

by the same author

THE POLISH REVOLUTION:
SOLIDARITY

THE USES OF ADVERSITY:
ESSAYS ON THE FATE OF CENTRAL EUROPE

WE THE PEOPLE:
THE REVOLUTION OF '89 WITNESSED IN WARSAW, BUDAPEST,
BERLIN AND PRAGUE

In Europe's Name

Germany and the Divided Continent

Timothy Garton Ash



JONATHAN CAPE
LONDON

DD290
.25
.G37
19936



First published 1993

© Timothy Garton Ash 1993

Timothy Garton Ash has asserted his right under
the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988
to be identified as the author of this work

First published in the United Kingdom in 1993 by
Jonathan Cape
Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA

Random House Australia (Pty) Limited
20 Alfred Street, Milsons Point, Sydney,
New South Wales 2061, Australia

Random House New Zealand Limited
18 Poland Road, Glenfield,
Auckland 10, New Zealand

Random House South Africa (Pty) Limited
PO Box 337, Bergville, South Africa

Random House UK Limited Reg. No. 954009

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

ISBN 0-224-02054-4

Typeset by Pure Tech Corporation, Pondicherry, India
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Mackays of Chatham PLC

Author's Note

To keep the main text readable, all sources, some caveats and many interesting further details have been consigned to the notes and other appendices. To avoid littering the text with superscript numbers, each note is keyed to a few words from the passage of text to which it relates. The top of each page of notes tells you to which pages of text those notes refer. This sounds complicated, but in practice it is not.

Informed criticism, questions and corrections really are welcome, but would-be critics, questioners and rectifiers are asked to look in these notes and appendices as well as at the main text. Other readers may happily ignore the supporting apparatus.

TGA, Oxford,
May 1993

1601

9300055701

R1249056

but also ultimately constrained — by the Kremlin. According to a transcript, he wished Krenz 'success' in the difficult task ahead of him and said the Bonn government was interested in 'a calm, sensible development'. In other words, the perspective for change was still within the horizons of Ostpolitik. When, just three and a half months later, Kohl coldly received in Bonn the Prime Minister of the GDR, Hans Modrow, one of Moscow's (and Bonn's) long-sought and cherished East German 'reformers', he did not even need to wish him failure. Modrow had already failed. Meanwhile, Kohl and Genscher had just got the go-ahead from Gorbachev to proceed with the internal unification of Germany, with no direct Soviet involvement. (The external aspects, concerning alliances, security arrangements and the like, were a different matter.) The cabinet in Bonn had formed a committee called 'German Unity', and decided to take the DM to East Germany.

The process of arriving at these decisions was more confused than it appears with hindsight. An important step was obviously Chancellor Kohl's '10 point programme' of 28 November, which sketched a path through the 'treaty community' already proposed by Prime Minister Modrow (and very much in the spirit of the earlier West German policy towards the GDR), through 'confederative structures' (of which East German leaders had also spoken in the past), to the final, but also the most distant point — full state unity. This programme was partly a response to developments inside East Germany, partly prompted by the questions of a Soviet emissary, and partly designed to improve the Christian Democrats' standing in the opinion polls and to regain the initiative in West German politics — all in all, a quite characteristic Bonn mixture. The real and very emotional breakthrough for the Chancellor was his visit to Dresden just before Christmas, where he was greeted by huge, patriotic crowds literally packing the rooftops and crying out for unity.

This cry from the people in East Germany, the continued flood of emigration and what can only be described as the collapse of the East German state were the three major factors which impelled the Bonn government to move from a measured 'calm and sensible development' to a headlong dash to unity. The East German Round Table(s), established following the Polish and Hungarian precedents, co-existed for a time with the Modrow government, in what Trotsky would have called 'dual power'. But by the end of January, it was rather dual impotence. Modrow was obliged to admit this collapse to Gorbachev in Moscow, and returned proclaiming his own commitment to 'Germany, united fatherland'. (Just three weeks earlier, Modrow had declared that unification was not on the agenda — one of many, many turns within the turn.)

