The Quest for a United Germany

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

The Quest for a United Germany.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/68482

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=2412494
CHAPTER III

WEST GERMANS AND THE REUNIFICATION QUESTION

The techniques and objectives of the Federal Republic’s Deutschlandpolitik (the policy for German unity) were formulated by the fathers of the Basic Law and by the Federal government with the support of the coalition parties. They have received popular approval in a number of federal elections. With the adherence of the principal opposition party, the SPD, to government reunification policy, an even more integrated national consensus appeared to have emerged. But this apparent consensus is misleading: paradoxically, this official harmonizing of aims and means to achieve German unity coincided with the realization by some members of the elite that Adenauer’s line had failed, that it was hopeless to wait for an “automatic” solution of the German problem. Even the bipartisanship of government and opposition failed to silence these dissident and critical voices which demanded mobility, flexibility, and, generally, a new strategy in West Germany’s Ostpolitik. Nor did the pragmatism and elasticity of the Grand Coalition fully satisfy all the critics of the official policy.

1 A symposium with contributions by thirty-six German publicists and scholars on present-day West Germany, including much criticism of Adenauer’s foreign policy, was published under the title of Hans Werner Richter, Bestandsaufnahme [stock-taking] (Munich, 1962).
Popular participation in the conduct of foreign policy is, even in traditional democracies, exceptional and reserved for events and decisions of outstanding significance. For the German public it was a new experience; earlier, except perhaps during the years of the Weimar Republic (1919–33), the voters were not asked to express opinions on foreign policy. Moreover, it may be correct to state that German proclivity for paternalistic government inhibited average Prussians—and later citizens of the Reich—from holding views beyond their average competence. There was, however, a “foreign policy elite” whose views carried weight in matters of foreign policy.

The relationship between internal and external politics took on a value in Prussia and Germany different from other countries. Because of Prussia’s and Prussia-Germany’s geographically exposed location, their bellicose history, and the expansionist ambitions of their leaders, the usual primacy of foreign policy over domestic was well recognized. This was just another reason to reserve foreign policy deliberation and decision-making to the rulers and specially qualified elites.²

However, the problem of German unity was a question of a very special nature: in the eyes of the average German it was essentially an internal German question, although, as was realized, it depended on foreign policy, especially regarding the Soviet Union. Unlike their direct participation in the Saar plebiscite, the West German voters were able to express opinions on German unification only in the most general terms: they expressed preferences for Adenauer’s policy line (the opponents of the Chancellor derided it as “no foreign policy”) which promised, first of all, security by integration into the Western system of alliances and a desire to abstain from “experiments,” even for the sake of achieving German unity.

The influence of members of the elite groups on foreign policy has always been and remains of considerable importance in Germany. In the Federal Republic, elite influence on the reunification question is even more significant, partly because of the present free democratic structure of government and partly because of the vital national importance of the issue. Of course, as long as the reunification problem does not reach the stage of concrete decision, opinions of the members of the elite are bound to remain academic and without practical consequence. But if, in the future, any opportunity

for meaningful decision should arise, the views represented by members of the cultural elites would become significant rallying centers.

Whatever the role of foreign powers in the achievement of German unity may be, this question is not and will not become "foreign" to German elites or people. It is, rather, a matter of personal experience or tragedy and almost always of personal interest. The apathy which a visitor to West Germany is likely to find when trying to elicit individual views on the reunification question is often the result of frustration ("nothing can be done, anyhow") or escapism from that deplorable subject ("I cannot help it, so I had better not think of it"). Naturally, there is also some genuine indifference. Others, again, indulge in empty verbosity on the subject without the will to act. Many Germans have reversed Gambetta’s dictum on Alsace-Lorraine ("toujours y penser, jamais y parler") by speaking constantly of reunification without giving much thought to the problem. However, it cannot be denied that Germany’s partition is a matter of personal drama for millions. Because of the division inflicted on families and friends, especially since the erection of the Berlin Wall, it is destined to remain a cause of personal unhappiness and irritation.

The divided state of Germany, despite seeming apathy, affects many leading West Germans. It produces strange psychological impacts on individuals—like the sudden visit of the Federal Minister of Finance, Fritz Schäffer, to East Berlin where he had a conversation with the East German Minister of Defense, Vinzenz Müller, or the even more conspicuous cases of Otto John and Viktor Agartz. The nightmare of the past, conscious and subliminal remorse for atrocities of the Nazi era, and memories of the apocalyptic destruction and upheaval of the postwar period are com-

---

8 Prittie, *Germany Divided*, p. 246.

4 Dr. Otto John participated in the anti-Hitler plot of July 20, 1944, but managed to escape to England. Upon his return to West Germany, he became head of the West German security services. On July 24, 1954, John escaped or was kidnapped and taken to East Germany; in 1955 he returned to West Germany and was sentenced to four years imprisonment for treason. He may have acted under a misconceived sense of duty to promote reunification. See Horne, *Return to Power*, pp. 360–70; Prittie, *Germany Divided*, pp. 223–47; Grosser, *Die Bonner Demokratie*, pp. 338–39.

Dr. Viktor Agartz, a leading trade-unionist and head of an economic research bureau, was accused of having betrayed secrets to the East German regime. In 1957 he was acquitted. He pleaded that he maintained contacts with the East for the purpose of promoting the cause of reunification. Prittie, *Germany Divided*, p. 246; Grosser, *Die Bonner Demokratie*, pp. 235–36, 339.
bining with partition to affect the minds of the German elite and of the people at large. These reactions are not irrelevant to West Germany’s present and future feelings about reunification.

*The West German Elite and Reunification*

In every nation, in addition to the official, an unofficial elite is likely to influence foreign policy; its members will vary from country to country. With regard to reunification it must also be said that, because of its vital importance, the groups exerting pressure on government policy are necessarily larger than those who attempt to affect more distant questions of national interest.

Policies are constantly influenced by individual refugees who occupy key positions in government or public life. In the Federal Republic it has been calculated that 26 per cent of its population in 1954 was born in East Germany, in the Eastern Territories, or in countries of East-Central Europe from which Germans were expelled after World War II. Statistics also prove that 23 per cent of the West German elite who, officially or unofficially, are in a position to influence foreign policy were born in these areas. The percentage figure for diplomats in active service in 1954 was higher than this average, 36 per cent; that of SPD deputies was even higher, 41 per cent; whereas that of CDU/CSU deputies was only 4 per cent. Among journalists it was 33 per cent; among educators, 24 per cent. It is only human that persons of East German origin would tend to be more interested in the question of reunification and to attribute greater importance to it than natives of other parts of Germany.

---


7 The term “elite” is to include (1) political and governmental leaders (party leaders, top officials, and higher bureaucracy), and (2) “opinion leaders,” who are “more important than others in the transmission of influence.” See Elihu Katz’s article in J. David Singer (ed.), *Human Behavior and International Politics* (Chicago, Ill., 1965), p. 295.

8 Two important publications deal with the questions of foreign policy decision-making in the Federal Republic of Germany using various techniques of public-opinion testing. Hans Speier and W. Phillips Davison, *West German Leadership and Foreign Policy* (Evanston, Ill., 1957); Deutsch and Edinger, *Germany Rejoins the Powers*.

9 At the end of 1965 the number of refugees and expellees born in East Germany, the Eastern Territories, or other parts of East-Central Europe shrank by natural mortality to 17.9 per cent (10.6 million), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 17, 1966.

106

---

WEST GERMANS AND REUNIFICATION

Opinions of members of West German elites may thus be summarized: 10

1) Among those who in general approved governmental policy on reunification (or the Deutschlandpolitik and Ostpolitik in a wider sense), we found many who represented the “patient” type. They refused to let their judgment or opinion be influenced by day-to-day events. They firmly and tenaciously clung to the thesis that in the long run reunification was inevitable. It was no longer upheld that it will come “automatically” or that West Germany as a “magnet” would attract East Germany. It was, however, maintained that opportunities were bound to arise making it possible “to have a serious talk” with the Soviet Union. They admitted that there was at present no quid pro quo to be offered to the Soviet Union against the abandonment of its East German “mortgage.” But the fact alone that the “two Germanys” concept was unrealistic because of the political failure of the German Democratic Republic would sooner or later force the Russians to seek a solution which would both save face and give them needed security against a reunited Germany.

