



JOURNAL À PLUSIEURS VOIX

Uniting Europe, Germany and Berlin

Margarita Mathiopoulos

It was only as recently as June 1987 that the then American President Ronald Reagan challenged the Soviet General Secretary before the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin: "Mr. Gorbachev, open this Gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this Wall!" On that occasion, Moscow expressed great disappointment over Reagan's speech, and had Central Committee member Valentin Falin hint that there were no plans for any such event, and that the president's words led to believe we were still up to our necks in the Cold War.

Two years later, to the great astonishment of world opinion, Reagan's words became a fulfilled prophecy. Hungary's step in opening its borders in May 1989 and allowing the mass exodus of East Germans during the late summer and autumn of 1989 seemed an act of great daring and courage. How ironical history is: during the very celebrations for the fortieth anniversary of the founding of a Communist German state the Cold War generation leadership of the GDR was outfoxed by the new dialectic of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. "Those who arrive too late are punished by life", Gorbachev rightly said on that occasion. The cement-heads in East Berlin lost control over events and the Wall was eventually torn down.

Since November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall has been open to passage, and as a relic of the Cold War has even developed a certain charm. A few days later, on December 22, 1989, the Brandenburg Gate was also reopened, and the crowds from both East and West, dancing and celebrating New Year's Eve at

the Wall and the Brandenburg Gate, have symbolised the many hopes and expectations that have since been aroused for overcoming the division of Europe and Germany. Indeed, over the last few weeks and months, we have been witnessing dramatic political and ideological changes in Eastern Europe, in Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the GDR, as well as in the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics.

Harnessing the German question

These developments are welcomed everywhere, yet at the same time, there is a widespread awareness of the great risks they bear. If the Eastern revolutions get out of control, if the present wave of migration of populations from East to West does not stop, and if the German yearning for self-determination and the wish for German unity proves unable to accept the European right to codetermination of German destiny and unable to understand the process of European unification as a condition underlying German unification, then the balance of power in Europe and the entire international system could be seriously disturbed. We are at present living in a phase of dissolution of the USA-USSR power blocks as have existed since 1945, in a period of rapid dissolution of the bipolar international security system. If the bipolar international system is not to be replaced by a mere set of nationalisms addressed *tout azimuth*, one against all the others, it is therefore necessary that the dynamic forces released by the collapse of the East Berlin regime are constructively channelled and set into the European processes of economic and political unification.

The German question, which ushered in the twentieth century and brought forth two World Wars and Hitler, might thus be well on the way to finding a peaceful solution during this last decade of the century. "As long as the Brandenburg Gate is closed", President Richard von Weizsäcker once said, "the German question will remain open". Now that the Brandenburg Gate is open, is the German question closed? On the contrary, the German question is more than ever an open one. German history is continuing thanks to Gorbachev. But the German question has never simply belonged to the Germans alone. As the history of the twentieth century has shown, the attempts of the Germans to solve the German question through unilateral national initiatives have always ended up in tragedy. Today, where Eastern and Western Europe are growing together and the possibility to overcome the crisis of Europe becomes reality, the crisis of Germany can also be resolved,

step by step, in a European framework. Berlin has always been seen as the key to the German question. Once the "frontier city" of the Cold War and now for some time the "fulcrum between East and West", Berlin can be the prototype of confederative political, economic and cultural *rapprochement* between the two parts of the city. Berlin might well be on the way to becoming the model city for a future, unified Europe. As the place where the freedom of the East Germans began, Berlin itself could provide the impulse for a European confederation which will lead one day to a United States of Europe. Why not dare to make a synthesis between the idea of a European house and the vision of a United States of Europe? No time in recent history has ever been so favourable.

Rallying 'round Europe

The opening of the Berlin Wall would have been inconceivable without Moscow's "new thinking" in foreign policy. Since Mikhail Gorbachev stepped onto the world stage in 1985, the European postwar order has begun to rock. Gorbachev's innovative domestic programme to open up Russian society with *glasnost* and *perestroika* for a "socialist pluralism" and his courageous foreign policy to proclaim the idea of a "common European house" stand at the beginning of the dramatic developments and upheavals in Eastern Europe over the last few years. From the very beginning, Mikhail Gorbachev thought along pan-European lines, and he then made clear three ideas which have kept their central importance up to the present day.