Meanwhile, nearly 350,000 East Germans had gone west in 1989, and they were now leaving at the rate of 2,000 or more a day. The level of haemorrhage which in 1961 had led to the building of the Berlin Wall

would now decisively hasten unification. To this challenge there seemed to be only two responses: to divide completely or to unite completely. *Tertium non datur!*

Yet while most West Germans might in principle dearly love their compatriots in the East they also dearly wished them to stay there — for their own good, of course. On the very evening of the opening of the Berlin Wall, the Free Democrat Wolfgang Mischnick concluded his welcoming speech in the Bundestag with a plangent plea to the East Germans to stay at home: *Bleibt daheim!* This from a man who had himself fled from East Germany forty-one years before, and enjoyed a successful career in the West. Whatever the degree of personal commitment which individual West Germans may or may not have had to the cause of unity, the single most important argument used to convince West German voters of the necessity of economic and monetary union was: if we don't take the DM to the people, the people will come to the DM.

The further steps to internal unification, intricate and fascinating as they are, cannot be our subject here. Vitally important was the resounding election victory won by the Christian Democrats and their allied parties in the 18 March elections in East Germany: a vote for rapid unification which cleared the way for a straight accession to the Federal Republic under article 23 of its Basic Law. With the introduction of the DM in the German economic and monetary union on 1 July 1990, the GDR effectively ceased to be a sovereign state. The details of the encyclopaedic Unification Treaty, negotiated by Wolfgang Schäuble, are more relevant to an understanding of what happened afterwards than to that of what went before.

Peace, agreement and Realpolitik

The story of external unification is much closer to our theme. As we have seen, it had been a consensual (though not wholly undisputed) maxim of West German policy up to 1989 that German unity could only be achieved by peaceful means and with the understanding/agreement/support of Germany's neighbours. After 1990 it became a commonplace of German politics to laud the fact that German unity had been achieved peacefully (in contrast to 1871) and with the understanding/agreement/support of her neighbours. But it did rather depend which neighbour one was talking about, which word one chose, and what meaning one gave to it.

All expressed their *understanding* and general approval at the Helsinki summit in Paris in November 1990; that is, after the event. Formal approval had obviously to be given by all the Federal Republic's EC partners to the arrangements for the European Community's incorporation of the former East Germany. *Agreement*, in a narrower and stronger sense,

was given by just four non-German states, the Soviet Union, the United States, France and Britain, with the first being obviously the most important, the second very important, the last two somewhat less so. Of course linkages were also made to the interests of other states, notably Poland. Of course everyone in sight was wooed, reassured, sometimes informed and even occasionally consulted. But for all the polite words, probably only the Soviet Union and the United States had the power to stop it. As for *support*, in the autumn of 1989 the Bonn government's first tentative moves towards unification were actively supported by just one state: the United States. France and Britain became supportive only somewhat later, in the first half of 1990. Poland, as Bronisław Geremek frankly told a domestic readership, could not stop the unification of Germany and therefore had to get to like it.

The formula agreed in mid-February for negotiating the external aspects of unification was '2 + 4'. But of the two German states, the Eastern one was always a fraction of the Western one, and a rapidly disappearing fraction at that. France and Britain were a somewhat larger and more constant fraction of the American one. But the most important negotiations were between Bonn, Moscow and Washington — the Big Three at the end of the Cold War. Genscher would subsequently characterise the true mathematics of '2 + 4' to the author as 'perhaps two and a half', meaning that the central deal was between Bonn and Moscow, but with Washington playing a very important supporting role. Co-ordination between Bonn and Washington was exceptionally close and successful in this period, as was policy co-ordination inside the American government. Much remains to be told of the American side of this story, but some essentials are clear.

The American Ambassador to Bonn, Vernon Walters, and the American foreign policy planner, Francis Fukuyama, both guessed sooner than any leading German politician that unification really was back on the agenda. The Bush administration, having decided early in 1989 that the Federal Republic was to be its West European 'partner in leadership', backed Kohl unambiguously at the end of 1989. Even more important, it made this clear in direct talks with the Soviet Union. There were several possible ways of charting the path 'from Yalta to Malta', and it was by no means a foregone conclusion that Washington would chart it the same way as Bonn.