Among the developments which could make a favorable solution of the German problem attractive or imperative for the Russians, these factors were frequently referred to:

a) German unity remains a four-power responsibility; no permanent and fruitful East-West agreement can be reached without the solution of the German problem, that is, without the unity of Germany. Because the Soviet Union, for a great variety of reasons, will be compelled to seek a permanent settlement of the Cold War, the German question someday will have to be given a satisfactory answer.

b) The global balance of power will, in the future even more significantly than at present, shift in favor of the United States and against the Soviet Union. The Sino-Soviet conflict is adduced as the chief reason for the growing imbalance in disfavor of the Soviet Union. On the whole, the West German foreign-policy elite is

10 It is realized that the summary presentation provided in the text does not amount to a detailed public-opinion analysis. Such an analysis would have required full statements on the character of the sample and, for such purpose, the writing of another book. The evaluation is based on personal impressions gained by this writer from interviews conducted in 1963 and 1965 with members of the official and unofficial elite in the Federal Republic, including West Berlin. It is believed that, despite its inevitable shortcomings, this presentation will be a necessary and useful contribution to this chapter.
strongly inclined to attribute outstanding importance to the “Chi­
inese puzzle” for the furtherance of German reunification.\(^{11}\)

c) A considerable number of interviewees believed that the solu­
tion to the German problem will coincide with the settlement of
the East-Central European “satellite” problem. They consciously or
unconsciously seemed to paraphrase Raymond Aron in saying that
“Germany will be re-united when Europe is united,” meaning that
the Soviet-dominated countries are, at present, unnaturally separated
from the rest of Europe where they belong, culturally and politi­
cally.\(^{12}\) The same applies to East Germany, which is now con­
trolled by the “non-European” Soviet Union. Holders of this view
are mainly adherents of the European integration concept; they
think that an integrated Europe must encompass East Germany to­
gether with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and pos­
sibly also Rumania and Bulgaria. Advocates of the European
federation movement who, simultaneously, are also supporters of
German unity, stated that “the Common Market is, for Germany,
no substitute for reunification.” Some of the European federalists
are, however, more absorbed in ideas of European integration than
in the integration of the two Germanys.

A still smaller but growing number of interviewees appeared to
be skeptical of a “wait and see” attitude. Often inspired by the
precedent of the Berlin Wall, they emphasized that a more flexible
and direct approach toward East Germany should be undertaken
because the fate of the Germans beyond the Iron Curtain would
not permit any procrastination. They reproached the government
for lacking initiative. It is characteristic that even the patient ones
welcomed the “policy of movement” though they failed to believe
in it.

Both the patient and the impatient expressed periodic anxiety lest
the United States should enter into some deal with the Soviet Union
that would harm Germany. One or two of these interviewees, sus­
picious of United States motives, seemed to draw consolation from
a belief that Ulbricht, similarly, might be anxious about a deal be­
tween the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic. Therefore, they
advocated direct contacts with Moscow, favored the invitation of
Khrushchev to Bonn and the loosening of the Hallstein Doctrine
(without, however, abandoning it) by establishing direct links

\(^{11}\) About the impact of the Sino-Soviet conflict on both elite and popular
thinking in West Germany, see pp. 136-38 below.

\(^{12}\) These ideas are developed in Raymond Aron, *Paix et Guerre entre les
with Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other European Communist governments.

Almost all the members of the West German foreign-policy elite who were questioned reflected, in various degrees, a guilt complex toward Poland. Many of them emphasized that they wished to distinguish strictly between "the Soviet Zone of Occupation" and the territories beyond the Oder-Neisse Line. Although many showed reluctance to commit themselves to relinquishment of these territories in exchange for reunification, others suggested renunciation of claims to these areas as a price to be paid for reunification. But all of the respondents expressed readiness to compensate Poland for her suffering during the war and for the sake of making Polish-German friendship a working reality.

Most of the respondents, particularly the impatient ones, placed liberalization of the conditions in the German Democratic Republic and the elimination of the Berlin Wall among the most urgent aims of the government, but very few were ready to associate themselves with the ideas submitted by Professor Jaspers\textsuperscript{13} of trading freedom in East Germany against consent to permanent severance of that territory.

While few respondents expressed themselves in the strict terms of the prevailing state doctrines or used legal arguments to support their views on reunification, their tendency did not suggest that these concepts should be abandoned or modified. A few remarked that these doctrines were difficult to understand or esoteric, but no active hostility against them was displayed.

A rather exiguous undercurrent of opinion, though refusing criticism of the government, admitted having no hope that German unity could be achieved. One or two of these respondents suggested that abundant lip-service to unification does not prove that it is being seriously considered.

The prevailing opinion, however, maintained that there was less talk on reunification than lucubration. "We do not speak of it as long as nothing practical can be done about it. But when the time comes, you will see: blood is not water."

2) A smaller group of the foreign-policy elite stated their disagreement with governmental policies on reunification. These respondents, with more or less emphasis, castigated Adenauer's "neglectful" attitude toward German unity or accused him plainly of not having wanted reunification at all.

\textsuperscript{13} See pp. 113–18 below.
A considerable number of government opponents insisted that “facts and fictions” must be separated and “rigid, stupid principles” abandoned if the Federal Republic was to come to grips with the problem. However, on the assessment of the past and on what is to be done now there were widely divergent views:

a) Most of those who criticized Adenauer’s Ostpolitik thought, nevertheless, that his Western policy was correct. They agreed with the basic concept that Germany’s place is with the West; many even thought it had been good policy to secure West Germany’s independence and strength by entering the Western alliance. But they still held that Germany’s alliance with the West and her re-armament had either been “premature” or carried out in disregard for the Deutschlandpolitik.

Questioned as to whether they would have preferred reunification for the price of Germany’s neutralization or the Federal Republic’s adherence to the West without the Soviet zone, the majority of respondents answered that these alternatives never really presented themselves. In their opinion Adenauer’s error consisted in the failure to explore certain possibilities which “might have” led to reunification with or without neutralization of Germany. As one interviewee said, “Adenauer has no alibi; he might have been right but he cannot prove it. And now it is too late.”

The majority of Adenauer’s critics agreed that, should the alternative of reunification or Western integration have presented itself, “some form of non-alignment” would have been preferable to the present division.

b) A small minority of the interviewees condemned Adenauer’s foreign policy in all its aspects as disastrous to German unity. They suggested that Germany’s rearmament and Western alignment should have been negotiated against reunification; as a result of such negotiations (which most likely would have been successful), united Germany should have become a neutralized or nonaligned power, even a “third force” between East and West. According to these views, Germany’s 1952 conventional rearmament within the Western alliance constituted a serious threat; its abandonment in return for a unified Germany would have been a worthwhile bargain for the Soviets. After the Soviet Union achieved nuclear capability, Germany’s conventional strength was no longer a matter of interest to the Soviet Union, and even a neutralized Germany could not be negotiated. The threat of West Germany’s nuclear armament is mostly considered out of the question: “Nobody wants it, not
even the Federal Government; in any case, it is too dangerous.” But sharing in nuclear decision-making is generally thought of as “desirable.”

According to some more negative and extremist views (which seem to ignore the part of the above argument which refers to the relative depreciation of conventional weapons), it has become evident that the “Cold War cannot be won” and, therefore, nothing remains to be done but to return to the 1952 status quo, the disengagement from all alliances and a new start “in the right direction.” Holders of such radical (and generally anti-American) views went so far as to deny the sovereign statehood of the Federal Republic and to suggest that there was no longer a “German nation” because there was no German nation-state and because the former national capital, Berlin, had become a center of international competition and intrigue.

These opinions of the members of the elite interviewed may be typical of the various attitudes; they cannot, however, be taken as a quantitative guide. Their relative weight and importance depend on the momentary influence which given respondents can bring to bear on foreign policy. In their case *vota non numerantur sed ponderantur*.

*Advocates of a Recognition of the Territorial Status Quo*

Some dissident opinions of a few scholars will be registered here. Their opposition to the generally accepted postulate of Germany’s unification has attracted much interest, though few converts, and has provoked violent criticism. These views of persons of highest renown in their fields of scholarship, motivated by theoretical rather than practical considerations, cannot be disregarded in the shaping of West German public opinion.

