, became very alarmed at what to them appeared to be a sellout of hard-earned positions. Even some American Democrats today, who ought to know better, are asking themselves whether the price paid in recent years for detente with the Soviet Union has not been too high. Regarding Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, in particular, the question arises as to how it fits into the broader picture of the West German *Westpolitik* and of the Western alliance as a whole. Now that the dust has settled and it can be viewed more soberly, we need to ask whether the *Ostpolitik* measures really implied such a basic reversal of earlier policies, or a departure irreconcilable with the enduring fabric of *Westpolitik*.

#### ANTECEDENTS OF THE OSTPOLITIK I

Our story begins with the confrontations in the CDU/CSU in the early 1960s, between the so-called Atlanticists and Gaullists, misleading labels that hide the bitter personal struggle between various heirs apparent to the late Konrad Adenauer. Despite their differences over particular policies, both camps had in common a desire to pursue a course more in keeping with a West German national interest that still had to be defined. Traditional German foreign policy for a hundred years had been looking both east and west, much like the two-faced Roman god, Janus. Adenauer had at first resolutely tied the West German saddle horse to the NATO wagon, implying that there was no difference in interest between the two. The German Gaullists, including Adenauer in his last years in office (1961-1963), wanted to give this Western orientation of the German Janus more of a French, or European, basis rather than exclusively relying on an American ally far across the sea. Atlanticists such as Foreign Minister Gerhard Schroeder also sought to reestablish limited ties to the old clientele of the German *Reich* in Eastern Europe. Thus the German Janus was once more beginning to look east as well as west, just as it had done under Otto von Bismarck and Gustav Stresemann. Willy Brandt in 1969 merely undertook to complete under more favorable circumstances and in a more effective manner what Schroeder had attempted in vain.<sup>1</sup>

Adenauer's policy toward the East had been an encapsulated refusal to enter into contacts or negotiate a settlement of the border questions and other claims. Schroeder, on the other hand, began to advocate an improvement of West German relations to Eastern Europe as early as 1962. The final settlement of Germany's World War II legacy in the East, indeed, was

<sup>1</sup> Brandt's coalition partner, the FDP, had already been holding out for a more nationalistic departure in foreign policy under such leaders as Maier, Pfeleiderer, and Dehler since the mid-1950s.

a Gordic knot that had resisted Adenauer's "policy of strength." As it turned out, it failed to yield also to the blandishments of Schroeder's *Ostpolitik* and later to the *Ostpolitik* of Willy Brandt, the foreign minister of the "grand coalition" (1966-1969). Only the *Ostpolitik* of Chancellor Willy Brandt has shown any real breakthrough so far, and even there the indications of a successful consummation still remain to be seen.

Schroeder's new *Ostpolitik* was a modest attempt to establish trade relations with Eastern Europe without automatically negating the Hallstein Doctrine of diplomatic nonrecognition of states that had recognized the DDR. West German trade missions or treaties were indeed established after some initial difficulties<sup>2</sup> in Poland, Hungary, and Romania (1963), and a year later with Bulgaria, though not with Czechoslovakia. These trade contacts involved a certain duplicity toward the common organs of the EEC in Brussels which were not consulted, although Bonn strove to avoid formal violations of its obligations under the EEC treaty. Schroeder hoped thereby to contribute his share to the relaxation of international tensions, although he had to endure much domestic criticism from the hardliners of old. DeGaulle, of course, had long ago blazed a trail of contacts to Eastern European countries and Washington; he favored Schroeder's new departures which promised to bridge over the irremediable chasms of European realities. The government also had its allies, such as the Free Democratic Party (FDP) leadership and important academic and journalistic opinion leaders. Its initiatives had already been preceded by prominent Protestant and Catholic spokesmen who had advocated recognition of the Oder-Neisse line and other gestures of German reconciliation with Eastern Europe.

It was rather odd that Schroeder's domestic critics should accuse him of confirming and accepting the status quo in Eastern Europe which they still hoped to be able to revise. For the Soviet Union at the same time was alarmed at how he was threatening by his *Ostpolitik* to change the status quo of twenty years of Soviet dominance and monopolistic control. Neither Moscow nor the DDR overlooked the significance of the discrimination of Schroeder's policy of conciliation against East Germany which gave his *Ostpolitik* the appearance of a sly maneuver to isolate the DDR. The telltale answer of East Berlin to the *Ostpolitik* was the Mutual Assistance and Friendship Treaty of 1964 between the DDR and the Soviet Union. Schroeder was not discouraged and proceeded to the next logical step, an attempted rapprochement with Moscow, beginning with a visit by Khrushchev's son-in-law Adzhubei to Bonn. Unfortunately, Khrushchev's fall put an end to this promising start.

<sup>2</sup> Poland, for example, at first insisted on the establishment of normal relations and on West German recognition of the Oder-Neisse line which Bonn was not prepared to grant at the time.

In the end, Schroeder's *Ostpolitik* and his other attempts at a reorientation of West German foreign policy got no further than, in fact, signifying a reorientation toward the forgotten or frozen Eastern aspects of the concrete interests of the Federal Republic. Most telling perhaps was the bipartisan Peace Memorandum of 1966 in which Bonn proposed to exchange renunciation-of-force agreements with all the Eastern states except the DDR and to enter agreements to freeze the nuclear potential of central Europe at present levels.<sup>3</sup> The idea of a renunciation-of-force treaty between Bonn and Moscow had already appeared in the Adenauer government's declaration of policy of 1961 with the object of demonstrating the good intentions of the Federal Republic which Moscow and East Berlin had always accused of war mongering and belligerent revanchism.