In the first place, economic considerations played a decisive role. Since his advent to power, the leader of the Kremlin has been aware that in a world characterised by incredibly rapid technical progress and increasing internationalisation of markets, the Soviet Union could remain a superpower only if it could tap the technological and economic productivity of the West. Thus since Gorbachev has been in office, Moscow no longer aims for the subjugation of the West, but for the exploitation of its technical know-how. How strongly economic goals influence the thesis of the European house is made clear in Gorbachev's book *Perestroika*:

"The building of the 'European house' requires a material foundation ... The economic, scientific and technical potential of Europe is tremendous. It is dispersed ... However, the current state of affairs economically within the

West and the East, and their tangible prospects, are such as to enable some modus to be found for a combination of economic processes in both parts of Europe for the benefit of all ... True, all this would increase the European states' interdependence, but this would be to the advantage of everyone and would make for greater responsibility and self-restraint."

Second, Gorbachev has also been and still is concerned with reducing the billions wasted on armaments, with exploiting in a more sensible manner the enormous resources that could thus be made available and with broadening his financial manoeuvring space for the modernisation of his country. The idea of the European house combined with almost monthly disarmament proposals were intended to make détente irreversible, to create trust in the West and to allay West European fears that intensification of economic cooperation would ultimately only strengthen a dangerous adversary. Moscow's about-face on the issue of middle-range missiles, which ultimately made the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty possible, the Warsaw Pact's willingness to negotiate away asymmetries in conventional armament, the withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan, the Kremlin's constructive attitude in regional conflicts and, most important, the tolerance shown by Moscow towards the reform movements in Eastern Europe—the final rejection of the Brezhnev doctrine—have all been impressive signals of a new Soviet disengagement policy to which the Western allies have been obliged to react.

Third and finally, with the idea of the European house, Gorbachev was and is pursuing the objective of portraying the Soviet Union as a European power, so as to bring the explosive nationality problems of the Soviet republics under control. Gorbachev is utterly determined to hold the multi-national Russian state together by Europeanising the Soviet Union. This *Bündelstaat* is not supposed to suffer the same fate of gradual disintegration that befell the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. For Gorbachev, who was born on the edge of Asia (Stavropol), the issue that seems to be of greatest importance is that of allowing the European consciousness of the various Russian nationalities to revive under a European roof, and thereby maintain power and influence over them. The revaluation of the Orthodox Church, as well as Gorbachev's audience with the Pope, can also be explained in this context. For the purpose of underlining European awareness of tradition, Gorbachev received the Patriarch and visited the Pope in Rome.

The General Secretary leaves no doubt about the European heritage of the USSR: "We are Europeans. Old Russia has united with Europe through Christianity, and the millennium of its arrival in the land of our ancestors (has marked the year 1989). The history of Russia is an organic part of the great European history. The Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Moldavians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Karelians and other peoples of our country have all made a sizeable contribution to the development of European civilisation. They thus justifiably regard themselves as its rightful heirs."

Still, the question remains, and poses itself anew vis-à-vis the burning nationality problems in the Baltics, in Armenia, Georgia and most recently in Azerbaijan, of whether and to what extent the Soviet Union is a European power from its history and culture, whether the USSR is considered as part of the "Central European cultural realm" or whether it must be placed in an



1253



1338



1699

Seals of the city of Berlin

“uncivilised” Asiatic tradition and “barbaric counterculture”—hostile to human rights and liberalism of the European stamp, as stressed by then Vice President George Bush in Vienna in September 1983. Bush pointedly stated that Russia had not been part of the three great intellectual currents of Europe: Reformation, Renaissance and Enlightenment. Gorbachev did not go into these aspects until April 1987 in Prague: “In Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, Western civilisation was enriched by the ideas of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and experienced powerful development through the humanist tradition and theory of socialism.”

The economic and cultural aspects of the European house strategy as well as the security policy aspects have developed into powerful factors of change in the international world arena. They forced the West on to the defensive and strengthened the image of a declining Soviet Union. However, they also developed their own domestic dynamics, insofar as revolutionary liberation movements have been formed in Eastern Europe, the Eastern bloc has fallen apart and ultimately the respective Communist leaderships in these erstwhile “satellite countries” have collapsed. In other words, the concept of the European house escaped Gorbachev’s grip and control, and developed greater force than he probably might have wished, so that today, the opportunity to overcome the division and demise of Europe seems to be finally evident. From being simply a distant vision in the future, the idea of the European house has become—more rapidly and different from the one originally conceived—a realistic political objective.