Ludwig Dehio, a patriarch of German historians, in an article published in 1953,\(^1\) set forth historical-philosophical arguments against the need for or even the expediency of a restoration of German unity. The author thought that the traditional European balance of power was outdated and had been replaced by an integrated Western alliance. A demand (“more explosive than anything else”) which West Germany could pose as a price for her

\(^1\) The article was first published in the June, 1953, issue of the periodical *Aussenpolitik*; it was included in the volume *Deutschland und die Weltpolitik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1955). An English translation of the book was published, Ludwig Dehio, *Germany and World Politics in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1960).
participation in the Western alliance (the article was written in 1953) was the demand for reunification. But such a demand, if endorsed by other Western powers, would “weaken rather than strengthen the unity of the West” and would in any case be considered as stemming from “egocentric nationalism.” In the eyes of Dehio, “liberty of the individual, not of the state” must now be the most precious aim. He continued:

A hundred years ago the most pressing goal was national unity; for the preservation of freedom offered no problem in the sense in which it does today, whereas unity was the natural demand within that system of nation states which is lying in ruins today. Now, however, after the Third Reich has abused and thrown away our unity by denying freedom, unity must be subordinated to the superior and wider aim of freedom, for today a demand for unity surely has an anachronistic flavor about it. No political watchword can be transplanted into a new situation without carrying with it traces of the soil in which it grew previously.15

Dehio appears to consider that the freedom of Western Europe, including that of the Federal Republic of Germany, would be endangered if Germany, supported by the Western powers, should eventually achieve unification. It is not easy to follow an argument which predicates that a united Germany must become disloyal to her association with the West. The priority accorded to the principle of freedom, as against that of unity, does not secure freedom for the inhabitants of East Germany, and it appears that this lack of freedom is likely to create the demand for unification. Whether a desire for national unity—especially for the purpose of securing freedom for one’s co-nationals—is, under present conditions, anachronistic is a philosophical view contradicted by historical facts. Dehio’s opinion was not generally shared by German historians, but his thinking preceded similar ideas launched in the early sixties.

The well-known existentialist philosopher, Karl Jaspers, had earlier discussed the moral and philosophical-theological questions of Germany’s guilt and the guilt of others for the tragedy of World War II. He had come to distinguish between criminal, political, moral, and metaphysical guilt, the last being the responsibility of persons and peoples for crimes committed in their presence or with their knowledge but without their complicity or consent.16

15 Dehio, Germany and World Politics, pp. 136–38. Italics have been added.
16 See Karl Jaspers, The Question of German Guilt (New York, 1947), passim.
WEST GERMANS AND REUNIFICATION

In March, 1960, Karl Jaspers was interviewed on the German re-unification question and the interview was broadcast on August 10, 1960, on radio and television. He also wrote several articles in Die Zeit on the same subject. Both articles and the interview were subsequently published in book form. He summarized his view in the following manner:

I have been convinced for several years that the claim to re-unification is unrealistic . . . it is unrealistic both politically and philosophically. . . . The concept of reunification considers the Bismarckian state as its model. The Bismarckian state is to be restored. But this state had irrecoverably—due to events—become past history . . . Re-unification means the non-recognition of something that had happened . . . a legal claim based on a situation which had disappeared because of the guilt of Germany herself. . . .

In Jaspers' view Germany had forfeited her right to national unity because of Hitler. What she retained was a right to freedom only, as well as the right of demanding freedom for the population of East Germany. He recognized that the German people of the East must be freed "from slavery" but expressed doubt that the demand for reunification would not render liberation more difficult. His answer was that the price to be paid for this freedom should be the abandonment of the claim to reunification. The abandonment should not be "absolute" but should be made conditional to the grant of political freedom to East Germany.

Jaspers denied the continuity of the German state and its right of self-determination (which must be dependent on the decision and consent of other powers); he also denied the factual independence of both the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic. He held the view that "facts cannot be changed by legal arguments." He predicted the "end of the German national state but not that of the Germans" because "the unity of the West presupposes a renunciation of the sovereignty of nation-states." He stated:

17 Jaspers, Freiheit und Wiedervereinigung. In 1966, Jaspers published another book in which he essentially reiterated his thesis. He added, however, the proviso that the DDR should not be recognized by West Germany as long as the Berlin Wall exists; Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik? (Munich, 1966), pp. 232-56.
18 Jaspers, Freiheit und Wiedervereinigung, p. 110.
19 Ibid., p. 111.
20 Ibid., pp. 17-21.
21 Ibid., pp. 25-28.
"The task is not a return from nation-state to cosmopolitanism but the realization of freedom in the all-out life of confederate states."^{22}

Jaspers refused to admit that the Federal Republic was only a *provisorium* (temporary arrangement); in his view "it is a new state." The founders of the Federal Republic did not see clearly, he explained, when they drafted the Basic Law. At this point he concluded: "The state becomes firmly established and does not remain temporary. To insist on the political concept of Germany which belongs to the past and is today an illusion appears to me, because of the political falsehood of such a thesis, a great tragedy for Germany herself and for the West."^{23}

Jaspers seems to believe that an open renunciation of the demand for reunification would persuade the Russians to allow East Germany a status somewhat similar to that of Austria, provided that all claims for a union with West Germany were abandoned. After the creation of a free East Germany, Berlin should, according to Jaspers, be given the right to choose between becoming a small independent state, the capital of the East German state, or an exterior enclave of the Federal Republic of Germany. He also suggests that the name of the Federal Republic (which, in his view, implicitly raises a claim to East Germany) be changed to "German Federal Republic" or simply "West Germany."^{24}

Jaspers' ideas were followed by a similar thesis of Alexander Rüstow, a sociologist and political scientist. Probably under the impact of the Jaspersian interviews, Rüstow developed his ideas in an address given to young officers of the German Air Force in the Evangelical Academy of Tutzing. Quotations of his speech were published in *Die Welt*, followed by articles in the same paper written by Professor Rüstow himself.^{25} The key idea of Rüstow's concept was thus formulated: "The primary requirement is not Germany's re-unification but the liberation of the population of the Soviet Zone from totalitarian Bolshevik dictatorship. If we were asked to renounce re-unification we should agree. Austria received her freedom while she gave up re-unification with Germany. The Austrians hardly suffer now under the prohibition of re-unification. Freedom is more important to them."

In his articles Professor Rüstow also stressed the theoretical and practical necessity of giving priority to the demand for freedom

over that for reunification. In his original Tutzing address, Rüdstow described the claim for reunification as “typically German”; this expression gave rise to misunderstandings and exposed the speaker to attacks. He later qualified his remarks by explaining that, while the demand for freedom for East Germany corresponds with the universal idea of freedom in the West, the demand for reunification is only a “special and specific German affair.”

The Jaspers and Rüdstow theses have been strongly assailed by politicians and academicians in Germany, especially by the publicist, Paul Sethe, by CDU Deputy Johann-Baptist Gradl, by FDP Party Chairman Erich Mende, and by the SPD Senator of Berlin, Adolf Arndt. Others, among them the historian, Golo Mann, paid tribute to Jaspers’ courage in having said what hardly anybody dared to say; they, nevertheless, refused to share all his views. Golo Mann wrote in 1962:

It is Jaspers who has the courage to say aloud what many of his fellow-citizens nowadays think but do not wish to say: that the German demand for reunification as a sacred right is based on an illusion; that it is based on the mistaken assumption that the national state founded by Bismarck, crippled through the First World War and then wantonly risked again and destroyed, nevertheless still exists. It exists no more, Jaspers holds, and the Federal Republic is something new and therefore definite, not the mere *locumtenens* of a theoretically existing “Reich.”

Personally, I am not quite as certain about this as Jaspers is. The victorious Allies themselves, in 1945, were operating with the idea of a continuing German unity and identity, first from Berlin, and then, when it did not work there, from Frankfurt, for the three Western Zones . . . they thought . . . that what had been achieved in the nineteenth century should not be entirely undone. . . . The drive toward unity is older than Bismarck, it began as early as the 1830’s with the *Zollverein*. . . .

Jaspers’ abandonment thesis is a consequence of his theological-moralistic conception of German guilt, liability, and responsibility. The “metaphysical” guilt of all Germans as well as their liability, which Jaspers differentiates from individual guilt (he does not recognize collective guilt, only collective liability—a very subtle distinction), have, according to this view, led the Germans to forfeit their unity. Whether such an abstract philosophical-moralistic principle has validity in the process of international politics is highly questionable. Defeated nations have been compelled to pay a price for their defeat whether they were guilty of aggression or not.

---

Whether Nazi Germany's aggression and unquestionable misdeeds, rightly condemned from the moral and legal points of view, could permanently justify partition is no longer a question of morality or right but of political facts of life. Though national policy-makers should be guided by considerations of justice and morality in their decisions, they will, obviously, where the fate of a collective entity, state, or nation is involved, be inclined to base their policy on expediency rather than abstract justice of morality. Besides, such principles are vague and open to divergent interpretations. And, as history demonstrates, many states and their leaders are ready to ignore obvious principles of morality and justice and base their policies on the Machiavellian policy of sacro egoismo.