#### ANTECEDENTS II

The declaration of policy of the Kiesinger-Brandt government of December 1966 followed the example of President Johnson who in a much-publicized television address in October 1966 had stressed the idea of building bridges to all the Eastern European countries. The Social Democratic party (SPD), and even the FDP, which was now in the opposition, intended to take the initiative in seeking contacts, short of diplomatic recognition, with the DDR. Chancellor Kiesinger himself called "a German contribution to the maintenance of peace" the foremost aim of the foreign policy of his administration,<sup>4</sup> and devoted a good deal of attention to German-Soviet reconciliation and to the renunciation-of-force agreements offered earlier. Diplomatic relations to Eastern Europe and particularly a reconciliation with Poland and Czechoslovakia—including a denunciation of the Munich Agreements of 1938—were other notable items of the declaration of policy. The DDR was no longer exempted from the proclaimed willingness to build bridges to the East. However, Kiesinger only spoke of seeking contacts—human, economic, and cultural—"so that the two parts of our people do not become strangers to each other during their separation."

<sup>3</sup> There had been a rapprochement between the SPD and the CDU/CSU in matters of foreign policy as early as 1960 when Herbert Wehner in a much-noticed speech before the *Bundestag* dropped the reservations of the SPD toward Adenauer's foreign policies and turned the eyes of his party toward the future. This rapprochement helped to make possible the "grand coalition" of SPD and CDU/CSU under Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger (CDU) in 1966. Wehner has largely been responsible for the strategy that took the SPD from the landmark Bad Godesberg Conference of 1959 via the grand coalition into power in 1969. He was also instrumental in drafting the Peace Memorandum.

<sup>4</sup> The standard formula of past administrations had always begun with the call for German reunification.

Whatever legitimate doubts the grand coalition may have raised in many minds,<sup>5</sup> in foreign policy it made sense, since the Christian Democrat Kiesinger and his Social Democratic foreign minister, Willy Brandt, at least initially seemed to speak the same language and to share the same goals of *Ostpolitik*. Within two months, in fact, the new government managed to achieve agreement with Romania to establish diplomatic relations. This quick triumph was possible not only because the Erhard administration had been working on it for some time but also because the resulting communiqué simply ignored the problem of East German recognition and of the Hallstein Doctrine. At the same time, Kiesinger and Brandt met with DeGaulle and emerged from the meeting speaking of a common, Franco-German *Ostpolitik*. This echo of the Gaullist and, more recently, Johnsonian pronouncements about healing the breach between Western and Eastern Europe pulled the rug out from under the German Gaullists and other enemies of Schroeder's *Ostpolitik*.

Unfortunately, the congruency of verbal formulas was not enough to solve the real problems posed by the situation. As recently as July 1966, the Warsaw Pact countries had pledged to make their solidarity with the DDR the test of their Communist loyalty. The price for West German diplomatic relations with Eastern Europe had gone up. Now it would take at least the abandonment of the Hallstein Doctrine and of the claim to speak for all Germans, the formal recognition of all de facto borders, and the end of West German nuclear ambitions. This was the reason why Eastern Europe had been rather reserved in its reaction to the new *Ostpolitik* of Kiesinger and Brandt.

The following months of 1967 soon were to demonstrate the limitations of the new *Ostpolitik*. Romania had been an easy mark because she had long been on a path of emancipation from Moscow. Yugoslavia was another easy gain because she had already maintained diplomatic relations with Bonn up until 1957 when the Hallstein Doctrine motivated Bonn to withdraw its representatives from Belgrade after Tito's recognition of the DDR. But the increasing Soviet pressure on Prague, Budapest, and Warsaw held these countries in a solidary ring against the wooing of Bonn. The Karlsbad Conference of April 1967 gathered all the Eastern European Communist parties except for those of Romania and Yugoslavia to debate on how to meet the West German threat to their solidarity. Western Communist parties including that of France were asked to help with discrediting the "revanchism" of Bonn. This conference issued a

<sup>5</sup> The chief criticism of the coalition of the two largest parties, who together accounted for some 90 percent of the seats in the *Bundestag*, circled around its effect on the two-party system and its preemption of an effective opposition. The last-mentioned feature, furthermore, was frequently blamed for the growing strength of the radical right, the NPD, and the New Left, the Extra Parliamentary Opposition (APO).

resolution calling for a European Security Conference exclusive of the United States, a proposal which must have pleased DeGaulle.

Bonn also had misgivings about the high-handed manner in which Washington neglected to consult its allies about its compromises with the Soviet Union. There must be some secret *quid pro quo*, the West German press suggested, possibly involving Soviet noninterference in the Vietnam conflict. And America's European allies were supposed to pay for it by accepting nuclear limitations while the great powers themselves undertook no disarmament steps. This issue for the first time allowed the German Gaullists to rally their forces around Strauss and Adenauer in opposition to the leaders of the grand coalition and their policy of relaxation of international tensions. What better argument could be used against the new *Ostpolitik* but that the Soviet Union wanted nothing more than Bonn's signature on that treaty? More sober critics pointed out that the treaty would also bar West Germany from access to the peaceful uses of atomic energy. The issue was also divisive for the grand coalition, because Kiesinger was more inclined to agree with the critics and with DeGaulle's advice not to sign than was Brandt.

In place of the West German offer of bilateral renunciations of force, the Karlsbad Conference came up with the Gomulka Plan for a collective renunciation-of-force agreement to be signed by all European states including the DDR, whose international discrimination in any case was to cease forthwith. The DDR, furthermore, concluded Friendship and Mutual Assistance treaties with Poland and Czechoslovakia to complete the regional integration of the DDR in case the Warsaw Pact should lapse following the security conference. And to draw the final line under the years of evolution toward a separate state, the DDR also moved to abolish the last remaining legal fiction of commonality, the all-German citizenship, and replaced it with its own "nationality." Ulbricht would have liked, in a reversal of the Hallstein Doctrine, to make the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bonn and the East European countries dependent on Bonn's recognition of the DDR, but did not succeed in winning the support of the conference.