The American diplomatic team under James Baker was instrumental in winning French and above all Soviet agreement to the '2 + 4' formula, rather than a '4 + 0' peace conference of the victor powers of 1945 (Adenauer's nightmare called Potsdam!) or even a '4 + 2'. In close co-operation with Britain, it forged a common Western position on Nato membership for a united Germany, which was its own — and Britain's — central *sine qua non*. Yet at the same time, by pressing forward with summit, arms control and disarmament talks with the Soviet Union it gave Moscow an incentive which only the other nuclear superpower could offer. In the

spring and early summer it brokered with Moscow the specific guarantees about united Germany's military and security position which enabled Gorbachev to accept Nato membership.

What American policymakers somewhat biblically described as the Nine Assurances were discussed by Baker with Shevardnadze in Moscow in mid-May, and then by Bush and Gorbachev at the Washington summit. The United States self-evidently took a leading role in the radical redefinition of Nato's role at the London summit, and in formulating the encouraging (if still vague) message delivered to the Soviet Union by the Houston summit of the Group of Seven leading industrial nations. These three summits formed the psychological take-off ramp for the Kohl-Gorbachev meeting in mid-July. Together, they contrived to suggest that the prize at which Gorbachev and Shevardnadze's whole foreign policy had been directed — a new co-operative relationship with the West which would permit the modernisation of the Soviet Union — was now within Moscow's reach. Just one more concession, and they could be there!

In the event, this was to prove yet another Gorbachevian illusion. But it was an extremely important, perhaps even a decisive illusion for the achievement of Soviet agreement to a united Germany within the Western alliance in the summer of 1990. Finally, the United States helped the Federal Republic through the last hoops at the 2 + 4 meeting in Moscow in mid-September, which saw the signature of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany — the '2 + 4 Treaty', which was for the external unification what the Unification Treaty was for the internal.

In looking at the evolution of the Soviet position we have all the usual problems of incomplete sources and retrospective rationalisation. The story of the public positions taken by the Soviet leadership is that of a dramatic retreat. The Soviet leadership would 'see to it that no harm comes to the GDR', Gorbachev told his Central Committee in December 1989. It was 'quite impossible' that a united Germany should be in Nato, he said on West German television in March 1990. And so on. Of course these public statements cannot simply be taken at face value, since they were diplomatic bargaining positions and also intended for domestic political consumption. Private thinking was ahead of public speaking, although probably not so far ahead as some would fondly imagine with hindsight.

Three sets of factors seem to have determined the rapid evolution of the Soviet position. Firstly, there was the internal collapse of the GDR and the rapid emergence of non-communist states elsewhere in Eastern Europe. These developments meant that the near-impossibility of holding on to the outer empire became apparent to all but the most square-headed conservative and bull-necked marshal.

Secondly, there were developments inside the inner empire of the Soviet Union itself. With his acquisition of the powers of an executive president

in March and his hard-fought but successful defence of his policies — including those towards Eastern Europe and Germany — at the 28th Party congress in July, Gorbachev briefly established matchless supremacy over the only partly reformed structures of the Soviet party-state. Yet at the same time economic crisis and nationality conflicts were shaking the very foundations of those structures, while in Russia itself his arch-rival Boris Yeltsin returned to power. Gorbachev as it were secured his command of the oil rig USSR, but the oil rig was itself being rocked by a gathering storm.

This in turn made the third factor, the active policies of the West, all the more important. Return to 'the civilised world' was the long-term goal of Soviet westernisers in foreign policy. But by now the West, and above all West Germany, was also the Soviet leader's last hope of help in an immediate crisis. As we have seen, here were Bonn's strongest cards even before the unification process began. During unification they were played as trumps.

Much from the German side is also still to be revealed, and we await the memoirs of Kohl, Genscher and others. Yet the published day-by-day account of Kohl's chief foreign policy adviser, Horst Teltschik, gives a vivid impression of the German-Soviet waltz danced inside the American-German-Soviet threesome (itself inside the '2 + 4' reel, which in turn was inside the multiple bilateral and multilateral, EC, Nato, Warsaw Pact, G7, G24 and Helsinki *mêlée*). Thus, for example, Teltschik reveals that, as East Germany imploded in early January 1990, a message came to the Chancellery from Shevardnadze. The message recalled Kohl's offer of help to Gorbachev during their conversations in Bonn in June 1989 — an offer made in response to Gorbachev's own account of his economic difficulties, following Kohl's weighty plea for German unity (see page 117f). Shevardnadze asked: did the offer still stand?