Jaspers' thesis had earlier been suggested, but in a language devoid of philosophical-moralistic phraseology, by no less a person than Khrushchev when confronted by the arguments of Carlo Schmid and Fritz Erler at their meeting in Moscow. The Soviet leader told the Germans that they had to accept partition as an inevitable consequence of a lost war.27

Jaspers' historical argument concerning the discontinuance of the Bismarckian German state because of Germany's collapse and prostration at the end of World War II is far from conclusive. There are many historic precedents which demonstrate that defeated, subdued, or divided nations strove successfully to re-establish their former territorial identities. Poland did so after more than 120 years of suppression. It is true that Bismarckian Germany had only existed for 75 years; but it was the smaller Reich in contrast to a former larger Reich which had existed through 900 years.

It is certainly correct to say that territorial claims based exclusively on history may be considered unjustified. This may apply to German claims to the Eastern Territories although here the Poles, apparently with success, made use of claims dating back six or seven hundred years. But it should be remembered that the demand for reunification is not only and not primarily territorial; it is also a demand for a union with German co-nationals and, simultaneously, for their liberation from a foreign-dominated regime, as is clearly recognized by Jaspers himself. Jaspers' refusal to admit the existence of the social force of national sentiment and the innate urge of members of the same nation to live within one political organization appears to ignore historical and political experiences.

Lastly, Jaspers' (and Rüstow's) Austrian analogy appears, as in-

27 See pp. 72–73 above.
voked, to be highly unrealistic. Austria was never part of Bismarckian Germany and her will to be an independent state is nowadays hardly questionable. Austria has not lost her “freedom” in the sense that East Germany has; the Russian-controlled zone was only a fraction of Austria, and it was not the Soviet Union, by withdrawing its forces, that allowed Austria to live in freedom. The plan suggested by Jaspers and Rüstow (freedom for East Germany against prohibition of union with West Germany) would, no doubt, be acceptable to many Germans and probably to the Federal government. But it is unlikely that it would be acceptable to the Soviet Union. To abandon the claim to political reunification when there is, at present, no chance for persuading the Soviets to agree to any such transaction, could hardly be considered a realistic diplomatic move. It would mean giving away “something” for “nothing.”

The Jaspersian thesis of placing emphasis on the libertarian and humanitarian aspects of reunification as opposed to political unification has certainly influenced West German statesmen and even the public during the past few years. Even Adenauer expressed readiness to defer political reunification if it would insure greater liberties and an improvement in living conditions for the people of East Germany. On this point, West German practical politics and Jaspers’ point of view meet. The rest of Jaspers’ thesis could, however, be considered impractical, even utopian.

The atonement approach has inspired other intellectuals besides Jaspers and Rüstow; but they have reached differing conclusions. Theological and pacifist ideas have stimulated, in particular, Protestant theologians, such as Gustav Heinemann. But while they advocated the withdrawal of Germany from active international politics into a self-imposed neutralism, they were unwilling to abandon political reunification.

The opposition of freedom against the demand for reunification has led different people to diametrically opposed conclusions. For some, security within an integrated Western alliance system was to precede even the demand for German unity; but Jaspers and Rüstow used another set of priorities when they placed freedom for East Germany above political unification of Germany as a whole.

Others, while not suggesting the outright renunciation of political unity for Germany, consider unification impossible as long as Germany’s guilt has not been atoned. Atonement requires time and patience. Such a view has been expressed by Eduard Heimann, an

---

28 See p. 28 above.
THE QUEST FOR A UNITED GERMANY
economist and sociologist. In his opinion, only "reconciliation can bring about re-unification." And as he sees it, this is not a matter for diplomacy or politics but a "matter of the heart." He refers to the Franco-German reconciliation as a model of how reconciliation in the East might be implemented. It seems, in Heimann's case, that the ideological and power conflicts which separate the Communist camp from the West are insufficiently appreciated.

Some years before the "opening up" of the East, the establishment of West German trade missions, later diplomatic missions, in some East European capitals began, or plans for an exchange of speakers between East and West Germany materialized, a number of publicists and political journalists — many of them writing for the periodical Die Zeit — suggested direct contacts with East Germany, including those with the government of the D.D.R. They revealed daring pragmatism, and irreverence toward established principles. West Germany's relationship to the D.D.R. should not be viewed legalistically but politically; legal rights were of no concern when interests were at stake. Recognition of the East German regimes should not be regarded as a moral issue but as one of expediency. Support for the material and spiritual well-being of East Germans should have priority over all other considerations. Writers and other intellectuals — some of them sympathizing with leftist political movements — who had no reverence for accepted dogmas of Germany's status were scathingly denounced as the "heimatlose Linke" (the unpatriotic left).

Not only academic scholars, writers, and journalists have undertaken to point out new ways of solving the question of German unity. Diplomats also, either unofficially, like Pfleiderer, or acting personally with the advantage of their official position, have endeavored to forward reunification. From this point of view, the story of Ambassador Kroll is of significant interest.

Ambassador Kroll's Individual Initiative

At the time when intensive talks between Washington and Moscow on Berlin were being conducted early in 1962, newspapers reported that Hans Kroll, the West German Ambassador in Moscow, was having conversations with Soviet officials, including

30 See Peter Bender, Offensive Entspannung (Cologne, 1964), pp. 163–64.
31 For a good survey, see Melvin Croan, "The German Problem Once Again," Survey, April, 1965, pp. 171–76.
Khrushchev, on a settlement of the East-West German conflict. The exact theme of these conversations was never revealed, but it seems certain that Ambassador Kroll had acted without instructions from Bonn.32

Ever since Adenauer's near-fiasco in Moscow in 1955, the aged Chancellor had been reluctant to enter into direct negotiations with the Kremlin on the sensitive German problem. He either considered such conversations useless or did not wish to face Soviet pressure without the direct support of the United States. He preferred, in any case, to leave any such negotiations to the Western powers and to stay in the background while advising them. It is improbable that Adenauer wished to neglect the reunification issue, for he was not indifferent to the return of the Saar. After 1956 when, almost against his will, the question of the Saar was solved in favor of Germany, he may have developed a preference for relying on the "inevitable evolution" instead of talks with the Soviet Union.

With regard to the Saar, it should be remembered that the Chancellor had, in 1954, consented that the Saar area be given a "European status." With great difficulties and against the votes of the Free Democrats, the Paris Agreement on the Saar was ratified by the Bundestag. When it came to the referendum to have the agreement approved by the population of the Saar, the Chancellor strongly recommended its adoption. The refusal of the majority of the Saar voters to accept European status was a windfall; it came against the intent and expressed will of Adenauer and made the return of that territory possible.

Perhaps the Chancellor was thereafter hoping, though less realistically, for a windfall in the East. But luck in the West did not mean that such a trouvaille would be forthcoming from the East as well.

Adenauer may also have felt reluctant to undertake direct or confidential talks with the Soviet Union because of the suspicion that would have been aroused in Western capitals. Were not the Chancellor and many German leaders anxious lest Washington and Moscow come to an understanding on the issue of Berlin without the approval of Bonn? Secret German-Soviet negotiations had been particularly in disrepute since the time of Rapallo and especially since the confidential contacts leading to the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939.

For all these reasons the German Foreign Office intervened.

Ambassador Kroll was not only instructed to discontinue his conversations but was ordered to return to Bonn for consultations. Evidently these consultations did not satisfy Adenauer and his advisers, and Kroll's attitude gave them no other choice than to recall the Ambassador from Moscow.\textsuperscript{33}

After his retirement from active service, Ambassador Kroll gave several interviews to radio and press. He was regarded as an advocate of flexibility who wished to improve relations with the Soviets so as to take one step on the tortuous road to reunification. What Kroll had in mind was a four-point plan which he had suggested to Khrushchev and which, he claimed, was submitted with the knowledge of the Federal Republic's Western Allies.\textsuperscript{34} These four points, aimed at reaching a “small solution” to the German question, included: (1) an assurance for Berlin against Communist attack; (2) humanization of the conditions in East Germany; (3) a “piercing through” if not an elimination of the Berlin Wall; and (4) the recognition, on principle, of a right to self-determination and reunification for East Germany.

What the reader of this interview with Hans Kroll is missing is the price which would have had to be paid for this “small solution” to the German question. Kroll is strangely silent on this aspect of his talks which, he said, were having some prospects of success. In his report he also stated that Khrushchev thought of reunification as the possible result of a long drawn-out historic process after the “two German states” had achieved a \textit{rapprochement} and a “reciprocal assimilation of their conditions.” Kroll does not say it, but the reader may guess what kind of assimilation might have been in the Soviet leader's mind when he made this suggestion. Kroll's diplomatic sortie was just that sort of “gamble” which the Chancellor—and with him the majority of the West German population—was reluctant to take.