The Federal Republic's attempt to break into the northern tier of Eastern European states now met a good deal of resistance even in Prague which had welcomed the Kiesinger statement about abrogating the Munich Agreements of 1938. Instead of diplomatic relations, Bonn only achieved the conclusion of a trade treaty and the establishment of trade missions. Warsaw still showed no signs of giving in to the German wooing. Bonn had to settle down in patience for the long waiting game, all the while assuring the East that it had no intention of isolating the DDR or any other state. And, once more, it attempted to advance the idea of mutual renunciations of force with each Eastern European state which amounted

to a West German admission that Bonn could not but accept the state of things as they were anyway.

The Kiesinger-Brandt team could no longer hope for the trade-off of reunification and nuclear arms, but was reluctant to drop its interest in Western nuclear planning and in peaceful uses of atomic energy. Kiesinger, moreover, wanted to maintain the West German stake in a future European *force de frappe*, while Brandt stressed the willingness of the Federal Republic to agree to nuclear nonproliferation, provided it was going to be a first step toward general nuclear disarmament or effective international controls on the nuclear arms race between the great powers. This argument found strong support also with India, Japan, and Sweden at the Geneva conferences of 1967 and 1968, and it was obviously in better harmony with the *Ostpolitik* than were the fulminations of the German Gaullists and the Springer press.

On August 21, 1968, the tanks of the Warsaw Pact forces, led by the Soviet Union and including East German units, rolled into Czechoslovakia to snuff out the liberalism of the "Prague Spring." There were reports of clandestine protest actions inside East Germany, but by and large the East German troops were as surprised as the Russians that the Czechs tended to compare them to another armed invasion they had suffered thirty years earlier. The Germans fiercely resented the swastikas which Czech youths and some of their own countrymen painted on their tanks and rolling stock. The Soviet desire to rein in its wayward satellites with a harsh hand had been evident for some time.

The implications of this action for the West German *Ostpolitik* were ominous. Bonn's negotiations toward a mutual renunciation of force with the Soviet Union had run aground on the hard demands of the Soviet government and the DDR at the time of the Berlin crisis of November 1967. In the meantime, Moscow further added a reference to certain clauses of the Potsdam Agreements of 1945 and of the United Nations Charter which justified hostile intervention on the part of the original signatories in case of a revival of fascism in any of the erstwhile enemy nations of World War II. This right of intervention could presumably be construed to refer to the National Democratic party (NPD) or any other neo-fascist splinter party of postwar Germany and West Berlin, or, for that matter, to the Bonn government itself which Communist propaganda had been calling "fascist," "imperialist warmongers" since its beginnings in 1949. The Soviets indicated that they would maintain this right of intervention even if a renunciation-of-force treaty was signed and, to add insult to injury, published the content of the confidential negotiations for all the world to see. The Czechoslovak invasion, which the Warsaw Pact justified as such a "suppression of fascist elements and foreign agents" presumably coming from West Germany, once more re-



vealed that the perception of a fascist Bonn was a functional prerequisite to maintaining Soviet control over the satellite empire. The West German government in a note still tried to reason that a renunciation of force would have to be based on equal conditions for both partners and could not be modified with any one-sided right of intervention. The Soviets replied in the strongest language that the Federal Republic had no claim to equality with other European states and that its renunciation-of-force proposals left untouched its "revanchist platform with regard to all the main questions of European security."

As the roof caved in on Bonn's policy of detente, the old fears reappeared. When at the time of the invasion Soviet troops began to mass across the border from West Germany, in the Bohemian Forest, moreover, Bonn urgently called for strengthening NATO and appealed to the Western allies for a change in the uncertain status in central Europe. At West Germany's urging, also, the Western allies forcefully rejected the Soviet interpretation of the U. N. charter and the Postdam Agreements. Washington bluntly announced that any Soviet invasion of West Germany would bring immediate military retaliation. This finally cooled down the ardor of Soviet belligerence.

#### THE TURNING POINT OF 1969

The parliamentary elections in September 1969 became something of a watershed in postwar West German history in that they finally retired the CDU/CSU as a government party of twenty years' standing. The chief issues were of a domestic nature, although the differences between the two largest parties also had significant foreign-policy overtones. Strauss and his adherents conducted themselves as "the national opposition" against the nuclear nonproliferation treaty and the *Ostpolitik*. The Soviet claims to a right to intervention in Germany and the nuclear nonproliferation treaty were seen by many to be made of the same discriminatory cloth, and some hardliners even spoke of a "super-Yalta" or "Super-Versailles." Kiesinger insisted on polemicizing against a "party of recognition (of the DDR)" in a willfully crude distortion of the issues. Thus he and his party had retreated far from their position at the outset of the grand coalition. Brandt held out the hope that signing the nonproliferation pact would avoid Bonn's falling into isolation. Waiting for the Soviet ardor to cool off might yet produce an advance in *Ostpolitik*.

The coming electoral upset was already heralded by the selection in March of a new Federal president by the Federal Assembly<sup>6</sup> in Berlin,

<sup>6</sup> The Federal Assembly consists of the *Bundestag* deputies and a like number of

when the FDP threw its electoral votes behind SPD candidate Heinemann who thereby won the contest. The FDP had already developed a draft "general compact" for the orderly relations between East and West Germany and thus was obviously ahead of the SPD.<sup>7</sup> Again there were bitter propaganda campaigns and harassment of the access routes to Berlin. Then mysteriously both the DDR and the Soviet Union softened their approach and began to make counteroffers relating to the access of West Berliners to their friends and relations in East Berlin. There were two potent reasons for the change in approach. As the Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Tsarapkin, himself informed the West German government, Chinese and Soviet troops had clashed bloodily at the Ussuri River half way around the world. And the steadying hand of the Nixon administration, in whose foreign policy adviser, Henry Kissinger, Europeans had the greatest confidence, had appeared on the scene with Nixon's personal visit to Berlin.

Willy Brandt tackled the objectives of his *Ostpolitik* with a dispatch born of years of observing the ups and downs of Soviet-German relations. After a mere five weeks in office, the chancellor had already put an end to the debate over the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by attaching the West German signature to the treaty. A billion dollar deal with the Soviet Union followed in which Bonn traded pipes for a huge pipeline through European Russia for Russian natural gas. A platoon of diplomatic emissaries from Bonn descended upon Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, and Bucharest with other favorable credit and commercial arrangements as well as assurances about the peaceful intent of the Federal Republic.