Ode to Monnet

We are witnessing an ace chance, a chance which history only rarely offers. We have not arrived though, as one philosopher of the State Department recently proposed, at the end of history; rather, we are at the beginning of a new phase in European history, a phase in which the different countries are no longer obliged to take separate ways under the pressure of totalitarian ideologies. One could wonder, however, if this chance will be fully understood and exploited. Up to now, it does not seem so. The West is reacting half-heartedly, without any leadership or grand design for the future. All that is proposed as a response to the new situation is the forcing of the construction of the (West) European market—1992—and a monetary union, while quarrelling over the conditions of German reunification, and in the Federal Republic, over the validity of Poland’s western borders. Where

European vision is required, national bickering begins. The politicians of Western Europe do not seem to meet the opportunities offered by the historical situation.

There is the model concept of the United States of Europe, which so moved the great Europeans of the postwar years. Why not revive the ideas of Jean Monnet? Along with other European politicians, he was firm as to the need to revalue our cultural heritage and to master future challenges democratically. After two wars and terrible destruction on European soil, the idea was to build a new, common, European future. "A strong Europe requires", Monnet said then, "that Europe is united, not only in the form of cooperation, but also in the voluntary transfer of sovereignty from the European nations to a central union, a union which would have the power to dismantle customs barriers, create a large European market, and impede the revival of nationalism". But the realisation of a pan-European concept after 1945 failed due to various factors inherited from World War II, and to the new bipolar power structure that has since been predominant.

First, both wars had emasculated the centuries-old international power structure, the so-called "Concert of Nations", and with the advent of the Cold War, divided Europe geographically and ideologically, and thus condemned it to the quasi-provincialisation of its political and economic goals. The rise of the USA and USSR to world power along with the bipolarity of worldwide ideological confrontation left the Western Europeans with only one realistic choice: to preserve their open and democratic social systems by accepting the path of political humility and entering into an alliance with the Americans as a guarantee of freedom, economic prosperity and anti-totalitarian engagement. The Soviet Union left the Eastern Europeans no choice, and they were forced into political subordination by the totalitarian means of a closed system. Europe's new status and its reduced political and economic capacities in the world, the loss of the past and the diminution of its future options all changed and inevitably narrowed the horizon of its historical and political thought. The Europeans were no longer the navel of the world (as Jose Ortega y Gasset put it); the wars had robbed them of their universal "vital élan" (Stanley Hoffmann).

Second, the oppressive fact that the pervasive phenomenon of totalitarianism had become a historical constant of the twentieth century must be acknowledged. This realisation, in turn, occasioned disillusionment in the

recent political past of Western Europe, for totalitarianism of the right as well as the left could ultimately be traced back to the domination and perversion of the European idea of progress. In turn, this disillusionment, made the act of remembrance a burden. Thus the repression of history seemed to be the only solution. Yet the repression of history remains senseless for *we* are history, which in this case means that in denying and suffering our past we are only repressing or denying our very selves. Hence we never have a choice other than to accept, analyse and answer to history in its negative as well as in its positive aspects. Otherwise we stand for nothing. "The past is not dead", Christa Wolf once said, "it has not even passed".

Third, in their efforts to come to terms with the past, the Europeans focused primarily on the war in order to relieve themselves of as much guilt as possible. To cope with the historical baggage of the Second World War, they simply relegated it to the Germans—though more carefully than after World War I. Undeniably, it was Hitler who plunged Europe into chaos and committed irreparable crimes against the Jewish people. German responsibility for World War II and its horrors cannot be quibbled out of existence.

Nonetheless, the Europeans had sufficient opportunity to begin a basic revision and analysis of their own political roles in the First World War, in the interwar ideology-loaded years and during the Second World War. Italy had the chance to reflect over Mussolini, England over Chamberlain, France over Marshal Pétain and Norway over Quisling. Political conditions in the southern European countries, Spain, Portugal and Greece, did not permit reflection over Franco, Salazar, Metaxas, and the devastating Greek civil war until some thirty years after the end of World War II. Certainly, no epoch has ever lacked historical material for self-analysis; all that has generally been lacking was political and democratic maturity, a consistent sense of responsibility and voluntary self-criticism.

A European confederation?

