

“Ostpolitik” – An Outline

By John Vincent Palatine

On 9 May 1945, Germany existed in no form defined by international law and possessed no innate government. With the unconditional surrender of the German Wehrmacht in Reims and Berlin-Karlshorst on 7 and 8 May 1945, the Second World War in Europe had ended. There was no German state or national authority left - the cities lay in rubble. The daily lives of Germans were hopeless and exhausted, determined by apathy and concern for missing relatives.

1. The Potsdam Conference - Collision of Allied Interests

The heads of state of the three main Allies USSR, England and USA met from 17 July to 2 August 1945 in the Cecilienhof Palace near Potsdam to regulate the post-war order. ¹ The geographical and political configuration of Germany and Eastern Europe, especially of Poland, and the future world order defined the core topics. A sort of camp formation between Democrats and Communists, or East and West, soon evidenced itself. ² Polish and German issues were closely related and were discussed intensively in the course of the conference. A nationalist, i.e. anti-communist, Polish government in exile had formed in London during the war, which, alas, was not democratically legitimized - and not under Soviet influence. Stalin strongly suggested that it be replaced by a "government of national unity", that is, controlled by himself. ³

Many questions of the future international political order should, following

¹ Josef Stalin representing the USSR, Winston Churchill for England und Harry Truman as the new President of the United States.

² Semantics - word choice and its subliminal assignments and connotations - are always a problem in political considerations. What are we to use in this text? "Eastern bloc" and "Western bloc", "NATO" and "Warsaw Pact", "Communists" and "Democrats" or simply "East" and "West"? The wording in this text is not intended to be prejudicial, rather built on ad hoc usage...

³ A few non-Communist representatives, so Stalin's proposal, should be added to the Communist government already installed under Russian control - mere window dressing, because the majority would remain under Soviet control.

Truman's ideas, be delegated to a council of foreign ministers, which was to deal with the draft of a peace treaty and a concept for the desired post-war order. In regards to the German question it was initially decided to create an Allied Control Council. The first practical problem apparent was the operative definition of "Germany", about which there was long back and forth between Truman and Stalin. Truman insisted on the definition "Germany in the borders of 1937", Stalin on the status quo of 1945. Roosevelt's old idea of dividing Germany into multiple states was adopted as a possibility but not a necessity. In addition, the future order in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Italy was addressed. With the exception of Italy and Greece, the Soviet Union had instituted there - already by 1944 - governments of its own design, which however were not accepted by Truman and Churchill. ⁴

An unofficial division of Europe into western and eastern spheres of influence had already been discussed by Stalin and Churchill at their 1944 Moscow conference. ⁵

The question of the Polish western border formed the turnstile for the geostrategic design Stalin intended for Russia and Eastern Europe after the war. A "Cordon Sanitaire" of ostensibly independent countries around Russia should serve both politically as well as militarily as a buffer zone that was to prevent the advance of democratic or liberal influences.

Stalin could afford to run out the clock, because he knew that most of the troops of the Western Allies were already slated for demobilization in the months to come. In fact, the Red Army had been conducting, since its first invasion into German Reich territory, an initially improvised, but soon well-organized displacement of German people. This expulsion was pressed ahead westward to the Oder-Neiße line, which was immediately proposed both by Stalin and by the "Lublin Committee" – which he controlled – as the new Polish western border. This communist committee was expanded by the inclusion of a

⁴ Tito had freed Yugoslavia without Russian „aid“.

⁵ Basically, this had been a repetition of the German-Soviet assistance pact of 23.8.1939 between Ribbentrop and Molotov - only the partners were different. Churchill suggested the following percentage of political influence: (1) Romanian: Soviet Union 90% - West 10%, (2) Greece: United Kingdom 90% - Soviet Union 10%, (3) Bulgaria: Soviet Union 75% - West 25%, (4) Yugoslavia and Hungary - both sides 50%.

few non-communist ministers and officially recognized on 5 July 1945.⁶ The main findings regarding Germany and Eastern Europe were published in a communiqué of 2 August 1945, which is commonly called the "Potsdam Agreement".⁷ With regard to Germany it was decided on:

1. an "orderly and humane transfer" of German "parts of the population" from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia,
2. the determination of Polish administrative sovereignty over all formerly German areas east of the Oder-Neiße line (the final demarcation line was reserved for a future peace treaty)⁸ and the
3. denazification, demilitarization, democratization and decentralization of Germany by the Allied Control Council.

All in all, however, there was little agreement between the Allies as far as concrete terms were concerned. The only real decision was the division of Germany into occupation zones. Ultimately all efforts of a common occupation policy as well as the realization of common geopolitical agreements failed - which expedited the division of both Germany and Europe and the Cold War.

2. Politics and reality of German division until the mid-sixties

2.1. The leaden times of Konrad Adenauer's "Westintegration"

The reconstruction of Germany had necessarily begun with the rebuilding of the livelihood for the people, making the securing of food and shelter the primary problems to be solved. Conceptually, the future economic and political development of West Germany's became the particular playground of new Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (CDU) and the Franconian economy theorist Ludwig Erhard, who subsequently became Minister of Economic Affairs in the

⁶ The „Lublin Committee“ then became the new, official, Polish government.