The whirlwind of activity focused in particular on Moscow where Brandt's special ambassador Egon Bahr met with Foreign Minister Gromyko about forty times between January and August 1970 in preparation of the renunciation-of-force agreement with the Soviet Union. Foreign Minister Scheel (FDP) also met with his Soviet counterpart some seventeen times during the same period for this purpose. Still more surprising, Brandt maneuvered the reluctant DDR government into two widely publicized encounters between himself and DDR Premier Willi Stoph, one in the historic East German city of Erfurt, the other in West German Kassel, to demonstrate to the whole world an intra-German understanding of sorts. At the same time, Brandt also got the four great powers, who had neglected their responsibilities for the status of Berlin for so long, together once more to work out a permanent solution for the be-

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deputies of the *Laender* diets. It serves as an electoral college to elect the Federal president.

<sup>7</sup> The FDP later in the year also proposed dropping the Hallstein Doctrine altogether when Cambodia, Iraq, and the Sudan recognized the DDR.

leaguered city. Events moved so rapidly in 1970 as to take Brandt's opponents in East and West Germany rather by surprise. The interpretation and analysis of what was happening and what it really meant began to catch up with the decelerating flow of the events only years later.

To begin with, the element of surprise could be maintained in large part only because of the air of unreality and hopeless entanglement which had long surrounded the relationship between Bonn and the East. Twenty-five years after the end of World War II, the tensions in Europe still were unrelieved, with nearly one-third of a million American troops and half a million Soviet troops stationed in various Western and Eastern European countries. West Germany had made its peace with the West, but never really with the East, pretending that the DDR did not exist, and ignoring the border questions and de facto losses of territory. Twenty years of hard-lining CDU governments and certain refugee and right-wing groups had been talking as if Germany had not lost the war in the East and as if the Western alliance could be used in the long run to win back the rightful spoils of war of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union which had suffered so grievously from German invasion in World War II. These right-wing elements and parts of the West German press rose in righteous wrath against Brandt's *Ostpolitik* initiatives. Ironically, they found their best allies among hard liners in the East German SED who fought tooth and claw against any rapprochement with Bonn. The vested interests in the status quo of both Germanies joined hands in propaganda, in provoking and magnifying incidents, and in leaking confidential documents and reports in order to wreck this unconscionable intra-German and Eastern rapprochement.

#### THE MOSCOW TREATY

In spite of all the bitter sallies and incidents of that eventful year, the Renunciation-of-Force Treaty between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union was initialed August 21, 1970. It was published together with a letter on German unity and supplementary notes and documents which gainsaid the earlier alleged "papers" leaked by the opposition to create the public impression of a "sell-out" or "betrayal of the fatherland" to communism, or of German ethnic interests to alien peoples. The two contracting parties solemnly pledged

to maintain international peace and achieve détente [and] . . . to further the normalization of the situation in Europe and the development of peaceful relations among all European states, and in so doing [to] *proceed from the actual situation existing in this region.*

They agreed to be guided in their mutual relations by the United Nations

Charter and "to refrain from the threat and use of force." For this purpose they declared their acceptance of all present frontiers and disavowed "any territorial claims against anybody," with the reservation that a final peace treaty conference or mutual consent (e.g., between East and West Germany) may still produce changes.<sup>8</sup> The treaty was to be submitted for ratification to the *Bundestag* only upon a satisfactory result of the four-power negotiations on the status of and access to West Berlin. In supplementary agreements, Bonn promised to conclude similar renunciation-of-force treaties with the DDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Regarding the DDR, in particular, the Federal Republic agreed to treat East Berlin as "a second German state within German territory," on a basis of equality and nondiscrimination, and no longer to claim the right to represent all Germans (*Alleinvertretung*).

The treaty documents made sure to cover also the points raised by the opposition spokesmen of the CDU/CSU, and the refugee and expellee organizations. They left undiminished the German right of self-determination and reserved the final disposition of the frontier questions to a peace conference which would very likely be some years off in the future. Most important for the West German side, they made ratification of the treaty dependent on a "satisfactory settlement" of the status and access to Western Berlin, a point creating considerable controversy at home and abroad. In May 1970, the negotiations with Moscow nearly collapsed when the Soviets reportedly wanted to separate the linking of the two subjects since, after many a meeting, the four-power negotiations on Berlin had not produced agreement on vital points. But Bonn remained adamant and asserted in a June note that there would be no renunciation-of-force without progress on Berlin. If it had not been for this pressure on the Soviets and the Western powers, the four powers would very likely have never made the effort. There is at least some evidence that West German public opinion was very favorably impressed by this feature of the Bonn-Moscow negotiations. The Soviet Union was too, for it in turn made the entering into force of the Berlin Agreements dependent on ratification of the renunciation treaty.

Another important aspect was its portent for the threat of Soviet intervention made in 1967 under articles 53 and 107 of the United Nations Charter. Despite some opposition comment to the contrary, the present treaty was presumed to have the effect of invalidating the Soviet threat.

<sup>8</sup> On this subject, see esp. Georg F. Duckwitz, "The Turning Point in the East," *Aussenpolitik* (English ed.), XXI (1970), 363–379, where the details of the treaty are discussed and related to earlier agreements of the Federal Republic such as Adenauer's 1954 declaration at the London Conference "never to seek the reunification of Germany or the modification of the present frontiers of the Federal Republic of Germany by means of force."

To be sure, as the hard liners in West Germany and elsewhere were quick to point out, no conceivable guarantee of this nature can ever be expected to bar a totalitarian state from aggression under all circumstances. But the American and NATO assurances could always be depended on to protect the Federal Republic in the event the Soviet Union made an abrupt about-face and turned to aggression again.