Within hours, Kohl was discussing with his Agriculture Minister arrangements for a huge delivery of meat. The Soviet Ambassador said that these supplies were needed to remedy some temporary bottlenecks — a familiar refrain! Naturally the Soviet Union wished to pay for them, but a 'friendship price' would be welcome. Less than three weeks later, the package was agreed: 52,000 tonnes of canned beef, 50,000 tonnes of pork, 20,000 tonnes of butter, 15,000 tonnes of milk powder, 5,000 tonnes of cheese, at a 'friendship price' subsidised by the Federal Government to the tune of DM 220 million. A mere bagatelle compared with what would follow.

Now it would of course be quite absurd to suggest that German unity was bought for 52,000 tonnes of beef. But this was an important and very specific signal that the prospect of Germany being Gorbachev's greatest helper in his embattled attempt to modernise the Soviet Union was made not less but more real by the possibility of German unification. This was

of course a prospect which the Federal Republic had already skilfully painted in the years 1987 to 1989, and in a larger sense ever since 1969.

At the German-Soviet summit meeting in Moscow in mid-February, the first of the two external breakthroughs in the unification process, Kohl elaborated *fortissimo* on a theme that he had already played *basso profundo* at his meeting with Gorbachev in Bonn eight months earlier. By Teltschik's account, he now told Gorbachev that Germany and the Soviet Union should shape the last decade of the twentieth century together. Gorbachev, in return, said the Germans had the right to decide whether they wanted to live in one state. According to Teltschik's Russian counterpart at these talks, Anatoly Chernyaev, Gorbachev said: 'On the point of departure there is agreement — the Germans should make their choice themselves. And they should know that this is our position.' When Kohl asked, 'You mean to say that the question of unity is the choice of the Germans themselves?', Gorbachev replied, 'yes . . . given the realities'. The path to internal unification was open.

In April, the theme of German-Soviet co-operation was further developed, in theory and practice. Following a suggestion made by Boris Meissner, the Kohl government proposed to Moscow that they should already start negotiating a bilateral co-operation and 'friendship' treaty for the period after unification. This was a shrewd psychological move. According to Teltschik, the Soviet Ambassador to Bonn, Yuli Kvitsinsky, reacted almost euphorically. His dream since he came to Germany, he said, had been to build something 'in the Bismarckian spirit' between Germany and the Soviet Union. Two weeks later, Shevardnadze directly confirmed to Kohl the Soviet Union's delight at the proposal. At the same time, he asked for a loan.

Just ten days later, Teltschik was off on a secret mission to Moscow, with two leading German bankers in the plane. The Soviet side spoke frankly about their hard-currency debt, revealing that the Federal Republic was by a clear head their biggest creditor (with Japan in second place, and, rather surprisingly, Italy in third). After discussing the possible loan and the bilateral treaty, Teltschik recalled the suggestion once made by Gorbachev that he should meet with Kohl in the Soviet leader's Caucasian homeland. While James Baker discussed with Shevardnadze possible security guarantees and military limitations for a united Germany in Nato, Kohl organised an immediate, untied, government-guaranteed loan of DM 5 billion. Writing to Gorbachev with the good news, he emphasised that this was to be seen as part of an overall solution to the questions that still remained open in connection with German unification. A hefty *quid*, but for a much larger *quo*.

Once again, it would clearly be absurd to suggest that Soviet assent to united Germany's membership of Nato was bought for DM 5 billion. This was but one of many Western signals, and Western policy but one of many

factors. Like the beef, it was nonetheless an important and well-timed move. Talking to Kohl in Moscow in mid-July, at the beginning of the summit that would end in the Caucasus, the Soviet leader himself said that the five billion credit was a 'chess move' made at the right moment. He valued it highly. Despite the suffering of the war, Gorbachev said, according to the edited and then retranslated Russian record which he himself released for publication in 1993, 'we must turn to Europe, and go down the path of co-operation with the great German nation'. However, it should not be forgotten that 'some accuse us of selling for German Marks the victory that was bought at such a high price, with such great sacrifices'.