⁷ For the purposes of international law, the "Potsdam Agreement" was not an international treaty, but solely a declaration of intent or intention of the participants of the conference.

⁸ Despite the Potsdam Agreement, the Oder-Neiße line remained controversial, as was publicly confirmed by the British foreign minister Bevin on October 10, 1945 and his American colleague Byrnes on September 6, 1946.

Adenauer cabinet and in 1963 his successor as chancellor. German integration into the developing western alliance as advanced by the conservative government of the new republic was much aided by the Marshall plan and the following “Wirtschaftswunder” (Economic miracle) strongly favoured the conservatives of CDU, CSU and FDP and won the voters quite effortlessly over the alternative concept of the SPD, aiming at non-alignment and prompt German reunification.

The rearmament of the Federal Republic from 1955 on remained, however, controversial. Around 1959, the SPD finally turned away from its Marxist roots with the new “Godesberger Program”, seeking out new voters as a moderate People's Party. The main foreign policy goal of the Adenauer government after the “Petersberg Agreement”⁹ was - in the early years of the Federal Republic - the restoration of its own state’s sovereignty over the victorious powers. German partial sovereignty over the Western powers was obtained in 1954 with the entry into force of the Paris Treaties, whose most important part - the German contract - ended the statute of occupation. In 1955 the Federal Republic joined NATO.

Adenauer always pursued the claim of the Federal Republic being the sole legal representative of all Germans¹⁰ and non-recognition of the GDR. The “Hallstein Doctrine” should prevent other nations from the diplomatic recognition of the GDR.¹¹ However, when dealing with the Soviet Union, Adenauer had to show

⁹ The Petersberg Agreement of November 22, 1949 between the Allied Control Powers and Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer laid the foundations for the future mutual relations and regulated e.g. the accession of the FRG to the Ruhr Statute (International Control of the Ruhr Area), the future inclusion of Germany in various international organizations, the application of the Marshall Plan, the gradual admission of consular foreign and economic contacts, a commitment to democratic values and an abandonment of totalitarianism and the formal rejection of a possible future rearmament. Quote:

"III. The Federal Government also declares its firm commitment to the demilitarization of Germany and with all means at its disposal the prevention of the reformation of any armed forces. For this purpose, the Federal Government will closely cooperate with the High Commission in the field of military security. "

BUNDESANZEIGER (Federal Law Reporter), 1st ed. No. 28 of 26 November 1949, p. 1., in <https://www.konrad-adenauer.de/dokumente/vertraege/1949-11-22-petersberger-abkommen>

¹⁰ His argument being that the government of the GDR was not freely elected ...

¹¹ The "Hallstein Doctrine" was formulated in December 1955, under the direction of Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer - named after, but not based on Walter Hallstein - State Secretary in the Foreign Office (AA). It held that the FRG was to break diplomatic contacts with every nation diplomatically recognizing the GDR as an autonomous country. An exception to this doctrine was only granted the Soviet Union, which established diplomatic relations with the GDR in September 1955. The basis of the "Hallstein Doctrine" was the claim of the FRG on its sole legal representation of the whole of Germany. The doctrine found its use exactly twice, relating

flexibility, not least in order to achieve the return of the remaining German prisoners of war at the Moscow negotiations in 1955.

From 1960 onwards, German domestic politics noticeably began to align the major political parties in programmatic and political reality, resulting in very similar programs which SPD and Union presented from 1961 on in their election campaigns. The "SPIEGEL Affair" of 1962¹² led to serious concerns in the FDP, whether Adenauer should be replaced - the liberals also saw their very existence threatened by plans of Union and SPD to introduce a majority voting law and thus eliminate them.

The CDU / CSU / FDP coalition in the Bundestag collapsed over the question of a general tax increase at the end of 1966. From 1 December 1966, Union and SPD formed a grand coalition, which reduced parliamentary opposition to the small FDP. Although the Grand Coalition was stable - due to its huge majority - and also performed a lot of legislative work – among it a complete overhaul of the financial system - it lasted only until 1969.

2.2 Cultural change and new values in Germany

Since the end of the 1950s, Germany had experienced a cultural and social change of values. The conservative Germany of Adenauer slowly began to change - essentially driven by the youth. The young generation took over the helm of development in literature, art, music and life planning - to name a few major influences would be: the "Beat Generation" of American writers who propagated alternative attitudes to life, the anti-baby pill, sex education and sex wave that followed, the success of the pop and rock music of the Beatles, Rolling Stones and many other artists, and films like "Easy Rider" plus their popularization of mind-expanding drugs. Common first among the young and among students, many citizens joined in the popular 60s opinion that

to relations with Yugoslavia in 1957 and Cuba in 1963.

¹² A critical article in SPIEGEL's issue 41/1962 of 10 October discussed the results of the recent NATO maneuver "Fallex 62" in the autumn of the same year. The article provided Defense Minister Franz Josef Strauss (CSU) the pretext to arrest journalists of the SPIEGEL - for alleged treason - and have the magazine's building searched. A subsequent legal review proved the innocence of the magazine and resulted in the resignation of both Strauss and two secretaries of state. The authority of Adenauer much suffered in the course of the affair, especially because of harsh criticism by his coalition partner, the FDP, which was close to Chief Editor Augstein and the SPIEGEL. Facsimile of the article that sparked the scandal::

<http://magazin.spiegel.de/EpubDelivery/spiegel/pdf/25673830>

something was rotten in the state of Denmark, that is, Germany.¹³

Dissatisfaction with the status quo, latent in some parts of the population and slowly growing in others, crystallized in the time of the Grand Coalition in the form of the APO – the “Außerparlamentarische Opposition” (extra-parliamentary opposition) – which was mainly a movement of students. From a purely political or parliamentary point of view, it was a reaction to the dominance - and arrogance – of the Grand Coalition and numerical inferiority of the 49 MPs of the FDP in the Bundestag.