The Kroll incident is another example of how the deadlock on reunification affects some in responsible positions. However, impatience hardly pays, especially in relations with the Soviet leaders who, partly by their national temperament, partly conditioned by the long-term objectives of the “inevitable” Communist victory,

\textsuperscript{33} For the narrative and analysis of the Kroll affair, see Studnitz, \textit{Bismarck in Bonn}, pp. 152–53, 172–78.
\textsuperscript{34} See the interview “Gespräch mit den Kreml, aber kein neues Rapallo” (Talk with the Kreml but no new Rapallo), \textit{Rheinischer Merkur}, July 5, 1963; on July 25, 1963, Ambassador Kroll gave a talk on the West German radio which mostly reiterated the arguments presented in the press interview.
are steeped in perseverance and tenacity. It is likely that Khrushchev was just setting a trap by being excessively accommodating to Kroll. It is also interesting to note that, according to the former ambassador’s statement, his conversations with Khrushchev, Mikoyan, and Kosygin during the New Year’s Eve celebrations in the Kremlin initiated the Soviet memorandum of February 17, 1961, which was considered in Bonn a clumsy instrument of intimidation. Evidently, co-ordination between the policies of the German Foreign Office and its ambassador in Moscow must have been out of gear; but, on the other hand, Moscow’s understanding of the reception of its propaganda in Bonn was not distinguished.

Impatience, caused by the sense of frustration, might induce persons of high rank to express ideas for ending the deadlock almost “at any price.” Thus, Rainer Barzel’s sudden “personal suggestions,” made in Washington on June 17, 1966, at a meeting commemorating the Berlin uprising of 1953, may psychologically be explained by the urge to do or say something “new” rather than by his wish to raise his political stature or to compete with the SPD or FDP in their advances toward the East German political circles. His proposals, quickly disowned by Bonn, offered that, in return for reunification, the Soviet Union should be allowed to maintain troops on the soil of reunified Germany; the Communist party should have the right to function freely; and the economic arrangements imposed on East Germany should be continued with added financial benefits for Moscow. The impulsive Vice-Chairman of the CDU/CSU had to be warned from the American side that the Federal Republic should not too precipitously rush into bilateral negotiations; otherwise the price for reunification would be too high, and future bargaining positions of the West could be weakened—without producing reunification.

The Churches and Reunification

The catastrophic collapse and partition of Germany have thoroughly changed the numerical proportion and the territorial distribution of the members of her two dominant churches, the Lutheran-Evangelical Protestant and the Roman Catholic, in East and West Germany. The religious split of the Germans in the sixteenth century proved to be one of the important factors of

---

35 For the text, see George D. Embree (ed.), The Soviet Union and the German Question, pp. 290–96; Siegler, Von der Gipfelkonferenz bis zur Berlinsperre, pp. 37–41.

36 See the reports in New York Times, June 16, 17, and 18, 1966.
German particularism. Bismarckian Germany still smarted under religious strife; Protestant Prussia contained a strong Catholic minority, especially in Westphalia and in the Rhineland; and some of the predominantly Catholic states of South Germany held large Protestant minorities. In Weimar Germany the ratio of Protestants to Catholics was 60 per cent to 39 per cent.

In the Federal Republic the proportion between Protestants and Catholics significantly shifted in favor of the latter: according to the 1961 census, 50.2 per cent of the population is Protestant and 45.5 per cent, Roman Catholic. In the German Democratic Republic (including East Berlin) there is an estimated 80 per cent Protestant population and 10 per cent Catholic.

Within the Federal Republic the internal distribution of the two denominations also changed: among the 9.3 million expellees from the Eastern Territories, the Sudetenland, and other East-Central European countries, 4.9 million (53 per cent) were Protestants and 4.2 million (45.2 per cent), Catholics; among the 3.14 million refugees from the Soviet zone until 1958, 1.3 million were Protestants and a half million were Catholics. The settlement of Protestants in heretofore homogeneous Catholic areas and vice versa often changed considerably the religious character of certain regions.\(^37\)

The simple fact that 43 per cent of all German Protestants live in the German Democratic Republic alone explains the greater stake which Protestants have in reunification.\(^38\) Furthermore, the unity of the German Protestant Church, which was re-established after World War II, has seriously been threatened by Germany’s division and is likely to be entirely lost as a result of the deepening partition.

It has been asserted that the Catholic Church of West Germany shows little concern with reunification lest the present balance of denominations be upset in favor of the Protestants. No doubt, the demand for German unity is being given lesser emphasis by Catholics than by Protestants—a circumstance explained by the


smaller number of German Catholics behind the Iron Curtain and by the weaker ties which Catholics in West Germany maintain with the co-religionists in the East.

There is, however, no reason to believe that Catholics or the Catholic Church in West Germany do not strive for the unification of their country. Except perhaps for an insignificant number of old-fashioned Bavarian priests steeped in anti-Prussian particularism, the desire for reunification of the West German Catholic clergy cannot be doubted.\textsuperscript{39} Observers, however, are inclined to compare Catholic enthusiasm for European integration, especially among the six powers of the Common Market (all of which, except the Netherlands, which is half Catholic, are predominantly Catholic countries) with the greater reserve shown toward reunification.\textsuperscript{40} It should not be forgotten, however, that geographical distribution strengthens Catholic sympathy for collaboration with Germany’s Western neighbors while Protestant concern is also explained by relative proximity to the borders of East Germany. In great majority the Catholics of the Federal Republic live in the western, southwestern, and southern parts of the country (in the Länge of North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, and Bavaria; Baden-Württemberg is about evenly divided between Protestants and Catholics); that is, it is generally more removed from the Iron Curtain than the predominantly Protestant states, such as Schleswig-Holstein, Lower-Saxony, Hamburg, and Hesse. West Berlin’s population is also overwhelmingly Protestant (80 per cent); Catholics there represent only 13 per cent of the population.\textsuperscript{41}

It is not without interest to compare the geographical origin and religious membership of CDU/CSU and SPD leaders with their respective emphasis on the question of reunification. In 1956 (when the SPD opposed governmental Deutschlandpolitik) 41 per cent of SPD leaders came from the Soviet zone or East German Territories, as opposed to 4 per cent of CDU/CSU leaders. At the same time, 74 per cent of CDU/CSU leaders were Catholics and only 26 per cent, Protestants, whereas thirty-three out of one hundred SPD leaders professed to be Protestants and none, Cath-

\textsuperscript{39} Speier and Davidson, \textit{West German Leadership}, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{40} Deutsch and Edinger, \textit{Germany Rejoins the Powers}, pp. 106-7, 156-57; Grosser, \textit{Die Bonner Demokratie}, pp. 248-49.

\textsuperscript{41} A good appraisal is to be found in Lowenthal, “The Germans Feel Like Germans Again,” p. 42.

123
THE QUEST FOR A UNITED GERMANY

olic. These factors may partly explain the parallel preoccupation of Protestants and Social Democrats with the cause of reunification without, however, suggesting any co-operation between them.

After the Nazi collapse in 1945, the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Germany undertook to establish a central organization to replace the German Evangelical Church created under Hitler. The "Evangelical Church in Germany" (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland) was set up in 1945 and strengthened in 1948. This organization included all the Lutheran and Reformed churches of Germany, in both western and eastern parts of the country. In its Council and Synod the individual churches were represented according to the numerical strength of their members. Church rallies with mass participation were held for some years, alternately in West and East Germany. Thus, for a number of years the Evangelical Church was the most important instrument of German unity. It is understandable that the bishops and other Protestant leaders were particularly anxious not to cause any severance of their ties in the divided parts of Germany and to preserve, at all cost, the precious unity of their church.

But under the pressures brought by the East German Communist regime, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the central organization of the Evangelical Church. The question of West Germany's rearmament, which already divided Protestant theologians in the Federal Republic, was exploited by stooges of the Pankow government, such as the CDU of the Soviet zone, to disrupt meetings of their church. The church rally planned in West Germany in 1957 could not be held because the East German government set unacceptable conditions for allowing residents of East Germany to attend. The attendance of Synod and Council meetings became, as the years advanced, more and more difficult; West German representatives were often refused admission into the East, and bishops and other delegates did not receive their exit permits from the German Democratic government. The manifest aim of the East German regime was to create a separate Protestant church within the area under its control and to sever all ties between the Protestants of East and West Germany. As under Hitler, the members of the church were faced with the dilemma of how far

Deutsch and Edinger, Germany Rejoins the Powers, pp. 134–35.