However understandable postwar European resentment towards Germany may have been, for many years it obstructed European unification and coordinated political, economic and social progress. What the West Europeans lacked was a common historical orientation towards the future, the discerning vision to redefine European identity and the ability to translate

Margarita Mathiopoulos, former Associate Director of the Aspen Institute in Berlin, teaches at the Free University of Berlin. Currently a Koerber Fellow and Visiting Scholar at Stanford University, her most recent book is *History and Progress: In search of the European and American Mind* (1989).

economic dynamism into common European projects. In retrospect, it might be quite embarrassing for the Europeans to recognise that at that time, the Americans were more European than the Europeans themselves. Postwar Europe demonstrated perhaps paradigmatically that periods of economic growth, social comfort and political stability could be attended by periods of historical sluggishness and that two categories of history, dynamism and inertia, need not be mutually exclusive. Progress in one sector can mean decline in another.

Under the then existing political and cultural conditions, European thinking concentrated almost exclusively on Western Europe, while Eastern Europe faded from the horizon: a grey, uniform Eastern bloc, it was repressed from our consciousness, and both the variety in its countries and peoples, as well as our common European cultural heritage were largely obscured. November 9 changed everything. There has been a sudden awakening of interest, indeed a euphoria, for the East, and the media report daily on the reform processes in the ex-satellite countries; the economists speak of a new "founding period" in Eastern Europe's markets. The Europe of 1992 and the Atlantic Alliance seem to have been pushed into second place: the East has been rediscovered as an economic and cultural part of Europe. The realisation of the United States of Europe seems no longer utopian; Stalinism has been defeated; the people of Eastern Europe seem to be taking their destiny into their own hands. For the moment, at least, the epoch of ideologies is over. European peoples from both East and West have learned from the past what is also demonstrated by the peaceful and rational nature of the upheavals in the former Communist dictatorships.

Now that the totalitarian ideologies have lost their force, European peace can be threatened only by a revival of nationalist thinking or by an exaggerated emphasis on the old fashioned concept of the national state. In order to avoid this, the idea of a United States of Europe could be revitalised as an alternative model to Gorbachev's vision of a common European house. As it has become evident with the proposal for a European Confederation launched by President François Mitterrand in his New Year's address, a synthesis of the two models could become possible today. The preconditions and instruments are all set. Europe, not the national state, must be our political objective.

Hence the emphasis will not be on West European integration and on the creation of an internal market, but on the opening of the EEC towards the East. This is the main political difference between Mitterrand's stance and the assertion by Jacques Delors, the French President of the Commission of the EEC, that the first priority of the EEC has to be the integration of East Germany. The unspoken reasoning behind Delors' position is that only in this way can the Germans be kept within Europe. Mitterrand's proposal aims not only at offering realistic prospects to the Germans, but to the Central and Eastern European states as well. To concentrate simply on the completion of Western integration would have a purely defensive effect, given the great challenges and opportunities of our time. It would leave Central and Eastern Europe in a vacuum, without a future, and would force the Germans into fateful alternatives.

Self-determination, but first consultation

Konrad Adenauer was wise in opposing Stalin's note of 1952, with respect to German reunification at the price of neutrality. At that time there was no talk of the right to self-determination or a national referendum. *Der Alte*, as Adenauer was called, decided without any ifs or buts on integration of the Federal Republic into the West. But today as well, it would be fatal for the future of Europe if the Germans decided to go it alone, to follow their own national *Sonderweg* and uncouple themselves from the pan-European developments. President Richard von Weizsäcker and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher have repeatedly made clear that they are not even thinking of giving up Bonn's close relations with the West. One could, however, wonder if this will remain true for the whole of this "double electoral year". There will be elections in the GDR on March 18, and in the Federal Republic on December 2, 1990, and reunification will become the main theme of both

electoral contests. Will it be possible to counter the temptation to emotionalise the electoral confrontation with the national question? Will Bonn's Western partners be put in the pillory for their intended or real hesitation over German reunification, as is already manifesting itself in some sectors of the German media? How should the West react?