From a cultural point of view, however, their roots lay in the change of values mentioned above - away from the authoritarian father-knows-best policy of the Union era. Its political reasoning was directed above all against the planned new emergency laws, and its demands were for more democratization and liberality - this cultural impetus, at first mainly borne by students, created a slowly growing expectation of political change in the German population.

4. New options in Eastern Politics

3.1. The Outbreak from Stagnation

Between the Potsdam Conference and the year 1969 few diplomatic developments happened worth mentioning. The main inhibitor of Eastern policy activities was the categorical refusal of the Allies on both sides - in the midst of the Cold War - to enter into any contractual ties that might prejudice the unresolved issues of the actual legal status of Germany or the now existing two German administrative areas, the question of the final Polish western border and the general diplomatic situation under international law. There existed, from the point of view of the FRG, a complete lack of official contact with Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe since 1949 - decisions were made in Washington, Paris and London, not in Bonn.

However, the normative force of the factual soon provided for movement. Some Interzone trade between East and West turned out to be unavoidable for simple practical considerations. Necessary transfers of goods and services between Allied occupation zones were relegated to the gray areas and blind

¹³ William Shakespeare, Hamlet, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark!" - Act 1, Scene 4 - by Marcellus to Horatio, Shakespeare - Complete Works, The Modern Library, New York, 2007, 1st Edition, p.1983

eyes of the law. Pursuant to international law, only the military governments of the occupied zones were allowed to trade with each other - directly or through appropriate local representatives. Everything else happened under the radar – sub rosa and top secret.

As it would be expected, a black market started in the food sector, widening quickly and was investigated or punished by military governments only pro forma. Triangular transactions with neutral third countries such as Austria, Switzerland, or Denmark were favoured, to circumvent uncomfortable questions of legality, especially when Western embargoes were involved, e.g. by inconvenient CoCom resolutions.¹⁴ However, the word "interzonal trade" itself remained taboo, until the economic necessities required the semi-official introduction of a bilateral trade framework, whose contractual basis was the Frankfurt Agreement of October 8, 1949.¹⁵ Although only of semi-official character, burgeoning contact and resulting trust created by this compact remained important as a platform for discussion.¹⁶

Construction of the Berlin Wall from 13 August 1961 on caused not only a temporary obstruction of the goods exchange, but ended for twenty-eight months all personal contacts between the eastern and western sectors of the city as well. This condition was temporarily remedied from 17.12.1963 on with the signing of a Passage Agreement between the Senate of Berlin (West) and the Government of the GDR.¹⁷

¹⁴ The Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls, CoCom, was the Allied authority to control the export of arms or dual-use goods until 1994.

¹⁵ The first agreement was the Frankfurt Agreement of October 8, 1949. It was extensive on both sides and detailed lists of goods set up by West and East German companies to be exchanged in the following calendar year. The downside of the process was that it had to be renegotiated every year. For practical reasons, both sides agreed in the revised Berlin Agreement of 20 September 1951 on a permanent contractual framework, which in the future made only the annual lists of goods the subject of negotiation. After further revision - from 16 August 1960 on - only the respective prices had to be negotiated. The Berlin Agreement remained in force until the end of the GDR in 1991.

¹⁶ "For about two decades, the only continuously open communication channel between Bonn and East Berlin were the routine discussions of intra-German trade. On this channel were - until 1969 - almost all of Germany's political issues at least brought up, which underlines its enormous importance. " FÄBLER, PETER E. : Inner German trade as a pioneer of détente policy, BPB Bundeszentrale for Political Education 2007, <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/30717/innerdeutscher-handel-als-wegbereiter-der-relaxation-policy? p = all> ", page 3.

¹⁷ The agreement allowed visits from West Berliners to the East (not the other way round!) About 700,000 citizens took the opportunity. A second license agreement of 24 September 1964 was valid from

The Hallstein doctrine remained the main diplomatic obstacle. In the heads of a few German Foreign policy thinkers, namely new Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder (CDU), there matured an idea of setting up German "trade missions" in the East with the aim of bypassing the doctrine. It was hoped that the opening of such missions would one day give birth to perennial relations – simply to make a start, while not entertaining or offering normal diplomatic relations, but to open up new opportunities for contacts.

The problem, however, remained, that the special relations of the other Eastern European countries to GDR and USSR in relation to the Hallstein doctrine were completely misunderstood - when Yugoslavia acknowledged the GDR in 1957, the FRG promptly closed its embassy in Belgrade, causing the death blow to the previously normal relations with the country – which was noted with disgust in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest and Bucharest. The idea of getting better contacts to the GDR in this way vanished in the sand.