Foreign Minister Walter Scheel put the rationale of a renunciation-of-force succinctly when he wrote in July 1970 in a newspaper editorial that the nature of military tensions in central Europe inexorably imposed certain necessary attitudes upon West German policy: It had to be a policy of peace, one free from the unrealistic illusions and emotions of yesteryear. It must work to inspire confidence and trust in German intentions and not "feed on existing distrust." And it had to be based on Bonn's alliance and the support of its Western friends. The earlier policy of ignoring the East permitted the Soviets for twenty-five years to cement their empire by playing on the Eastern European fears of Germany. The "imperialist," "aggressive" nature of the Bonn regime was a functional prerequisite of Communist policy and cohesion. What a triumph, then, to get Moscow to acknowledge the peaceful, nonaggressive intentions of West Germany and her willingness to leave the border settlement to negotiations rather than strong-arm tactics! And as for the support of the allies, this aspect of the *Ostpolitik* was quite in keeping with the allied goal of a relaxation of international tensions as, with rare exceptions, a long line of prominent American and international visitors testified.

#### THE DDR ON THE DEFENSIVE

It is not possible here to go into all the vagaries of the struggle of the CDU/CSU and the refugee spokesmen against the ratification of the Renunciation-of-Force agreements with Moscow, Warsaw, and, most recently, Prague. Regarding the latter two, as the immediate neighbors of Germany, as the homelands of many German refugees, and particularly as the victims of German aggression in World War II, feelings were bound to run high both among the advocates and the enemies of reconciliation. Let us focus instead on the reception of the *Ostpolitik* in East Berlin.

To understand the defensive attitudes of the DDR leadership, one cannot ignore the obvious defects, in the East German view, of the negotiations between Bonn and Moscow. Bonn had declared its intent to organize its relations with the DDR "on the basis of complete equality, nondiscrimination, respect for the independence of each of the two states in matters of internal competence within their respective boundaries," and renounced the claim to *Alleinvertretung*. But these concessions were not

an integral part of the Bonn-Moscow Treaty, nor did they follow the East German proposals and indicate a promise of real international recognition instead of the suspicious "inner-German" relations on Willy Brandt's program. Since the Western allies insisted on their residual rights over Berlin and Germany, recognition was not even Bonn's to give. The Soviets, moreover, refused to force the East German demands upon Bonn and had even stated their readiness to bring about, on the basis of residual occupation rights, a Berlin settlement to Bonn's liking and presumably at East German expense. The assertion of the occupation rights meant a severe setback to East German pride and self-confidence. The DDR leaders could not tell whether they were being taken to the altar or down the garden path. The nightmare of agreement between Bonn and Moscow had ever been the DDR's *cauchemar des coalitions* and the thought of some of the nearly 200,000 Soviet troops stationed in East Germany being moved to the Chinese frontier is as painful to East Berlin as the thought of American troop withdrawals is to Bonn.

The DDR had little choice but to accept the new situation, although not without attempts to undermine it. At first the leadership seems to have adopted a strategy of reinterpreting the Moscow Treaty in the light of its own needs while pretending that the Federal Republic had merely been forced to conclude this "Soviet accord" and was not in fact the author of the policy. Thus, East Berlin in August 1970 issued a statement approving of the treaty while denouncing Bonn for not ratifying it immediately and, in particular, for still withholding East German recognition.<sup>9</sup> At a later point, Ulbricht sought to shift the initiative in the Berlin question from the allied negotiations back to a dialogue between the two Germanies, or simply to stall and obstruct whenever possible. Soviet leaders have shown no reluctance to intervene personally whenever East Berlin became too obstreperous. But there have also been times when the willingness of the Soviet Union to come to terms with Western negotiators seemed to be noticeably slackening under the impact of pressure from the DDR. Even though he is known for his hard line, Ulbricht's successor, Erich Honecker, has had to acquiesce to the measures of *Ostpolitik*. The East German leaders are on the defensive, reduced to petty harassment and recurrent campaigns of "demarcation (*Abgrenzung*) against imperialist West Ger-

<sup>9</sup> See *Neues Deutschland*, August 15, 1970. Originally, the DDR had responded to the West German overtures with a demand for 100 billion marks in reparations for the pre-1961 loss of East German refugees and for "economic discrimination," meaning the Hallstein Doctrine. It should be noted, however, that the establishment of contacts and administrative cooperation at the ministerial and subministerial level between the two Germanies survived the debacle of the Kassel meeting between Willi Stoph and Brandt, to a modest degree, in fields such as transportation and postal services—*Postpolitik* instead of *Ostpolitik*.

many"<sup>10</sup> and against the "Social Democratism" emanating from Willy Brandt's SPD, a tool of "the monopoly, capitalist bourgeoisie."

For the DDR, moreover, long-range security no longer seems to be found in bilateral agreements, but only in multilateral pacts and conferences where its links to the Warsaw Pact nations would become less dependent on momentary internal problems or the external expedencies of its Eastern partners. The intense desire of East Berlin for Western diplomatic recognition is, at least covertly, also a desire for greater autonomy from Soviet hegemony. With its striving for more autonomy from Moscow, of course, the DDR is in the best company of all the other Eastern European states. As a truly autonomous partner of the Communist bloc, the DDR could play a double-sided game of security politics, analogous to the role of the Federal Republic in the Western alliance, in which the Communist alliance would still guarantee its security without smothering it in its powerful embrace. Proletarian internationalism and socialist brotherhood need not be limited to the Russian bear hug.