It would certainly be a grave mistake to give the Germans the feeling that either for geographical reasons or because of Hitler's barbarity they had less right to self-determination today than all other peoples. The West would lose credibility if it did not support the desire of the Germans for freedom, self-determination and the overcoming of the division of their country. But just as the Germans have the right to support their wish for self-determination, Germany's allies and neighbours also have the right to co-determination over the concrete forms and timing of a future German unification. No self-determination without consultation! The German question is a European question. There is not only a *volonté allemande*, there is also a *volonté européenne* to be taken into account. The architecture of the heart of Europe and related security issues are all relevant. The Germans should thus take the considerations and reservations of their neighbours seriously, and act accordingly. It is not only a question of whether French, Dutch, English, Italian or American fears of a reunified Germany have any real justification today, or whether Germany actually constitutes a new threat. Subjective feelings are a fact in themselves, and are alone sufficient to impair the relations and trust which have been established since 1945. In 1949, Konrad Adenauer had referred to these "psychological" aspects with respect to France: "It is of no use that we are effectively not dangerous, but it is a question of whether France holds us to be dangerous ... Even though France might be making an error, its need for security is nonetheless psychologically real, and this is a political fact we have to reckon with."

The German question cannot be solved by the Germans alone; if so, then it is only with great danger for stability in Europe. The German question has to be Europeanised and integrated within the European balance of power.

The most suitable instrument to this end is the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. All those who up to only three or four years ago—especially in the USA—tried to degrade the CSCE process to a mere playground for the Europeans did not understand the fact, however, that the Final Act of 1975 would turn out to be the most important historical

document of European postwar policy. It is the charter of a European peace order; its principles can serve as impulses for the rules of a European house. It is the foundation of the international policy which stimulated the upheavals and fantasies in Eastern Europe, and might prove to be the instrument capable of controlling these changes. It allows the Europeans to combine self-determination and sovereignty with cooperative development and partnership, and gives them the chance to understand themselves as a learning community.

The road to the Helsinki Final Act was paved by the *Ostpolitik* and *Deutschlandpolitik* of Willy Brandt. In retrospect, it can be said that the



Helsinki process is nothing other than the realisation of the classic foreign policy maxim of the Brandt era: change through *rapprochement*. If the Americans were concerned during the 1970's that the CSCE would slowly but surely dissolve Atlantic Alliance it has turned out today that, on the contrary, the CSCE process has contributed to softening the Eastern bloc and to surmounting the division of the Continent through relaxation of confrontation, through peaceful solution of conflicts, through constructive collaboration and through the alleviation of human problems.

The CSCE process is finally no other than the political concretisation of peaceful change towards freedom in Europe. The CSCE contained recognition of the European *status quo*, and the determination of international rules and borders is precisely what has provided the prerequisite for change.

Détente in foreign policy thus led to domestic relaxation. Now it is a question of political control over these changes and the prevention of any revival of new nationalistic feelings or concepts through a comprehensive pan-European perspective.

From San Francisco to Vladivostock

Due to the great diversity of the individual countries, and above all to the appreciable East-West difference, a Europe with several speeds will be impossible to avoid, at least at first. In this context, an interesting concept was developed in the Bonn Chancellery last summer. The idea was to organise all the numerous European integration nexuses into a "system of concentric circles". At the centre of this construction would be the United States of Europe and thus a European federal state which could include the old Europe of the Six in a first instance, in addition to those states which would agree to such an enterprise. The second circle would be the European Community as a confederation of European states, which would also include the United States of Europe. This stage corresponds more or less to the present Europe of the Twelve, possibly broadened to include Norway and Austria. The third circle, which again would include the previous two, would be an Association of European States. This would be oriented towards the present European Free Trade Association configuration, and would be open to states such as Finland, Sweden or Switzerland, just as to Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia or East Germany. Finally, the widest circle would form the common European house, congruent with a future European peace order and the CSCE-Europe, which would also include the United States and Canada. And here the most recent plea of the philosopher and physicist Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker for a reunification of Europe—from San Francisco to Vladivostock—hits the bull's eye.

To keep to the Chancellery metaphor, the aim of European policy must be to make the circles smaller and smaller, to promote Europeanisation further and further, so that eventually all states of Europe move together towards the United States of Europe, and one day a Europe from Portugal to Poland may become reality. In a Europe growing in this way, national and regional individuality is not to be "harmonised away"; on the contrary, under the roof of the United States of Europe an active federalism is to develop. This idea is a vision, a task for the future. Yet visions are precisely what men ask for in times of upheaval and lack of orientation. Why not dare to make a synthesis

of Jean Monnet's former vision of a United States of Europe, and Mikhail Gorbachev's contemporary vision of a common European house? A concrete European perspective for the future is more than ever needed—if only to avoid the revival of neo-nationalism and its long-known destructive power.