The establishment of the grand coalition in Bonn on 1 December 1966 and the appointments of Willy Brandt to Foreign Minister and Herbert Wehner to Federal Minister for German Questions (both SPD) gave life to a certain new flexibility in German Ostpolitik. The grand coalition defined its goals in a government statement by the new chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger on 13. December 1966. Martin Winkels summarizes it in his dissertation "German and Eastern Policy of the First Grand Coalition in the Federal Republic of Germany (1966-1969) "as follows:

"In the foreign policy part of Kiesinger's government statement the striving for continuity with the previous governments was as recognizable as the new conception of foreign policy as considered by his Social-Democrat coalition partners. The basis was the eight-point Program of the SPD, which in November had served as the starting point for the negotiations of the grand coalition. The influence of Brandt and Wehner was especially noticeable in the

30th October to 12th November 1964, over Christmas/ New Year 1964/1965 as well as on Easter and Pentecost 1965 - a third agreement of 25 November 1965 for the period from 18 December 1965 to 2 January 1966 and a fourth agreement, dated 7 March 1966, for Easter and Pentecost 1966 (from April 20 and May 23 to June 5). After these, there were no further agreements until 1972.

government statement. On December 6, Brandt had sent the following proposals for the government statement to Kiesinger: Armaments reduction, a consistent peace policy, the renunciation of nuclear weapons, a commitment to the Atlantic Alliance and the clear statement that a mutual dependency between the division of Europe and the division of Germany existed." ¹⁸

Although Kiesinger's statements contained clear offers to rethink the current policy, and Gerhard Schröder had developed the so-called "Birth defect doctrine" ¹⁹ already in the middle of the 60s, the impetus to the actual changes in Eastern policy clearly came from the SPD.

Progress seemed to have been made at the beginning of 1967 when diplomatic relations between the FRG and Romania were instituted. This was, however, understood by the GDR as "Hannibal ante portas" ²⁰ and the State Council Chairman of the German Democratic Republic, Walter Ulbricht, developed in response his so-called Ulbricht doctrine, which should prevent a more active Ostpolitik of the FRG. ²¹ Recent developments in Germany as well as the economic interest of other Eastern Bloc countries in improved relations with West Germany, however, quickly reduced his doctrine to insignificance.

3.2. Conception of a new Ostpolitik

¹⁸ WINKELS, MARTIN: German and Eastern Policies of the First Grand Coalition in the Federal Republic Of Germany (1966-1969), Inaugural Dissertation on a Doctorate Degree in Philosophy at the faculty of the Rhenish Friedrich Wilhelm University in Bonn, published there in 2009, page 70.

¹⁹ Foreign Minister since 1961; the doctrine held that one might have peaceful diplomatic relations with those states of the Warsaw Pact which had to acknowledge the GDR solely under pressure from the USSR - a "birth defect" for which they could do nothing and hence could not be punished.

²⁰ After Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 - 43 BC), Roman statesman, in the "Philippine speeches" and "De finibus bonorum et malorum" - an expression of imminent danger.

²¹ "Ulbricht's doctrine describes a foreign policy attitude of the GDR from 1967, demanding that the Members of the Warsaw Pact were not to normalize their relations with Germany until the Federal Republic had established normal relations with the GDR. The doctrine was an answer to the efforts of the Federal Republic, despite maintaining its claim of sole representation, to institute a more active Ostpolitik, which manifested itself initially in the establishment of diplomatic relations with Romania in the beginning of 1967. " SCHÖLLGEN, GREGOR: The Foreign Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany: From the Beginning to the Present, Verlag C.H.Beck Munich, 3rd edition 2004, page 88, <http://www.lexexakt.de/index.php/glossar/ulbrichtdoktrin.php>.

These above-mentioned, rather tentative Eastern policy approaches of the Union were simply the price for the establishment of the Grand Coalition and remainder of the Union in power - it is often overlooked that after the Federal elections of 1965, a social-liberal coalition with 251 to 245 seats was already mathematically possible. The real shadow on the horizon, however, was the rise of the NPD, the National Party, which threatened to enter the Bundestag in 1969. The decisive impetus yet came clearly from the SPD, geographically speaking from Berlin, and personally and conceptually in the main by Egon Bahr and Willy Brandt (see relevant short biographies ²²).

The public birth of the new Ostpolitik can essentially be attributed to two lectures held by Egon Bahr and Willy Brandt at the Evangelical Academy Tutzing on Lake Starnberg on July 15, 1963, titled "Change through Convergence" (Bahr) and "When I think of Germany "(Brandt). ²³ Bahr described his fundamental considerations as follows:

1. A fundamental change in Ostpolitik, whose ultimate goal is the Reunification of Germany, is only possible with the USSR, not against her. Communist rule cannot be eliminated, but may be changed. ²⁴

²² **Egon Karl-Heinz Bahr**, SPD (born March 18, 1922 in Treffurt, Mühlhausen District, Saxony, † 19. August 2015, Berlin), from 1960 to 1966 director of the Berlin Press and Information Office and Speaker of the Governing Mayor Willy Brandt, from 1966 head of the Political Planning Staff in the Foreign Office and most important contributor to the new Foreign Minister Brandt. From 1969 State Secretary in the Federal Chancellery, from 1972 to 1974 Federal Minister for Special Tasks, afterwards from 1974 to 1976 Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation.