The East German attitude is somewhat self-contradictory but understandable even when it may border on a quixotic sense of insecurity or paranoia.<sup>11</sup> East German foreign policy, therefore, looks toward the European Security Conference (CSCE) envisaged by the various Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union at Karlsbad (1967) and Budapest (1969), and debated also by the Western foreign ministers at Rome (1970) and since 1972 by the smaller European nations. This conference has been described by East German sources as "a conference for the taming of the imperialistic, tension-provoking West German *Ostpolitik*."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The fear of cultural contacts with the West was eloquently expressed by H. Busse and W. Haenisch in "Friedliche Koexistenz-Grundprinzip der Aussenpolitik der DDR," *Deutsche Aussenpolitik*, no. 1 (1974), 32-33, 37. See also the discussion of the evolution of East German "national identity" in Hermann Axen, *Zur Entwicklung der sozialistischen Nation in der DDR* (East Berlin, 1973), a lecture by the secretary of the SED Central Committee.

<sup>11</sup> Foreign Minister Otto Winzer, for example, still rather recently expressed acute alarm at a 1963 formula of Willy Brandt's according to which peaceful coexistence between the two Germanies denotes "a peaceful method of competition and *penetration*, an advancement of *transformation*" (italics by Winzer) which he interpreted as "undermining the socialist order of state and society" in the DDR, and as being at the root of Brandt's 1970 refusal to grant diplomatic recognition. *Die Einheit* (May 1970), 592.

<sup>12</sup> The Soviet Union first proposed such a conference in 1954, to forestall West German rearmament. Revived by Rapacki in 1964, the idea finally became capable of realization after 1968 when the Warsaw Pact agreed to full participation of the United States and Canada. See the communiqué in U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, 92nd Congress, 2nd session, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Europe, 1972, *Conference on European Security*, pp. 142-144. See also Otto Winzer's article on peaceful coexistence, *Die Einheit* (May 1970), 594-596, and Peter Florin in *German Foreign Policy* (June 1970), 423-438.

But its principles of sovereign equality, inviolability of borders, and nonintervention in the internal affairs of the thirty-three European and North American countries<sup>13</sup> would appear to have just as much application to the power of the Soviet Union over its satellites.

#### THE QUID PRO QUO

Why did Brandt and his foreign minister, Scheel, succeed where others had failed? The secret of their success lay in the timing and in their skillful linkage of the various measures and their ratification. The Bonn-Moscow treaty as well as the one with Warsaw was not to come up for ratification until a "satisfactory" solution of the Berlin question was reached by the four powers, France, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. This made the Berlin settlement the crucial pivot of the relaxation of tensions in Europe, as indeed it should have been. Herein then lay Willy Brandt's grand design for the solution of the German problem in the East-West context. It consisted of tying all the loose ends of the *Ostpolitik* into a package dependent on four-power action in the most delicate point of friction, Berlin. If one could wrest de facto control of the access routes to Berlin from the DDR, secure the economic survival and free movement of the West Berliners with Soviet guarantees, and assert the political link between West Germany and Berlin, after twenty-five years of recurrent crises, this was worth the settlement in the East. The nature of the package placed the burden where it belonged, into the lap of the four powers and made a settlement especially attractive to the least cooperative of them, the Soviet Union. The DDR, which obviously stood to lose from the final product of the negotiations, played no official role in the long series of meetings among the representatives of the big four.<sup>14</sup> The Soviets would have preferred severing all Berlin ties, including the subsidies, to Bonn and making West Berlin economically and, by implication, politically dependent on "its natural, East German hinterland." The East Germans for their part have always objected to the West German "revanchist" activities in this "bridgehead against the DDR" and insisted on the "good conduct" of West Berliners, West Germans, and transients in West Berlin as a condition for their cooperation.

<sup>13</sup> Other principles agreed upon include the multilateral renunciation of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for human rights and basic freedoms, and cooperation among states. For an East German view, see Dieter Vogl, "Die Warschauer Vertragsstaaten und die europäische Sicherheitskonferenz," *Deutsche Außenpolitik* (January 1971), 48–62, where great emphasis is placed on the participation of the Federal Republic and of the neutral states of Europe whether or not they are United Nations members.

<sup>14</sup> See details in Peter H. Merkl, *German Foreign Policies, West and East: On the Threshold of a New European Era* (Santa Barbara, Calif., 1974), pp. 156–165.



By mid-1971, the expectations raised by the bold gamble of the *Ostpolitik* had reached such a height that even the CDU/CSU was willing for the time being to withhold criticism of the kind of Berlin agreement that was evidently taking shape. "For the first time since the end of World War II," declared Chancellor Brandt triumphantly on September 1, "agreements based on international law are creating clear conditions for access to West Berlin and for the relations between the city and the Federal Republic of Germany." Two days later, in the building of the long defunct Allied Control Council of Germany, the foreign ministers of the four major allied wartime powers initialed the Berlin Agreement, a first step toward a viable settlement.

The agreement reaffirmed the reserved rights of the four allies and pledged the latter to respect each other's rights in Berlin and not to attempt to change the status quo unilaterally or by threat of force. Four annexes to the agreement proposed details of (1) the civilian traffic between West Germany and West Berlin, (2) the relationship between the Federal Republic and West Berlin, (3) travel and communications between West Berlin and the surrounding East German territories; and (4) the representation of West Berlin interests abroad and the Soviet consular activities in West Berlin.

Regarding the first item, the Soviet Union solemnly assured the Western powers that the traffic of goods and persons across East German territory to and from West Berlin would be "facilitated and unimpeded." Some regulations of this traffic were specified and the details left to intra-German agreements. In the second annex, the Western powers reaffirmed the ties between Berlin and Bonn, provided that West Berlin not become a constituent part of the Federal Republic and the political organs of the latter not be convened in West Berlin. In the third annex, the Soviets gave equal visiting rights in East Germany to the West Berliners who had long been discriminated against as compared to West German or foreign visitors. This annex also promised to improve the ruptured communications between East Germany and West Berlin and to resolve the problem of enclaves such as Steinstuecken by exchanges of territory, with the details again left to intra-German negotiations. The fourth annex, finally, granted West German consular representation abroad and with respect to international organizations to the residents of West Berlin and authorized the establishment of a Soviet Consulate General in the Western sectors of the city. In a further exchange of letters with Bonn, the Western powers indicated which West German governmental agencies would be permitted to appear and operate in West Berlin for purposes of coordinating the relationships between the two entities.