Grosser, Die Bonner Demokratie, pp. 250–54; Zehn Jahre Bundesrepublik Deutschland, pp. 664–65.

to obey the authorities, when to question the legitimacy of those authorities, and when to obey God alone.\textsuperscript{45}

The pressures on the East German Evangelical churches increased when, in March, 1957, the Chairman of the Evangelical Church Council, Otto Dibelius, Bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg (whose diocese extended to both West and East Berlin) agreed to the Chaplaincy Agreement with the Federal government providing field chaplains for the Bundeswehr. He and his collaborators were, thereafter, styled NATO-bishops in East Germany, and Dibelius himself was refused entry into his East Berlin and East German parishes.\textsuperscript{46}

Henceforth, the government of the German Democratic Republic announced its intention to discuss and handle state-church relations with the bishops of individual Land churches rather than with the representatives of the Evangelical Church of Germany or its chief organ, the Church Council. Dibelius, who had courageously fought nazism, now found himself opposed to the totalitarian regime of East Germany; he considered Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans 13, the theological source of Luther's thesis of obedience toward the "governing authorities," no longer applicable to the atheist East German state. In this stand he was supported by the influential Bishop of Hanover, Hanns Lilje.\textsuperscript{47}

The reactions of East German Protestant church leaders differed greatly; some of them, like the ultraconservative Bishop of Thuringia, Moritz Mitzenheim, undertook to co-operate fully with the government of the Democratic Republic in strict obedience to Luther's thesis and were encouraged by the supporting letters of the famous Protestant theologian, Karl Barth of Basel. Others, however, under the leadership of Günter Jacob, the Episcopal Administrator of East Berlin, who considered himself operating in a "besieged city," accepted the "Ten Articles on the Freedom and Duty of the Church"; these articles acknowledged obedience toward the Obrigkeit (lay authority), but refused the absolute demands made on human personality by Communist ideology. In case of conflicts between governmental and divine demands, the faithful "must obey God rather than men."

After the erection of the Berlin Wall, movements of all Protestant

\textsuperscript{45} Die Welt, April 14, 1964.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., pp. 283–88; Die Zeit, July 26, 1963.
ecclesiastical personnel were barred; Präses Kurt Scharf, the deputy of Dibelius in East Berlin, was also refused re-entry into the D.D.R. After August 13, 1961, no more joint meetings could be held between representatives of the all-German Evangelical Church, not even in Berlin. All personal contacts except by letter became impossible. The Protestant Church of Germany, a most important link between Germans on both sides of the demarcation line, has thus been severed. For a while it appeared as though Pankow's policy was aimed at setting up a "National Church" in East Germany.\textsuperscript{48}

The eighty-six-year-old Dibelius resigned early in 1966. The West and East German members of the Synod, convened separately in East and West Berlin and elected Kurt Scharf Bishop of Berlin and Brandenburg in defiance of the government of the D.D.R., thus refusing to accept the split of their church and of the diocese of Berlin-Brandenburg. The two sessions of the Synod exchanged greetings across the Wall, emphasizing the unity of the church.\textsuperscript{49}

The East German regime tried in vain to obtain separate recognition for the Protestant Church in East Germany at the meetings of the World Council of Churches. On the other hand, the D.D.R. government refused permission to the World Lutheran League to hold its international congress in 1969 in Weimar (East Germany). Otherwise, it appears that all leaders of the German Evangelical Church, except perhaps Bishop Mitzenheim, are determined to preserve their unity.\textsuperscript{50}

In October, 1965, the Council of the German Evangelical Church issued a memorandum asking for a reappraisal of German policy toward Poland. The memorandum asserted that the enforced mass deportation of Germans living in the Eastern Territories was not in accordance with international law, but acknowledged that "a complete reconstruction of the former situation" would not conform to justice and that the German people should respect the right of Poles to live in the area which they needed for their development and economy.\textsuperscript{51} West German expellee organizations im-

\textsuperscript{48} Süddeutsche Zeitung, February 16, 1966.
The post-World War II political developments caused important changes in the administration of the Catholic Church in Germany behind the Iron Curtain. In the territories east of the Oder-Neisse Line, the former Roman Catholic German bishops were replaced by members of the Polish clergy though no final reorganization was undertaken by the Vatican. Small parts of the Archdiocese of Wrocław (Breslau) are now within the territory of the German Democratic Republic, while the diocese of Berlin has lost some of its area in Pomerania.

The demarcation line between the Soviet zone and West Germany also separated Catholic ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Because the direct administration of these separated parts of East Germany became more and more difficult (after 1958 no West German bishop or archbishop was allowed to enter East Germany), they were placed under the administration of resident episcopal commissioners or vicars-general. The Bishop of Meissen and the Bishop of Berlin are the two diocesan bishops in the eastern part of Germany; there are episcopal and archiepiscopal commissariats in Magdeburg (belonging to the archdiocese of Paderborn in West Germany), in Schwerin (belonging to the diocese of Osnabrück), in Meiningen (belonging to the diocese of Würzburg), and an episcopal vicariate-general in Erfurt (belonging to the diocese of Fulda). Since August 13, 1961, the bishops and administrators of East German ecclesiastical jurisdictions have not been allowed to participate in the German Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference held in Fulda, West Germany. Thus, the ties of the Catholic Church in East and West have also been severed.

Special difficulties have arisen in Berlin: the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Berlin extends over Greater Berlin and parts of the German Democratic Republic. After 1958 he was no longer allowed to enter his diocese outside Berlin (though he was still able to enter East Berlin). After August 13, 1961, he was prevented from

---

52 The German Tribune, October 30, 1965.
53 The former German bishoprics (and one archbishopric) are administered by apostolic administrators (consecrated bishops) who are considered by Poland as diocesan bishops. See M. Dziewanowski, “Communist Poland and the Catholic Church,” Problems of Communism, September–October, 1954.
54 This area is administered by the archiepiscopal office in Görlitz, headed by a vicar-capitular.
going to East Berlin, too. When Cardinal Döpfner was appointed Archbishop of Munich-Freising, his successor, Bishop Alfred Bengsch, took residence in East Berlin (whence he can proceed to parts of his diocese in the Democratic Republic) and is allowed to leave occasionally for West Berlin, where he is permanently represented by Vicar-General Walter Adolph.\textsuperscript{55}

For the rulers of East Germany, Catholicism presents a lesser problem than Protestantism, not only because of the smaller number of Catholics but also because organizational and personal ties of Protestant leaders in both parts of Germany are closer. While East German Protestants look ardently over the demarcation line to their brethren in West Germany and thus strengthen the idea of unity, the leaders of the Catholic Church in the German Democratic Republic, as elsewhere, wish to maintain their contacts with Rome. For the East German regime, contacts with the Vatican are considered less dangerous and important than those which remind their people of German national unity.

\textit{Mass Opinion and Reunification}

Expression of popular will generally influence foreign policy decisions only in an indirect manner. The electorate decides only when there is a clear positive or negative position to take. Usually, however, the process of foreign policy, depending on a great many things lying outside the power and competence of the national society and government, is too involved to admit "yes" or "no" responses in elections and referendums. Timing is the essence of the diplomatic process, and it can be directed only in a very general manner by the popular will.

The question of reunification has never been directly put before the electorate. This was, rightly, taken for granted; just as the questions of public education and the public use of the German language are not election issues, reunification was a value which every reasonable person was assumed to accept. The issues which in the past years have come up in connection with reunification were: whether the adherence to the alliances of the West and rearmanent were or were not conducive to reunification; whether the security, freedom, and welfare of West Germany would eventually promote German unity; and which question was to be given over-all priority. When the majority of the voters at several Federal

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Die katholische Kirche in Berlin und Mitteldeutschland} (Berlin, 1962), pp. 5-10.
elections pronounced themselves in favor of security, freedom, and welfare for West Germany—either in the belief of promoting thereby reunification or in the belief that reunification was, at the time of voting, unrealizable—one could not conclude that “the Germans do not want re-unification.” The gratuitousness of this conclusion is evident since no unqualified answer could be made to this question. What a German could say was that he wanted re-unification at a certain price, at a certain risk, and in a certain manner, or that he did not want it under the same conditions. It is doubtful that he would want it at any price.

The importance of timely response had clearly been shown in the Saar referendum: the Saarlanders had also proved that, when national integration was really at stake, the electorate would respond in a different manner than in elections on marginal changes.

At the height of Franco-German tension over the Saar question before the November 30, 1952, elections, the CDU, the SPD, and the FDP enjoined the Saarlanders to vote blank or refrain from voting in protest. The response was meager, indicating indifference.