Willy Brandt, SPD (born December 18, 1913 in Lübeck as Herbert Ernst Karl Frahm, † October 8, 1992 in Unkel), as an avowed opponent of the Nazis from 1933 to 1945 in exile. From 1949 as a member of the Berlin SPD in the Bundestag. 1957-1966 Governing Mayor of Berlin, from 1966 to 1969 Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor in the Great Union of the SPD, CDU and CSU, 1969-1974 Federal Chancellor of an SPD / FDP Coalition, 1964-1987 Chairman of the SPD, 1976-1992 President of the Socialist International.

²³ Complete texts of both speeches: PALATINE, J.V. : Texts and documents on German history 1871, <https://jvpalatine.wixsite.com/deutsche-geschichte/ostpolitik>

²⁴ "The first implication of a change in the strategy of peace for Germany is that the policy of all or nothing is to be eliminated. Either free elections or none at all, either all-German freedom of choice or a harsh no, either elections as a first step or complete rejection, all this is not only hopelessly antiquated and unreal, but in a truly peaceful strategy also meaningless. Today, it is clear that reunification is not a one-off act through a historic decision on a historic day set in motion at a historic conference but a process with many steps and many stations. If it's right, what Kennedy said, that you must recognize and consider the other side's interests as well, it is certainly impossible for the Soviet Union, the give up the zone [the GDR] for the purpose of a reinforcement of the western potential. The zone must be transformed with the consent of the Soviets. If we could accomplish this, we would have done a big step towards reunification. ... If it is right, and I think it is right that the zone cannot be wrested from Soviet influence by force, then it is clear that any policy to fell the regime

2. Bilateral or trilateral talks (FRG, USSR and GDR) must by no means necessarily prejudice international law.²⁵ The Hallstein doctrine is too inflexible.

"I come to the conclusion that below legal recognition, underneath the confirmed legitimacy of this compulsory regime, so much has been naturalized between us that it must be possible to use these forms, if necessary, in a sense favourable to us. If Dr. Leopold²⁶ or another man would be made head of an authority dealing not only with the issues of inter-zone trade, but with all issues of practical interest between the two parts of Germany, then I would see not much of a substantial change compared to today's situation, since the trusteeship agency for the interzonal trade has already by now not exclusively discussed trade issues."²⁷

3. The example of the US (including its lending to Poland) shows clearly that increased trade relations and the resulting improved living conditions in the East have a relaxing effect. This has often been disparaged as a failed appeasement policy, but is the only viable way.²⁸

Trained foreign policy leader Willy Brandt opened his reflections with the almost unreal expectations of the NATO allies on the role of Germany: "The Federal Republic should be strong enough militarily to keep the Soviet Union in check, but no more dangerous than Luxembourg."²⁹

over there violently is hopeless." Bahr: Change through Convergence, p. 1-2.

²⁵ Bahr mentions the example of the years of talks between the US and China in Geneva and Warsaw, as well as the existing transit regulations and the reality of inter-zone trade. Please refer to Bahr: Change through Convergence, p. 2-3.

²⁶ Dr. Kurt Leopold, Head of the Trusteeship Office for Interzonal Trade.

²⁷ Bahr, Change through Convergence, p. 3

²⁸ "To accelerate the process of raising the standard of living, because it makes many things easier for the people, and strengthen ties through stronger economic relations, would be in our interest. You might be worried that the dissatisfaction of our compatriots might then diminish somewhat. But this is desirable, because it is another prerequisite for eliminating an element in the process of reunification that could lead to uncontrollable developments and therefore inevitable setbacks. You could say the regime is supported by it, but I have to admit that there is no practicable way to overthrow the regime. I only see the narrow way of relief for people in such homeopathic doses as do not pose the danger of a revolutionary development that would inevitably compel a Soviet intervention out of Soviet interest." Bahr: Change through Convergence, p. 4.

²⁹ Brandt: „When I think of Germany“, S.1., see PALATINE, J.V., 23 – 25

Due to the recent history of Germany, it is easy for the USSR to portray the FRG abroad as a quasi-successor to Hitler's Germany and to earn advantages with superficial anti-fascist policies. A certain mistrust of the ultimate goals of West Germany must be overcome - first and foremost by the West Germans themselves.³⁰

It was inevitable to understand "that one of the big tasks of the coming years will be to broaden and deepen the basis of the trust that Germany enjoys in her foreign politics." The first step of change would be self-criticism. The slogan of the Adenauer period - "No Experiments" - urgently needs to be reconsidered because the indisputable economic successes of West Germany have led to domestic complacency and considerable paralysis of her foreign policy. The politics of Adenauer have much reduced the internal political friend-foe relationship between the German parties: „... the necessary and useful commonality between the democratic parties was, for a long time, limited to some general anti-communism bereft of constructive features, and otherwise sacrificed to the domestic political scheme of simple pro and contra – for or against. The foreign policy reality of the Federal Republic has changed and is no longer fairly represented by such simple schemes.”^{31 32}

Ultimately, one day, one would have to face reality:

"At the same time, the change in foreign policy reality becomes visible faster than in domestic policy. For West German foreign policy after the war, the highest principle was the safekeeping of the remnants. This principle has been the dogma, although you cannot

³⁰ "There was no German self-purification [after the war], and there was no strength or will to confront the people with the past in all objective harshness and human openness. Not for us to cope with this past in the misleading sense of the word, but to make our people understand the story as a unity including its depths. As a unit that you cannot escape but have to bear. ... Our people have not yet succeeded to make peace with themselves. We have not filled in old trenches but went on cheerfully to dig new ones. ... Chancellor Adenauer has accomplished, through personal authority and reputation, to gain confidence in Germany worldwide. He has, however, barely understood to transfer this confidence to the German people." BRANDT: When I think of Germany, p. 2.