After exchanging 'non-paper' drafts for the German-Soviet friendship treaty prepared by Anatoly Chernyaev and Horst Teltschik respectively — and, according to the Russian record, Kohl stressed that he had involved neither his Foreign nor his Finance Ministry in its preparation! — the two leaders got to the point. And already there in Moscow, Gorbachev made the key concession that united Germany could be a member of Nato, although with special conditions and reservations, especially so long as Soviet troops remained 'on the former territory of the GDR', as he himself put it. But, Gorbachev went on, according to the Russian record: 'The sovereignty of united Germany will thereby in no way be put in doubt.'

The security conditions, agreed with the help of vodka and cardigans in the Caucasian hamlet of Arkhyz, were then extraordinarily favourable for West Germany, and for the West as a whole. Soviet troops would withdraw from East Germany within four years. While 'Nato structures' would not be extended to that territory, articles 5 and 6 of the Nato treaty would immediately apply and Bundeswehr units not integrated into Nato could be stationed there straight after unification. In return, Germany would limit its armed forces to 370,000, and at the moment of unification would solemnly reaffirm the renunciation of atomic, biological and chemical weapons already made by the old Federal Republic.

Now whenever Germany and the Soviet Union seemed to be getting close, the spectre of Rapallo would invariably be raised somewhere in the West. It was therefore not surprising that, picking up the name of the nearest big town, Stavropol, the relentlessly punning *Economist* would christen this meeting 'Stavrapallo'. The comparison with Rapallo helped to highlight the fundamental differences, for this was not an arrangement made against the Western powers, nor even in substance behind their backs. Yet this was also a very long way from the new, post-national, multilateral style of international relations which the Federal Republic publicly preached, and which went by the name of 'Helsinki'. In style and content this was a great-power deal. As Gorbachev himself remarked at the concluding press conference: 'We [have] acted in the spirit of the well-known German expression *Realpolitik*.'

Indeed, in some ways the whole negotiation of German unification recalled the meeting that had been held in another scenic Soviet location, in the Crimea, forty-five years before. Here was, so to speak, a Yalta to undo Yalta. It was, to be sure, diplomacy in peace not war. It was diplomacy transformed by the new technologies of communication. But it was still elite, great-power diplomacy, the few deciding about the many. While thousands of diplomats, officials and experts were involved in the whole process, Stephen Szabo, who has made a close study of the diplomacy of unification, concludes that the most important decisions and deals were made by eleven men in three capitals. And even President Bush and James Baker were apparently surprised and just a little piqued by the German-Soviet deal in the Caucasus. The Federal Republic's closest and most important West European allies, France and Britain, were neither present nor intimately involved in the crucial negotiations. In this sense Britain now experienced what France had always most bitterly resented about Yalta — not being there.

As for the neighbour most directly affected in both cases: then as now, Polish politicians might repeat the old cry *nic o nas bez nas* ('nothing about us without us'), but then as now the strong would decide about the weak. As we have seen, Chancellor Kohl had long recognised that Germany would have to concede the Polish frontiers established after Yalta and Potsdam as the price for German unification — although he would deliberately prevaricate until all but the most dunderheaded expellee could see that this was so (see page 230). Here was one thing on which all Germany's neighbours and partners agreed.

Yet at the same time, the Federal Republic made quite sure that Poland would not be a full participant in the 2 + 4 negotiations. According to the published, edited and re-translated Russian version (which must clearly be treated with great caution), Kohl told Gorbachev in Moscow in mid-July that he did not quite understand why 'the Poles' were hesitating about his offer of negotiating a frontier treaty after unification, followed by a general political treaty. 'But,' he continued, according to this version, 'when Germany then concludes its treaty with the Soviet Union they will immediately wrinkle their noses, make a great rumpus and remember history. We should try to think how that can be avoided, how one can bring the Poles to reason.'