The Brandt government immediately made it clear in a televised address that the Berlin Agreement was only the beginning of a settlement

and that in many ways it accomplished little more than the sanctioning of the existing situation. Nevertheless, the former Berlin mayor said, "there are to be no more Berlin crises." And he stressed the sanctioning of access rights and the visiting privileges of West Berliners. The West Germans and West Berliners obviously had not received everything they had hoped for, and what they had been granted still required long and difficult direct negotiations between the two Germanies. East German stalling and different interpretations of the Berlin Agreements complicated their implementation in intra-German accords.<sup>15</sup> There have been incidents and violations on both sides to this day to disillusion the starry-eyed.

There was also the bitter fight to the finish by the CDU/CSU opposition which at first hoped to topple Brandt by defeating his treaties and then discovered it could not afford the odium of wrecking the whole edifice of his popular *Ostpolitik*. For without the ratification of the Renunciation-of-Force treaties with Moscow and Warsaw by the West German *Bundestag*, the Berlin Agreements and even the implementing traffic accords between Bonn and East Berlin would fail to enter into force. Thus the Moscow Treaty passed on May 17, 1972, with a majority of 248 against 10 (238 abstaining) and the Warsaw Treaty passed with 248 against 17 (231 abstaining), and the CDU/CSU also chose to abstain in the upper house, the *Bundesrat*. A joint resolution by both major parties on legal reservations regarding the Oder-Neisse line and other borders passed the *Bundestag* by 491 to 5 votes, and was immediately gainsaid by a special message of reassurance about the Oder-Neisse line addressed to the Polish government by Chancellor Brandt.

In the battle over ratification, the Brandt government had lost its legislative majority and could no longer even pass its budget. A surprise motion of no-confidence by the opposition came very close to toppling the Brandt cabinet. Nevertheless, the engineers of the *Ostpolitik* continued to work on further civilian traffic and cooperation agreements with the DDR and, two weeks before the November elections, unveiled a Basic Treaty on the relations between the two German states, in which the Federal Republic "formally takes note of the DDR as a sovereign and equal state," though not as a foreign country, as Brandt pointed out in a newspaper interview.

#### THE BASIC TREATY WITH THE DDR

The Basic Treaty proceeds from the fact of the German division under

<sup>15</sup> A book review by V. A. Pjatin of V. N. Boldyrew's *Westberlin und die europäische Sicherheit* (1973) in *Deutsche Aussenpolitik*, no. 1 (1974), 189–192, gives a revealing glimpse of East German motives.

allied suzerainty without exactly recognizing such a division as permanent. It does pay tribute to detente, nonuse of force, and inviolability of borders, and pledges the two German states to (1) normal, good-neighborly relations, (2) sovereign equality, self-determination, and, among other things, the protection of human rights, (3) the discontinuance of *Alleinvertretung* by Bonn, (4) the promotion of European security and a reduction of armaments, especially the control of nuclear weapons, (5) steps toward economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation, and (6) an exchange of permanent missions between the two Germanies. As Willy Brandt put it in a press conference, this treaty is "the instrument for organizing cooperation under the prevailing circumstances," that is, "by way of settled coexistence" and without abandoning the notion of a common nationhood. It opens the way to "the normalization that is now possible" and makes life easier in many ways in the two Germanies and in West Berlin, again without changing the legal status quo in such matters as citizenship or property. A number of practical cooperation and exchange agreements between the two states and including Berlin will follow.

By this time, the long-expected wave of diplomatic recognitions of the DDR by many states other than the Federal Republic (which had insisted on noninternational recognition) was obviously well under way. FDP leader and Foreign Minister Walter Scheel felt compelled to deny that this was "a bitter consequence" of the *Ostpolitik* and, in particular, of the Basic Treaty. On the contrary, he argued, it is "a natural outcome of these treaty negotiations and of the conclusion of the accord that the NATO members now establish contacts." Not only was this trend already strong without the policies of Bonn, thus making it necessary for the Federal Republic to take the initiative and obtain concessions from Moscow and Pankow while they still had something to offer the East, but also the Basic Treaty and the Four-Power Declaration relating to the treaty and United Nations membership expressly reserved the final disposition of the German question to a peace settlement. "There was no reason in the meantime to discriminate against the DDR" as long as it showed some willingness to cooperate. The underlying formula, in other words, was that human improvements in the DDR and in West Berlin were well worth the concession of international recognition, since German reunification was in any case unattainable in view of the irreconcilable differences between the two systems.

Needless to add, the CDU and especially the CSU rejected this trade-off as well as the whole Basic Treaty with the DDR. There was some expression of dissent among the CDU deputies, however, which produced several points illuminating the predicament in which the party has found

itself since 1970. The CDU/CSU must catch up to the international developments, the dissenters argued, and be realistic about the emergence of the DDR and the present Eastern borders which are now being recognized by practically everyone in West and East.

Indeed, it seems to be the normal course of major innovations in foreign policy that they can only begin with a realistic acceptance of world conditions as they are rather than as they never were or as they might have been years ago. The SPD learned this lesson the hard way during the long years of Adenauer's bold new departures in foreign policy. It was a painful process for the SPD leaders to give up their hardened rearguard action against his policies of European integration and of bringing West Germany into the Western alliance. Only after they had come to accept the new conditions could they set out for major departures of their own. It may well require a similarly painful process of accepting the achievements of their antagonists before the proud leaders of the CDU and CSU can stage a comeback.