³¹ BRANDT: When I think of Germany, p. 8

³² The dichotomy between German Ostpolitik and the changes in global foreign policy after 1963 was well recognized, even by Schröder and Kiesinger. The Cuba crisis had led to a re-evaluation in both East and West.

read it in any government statement. Everything else became subordinate to it.

Securing the free remnants was necessary. I say that here as a sober declaration. Reconciliation with the former enemies in the West and involvement in the Western Community were the indispensable means of such politics. The Chancellor took the position that a few blemishes would not count much, that German advances would in the end constitute German advantages and that the German unity with a certain consistency would inevitably follow. But without a doubt, the struggle for self-determination for the entire nation would be subordinated to the safety of the free part of it. ...

In reality, it's about the simple realization, that there is no other prospect of the peaceful reunification of our people than the unceasing attempt to break the solidification of the fronts between East and West. Precisely because the problem of Germany is so much embedded in the relations between East and West, there is no hope for us if there is no change. "BRANDT: When I think of Germany, p. 9.

In summary, Brandt quoted from his lecture in October 1962 at Harvard University:

"We have to find the forms that overlay the blocks of today and penetrate them. We need to develop as many real points of contact and as much meaningful communication as possible. We do not need to fear the exchange of scientists and students, of information, ideas and achievements. Decisive for us should be that they are reasonable projects in responsible form. In that sense, I support as many connections to the communist East as can be established in each case. Such a conception can contribute to a transformation of the other side as well. This is what I understand as an active, peaceful and democratic policy of coexistence.

We should focus on a development which promises us more than mere self-assertion, which may contribute to a peaceful and dynamic transformation. ...

This is about a policy of transformation. The existing political and ideological walls must be cleared away gradually, without conflict. It is about politics of peaceful change of the conflict, a policy of slow penetration, a policy of peaceful risk; of risk, in a sense, because in the desire to transform the conflict, we ourselves are also open for the influence of the other side and need to be. "BRANDT: When I think of Germany, p. 11.

As might be expected, the advances of Bahr and Brandt were reviled as treason by the officiating government of Union and FDP; as foolishness, which would not only not promote German reunification but in fact would hinder it.

Yet first breaks in this rejection front of the Union manifested themselves after the replacement of the Federal Chancellor Adenauer by Ludwig Erhard, who was not a foreign politician by trade.

The eventual openings of trade missions in the Eastern Bloc promoted by the new Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder (CDU) and the resumption of diplomatic relations with Romania on 31 January 1967 - approved by the Grand Coalition - were expressions of a softening of the Union, which in fact led so far that - reluctantly admitted and often publicly suppressed - the CDU from mid-1969 already had swung in principle upon the line of the SPD.³³

3.3. After the 1969 election

In the federal election of September 28, 1969, the SPD won 224 seats, the CDU 193, the CSU 49 and the FDP 30.³⁴

A new government was formed by SPD and FDP who were supported by 254 MPs, compared to 242 of the opposition (CDU and CSU). Foreign policy was led by Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt and assisted by new Foreign Minister Walter Scheel (FDP) and Egon Franke as new Federal Minister for Internal German Relations.³⁵ In the preparations on future foreign policy rounds - with significant participation of Scheel (FDP) - the following five approaches to a revised Eastern policy were laid out:

³³ "That Federal Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger and his party respectively faction, the CDU / CSU, were also ready - at the end of negotiations over a renunciation of violence with Moscow - to conclude a contract with the GDR as well, and the fact that they declared so in public, later became commonly suppressed [in the official party history], but is easily verified, e.g. in the government statement of April 25, 1969; in a speech by Baron Olaf von Wrangel (CDU / CSU) in the Bundestag on the same day; and in the report of Federal Chancellor Kiesinger on the state of the nation of 17 June 1969. In this report Federal Chancellor Kiesinger affirmed the official statement of his government, 'that the conclusion of a contract to the regulation of intra-German relations for a transitional period is also not excluded.'"

LINK, WERNER: The Origin of the Moscow Treaty in the Light of New Records (Quarterly Journal for Contemporary History, Issue 2, Volume 49, 2001, p. 298) Institute for Contemporary History, Munich, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2001, https://www.ifz-muenchen.de/heftarchiv/2001_2_4_link.pdf

³⁴ Not counting MPs from Berlin who had only limited voting rights

³⁵ There was a change of name, until 1969 it was called „Federal Ministry for all-German questions (BMG)", under predecessor Herbert Wehner.