At the insistence of other participants in the 2 + 4 negotiations, the Polish Foreign Minister was invited to the meeting in Paris which dealt with the frontier issue, the day after the Caucasus summit. Teltschik has an extraordinary vignette of Genscher talking to Shevardnadze about the next day's 2 + 4 meeting, during a helicopter trip to the town of Mineralniye Vody (that is: Mineral Waters) for the concluding press conference of the Caucasus visit. 'Genscher is mainly concerned,' noted Teltschik, 'to get Shevardnadze's support against Poland.'

Now the word 'against' in this sentence refers to diplomatic tactics, not to fundamental content. As we have recorded above, in substance Genscher was clearly for the final recognition of the Polish western frontier. So this conversation was to earlier German-Soviet ones (Rapallo, Ribbentrop-Molotov) as mineral water is to vodka. But in the politics of unification, as in the whole preceding Ostpolitik, Bonn put Moscow first and Warsaw second. The frontier treaty with Poland was not signed until after German unification. It was not actually ratified by the Bundestag until a year later, in a package with a bilateral 'good neighbour' treaty in which the Bonn government entrenched its interest in the German minority in Poland.

What was true of Poland was even more true of a little country like Lithuania, at this time struggling to regain the independence it had lost in 1939/40, as the result of a German-Soviet pact. When President Bush told Chancellor Kohl that he would find it difficult to sell to Congress a large package of economic aid to the Soviet Union, because of Moscow's attitude to Lithuania, Kohl replied that the Lithuanians had his 'sympathy', but they could not be allowed to determine the policy of the West. Up to and even beyond the Soviet ratification of the 2 + 4 Treaty, the Federal Republic was among the least supportive of all Western states in relation to Lithuania's struggle for independence. As Bonn itself raced headlong to realise the Germans' 'right to self-determination', it sagely advised the Lithuanians to take things very slowly.

Now there were powerful arguments for this attitude from the point of view of German interests, even of Western interests altogether. Germany was by no means alone in its concern about Lithuania's stance. But it is clearly not the case that the national interests of all other European states and peoples, as they themselves defined those interests — and who else should define them? — were all equally respected in the process of unification. This was *Realpolitik* in a highly civilised form, with the telephone and the cheque book instead of blood and iron; but it was *Realpolitik* all the same.

The last treaty work

The veteran Soviet expert on Germany and head of the Central Committee's international department, Valentin Falin, would later describe the concessions made by Gorbachev in the Caucasus as the emotional decisions of an exhausted man. Shevardnadze's contribution he characterised wittingly as 'Georgian games'. The clear implication was that true Russian professionals — such as Falin — would have struck a harder deal.

Perhaps mindful of such criticism, Gorbachev haggled hard on the telephone with Kohl in early September, securing a round DM 12 billion

plus a further DM 3 billion credit, to cover the costs of the Soviet troops in the (now hard-currency) territory of the former GDR and their relocation to the Soviet Union. This removed the last major obstacle to the conclusion of no fewer than four German-Soviet treaties, which had been negotiated in an extraordinary diplomatic sprint. The 2 + 4 Treaty could now be signed in Moscow, with a last-minute British objection brushed aside into an addendum.

Noting in the preamble 'the historic changes in Europe, which make it possible to overcome the division of the continent', the treaty gave united Germany 'full sovereignty over its internal and external affairs'. Thirty-five years after Adenauer celebrated the Federal Republic's day of sovereignty, the day of sovereignty had come.

The very next day, in Moscow, Genscher and Shevardnadze initialled their bilateral 'Treaty on good-neighbourliness, partnership and friendship'. A patchwork quilt of fragments from German-Soviet agreements and declarations over the twenty years since the Moscow Treaty, hastily sewn together with golden thread by Genscher's chief negotiator, Dieter Kastrup, this contained some remarkable statements. 'The Federal Republic of Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,' said its preamble, 'wishing finally to have done with the past...' (Francis Fukuyama had recently declared the end of history, but perhaps only Germans and Russians could commit themselves in a treaty to have done with the past.) Yet, picking up a formula from the Bonn Declaration of June 1989, the preamble also said that the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union were 'determined to follow on from the good traditions of their centuries-long history'.