A plea for Berlin

If we assume that one day Brussels will possibly become the capital of the United States of Europe, then Berlin, where finally the spirit of Helsinki brought down the Wall, could be the capital of the "CSCE Europe"—almost a kind of political training camp for the Western and Eastern states on their way to the United States of Europe in Brussels.

Today it is still historically immature to speculate as to whether Berlin some day will again be the capital of a reunified Germany. In an epoch where the course is being set for Europe, this question is of second rank. In an epoch marking the end of the national state, why should Bonn be robbed of its functions? The "Bonn democracy" has positive associations everywhere in the world, whereas Berlin, as national capital, still evokes negative feelings and fears. "Of course we love Berlin", says the well-known expert of German affairs and former ambassador to Bonn, Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, "the air, the humour, the people, the theatre, the *Kurfürstendamm*, the museums and the opera. Of course we want—and especially so today—to go to Berlin, and we all have a *Koffer* in Berlin. Yet unpretentious humble Bonn is really more suitable to represent the solidity of a new Germany which is a part of Europe, and neither is nor wants to be a great power: let us stay in Bonn!"

Berlin is already a European metropolis, a cultural centre and also growing in the economic sphere. As suggested by Presidents Bush and Gorbachev in Malta, the Olympic Games will be held here in the year 2000 or 2004, so why degrade this international metropolis to the rank of centre of a nation state yet again? As the twentieth century comes to a close, the name of Berlin should be associated with the idea of a unified Europe.

George Kennan, the grand old gentleman of American diplomacy, recently said before the US Senate foreign affairs committee that German unification should wait until the point when the United States, the Soviet Union and Germany's European neighbours had come to an agreement as to a framework for this asset. And as the first step on the road to German unity, he

proposed a reunification of both parts of Berlin under one, common city administration. The protecting powers France, Great Britain, the USSR and the USA would have to provide the right conditions for this. This is an important and realistic idea. Following a proposal by the governing Mayor of West Berlin, Walter Momper, supported by his counterpart from East Berlin, Erhard Krack, a regional committee has been established in which the development of infrastructures, above all in the fields of transport, communications, environmental protection, the opening of leisure areas and all questions of cultural, scientific and sports exchange are to be discussed.

Berlin was the “frontier city” of the Cold War, then the “fulcrum between East and West”. Now the time seems to have come for it to develop as “metropolis of the European house”. The permanent institutionalisation of the CSCE in Berlin could be considered; it would regularly take care of, promote and control the network of the three Helsinki areas. A liberated Berlin would offer itself as an ideal place to respond to Gorbachev’s and Mitterrand’s proposal to hold a CSCE conference this year and, among other matters, discuss the future stability and peace settlement of Europe. It would be a positive signal worldwide if negotiations over a peace treaty within the framework of the CSCE were to take place in Berlin.

The Berlin Senate could found a CSCE Research Institute in order to supply academic advice to the European unification process, and concrete ideas in this respect have already been developed. A European East-West environment bureau could also find its ideal headquarters in Berlin, and thus set the course for the great “cleaning up” to be carried out during the 1990’s. Furthermore, Berlin could host an international language centre for Eastern and Western languages, an international management school for Eastern managers and an international data bank to which step by step Eastern enterprises could get online access.

Berlin is so suitable for these tasks because it is in the middle of Europe; because Berlin, having been a divided city for a long time, is the place where reconciliation between East and West was rehearsed for years; because it is an international city in any case, due to its Four-Power status; because it is a place where the Americans are particularly firmly anchored, without whom there can be no future security in Europe; because after decades of division, the Berliners are particularly highly motivated to overcome any division of city, country or continent; because the association of the name of Berlin as

the new CSCE capital (instead of with the “capital of the Fourth German Reich”) could be a pan-European signal, and finally, because in this way the Germans would be embedded into the European process.

Berlin’s European charm is irresistibly international. Having been one of the main symbols of nationalistic mass insanity during the Hitler era, the city of Berlin has for a long time held terrible associations for many people throughout the world. Now this city, which has affirmed itself under such difficult conditions and earned back much democratic credibility over the last forty years—and this not least due to the recent democratic revolution in the GDR—could become a symbol of European hopes.