1. The Hallstein doctrine, that is, the claim of sole representative of all Germans by the FRG, no longer corresponds to international reality and must be abandoned.
2. Although the FRG could not be recognize the GDR under international law,³⁶ as a matter of state law, however, the GDR could be recognized as one of "two states in Germany" ["Not foreign to each other"] in the meaning of a common nation.³⁷
3. Therefore, the GDR must actively be approached in a new spirit of détente.
4. As an advance, the FRG will immediately (i.e.1969) join the Atomic Non-Proliferation Treaty.
5. The idea of the "Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe "(CSCE)", already proposed several times by the Warsaw Pact countries, will be supported by the FRG and the body should be constituted as soon as possible.

3.4. From theory to practice

In a first approximation, the interests of political relations between states manifest themselves in relations of geography and economics.³⁸ Egon Bahr was well aware of the junction between Germany's eastern policy development opportunities and the global political trend towards more détente under the impression of the Cuba crisis.³⁹ One first needed to sound out Moscow and if possible come to an understanding; only then could one proceed to a bilateral, German-German phase of negotiations - so much had already been obvious to the Grand Coalition before 1969.⁴⁰

³⁶ Every regulation under international law would contravene Allied control rights.

³⁷ FEDERAL CHANCELLOR WILLY BRANDT FOUNDATION: Declaration of the Federal Government of October 28, 1969, https://www.willybrandt.de/fileadmin/brandt/Downloads/Regierungserklaerung_Willy_Brandt_1969.pdf

³⁸ "International politics is not and never about democracy or human rights, it's about the interests of states. Remember this, no matter what you're told in history lessons." Egon Bahr
RIEMER, SEBASTIAN (RHEIN NECKAR ZEITUNG): Egon Bahr shocks students: "There may be war", Egon Bahr on 3 December 2013, in front of pupils at the Ebert Memorial in Heidelberg, 4.12.2013.
(https://www.rnz.de/nachrichten/heidelberg_artikel,-Heidelberg-Egon-Bahr-schockt-die-Schueler-Es-kann-Krieg-geben-_arid,18921.html)

³⁹ "In a basic memorandum of September 18, 1969 (which became, in abbreviated form, and dated October 1, a part of the subsequent coalition agreement between SPD and FDP) Egon Bahr argued that the Federal Republic of Germany is `more than other states sensitive to tendencies in world politics; she needs to carefully monitor the political landscape in which her foreign policy may have room to move in order to realize its own goals; she must try to operate, if possible, not against, but with the political wind.'"In the subchapter on German and Eastern European policy, he said literally: 'The necessity to adapt to this situation grows - without giving up the goal of reunification.'" LINK, supra, page 297, also see³⁴

⁴⁰ "The Grand Coalition was already in the process of very confidential talks with the Soviet government about the exchange of mutual declarations of renunciation of violence, whereby in regards to the critical question of the GDR a good deal of progress had been made. The interlocutors were the Germans State Secretaries

In this context, there is little room for details of the negotiations Bahr entered into - the respective volume of the Federal Archives (inner-German policy only) lists 1114 pages for the period from October 21, 1969 to December 31, 1970⁴¹ and Karl Seidel, Central Committee member of the GDR, remembered 75 long rounds of negotiations between 1971 and 1972 alone.⁴²

One document, however, casts a spotlight on the processes - both the obvious as well as the clandestine ones - one that became less pivotal to the diplomacy itself, from whose shadow it emerged, but through the leverage that was triggered by its publication.

As with all diplomatic conferences, the stakeout of the claims, the definition of the fundamentals takes place before the actual horse trading begins. So it was in Moscow. In his government statement of October 28, 1969, Brandt had explicitly mentioned „two German states“, and on November 28 of the same year had signed the contract on the Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons – which means that he, respectively West Germany, had provided advances. Egon Bahr had identified the demand of the Eastern bloc to create the abovementioned CSCE (then called ESC - "European Security Conference") as a "lever" for the FRG – but that alone was hardly enough. Unbound to written instructions of Brandt or Scheel, Bahr foresaw that only a comprehensive concept created by the FRG (i.e. himself), i.e. the offer of a thorough solution might trigger a rethinking of their own position in the USSR. In his first talks to Gromyko, he tested the waters.⁴³

Carstens, Klaus Schütz and later Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz and Soviet Ambassador Semyon Konstantinovich Zarapkin. Bahr was able in 1972 to inform the SPD parliamentary group that 'talks about the renunciation of force have already been going on for two years', before he was to continue them in Moscow. " LINK, supra., page 300, see also³⁴ and⁴⁰

⁴¹ BDI (Hrsg.): Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik, https://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Content/Downloads/Aus-unserer-Arbeit/dokumente-zur-deutschlandpolitik-vi1.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

⁴² MDR: "... im Grunde waren es natürlich Botschaften" Interview des MDR, 12.11.2009, <https://www.mdr.de/damals/archiv/artikel91544.html>

⁴³ "Bahr went to Moscow to reach a comprehensive policy statement in a ,keynote discussion with the leading power: a treaty with the Soviet Union and agreement on the basic outlines of subsequent treaties with the other Eastern and Central European states, in particular with the GDR; memoranda of understanding on contentious issues (including a Berlin settlement) – and all this as unified whole'. Thus Bahr paid respect to the self-image and the intentions of the Soviet hegemony. In the draft of the negotiating directive for the commission negotiating with the Soviets of 3 December 1969 he wrote, inter alia: 'The negotiations are to be lead in a way that ,within the Brandt government the impression should arise, that without agreement with the USSR, they has no basis for agreements [...] with other socialist countries.' On the other hand, and this was Bahr's calculation, a satisfactory Moscow treaty would further Soviet goodwill in influencing Poland and