On October 23, 1955, the population of the Saar was called upon to approve by referendum the statue providing for a “European status” for the Saar which would have barred it indefinitely from uniting with Germany. Adenauer, personally, and his government, bound by the Paris Treaty of October 23, 1954, felt strongly obliged to recommend an affirmative vote. But, unexpectedly, the people of the Saar, by 67.2 per cent of the votes, refused to endorse European status and clearly expressed their will to rejoin Germany.

Once again, as in 1935, the national issue was at stake, and the

---


57 In 1935 the population of the Saar, in an internationally supervised referendum, voted overwhelmingly for re-unification with the then-Nazi Germany, although the majority of the voters consisted of Catholics and Social Democrats for whom Nazism must have been detestable. But they voted on a “national” issue and had no opportunity to choose a “certain type” of Germany. They simply chose: Germany, instead of France or a continued international status.


majority of the Saarlanders voted according to their deepest conviction when it appeared indispensable to do so.

Some ideas about West German sentiment on reunification may be gained by studying the results of public opinion polls. The analyst must, however, admit two reservations with regard to these polls taken at various times and under various circumstances. The replies are naturally conditioned by the formulation of the questions, and they may not reflect so much what the respondent believes as what he wants the poll-taker to think he believes. Thirdly, the impact of popular opinion on foreign policy is bound to be limited and exceptional—a fact which further reduces the weight of popular opinion polls on these issues.

On the question, “What would most please you in politics?” asked in a public opinion poll of 1965, 66 per cent (in 1962 only 64 per cent) of the replies indicated “reunification of Germany.” Questioned on the prospects of reunification, in October, 1961, only 2 per cent of the respondents thought that it could be achieved within twelve months, and 46 per cent believed that reunification could be realized only within “a few years.” No prospect for it was seen by 45 per cent, and 7 per cent remained undecided. In March, 1964, 69 per cent of those questioned believed that “reunification will become possible,” and only 16 per cent thought it no longer possible; 16 per cent were undecided.

In July, 1962, 61 per cent of the respondents expressed the opinion that the division of Germany was “unbearable” (in September, 1956, only 52 per cent). The increase must have been related to the effect of the Berlin Wall. In July, 1963, the figure decreased to 53 per cent, and 32 per cent now thought that it would be possible to adjust to Germany’s partition. In August, 1963, 48 per cent answered that they would never renounce German unity, 18 per cent expressed readiness to do so, and 34 per cent were undecided.

Among the various age groups the higher ones generally showed a greater proportion of affirmative views.

---

60 See Erich Peter Neumann, “Wiedervereinigung in der öffentlichen Meinung,” Die Politische Meinung, January, 1964, p. 22. These public opinion polls were taken by the Allensbacher Institut für Demoskopie. The 1964 and 1965 results, if available, were received directly from the Institute. See also Frederick H. Hartmann, Germany Between East and West: The Reunification Problem (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965), pp. 8–11.


63 Ibid., p. 25.
WEST GERMANS AND REUNIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Unbearable (%)</th>
<th>Possible to Adjust (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-29</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and above</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Party affiliations hardly affected replies, as shown by the following polls:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Unbearable (%)</th>
<th>Possible to Adjust (%)</th>
<th>Undecided (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDU/CSU</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDP</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The public opinion institute asked its respondents whether they would be willing to pay part of their income (on progressive scale ranging from DM 12.50 to 425 yearly) as a price for reunification for a period of ten or three years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ten Years (%)</th>
<th>Three Years (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the Plan</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against the Plan</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “priority” or “urgency” aspect of reunification as compared with other national goals was also a topic of public opinion polling. Thus, in January, 1950, only 1 per cent of the respondents considered reunification “the most urgent task facing the Federal Government.” But this figure has since risen constantly, and it reached 27 per cent in January, 1957.

In January, 1963, when asked, “What would you consider the generally most important question for the people in West Germany?” 30 per cent mentioned the question of reunification as most important. The maintenance and improvement of the economic situation was second-best with 21 per cent; the preservation of peace, third with 15 per cent; the Berlin question, fourth with 12 per cent; and European integration, fifth with nearly 12 per cent. Responses to the same question have fluctuated as follows during the past fourteen years:

---

64 Ibid., p. 29.
65 Deutsch and Edinger, *Germany Rejoins the Powers*, p. 178; this poll was taken by the Emnid Institute.
THE QUEST FOR A UNITED GERMANY

Year | Reunification (%) | Economy (%) | Peace (%) |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
1951 (October) | 18 | 45 | 20 |
1952 (July) | 23 | 33 | 24 |
1953 (January) | 17 | 37 | 17 |
1955 (January) | 34 | 28 | 16 |
1956 (January) | 38 | 22 | 13 |
1957 (January) | 43 | 18 | 17 |
1959 (January) | 45 | 15 | 16 |
1960 (January) | 46 | 15 | 16 |
1961 (February) | 35 | 20 | 19 |
1962 (February) | 30 | 20 | 26 |
1963 (February) | 31 | 21 | 15 |
1964 (January) | 41 | 27 | 11 |
1965 (January) | 47 | 27 | 10 |

The poll results seem to indicate that, after the improvement of the West German economy from its postwar low, the reunification issue had, by 1955, emerged as the most important goal of German politics, a priority maintained ever since. Hopes for the achievement of German unity and the sense of urgency attached to it are reflected in the oscillating percentage figures. The Berlin Wall is probably the cause for the 1962 decrease; on the other hand, the decrease in concern for peace from the February, 1962, high of 26 per cent to 15 per cent in January, 1963, is presumably a result of reassuring outcome of the Cuban crisis of October, 1962.

The year 1965 witnessed a rise in popular West German commitment to reunification: a poll conducted in the spring of that year by the Bielefeld Emnid Institute of Political Opinion Research resulted in 69 per cent of the respondents placing the need for reunification of Germany above that of a united Europe, while only 24 per cent considered the latter more important or necessary. But only 35 per cent of those questioned were ready to conceive of reunification within the next twenty years.\(^7\)

To contrast German and European unity, as in the above opinion poll, is somewhat misleading; in the past, and even in 1965, many respondents may have believed that these two choices were not self-exclusive. Many might have thought that European integration would eventually lead to German unification. On the other hand, De Gaulle's stand against federated Europe may have disillusioned many and thus increased votes in favor of the priority being given to German reunification.

\(^7\) *Die Welt, August 12, 1965.*

132
WEST GERMANS AND REUNIFICATION

Questioned as to whether they believed that the United States would one day recognize the division of Germany and come to an understanding with the Russians, the respondents replied:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>October, 1959 (%)</th>
<th>February, 1961 (%)</th>
<th>September, 1962 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided or no opinion</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Early in 1964, 43 per cent of the respondents believed that the SPD was more likely to solve the reunification problem than any other party, but an equal number believed that the CDU/CSU was more reliable.

The desire for reunification is not only the result of patriotism or loyalty to German Volksstum but is a consequence of innumerable personal ties, personal impressions, emotions, and other imponderables. The symbiosis of the German people within the borders of the Bismarckian Reich; decades of social, political, and personal exposures; the experiences of two world wars and their aftermaths; the ups and downs of national history; and, finally, the internal migrations of the post-World War II period caused a high quotient of national cohesion. This solidarity was certainly stronger than one might have expected from the formerly particularistic Germans.

Even after the catastrophic postbellum years, the painful experience of national division was kept alive by the influx of refugees from East Germany ranging from 10 to 50 thousand per month on the average. About 3.2 million arrived between 1950 and August 13, 1961, when the erection of the Berlin Wall drastically reduced the exodus. These refugees (officially “resettlers”) are, naturally, more intensively integration-conscious than the average inhabitant of the Federal Republic. Their presence and the memories which they are eager to share with any and all stimulate the demand for reunification even among those who might otherwise be indifferent.

The determination to achieve reunification is also constantly fomented by the ties of kinship and friendship between residents of both parts of Germany. These ties were kept alive by reciprocal visits until the Iron Curtain finally closed down; thereafter, the

---

69 Deutsch and Edinger, Germany Rejoins the Powers, pp. 179–80.
impossibility of seeing relatives and friends made reunification seem more imperative. It has been stated that in the Federal Republic sixteen million persons over the age of sixteen (40 per cent of all adults) have relatives or friends in East Germany and that one third of the inhabitants of West Germany regularly exchange personal correspondence with residents of the German Democratic Republic. In 1965 fifty-one million parcels were sent from the Federal Republic to East Germany and twenty-two million parcels in the reverse direction. In the same year 1.8 million visits were made by West Germans to see relatives and friends (they are not prevented to the extent that West Berliners are from visiting East Berlin) in the German Democratic Republic. About 1.2 million old people from East Germany were permitted to travel to see West German relatives.