There followed a familiar catalogue of areas of co-operation and good intentions. This included, for example, the assertion that the two sides 'will never and under no circumstances be the first to use armed force against each other or against other states. They call upon all other states to join in this commitment to non-aggression.' Taken literally, this meant that Germany was joining the Soviet Union in calling upon, say, the United States not to use armed force against, say, Iraq. But of course it was not meant to be taken literally. It was meant to secure Soviet agreement to German unification. This was Machiavelli dressed as Luther.

On the third of October 1990, Germany celebrated, with fireworks, flags and champagne, what would henceforth replace the 17 June as the 'day of unity'. But two more detailed agreements remained to be signed: that on 'several transitional measures', meaning the agreed payments for the removal of Soviet troops, and that specifying the precise terms on which the Soviet troops would remain and withdraw by the end of 1994. On 9 November, the first anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall, Kohl and Gorbachev formally signed in Bonn the friendship treaty that Genscher and Shevardnadze had initialled in Moscow and yet another treaty — 'on

the development of a comprehensive co-operation in the fields of economics, industry, science and technology'. Gorbachev concluded his speech with the modest words: 'Let the Soviet-German treaty signed for twenty years be transformed into the treatise "To Eternal Peace".' Kant as cant.

With this, the latest and in the event the last German-Soviet treaty work was complete. It was the most complex in form, the simplest in content. Yet the cautious diplomats said it was still not wholly secure. Ratification of the 2 + 4 Treaty by the Western signatories was a foregone conclusion. The complex arrangements with the EC had already been agreed. The frontier treaty with Poland would be signed by Genscher in Warsaw a week later. The blessing from the Helsinki summit in Paris was easy. But something could still go wrong in Moscow. Thus Genscher would argue that German unification was only definitely achieved when the Soviet Ambassador handed over the Soviet ratification document for the 2 + 4 Treaty, in the Foreign Ministry in Bonn on 15 March 1991. Only then was Germany finally united, again; or was it rather, anew?

In July 1987, Gorbachev had said to Weizsäcker that German unification might perhaps come 'in a hundred years'; generously reducing the period, on Weizsäcker's intervention, to a round fifty. In January 1989, Erich Honecker had declared that the Berlin Wall might survive for fifty or a hundred years, if the grounds for its existence were not removed. The hundred had happened in one.

Yet was Germany really united? Asked for his hopes on 'the day of unity', the writer Reiner Kunze, one of many free spirits driven out of Honecker's GDR, said he hoped that after this day the Germans would prepare themselves for it. The deep truth in that deceptively simple remark was to become apparent to everyone over the next two years. Economically, socially, culturally and psychologically, the Germans were still very far from united. Nonetheless, Germany, the state, was united in a way that Europe, for example, was not. What is more, united Germany was, whether it liked it or not, once again a major power in the centre of a still disunited Europe.

VIII

Findings

German and European

An old truth: the more you know, the less you know. Politicians and commentators in happy possession of a little knowledge can make the most confident pronouncements about the certain future effects of a given policy on another country. After making a detailed study of what actually happened, one hesitates to make any positive statements at all. This applies not only to the tangled skein of cause and effect. It applies even to intentions.

If we return to the issue of the relationship between the German and the European questions, raised in Chapter One, then our first general finding is that German Ostpolitik was above all a German answer to the German question. However, from the 1960s onwards German politicians — not all German politicians, but politicians in all parties — concluded not only that this required seeking German answers to the European question, but also that these German answers must be built into a larger European answer to the European question. The way forward led not through reunification to détente but through détente to reunification. Bonn would work towards a European peace order, in which the Germans could achieve unity in free self-determination. West European integration or 'European Union' would be a contribution to the larger European unification. This in turn might be described as a European answer to the German question — indeed even, one German historian suggested, the most constructive answer to the German question since the Thirty Years' War.

Throughout, almost every aspect of Bonn's policy towards Europe (West) and Europe as a whole had (at least) two sides. The multilateral also facilitated the unilateral. The renunciation of sovereignty was also about the recovery of sovereignty. The transfer of power also served the (re)acquisition of power.

From Adenauer to Kohl, West German Chancellors asked the West and