After some back and forth - as Werner Link describes on pages 304-05 - all sorts of agreements were reached and "Principles for a Treaty between the FRG and the USSR" – the so-called "Bahr paper", ⁴⁴ were agreed on and initialed. The main point of the document was paragraph 3 – wherein the genie jumped out of the bottle:

"3) The FRG and the USSR agree in the realization that peace in Europe can only be secured if no one violates the current borders. They undertake to protect the territorial integrity of all states in Europe and fully respect their current boundaries. They declare that they have no territorial claims against anyone and no such claims will be raised in the future. They consider the borders of all states in Europe as invulnerable, as they exist on this day of the signature of this agreement, including the Oder-Neiße Line that forms the western border of the People's Republic of Poland, and the border between the FRG and the GDR." ⁴⁵

This was everything the Union was unwilling to concede. The secret paper was published barely three weeks later by the conservative BILD newspaper and illustrated magazine QUICK. Prominent critics of the new Ostpolitik from the Union, e.g. the deputies Freiherr zu Guttenberg and Werner Marx, presented similar versions of the paper, but these publications were considered by many as barely disguised attempts at torpedoing the negotiations and brought the Union few sympathies. ⁴⁶

The Union criticized that these indiscretions might be used by the USSR as a

especially the GDR; to ward them off maximum demands in subsequent negotiations with Bonn (in the case of the GDR, i.e. the question of its recognition by international law). "LINK, WERNER, supra, p. 304, see also ³⁴, ⁴⁰, ⁴¹ and ⁴⁴

⁴⁴ There are some discrepancies in the sources: The BUNDESZENTRALE FÜR POLITISCHE BILDUNG (Federal Centre for Political Education) names Bahr and Gromyko as partners, the date as May 22, 1970 and Moscow as the place, see: „<http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/zeitgeschichte/deutschland-chronik/131824/22-mai-1970>“ - the UNIVERSITY OF LUXEMBOURG, CVCE, Institute for European Studies, presents a PDF file with the source: SCHWARZ, HANS-PETER (ed.): Foreign Policy Acts of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1970. Volume II: May 1 to August 31, Munich, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001. ISBN 3-486-56498-6. "Principles for a Treaty with the USSR", p. 822-824 – and names Egon Bahr and Valentin Falin, department head in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as participants, the date as May 20, 1970, but no place. See ⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Also see ⁴⁶: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2003/4/24/95b7a60e-2786-47c7-9c20-f7c831a3b97e/publishable_de.pdf

⁴⁶ HOERES, PETER: Informationslecks im Kalten Krieg, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 19.12.2010, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/geisteswissenschaften/politik-und-geheimnisverrat-informationslecks-im-kalten-krieg-11083219.html>

pretext to interpret the Bahr paper - for their own benefit - as "unalterable" - the question is whether this was not Egon Bahr's – the old fox - exact intention. To begin with, Paragraph 3 was indeed the condition sine qua non (no treaty without it), secondly, the Russians had already renounced violence, in their approval of paragraph 2 of Article 2 of the UN Charter (Nonviolence), and Berlin tacitly excluded - what more could have been achieved?

The *Fait Accompli* is the standard tactic of diplomacy - and a *Fait Accompli* was created by the Bahr paper. There was no way back and nobody could think of anything better - not even the toughest critics.

4. End Game

The details of the subsequent contracts of Moscow (12.8.1970) and Warsaw (7.12.1970), the Four Power Agreement on Berlin (3.9.1971), the following treaties with the GDR (Transit Agreement of 17.12.1971 and Basic Treaty of 21.12.1972), as well as the final contract of Prague with Czechoslovakia (11.12.1973) are publicly available.

The constituent session of the KSZE (Konferenz für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa – Conference for European Security and Cooperation) - demanded by the Warsaw Pact members since the 1960s - took place on 3 July 1973 in Helsinki - two years later the conference was rebranded and extended as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The Final Act of the CSCE was signed on 1 August 1975. Ironically – in retrospect - remains the fact that the Eastern bloc failed to have some interpretations of Chapter VII of the Final Act - "Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief" - on their radar at all. This failure soon formed the starting point for the foundation of "Helsinki" groups in the USSR (including Moscow, the Ukraine, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) as well as for the civil rights movement in the GDR, the Organization Charta 77 in the CSSR and the free trade union Solidarność in Poland – the eastern governments' own signatures in Helsinki made it more and more difficult for them to suppress dissent as easily as it used to be. The consequences played out from 1989 on.

On November 9, 1989, at 11:30 pm, lieutenant colonel Harald Jäger of the MfS (Stasi), deputy head of the passport control unit of the GDR border crossing

point Bornholmer Straße in East Berlin, opened the barrier to the public - the wall had fallen.

On September 12, 1990, all powers involved signed in Moscow the "Final Settlement Agreement with respect to Germany", also called the two-plus-four contract, which restored full sovereignty to the new reunited state of Germany. On March 15, 1991, the contract took effect. Egon Bahr had won.

John Vincent Palatine © 2019