The attitude of the younger generation of Germans toward the problem of reunification is of considerable importance for the future fate of German unity. Popular polls have shown a comparative indifference of young people on this question (see above). It has been observed, however, at least in the case of university students, that in recent years their interest in German unity has constantly and dramatically increased in striking contrast to earlier apathy.

Although somewhat less than half of the young West Germans show significant interest in politics in general, four fifths of them regard Germany's reunification as an imperative and urgent duty. Three fourths of those questioned opposed the recognition of the Oder-Neisse Line. In the terminology of German youth, the word "fatherland" invariably includes East Germany.

The issue of reunification is significantly promoted by unofficial organizations which rally refugees from the East and serve as pressure groups to influence branches of the government. While expellee federations (Landsmannschaften) are interested in areas

---


72 See the volume, *Die Jugend und die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands* (Frankfurt/M, 1962). This publication has been made available by the Stiftung die Welt and contains highly interesting contributions by young university graduates and endeavors to refute contentions that youth is disinterested in the issue of German unity.

73 From a report by the Federal government on youth, as reported by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 22, 1965.

behind the Oder-Neisse Line (and, therefore, only indirectly serve the purposes of reunification), the Kuratorium Unteilbares Deutschland (Council on Reunification or Committee Indivisible Germany) is the most important nationwide organization for the promotion of reunification.\(^75\)

Economic reasons also play a limited role in the hopes for reunification. This is probably why the people living closest to East Germany display greater interest and stronger desires for reunification than the population of more distant regions. Undoubtedly, reunification is almost a matter of life and death for the future of Berlin. It is also very essential for the city of Hamburg which has lost most of its commercial hinterland through the division of Germany. Even harder hit has been the Hanseatic city of Lübeck, just a few miles from the border, and also some border areas in Lower Saxony.\(^76\)

But the economic and demographic arguments for reunification are, on the whole, secondary to emotional and psychological factors. Although the popularity of European integration among intellectuals occasionally seems to overbalance pressures for German unity, public opinion polls clearly suggest that the overwhelming majority of average West Germans do not share this sense of priorities.

After the economic recovery of West Germany had been achieved, the popular concern with restoration of national unity constantly increased. In 1956 it was predicted that the demand for reunification would continue on its upward trend. The rising popular trend was not to be deterred by the weakening chances that practical politics could bring about the desired result.\(^77\) However, the negative energy directed toward the defense of West Berlin superseded the positive clamor for reunification. The government’s passive acceptance of the Berlin Wall was only partly met by popular furor. But Soviet failure to achieve control over West Berlin, together with the dismal ending of Khrushchev’s Cuban adventure, again raised popular interest in the reunification issue.

In all likelihood, public interest in German unity will fluctuate according to international and internal developments. Its importance, as mentioned earlier, should by no means be overestimated: the solution of the German problem of the mid-twentieth century depends considerably less on the ups and downs of popular inter-

\(^{75}\) For detailed information on the Kuratorium Unteilbares Deutschland see The Bulletin, September 20, 1966, pp. 3–6.

\(^{76}\) Speier and Davidson, West German Leadership, p. 87.

\(^{77}\) See Fritz René Allemann, Bonn ist nicht Weimar (Cologne, 1956), pp. 438–39; Deutsch and Edinger, Germany Rejoins the Powers, pp. 177–78.
est than on the will and skill of governmental leadership, not to mention international developments, especially the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. The people and the government of the Federal Republic are closely following trends in the Soviet Union, searching for favorable signs that might herald a start on the road to reunification. It is also for this reason that the development of the Sino-Soviet controversy and the schism in the Communist camp are being watched with greater interest in Germany than anywhere else outside the Communist orbit.

Was Starlinger Right?

Long before the antagonism between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China had burst into the open, the attention of the German public and its leaders had been directed to the potentialities of such a struggle.78

As early as 1954 a study had been published by Dr. Wilhelm Starlinger, a former professor of internal medicine at the University of Königsberg, under the title, The Limits of Soviet Power.79

This book stirred the imagination of its readers, including many in leading circles in Bonn. Chancellor Adenauer received Starlinger and, subsequently, made reference to Starlinger's thesis: that reunification would be in sight when the Soviet Union experienced the inevitable pressures of Chinese expansionism.

The author had been taken prisoner by the Russians and spent many years in Soviet captivity. He wrote his book after his return from Russia. He predicted the split between China and the Soviet Union on the basis of impressions he had gained from interviews with various types of people in the prison camps where he had practiced medicine.

Starlinger relied for support on his thesis of the "bio-geological" factors of China's population explosion which, in his view, was bound to inundate the empty spaces of Siberia. In the author's view, this would be the proper time for Germany to open negotiations with the Soviet Union for the settlement of the German problem. The author felt that the event was inevitable within a few years.80

Starlinger died in 1956. In a posthumous book,81 he further enlarged on his subject and also predicted the schism in world com-

78 See Speier and Davison, West German Leadership, pp. 179-80.
79 Wilhelm Starlinger, Die Grenzen der Sowjetmacht (Kitzingen/M, 1954).
80 Ibid., pp. 118–25.
munism, the abandonment of Communist East Germany by Moscow, and possibilities arising for Germany from the global triangular confrontation between the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. 

No doubt, Starlinger was much influenced by "geopolitics" and lebensraum-concepts; but his thesis did not fail to impress the West German public. His predictions were recalled again in 1963 when the first part of his prophecies proved to have been correct.

The appeal of Adenauer's "automatic" reunification concept, so pleasing to the mentality of the postwar German public, combined the promise of German unity with that of a "spontaneous" realization of this national goal. The Germans had been told by Adenauer that reunification could be achieved without risks or any direct action as a result of outside pressures on the Soviet Union. The Starlinger thesis admirably fitted this picture.

For fifteen years the question of German unity elicited no interest among writers of fiction until Uwe Johnson published his two masterly portrayals of the nightmarish, inscrutable, and seemingly insoluble problem. These books were also an apologia for the political escapism practiced by many Germans in the face of their tragic national predicament.

The popular hope that the Sino-Soviet animosity might create conditions for German unity is a notable example of how West German public opinion relied on "outward" forces that would involve no risks by the Germans themselves. The German propensity to think in terms of territorial power struggles also gave credence to Starlinger's thesis. "Behind Russia stands China," wrote Starlinger; so China will bring help.

Adenauer, even after his resignation as chancellor, has not given up his belief that the Sino-Soviet conflict will eventually force Moscow to disgorge its portion of Germany. He only expressed what is in the mind of many in Germany when he said: "In the long run, Soviet Russia will be confronted with a choice between subordination to Red China or keeping hands off Europe."

A West German publicist, whose views are representative of wide influential circles, wrote that the policy to achieve reunification by détour was correct, only the détour made was wrong: it should
not have been undertaken via Warsaw or Bucharest, but via Peking. And the SPD deputy, Wenzel Jaksch, an expellee leader, suggested that trade links with China were more likely to make Moscow ready for negotiations than similar contacts with East European Communist governments. In a similar vein, a CDU deputy, also an expellee, considered it irresponsible for the Federal Republic not to come to some trade agreement with such a large and important area.

De Gaulle's recognition of Communist China, although an affront to United States policy, was not unpopular in the Federal Republic and was thought to be directed not only against the Soviet Union but also against the latter's most obedient satellite, the German Democratic Republic. While Peking had earlier accused Moscow of being willing to abandon East Germany to the West German imperialists, a rumor of 1964 had it that China favored German reunification. Walter Ulbricht's regime was no doubt beginning to feel the diplomatic pressures and strains caused by the Sino-Soviet conflict. The German Democratic Republic, the weakest member of the Communist bloc in popular support, was also clearly a military outpost for twenty-two divisions of the Soviet Union. Any seismic rumblings of the balance of power between the superstates will be increasingly felt in the D.D.R. But its greatest source of instability has been the natural desire of its people to rejoin the main body of Germans. This, an impulse which is probably stronger even than the antitotalitarianism found elsewhere in the satellite area, is a force against which the Ulbricht regime knows it must fight with all available means.

Studnitz, Bismarck in Bonn, pp. 141-51.
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, April 5, 1966.
Trade between the German Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of China declined considerably after 1961 (to $53 million in 1962, a decline of 88 per cent), while the trade between the Federal Republic and China trebled in six years to $103 million in 1966. West Germany is the biggest single trading partner of China in Europe.
See Chapter IV, pp. 164-65 below.