#### OSTPOLITIK AND WESTPOLITIK

During their determined struggle against Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, the CDU/CSU leaders' weightiest, if not their most influential argument, pointed to an inherent conflict between further European integration and the Eastern policies. Granted that the West German policies toward the East presupposed a secure West German position within NATO and a sound economic one within the Common Market, this objection is far from absurd. One aspect in the preparatory talks for the Conference on European Security and Cooperation, for example, concerned the West German desire—shared by other EEC members and opposed by the East—to allow the European Community (EEC, ECSC, and Euratom) a mode of formal participation. Behind this request lay the concern that the Eastern Europeans should recognize the right of the EEC members to continue to develop without Eastern interference the process of economic and political integration they have begun and to which they accord priority over any all-European patterns of cooperation. The European Community indeed commissioned its Political Committee (of Political Directors of each Foreign Ministry) and an ad hoc group to prepare a common strategy toward the conference, an absolutely necessary maneuver, since community members after January 1, 1973, are no longer free individually to conclude new trade treaties with nonmember states. Furthermore, these deliberations have been linked with those in the NATO Council, at least among the delegations from community countries. The Eastern Europeans for their part feel a hearty dislike for the Common Market, its "economi-

cally discriminatory" policy, and even more for its ambitions to become a politically unified "superpower" and a vehicle for "Western European imperialism."<sup>16</sup> Within the EEC Commission, the views about the European Security Conference have ranged from positive ones hoping for better relations with the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe (with the ulterior motive of making the satellites less dependent on Moscow) to the suspicion that the conference was a plot to substitute a weak all-European pattern of cooperation for the further political integration of the community.

The standard response of the Brandt government to these Christian Democratic criticisms has always been that Bonn's *Westpolitik* has been proceeding apace and that the *Ostpolitik* measures enjoyed substantial support among all of the Western allies.<sup>17</sup> Appearances have indeed fostered the impression of a very active and successful *Westpolitik*, especially with the dramatic expansion of the Common Market from the original six to nine members. To be sure, the demise of Charles DeGaulle and the persistence in the face of determined resistance at home of a pro-European leadership in Great Britain account far better for the final coming about of that long-awaited event than anything the Brandt government did in its few years in office. Still, as Great Britain, Ireland, and Denmark took on their official roles in the European Community on January 1, 1973, it was difficult for the critics to claim that no progress was being made in European integration. The impact of the event was further magnified by the surprising eagerness of the British to enter into the round of contacts and activities toward greater cooperation in political and defense matters which accompanied the expansion of the community. For many years, a potent argument against British membership in the Common Market had been that Great Britain was "not really interested in European integration" beyond the advantages of economic cooperation and hence, that her membership would water down the heady spirit of European union. Now that she was actually joining, her government turned to be nearly as keen on playing a strong political role in the community as any of the "good Europeans" of long standing who had agreed

<sup>16</sup> This gives some plausibility to the Christian Democratic demand, that Eastern Europeans should first "recognize EEC" before the Federal Republic would drop its objections to the international recognition of borders and of the DDR. Actually Brezhnev in a speech of March 1972, did "recognize the reality of the Common Market" and asked for a similar "recognition" of Comecon by Community members. See also Michael Palmer, "The European Community and a European Security Conference," *The World Today*, July 1972, and the special issue of *Deutsche Ausenpolitik* on the European Community *Westeuropa, Politik, Oekonomie* (1973).

<sup>17</sup> In December 1972, the NATO Council once again reaffirmed its support for the intra-German policy of Bonn as well as for its policy of "peaceful reunification."

at the Hague Conference of 1969 to turn their attention to political integration.

There is no need to provide here a detailed review of the lively developments in the European Community in the years of the greatest advances of *Ostpolitik*, nor to comment on its current ups and downs. Suffice it to say that European integration was far from dormant and that its impact on West Germany was far greater than that of the increasing trade relations with the East. West German relations with the United States also have not suffered in the least, although there appears to be more of a sense of European self-confidence vis-à-vis the old fears that American trade and capital will take over Europe. At the same time that Western Europe feels all this burgeoning economic strength, moreover, it remains as militarily dependent on the United States as ever. The late President Pompidou in 1971 spoke optimistically of a European political union by 1980.

In 1972, for a summit conference of the ten prospective members of the European Community (Norway had not yet opted out), Bonn prepared an agenda which puts *Ostpolitik* and *Westpolitik* in context. The first points on it were economic and monetary measures, along with social security, regional structural policy, and the environment. Second were institutional reforms such as the strengthening of the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, and of the Economic and Social Committee. The third point called for an "organized dialogue" with the United States, better relations with industrialized countries, trade cooperation with Eastern Europe and with the developing nations. European political and intergovernmental cooperation also figured prominently on the West German agenda for the summit. As the reader will notice, *Ostpolitik* played a very modest role in this context.

Looking back on the hectic battles of 1970-1972 with the benefit of hindsight, one is inclined to see the *Ostpolitik* in a more realistic light than seemed possible then. It was never as great a reversal of previous policies as its detractors claimed but merely the more effective execution of earlier attempts. The Renunciation-of-Force treaties and the reluctant rapprochement of the Federal Republic with the DDR have not basically changed the political landscape of Europe or surrendered vital defenses against the ideological pressures of the East. West Germany is too well ensconced in its *Westpolitik* relations to have to fear such consequences. The basic differences in the political and economic systems on either side continue as before and their impact limits the possibilities for interaction and frequently leads to mutual suspicions and minor breakdowns. Either side naturally is inclined to get some political advantage out of the greatly increased volume of trade and of cultural ex-

changes, at the same time that it feels dangerously exposed by the lowering of the psychological guards of two decades of cold war.<sup>18</sup> But these fears are obviously to be preferred to the system of fears that kept both sides under its spell prior to Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.\*

<sup>18</sup> For an excellent survey from the East German perspective, see J. Dankert et al., "Die Beziehungen Frankreichs, der BRD, Grossbritanniens zu den sozialistischen Staaten Europas," *Deutsche Aussenpolitik*, Sonderheft 1973: Westeuropa, Politik, Oekonomie, 113–149, and, from the West German side, Andreas Meyer-Landrut, "Fourth Year of the Moscow Treaty," *Aussenpolitik*, no. 1 (1974), 23–30

\* Adapted from Peter H. Merkl, *German Foreign Policies, West and East: On the Threshold of a New European Era*.